

The Compost

WILLIMANTIC

Vol. 30, Number 2

Spring 2008

FOOD CO•OP

91 Valley Street
Willimantic, CT 06226
860.456.3611

willfoodcoop@snet.net

www.willimanticfood.coop

STORE HOURS

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 8:00pm

Saturday
9:00am - 6:00pm

Sunday
10:00am - 5:00pm

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Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin*

It seems like it has been a long winter – it always seems like that, but spring is in the air and the warmth and sun means it is time to grow food in our region. It is incredible how different procuring food is today than 100 years ago. For the vast majority of us it is not about planting or gathering, it is about shopping. Pretty much night and day. At the Co-op, we also shop and we spend a lot of time and effort looking for good food. A lot of what is on the shelf is mass-produced because that is what is most widely available. But tucked in are some treasures – food that is produced on small farms.

Soon the produce department will be full of locally grown vegetables and fruits. As the interest and desire for locally grown food has increased, so has the ability of the independent farmer to make a living. This trend brings more land into agricultural production, saving it from development and employing more people. It also increases the availability of some really nutritious food while decreasing the amount of fuel used in transporting the produce to our store. We are taking advantage of this opportunity by doing business with more farms this year, hoping to make available as much fresh food as possible. We have hopes of securing an entire year's supply of storage crops: garlic and onions, potatoes and squash, to see us through the next long winter with food grown as close to us as possible.

There has also been an increase in locally produced dairy products. Raw milk is sold from three farms: Foxfire in Mansfield, Baldwin Brook in Canterbury, and Beltane Farm in Lebanon. Connecticut is one of eight states in the entire country that allows the retail sale of raw milk, and demand is incredible. The rest of our milk comes from Mountain Dairy in Mansfield and the Farmer's Cow, a cooperative of farms from several local towns. We have a wide selection of cheeses from small farms throughout New England, many of which are not only delicious, they are award winning (see page 9). Our eggs are all from small backyard farms, as they have been for years. Maple Syrup has had a good season and we have plenty from Bats of Bedlam in Chaplin, and Bower's Farm in Hebron. Our local honey supply has been good from A&Z Apiaries in Hampton, and Alba Flower Farm in Bristol.

Not quite as local, but not so far away is one of our new suppliers, Crown O Maine Cooperative. Made up of a group of small farms throughout Maine, they have been in business 13 years, distributing quality Maine grown products. They don't have a truck that comes to Connecticut, but we can get a pallet shipped at a reasonable price. This trucking arrangement does limit our access to perishable produce and dairy products, especially as the weather warms up (we won't be able to get the ice cream that Bruce wants so bad), but

**Willimantic Food
Co-op**

General Manager
Alice Rubin

Assistant Managers
Shandra Craig
Bruce Oscar

Staff

Michelle Brazeau
Jonathan Campo
Mariclare Cole
Chris Demorit
Chris Diaz
Maiga Doocy
Chad Dunnack
Kristin Fortier
Mark Giangrave
Scott Goodwin
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Tara Hills
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Amy Lamont
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Steve Scanlon
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Tyger Wright

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Member Elected:
Mitch Beauregard
Dave Burdette
Jack Collins
Kevin Donohue
Suzanne Gerety
Lynn Stoddard

Manager Representative

Alice Rubin

Staff Representative

Cari Nadeau

Board Scribe

Susan Chasin

Newsletter

Shandra Craig

Jason Williams

we'll get what we can. Our first shipment from them just came in last week: potatoes, cider, and dried beans.

It feels good to be able to buy food from all of these small suppliers, supporting other small businesses, similar to ours, that are struggling to make it in this world of bigger is better. And it seems to be the food that you want to buy – it is flying out the door.

So, there is the sunny side, the not so sunny side is that all food prices are increasing quickly. Flour is through the roof; the price of wheat has more than tripled in the past 10 months, making daily bread feel a little like a luxury item. Baked goods aren't the only food items getting more expensive: experts expect that 80 percent of grocery prices will spike, because wheat and other grains are used to feed cattle, poultry, and dairy cows. Wheat prices have been pushed higher by a combination of agricultural, financial, and energy issues. This is the age-old story of supply and demand. Poor wheat harvests in Australia, parts of Europe, and the U.S. have caused China and other Asian countries to buy more American crops, which are especially attractive because of the weak U.S. dollar. At the same time, the American crop is shrinking because of federal incentives to grow corn for ethanol. Rising gas prices make it more expensive to get wheat to market. Those same pressures have made it more expensive to supply feed grains for livestock, who supply our eggs, milk, and cheese. Grain makes our chips and bread and cookies. The list grows longer and longer.

Currently, the Co-op has no choice but to pass on price increases as we get them from manufacturers and producers. What we will be looking at is the impact these price increases are having on our profits. Because we mark up the food that we sell as a percentage of the wholesale price, the higher the wholesale price, the more money we take in. We need to look carefully at just how much the Co-op needs to make, because while we are a not for profit business our goal is not to make a hefty profit, the costs for us to stay in business are also increasing. Our electric bill continues to go up, just as yours does. The wages we pay our staff needs to increase as the cost of living increases. The health care benefits we provide for the staff continues to increase. You know, you are all feeling the same strains in your lives. But we will do everything we can to manage these expenses and minimize the cost of the food that we sell.

Lastly, an update on our POS System, things are looking up. We've got the accounting puzzle sorted out and it is working fine. Shelf tags are in the process of being printed as I write this, and we are beginning to see the benefits of the system. I think we are on the home stretch with this one.

I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting on Sunday June 1st.

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When I Close My Eyes I Can Smell Basil *Markus*

If I were to designate one noticeable trend in the produce realm this year, it would be that folks are gardening more than ever. The Food Co-op has, for the last 15 years, carried garden seeds and supplies from small independent seed companies that are dedicated to preserving traditional heirloom varieties of vegetables, flowers, and herbs. Seed Savers Exchange, in Iowa, is a non-profit organization that farms its 650 acres to produce and preserve a diverse collection of seeds. High Mowing Seeds (Vermont) is an independent family-owned farm producing exclusively certified organic seed. Fedco Seeds (Maine) is a cooperative business that purchases seed from many local growers, as well as other seed company wholesalers, in order to offer a wide selection to the public.

This year, the Co-op had a record number of preorders for the annual Fedco Seeds group order at the beginning of the year, as well as preorders for the Fedco potatoes (Moose Tubers), and for the growers' supplies. The true sign of ambition and enterprise is apparent when people are preparing to buy potatoes, potting soil, calcitic limestone, and floating row cover in January, which will not arrive until mid-March. You know there are big plans in the making. As of this writing, seed packet sales from the floor displays have been amazing. I have already had to reorder to fill out-of-stocks of seed packets, which is far earlier than ever previous.

Spring has its way of motivating us Yanks with optimism, where we can begin anew, where practically



anything is possible with enough gumption, and after the past months of sleet and ice and mud, we are ready, so let's do it! Mid-summer is another story, but we are in the moment here... Whatever the motivations are, be it the unequalled quality of your own vegetables fresh from the garden, the rising cost of food distribution, or the basic need to grow, nurture, and provide for oneself, gardening is good for the soul, where the end return proves greater than the investment. Just remember to keep your back straight and bend your knees, or your back may disagree with your soul.

For more information on our seed suppliers visit their websites: <http://www.fedcoseeds.com>
<http://www.highmowingseeds.com>
<http://www.seedsavers.org>



Checking out with Checks

It used to be that most people paid for their food with a check, but not anymore. I'd say that money comes to us in the following order – Debit Card, Credit Card, Cash and Check. It doesn't happen too often, but lately we have been getting checks that not only won't get cashed by the bank, but are also written by a person that is nowhere to be found, leaving the Food Co-op no where to turn. To prevent further losses, we will now be writing down driver's license numbers on all checks, and we won't be taking checks from non-members. I hope that this will not inconvenience anyone.

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Board of Directors Elections and Annual Meeting Potluck

Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 1 at 6:00 p.m., at the Windham Theatre Guild’s Burton Leavitt Theater. We would like to thank departing Board Members Dave Burdett and Jack Collins (treasurer) for their three years of dedication and hard work. And thank a special thank you to Lynn Stoddard for her 6 years as a board member, most of those as president. You were invaluable during our move and expansion. Thank you.

In addition to these seats, we have another three vacant seats making the election uncontested; we will not be sending out ballots, but will vote in new board members at the Annual Meeting. Board candidates will be given a chance to speak at the beginning of the meeting, and nominations may be taken from the floor.

This year’s meeting will also include a potluck, a vote on the bylaws changes (see following pages), a presentation of the annual report, and guest speaker Erbin Crowell will discuss “Building a Co-operative Economy.” Mark your calenders, this will be a great evening.†

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Proposed amendments to the By-Laws of the Willimantic Food Co-op, Inc.
 [Revised draft—2/13/08]

Section 1.1: Purposes

As more fully stated in its amended and restated certificate of incorporation, the purpose of the Co-op is to operate a retail food cooperative for the prim-ary and mutual benefit of the members of the Co-op as patrons of its goods and services. The Co-op is organized and shall be operated exclusively on a nonprofit and cooperative basis.

Section 2.1: Admission

Membership in the Co-op shall be voluntary and open to any ~~person~~individual who is in accord with its purposes, will use its services, and is willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. ~~Organizational members shall not be permitted to participate in governance of the Co-op.~~ Applicants will be admitted to membership upon submitting required information, paying an initial fee and paying, or agreeing to pay in installments, the issuing price of a Member Capital Certificate. In case of doubtful eligibility, membership shall be subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Section 2.3: ~~Delinquency~~ Inactive Status

A member who becomes delinquent by three months in meeting his or her capital payment obligation to an extent determined by the Board of Directors, or who fails to keep the Co-op advised of his or her current address as evidenced by two successive meeting notices having been returned by the post office as undeliverable, shall be placed into inactive status. A member ~~so placed in inactive status~~ may attain good standing-active status upon resuming regular payments and paying a reinstatement fee, if any, as determined by the Board or by resuming communication with the Co-op and providing correct contact information. Reference in these by-laws to the rights and entitlements of members, other than the right to redemption of capital funds, shall be understood to refer only to active members in good standing.

Section 3.2: Special Meetings

Special meetings of members may be called by the Board or by the President. A special meeting shall be

called ~~as soon as practicable upon~~ within fifteen days of receipt of petitions of ten signed by at least five percent of all members which state the any proper business to be brought before the meeting.

Section 3.4: Quorum and Voting

The presence of twenty-five members shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of members. Each member shall have one ~~voice or~~ vote on each matter submitted to a vote of members. Proxy voting shall not be permitted. ~~Members shall strive to reach consensus on all issues. If after diligent efforts the majority is of the opinion that consensus cannot be reached on a particular issue, resort may be taken to voting by a two-thirds majority. Unless otherwise required by law or by these by-laws, issues shall be decided by two-thirds majority vote or, in the case of the election of directors or where two or more options are presented on a single issue, by plurality vote. Meetings of members shall be conducted in conformity with generally-accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.~~

Section 3.5: Voting by Balloting by Mail

The Board of Directors may authorize ~~voting by~~ balloting by mail in conjunction with a meeting of members through procedures that are designed to ~~assume~~ assure fairness of the process, secrecy of ballots, and convenience to members. In such event, the notice of the meeting shall include a ballot and a full description of the issues to be voted upon. Ballots shall be returned either by mail or in person at the store during the month preceding the date of a meeting of members. Submission of such a ballot shall be equivalent to presence in person at a meeting of members with respect to the issues covered by the ballot, and votes cast by ballot shall be counted together with votes cast in person at the meeting. ~~Decision making shall be by two-thirds majority vote, except for the election of directors which shall be by plurality vote.~~

Section 3.6: Issues Submitted by Members

Notices of a meeting of members shall include any proper issues submitted by petition of not less than ~~ten~~ fifty members. Petitions must be received at the principal office of the Co-op not less than ~~one~~ two months before the date of the meeting.

Section 4.3: Standards of Conduct

Directors are responsible at all times for discharging their duties in good faith, in a manner which they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the Co-op, and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

Section 4.5A: Indemnification

In order to attract and retain qualified persons to serve as directors and officers, the Co-op shall indemnify its directors and officers as required by Connecticut law and may indemnify its directors and officers as permitted by Connecticut law, subject to its amended and restated certificate of incorporation. Indemnification payments shall be made on a priority basis but only in such increments and at such times as will not jeopardize the ability of the Co-op to pay its other obligations as they become due. All indemnification payments shall be reported to members at the next-scheduled meeting of members.

Section 4.7: Termination

The term of office of a director may be terminated prior to its expiration in any of the following ways: ...and (3) involuntarily, with or without cause, by the ~~group that elected~~ members entitled to vote for the election of such person or, in the case of a director appointed by the Board, by the Board, provided in either case that removal is at a meeting the notice for which states that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the meeting is to remove the director; and (4) involuntarily for cause by the Board ~~provided that such person is given the opportunity to respond to the charges in person or in writing, and provided that such person is accorded the right of appeal at the next meeting of members.~~ A Director who fails to attend three consecutive Board Meetings, unless excused by the Board, shall be presumed to have resigned.

[In Sec. 6.3]

(d) The Secretary shall oversee the issuance of required notices and the keeping of minutes of Board and member meetings, shall be responsible for maintaining and authenticating records of the Co-op, and shall, as authorized by the Board, sign or attest to formal documents on behalf of the Co-op.

Section 7.1: Issuance

~~For~~ To evidence capital funds provided by members, the Co-op shall issue Member Capital Certificates. Certificates shall be issued only upon full payment of their issuing price, as determined by the Board of Directors. They shall be subject to assessment for the reasonable capital needs of the Co-op, as determined at a meeting of members upon the recommendation of the Board. ~~Such~~ Certificates shall represent no proprietary interest in the income or property of the Co-op. They shall be non-transferable and shall be entitled to no dividend or other monetary return ~~on invested capital.~~ ¶

A brief explanation of proposed amendments to by-laws: *Laddie Lushin, Esq.*, February 13, 2008

Most of these amendments are required by, or at least suggested by, a complete review of the governing statute which was totally rewritten subsequent to the original adoption of the Co-op's by-laws.

Name: Title of by-laws should be changed to "Willimantic Food Co-op, Inc." per explanation re certificate of amendment and restatement.

1.1: The purposes are revised to conform with the certificate of incorporation as is now being amended and restated. The former purposes (which was really a mission statement) is deleted as it is now in the process of being revised and may or may not be reinserted in the by-laws. Members would no longer be required to be in accord with the mission statement.

2.1: To eliminate organizational membership which has not been in use, and which would require substantial and complicated amendments to the Co-op's certificate of incorporation.

2.3: To clearly state the duration of delinquency that would result in inactive status, three months being merely a suggestion. The added basis for inactive status is necessary for the Co-op to better manage its list of active members, and to avoid the expense of having to continuously issue undeliverable notices.

3.2: Time limit is required by statute. If not complied with, the statute permits the meeting to be called by the petitioning members (without dealing with the cost and practical difficulties of doing so). GSC 33-1062(a). Limitation to "proper" business is not per the statute, but it is important and would seem to be a reasonable interpretation of it. In view of the foregoing and the expense and disruption of the process, I recommend that the required signatures be increased to the statutory default requirement. This would encourage members to use the less onerous procedure provided by Byl. 3.6 for getting a member-initiated issue on the agenda of a meeting called by the Co-op.

3.4: Use of balloting by mail per 3.5 precludes consensus decision making. Voting by 2/3 majority is, however, retained. See supporting provision in art. 5 of certificate of amendment and restatement.

3.5: References to balloting "by mail" have been added because that is the only variation from in-person voting that is permitted by statute. GSC 33-1064(b). For minimum accordance with the statute, ballots must be distributed by mail to all members. Ballots may, however, be returned in person at the store either by requirement or by option.

3.6: 50 seems much more reasonable with a membership exceeding 3,000 and growing. The thinking behind this is that it should be high enough to assure some degree of widespread member support, but significantly less than that required to call a special meeting. The time for submission of petitions needed to be increased to allow for processing before the maximum time permitted for the issuance of notices per 3.3.

4.3: To correct inadvertent oversight of commas which arguably changes the meaning of this section.

4.5A: The last two sentences are important limitations on indemnification which attempt to reasonably balance the respective rights of directors and the Co-op while minimizing the risk of resulting bankruptcy and furthering transparency.

4.7: Amendments are required because the statute no longer permits removal by the Board of a director elected by members, and it explicitly requires the provision regarding the purpose and notice of the meeting. GSC 33-1088.

6.3(d): To conform with the requirements of GSC 33-1109(c).

7.1: Added sentence secures the ability to increase the capital payment obligation of members as necessitated by the Co-op's reasonable capital needs, but only upon the approval of members. Note that the required approval could not be met if the board opposed the proposition, but this would seem to be a very unlikely scenario. In view of securities laws it would seem best to avoid any reference to investment.

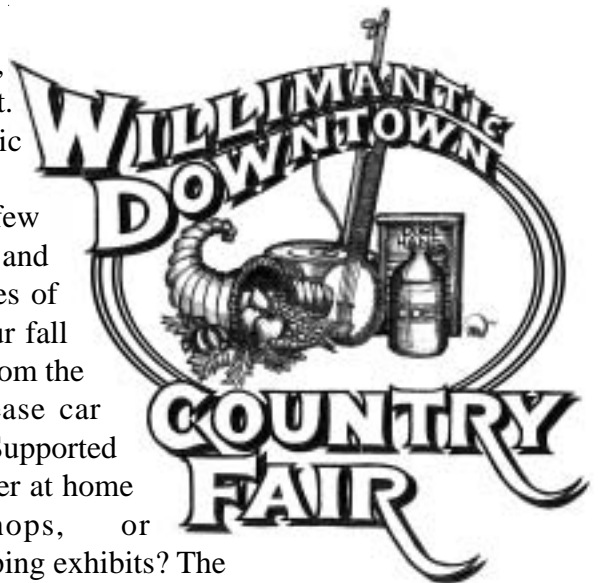
In general: These bylaw amendments are subject to the caveat stated in the explanation of the certificate of amendment and restatement. ¶

Upcoming Meetings for the Downtown Country Fair Committee *Kristin Fortier*

Tuesday, May 27th at 6pm in the Food Co-op's Cafe

Our fair celebrates local crafts, artists, musicians, holistic health, and farmers in a wonderful community event. But this show doesn't put on itself. The 2008 Willimantic Downtown Country Fair needs YOU!

Planning meetings have begun and we have had a few requests to bring back workshops, include more festivities, and add more cuisine choices to our already wonderful varieties of music, vendors and activities. What do you envision for our fall gathering? Puppet shows, musical parades, banners flying from the street corners, workshops on reducing energy use, grease car demonstrations, talks on how to start a CSA(Community Supported Agriculture), demos on green building practices, wind power at home



workshops, or beekeeping exhibits? The possibilities are endless! So put on your thinking caps and mark your calendars for the next meeting of the planning committee. Our next meetings scheduled for Tuesday, May 27th at 6pm, in the front of the store. For more information contact Cindy at www.willifoodcoop@snet.net

The Downtown Country Fair is also looking for performers to play on our stage. If your band is interested in performing please contact Mark at produce@snet.net. ¶

Buying in Bulk is Exciting! Choices and Quality!! *Kristin Fortier*

It is evident that climate change, pollution, and overconsumption are on a lot of people's minds these days. With Earth Day in April (umm?...everyday is Earth Day, right?) I wanted to remind everyone about our awesome bulk department. Buying in bulk saves on energy and resources all around! With a high demand for bulk products, manufacturers can cut costs while conserving resources and pass those savings to the consumer. Buying in bulk can also add to our quality of life because we actually have to slow down to think about our foods and plan more, instead of reaching for convenience. Convenience in our disposable society has proven to be not very good for sustaining life.



At the co-op, buying in bulk does not mean you have to buy huge amounts, but you can if you want to. The best part is you get to buy exactly the amount you need and save on packaging. If I have my containers with me when I shop, I do not have to buy one new piece of packaging. I am always working on this and it is getting easier! It doesn't take much time to organize a bag with an assortment of reusable bags and containers for bulk supplies. If you forget to bring your own, the Co-op even has a shelf dedicated to recycled containers at the back of the store, or you can purchase new containers to reuse. It will help speed your check out time at the register if you write down the tare (weight of the container) or how many ounces your container holds. I applaud the many members who have figured out ways of bringing in all their bags of containers. I have learned a lot from seeing our members' ingenious ways of conserving.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Grains | Tamari |
| Flours | Sesame oil |
| Oats | Olive oils |
| Rice | Canola Oil |
| Nuts | 6 types of sugars |
| Legumes | Vanilla |
| Flax Seeds | Molasses |
| Dried fruit | Agave syrup |
| Granola | Maple syrup |
| Trail mix | Honey |
| Pasta | Belgian chocolate |
| Ready-made mixes | Sea salts |
| 24 coffees | Dog biscuits |
| 50 kinds of tea | Cleaners |
| Balsamic vinegar | Body Care |
| Local tofu | |
| Grind-your-own peanut butter | |



Our spice section is something to tell your friends and family about. With over 130 spices to choose from you can save you a lot of money. Expect to pay about half of what you would at the grocery store. Trying some exotic spice for the first time? Get exactly what your recipe calls for instead of being stuck with a three year's supply. Need soup base for a family of 6? Buy a one pound bag for 10% off.

If you can use and or store larger quantities of bulk items consider pre-ordering cases of these items. As a member you can save 12% on these pre-ordered purchases. Always ask ahead of time and all pre-orders must be made in store.

And finally... the bulk cleaning, health and beauty supplies is an often forgotten nook at the co-op. Located near the dairy coolers and pet product area, most folks whiz right

PLU numbers are on bulk products, including spices, herbs, and teas.

Writing these number on bags and twist ties will help speed the checkout process and help us keep better track of our inventory.



Thank You!

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past this section, losing out on great savings to pocket and planet! This area is why I decided to write this article in the first place! I had lost track of the great selection of really good products for the house and body in this section. You'll find laundry powder, non-chlorine bleach powder, auto-dish powder, liquid dish soap, and all-purpose cleaners. There is a veggie wash, pet shampoo, shower gels, moisturizer, lotions, shampoo, conditioners, and castille soaps by Dr. Bronner's and VT. Soap Co. All of these products are cruelty free and biodegradable, and cost a whole lot less than their packaged counterparts. I know many of you might think that 'natural' cleaning products won't cut the mustard, but believe me, they've come along way. Two of Shandra's favorite products are Biokleen's Bac Out Enzyme Cleaner and Lifetree's Bathroom Cleaner. Try some out, they'll tackle your spring cleaning, biodegrade, and won't be found on any carcinogen list. Oh, and don't forget a gallon of white vinegar and some baking soda (not necessarily together) can clean just about everything.



So, I hope that you find some of your favorite staples on the list of bulk items and don't forget you can buy a trial size to see if you like a product. You can't do that when it's all packaged up for sale in a 16 oz container! If the bulk department still seems a little daunting there are tours and orientations of the store every Saturday from 11am to 1 pm. As with anything in our store, if you need help with pouring items into your containers, information on ingredients, or location of a company, we are always glad to help out. Cheers to us as we discover more ways of conserving resources as a cooperative and a community of people who love this planet! ♪

Looking for Co-op members interested in representing the co-op with an info booth and/or selling local products at area farmers markets. Have fun while earning a discount! E mail Sarah Keleher at alliswell13@sbcglobal.net ♪



The Cheese Stands Alone *Bruce*

Most of you know that the Co-op has fantastic cheeses, but did you know that many are award winners? The following won awards for excellence at the 2007 American Cheese Society Competition. Next time you are looking for something new, give one these a try.

- **Grafton** (VT) Maple Smoked Cheddar
- **Hahn's End** (ME) City of Ships, Ragged Island, Eleanor Buttercup
- **Neighborly Farms** (VT) Organic Colby
- **Shelburne Farms** (VT) Smoked Cheddar
- **Silvery Moon Farm** (ME) Herbed Cheese Curd, Creme Fraiche
- **Thistle Hill** (VT) Tarentaise
- **Woodcock Farm** (VT) Timberdoodle
- **Vermont Butter & Cheese** (VT) Cultured Butter, Creme Fraiche
- **York Hill** (ME) Goat Chevre Roll

For a complete listing of the winners see the pamphlet attached to the kid's room. ♪



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Tips from a Co-op Veteran *Jon Campo*

Well, it's been a bumpy ride lately in bulkland with commodities prices going through the roof. I'm sure most of you have noticed that flour prices have skyrocketed. I hear that rice prices are going up next. We do the best we can here at the Co-op to source the least expensive products available without compromising quality. We are also trying hard to find more local sources of food. 'Local' in our case pretty much means east of the Mississippi river. We recently started doing business with a distributor cooperative in Maine that will supply us with some beans and possibly oats and other grains. We are also trying to support small mills and farmers growing and producing food in a sustainable fashion.

With food prices on the rise, more and more folks are looking for ways to economise. I wanted to share a few ideas that have worked to reduce my food bills over the years. Working at two co-ops have made me something of an expert on living on a budget (at least food wise). One of my personal goals is to buy better, more expensive food, local if possible, and less of it. This would also fit in with my goal of keeping my waistline from expanding any more rapidly. Also, like almost everyone I have talked to lately, I'm starting a garden to try and grow some of my own food (but not salad or greens as I'm addicted to the Tobacco Road Farm's offerings). As a recovering breakfast skipper, I've become a convert to eating a healthy breakfast, and find that it gives me more energy and keeps me from pigging out at lunch time. I've become pretty diligent about brown bagging my lunch, which keeps me from spending money on lunch out. I generally do some bulk cooking every weekend and make double and triple batches of food and freeze portions to bring for lunch. Then all I have to do is pull something from the freezer every night for the next day. If I cook bean dishes I soak the beans before I go to bed Friday night, after I mix the bread. This way one can plan shopping around whatever is on sale or fresh at the farmers' market. I like to listen to the broadcast of live music from the Metropolitan Opera while I'm cooking. Two of my favorite appliances for bulk cooking are the rice cooker and the crock-pot. These can be found really cheap at yard sales and flea markets. Generally, things that get cooked in the crock-



pot go well over rice, and this will free up burners on the stove. Also cooked rice freezes really well and can be the base for speedy dinner in a pinch. No doubt you'll want to open a bottle of wine for cooking, and this can really improve your attitude as you work, along with the music. Remember, almost anything is better with a little hearty red wine in it, especially the cook. One final suggestion from the picnic booster is to pack a lunch or snack when going on any sort of car trip that might otherwise necessitate a stop for expensive (and likely bad) food along the way. Good eating to all and Happy Spring. ¶

Slivered Asparagus Saute with Shallots

From Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone

Deborah Madison

1-2 lbs thick asparagus trimmed and peeled

2 tbl olive oil

Salt and freshly milled pepper

1 large shallot finely diced

1 small garlic clove, minced

1 tsp lemon zest

2 tbl chopped parsley

Lemon juice to taste

Slice the asparagus diagonally about ¼ inch thick, leaving the tips about 3 inches long. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the asparagus, season with a few pinches of salt, and sauté until nearly tender. Add the shallot, garlic, lemon zest, and parsley; toss well and cook for another minute. Season with lemon juice and pepper to taste.



Irma Campo's Rhubarb Batter Cake

2 cups 1" chunks rhubarb ¼ cup lemon juice

1 ¾ cup sugar (divided) 1 cup flour

1 tsp baking powder ¼ tsp salt

3 tbl butter softened ½ cup milk

1 tbl cornstarch 1 cup boiling water

Preheat oven to 350°

Spread out rhubarb chunks in buttered 9x9" baking dish and drizzle with lemon juice. Mix ¾ cup sugar, flour, baking powder, salt and butter until blended. Add milk and mix until smooth. Spoon over rhubarb. Combine 1 cup sugar and cornstarch and sprinkle over batter. Pour one cup boiling water over top. Bake about 1 hour until golden and bubbly.

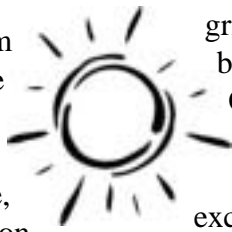


Winky's Food Review

This issue's food review has warm weather in mind – sort of. Okay, I have warm weather in mind and some of the products reviewed have vaguely summerish attributes. They are, otherwise, a fairly random grouping of foods: Anson Mills' Quick Grits (\$4.25/lb.); Minerva's Amish Farmer Cheese ((\$7.89/lb.); Falafel Dips and Chips' unimaginatively named Falafel Chips (\$3.99/8 oz. bag); Blueberry Juice Concentrate from Dynamic Health Laboratories (\$7.05/8 oz. bottle); and my favorite, Dark Chocolate Covered Walnuts (\$7.25/lb.).

Bulk Master Jon claims the Quick Grits are of a mighty fine quality. Not being a connoisseur of grits myself, I'll take his word for it. The company who produces them insists that their grits are gourmet; they require the vendor to refrigerate them, or else...First time I cooked them I did not follow the instructions and burned them. Bleah; burned grits. The second time, however, I was patient and let the water fully boil before carefully adding the grits. They were perfectly fine with butter and honey on top. In the event that you are not grit-hip, here are the details: grits are made from dried corn with the germ removed. They are frequently found in Southern dishes, served with breakfast, or as a grain with a larger meal.

The Amish Farmers Cheese tastes a lot like Muenster with a tiny bite. I've been eating it straight, with cut vegetables or apples on the side. But, speaking of summer, this cheese would go well in sandwiches with fresh tomatoes. Or as the inner workings of a



grilled cheese sandwich any time of year. A tasty tidbit of information: Bruce tells me that Minerva Cheese is actually an Amish owned company.

I will confess that my first tastes of the Falafel Chips did not make me jump up and down with excitement. As I've snacked on them in the past week, however, they've grown on me (in a good way). Back to the summer theme – they'd be a great accompaniment to a picnic meal. Perhaps their most outstanding feature is that, unlike many kinds of chips, these ones have a high ratio of protein to fat: 4 grams of protein to 7 grams of fat. They are made with organic ground corn, organic chickpeas, canola oil and/or sunflower and/or palm oil, along with a blend of herbs and vegetables. You might try experimenting with dipping these chips in various sauces, like salsa, or hummus.

Here's the real summer star – the Blueberry Concentrate. I was thinking of homemade spritzers when I pulled it off the shelf. I find that most sodas, including the ones without scary ingredients, are just too sweet for me; I enjoy making my own with juice and seltzer water. You've certainly heard all about the anti-oxidant properties of blueberries, as well as their high vitamin C content. At \$7.05 for multiple servings, this concentrate sure beats the crazy prices of most bottled juices. And it tastes great! Even your kids will think so *and* they will love the fact that it's a purplish-blue.



Chocolate is good at any time of year, so I can't claim it as a summer food. This product is incredibly oohyummy wonderful and I *am* a sort of connoisseur of chocolate. (We have lots of really good chocolate for sale at the coop, in case you hadn't noticed. Look in the baking, candy, and bulk foods sections for the full array.) When I asked about the specific ingredients, Bulkie John just said, "Walnuts and chocolate." You'll have to ask him if you want further details.

A few weeks ago, I bought one of the last squashes for sale at the Co-op this season. And my daily fruit food, apples, are getting more scarce and less crispy. The sad news is that I have to wait a while for apples to return. The good news is that in the coming months we will begin to see local produce for sale. Support your Co-op and your local growers. We all need each other! 🍷

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Willimantic Food Co-op's 2008 Annual Meeting and Potluck

With Special Guest Speaker
Erbin Crowell

" Building a Cooperative Economy"

Sunday June 1st
Burton Leavitt Theater
6 pm

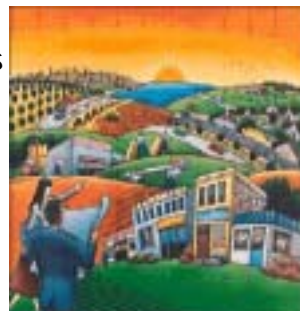
Building a Cooperative Economy

Erbin Crowell

Co-operatives such as Willimantic Food Co-op have been at the forefront of new and innovative movements such as organic agriculture, Fair Trade and supporting local economies. As competition increases in these markets, the co-operative movement is exploring the next frontier—and returning to its roots. Increasingly, co-ops are working together to build a new vision of a

"Cooperative Economy". What are some examples of these trends and where does Willimantic Food Co-op fit in?

Join us for a presentation and discussion at our annual meeting.



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