

The Berkshire Rice Project

A Local Endeavor Seeks to Fortify Local Food, One Grain at a Time

By Daniel Esko

When people ask me what I do for a living, I sometimes answer them with, “changing the world through food.” I find it a bigger picture answer and more reflective of my actual work than “Grocery Manager” or “Non-Perishables Manager.” One need only watch the movie Food Inc. to discover how every food decision we all make has a profound impact on the world, especially when measured in the collective sense. I believe the work that food co-ops, CSAs and small farmers are doing is truly evolutionary and is helping shift the paradigm from an overextended supply chain that requires incredible amounts of energy for production, storage and distribution to a less energy intensive, friendlier and more humane food system. By promoting the development of local and regional sources of staple foods, we can decrease our dependence on imported food, increase the food security of our communities, strengthen the local economy, and build a more sustainable food system. In fact, one of the guiding principles of Berkshire Co-op Market’s activities is a commitment to this very idea.

This past summer my wife, Sheri, and I started our first backyard garden at our home in Dalton, MA. It was a great learning experience and we discovered a few things about farming. First, that our soil quality was poor and we didn’t fertilize adequately, as evidenced by our two-inch carrots. Second, we discovered that the woodchucks in our neighborhood wouldn’t allow us to grow anything other than tomatoes and herbs. Even with a decently constructed chicken wire fence, they ate all of our green beans, lettuces and collards. I did, however, embark on a unique journey that year. I planted six rice plants in one row of our garden. When approached by my brother Sennin about doing this, I had no idea one could grow rice here in New England. I was of course immediately excited about the idea. He said that he had some plants from Christian and Gaella Elwell, the founders and owners of South River Miso Company. I learned that they have been cultivating small plots of rice for over thirty years, right up the road in Conway, Massachusetts! Additionally, I learned of several farmers in Vermont and New York who have been growing rice for several years now. Originally from Southeast Asia, this rice is purported to have been brought to Italy

by Marco Polo, where it eventually made its way to the Ukraine. This variety of *Oryza sativa* is of the japonica subspecies. It is a type of short-grain rice commonly grown in Northern Japan as well as Uzbekistan, Romania and the Ukraine. It is more cold tolerant than the indica subspecies, or long-grain rice. Christian’s efforts throughout the years culminated in the harvesting of over a hundred pounds of rice in the fall of 2011. That translates to a potential yield of two tons per acre! My own rice-growing experiment resulted in six plants growing to maturity and producing over a thousand seeds for future use.

This experience inspired me to share with local farmers and encourage them and others to begin growing rice in the Berkshires. I had a vision of fields and paddies of rice being cultivated right here in our own backyards. I was fascinated by the idea that this staple food relied on by so many could be grown locally and made available to the community. In 2011, the Co-op sold 14,700 pounds of rice, 14,000 pounds of oats, and 9,100 pounds of other grains. It would take only four acres to grow enough rice to meet annual demand at the store. When I visited

RICE cont on page 6

Young Farmers’ Movement Thrives at Three Maples

By Matthew Novik



The greenhouse that got its start on the internet.

When you walk onto the property at Three Maples Market Garden, the first thing you notice is that it is a unique place. Nestled in between Route 102 and the Berkshire Spur section of I-90, Three Maples is a great example of the innovative young farmers’ movement, made up of people who will farm wherever they can get land, making any space beautiful and bountiful. And Cian and Amanda Dalzell, the farmers at Three Maples, are a perfect example of the people who are making the young farmers movement happen.

Across the nation, young farmers are starting small farms. According to the National Young Farmers’ Coalition, in five years 125,000 current farmers will have retired. If those numbers hold true, the young farmers movement will be all that stands between Americans and a major food supply and safety crisis. “The average age of farmers around here is somewhere in the sixties,” said Cian (pronounced kee-in). “Part of the reason for the young farmers movement is that there is no other choice. Somebody has to grow the food that we all need to eat, and that older generation can’t do it forever.”

MAPLES cont on page 9

42 Bridge Street
 Great Barrington, MA 01230
 413.528.9697
 www.berkshire.coop
 Mon - Sat 8 am - 8 pm
 Sunday 10 am - 6 pm



Inside This Issue

Notes from HQ	Page 2
Our Ends	Page 3
Changing School Lunch	Page 4
Education & Outreach	Page 7
Featured Co-op	Page 10
The Story of Mondragon	Page 11
Departmental Reports	Page 12



NOTES FROM HQ: THE GM REPORT

By Art Ames



I'm baaaackkk! Hi, everyone. When last we spoke, in early February, I was headed out to parts somewhat unknown for a few months. I had a wonderful trip, and came back to Great Barrington and the Co-op at the end of April, almost three months later. It's been a lot of fun engaging with many of you since my return. I also discovered in practical terms that social networking has its advantages and disadvantages. Rather than committing to a blog or individual means to communicate with all who seemed to have some interest in my escapades, I promised to post daily on Facebook. I actually adhered to that and had some fun doing so. Of course, there was a minor glitch. For three days I was in an area of Big Bend in Southwest Texas, where Internet was not available, and consequently I could not post. Once I was able to reconnect, there were a variety of posts on my Facebook page and messages from very concerned folks. Had I been kidnapped, or worse? One expressed serious and thoughtful worry that I had succumbed to a rattlesnake bite, and this individual pleaded with me to respond. Naturally, as I read these comments, I was touched by the sentiments and worry, but admittedly slightly amused as well. If indeed I had fallen prey to some natural tragedy, would my lack of response have been construed as rudeness? Anyhow, I digress.

I've been asked if I made any particular discovery, as if I had embarked on some type of quest; and I have been asked if I learned anything on my journey. First of all, I learn something every time I interact with another entity, whether I'm traveling or not. It's probably why I like being here and doing what I do. I get to engage with you, and others, on a daily basis, and I revel in what we can share with each other. I'm not sure I actually learned anything on my trip, but perhaps it did reinforce a belief I already had. Keep in mind that the bulk of my travel was through the states of Florida, Louisiana and Texas. It could be argued that life in Great Barrington from the perspective of a cultural and political outlook may not always be in tune with the geography of these travels. I've always believed that essentially, as individuals, we are all quite alike. We all possess a natural curiosity, a certain level of humanity and kindness, and a need and desire to engage with other people. When we set aside external influences and engage one-on-one, magic happens. My travels reinforced that belief, and I certainly met and interacted with many wonderful people wherever I went.

While I had a couple of possible destinations in mind, such as New Orleans and Austin, I ultimately traveled without an agenda. I expected to plow through Cajun country in Louisiana in two days, but met so many wonderful people, and ran into so much amazing food and music and culture that it took well over a couple of weeks to drive through the area. Who knew that the state park system in Texas would be extraordinary? Consequently I spent much more time traveling the Texas byways than expected. As I've mentioned, I have a passion for music. I heard amazing music wherever I went, particularly in Key West, Eunice, LA, and all along the Rio Grande in Southwest Texas. I feel very lucky that I was able to bring back a lot of it and mix it into the music that I play on my local community radio show. My highlight? Musically, I was allowed to sit down with Del McCoury and actually help him write a song. Well, to tell the truth, I threw him a single line, but I can daydream, can't I? There were so many other highlights, but I have to mention Big Bend and the tiny ghost town of Terlingua, Texas. If Great Barrington is the #1 small town in America, then Terlingua deserves to be recognized as the #1 friendly small town in America, and there's no better hiking and landscape than in Big Bend, from what I've seen. Essentially and unexpectedly, the true destinations on my trip proved to be the travel between what I thought would be my destinations. How refreshing!

Oh, and rather than tell more stories in an already too long narrative, I'll just simply list the unusual or unexpected wildlife that I encountered, even though I'm tempted to tell you the details about almost stepping on that alligator's tail during a hike, or spending fifteen minutes on a deserted trail twenty feet from a black bear. I'll just say that at close range I ran into crocodiles, alligators, a Florida panther, a copperhead snake, a mountain lion, a black bear, whooping cranes, turkey vultures, red-tailed hawks, javelinas, a boa constrictor, a few others that I can't recall, and Dan, an unusual human I met in the Everglades who may very well be a species unto himself.

I loved traveling in my little VW camper, staying off the highways and creating my own far more modest version of *Blue Highways*. Of course, I read that book again during my travels, and saw it from a much different perspective. Indeed, I'm already thinking of my next little trip, although I realize that it won't be for at least three months. Don't get me wrong. I love being home and reconnecting with this community, but I do like the balance that a variety of experience provides to me. I recognize finally that I am incredibly lucky to be able to do these things. The people who work at and run our co-op, from part-time high school help to our key management to our Board of Directors, support our individual need to flourish and have the skill and dedication to take care of things when one of us is absent from the organization.

OK. I usually give you an update on what's happening. While I was gone we painted part of the store in intriguing colors, opened up a different traffic flow for the café, worked out the details to *finally* allow you to help us reduce credit card fees, and started working with a community garden in order to develop a farming and nutrition educational element. It's never boring around here. To wind my report up, I'm only going to talk about three more things today.

Construction. Thanks for all of your questions and concerns. Yes, the fire district project downtown has affected us negatively. We knew that it would, but it particularly affected us a bit more because we already deal with a malfunctioning intersection at Bridge and Main Streets, and also because the Wheeler & Taylor back parking lot has been used as a staging area. I'm not complaining. Merely observing. All of the parties involved, from the construction crew to the fire district committee to the Board of Selectmen to Betsy at the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, have nothing but good intentions. Have mistakes been made? Absolutely. Have communication and planning been perfect? Nope. I assume that all are taking careful notes on what worked and what didn't so that next year's even more extensive project can be smoother. I know, based on your questions in the store, that you want

to know more. I ask that we all continue to have patience when dealing with the inevitable and keep on working with everyone involved rather than pointing fingers.

Expansion/Relocation. Over the last few weeks, I've been meeting with planners, developers, architects, lawyers and government officials in order to put together the best possible proposal to deal with our current location. We've outgrown it, and we need to do something about it. At this moment, we have two potential courses of action; we either expand our current facility, or we move the Co-op. The former log home site is a leading contender if we choose to relocate. While it may seem like we've been talking for forever and a day about this, you will be amazed how quickly things begin to move once we get past this fact-gathering stage. It's going to make our heads spin. I expect that by this fall, the Board of Directors will have been given a clear and concrete proposal or two, and that's when we'll all start to have some fun. Please continue to stop me in the store and offer your thoughts. Even at this stage, I'm all ears.

So, when is a rumor not a rumor? There have been rumblings that we were looking at a second and significantly smaller location in Lenox. It wasn't, and indeed isn't, merely a rumor. We've been asked to look at a possibility, and we are doing so. This is a smaller project that would be independent from any move or expansion that we make in Great Barrington. Originally we contemplated trying to do something quickly that would get us to Lenox by this summer. That is not going to happen. Instead, we'll continue to work with all interested parties, and if it ends up being something that will benefit our community, owners, and contribute toward enhancing our local economy, then my team will offer a proposal to our Board of Directors. Those of you who are owners and live north of Great Barrington have certainly not been shy in offering your opinion that this potential expansion would be a good one. I hear you loud and clear, and I'll do my best to evaluate the resources needed and be conscious that smart growth is what we strive for, and not growth just for the sake of growth.

PPOT. As I write this, we are unveiling Prepaid Owner Tabs, our newest service to owners. By offering the ability to use owner cards to draw off a prepaid account, we hope to offer an alternative to the traditional banking hold that can strangle our economy. I won't write too much about how it all works, but will instead remind us why we are doing this.

We spend around \$90,000 a year on credit card fees, and that number is climbing! Outrageous! Close to 80% of all of our cash register transactions are credit or debit charges. These charges benefit no one. Businesses pay the fees, but you pay as well through higher retail prices to cover operating costs. The profits generated by the nameless banking industry are obscene. That is not a personal political view. It's a reality, regardless of your own political affiliation. We asked you a few years ago if you wanted to do something about this. We promised that if we were able to reduce these idiotic fees that we would reinvest those funds in our community. You told us in no uncertain terms that you wanted to do something about this. You know what? To be blunt, we've developed a program and it's now time to put your money where your mouth is, by thinking a little differently and adjusting a habit or two. We've created the mechanism, and to continue with the pithy sayings, it's up to you to pull the trigger.

Very briefly: The fee structures are very confusing. They are intentionally designed that way. Some fees are charged with each transaction. Some are charged on daily and monthly totals. Some are even charged on both. What we know for sure is that every time you use a charge card, it costs money and banks prosper. We want you to continue to charge if you want to. But, most of us use our charge cards many times in the course of the week. We want you to figure out approximately how much you charge in a month at the Co-op. We then want you to put that total on your card as a onetime charge, and essentially we will take that amount and apply it to a charge account tied to your owner card. You can then spend down the amount. This way, we only get charged one fee instead of many. It's a simple idea, isn't it? (Just in case you don't fully understand it, please ask us.) But here's the catch. Until you get used to it, it is a bit less convenient. First you have to open an account with us. Second, we'll need to glance at an ID to ensure the safety of the account and our new program. We can evaluate everything once we get going, but for now we need to be overcautious in order to protect your funds. For a second, allow me to talk about convenience and investment and cooperation.

Bluntly again, we are bucking the system. Everything that we use, from our credit card machines to cash registers to federal privacy regulations to accounting, is built to support our current structure of banking. It is *not* in the interest of the status quo for us to succeed with this simple experiment, yet naturally we need to operate within these systems that are forced upon us. Is it a bit more inconvenient for owners? After all, you already have to show us an owner card, where other customers do not. I believe that one of the major reasons that you are owners is that you want to work with us to create these alternatives. We are leading the way. Other co-ops will look to us to see if we are successful. Someone needs to be the first, and the reality is that there is a price to pay for that. One day, our newly created systems will improve and the next group that takes on the idea will have an easier time of it, and so on. So, again I ask you: Do you really want to help us work toward fundamental change? Then consider partnering with us and signing up for a PPOT today. So what if you have to show us a card for a while. Imagine what we can achieve with your help by this temporary, and in the grand scheme of things minor, imposition. This is what you asked for. We've delivered. If you think about it, I'm challenging *us* to make it work. This morning I put \$200 on my account. I've already made three different purchases today, and spent down from my account. I've already made a difference. There's skepticism out there, even amongst our peers. They don't think that owners/members are willing to work toward change, and that we have all been consumed by the jaded "what's in it for me" approach, and that inherently we always wait for the other guy to do something. We think they are wrong. With your help, we are going to lead, and not follow anymore. Enough said.

By the way, since this whole idea is a bit unconventional, we are being a bit irreverent in our message to you. When you see a button that asks if you are a "PPOthead," if you find the humor in it, then I'll tell you that we have a great communications team, led by Matt. If you take offense, then I'll tell you it was my idea, and make sure that you let me know about your displeasure. Happy summer!

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS BOD@BERKSHIRE.COOP



Daniel Seitz,
President



Erica Spizz,
Vice President



Betsy Andrus
Treasurer



Melissa McGarrity
Secretary



Lawrence
Davis-Hollander



Molly
de St André



Sally
Michael-Keyes



Alexandra
Phillips



Matthew
Syrett

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Art Ames
General Manager

generalmanager@berkshire.coop



Bob Crowle
Business Manager

bcrowle@berkshire.coop



Daniel Esko
Non-Perishables Manager

desko@berkshire.coop



Matt Novik
Communications Manager

mnovik@berkshire.coop



Jeff Schilling
Fresh Food Manager

jschilling@berkshire.coop

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



Cian Dalzell
Assistant Non-Perishables
Manager: Grocery

cdalzell@berkshire.coop



Michele DiSimone
Front End Manager

mdisimone@berkshire.coop



Ted Moy
Merchandising Coordinator

tmoy@berkshire.coop



Lynn Pino
Assistant Fresh Foods
Manager

lpino@berkshire.coop



Andrei Smerechniak
Produce Manager

asmerechniak@berkshire.coop



Kira Smith
Owner Services Manager

ksmith@berkshire.coop



Brenna St. Pierre
Assistant Non-Perishables
Manager: Wellness

bstpierre@berkshire.coop



ENDS STATEMENT (Developed By The Board of Directors)

The Berkshire Cooperative Association cultivates a sustainable local/regional economy and cooperatively builds a vibrant community.

To this end, the Berkshire Cooperative Association:

- E1. Operates a financially successful, community-oriented natural food store that specializes in consciously fresh food and meals, with reasonably priced options
- E2. Flourishes
- E3. Is a model of social and environmental stewardship
- E4. Is accessible, welcoming, inclusive and innovative
- E5. Fosters the growth of local/regional food systems
- E6. Develops an informed and engaged community
- E7. Promotes healthful living
- E8. Supports a sustainable environment

OPERATIONAL VISION

- To be a transformative force in the community
- To serve as a model of a sustainable business alternative
- To nurture social and economic well-being in an environmentally sensitive manner

UPCOMING EVENTS

2012 OWNER APPRECIATION DAYS

10% OFF TO OWNERS IN GOOD STANDING

THURSDAY, JULY 19TH, 2012

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20TH, 2012

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 2013

2012 BOARD MEETINGS

HELD THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

SCHEDULE CHANGES NOVEMBER & DECEMBER DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS

6:00 PM • BERKSHIRE CO-OP OFFICES • 307 MAIN STREET

JULY 25TH - AUGUST 22ND - SEPTEMBER 26TH - OCTOBER 24TH

NOVEMBER 28TH - DECEMBER 19TH

Co-op owners are welcome to attend Board meetings. Owner-input time is reserved from 6:45 – 7 pm to speak on any topic. If you need more time or want to address something in more detail, you can request to be placed onto the meeting agenda. Please recognize that the agenda needs to be set and posted in advance of any meeting. Requests must be received at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Send requests to bod@berkshire.coop

Reinventing School Lunches

By Zoe Borden, Monument Mountain Regional High School

In October 2011, four students from the Monument Mountain Regional High School system banded together to change the way their school perceived food. In a town where there is an abundance of local food sources, the students didn't see why they should have to eat processed and pre-frozen foods everyday. They believed that healthy eating habits should be taught in schools, not just at home, and that students have the right to know where their food is coming from. Zoe Borden (sophomore), Sophie Randolph (senior), Charlie Gibson (junior) and Kelt Wilska (junior) wanted to connect the students with the food they were being served, and saw an opportunity to not only teach students how to make healthier decisions, but also an opportunity to support the local economy.

After a few initial meetings, the students invited State Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli to sit down to a school lunch and talk about building a healthier, more sustainable lunch program at the school. During that meeting the students asked for support in starting a pilot program for the 2012-2013 school year, where more local food would be served in the cafeteria and food would be purchased from local businesses whenever possible. They presented Mr. Pignatelli with their mission statement.

- 1. School meals should be something students are excited about. This will be a result of quality and variety.**
- 2. School meals should be a learning experience. They should be an example of good eating habits, buying locally, sustainability and creativity.**
- 3. Students should be educated about the food they are eating, making lunch a more engaging experience that has a lasting impact.**



Students preparing guacamole for the school lunch test day.

With the support of Mr. Pignatelli and the principal, Marianne Young, the students organized a round-table discussion, which included representatives from food services, a representative from the Department of Health, and local farmers and business owners (the Co-op included). The discussion built up momentum and the students were encouraged to continue their efforts. Local businesses said that they would be pleased to partner with the school, and local farmers said they would help in any way they could to make the pilot program a reality.

So, after months of meeting with the school committee, business owners and food services, a date was picked as a "test day" for the pilot program. On June 8th, the hard work of the students materialized in the form of vegetable wraps, salad,

salsa, hummus, guacamole, chips and cookie treats. The Student Senate funded the purchase of organic zucchini, summer squash, eggplant, onions, peppers, two boxes of whole-wheat wraps, and cheddar cheese. These items were offered at cost by Berkshire Co-op Market. The Co-op also donated the hummus, salsa, chips and raspberry Fig Newton cookies so that the students would be able to have some healthy side options, instead of Rice Krispie treats and Lays potato chips.

At 7 am, students and a few faculty members started bustling into the kitchen. Project Sprout (the student-run garden at the school) brought up a record amount of lettuce, and the vegetables purchased through the Co-op began to be prepped. Avocados were cut and mixed for the guacamole; hummus and salsa were scooped into cups; lettuce was washed and shredded; cheese was crumbled, and the wraps were prepared.

By 11 am, when the first lunch started, 27 students and three faculty members, including the principal, had helped the food services team in the cafeteria to make the entire lunch.

By the end of the lunch periods, the cafeteria had sold a record number of lunches. Students were talking about how full they were and how great it tasted! Some said that they didn't know a vegetable wrap could be so good, and wanted more.

The day was a huge success, and the students are now working with the food services team so that next year, local food days

will occur once a month and at least one thing that is local (whether it's a soup, a salad or chips) is available every day of the school week.



Students lining up for a healthy lunch.

How My Dog Changed My Community

By Matthew Novik

In March, I adopted a dog. I've always been a dog lover, but never had one of my own. At the end of February, I visited a friend in California and spent a week with her and her two wonderful dogs. Prince and Fifi sealed the deal. A week after my return I had adopted Thunder and we've been buddies ever since. I love being a dog owner. I love the additional exercise. I love the companionship. I love the cuteness and the playtime. All of that was expected. What has surprised me, though, is that I have become part of a new community. One that I didn't even realize existed. I am now a dog person and therefore a member of the dog person community.

Dog people talk about their dogs. They share stories about dog adventures, dog health news, great new dog toys, places to walk dogs and quirky dog habits. Dog people also post pictures of their dogs on social media (my instagrams are half Thunder), have bumper stickers on their cars that say funny things about dogs (I'm not there yet), and always seem to have plastic bags falling out of their pockets when they pull out their keys (at least those of us who walk our pups in public do).

Besides just being a dog person, I have become a part of several spin-off dog communities. I go to the dog park in Egremont almost every day. That community takes care of the park, pays for waste removal, and all know each other by the dogs' names instead of the owners'. I'm also now a part of the Sonsini Animal Shelter community. The pound in Pittsfield even put a picture of me and the pup on their Facebook page and in their newsletter. That has led to many encounters with strangers who know me and my dog. Not to mention all the volunteer dog walkers who call him by name when they see him. The last time I was at the bank the teller said hi to him instead of me.

So, with the single action of adopting a dog, I have been inducted into at least three new community



Me and Thunder on Adoption Day

groups. I'm a dog person, I'm a dog park person and I'm a dog pound person. At the Co-op, we talk about community a lot. The cooperative is dedicated to strengthening and supporting our community. It's one of the main ideas behind our mission and why we work as hard as we do. But, even with all that talk, I am always surprised when I'm forced to pare it down and think about what community really means.

Community is a tricky word. At its base definition, it is a unified body of individuals who have shared interests such as their location of residence, hobbies, political beliefs or more. But, when talking about the value of community and efforts to strengthen it, that definition is sort of vanilla. It needs more layers; it needs more depth. When thinking about community, take the dog example into consideration.

We're not talking simple location or politics. Each community to which I belong crosses over other subcommunities and then crosses back again. Just like the dog example, there are people who belong to all sorts of groups and those groups have subgroups upon subgroups. And every person belongs to more than one. Community weaves over itself so many times that the resulting fabric is one of the strongest any of us could imagine.

So, what does that mean? To me, it means the stronger my attachment to my community and its spin-offs, the stronger the community is as a whole. It means I need to pay a little more for waste disposal at the dog park, maybe even donate a lawn chair or something. It means that I should volunteer at the pound or at least write a piece for their newsletter about how the adoption has gone so far. And it means that I should embrace every community to which I belong with that same gusto.

I think we should all do the same. The stronger you connect with your community, the stronger it will be for you when you need it. Whether you are a dog person, a churchgoer, a political activist, a vegetarian, a farmer or a member of one of the countless other possible communities that exist here in southern Berkshire County, I suggest you dive right in.

With all that in mind, I feel I need to suggest that you all do the same with the Co-op. Many of you shop here but are not owners. I suggest that you sign up as an owner. Many are owners but don't take advantage of owner benefits. I suggest that you sign up for a farm tour or to volunteer at our Cooperative Community Garden. The Co-op is a vibrant and important community in our area. So why not dive in and be a bigger part of it? Your participation won't just be fulfilling for you alone, it will benefit us all.

Thinking About What We Eat

Two Co-op Staffers Explore Their Relationships With Food

Adapting to Gluten Free For Love

By Ted Moy

When interviewing for my first job in a store focused on natural foods, I recall being asked the question: Do you know what a gluten-free diet is? My response, accompanied by a deflective chuckle, was, “A diet for gluttons?” This answer was not enough to dismiss my application and I was hired for the cashier position by the end of the interview. Maybe I was hired because of my charm, or possibly the number 28 New England Patriots football jersey I was wearing. Either way, I was in.

This store in northern Vermont was an eye-opener for me, a guy from the suburbs outside Boston. I had never encountered a group of people with such specific dietary needs as those required for someone who has celiac disease. For the first year or so of working the register, I was under the impression that the people choosing the corn or rice pastas were doing so out of personal preference. At some point I struck up a conversation with one of the cooks in the kitchen about what having celiac disease meant to her and what was implied by having a gluten-free diet (No Guinness!). She explained to me the basic dietary restrictions she had to adhere to and the consequences of deviation. My charm must have taken hold again because this cook has now been my girlfriend for more than five years.

Living with someone who has celiac disease was at first a challenge to me. I was constantly forgetting what contained gluten and what didn't and often refused to be in charge of making dinner (unfair, but I figured since she's that she wouldn't my dinners too). This was especially difficult for me because I had never used ingredients like quinoa, and by the way, what is sauce? Over time I began to figure out the nuances and became more comfortable selecting only the acceptable ingredients. I even found myself eating a “mostly” gluten-free diet myself; partially out of sympathy, partially out of sheer laziness.

“Living with someone who has celiac disease was at first a challenge to me. I was constantly forgetting what contained gluten and what didn't and often refused to be in charge of making that nights dinner.”

For those who require it, eating a gluten-free diet has become easier over the past decade or so. Before, to eat gluten-free bread would require going to a co-op or natural foods store to find the seven different flours needed. Then you start baking, which for all the effort required, still does not make sense to produce more than one loaf as you are the only one who has to eat the stuff. Now there are gluten-free options in every aisle, including the bread rack, of most stores. And now some of these items are actually pretty good. As a gluten-eating individual, I can attest that the Tinkyada brand spaghetti maintains a nice consistency (not too mushy, and with a little oil becomes not too sticky), and I am pretty partial to Blue Diamond Nut Thins with a smear of chèvre.

At the bottom of the page, there are a couple of my favorite gluten-free summer salad recipes. They are compliments of my wonderfully talented girlfriend. If you know any recipes that you would like to share with the Co-op community, feel free to write me at tmoy@berkshire.coop and I will happily post them to our co-op blog.

•••••

Just so you know... Celiac (SEE-lee-ak) disease is a digestive condition triggered by consumption of the protein gluten, which is primarily found in bread, pasta, cookies, pizza crust and many other foods containing wheat, barley or rye. People with celiac disease who eat foods containing gluten experience an immune reaction in their small intestines, causing damage to the inner surface of the small intestine and an inability to absorb certain nutrients.

Celiac disease can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Eventually, the decreased absorption of nutrients (malabsorption) that occurs with celiac disease can cause vitamin deficiencies that deprive your brain, peripheral nervous system, bones, liver and other organs of vital nourishment.

No treatment can cure celiac disease. However, you can effectively manage celiac disease by changing your diet. Taken from <http://www.mayoclinic.com>

GF Quinoa-bouleh (keen-wah-boo-lee)

Ingredients

2 cups water
1 cup quinoa, rinsed
1 cup tomato, diced
1 cup cucumber, diced
½ cup parsley, chopped
¼ cup mint, chopped
¼ cup green onions, chopped
¼ cup lemon juice
2 T extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp cumin, toasted and ground (optional)
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- Bring the water and quinoa to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until the quinoa is tender and the liquid has all been absorbed (about 20 minutes) and let cool.
- Mix the quinoa, tomato, cucumber, parsley, mint and green onion.
- Mix the lemon juice, olive oil, cumin, salt and red pepper and toss with salad.

Food Awareness Doesn't Come Easy

By Kira Smith

From the moment I started working in restaurants I was interested in food. I wanted to know everything. I worked my way from clearing tables and making salads to managing one of the top restaurants in the Washington, DC, area. I had made my dream come true and learned amazing things along the way, but now what? That question stuck with me for many years and eventually it evolved. I found myself pondering what I really knew about food. I could run a seamless dinner service, figure out any overbooking situation and cook just about any dish. I could even tell you the meanings of all those fancy words on the menu like confit, meritage and poisson, but then I realized that all that knowledge is really only half the story. The burning question really was: what am I really eating and where did it come from?

In 2003 I decided to find out. Being the know-it-all that I am, I figured this could not be too difficult. I mean, I worked in restaurants where we only used the best of the best, so a little research and I'd start feeling better, right? Knowledge would be satisfied and I could move on. Lets just say I was wrong—really wrong.

Starting at the restaurant level was the first step, and because most high-end restaurants buy from trusted purveyors and local gatherers to source their ingredients this step was relatively easy. In most cases I could trace major ingredients back to the farms just a few miles away from the establishments themselves. For a moment I was pacified. A little while later, Chef Cathal Arm- strong, for whom I worked at the time said some- thing I will never forget. “Nature is perfect. Extract the flavor. Enhance it. Don't take away from it.” I headed home, pondering that statement as I walked the six blocks from the restaurant to my apartment.

Working in a restaurant eighty hours a week meant I ate most of my meals at the restaurant, but what was in my cabinets at home? That night I walked straight through the front door and right into my kitchen. I opened my cabinets and starting pulling things off the shelves. By the time my boyfriend (at the time) came home that night I was sitting on the kitchen floor surrounded by boxes of “food” with a long list of “ingredients” that I needed to look up because I had no idea what they were. I clearly had a lot more work to do.

The longer I spent Googling the ingredients, the more freaked out I became. I had always thought of myself as knowledgeable about all things food, but in reality I had no idea what I was putting into my body. I spent that whole night searching the Internet. Every fact I learned brought up ten new questions. It was clear I was fighting a losing battle, but I couldn't just give up and go back to not paying attention. Some of the ingredients I found in my crackers were the same as in chemical cleaners. Nope, that was not going to cut it. I had to make a lifestyle change and it wasn't going to be easy.

It took me a long time to change my shopping habits, starting with shopping at farmers' markets and small health food stores, but once I did I found it affecting my whole life. I stopped working in restaurants; I had done all I could there. I now work at a food cooperative where I can be more directly involved with things like the Non-GMO Project, and I'm not afraid to read the back of a box of cereal. While I still frequent local farmers' markets, it's nice to know I can walk into the Co-op and support our local farmers there as well. There is nothing like fresh lettuce. I have started my own garden, and while it is small and just has a few plants, it has proven to me that the green thumb I thought I didn't have is there after all. Next year I will give actual food a try. I have learned to can food and create less waste. I can make my own bread and crackers and the feeling is very liberating. Instead of feeling tied to a grocery store and the products they want me to buy I have given myself the ability to choose what I put into my body. While there will always be questions about the food we eat, I will always remember: “Nature is perfect. Extract the flavor. Enhance it. Don't take away from it.” It will always direct one down the right path.

Sesame Noodles Sans Glut-ans

Ingredients

1 pound brown rice spaghetti or linguini
1/2 cup gluten free soy sauce or tamari
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
2 tablespoons canola oil or olive oil
2 tablespoons rice-wine vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons crushed red pepper
1 bunch scallions, sliced, divided
1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds- black and white

Directions

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook spaghetti until just tender according to package directions. Drain; rinse under cold water.
- Whisk soy sauce, sesame oil, canola oil, vinegar, crushed red pepper, and 1/4 cup scallions. Add noodles; toss to coat.
- To serve, mix in sesame seeds and garnish with the remaining scallions.

Growing Rice in the Berkshires

Continued From Page One

South River in February (see the spring newsletter for my last article) I introduced Christian to Alex Freedman of Community Cooperative Farms in Sheffield, MA. They have been cultivating other grains for some time and were intrigued by the idea of growing rice on their farm. The “seed was planted” that day, and “The Berkshire Rice Project” was born.

The Berkshire Rice Project is a local, grassroots effort to foster the sustainable cultivation of rice in the Berkshires. Participants include Berkshire Co-op Market, local farmers, and individuals such as my wife and myself. The first-year goal is to develop a viable stock of seeds for a bigger growing project next year. I have obtained a rice-growing manual written by Takeshi Akaogi that I will be sharing with everyone involved. He has been experimenting with growing rice in Putney, Vermont, for several years now and has developed a comprehensive guide to growing rice in the northeastern United States. This manual will prove invaluable to us and to any others who are interested in participating in the next phases of the project in 2013 and beyond. The second- and third-year goals are to have several paddies in cultivation in the area for limited consumption, perpetuation of the seed stock, and the development of cultural knowledge and experience. Although the commercial potential of rice-growing in the Berkshires is somewhat uncertain at this time, by years four and five I would like to see rice in distribution at your local CSA and for sale at the Co-op. I do think that backyard gardens have a much greater potential to move the project forward, so I encourage any individuals interested in growing rice in their backyard next year to get in touch with me. Everyone is invited to participate.

Fast-forward to early June and it was now time to go pick up the rice plants from Christian. We had discussed the fact that it was a bit too late to grow the plants in the ground this year (mid-May would have been ideal), but that we could all grow the plants in five-gallon buckets or large planters. So on a day off from the Co-op, I made my second journey to South River Miso, this time accompanied by my two children, Charlotte (five) and David (two). They were excited about the trip, and as we made our way up the foothills of the Berkshires, our eyes were treated to a rolling kaleidoscope of varying size farmsteads framed by lush rolling hills, vibrant wetlands, and flower-filled fields. The night’s rain covered the vegetation with a blanket of droplets reflecting the sun’s light, which was just starting to shine through the breaking clouds. We arrived at the farm an hour later and we were soon greeted by Christian and Gaella. I was happy to meet Gaella, as I didn’t get the chance during my last trip. They were obviously busy with renovations to the downstairs portion of their home and I felt incredibly grateful to them for taking some time out of their busy day to meet with me. They were very warm and friendly and I could tell that the life they live on the farm has treated them well.

Nestled on 64 acres in rural Conway, MA, the farm has four rustic post and beam structures. One is their home, the second the miso production building, the third the miso fermentation building, and the fourth a barn. To the left of the buildings, they also have a ninety-foot long array of solar panels that just went active in March. The panels should produce enough power for the property, and the system is “on the grid,” meaning it will send electricity back into the electrical grid should production exceed usage. There is a small greenhouse to the right of the solar panels. Down the hill from the buildings and the solar panels, the South River runs



The beautiful circular rice paddy at South River Farm

right through the middle of the property. Directly across the river they lease an impressive expanse of acreage to a local CSA called Natural Roots. They provide food to over 150 members, and when we arrived we saw one of the CSA members leading a horsedrawn plow through the field. The children were excited to see this so I told them we would cross the river after we got the rice plants ready.

We met Christian down by the river with the buckets. He began filling them with a combination of decomposed wood mulch, and soil the South River had deposited when the whole valley flooded during Hurricane Irene in August 2011. Once the buckets were full, we transplanted eleven plants in total, with my daughter excitedly participating. Nearby, David was exploring the local flora. Christian gave me eighteen more plants in a box for later planting, and instructed me on the care of the plants. We then loaded the buckets in the car and proceeded to explore the property.

We started near the small 36’ diameter paddy where Christian had cultivated the rice for the past three years. Regrettably, his summer schedule was too busy for him to grow rice in the paddy this year. He did of course have numerous plants growing for seed and for sharing with friends interested in growing rice. We sat next to the small pond that feeds the paddy and noticed a beautiful group of lily pads that had produced an exquisite pink flower that Charlotte wanted to pick. David enthusiastically pointed out a frog perched on one of the lily pads. We then crossed the river on a wooden suspension foot-

bridge and explored the farm. The cultivated land stretched for hundreds of feet in both directions and we started to walk towards the south end of the field. We discovered over one hundred heritage breed chickens openly roaming in their own fenced off section of the field, foraging for bugs, worms and grubs. The horse was no longer in the field. The kids were obviously disappointed so I told them we could cross back to the other side of the river and explore there. While being careful to avoid the poison ivy rampant by the river’s edge, we discovered a clear opening to the river. Some river wading and stone skipping later, we collected several rocks for painting when we got home. Our trip was coming to an end so we made our way back up to the house to bid farewell to Christian and Gaella. Gaella provided us with some fresh water and the children played with a ball for several minutes while we said our good-byes. Christian gave us a jar of sweet white miso and a bottle of miso tamari. The children told him they were excited to have miso soup later. I left feeling a longing for a simpler life. One in which the measure of wealth is the health of the land that provides our sustenance. A life unencumbered by the distractions of modern society. A life dedicated to family, food and community. As we drove away, David broke through my reverie with the question, “Daddy, were we at Miso’s house?” Charlotte and I laughed so heartily that it took a few moments for me to answer. I replied, “His name is Christian, but you can call him Miso if you would like.”



Harvested rice hanging to dry

The next day I distributed the plants to several area farmers. Today, there are rice plants growing at Community Cooperative Farms in Sheffield, MA, Left Field Farm in Middlefield, MA, Three Maples Market Garden in West Stockbridge, MA, on Berkshire Co-op Market’s patio and at my house. In closing I would like to extend a most heartfelt thank you to Christian for his generosity and graciousness throughout, and for so willingly sharing this amazing gift with all of us in the Berkshires. I like to believe that these seeds could have the power to change the destiny of our community. From the ancient wisdom that articulates the unlimited abundance and generosity of nature, we say “from one grain ten thousand grains.”

You can visit the rice plants on the patio at Berkshire Co-op Market or by contacting the participating farms in advance to schedule a visit. Stay tuned for the next installment in this series due out in the fall newsletter.

Get Unplugged: A Screen-Free Success

The Education & Outreach Report

By Jenny Schwartz

The sun was shining for the second year of “Get Unplugged,” which took place from April 16th to April 20th. Get Unplugged, a collaboration between Berkshire Co-op Market and Berkshire South Regional Community Center, provides a weeklong series of free programs with an emphasis on environmentally friendly and community building activities. Along with Jenna Bronson, Associate Director of Youth Enrichment and Recreation at Berkshire South Regional Community Center, we worked together to provide activities that would spark new interests in children to potentially replace screen time.

We saw our vision come alive when Katherine Vause of Solid Rock Farm visited the center on Tuesday. She chose to focus on the proper care and handling of chicks and baby goats. The goats grazed in the future site of the Berkshire South Community Garden as the Greenagers crew, led by Abigail Childs, cleared away weeds in preparation for the raised bed assembly and workday that was scheduled to take place the next day. The children gained exposure to the talents of the young goats and were great assistants in the garden. They also enjoyed some petting and feeding time with the animals.

On Wednesday, it was a community garden day at Berkshire South Regional Community Center. Abigail Childs, Mike Leavitt and Will Conklin from Greenagers worked alongside Justin Torrico, Mael Raoult, Alex Freedman, Jasper Kosokoff and Hannah Converse, from Community Cooperative Farm. We had an overwhelmingly positive response to the day as the majority of the children who participated were actively engaged for the duration of the workshop. Even the youngest kids were involved in the assembly process of the raised beds by assisting in holding planks of wood as an adult nailed them together. At one point, when the older group of children came out, it was clear that one child was not interested in participating. Irritable and argumentative, he continuously asked why he needed to be outside in the garden. To everyone’s surprise, he quickly changed his attitude as he became more involved, and ended his experience in the garden by taking ribbon and weaving it around four sticks he had placed in the respective corners of one completed raised bed. It was tremendous to see the change in his attitude.

At the conclusion of the day, one child asked, “Do we get to come back tomorrow?” I found “get” to be a key word in this sentence as it emphasized the child’s natural interest rather than a feeling of obligation in returning to the garden. This type of response was exactly what we wanted from this program.

The fluidity continued Thursday when Jamie Samowitz, Youth Education Coordinator at Berkshire Botanical Gardens, led a workshop on how to make terrariums. For an hour the children were the “kings and queens” of their environment, placing soil, charcoal and rocks into an empty soda bottle and then deciding on the placement of their plants. There were “oohhhs” and “aahhhs” when Jamie mentioned the addition of treasure to their habitat, which consisted of little pine cones and small beads. It was remarkable to hear their responses based on the simplicity of these objects. When it came to naming their terrariums, we had some creative ones such as “Adventure World,” “Palm Tree Avenue,” “Ecosystem Aquarium” and “Treasure Planet.”

Later in the day, we got the blood flowing when Crossfit Kids came to Berkshire South and Mike, Leslie, Cole, and Jack Bissaillon showed the group how to play a game of “Crossfit Baseball,” after an invigorating warm-up. What is Crossfit Baseball? Each base consisted of completing a number of repetitions of a physical movement before moving to the next base. First base consisted of box jumps, second base involved squats, and third base was burpees, a movement that resembles the combination of a pushup and a jumping jack. One child had such a great time he repeated the class with the second group of kids.

Other highlights of the week included a Berkshire Co-op Market DIY Kids class on how to make your own hand lotion. Food Adventures, a program in collaboration between Berkshire Co-op Market and the Nutrition Center, led a workshop on how to make a rainbow wrap with a maple vinaigrette dressing. Extra wraps were shared among employees of Berkshire South and Get Unplugged volunteers. Rachel Bodine from the Center for EcoTechnology presented a workshop on recycling to a group of teens who were also at the Community Center for babysitter training. The workshop ended with making a paper craft in which these future babysitters can make with kids instead of resorting to television. Berkshire South provided their own instructors to lead workshops as well. Erin Naylor, a ballet and jazz dance instructor, led a ballet workshop while Peggy Harner, a swim instructor and lifeguard, led a workshop on swim safety. It was a sight to be seen as one side of the pool was filled with bobbing children in bright orange life vests.

We ended the week with a friendly game of kickball, boys versus girls, where everyone received a good lesson in sportsmanship when competition got the best of some of players. After snacking on some water and popcorn, courtesy of the Co-op, all participants in Get Unplugged received a flower bulb complete with instructions, which they could plant at home.

One quote that stuck throughout the week came from a young girl while we were enjoying a nature walk in the woods. She exclaimed, “I love nature! I love playing in it, I love picking things from it and I love building it!”

It’s never too early to express interest in leading a workshop for Get Unplugged. If you have a skill you would like to teach, please contact Jenna Bronson at 413-528-2810 ext.34 or Jenny Schwartz at 413-528-9697 ext.33.

While the initial work in the community garden has been completed, we are still looking for volunteers in the garden throughout the summer. Get involved in the work these kids have started. Workdays are Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30pm and Sundays from 3-5pm. Produce grown in the Co-op’s plot will supplement Berkshire South Regional Community Center’s Community Suppers. There will be an opportunity for volunteers to take home harvest depending on availability. For more information, please contact Jenny Schwartz at 413-528-9697 ext. 33 or email jschwartz@berkshire.coop.



cooperative community garden

Learn - Plant - Cooperate

Community Plots - Gardening Workshops

with The Co-op, Berkshire South & Greenagers

Information: 413.528.9697 x33 or jschwartz@berkshire.coop

The Aware Shopper is the Safe Shopper

By Art Ames

Sometimes it feels like much of what we try to do at the Co-op is a bit like being on a seesaw. If we lose the balance, or jump off too quickly, someone can get hurt. Trying to find the balance between education, action and consumer interest when it comes to selecting the food that can be sold here and the food that is not allowed on our shelves is particularly challenging. Fortunately, we do have a Food Policy to refer to (available on our website), yet that is naturally a living and breathing document, subject to change as we constantly learn more about the food system around us.

We specifically bar certain items for different reasons. To take the most obvious example, only products devoid of artificial ingredients are allowed. Our Ends Statements (sort of like our mission) clearly define us as a natural food cooperative, and we interpret that as a literal description, thus our ban of artificial ingredients. We ban other ingredients because there is incontrovertible evidence that those ingredients are harmful. Period! Recently, we made the decision to more aggressively address the GMO issue by recognizing the key crops that are most likely to contain GMOs and banning all NEW items at risk unless the manufacturer has provided assurances that their product is GMO-free or will be GMO-free. As an aside, I note that this is only an issue for natural products since products that are certified organic have to be GMO-free. We even make use of our Food Policy to promote other beneficial results that are more social in nature, such as giving preference to Fair Trade, local and regional, so it's not all based on science. I suspect that most of you intuitively understand what we are trying to achieve through this Food Policy. However, I also suspect that we need to be careful at the Co-op to not give you a false sense of security.

Individual differences and reactions to food are increasing nationwide. Health issues ranging from obesity to sodium intake to sugar content affect us all, but not always equally. Allergic reactions to everything from gluten to soy to lactose to peanuts are of more

concern than ever in our homes. Recently, I assisted an owner whose child has an allergy to cinnamon. That was a first for me, but certainly it was a priority for that concerned parent who observed that we use too much cinnamon (in her opinion) in our recipes. We just brought in gluten-free oats to our bulk department—stored in a separate and dedicated container—and yet we certainly do not operate in a gluten-free environment. For most of us who are reducing gluten or have a normal allergic



ingredient that is currently becoming controversial, and inconclusive studies have led to inconclusive opinions, and our team is actively gathering information in order to potentially make a change in Food Policy...or not. I'm being vague because the actual ingredient is not of importance right now. More crucial, our unhappy owner was unpleasantly surprised that the ingredient was included in anything at the Co-op, because due to her own family's issues, the ingredient is of course considered to be forbidden. She assumed we would not have it here. We gave her a false sense of security.

Yes, you should feel generally more comfortable when you buy products at the Co-op. Generally, those products will have fewer additives, be closer to original sources, will have a higher percentage of organic purity, and in some cases, will be a healthier alternative. Don't forget we aren't a health food store either, although we carry pure ingredients. Most important, please make sure that you also practice your own due diligence and check the ingredients on products you buy whether at



reaction to gluten, this will be a perfect solution. For the few who have severe reactions and for whom there's even a dire consequence at the hint of cross-contamination, perhaps they would be better served by buying the packaged gluten-free oats.

We all have our own agendas, based on our own experiences. I can't even begin to describe how often we are asked to remove product from the store based on ingredients. It is a bit ironic, because I have an absolute certainty that our product selection is far more restrictive than any other grocery type establishment in the area. In fact, I can safely say that many other co-ops would view our product vetting and decision-making as being far more stringent and exclusionary than theirs. Is it enough? I'm really not sure. Every day we learn something new and evaluate. Recently, an owner bought a product that ultimately caused her child to get sick because of the inclusion of an ingredient that causes an allergic reaction. It's an

the Co-op or elsewhere. Don't assume anything. Please continue to bring it to our attention when you question ingredients and also come to us and let us help you find alternatives. We are here to work and partner with you so that you have the opportunity to feed your families as you choose. We will also continue to actively and aggressively reach out to manufacturers and suppliers to try and effect change where needed or wanted. Yet ultimately, your own family's health and safety will remain dependent on your own actions and education. We can and will help.

THE CO-OP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Each fiscal year, the Co-op is involved in a wide variety of community efforts. We donate nearly \$20,000 and countless employee hours a year to this community. A few owners have asked for a list of organizations that have been supported by their co-op. Listed below, you will find every local organization that has received a financial donation of \$100 or at least ten hours of staff time.

Bard College Trustee Leader-Scholar Program
BerkShares
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Berkshire Grown
Berkshire Humane Society
Berkshire Playwrights Lab
Berkshire Pulse
Berkshire South Regional Community Center
The Cancer Project
The Carrot Project/Greater Berk. Agricultural Fund
The Center for Eco Technology
The Center for Peace Through Culture
Construct Inc

Conte Community School
Community Cooperative Farms
The Eagle Fund/Southern Berk. Reg. School District
Eat Well & Learn
Fairview Hospital
Great Barrington Cooperative Preschool
Great Barrington Land Conservancy
GreenAgers
The Housatonic Library
Kare Bear Invitational
Monument Mountain Regional High School
Monument Valley Regional Middle School
Mount Everett Middle School
Muddy Brook Elementary School

Nessacus Regional Middle School
New Marlborough Central School
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association
Railroad Street Youth Project
Sheffield Kiwanis Club, Inc.
Sheffield Land Trust
Trustees of Reservations
Undermountain Elementary School
Volunteers in Medicine
WAMC Northeast Public Radio
WBCR Berkshire Community Radio
WFCR New England Public Radio
Williamstown Elementary School

Visiting Three Maples Market Garden

MAPLES CONT FROM PAGE 1 Cian and Amanda met when they were in college. Both of them had dreams of farming, but as Amanda said with a laugh, they “thought they would have to retire before they could start farming.” They were wrong about that one. Once they started dating, their shared enthusiasm for agriculture added fuel to the fire. After college, they did apprenticeships on farms in the Hudson Valley and Vermont and traded off working and farming to pay the bills. Just a short time after graduation, they were well on their way to a dream that had seemed impossible not long before. “The biggest obstacle we had to overcome was the need for land,” said Amanda. And then conversation turned to her family’s four acres in West Stockbridge. But it took a help-wanted ad for a full-time grocery buyer at Berkshire Co-op Market to make the move a reality. That’s right, Three Maples Market Garden is here, in part, because Cian got a job working for the Co-op. Now he works a full-time job to pay the bills and part-time on the farm while Amanda farms all day and works part time as a freelance internet consultant.

After five minutes of conversation with Cian and Amanda, it is clear that they are thrilled with the choices they have made. They sit together, each petting their dog, Badger, and chatting about farming, the work they do, the politics of agriculture, their plans for the future and their upcoming growing season. Ten minutes in, it is just as clear that Three Maples Market Garden is not a singular sensation. When looking at the young farmers movement as a whole, several characteristics seem to be pervasive throughout.

They Work Really Hard

Cian and Amanda work all the time. Cian is full time plus at the Co-op. Amanda works part time as an internet consultant and at a local residence for developmentally disabled adults. And, in their “free time” they farm about an acre in West Stockbridge and another acre

and a half at their second location in Alford. “Farmers don’t get vacations,” said Cian. “We are at the mercy of nature, and need to be ready to react whenever nature says so.” Young farmers have energy. And they use it all in pursuit of their dreams. They work hard in the fields and many of them, like the Dalzells, have other jobs to help pay the bills.

They Are Innovative

The Dalzells are interested in season extension. As a lot of young northeast farmers are, they hope to extend the growing season past the prime two summer months into the spring and autumn. In order to begin that process, they needed a greenhouse. Not long before they started Three Maples, the USDA was offering financial assistance to farmers for projects like this. But that most of those programs have since been defunded. Cian and Amanda needed money to start the process.

That’s where the Internet came in. Because they are young,

computer savvy, blog happy people, the Dalzells found out about a site called Kickstarter. The website offers users the ability to present original ideas for projects that need funding, set a minimum financial goal and

ask the web community for help. They had received a small video camera as a gift and used it to create a video making the case for their greenhouse. With high hopes and fairly low expectations, they uploaded it to the Kickstarter page. They thought they would struggle to

reach the minimum. Instead they raised over \$1,000 more than they asked for in just under three weeks. “We were floored by the results,” said Amanda. “In some ways it gave us confidence that our project would work. If all those people believed in us, we must be doing something right.”

They Collaborate

The Dalzells are not ashamed to admit that they have taken any help that has been offered. They look for advice, for opinions and for suggestions that may help them get to where they want to go easier, faster and more efficiently. They communicate regularly with other young farmers about their methods and their challenges. And they even stay in touch with farmer friends in New York and Vermont. “Thank god for the Internet,” said Cian. “Our network is



The Dalzells Take a Break at the West Stockbridge Location

larger because we can stay in touch by email with farmers that are farther away. It’s a great resource.”

There is also an underground collaboration of local young farmers in the Berkshires. They hold a weekly potluck at rotating locations. They eat good food, talk about their farms and generally have a good time. “We hardly ever get to go,” said Amanda, “but it’s wonderful that everyone is staying connected.”

They are Reclaiming Farmland

“We named our farm Three Maples Market Garden because of the three maple trees my grandfather planted here back when this was a full-time farm,” said Amanda. “The property stopped being actively farmed almost fifty years ago. Until last year, that is.” The highway wasn’t there back then. And the family owned far more acreage than they presently do. But, in spite of the changes, Cian and Amanda have made the land productive again.

That’s a story that is being repeated nationwide. According to the National Young Farmers’ Coalition, 68% of young farmers cite limited access to land as their biggest challenge. But, with a little creativity, farmers are making it work. Just like in the case of Three Maples, the available land is starting to get farmed. Land owners are trading access for CSA shares, barter deals or just the pleasure of seeing the land used. One local farm is located on the land of a farmer’s former grade school teacher. Another is on land owned by a family hoping to build a home someday. In each case, young farmers have found a way to access the land they need.

They Care

When asked why they do what they do, the Dalzells’ answer is quite simple. “We want to supply good local food to good local people,” said Cian. And, by all accounts, they are well on their way to achieving that goal. They have twice as many CSA members as they did last year. The greenhouse is up and running. The additional land in Alford is planted. The farmstand is built and filled with fresh produce every weekend, and the Dalzells, along with all the other young farmers in the area, are ready to take this area’s food supply to the next level.

For more information:

Three Maples Market Garden
 threemaplesmarketgarden.com
 98 State Line Road, West Stockbridge, MA
 413-329-8601 threemaplesgrowers@gmail.com

Cafe Recycling 101: The Basics

From the Sustain Ability Committee

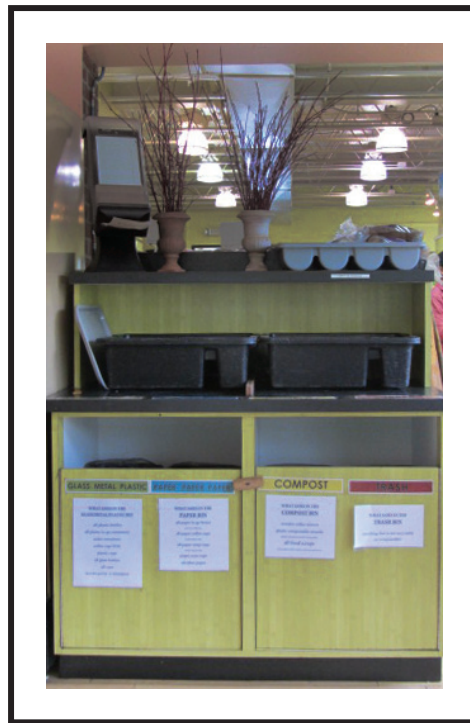
Here at Berkshire Co-op Market, we are excited about some of the positive environmental changes that are happening throughout the store. Recently, you might have noticed one of the changes yourself during a visit to the café: we now have a recycling station there. Although it is still a work in progress, we are very happy about the improvements. However, we understand that some people might find it a little confusing. So we have decided to break it down for you here. Hopefully your trip to the café can run even smoother than it has in the past. We hope this helps!

DISH STATION

Please remember that the top of the recycling center is reserved for dirty dishes and cutlery. Utensils go in the bin on the highest shelf, while cups, bowls and plates all go in the bins on the lower shelf.

DOWN BELOW – RECYCLING CENTER

There are four bins below the dish station. Many people get confused because they are used to just one or two trash stations. We have gone the extra mile to include one container for glass/metal/plastic, one for paper, one for food waste and one for all other trash.



WHAT GOES WHERE?

Glass, Metal & Plastic

all plastic bottles
 all plastic to-go items
 sushi containers
 coffee cup lids
 plastic cups
 all glass bottles
 all cans
NO plastic utensils

Paper

all paper to-go boxes
 all paper coffee cups (no lids)
 all paper soup cups (no lids)
 paper cone cups
 all other paper

Compost

wooden coffee stirrers
 plastic compostable items
 all food scraps
 (this includes *everything*, even bread and bones)

Trash

anything that is not recyclable or compostable!
 Remember Before you throw it away, ask yourself:
Can it be reused or recycled?



2012
International
Year of
Cooperatives

**Featured Co-op: Organic Valley
Building a Better World, Organically**

By Kristin Howard

For over twenty years, Organic Valley has been a leader in promoting organic agriculture and building the market for organic dairy products. Formed in Wisconsin in 1988 with the mission of saving family farms through sustainable farming, the organization is America's largest co-operative of organic farmers and includes over 1,600 farmer-members across the country.



While its roots are in the Midwest, Organic Valley has a strong network of member farmers in New England, with some right here in our neighborhood. (The Organic Valley website includes a "Who's Your Farmer" tool that shows member farms near your zip code.) The co-op is organized into regional "pools" and the pool that supplies milk to food co-ops in our region includes more than 175 member farms in New England. Organic Valley's strong national brand helps provide stability to farmers in a notoriously difficult dairy market, as well as a price premium for members in our region.

Self help is a basic co-operative principle, and farmers must adhere to organic standards and purchase an equity share in order to become members of the co-op. Regina and Brent Beidler joined Organic Valley in March of 2000 as one of the first member farms in Vermont. "We had a meeting in St. Albans with George Siemon (C-E-I-E-I-O of Organic Valley and one of its founding farmer members)," remembers Regina. "There were six of us who said 'yes, we'd love to be part of the co-op'".

According to Regina, Organic Valley has always had a strong culture of valuing family farming, and membership in the co-operative provides benefits that extend beyond improved price and ownership. "For us personally, we've been able to participate in the governance of the co-op but we've also had opportunities that have expanded our own horizons, like meeting other farmers and participating in public forums," she says. "These sorts of opportunities for farmers are rare and we greatly appreciate them."

Organic Valley's co-operative model has also been a good business strategy, strengthening the success of member farmers and enabling them to compete in the marketplace. The co-op is noted for its support services, particularly for the next generation of dairy farmers. In 2011, the co-op grew over 14% in sales and welcomed another 200 farmer-members. Reflecting on this growth, Regina notes, "The original intention was for farmers to have some control and say. That this idea resonates so much is pretty astounding."

Organic Valley and Berkshire Co-op Market share a common vision of cooperative business as key to building thriving local food systems and strong regional economies. Co-ops root infrastructure in our communities, enabling consumers to access healthy, affordable food while helping farmers and other producers receive fair prices for their products. This co-op is proud to carry a large line of Organic Valley products including milk, butter, cheese, cottage cheese and sour cream. During 2012, the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives, we have a strong message to share: Co-ops Build a Better World!

Kristin Howard works in a variety of capacities with Franklin Community Co-op, which operates Green Fields Co-op Market in Greenfield and McCusker's Co-op Market in Shelburne Falls, MA.

Pedal Power in Action

Local Student Bikes Across America to Build a School in Haiti



This summer, Peter Smith, who will be a junior at Monument Mountain High School in the fall, will be riding his bicycle across the United States. His hope is to ride 3,800 miles and dedicate all the funds he raises to a capital campaign to build a new school in Jacquet, Haiti. Peter made this decision after learning about Haiti and participating in Berkshire Hills Regional School District's "Give to Give" efforts working with the AVJ School in Jacquet. He was fortunate enough to meet and interview the director of the school, Gregory Antoine, when he visited the Berkshires this past February.

"Peter is an example of one extraordinary young person's desire to make a difference in the world by raising awareness and bringing people's attention to helping others in the world receive the benefits of education."

Peter is working with HotFutbol, a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to bringing organized soccer to communities in Haiti with a simultaneous and parallel emphasis on community development and sustainability. The organization works closely with a decentralized network of Haitian grass roots groups dedicated to promoting voluntary and cooperative ways of organizing the pursuit of social justice, economic self-sufficiency and universal education. Futbol (soccer) is a fundamental component of community identity in Haiti for children and adults. Using futbol as a medium to address community needs provides both the opportunity for play and the chance to develop skills of communication, leadership, goal setting, discipline, and being a contributing member of a larger community.

Berkshire Hills Regional School District and HotFutbol are working together, having developed a "sister school" relationship with the AVJ School. This involves letter writing, Skyping between students, and collecting school supplies and donations for the school's general operating budget. The effort also creates the opportunity for students to learn firsthand about the culture and the conditions in this neighboring country, and for the children in Haiti to have experience communicating with children in the United States.

Peter is an example of one extraordinary young person's desire to make a difference in the world by raising awareness and bringing people's attention to helping others in the world receive the benefits of education.

Please visit www.hotfutbol.org to find out more, and visit Peter's Facebook page: Sea2Sea for Haiti: Education for Tomorrow. Peter will be blogging and posting updates during his trip.



COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD

The Story of Mondragon: A Study in Cooperation

By Daniel Seitz, President of the Berkshire Co-op Board of Directors



Lately, I've been inspired by the story of Mondragon—the worker cooperative complex located in the Basque region of Spain. Mondragon was founded in the 1950s by a visionary Catholic priest named José María Arizmendiarieta (referred to as Don José María) and five young engineers. At that time, the Basque region was poor and its natural resources largely depleted, and the Franco regime was trying to eradicate the Basque language and culture. Don José María believed that the Basque people could meet their economic needs and sustain their cultural heritage in the face of these severe challenges through the development of worker-owned cooperatives, and he set about realizing this goal by creating a small cooperative company to produce oil lamps. Sixty-five years later, this venture has grown to become a complex of interrelated cooperative companies that operate in four different broad areas—finance, industry, retail, and knowledge—and that earn roughly \$20 billion annually while employing approximately 100,000 workers. Mondragon is Spain's fourth largest industrial and seventh largest financial group, and conducts business worldwide.

Mondragon strives to operate according to the same cooperative principles as our own Berkshire Co-op Market, as expressed by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA): 1. *Voluntary and Open Membership*; 2. *Democratic Member Control*; 3. *Member Economic Participation*; 4. *Autonomy and Independence*; 5. *Education, Training and Information*; 6. *Cooperation among Cooperatives*; and 7. *Concern for Community*. The principles reflect the values of the cooperative movement as expressed by ICA: *self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity*. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

What allowed Mondragon to become so successful in a relatively short period of time was not only its commitment to cooperative principles and values, but also the understanding of the founder that:

- The cooperatives he and his colleagues were establishing needed to work together instead of in isolation—meaning that they needed to purchase and sell to one another, share technical expertise, allow for movement of workers from one company to another, and so on;
- The cooperative movement needed its own investment funding source in the form of a cooperative bank that would be required to lend to cooperative companies;
- In order to be successful, cooperative companies needed to operate on the basis of sound business management practices, utilize expert technical knowledge, engage in careful financial planning, and utilize other types of practical business knowledge; and
- It is necessary to experiment pragmatically in developing the organizational-



structures of cooperatives while staying true to the underlying values and principles, since changes in the economic and social environments require ongoing innovation.

Although Mondragon is a unique case due to the circumstances in the Basque region and the extraordinary vision, drive and brilliance of its founder, nonetheless there are other places—most notably Quebec and northern Italy—where interrelated cooperative businesses have developed and play an important role in the regional economy. This leads me to two questions: Why not work to create an interrelated cooperative sector in the Berkshires? What better time is there than now?

[The following books on Mondragon are very informative: *From Mondragon to America: Experiments in Community Economic Development*, by Greg MacLeod; and *Making Mondragon: The Growth and Dynamics of the Worker Cooperative Complex*, by William and Kathleen Whyte. Wikipedia also provides fairly extensive information on Mondragon.]

PPOT Prepaid Owner Tabs

What is a prepaid owner tab?

A PPOT account allows Co-op owners to link funds to their Co-op Owner Card. They can pay a lump sum at the register and then gradually spend that total at their convenience.

How does it work?

Interested owners can sign up for the program at the front desk. They will be asked to show picture ID and fill out a simple form. Within two days of the form's submission, the account will be activated. Once the account is active, funds may be added at any time at any register.

Where did this idea come from?

A while back, Co-op owners expressed concern at the amount of credit card fees charged to the store each year. They asked for an alternative that could give them a path to lowering those fees. PPOT is the response to that request. With the money saved, the Co-op could improve services and outreach.

How much does the Co-op pay in fees?

The number has increased every year for as long as we can remember. In Fiscal Year 2013, which started on July 1st, we are budgeted to spend almost \$100,000.

Co-op shoppers may have noticed a lot of talk about something called PPOT lately. This new program is the Co-op's attempt to offer an alternative to the credit card economy to its owners. Many consumers are looking for another option for spending without amassing debt and incurring fees. The Co-op as well has been looking for a way to alleviate the substantial fees charged with every credit card transaction. The PPOT program, which allows owners to use their owner cards to pay at the register, provides that alternative.

How much will this program save?

Unfortunately, this is a more difficult question to answer than it seems. Credit card fee structures are incredibly complicated. The rates vary in all sorts of way according to all sorts of factors. Some are charged per transaction, others on totals over a period. What we do know is that if people use their cards less, the fees will go down. The rate of that decrease depends of the rate of PPOT usage.

Can I fund my account with a credit card?

Yes! By charging a lump sum instead of many smaller transactions, you will still save on the per transaction fees,

Can I fund my account with BerkShares?

Unfortunately, BerkShares do no work for this program. But you can still use Berkshares for up to 50% of your purchase amount at any time.

Can two people share a PPOT account?

While we would love for this to be an option, the limitations of our systems will not allow it. Funds can be designated to any owner or associate card, though those funds cannot be shared between cards.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CREDIT CARD ECONOMY

The Departmental Reports

Wellness From Brenna St. Pierre

Greetings from Wellness! We've made some changes since spring and would like to pass on information about the FDA's new sunscreen regulations. We couldn't be happier about these new regulations, as prior rules on sunscreen were concerned only with protection against sunburn, caused primarily by UVB waves. Regulations did not address protection from UVA waves at all, which contribute to skin cancer and early skin aging. "Sun Protection Factor," or SPF, only refers to the degree of protection from UVB rays, while "Broad Spectrum" sunscreens include either minerals or chemicals to protect against both UVA and UVB waves. The FDA is implementing both testing and labeling requirements for sunscreens that require manufacturers to substantiate "Broad Spectrum" claims with a critical wavelength test. Previously, companies could make these claims with or without testing. On the label, sunscreens will now have "Broad Spectrum" and the SPF value, which must be the exact value determined by testing, must be the same size, and must be uninterrupted by distracting images or text. Water resistance claims must also indicate whether the sunscreen remains effective for 40 or 80 minutes. All sunscreens must also include a "Drug Facts" panel on their label.

We would like to highlight that Badger Balm has always tested for UVA and UVB Broad Spectrum protection in addition to having a Drug Facts panel for many years. Their new Damascus Rose Face Sunscreen, Aloe Sunscreen Lotion, and Sport Sunscreen are all equipped with the new label, and others have begun to arrive. Badger sunscreens are made from a unique organic base with non-nano zinc oxide and they were made to exceed the strict testing requirements in the EU, Australia and Japan. If you have any questions concerning the new FDA regulations, sunscreen or Badger products, please do not hesitate to ask.

The bar soaps have been reset and our local soaps are happily together. We've added WS Badger Co.'s new Botanical Face & Body soaps. Made from beautifully pure organic olive, palm and coconut oils, they add wonderful essential oils, clay, and herbs to make six unique bars. My favorite is the Moroccan Mint with Kaolin Clay, detoxifying and invigorating for summer skin, and it is joined by Unscented, Chamomile & Calendula, Rose Geranium, Lemongrass & Ginger and Mailette Lavender varieties.

If you are interested in a liquid soap instead, we've brought in Alaffia's new Authentic African Black Soap in a bar and in 8oz, 16oz and 32oz sizes. African Black Soap is traditionally made from handcrafted shea butter and West African palm kernel oil through an extensive six-hour cooking and three-week curing process that makes the soap mild and gentle. It is ideal for babies, faces, shampoo, body wash, hand wash, shaving soap and for household cleaning. Charcoal is added to the soap during the cooking process, giving it purifying and detoxifying properties. Alaffia African Black Soap can be found in tantalizing Savanna Spice, Tangerine Citrus, Peppermint or Unscented.

We have some new faces in our supplements section! From Nordic Naturals, we are now carrying the large bottle sizes of Ultimate Omega and Omega-3 soft gels. We've also brought in Omega Woman, Nordic's Evening Primrose Oil Blend with fish oil for hormonal support. And for vegetarians looking to add essential fatty acids to their diet, we are now offering their Algae Omega, a pure omega-3 supplement made from marine algae, third-party tested to be free of environmental toxins. Nordic promises a chemical-, trans fat-, and dioxide-free product, made with reduced heat, and in a natural triglyceride form with research to suggest better absorption. They consistently receive awards for purity, freshness and taste.

Renew Life has helped us expand our selection of probiotics in the store, particularly with respect to room temperature stable varieties. We now carry their room temperature stable Ultimate Flora Daily Probiotic, Colon Care Probiotic, and Women's Probiotic, which are all-in-one daily probiotics with fifteen billion live cultures per capsule, with specific strain formulas for different needs. Great for travel, these probiotics do not need to be kept in the refrigerator and they are gluten- and dairy-free. In the fridge, you'll now find Ultimate Flora Kids Probiotic, free of dairy, gluten and sugar, with three billion live cultures per berry-licious chewable tablet. For adults, the new Super Critical 200 Billion probiotic is our highest dose probiotic in the store. This is a high bifido, seven-day program to provide maximum support for healthy digestion, detoxification and immunity. Stay healthy this summer and support your digestive system, the root of good health.

Fresh Food From Jeff Schilling

Summertime is a wonderful time for the Fresh Foods department! This time of year we look to offer refreshing beverages on hot days, great meats for backyard barbecues and delicious lunches and dinners to be enjoyed on our spacious patio.

A few items you should try:

Kohana Cold Brew Organic Coffee Concentrate: After years of trying to come up with our own perfect cold brew recipe, we gave up when we found this wonderful product. Order on in the café and, if you like it, take home a liter for your own delicious iced coffee at home.

We Prep It. You Cook It: Our Meat & Seafood counter has been hard at work to create some special BBQ season items for you. We have marinated kabobs, specialty burgers, marinated fish and more

Northeast Family Farms: We have a new distributor that is able to offer us more selection in the meat case. NEEF sources from small, family owned farms and prints the name of the farm on each package. Give it a try if you're looking for something new to grill.

Local Hot Bar: This summer, we will be attempting to source more local food for the hot and salad bar. Keep a lookout for some special regional flavors in the daily menus.

Cold Soups: Our summer selection includes melon soup and gazpacho. They're available in the grab 'n' go case. Enjoy them for lunch or dinner!

Produce From Andrei Smerechniak

Local Local Local Local Local Local Local - That's pretty much what's going on in the produce department these days. The prime growing season is upon us and we are thrilled to be offering a huge amount of local produce. Our relationships with the farmers have never been better after a great winter meeting back in February and we are hoping to smash every department record for local sales this year.

Here's a list of the local farms we are working with this summer:

Better Nature Produce: Schodack, NY

Community Co-op Farms: Sheffield, MA

David's Melons: Pittsfield, MA

Earthborne Gardens: Hillsdale, NY

Equinox Farm: Sheffield, MA

Et Cetera Farm: Hillsdale, NY

Farm Girl Farm: Great Barrington, MA

Hepworth Farm: Milton, NY

High Meadow Farm: Putney, VT

Howden Farm: Sheffield, MA

Indian Line Farm: Egremont, MA

Left Field Farm: Middlefield, MA

McEnroe Farm: Millerton, NY

Mountain Pasture Farm: Becket, MA

Pelletier Farm: Becket, MA

Project Native Gardens: Housatonic, MA

Red Fire Farm: Granby, MA

Red Oak Farm: Stuyvesant, NY

Second Hand Farm: Great Barrington, MA

Sol Flower Farm: Ancramdale, NY

Talliaferro Farm: New Paltz, NY

Thompson Finch Farm: Ancramdale, NY

Wild & Cultivated: Sheffield, MA

Windy Hill Farm: Great Barrington, MA

Wolfe Spring Farm: Sheffield, MA

Woven Roots Farm: Lee, MA

This list is always evolving. So, if I accidentally a name or too off, please accept my apologies. The point we are trying to make is simply Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local Local!

Grocery From Cian Dalzell

The Grocery department would like to welcome Maeve back for her summer vacation. We're already dreading the start of school in September.

There are some exciting new products in the Grocery department this quarter. For backpacking or smoothie making we have Just Great Stuff's powdered peanut butter. In smoothies it adds that great peanut butter flavor without the oily aspect or glob issues that can occur with other peanut butters, and the flavor pairs well with maca. Also new in the baking aisle are Home Free cookies, which are made in New Hampshire and are delicious, and happen to also be gluten-free and non-GMO verified.

If you're looking for a new go-to drink this summer, there are some great options in Grocery. There are now Virgil's Zero, stevia-sweetened versions of their classic root beer and cola. Additionally, Ayala's herbal water gives sparkling water a sophisticated twist of something other than lemon or lime. Try out the lavender mint or cinnamon orange. And, on the heels of quite a few requests for an organic coconut water, Harmless Harvest became available. They are raw and certified organic, and have the added bonus of an occasional pink bottle, which is higher in antioxidants. Even without being mentioned in the last newsletter, they've become the most popular coconut water in the store, and the supply can't keep up with our demand. We're hoping by the time this newsletter is printed the 16oz. size becomes available and the supply is steadier.

We have a third bulk kombucha option coming in. The original and seasonal fruit varieties will be complemented by a ginger brew. In the attempt to have less waste from the Bulk department, we're bringing in small paper bags for spices and tea, and trying out markers instead of pencils and stickers. Some recent additions to Bulk include a tri-colored popcorn and germinated rice.

Food Policy in Action: The Co-op's food policy reads, "We will not knowingly sell products that contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). We rely on third-party testing to prove either the absence of GMOs (such as with the Non-GMO Project), or presence of them in conventional foods. In November, the Cornucopia Institute (cornucopia.org) released results from testing natural cereals for GMOs. Two of the brands that we carry had products that tested positive for GMOs, and those Kashi and Barbara's cereals are no longer available at the Co-op. The cereals we still carry from these companies do not have any ingredients that are at risk for being GMO. To replace those items, there are more Field Day, Nature's Path and Cascadian Farm cereals available. Those brands are all-organic, and two are additionally Non-GMO verified. Try out Cascadian's new Ancient Grain or Nature's Path's new Coconut Chia granola. Field Day's Bran Flakes may sound less exciting, but instead of ordinary raisin bran in the morning you can have dried cranberries or blueberries, or add some freeze-dried fruit for a crunch paired with a burst of sweetness.