

The Harvest Herald

FREE

BLUE HILL CO-OP'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
SPRING EDITION 2023

From the GM



Kevin Gadsby
General Manager
Co-op owner since 2016

Greetings co-op owners near and far. I hope this finds you in good health and looking forward to a new year of possibilities. It feels like it's been a while since I wrote for the newsletter or anything else for that matter. Truth be told I have been at a loss for words lately. Managing a transition into a brand new space while navigating the ups and downs and ins and outs of the pandemic over the past three years has been the most stressful period of my career. We experienced rapid growth during this time. While this level of growth is good news for any business, it came to us with many unforeseen challenges the likes of which we or the grocery industry have not faced in our lifetimes. Looking back feels like a time warp. Looking ahead feels uncertain and nuanced.

In spite of the challenges we've faced, I remain grateful for my staff, for the board of directors, our member-owners and for the continued support from our entire co-op community. In some ways it's beginning to feel like we're on level ground again, or closer to it than we've been recently. There are many key indicators in our favor: sales are up, paid-in equity and member-ownership is up and staff turnover has slowed. Community engagement is also on the rise with many things planned for the coming months. Hopefully, the season of nasty weather is in the rear-view mirror, or at least the side-view mirror as we carry on toward Spring which cannot come soon enough, in my opinion.

For the past couple of weeks, I've been handling some bookkeeping tasks while our bookkeeper and payroll administrator Mira has been on leave enjoying the life of her



Photo by Robin Byrne

newborn baby boy. One of the things that has stood out to me during this time is the number of coupons we are processing, more than we've ever seen. As a co-op shopper, you may have noticed the increase in the number of sale items throughout the store. We have all felt the financial burden of the rising cost of goods and services and I am happy to see more customers taking advantage of these great deals. Coupon redemption and sale program rebates grew by nearly \$47,000 in 2022 compared to the prior year. This is just one way that makes co-op shopping more affordable for more people. Another way is through our Equinox and Solstice sales which offer a discount to member-owners each quarter. With these sales and other discount incentives, the co-op community received over \$107,000 in discounts. In addition, the co-op gave over \$20,400 in donations to area nonprofit organizations which consisted of

Continued on page 2

In this Issue:

- From the GM pg. 1 & 2
- Ownership at a glance pg. 2
- Check it out pg. 3
- Archive it pg. 3
- Biodynamics and wine pg. 4
- Spring stargazing pg. 5
- Spring astrology: pluto is back y'all pg. 5
- A short history of black cooperatives... pg. 6 & 7
- Cheese at an all-time low. Lower prices that is pg. 7
- Havarti & smoked salmon quiche pg. 7
- The community mural pg. 8
- Art in the café pg. 8
- Better together pg. 9
- The café times are a changin' pg. 10
- An interview with Liz, the new café manager pg. 10
- Blueberry basil and chevre galette pg. 10
- The puzzle page pg. 11
- Generosity is a form of wellness pg. 12
- Bulk department's top hitters pg. 13
- Garlic confit pg. 13
- What's in season when pg. 14
- Japanese-style potato salad pg. 14
- Co-op outpost pg. 15
- Co-op voices pg. 15
- Puzzle answers pg. 15
- The great co-op kitchen challenge pg. 16
- Placek (Polish Easter bread) pg. 16

Continued from page 1

donations directly from the co-op and through the Change for Good, round-up at the register program where co-op shoppers round-up their purchases for the local nonprofit of the month. Round-up donations in 2022 reached over \$13,000. Thank you, co-op shoppers, for your contributions. In 2022, we also launched the S.H.A.R.E. discount program, Supporting Households and Reaching Everyone. These are just some of the ways we're able to give back to the community. We hope to give more with greater impact as we continue to evolve and as we work toward profitability that will enable us to pay back our member-owner investors whose

contributions played a critical role in making this beautiful new store possible.

We've made it through some very difficult times. Surely there will be challenging days again, but it remains clear that Blue Hill Co-op has incredible potential to impact the peninsula community and beyond in greater ways. Thank you all for your support.

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples.”

~ Mother Teresa ~



SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Meeting will be earlier in the year from now on.

Please mark **Thursday, June 22** on your calendar.

More details to follow as the date approaches.

“I heard the forest’s green heart beat
As if it heard the happy feet
Of one who came, like young Desire:
At whose fair coming birds and flowers
Sprang up, and Beauty, filled with fire,
Touched lips with Song amid the bowers
And Love led on the dancing Hours.”



From the poem “Seasons” by Madison Julius Cawein

Ownership at a Glance

NEW OWNERS
SINCE JANUARY 1ST: 78

TOTAL ACTIVE OWNERS: 2,671



Did you know that 48% of our owners are fully vested? This means they have paid their full equity of \$200.

Wondering how much of your equity remains to be paid? Ask a cashier the next time you're at the check-out.

Co-op Board Officers & Members

President: Jerome Lawther
Vice President: Aaron Dority
Secretary: Jen Traub
Treasurer: Tim Tunney

Deborah Evans
Jo Barrett
Jenny Brillhart
Anne Gilchrist
Annie Silver

For bios and photos, check out the Board of Directors page at:
www.bluehill.coop/board-of-directors

When Are Board Meetings?
THE FOURTH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 6:30PM

*Meetings are open and held in the café.
Check our website for more info.*

The Newsletter Team

Managing Editor: Kipp Hopkins
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Art and Layout: Kipp Hopkins
Advertisements: Kipp Hopkins
Contributors/Writers: Co-op Staff & Working Owners

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome input. Please mail letters to: Letters to the Editor, Blue Hill Co-op, 70 South Street, Blue Hill, ME 04614 or email them to: newsletter@bluehill.coop. Letters should be brief and may be edited for style, but not for content. Please include your name, address, and phone number.

DISCLAIMER

The Blue Hill Co-op serves a diverse community. It is within the vision of this co-op to strive to embrace diversity and to meet as many needs as possible. Opinions and viewpoints shared within this newsletter are neither endorsed nor disregarded. Editorial content is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, prescribe, recommend, or offer medical advice. Newsletter articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board, staff, management, or Newsletter Team. Advertisements will be sold at the discretion of the Advertising Coordinator, who reserves the right to refuse and edit submissions.

Check it out



Cat McNeal
Front End Manger
Co-op owner since 2013

If you’ve stopped by lately, you’ve probably noticed that we now have a self-checkout machine. We have been working on getting it set-up and ready for use since around the end of November. It’s pretty easy to use. If you have a small order, you may find that it’s just what the doctor ordered this summer when we tend to get extra busy. We are really hoping that it will help keep the lines moving along, no matter the time of year.

If you would like to use your owner number, after scanning your items, you will simply enter your phone number on the card payment machine. Your phone number will pull up your account. Even easier is to scan your key card with your number on it (if you still have it). You may want to check in with our Ownership Coordinator to verify that the information we have for you is up-to-date.

Beer and wine sales will need to be done through an actual cashier, not the self-checkout. We have most of the bugs worked out, but if you use the machine and get stuck, we cashiers can usually get you rolling again. So, you will really be helping us out by using the self-checkout and giving us cashiers some practice working with it. Using the new checkout is not taking a job away from anyone. The experience from last summer tells me that we will be thankful to have this new machine, even with the cashiers we have now.

Speaking of cashiers, you may have noticed

that we have a few new faces up front. Training takes some time as different needs arise from different departments and customers/owners. We focus on learning the POS (Point of Sale) system first. Also, we carry much produce and several of each variety and from several different farms that need to be learned. Not only that, but we also have to learn quite a few different procedures, all while doing our best to be a friendly bunch. It can take some time to learn all of the above. We have a wide variety of people (which I love) on the Front End, so please give us some time to get up to speed.

That’s enough about work. Time for a Puppy Palaver.

I feel like I’ve had these dogs forever (forever?), but they’ll only be turning two in April. They’ve been pretty big for a long time, so it’s hard to still see them as babies. But their actions show their age. Don’t get me wrong, I love these spunky little critters but boy, do they put me through it. They really like to fight over me. I’ve read, by some obviously non-dog people, that dogs cannot be jealous. I can tell you that that is not true. Bishop and Maggie definitely want to be the only dog I pay attention to. Uh, not easy since there are two of them. One will sit at my feet and one will lay on the couch next me. I mostly try to have one hand on each of them, but sometimes even that isn’t enough.

Basically, it’s Maggie who is the rabble-rouser. She really likes to get Bishop all worked up and in fighting mode. They’ll each have their chew toy after dinner and will be happily entertained. All of a sudden, Maggie will jump up on my knees



Photograph by Cat McNeal

and start licking my chin, or snarling, all to get Bishop to fight her. He can be very protective of me, even if it’s just Maggie giving me a hard time. Then they’re off and running. Actually, it’s more like on because at this point she’s angling to jump up on me and he’s angling to jump on her. I end up with a whole lotta dog in my lap. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

I know they’ll probably be calming down soon (I can only hope), so with much laughter, I’m taking all the craziness they dish out. Woof Woof!

Archive it



Kipp Hopkins
Marketing Manager
Co-op owner since 2006

Did you know that we have an online archive of old *Harvest Herald*s? They go back to 2007 and are a great snapshot of the times, not only in the co-op but the community in general. Recently I’ve been skimming through some of the oldest volumes, and it’s fascinating. I’ve only worked at the Co-op since 2016, but I’ve been shopping here since moving to the peninsula in 1997. When the archive starts, I was in my junior year of high school, and though one of my best friends was a cashier at the time (I found his staff profile in one of the issues), I wasn’t up on Co-op news.

I doubt that news about the Co-op starting to print shelf tags would have stood out to me as a teenager. But now, having been an employee for over six years, when I read that tidbit in an older issue, my mind was blown. Before 2007, each item on the shelf had to be stuck with an individual price sticker by a staff member. Eventually, intrepid employees spent hours building the “new system” to print shelf tags. From then on, we only needed to print one label when a new item came in, or a price changed.

It must have been a revelation. I was so struck by this history that I had to email my former officemate, Chris Ramsay, who now coordinates all that pricing information. “Can you imagine doing that now?” and she agreed it sounded like a nightmare, saying, “Considering that right now we have approximately 4,145 different active SKUs in what I call ‘Grocery Plus’... I’m really glad we don’t do that anymore!” To be clear, that current number represents only the Grocery Department, it does not even include Wellness, Cheese, Bulk, or Produce. Of course, the Co-op was a lot smaller back then, but still.

Something else that struck me was a small article introducing the new Marketing and Ownership Coordinator, meaning there was one person for both jobs! As I’m sure you know, Jennifer Wahlquist Coolidge and I fill those two positions today. Trust me, neither one of us is wanting for tasks, which is more evidence of our impressive growth as a co-op.

Even in 2007, just eight years after moving to the Ellsworth Road location, Karen Doherty, the General Manager, wrote in the newsletter about how the Co-op was already getting too big for the small building. She wrote, “How wonderful it would be to have a store designed for our needs, rather than trying to work with a space that is inefficient, stressful, and dangerously crowded.” Eleven years from that issue, almost to the month, we would open our new store in just such a building. I wonder if the new store was what she had in mind or if it was even bigger than she’d

imagined. I don’t know Karen, so I can’t ask her.

I again thought about this rate of change and growth, reading Cat’s account of the new self-checkout. There was a time in the past (1999, to be precise) when the Co-op purchased its first credit card machine. Owners who were around at that time report there were a few ruffled feathers. But imagine trying to do business today without the ability to take credit and debit purchases? I haven’t carried cash since about 2015, and I’m almost shocked now when I can’t pay somewhere with my phone.

Now I completely understand why some people at the time felt that way. I’m old enough to remember the transition to digital currency and heard both sides of the issue from many of the adults in my life. Those naysayers at the time could have never imagined our world today, where cash is probably going the way of the dinosaurs. Nor could they imagine the incredible trajectory of the Co-op’s growth. Sometimes, it’s hard for me to wrap my mind around too. It’s like a growing puppy; the change occurs so gradually that we don’t even notice and then, boom, a big dog. My trip down memory lane with *The Harvest Herald* archive puts things back into perspective. I wonder if someone might read this issue in the archive eleven years from now and marvel at how much progress has been made.



Biodynamics and wine



John McClement
Beer & Wine Department
Co-op owner since 2018



There is an old saying, “There is no matter without spirit and no spirit without matter.”

Wine has been produced naturally for centuries but starting with the advancement of industrialization in the latter part of the nineteenth century, winemaking began to incorporate more and more man-made chemical methods for fertilization and pest control. These “time-saving advancements” increased with world wars and the depression as herbicides and pesticides became big business from new companies incorporating bomb-making materials into daily life. In the 1920s a group of worried farmers approached scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner asking him for help in diagnosing the unhealthy state of their farms and vineyards.

The result was a series of eight lectures and five discussions on the declining state of the natural world and the intricate steps necessary to achieve rejuvenation. Steiner’s theories are the basis for biodynamics. His teachings are illustrated in the Biodynamic Association’s definition of biodynamics as “a holistic, ecological, and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food, and nutrition.” At its most basic level, biodynamics is about bringing balance to our natural environment and holistically supporting its health and vitality. It’s about improving the soil and the surrounding environment at all times and putting back more than you take away.

There are many moving parts to becoming a certified biodynamic winery. Many of these make pure, simple sense. Others are considered “out there” and “nature voodoo,” but a winery must incorporate them all to become certified biodynamic, and the proof is in the pudding when the health of the plants, the soil, the animals, and even the humans involved is compared with previous years at the winery.

A famous French winemaker spent eight years comparing the health, vitality, and products generated from three adjacent plots of vines having the same soils, exposure, and age of vines. One employed conventional farming techniques, the second was organically farmed, and the last was biodynamic. The changes to the soil became evident early on, and the health of the biodynamic plot morphed dramatically with each passing year. Although biodynamic vineyards had been a small part of the equation for a long time, this well-documented experiment made everyone sit up and take notice.

Basically, the methods incorporated are generous use of compost from manure from your own cows and a series of organic sprays

(preparations) devised from minerals and medicinal plants grown on the property. Also included and no less important is the philosophy of the strength of the phases of the moon on plants and solar influence as it pertains to seasons. The latter two dictate the horticultural calendar for the growing season.

There are nine sprays in total. Six are all plant-based and used in the compost blend, and the remaining three are sprayed directly on the vines.

The individual compost preparations are made from:

- Yarrow
- Chamomile
- Nettle
- Oak Bark
- Dandelion
- Valerian



The spray preparations are composed of the following:

- Cow horn manure—manure from a preferably lactating cow that has been stuffed in a cow’s horn and buried throughout the winter for at least six months.
- Cow horn silica—ground quartz or feldspar placed in a cow’s horn and buried throughout the growing season for at least six months.
- Horsetail (the plant)—a tea is made from steeping the plant.

The first six, in the form of additions to compost, make sense to anyone with knowledge of the efficacy of plants for health. However, the first two spray preparations are where a line tends to be drawn, and those who step over it are considered in a different realm of reality.



Alterations
Alterations, repairs.
I make almost any clothing.
Anne Walker 374-5749

All I can offer here is that these “concoctions” and their formulas for use have been used successfully for almost one hundred years, and MANY variations have been tried and have yielded lesser results. As noted earlier, the proof is in the pudding.

As far as the use of the celestial cycles is concerned, the results are easier to grasp as the power of the lunar cycles differs throughout the waxing and waning phases, and its effect on plants and water is well documented.

The use of the sun relates to its seasonal effects, strongly influential in the growing season and much less so in winter when the earth itself has more control over what is happening below the frost line.

Biodynamics is actively used in over twenty countries, and there are approximately 500 Demeter-certified biodynamic wine producers, with 80+ and growing in the US. Demeter (pronounced “DIMitter”) is the most recognizable worldwide certification for biodynamic farms, foods, and wineries. Read the labels and look for the symbol or the word “Biodynamic” used by other certification agencies.

As the inconsistencies and unknowns of our present weather patterns continue to cause alarm and wreak havoc, winemakers are rapidly turning to methods that will build up the health of their vineyards, making them less susceptible to drought, flood, and massive temperature variations. The icing on the cake is that while protecting their vineyards, they are producing healthier grapes that translate into better wines with less work in the winery.

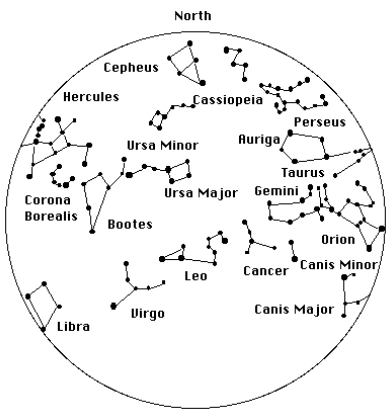
If there is a downside to biodynamic wines at present, it is price. Biodynamic wines tend to be more expensive. Looking forward, as more wineries become biodynamic and the long-term costs of converting a winery to a self-sufficient, self-contained “organism” of its own, prices should come down. This has already been demonstrated by some of the larger wineries that have converted.

Want to try biodynamic wines? At present, we have seven very affordable selections on our shelves. Look for the Demeter logo:

- **Gulp Wines**—We have liter bottles of Verdejo, Orange, and Garnacha (Grenache).
- Pablo Claro, Cabernet/Graciano blend.
- Tikal, Malbec/Syrah blend.
- Domaine de la Chevalerie, Diptyque, Bourgueil - Cabernet Franc.
- Meinklang White—Gruner Veltliner/ Welschriesling/Muscat blend.

Have a delicious journey into biodynamics!

Spring stargazing



| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Circumpolar Constellations: | Spring Constellations: |
| Cassiopeia | Bootes |
| Cepheus | Cancer |
| Draco | Crater |
| Ursa Major | Hydra (not shown) |
| Ursa Minor | Leo |
| | Virgo |

This time of year, we can see many bright stars in the spring constellations. Bootes contains the supergiant red star Arcturus. It's 37 light-years from Earth and is 20 times larger than our sun. Virgo has Spica, a star 260 light-years away from Earth that is 100 times brighter than the sun. It is believed that Spica may actually consist of two stars orbiting each other closely. To find these two (or three) stars, imagine an arc connecting the big dipper's handle (Ursa Major), through Bootes, to the end of Virgo.

Another constellation known for its bright stars is Leo the Lion, which contains Regulus, one of the brightest stars in the night sky. Regulus looks like a singular star to us, but it is actually a star system composed of four stars that are organized into two pairs. You might be able to distinguish the two systems with a good pair of binoculars, but probably not all four stars.

Observable Astronomical Events:

April 11, Mercury will reach its greatest eastern elongation. Meaning it's the best time to see the planet from Earth. Look for the planet low in the western sky just after sunset.

April 22/23, you can watch the Lyrids Meteor Shower. This average shower usually produces about 20 meteors per hour at its peak. The meteors are dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher. The moon will be in a crescent, making for dark skies, perfect for stargazing. The best time to watch will be just before midnight on the 22 and into the next few hours. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Lyra but can appear anywhere in the sky.

May 6/7, if you missed the Lyrids, you can see Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower, caused by dust particles left behind by the more famous comet Halley. In the Northern hemisphere, it will produce around 30 meteors per hour. The night before, there will be a full moon, making it harder to observe. The best time to start is just before midnight on the 6. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Aquarius but can appear anywhere in the sky.

May 29, Mercury is at its greatest western elongation. Look for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

June 4, Venus is at its greatest eastern elongation. This is the best time to view Venus since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky. Look for the bright planet in the western sky after sunset.

Spring astrology: Pluto is back, y'all

Here are a few astrological events taking place in the second quarter of 2023.

Full moons occur when the Earth is located between the Sun and the Moon. This is when the lunar hemisphere facing Earth is completely sunlit. Astrologically speaking, full moons are times when events in our lives can culminate, blossom, and come into full bloom. Our emotions are ripe and undeniable. This is a time in our personal lives to operate "eyes wide open" to acknowledge truths that come to bear.

Full moons of this second quarter:

- Thursday, April 6, 2023, 12:34 am EST (Pink Moon)
- Friday, May 5, 2023, 1:34 pm EST (Flower Moon)
- Saturday, June 3, 2023, 11:42 pm EST (Strawberry Moon)

New moons happen when the Moon is in conjunction with the Sun, so its dark side is toward the Earth. Astrologically speaking, new moons are a time when events in our lives foster new beginnings. It is a time for planning future projects, planting the seeds of thoughts for new ventures, as well as working from a clean slate.

New Moons of this second quarter:

- Thursday, April 20, 2023, 12:12 am EST (New Flower Moon)
- Friday, May 19, 2023, 11:53 am EST (New Strawberry Moon)
- Sunday, June 18, 2023, 12:37 am EST (New Buck Moon)

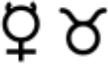
When planets are in retrograde for periods of time they appear to slow down and move backward in their orbits from our point of view on Earth. All planets go into retrograde at some point every year or two. Most people have heard of Mercury retrograde since it is the planet with the most retrograde periods in a year, 3-4 times in a given year.

Astrologically speaking, retrograde planets can be understood by looking at the planet involved and the astrological sign it is moving through or transiting. Planets closest to the Sun (Mercury, Mars, and Venus) are said to affect individuals on a personal level. Planets farther away (Jupiter and Saturn) are said to affect society. Planets even farther away (Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto) are said to affect whole generations of people.

Retrogrades are a time to review the past rather than push forward our plans and actions. They are a time of looking back for understanding, slowing down, and looking within ourselves for the wisdom we have gained from our experiences.

Retrograde planets of this second quarter:

Mercury retrograde in Taurus
April 21, 2023, - May 14, 2023



Mercury is in retrograde four times this year. They last for about three weeks but have a shadow period of about two weeks on either side where they can still exert influence in our lives, albeit to a lesser extent. Mercury is associated with communication, intellect, analytical skills, memory, and transportation. In its positive expression, it gives a strong desire to explore and gain knowledge, reasoning can be strong, and creativity is often expressed through writing or speech. In its negative expression, it can bring about indecision, over-critical thinking, nervous and anxious energy, technical and transportation glitches, and breakdowns.

In Taurus, an earth sign, we may be concerned with material comfort and self-esteem. Slowing down to contemplate our physical surroundings, our structures of working and living, and the foundations of how we operate in our daily lives

can benefit us in the long run. We might review our comfort levels, sense of security, finances, personal income and valuables. Taurus can be reclusive and seeks stability. Mercury in Taurus can stir up insecurities so take it slow and look to build good foundations for the future.

Pluto retrograde in Aquarius and Capricorn
May 1, 2023 - October 10, 2023

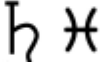


Hold onto your hat, this is an exciting astrological happening!

Pluto is a generational planet that relates to collective awareness and everything massive, intense and hidden. Due to Pluto's irregular orbit it spends more time in certain signs than others. It will travel back and forth from Aquarius to Capricorn during this retrograde. It has been in Capricorn since 2008 and will transition into Aquarius for a two decade span! Pluto enters Aquarius March 23, 2023. It will go retrograde in Aquarius May 1, 2023, then it will re-enter Capricorn June 11, 2023. It continues this retrograde in Capricorn, stationing direct October 10, 2023. It will then enter back into Aquarius January 20, 2024 until January 19, 2044! Now that is some interesting movement.

In Capricorn, an earth sign that is practical, prudent, disciplined, patient and careful, Pluto has been exposing the shadow side of power, the incredible gap between the rich and the poor, and the extremes in disease threats. Pluto shifting into Aquarius forward and retrograde can tilt the balance of power as the water bearer concept of "power to the people" begins to take shape. The last time Pluto was in Aquarius, (1778 - 1798), the American Constitution was written in 1787, ratified in 1788 and put into operation since 1789. Also the French Revolution took place, May 5, 1789 - Nov 9, 1799. We might expect similar themes in this collective vibration!

Saturn retrograde in Pisces
June 17, 2023 - November 4, 2023



Saturn is a planet that affects both society and our personal lives, especially how we relate to society. It is about maturity, responsibility, discipline and stewardship. Saturn wants to create structures that work and can stand the test of time. When Saturn moves into spiritual and imaginative Pisces it looks to help us bring our dreams into reality. This can be when we lay the groundwork to manifest our highest purpose.

In Pisces, a water sign, Saturn wants to create the structure this sign lacks without pushing against Pisces will. It is a great time to gather up the details of your dreams and imagination and plan out how to make things happen. Create a business plan, scheme out a budget, look into loan options to make your dreams a reality. Put substance into your imaginations and see where you can take them! It may not be all fun and games, limitations are also associated with Saturn. Structures are fun to climb though and can bring you to the heights of your wildest dreams given a chance.

This gives you an overview of some astrological events happening in the second quarter of 2023. To understand these events further, I suggest you take each event and seek a deeper understanding of the planets, Moon, and Sun involved, and the astrological signs these travel through. One of my favorite and most helpful astrology sites online is caféastrology.com. You can easily look into any astrological event you are interested in and gain a keener insight into the energies that affect our daily lives here on Earth!

Lisa Jae

Co-op owner since 2006

A short history of black cooperatives in America

This article was written by Lisa Barclay, The Food Co-op (Port Townsend, WA), and published initially on gorcery.coop. We shared the article in our email newsletter for Black History Month.

The long tradition of African American cooperation is not well known, and in her book *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*, Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard sets out to remedy that gap in our knowledge. From mutual aid societies to independent fugitive communities and from farmer cooperatives to consumer co-ops, Professor Gordon Nembhard details how people work together in the face of racism and active sabotage to improve each others' lives in tangible ways. Cooperation has proved a powerful tool against discrimination. In honor of the Black Lives Matter movement, we'll survey a small part of the rich cooperative history that Gordon Nembhard chronicles.

While African Americans have utilized cooperation since the first Africans arrived as indentured servants in the early 17th century, the first recorded cooperative efforts were mutual aid societies in the late 18th century. Both free and enslaved Black people pooled money to pay for things like burials, land, helping the sick and the orphaned, and even buying freedom for one another. Early forms of cooperation ranged from mutual insurance companies to buying clubs to collective farming. The Underground Railroad is a famous example of cooperative effort.

During the Civil War, the disruptions of war sometimes actually created new cooperative possibilities. For instance, the

Combahee River Colony in South Carolina was formed by African American women (the men had joined the Union Army) who grew cotton on abandoned farms, remaining independent and eventually becoming a community of several hundred women. Women often founded and ran African American cooperative efforts.

After the war, Black farmers started the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Co-operative Union when the Southern Farmers' Alliance would not admit Black farmers except in separate

increase Black farm ownership and improve farm businesses though cooperative buying, production, and marketing. Tenant farmers and sharecroppers joined the cooperative, and by the time it ended ten years later, most members had been able to buy their own farms. Co-ops of all types are often short lived, but their rippling effects can be impressive, including training activists and leaders, improving individual lives and leading to new ventures and co-ops.

African American activists were also inspired by the cooperative

the Mercantile Cooperative Company was established in 1901. This successful cooperative coexisted amicably with the White-owned store across the street. The community also raised money to build a new school—like the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, African American cooperatives often stressed education, hosting study groups and evening classes. And interestingly, Black colleges were ahead of the curve on teaching cooperative economic theory; most had it as part of their curriculum by 1940, something large universities still do not usually offer even today.

Another important cooperative was the Young Negro Cooperative League, founded in 1930 with a mission "to gain economic power through co-operation." Although short-lived, this co-op inspired many other cooperative efforts and trained people who later became activists. For instance, Ella Baker was the League's national director, and she went on to help found SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), one of the seminal groups of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century. Through her work in the Young Negro Cooperative League, Baker learned, as Gordon Nembhard notes, to focus on "grassroots leadership, education, democratic decision making, and a step-by-step, transformative process of working toward long term goals."

While cooperatives were a training ground for activists and leaders of the civil rights era, the movement in turn led to more co-ops. A particular success was the Freedom Quilting Bee, founded in 1967. Women from southern sharecropping families joined to craft and sell quilts. With the

Continued on page 7



Wedge Community Co-op, Minneapolis

chapters, and by 1891 the co-operative had more than a million members. The Union stressed mutual aid—sharing farming techniques and coordinating planting and harvesting—as well as political participation. The members also started a lot of co-ops. The cooperatives siphoned off trade from White-owned businesses, leading to various kinds of retaliation—sometimes slander, sometimes violence. By 1896 the Union was gone, but in 1922 the National Federation of Colored Farmers formed to

principles set out by The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, a co-op founded in 1844 in England (and often called the start of the modern cooperative movement). Many Black-owned consumer cooperatives were established at the end of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th: grocery stores, gas stations, credit unions, insurance co-ops, and some housing co-ops. In 1907 W. E. B. Du Bois held a conference on cooperatives and listed 154 current African American co-ops. In Ruthville, Virginia, for example,

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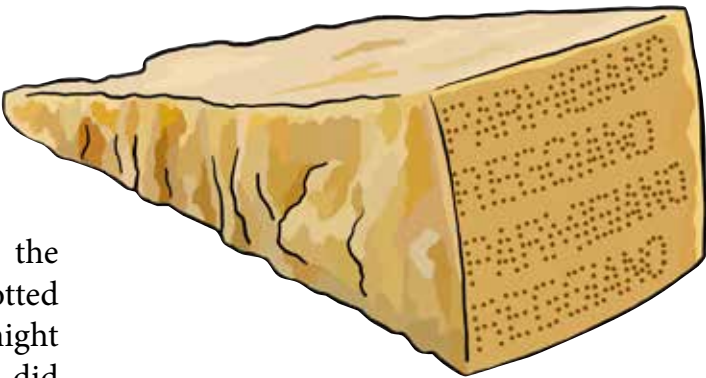
Robin Byrne
Cheese Manager
Co-op Owner since 2002

By now, we hope you have noticed the “NEW LOW PRICE” signs dotted around the cheese case. Hmmm, you might be thinking, what’s going on? Well, we did some research and found a local purveyor able to deliver many products at lower costs. It’s a competitive market out there! This provisions company isn’t able to bring us all we offer. Some products arrive through other local delivery systems, some from national, and a few products reach us directly from individual businesses. We would love to lower the price of everything at the Co-op, but unfortunately, as you all are well aware, the cost of living just won’t stop rising. We do our best where we can.

So, for now, let’s take a look at the items that have a “new low price,” many of which might have seemed in the not-so-distant past high-priced luxury items.

Imported cheeses:

- Cambozola - Germany
- Fromager D’Affinois - France
- Manchego - Spain
- Parmesan Reggiano - Italy
- Pecorino Romano - Italy
- Halloumi - Greece
- Havarti with Dill - Denmark



Domestic Cheeses:

- Seal Cove Fresh Chevre
- Block Mozzarella
- Muenster
- Shredded Mozzarella
- Shredded Parmesan

Charcuterie and accompaniments:

- Vermont Smoke & Cure Pepperoni & Summer sausage - USA
- Sweet & Spicy Peppadew Peppers - South Africa
- Fig Almond cakes - Spain

Be on the lookout for more “new low prices” and exciting new products in the cheese case and the entire store. We love to keep it fresh around here!

This is not to say prices won’t creep up from time to time, that’s just life in general, but we aim to do our best!

We hope you continue to enjoy perusing the delicious isles of our great co-op as much as we do!

For now, come get some deals on cheese!

HAVARTI & SMOKED SALMON QUICHE



Photo by Kipp Hopkins

A quick and easy quiche with delicious flavor combinations of nutty havarti, fresh dill, and smoked salmon. Perfect for brunch, lunch, or dinner!

Ingredients:

- 1 Simple Pie Dough (see below)
- 1 bunch asparagus (trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces)
- 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup dill havarti (cut into cubes)
- 1/4 cup smoked salmon
- 8 grape tomatoes (cut in half)
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh dill
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup half & half
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 pinch paprika

Heat a skillet over a medium flame. Add the olive oil and asparagus and saute until the asparagus is tender. Remove from the heat and let it cool.

Prepare your pie dough by following our recipe for Simple Pie Dough, found on the Co-op’s blog, or your own. Roll out the dough to about 1/8” thick and carefully transfer to a pie pan. Trim the dough, leaving about 1” of overhang, then roll up the extra and crimp it to create the scalloped edge. If you’re using a metal or enamel pie tin, place the pie shell in the freezer for 10-30 minutes. Do not do this for glass, ceramic, or pyrex, as it can shatter in the hot oven if exposed to extreme temperature changes. While the pie shell is in the freezer, preheat the oven to 350° F.

Take the crust out of the freezer (if it was in there) and evenly spread the asparagus, cheese, smoked salmon, tomato, and dill in the shell. In a small bowl beat together the eggs, half & half, salt, and pepper. Pour the egg mixture over the fillings in the shell. Sprinkle the top with paprika. Bake at 350° for 35-45 minutes, or until the center of the quiche is set (doesn’t jiggle when gently shaken). Let the quiche cool for 10-20 minutes before slicing and serving warm.

Continued from page 6

money they earned, they bought land and built a sewing factory. They also sold some of the land to families who had been evicted for civil rights activities. The Freedom Quilting Bee was a founding member of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC), which still thrives today. The Federation was created to “promote cooperative economic development as a strategy (and philosophy), to support and sustain Black farmer ownership and control over land, to support the economic viability of family and independent farm businesses—especially small, sustainable, and organic farms.” Find out more or donate towards their work at <https://www.federation.coop>.

Black cooperatives are still solving problems and creating opportunities today. For instance, the multi-ethnic youth group Toxic Soil Busters Cooperative in Massachusetts detoxified soil in their community during the eleven years of its existence. The Ujamaa Collective was founded in Pittsburgh by African American craftswomen to create a marketplace for their wares. Read about them online and shop at <https://ujamaacollective.com>. And the largest worker co-op in the United States today is comprised largely of Black and Latina women—the Cooperative Home Care Associates

(CHCA) in the South Bronx. The cooperative provides benefits almost unheard of in the home-care industry, from small interest-free loans to free income tax preparation services to paid vacation and health insurance. Not to mention dividends! It also helps other co-ops get started, an example of co-ops helping co-ops, fulfilling Principle 6 of the International Cooperative Alliance. The immense success of the CHCA indicates the power of cooperation to improve lives.

These are just a few examples of African American cooperation over the last several hundred years. Much of the history of this cooperation and its profound effects have been lost because it was not recorded, but Jessica Gordon Nembhard’s book thoroughly reviews the information available.

At this time when we are all thinking about how we can work to finally fulfill the promise of our Declaration of Independence—that all people are equal—cooperation can be a powerful tool. We can support cooperative efforts that work to dismantle racism and we can continue to work to make sure everyone is welcome at our co-op. As a country we have a long way to go, but step by step, we can make the world a better place for all of us.

The community mural



Kipp Hopkins
Marketing
Manager
*Co-op owner since
2006*

Last summer, we announced a new community project, a mural for our vestibule made of hexagons designed by owner artists. Ever since we moved into 70 South Street, we had intended to use the large wall above the grocery cart area for some kind of wall art. We bounced around some ideas, but in the end, time wasn't on our side, so I created the large local maps that were our stand-in for several years. Jennifer W.C., Kevin, and I thought long and hard about what we could do for the space and how to include the community. The plan for a collaborative mural made with many artists' contributions was finally settled on. Another hurdle was figuring out how to make a multimedia art installation that was permanent and tough enough for a busy space. It was actually my sister, a lifelong artist, and exceptional problem solver, who suggested we assemble the mural digitally and have it printed on wallpaper. Wallpaper is no longer the stuff of yore. You can get it custom printed



Steve Brookman

from several companies for a very reasonable cost. The wallpaper is tough enough for public spaces yet is easy for a layperson to install. With the plan finalized, I did a mockup to determine how many hexagons we should use. It came to 131. The Co-op reserved some for our own branded artwork, and the campaign to fill the rest began! It was important to us to include all types of art and artists, from professionals to amateurs to youths. I am a firm believer that every person is inherently creative and artistic. It always makes me very sad when someone tells me they're not a creative person. That is simply not possible. All humans have the capacity to create. It's in our DNA. People who do not create are often either creating in a way they don't consider an art (like cooking or what they wear) or haven't had the time or opportunity to explore their latent talents. Personally, I have been drawing since before I can remember. My mother always ensured that we never wanted for art



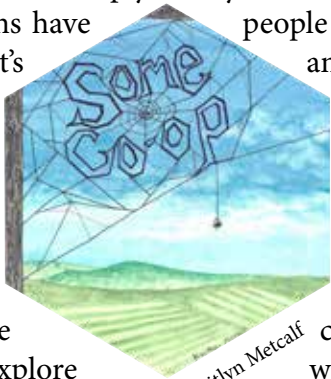
Liz Kindig

supplies, and my dad is a craftsman by nature. I grew up with art and creation all around me. Not everyone had it that way. But I believe access, time, and inclination are all it takes—that and a little confidence. My beliefs have only been reaffirmed by this project. When handing in their art, so many people said things like, "you don't have to use it," or "I'm not really an artist." Most of the time, the people saying this gave me pieces that I thought were incredible. I didn't reject a single hexagon. Maybe some were created with less technical skill than others, but they're all pieces of art made by people who create. I love each and every one of them. I also loved hearing from people about what inspired them. We gave loose guidelines, saying Co-op themed art (food, community, cooperation, etc.). Food was the predominant theme. Plus, bees, not surprisingly, given the honeycomb template. I thought it was interesting how many pears we got. Apples are



Julie Jo Fehle

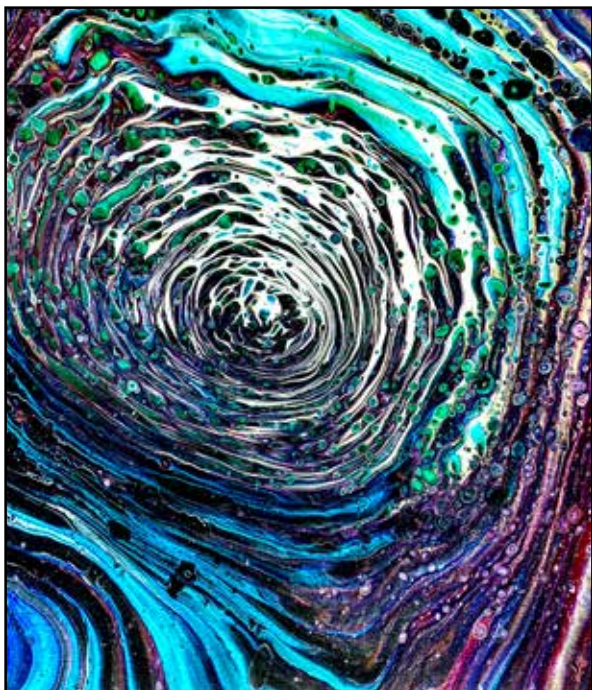
a more common crop in Maine and part of the Co-op's brand. But we got the same number of pears as apples. My favorite story was from Liz Kindig, who painted the barn owl. She told me that an owl lived by her house, and that she could hear its call while she was inside. Their calls famously sound like, "who cooks for you?" She said since she eats at the Co-op Café a lot, that was the answer to the question. In the end, we got 106 hexagons from 71 owners. To my knowledge, we had four youth artists from preteens to toddlers. We had watercolors, acrylics, oils, pencils, inks, block prints, dried flowers, markers, collages, chalk, digital pieces, patchwork, carved wood, polymer, sea glass and found objects, paper cuttings, photography, and crayons. There were probably a few other medium types that I'm forgetting. And for the mural's center, Tanya Silver, a local sculptor, made us a beautiful 3D bee. While I write this, the wallpaper has been delivered, but we have yet to install it. Maybe by the publishing date, it will be up for all to see. I hope you enjoy the mural as much as I have enjoyed coordinating it. And remember, if you make art of any kind, you're an artist!



Kaitlyn Metcalf

Art in the Café

JANUARY:
TERRI SNOW



FEBRUARY:
MARI BROWN



MARCH:
DALLAS AGNEW



Upcoming: April - Jonathan Fisher Exhibit / May - Madgeline Henderson-Diman / June - Julia Hanway
Interested in having your artwork exhibited at the Blue Hill Co-op?
Contact Kipp Hopkins at: (207)374-2165 or marketing@bluehill.coop (We're booking for 2023.)

Better together: an introduction to companion planting



Sarah Scamperle
Working Owner
Co-op owner
since 2022

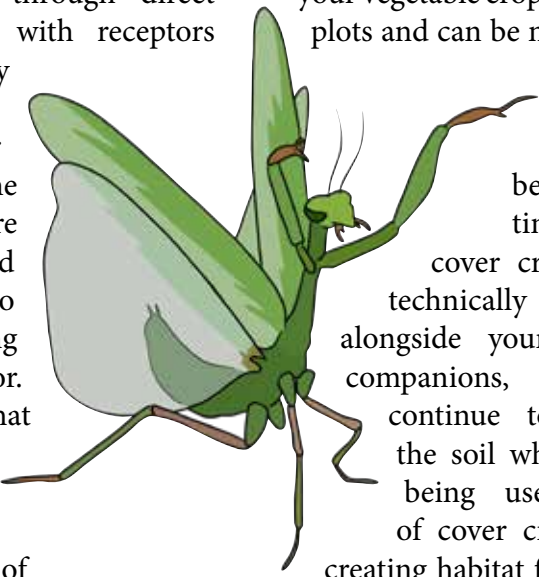
The basis of companion planting lies in recognizing the complexity of a garden space. Regardless of which management practices you choose, there are countless interactions happening between the plants, soil, insects, fungi, and microorganisms (and often between birds and other animals, as well). The practice of companion planting aims to encourage beneficial interconnections in order to create a more balanced and productive garden ecosystem. The Victory Garden, first promoted during WWI as a way for citizens to assist with the war effort, depicted tidy, highly organized rows of vegetables. It is an ideal that is still commonplace amongst growers today but is not especially conducive to the health or productiveness of the garden ecosystem as a whole. By shifting our image of gardens from that of a solitary plot used for maximizing yields for human consumption to a working ecosystem, we are able to save ourselves undue labor and minimize chemical inputs while still achieving our yield goals. Simply put, companion planting is “planting two or more species in close proximity for some benefit to one or more species.” (Walliser, 2020) These benefits include: pest control, weed control, disease control, improved soil quality, shade regulation, better biodiversity, natural structural supports, and improved aesthetics.

Pest control is achieved by luring pests away from crops by using sacrificial trap crops, as well as disrupting feeding and egg-laying behaviors. Pests often locate hosts by honing in on visual and chemical cues that are released by the plant of interest. Interspersing

certain companion species amongst crops can help to hide host plants, making it more difficult for pests to locate their identifying markers. Companion plants with strong fragrances are effectively masking crop plants rather than repelling insects, as is sometimes believed. This technique works best for larger pests rather than smaller bugs, like aphids or whiteflies. In addition to disrupting feeding behavior, companion plants also have the potential to interfere with insects’ egg-laying behavior. It’s been found that certain pest species exhibit a predictable behavior of landing multiple times on a host plant before depositing their eggs. These insects find their hosts through direct contact, “tasting” with receptors on their feet. They need to make a certain number of landings on the host plant before they’ve received enough stimuli to initiate egg-laying or feeding behavior. Studies show that interplanting with companion species can affect the number of successive appropriate landings a pest insect will make and thereby decrease the likelihood that the insect will choose the location to feed or reproduce. The use and placement of trap/sacrificial crops can potentially impede the progression of pests toward more valuable crops. Fewer pests mean less need for harmful or laborious pest-control measures!

Multiple companion planting techniques can achieve weed control. By intentionally planting certain species with allelopathy, one can control the growth of weeds in the soil. Allelopathy is the ability of a species to produce chemical compounds - from any part of the plant - which inhibit the growth

of competing species. Sowing a “living mulch” between rows and in walkways requires some planning and maintenance but can be used to outcompete troublesome weeds. Mulching this way also reduces erosion, attracts beneficial insects and pollinators, increases biodiversity, and can even improve the mycorrhizal network in your soil (which is an underground fungal network that joins plants into a larger community and increases an individual’s access to water and nutrients). Certain living mulches can also supply valuable nitrogen to crops. Cover crops are non-harvested crops that are sown before or following the harvest of your vegetable crops or in fallow plots and can be mowed down



or turned into the soil shortly before planting time. Although cover crops are not technically growing alongside your plants as companions, they will continue to condition the soil when it is not being used. Benefits of cover crops include creating habitat for beneficial species, making nutrients more accessible to crops, improving soil quality (fertility, structure, organic matter), suppressing weed growth, and reducing erosion. Certain deeper-rooted mulches and cover crops can also assist in breaking up heavy or compacted clay soils without damaging the soil structure further through excessive tilling.

In addition to the benefits above, companion planting improves garden biodiversity overall. An increase in plant species will also increase the population of beneficial species inhabiting the garden ecosystem, pollinators, and pest-eating insects alike. By creating a habitat for them and encouraging these populations, the garden is

better equipped to combat pests, resulting in fewer outbreaks and a healthier balance between pests and beneficial organisms.

There can be some downsides to companion planting. It can minimize superfluous labor but is not a hands-off practice. Living mulches still require management (mowing) to keep them from overtaking crops. Depending on your garden and soil composition, companion planting may require more watering to quench the thirst of additional plants. There is the possibility of resource competition, which can be managed with appropriate planting proximity, planting timing, species pairings, and the number of companion plants that are included in your plot. When utilizing cover crops, there is the risk of an increase in certain diseases, which can be avoided by factoring in a 3-4 week “till-and-wait” period before planting seedlings. Additionally, a moister environment can also increase fungal pathogens in wet weather and high humidity and may require additional disease control measures, such as garden sanitation or the application of organic fungicides. With planning, these few drawbacks shouldn’t outweigh the multitude of benefits that come from including companion plants in your garden ecosystem.

If you want to incorporate some basic companion planting practices into your 2023 garden, check out these free guides and recommended reading. Happy growing!

- Companion Planting for Beginners by Brian Lowell
- Carrots Love Tomatoes by Louise Riotte
- Farmer’s Almanac Companion Planting Guide (search Farmer’s Almanac Companion Planting Guide)
- Unity Gardens Companion Planting Guide .pdf (search Unity Gardens Companion Planting)
- GrowVeg channel on Youtube



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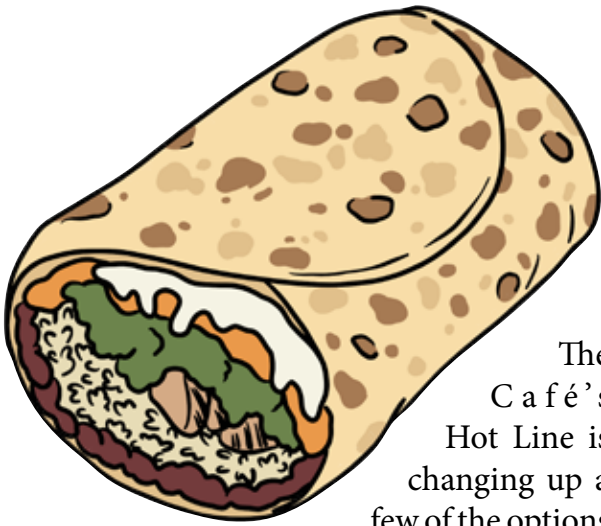
The café times are a changin'



Liz Barbato
Café Manager

I should start this off by introducing myself. My name is Liz Barbato, and I have recently taken over as the Café Manager. I have been told to tell everyone a little bit about myself, and I'm going to try but I AM NOT GOOD AT TALKING ABOUT MYSELF. I started working in kitchens at age 14 and have never left. I have enjoyed the opportunity to travel across the US cooking and learning. I am extremely excited to be at the Co-op and absolutely love my café staff and the entire Co-op staff, who have been so supportive and helpful in this time of transition. Now let's talk about the good stuff!

As many of you may have noticed, the Co-op café is going through some changes. Good changes, that is. We are working on updating and expanding the menu and offering after-school snacks for the students that we have coming in from local schools. We want to make sure that these students have the food they want offered in a healthy way. With that in mind, we will have a box where kids and parents can leave ideas for the kind of food they would like to see after school. I am open to all ideas and have a few of my own from my children. What better way to get ideas than what my kids want at home after school, right? These foods will primarily be from the hot bar.



The Café's Hot Line is changing up a few of the options and adding weekly

specials. Some Co-op favorites will make a return, as well as a few new things. We will keep you posted as these are rolled out!

Breakfast is also seeing some growth. We're adding burritos Y'all!!! The regular bacon and sausage will be available, as well as Chorizo. Pancakes will be available soon.

The hot bar has been trying diligently to offer more vegan and vegetarian options. We are testing new items and working out the kinks that come with growth. It's an exciting time in the Co-op Café.

This is a time of growth and an opportunity to serve the community better. Please also bear with us while we make these changes and continue to grow.

Thank you for the opportunity to warm your bellies and serve this amazing community. I hope to see all of your faces soon.



An interview with Liz, the new café manager

What area are you from/where did you grow up?

I was born in Texas but was raised split between New York and Deer Isle, Maine. I graduated High School from Deer Isle.

What's your background in the food industry?

I started cooking in restaurants in the area at the age of 14 and have never left. I graduated from The Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park Campus in '03. From there, I have worked all over the country before settling back in the area almost 11 years ago.

How long have you worked at the Co-op?

About a year and a half, I think.

What's your favorite thing about working at the Co-op?

The people. We have wonderful people store-wide who make it a real pleasure to come in and work with them every day.

What's your favorite thing to do outside of work?

Mostly spend time with my fiancé and our kiddos. Even though I grew up here, I am not a fan of winter. But in the warmer months, we love to fish, swim and just be lazy in the sun.

Any other comments you want to make to the community?

I would like to thank the entire Co-op staff for the love and support that they have shown me, it was not an easy leap taking over the café, and I still have some struggles, but I truly would not have been successful without the support of the Co-op in its entirety. I would also like to thank the customers and community for their continued support while we are going through some growing pains, with wonky hours and changes in food availability. We are working on hiring more people and getting back to full steam. Your continued patience is greatly appreciated.

BLUEBERRY BASIL AND CHÈVRE GALETTE

Blueberries and basil are a match made in heaven. Add chèvre cheese, and it's even better! This simple country pastry has the perfect balance of savory and sweet. It works well for breakfast, dessert, or as an appetizer.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Simple Pie Dough
- 2 cups blueberries
- 1 tbsp cornstarch OR potato starch
- 1 tbsp sugar OR monk fruit sweetener
- 2 tbsp minced basil
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup plain chèvre cheese

Prepare your pie dough by following our recipe for Simple Pie Dough, found on the Co-op's blog, or your own. Cover the dough and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Rinse the blueberries and put them in a mixing bowl. Toss the berries with potato starch or cornstarch, sweetener, and basil. Roll out the pie dough to a thickness of 1/16". Carefully transfer the pie dough to a cookie sheet (or large baking pan). Pile the blueberries in the center of the pie dough circle, leaving about three inches of dough around the edge.

Then fold the extra dough in around the berries one section at a time, creating a pinwheel pattern. The center area with the berries should remain open. Beat together the egg and water, then use a pastry brush to apply the egg wash to the pie dough. We use the extra dough to cut out blossom shapes, then use the egg wash to stick them to the top of the pie dough. Sprinkle with sugar or monkfruit sweetener. Bake the galette for 30 minutes, then remove it from the oven. Crumble the chèvre cheese over the exposed blueberries. Bake for another 10 minutes.



Photo by Kipp Hopkins

Double Scramble

“Mycology Mixology”

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A black and white line drawing. In the foreground, a man wearing a wide-brimmed hat, a t-shirt, and boots is seen from behind. He is holding a pitchfork over his right shoulder. He stands in a garden with various flowers, including sunflowers and tulips. A small gnome is visible in the lower left corner. In the background, there is a house with horizontal siding. A woman is sitting in a window on the upper floor of the house, looking out. The scene is set in a rural or suburban environment with trees and a clear sky.

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| HAWK | SAPSUCKER |
| JAY | TITMOUSE |
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- 1 Alfresco event
- 2 The Duck in Peter and the Wolf
- 3 Wise flavoring
- 4 Next installment
- 5 Cowboy's tie
- 6 That one
- 7 Wine nuance word
- 8 Pigeon's refrain
- 9 A lamb's mama
- 12 Author Lewis
- 17 'Nova' and 'Nature' home
- 19 Gifts on Easter
- 21 Akin to nutmeg
- 22 Good Friday fare
- 23 Cherry tree features
- 25 Spring bird
- 27 Topside
- 28 Retirement benefits agency
- 30 Being in a co-op means
- 31 What'd ya say?
- 33 Have an existence
- 38 Solid water
- 40 Mamba's weapon
- 42 Noca Scotia abbr.
- 43 A little woman
- 44 The Granite State abbr.
- 45 Behold!
- 46 God of mischief
- 47 Confused din
- 50 Sow's babe
- 51 What time is it in Maine?
- 53 The loneliest number
- 56 Alternative
- 57 Pu'er or pekoe
- 58 Pattern of eating
- 60 Character's journey
- 62 A day on mars
- 63 Metric wt. units
- 66 Hey you!
- 68 Hence

Generosity is a form of wellness

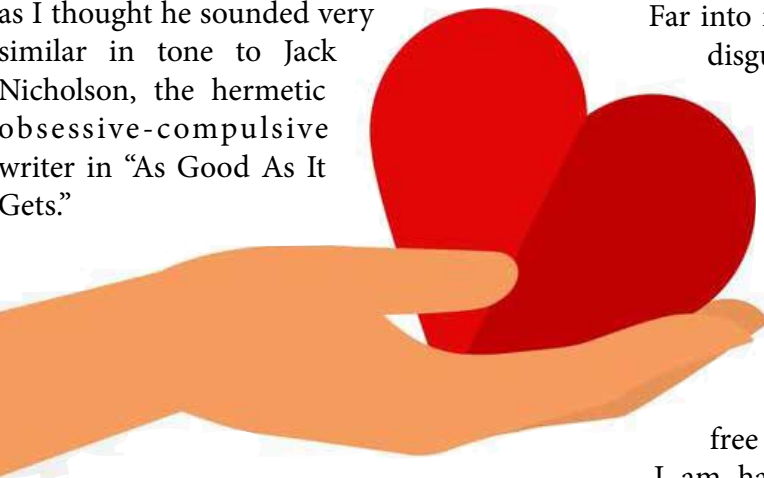


David Walker
Wellness Manager
Co-op owner since 1989

A member of our Co-op community is in dire need. He is a person who has been a part of the Co-op ownership for more than a decade, though he purchased from our Co-op many years prior. This person, who wishes to remain anonymous, is my friend of sorts. I have known him since I began working at the Co-op in 2007 as its Wellness Manager. During that time, I had the opportunity to get to know him well. I would drop his particular supplements, a favorite brand of cracker, and a few other odds and ends that he would request once or twice weekly on my way home. My friend owns no car, is housebound, and prefers to remain mostly unseen.

A little background. My friend was born sometime between 1940 and 50. His mother was not ready to mother him, so he was brought up by his grandparents. He spent most of his earlier years in Connecticut, the state where I spent my first 20 years. When my friend was 23, he was drafted. This was the mid-sixties, and he was frightened of getting wounded or dying in Vietnam. Luckily, he was stationed in France and Germany. Still, it was not an easy time for him, as he was not a person who liked large institutions. He is a small person, and no doubt, that did not make things any easier.

When I began my time at the Co-op, he was the curmudgeonly person who called frequently and whom my co-workers sometimes complained about. They had never seen him and were curious. I had already developed a phone-based connection. My friend was having a rough time getting his helper to find and deliver the particular supplements he desired. I was curious to meet this mysterious and somewhat demanding customer. I agreed to drop off a delivery. I was also interested, as I thought he sounded very similar in tone to Jack Nicholson, the hermetic obsessive-compulsive writer in “As Good As It Gets.”



Through the years, week in and week out, I would stop at my friend’s ramshackle trailer. I would also talk on the phone with him about the vitamins and supplements he was searching for. He always had a very strong opinion. Having spent many years studying nutrition, my friend sometimes pushed me to think more deeply about supplements he had found so helpful. He has been besieged with health issues. One supplement he credits with saving his eyesight is colostrum. The steroids doctors prescribed gave him severe side effects, and he credits colostrum, extracted from the fresh and initial milk mother cows produce, with

healing his chronic eye infection.

Once, some five or so years ago, on a wintry night, I waited just inside the door of my friend’s trailer while he gathered cash to pay me back for my weekly delivery. Out of the sea of stuff, a large airborne rat flew past my legs, which gave me deep pause about my friend’s living situation. Added to this, one could not really move about within his cave-like abode without knocking something over, as these, some things were piled one atop another, often in small to large cardboard boxes. Plastic containers, stacked a dozen high, teetered. I marveled at this eccentric Being, who kept pretty good humor, inquired kindly about our dog and family, thanked me profusely, and maintained passionate political opinions. He loved the Progressive Populist weekly. He once sent us a Christmas card with a classic old-fashioned Christmas scene.

Time went on, and I encountered a number of people who came to his aid over the years. Many came and went. For anyone to actually enter his home, there was a lot to contend with, often too much.

About three weeks ago, my wife left for an artist’s residency in Vermont. As he usually did, my friend complained about the lack of real help with some of the bigger problems he faced. Food delivery had become spotty and unpredictable. A sore on his leg needed serious medical attention. Three years of the pandemic had not helped the flow of help to my friend.

One Sunday, I decided it was time to help a lot more than I had already. I agreed to head over and help him with his refrigerator. Six hours later, I had only succeeded in helping him clean his freezer and the top shelf of the fridge. I also felt it important to clear his entrance, where a boxed exercise machine made getting in and out nearly impossible. That led to cleaning the thick coating of birdseed hulls that filled his entry area. Far into nightfall, I left exhausted, amazed, and disgusted, if truth be told. Getting down at floor level really opened my eyes.

Since then, I have endured some 80 hours of feverish work with the help of another generous coop member who immediately said, “Yes.” Hugh Evans and I took ten truckloads of boxes and other rat-infested debris to the Surry transfer station. The folks there have generously allowed us to dump free of charge in their commercial hopper.

I am happy to report that one of our coop members has donated a new glass-topped electric range, as my friend’s range has not functioned for years, and he has had to cook a two-burner gas camp stove. Big news occurred just a couple of days ago: No sooner had I pushed my friend’s nonfunctional, rat-infested old range end over end over end out the side door than the delivery duo from Portland called to say they would be there in two minutes with a new, donated glass-top range. Now installed, his camp stove is in the shed, and the blue formica countertop is now clean and visible next to his new stove. Still, on this morning’s visit, a rat scampered in front of us across the kitchen counter and out of sight. There

is a lot more clearing and cleaning to do!

My friend has not had hot water for years. One of my Yoga students has donated a new On-Demand hot water heater, as my friend’s old one rusted through long ago (coaxing it out of its cubby is its own story). There will be some serious carpentry needed to repair the rotted floor first. Another student donated a new, vented 17,000 BTU propane heater, which I hope to install after clearing his main living area enough to get to a wall. This will solve the scariest problem of all, other than the rat issue, as my friend has heated with an unvented kerosene heater amidst the chaos, perched on a table for decades.

The day before this writing, I removed ten contractor bags full of trash from my friend’s kitchen and moved boxes and furniture so that the range could be delivered the day after this writing. I was shocked when a rat scrambled out of a wooden file cabinet after I inquired into its contents, dashing from below somewhere else in the trailer. That event sent a level of angry determination through my veins, the likes of which I have never before experienced. I spent 12 hours clearing and cleaning. Now I can see what needs to be repaired, like the floor.

I have spent this time describing these circumstances in detail to you, oh reader, to give another perspective on this thing we call wellness. As hard as this has been for me, I feel both exhausted and more well than ever, as the spiritual wellness I feel has increased. Passing beyond that place within myself of absolute exhaustion and discovering new realms to draw energy from has been powerful, and to almost immediately get such profound support from my community has been as or more powerful. I have decided to extend my vision for my friend, who is one of us – who is perhaps the uncle, grandparent, person we ignore down the lane or that person on the other side of the world we hear about. Now, having gotten this far, I reason why not keep going, and turn my friend’s home into a place that is bright and encouraging. I could not be making this happen if my most excellent Assistant Wellness Manager, Sam Duddy, was not the truly dependable and knowledgeable person he is. When I am not at the Coop, I know the department is in his good hands as I take some time to toil.

If you have made it this far in my article, and are interested in donating, below is a GoFundMe link. He needs the skirting around the trailer’s base replaced and electrical work done. His 1950s aluminum-sided trailer has never been painted, and when I asked my friend what color he would like it to be, light yellow was the word. A small covered deck on the south side of his trailer, screened in, with a comfortable rocker, would be a way to encourage my friend to breathe in the fresh air, watch his birds, and contemplate the great outdoors while still feeling safe. His couch springs have collapsed, which is where he sleeps.

Link to GoFundMe if it would give you the joy to support this project: <https://gofundme.com/f/rehabilitate-tuks-trailer-to-livable-conditions>

Bulk department's top hitters



Kipp Hopkins
Marketing Manager
Co-op owner
since 2006

The bulk department is part of what makes the Co-op stand out from other grocery stores. We have nearly 400 items stocked, from flour to shampoo to cinnamon. Shopping in the bulk department is great because it allows you to buy as much or as little as you need. This help prevents waste, and we all hate waste! It also helps to know how to properly store your bulk items and how long they keep. The following is a list of our top 5 sellers with this information and more.

#1 ROLLED OATS: Oats are generally considered a very healthy grain. They are highly nutritious with lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. They're a good source of carbohydrates and fiber, including beta-glucan, the special fiber responsible for oatmeal's famous heart healthy reputation. Beta-glucan is also good for reducing blood sugar and improving insulin sensitivity. It is highly digestible and sticks to your ribs! Oats are naturally gluten-free but are often milled around other grains, which may cause cross-contamination. The bulk department has "gluten-free oats," which have been processed in a gluten-free facility, so if you're gluten-sensitive, you should stick to this kind.

Bulk oats should be kept in an airtight, sealed container, such as a lidded glass jar or a reusable plastic bag that can seal. Opened oatmeal can be used within one year.

Oats are less expensive to buy in bulk than packaged. In our bulk department, organic rolled oats are \$2.19 per pound. The equivalent in grocery is \$3.93 per pound.

#2 THOMPSON RAISINS: raisins are called nature's candy for a reason. As highly concentrated grapes, they are very high in calories and sugar. A half cup of raisins has more sugar and calories than the average 12 oz can of soda. But don't despair; raisins are fine in moderation. And since the flavor and sweetness are so strong, moderation is probably what you want anyhow. A few good ways to enjoy raisins are on top of a salad, in oatmeal, in granola or trail mix, and in cinnamon raisin bread. Raisins have a decent amount of fiber and are great for boosting iron. They also contain antioxidants and have some antimicrobial properties.



You'll want to keep raisins in an airtight container and reseal it quickly when helping yourself, as raisins can harden quickly. Store the container in a place that is cool, dry, and dark. Raisins are best enjoyed within six months.

In the bulk department, Thompson raisins are \$3.99 per pound. In grocery, they are \$9.46 per pound.

#3 DRIED MANGO: Our dried mangoes are not sweetened, which is good because mangoes already have a lot of natural sugar. Dried mangoes have reasonable amounts of vitamins C, A, and B9. Dried mangoes are not as nutritious as fresh mangoes, but they are a good source of the antioxidants beta-carotene, beta-cryptoxanthin, luteoxanthin, and violaxanthin. However, as with most dried fruits, the sugar and calories are concentrated. Keep that in mind when snacking on these delicious fruits.

Dried mango can be stored in an airtight sealed container in a cool, dry place for up to six months. Or they can be kept in the refrigerator for 1-2 years. They can also be frozen.

In bulk, dried mangoes are \$13.99 per pound. In grocery, they are \$19.98 per pound.

#4 ROASTED PEANUT BUTTER: Not all peanut butter is created equal, with some brands adding sugar, vegetable oils, and trans fats. The peanut butter that is our top seller is the fresh ground variety available in bulk. It's only got peanuts! Peanut butter is high in protein and healthy fat. It's also low-carb and does not strongly affect blood sugar levels. Peanut butter is relatively nutritious with Vitamins E, B3, B6, and B5; folate; magnesium; copper; and manganese. It also contains iron, potassium, zinc, and selenium. Of course, some people are allergic to peanuts so be careful when bringing food with peanut butter to public events or spaces.

Keep your peanut butter sealed in a cool, dry place for up to three months. After that, it should be refrigerated and can last another three to four months.

Our fresh ground peanut butter is \$2.49 per pound. Our least expensive peanut butter in grocery is \$7.10 per pound.

#5 CANE SUGAR: Though it's less processed than white sugar, cane sugar is still sugar. It's not exactly a health food, but in moderation, many people can enjoy a little sugar in their diets.

Sugar is highly susceptible to moisture and should be stored in a cool, dry place, never in the refrigerator. Always keep sugar in an odor-free environment.

Organic cane sugar in the bulk department is \$1.19 per pound. In grocery, it is \$3.66 per pound.

Those are our top five sellers, but if you're curious what comes next in the top 10, they are:

- 6. All-purpose flour
- 7. White basmati rice
- 8. Raw cashews
- 9. White jasmine rice
- 10. Wild flower honey

Health and nutrition info gathered from:
www.healthline.com

GARLIC CONFIT



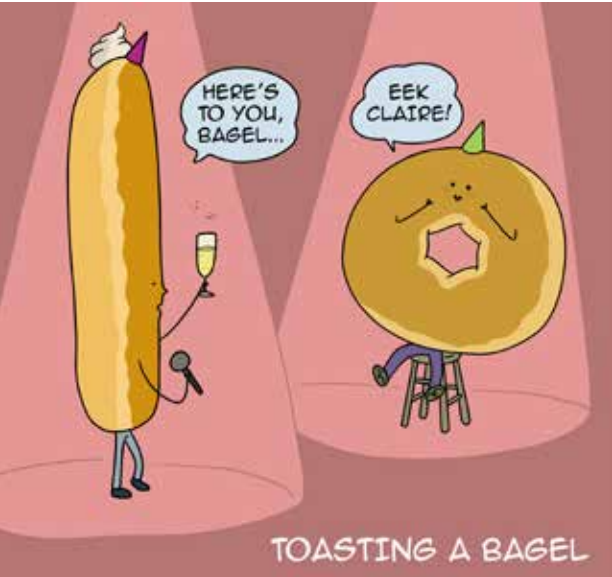
Garlic confit is a simple recipe to make the most delicious garlic spread you've ever tasted. The garlic cloves are slowly cooked in oil with fresh herbs, softening the sharp garlic taste to something sweeter and earthier. The soft texture of the cooked cloves easily spreads on crusty toast or sandwiches, roasted meats, or grilled veggies. This confit is versatile and ideal for garlic lovers; it can be mixed into mashed or baked potatoes, and pasta, added to soups, dressings, and sauces.

Ingredients:

- 12 heads of garlic (around 100 cloves)
- 1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 10 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 2 tsp red pepper flakes

Break the garlic heads apart and peel the skins off the cloves. Add the garlic to a small saucepan with the herbs and red pepper flakes then pour the olive oil on top and turn the burner to medium-low.

Once the oil begins to bubble, lower the heat to a slow simmer and continue to cook for 30 minutes, or until the garlic cloves are tender. Remove the pot from the heat. Spoon the garlic and herbs into a sterilized jar, then pour in the oil to cover the cloves (this recipe should fit in a 16oz mason jar). You will likely have extra oil, which can be saved and used for cooking or as a dressing. Put the lid on the jar and allow the confit to reach room temperature. Store in the refrigerator for up to a month.



Maine harvests: what's in season when (from mainefarmersmarkets.org)

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| JANUARY | Seedlings | Strawberries | Radishes | Radishes | Turnips | Zucchini | Radishes | Raddichio |
| -APRIL | Annuals | Blueberries | Turnips | Raspberries | Watermelon | | Scallions | Radish |
| Apples | Perennials | Raspberries | Fennel | Scallions | Zucchini | OCTOBER | Spinach | Rutabaga |
| Beef | Breads | Scallions | Microgreens | Turnips | | Apples | Squash | Spinach |
| Beets | Fresh pasta | Carrots | Corn | Zucchini | SEPTEMBER | Beans | Sweet potatoes | Squash |
| Cabbage | Jams & jellies | Chard | French beans | | Apples | Beets | Swiss Chard | Tatsoi |
| Carrots | Pickles & | Cucumbers | Snow peas | LATE | Beans | Broccoli | Raspberries | Turnip |
| Celeriac | sauces | Garlic Scapes | New potatoes | AUGUST | Beets | Brussels | Tomatoes | Mushrooms |
| Daikon | Prepared Foods | Spring Garlic | | Apples | Blueberries | sprouts | Tomatillos | |
| Dry beans | Baked Goods | Herbs | EARLY | Beans | Broccoli | Cabbage | Turnips | DECEMBER |
| Garlic | And more! | Kale | AUGUST | Beets | Cabbage | Cantaloupe | Zucchini | Apples |
| Leeks | | Kohlrabi | Apples | Blueberries | Cantaloupe | Carrots | | Cranberries |
| Maple Syrup | JUNE | Lettuce | Artichokes | Broccoli | Carrots | Cauliflower | MID | Beets |
| Microgreens | Asparagus | Mixed Salad | Beans | Cabbage | Cauliflower | Celery | NOVEMBER | Brussels |
| Mushrooms | Greens: beet | Greens | Beets | Cantaloupe | Celery | Chard | Apples | Sprouts |
| Onions | greens, bok | Spring Onions | Chard | Carrots | Chard | Chili peppers | Broccoli raab | Cabbage |
| Parsnips | choy, chard, | Radishes | Cherries | Cauliflower | Chili peppers | Cider | Bok choy | Carrots |
| Potatoes | dandelion | Turnips | Cherry | Celery | Corn | Corn | Beets | Celeriac |
| Pork | greens, kale, | Fennel | tomatoes | Chard | Cucumbers | Cucumbers | Beans | Carrots |
| Pumpkins | spinach, | Microgreens | Collard greens | Corn | Delicata squash | Delicata squash | Brussels | Garlic |
| Rutabagas | lettuce, turnip | | Corn | Cucumbers | Eggplant | Eggplant | sprouts | Kohlrabi |
| Shallots | greens | MID JULY | Summer | Eggplant | Fennel | Fennel | Cabbage | Onions |
| Sweet potatoes | Herbs: chives & | Zucchini | squash | Fennel | Garlic | Garlic | Carrots | Parsnips |
| Turnips | parsley | Beets | Blueberries | Garlic | Greens | Ginger | Cauliflower | Potatoes |
| Winter squash | Peas | Braising greens | Carrots | Greens | Herbs | Gourds | Celeriac | Pumpkins |
| | Radishes | Summer | Chard | Herbs | Kale | Grapes | Chard | Squash |
| MAY | Rhubarb | squash | Cucumbers | Kale | Kohlrabi | Greens | Cider | Sweet Potato |
| Greens | Salad turnips | Blueberries | Fennel | Kohlrabi | Lettuce | Herbs | Collards | |
| Parsnips | Scallions | Raspberries | Garlic | Lettuce | Melons | Honey | Daikon | |
| Radishes | | Scallions | Herbs | Melons | Onions | Kale | Garlic | |
| Scallions | EARLY JULY | Carrots | Kale | Onions | Peppers | Kohlrabi | Herbs | |
| Spinach | Zucchini | Chard | Kohlrabi | Peppers | Potatoes | Leeks | Jerusalem- | |
| Maple syrup | Beets | Cucumbers | Lettuce | Potatoes | Pumpkins | Lettuce | artichoke | |
| Eggs | Braising | Garlic | Microgreens | Pumpkins | Scallions | Melons | Kale | |
| Beef | Greens | Herbs | Mixed salad | Radishes | Spinach | Mushrooms | Kohlrabi | |
| Chicken | Broccoli | Kale | greens | Scallions | Squash | Onions | Leeks | |
| Goat | Summer | Kohlrabi | Peaches | Swiss Chard | Swiss Chard | Pears | Lettuce | |
| Lamb | Squash | Lettuce | Peppers | Summer | Raspberries | Peppers | Onions | |
| Pork | Snow Peas | Mixed salad | Plums | squash | Tomatoes | Parsnips | Parsnips | |
| Butter | Sugar Snap | greens | Potatoes | Raspberries | Turnips | Potatoes | Potatoes | |
| Milk | Peas | Spring onions | Spring onions | Tomatoes | Watermelon | Pumpkins | Pumpkin | |

JAPANESE-STYLE POTATO SALAD

Potato salad has been a popular dish in Japan for at least 125 years, first created as a version of the Olivier Salad. Japanese potato salad may vary from home to home, but it has a few key elements that distinguish it from American or German potato salad. It isn't made with vinegar, it is creamier with the potatoes almost mashed, and it is made with Japanese-style mayonnaise.

POTATO SALAD INGREDIENTS:

- 5 large golden potatoes
- 3 large carrots
- 1 European cucumber
- 1 tsp salt + more to taste
- black pepper to taste
- 1/4 red onion
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 3 hard-boiled eggs

MAYONNAISE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp rice vinegar
- 1/3 cup safflower or canola oil
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp sugar OR monk fruit sweetener
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/4 tsp salt

To make the mayonnaise, it's helpful to have two people, one to pour the oil and one to whisk. The secret to a good mayo is a fresh egg yolk, a thin stream of oil, and a vigorous whisk. Put the egg yolk and vinegar in a clean, dry bowl. Begin to whisk vigorously while a thin, steady stream (just a drizzle) of oil is poured into the bowl. It

will take about a minute before you can tell if the mayo is emulsifying and thickening the way it should. If it's still soupy after a minute, it will not emulsify properly, and you should start over. If it is thickening correctly, continue to drizzle the oil while whisking until you have about 2/3 cup of mayonnaise. Add the sesame oil, sweetener, Dijon, and salt. Cover and refrigerate until ready to assemble.

Cut the potatoes into bite-sized pieces (1-2"). Peel the carrots and cut them into 1/4" inch coin. Put the carrots and potatoes in a large pot of water with a bit of salt and bring to a boil. Cook for 8-10 minutes until you can pierce the potato with a fork and it breaks in half. Drain the veggies and rinse with cold water until they stop steaming. Separate the carrots and set them aside. While the potatoes are still warm, mash them, leaving some large chunks whole.

Cut the cucumbers into very thin slices. Put the slices into a bowl and sprinkle with a tsp of salt. Mix the slices, massaging the salt into each piece using your fingers. Let them sit for 10 minutes. Using your hands, squeeze the cucumber slices to remove the excess water. Thinly slice the red onion and chop the hard-boiled eggs. Boil



Photo by Kipp Hopkins

the corn for a minute and drain, rinsing with cold water. In a large salad bowl, combine the potatoes, carrots, cucumber, red onion, eggs, and corn. Add mayonnaise and salt & pepper to taste. Serve and enjoy!

New Mexico outpost



Kipp Hopkins
Marketing Manager
Co-op owner
since 2006

Now a little story from our Santa Fe correspondent...

You know those times when you go out on a drive and suddenly find yourself standing on the summit of a 10,679-foot mountain? No? Maybe that's the sort of thing that only happens to my family.

The three of us all work from home, meaning we clock a lot of time in our Santa Fe apartment. When the weekend rolls around, we're all ready to get out of the house and explore some surrounding areas outside the city. Sometimes we go with the purpose of actually checking out an area we might want to settle in. Or maybe we have a state park or landmark in mind. Other times we're just curious about what we'll find when we head a particular direction.

The weekend in question was very much the latter. One Saturday we'd been kept inside all day by bad weather and we were bored by Sunday. We got in the car but no one had a particular destination in mind. We knew we really liked the area by Madrid, an artsy former mining town which is about a twenty-five-minute drive from us. So we packed the poodles in the car and headed out. A little passed Madrid we stopped for a nice walk then decided to carry on down the road, which we could see on the map would take us to Albuquerque. From there, we could jump on the highway and head home. This drive goes through hills and grassy fields and looks out on some gorgeous mountain views.

But, on our way, we saw a sign for Sandia Scenic Byway. Scenic byway, you say? We love a good scenic byway! On the map, it looked like a back way to get to the other side of Albuquerque, and it probably is, though I have no idea where the road branches off. Eventually, we found ourselves climbing up and up and up with some truly angular switchbacks. We appeared to be climbing up a mountainside, a snowy one at that. After climbing for quite a ways, we reached a visitor center at the summit of Sandia Crest, a mountain we stare at every day from our apartment window.

All the steps and walkways were buried under piles of packed down snow. Not anticipating this destination, my sister and I were both in sneakers. Though our mom was in more sensible boots, she was the exception, because the thirty or so other visitors on the summit all looked like they ended up there by accident, wearing Santa Fe-weight clothing and shoes. One woman even had Crocs on. But once we scampered up the slippery climb to the observation platform, we found ourselves looking down on several smaller mountains and a valley below, with one of Albuquerque's suburbs spread out before us. It was a breathtaking view!

We're planning on going back, more on purpose next time, when it's a little warmer. But I look forward to finding more amazing locations on our future jaunts.



Co-op Voices is a place for you to express yourself as a voice in our Co-op community and a place to submit articles of your own to The Harvest Herald, our quarterly newsletter.

THE CARETAKER

In the ring of acquainted strangers
the methodical drone of his body and voice
sets him, statue-like, aside and central.
Fog surrounds the glassed-in porch.
Small brown-and-white birds
fly in and out of the eaves.

Silent, he is a focus of irritation
for the women: trying too hard,
bathed in cheap-sweet shaving cologne.
They'll never forget
how he tried to fix the toaster
with the toast still in it.

All soon leave him alone
except Punchy the dog and the birds.
He likes the boats and the fog,
the lighthouse, distance.
It would be the same, with people, anywhere.
Now there's the brief ease the elements allow.

The inn is no haven, but it's work.
He remembers what they say
about beggars. It's in him to wander
and so long now since he thought about it.
"They don't take kindly to me and porcupines."
He bristles in his chair and smiles.

By Martha E. Duncan
Co-op owner since 2013

OLD MAN WINTER

Old man winter, it's time to move on.
Your ice and snow, I want it all gone.
Spring is waiting to bring forth it's blooms.
And sunshine to replace your gray and your gloom.

Don't let the calendar tell you when it's time to leave.
For your early exit we surely won't grieve.
Fun in the cold, I just don't get ya.
So old man winter, don't let the door hit ya!

By Donna Roskom

"Resolve to be tender with the young,
compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the wrong. Sometime in life you will have been all of these." — George Washington Carver

Included by request of Cat McNeal

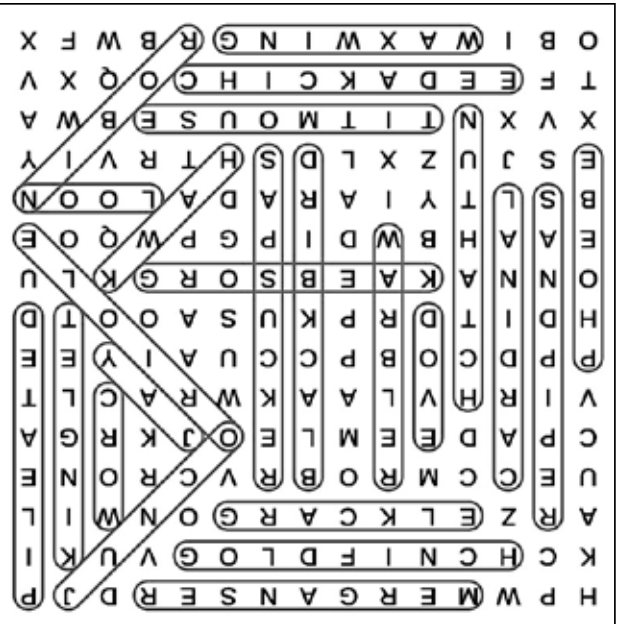
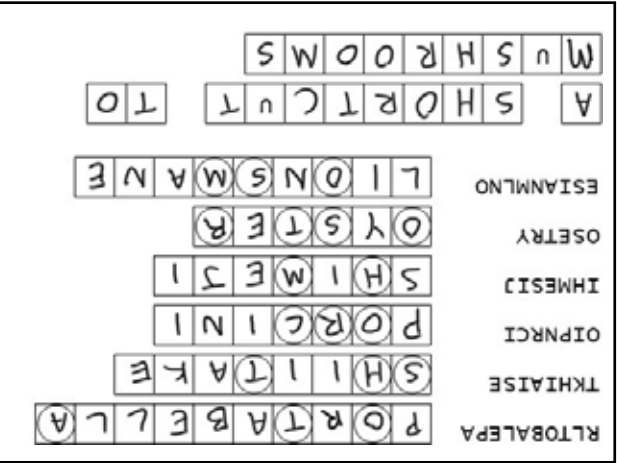
Puzzle Answers

see puzzles on pg. 11
Enjoy the puzzles? Too hard, too easy?
Let us know: newsletter@bluehill.coop.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 4 |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| 5 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 7 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

spider, gnome, dog
sunflower, potted plant, potted plant 2,
Boots, Bow, Cat, frog, t-shirt, bird,

Spot the 12 Differences



THE GREAT CO-OP KITCHEN CHALLENGE

Do you relish a challenge AND love to cook? Looking for something new and fun to activate your kitchen skills? Want a chance to win a \$25 Co-op gift card? The Co-op is excited to present a new quarterly kitchen challenge!

How does it work? In each Harvest Herald, we will present a new challenge, a dish for participants to try their hand at. You will have two months from the time of printing the Herald to complete the project. We will provide a recipe for inspiration, but you are free to use any recipe you like, as long as it's the same type of dish. You can use your creativity, follow your passion, and make your ideal version. When you're done with your dish, take a picture, describe the flavors and aspects you used, including any fun anecdotes about the process and send it to: marketing@bluehill.coop. We will publish your photos in the following Harvest Herald, and one participant will be randomly selected to win a \$25 gift card to the Co-op. Sound like fun? Let's get started!

The second Co-op Kitchen Challenge is to make a sweet, leavened bread. It can be any bread leavened with yeast, sourdough starter, or a soda bread. The flavor components can vary, but it must be sweet! With Easter on the horizon, many families around the western world are dusting off their favorite recipes for Easter bread, whether it be hot cross buns, tsoureki, rosinenbrot, or babka. But even if you don't celebrate Easter, everyone loves a slice of fluffy, sweet bread hot out of the oven.

Please send in your photo and description by May 31 in order to have your creation published and for a chance to win the gift card.

The Roll cake Challenge

Our last challenge was Buche de Noel or Roll Cake. We had three submissions, and Deborah Wiggs was randomly selected to win the gift card. You could be next!



Deborah Wiggs' Chocolate Buche de Noel

PLACEK (POLISH EASTER BREAD)

Many different traditional Easter Breads are made around the world. One of our favorites is Polish placek, a sweet bread with a soft texture, mildly citrus flavor, and crunchy crumble top. It's almost like a sweet bread mixed with a coffee cake. This bread is perfect slathered in butter and served with tea or coffee. The recipe makes five 9x5" loaves but can also be made as mini loaves or in cake pans.



Photos by Kipp Hopkins

For the first dough, heat the milk on the stovetop to 105-115°F. In a mixing bowl, combine the milk, yeast, and sugar and let sit for 10 minutes. Then add the flour, whisking it into a soupy batter. Cover with a damp towel and let rise for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, make the second dough. Cream the butter with the sugar (or monk fruit sweetener) using a hand or standing mixer. Add the eggs one at a time, beating to combine with each addition. Add the salt, nutmeg, and zest. Finally, beat in 2 cups of the flour, making a smooth, cake-like batter. When the first dough is done rising, add it to the second dough and stir to combine.

If you have a standing mixer with a bread hook, switch over. Otherwise, you'll need to use your hands to "knead" the batter. Add the remaining 3 cups of flour and knead for about five minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. This dough is very wet, so the kneading process will be sticky and messy. Once the dough is smooth, transfer to a clean, well-greased mixing bowl. Cover with a damp towel and set in a warm place to rise until it is doubled in size (1 to 2 1/2 hours). Meanwhile, make the crumble top. Combine the butter, sugar (or monk fruit), and flour, mixing in the butter with your fingers until it's the texture of cornmeal. Add the sliced almonds and set aside.

Grease five 9x5" loaf pans or a combination of various baking pans making up roughly that

First Dough Ingredients:

- 2 cups milk, around 105° - 115°F.
- 2 packages active dry yeast (or 5 tsp)
- 1 1/2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 cups of all-purpose flour

Second Dough Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter (room temperature)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 eggs (room temperature)
- 1 tsp salt
- dash of ground nutmeg
- zest of one orange
- zest of one lemon
- 5 cups all-purpose flour

Crumble Top Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup butter (room temperature)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds

volume. You can make this bread in loaves, cake pans, mini loaf pans, or however you like. It is a good idea, though, to use pans with straight edges as it will be easier to remove the loaf without damaging the crumble top. Once you've selected your pans and greased them, cut strips of parchment about 2" wide and long enough to go under the loaf and hang over each edge of the pans by about an inch. You will use the parchment to carefully lift out the bread from the pan after they're baked.

Once the dough has doubled in size, grease your hands and divide the dough between your pans. The dough will still be pretty sticky and wet, so you don't really need to "form" a loaf shape. Divide your crumble-top across the pans and press it with your hands to stick it down to the dough. Cover the loaves with a damp towel and let them rise for another 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 325°F and bake for 30-50 minutes, until the loaves are golden brown and the center is cooked through. A good way to test this is to insert a skewer or chopstick into the center of the loaf and see if it comes out clean. Set the loaves on a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes, then remove them from the pans by using the parchment lift them out. Cool for at least another 10 minutes before serving. Placek is delicious served with butter or on its own.



Matthew Jones' Cocoa Dusting Roll Cake



Hazel Kimball's Bouche de Noel