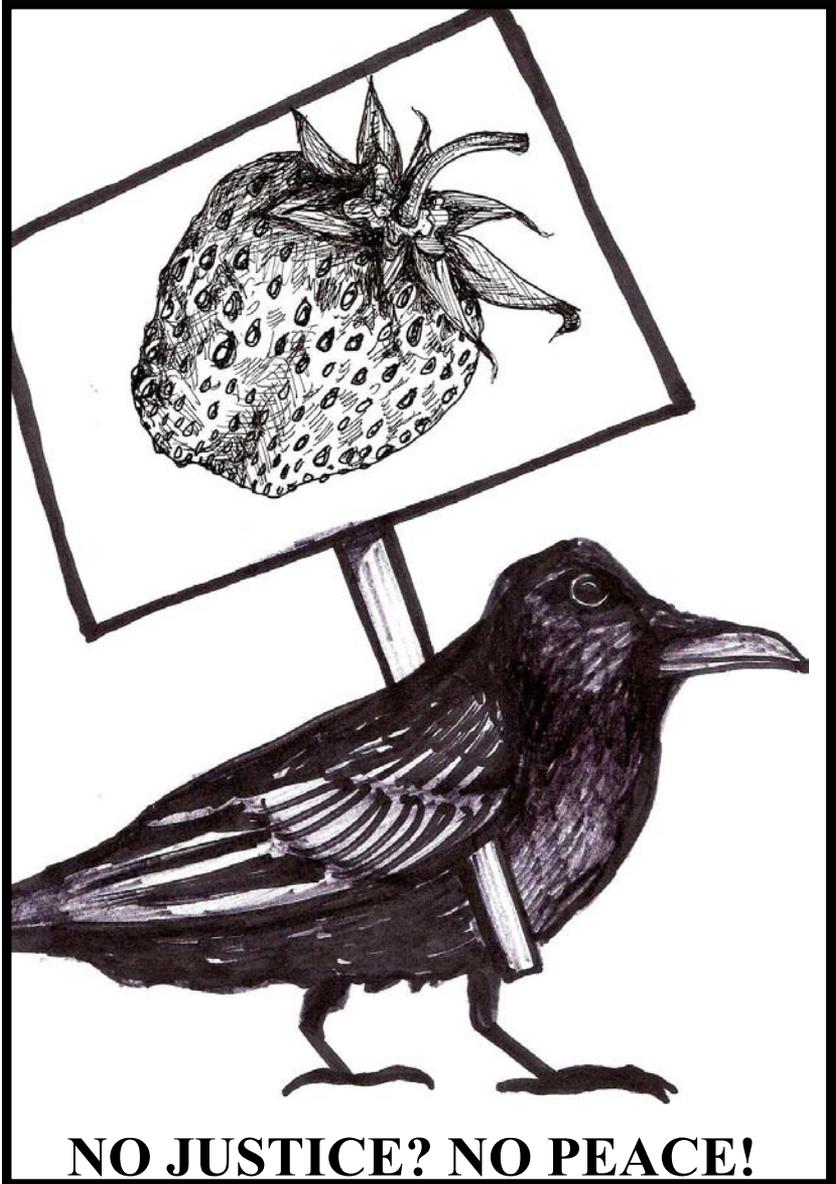


# The Plainfield Co-op - Celebrating Berries -

*Summer 2012*



**NO JUSTICE? NO PEACE!**

**Hours:** *Monday–Saturday 9AM–8PM Sunday 9AM–6PM*

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



## Management Collective

Anji Murphy  
Dawn Fancher  
Dawn Rose Kearn  
Dorothy Wallace  
Jeannine DeWald  
Jessi Robinson  
Karen Starr  
Margie Yoder  
Mike Peabody  
Nancy Ellen

## Regular Staff

Aaron James  
Doni Cain  
Jill Frink Thompson  
Kristin Brosky

## Substitutes

Ben Rappold  
Chris Jackson  
Jim Malloy  
Kate Darakjy  
Paula Emery  
Stephen Bosserman

## Co-op Board Members

Chris Jackson, President  
802-595-3623  
Gail Falk, Vice-President  
802-777-0528  
Les Snow, Treasurer 426-3800H,  
229-1888 W.Isnow@fairpoint.net  
Rebecca Armell, Secretary  
426-3034.  
rebeccaarmell@rocketmail.com  
Mike Peabody 454-0195  
Joseph Gainza 454-8550  
Sue Chickering (229-6232)

## Committee Contacts

Building: Mike Russell  
mikerussellc@gmail.com  
Finance: Les Snow (426-3800)  
Newsletter: Glenda Bissex (454-7895)  
Equity Action Team (EAT): Les Snow  
(426-3800)  
Community Center: Doni Cain (454-1478)

Cover art by Erok

# Newsletter Advertising Specifications

RATES		
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Half Page	\$50	\$160
Quarter Page	\$25	\$80

## Copy Deadlines:

August 5 for the Summer Issue  
Send check made out to **Plainfield Co-op** when your copy is submitted  
Ad copy and payment should be submitted to:

Alan Taplow, Ad Coordinator  
844 John Fowler Road  
Plainfield VT 05667

Electronic Graphics files preferred but we are able to work with any clear copy.

Questions: 802-454-4675 Or  
ataplow@vtlink.net



Fresh Organic Pies

Dump Truck Hauling

Horse Drawn Rides

Firewood For Sale

Massage Therapy

# About This Newsletter



It's (almost) summer and we're celebrating one of its special gifts—berries! Our thanks to Plainfield graphic artist, activist and Co-op member Erok (Erik Gillard) for his originals of

berries on our cover and elsewhere in the newsletter (except as noted),

We're also celebrating Sarah Albert as our new design and layout person. Sarah, who has years of experience doing layout for several local organizations, has been a member of the Co-op since she moved to Plainfield in 1994. A member of the Planning Commission for 13 years, Sarah was also a founding member of the Conservation Commission.

The United Nations has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives so we join in celebrating cooperatives near and far. For more info see the United Nations' website dedicated to the International Year of Cooperatives: [www.social.un.org/coopsyear](http://www.social.un.org/coopsyear).

Your participation in our Co-op is a vote for a more sane and just economy. And your participation in this newsletter--with art work, commentary letters, and especially reading it thoughtfully--is appreciated. Next deadline for submissions: August 5.

Glenda Bissex, co-ordinator (454-7895)  
Sarah Albert, design and layout (476-0526)

Joseph Gainza, board liason and editing (522-2376)

Debra Stoleroff, editing and recipes (476-3154)

Alan Taplow, advertising and distribution (454-4675) ♦



**Strafford Organic Creamery**

**53 Rock Bottom Road,  
Strafford, VT 05072**

**(802) 765-4180**

**info@straffordcreamery.com**

**<http://www.straffordcreamery.com>**

***Delivery to the Plainfield Co-op every Friday***

The Building Committee has been on vacation through last summer and much of the fall, recovering from the “Back of Store” efforts. But we’re back in business. There are some loose ends from previous projects, and three potential major projects we are now working on. These are all in the planning stages and member, staff, and board input is welcome.

1. *Back wall.* The back, end wall of the Co-op (facing Kerrin McCadden’s yard) is in bad shape and needs repairs and painting. Since this is old lead paint, lead precautions are needed for anything we do there. We have an estimate of about \$10,000 for repairs and painting. However, another approach is to remove the siding, add an inch of Hi-R insulation, and reside with prefinished cement clapboards, at a cost of about \$15,000. This will avoid future paint-

ing, and make the building more energy efficient. We think this is the right approach, most cost effective in the end, and we will be taking this to the board in the near future. This work is long overdue.

2. *Coffee Area.* The staff has been working to develop a coffee/hot snack/sitting area in the Co-op, back in that corner where the bread has been. Nate Nussey has been working on designs, which will be posted at the Co-op this week. With everything factored in, this could cost as much as \$5,000, but would add a lot to our co-op.

3. *Garden/deck/boat launch.* Allen Banbury, the Friends of the Winooski, and others have been pushing to develop a canoe launch in the land behind the Co-op. The basic idea is that folks could conveniently launch a canoe or two back



*Credit: computer image of coffee corner by Nate Nussey*

there, and take a little cruise on the river (upstream would work out best). Extending this idea, that same area could become some sort of garden and sitting area...a couple of tables, a deck, so you could get your delicious coffee and pastry, walk directly out onto the deck and have a lovely view of the river. Maybe the garden part could be done as a volunteer project, and the Friends of the Winooski have some grant money perhaps for the boat launch.



*Credit: sketch by Noah Pollock*

This is still in the planning stages, and there have been a couple of meetings with the town about it. In general we think it dovetails perfectly with the coffee area idea and adds a lot to what the Co-op offers its membership.

Mike Russell is the new committee Chair, and we are looking for new members, particularly for someone to take over minutes, notices, and so on.

These are ambitious projects, but we're excited to move ahead on them.

[mikerussellc@gmail.com](mailto:mikerussellc@gmail.com)  
[samclark@sover.net](mailto:samclark@sover.net) ◆

## Looking for:

The Building Committee needs someone to take over the position of Recording Secretary from Sam Clark. Responsibilities would be:

- keeping files of minutes, reports, and drawings
- coming to all meetings
- preparing and sending out minutes in a timely fashion
- handling email chores as needed
- writing reports for the Newsletter

This should be someone good with details, who likes to write. Sam will help the new Recording Secretary get started. Mike Russell is the new Chair of the Building Committee

Contact: [mikerussellc@gmail.com](mailto:mikerussellc@gmail.com)  
[samclark@sover.net](mailto:samclark@sover.net)

As we move into summer, we look at what we've done, what we've planted, and how it's all growing. It's a time to reflect on the plans we made, and take action when we need to, such as pulling out a weed, or turning under a crop that is not thriving so that we may start again with something else. These seasonal analogies are always useful to find a theme for such an article, but they often mysteriously follow what is going on inside all of us, in our communities, and in our organizations. The Co-op board is no exception.

As I've mentioned in previous articles, the board has spent much time trying to gather information and feedback from you, our membership. This has been done through surveys, and through the World Cafe. We do this to help inform our ends policies, the overall big picture vision that we charge the Management Collective with carrying out. Once again, our ends are: Our community will have in the following order of importance:

- a market for the distribution of healthy food and other goods.
- An outlet for local producers and growers that supports the local and regional economy.
- Opportunities to build a sense of community in the village of Plainfield and surrounding areas.
- More awareness of the quality and source of our food.

Since the World Cafe, we are also exploring adding to our ends policies regarding ecological integrity and social justice. This is a seed that has

been planted and that we are now working on developing.

In each article, I have put out my contact info and made myself available for any concern and input regarding the Co-op and these ends. I have heard from some people concerns that are perennial, concerning organic, local, and affordability. This is a constant challenge with the Management Collective as well. There are no easy answers, but what I'm interested in is how do you interpret the ends? What does "healthy food" mean to you? What is "local"?

The board asks the Management Collective how they interpret these ends. Here's what they've come up with in their last report on them:

*Our community will have a market for the distribution of healthy food and other goods.* The Co-op will prioritize healthy food over products that either the members or the Management Collective deems unhealthy.

*Our community will have an outlet for local producers and growers in order to support the local and regional economy.* The Co-op will prioritize local vendors and products direct from vendors over non-local products and products from a distributor. We define local as any product produced within 100 miles.

*Our community will have opportunities to build a sense of community in the village of Plainfield and surrounding areas.*

The Co-op will put into place systems

*continued on page 12*

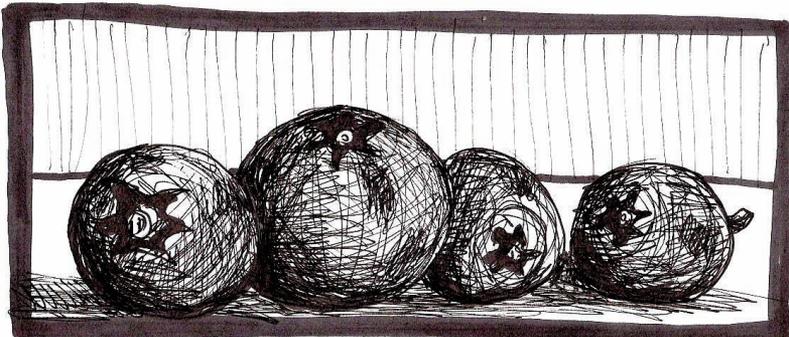
**Plainfield Co-op Financial Summary, 2007-2012**

**Profit & Loss Statements, 2008-2012**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Jan-Mar 2012
Sales	804,805	803,121	883,455	942,072	221,850
Cost of Goods Sold	547,849	545,612	601,457	654,211	149,003
Gross Profit	256,956	257,509	281,998	287,861	72,847
Operating Expenses	250,337	267,150	271,609	289,837	72,954
Net Operating Income	6,619	-9,641	10,389	-1,976	-107
Other Income/Expenses					
Other Income	14,821	14,285	12,187	17,483	10,746
Other Expenses	10,925	2,100	5,933	4,274	101
Net Other Income	3,896	12,185	6,254	13,209	10,645
Net Income	10,515	2,544	16,643	11,233	10,538

**Plainfield Co-op Balance Sheets, 2008-2012**

ASSETS	12/31/08	12/31/09	12/31/10	12/31/11	3/31/12
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Checking/Savings	41,982	23,359	43,510	21,763	38,650
Accounts Receivable	153	520	0	646	0
Other Current Assets	50,380	51,080	51,002	43,226	42,602
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	92,515	74,959	94,512	65,635	81,252
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	80,384	84,846	99,463	99,463	99,463
Accumulated Depreciation	-49,793	-49,793	-65,772	-65,772	-65,772
Cap. Imp. Deferred Revenue	0	-24,282	0	-7,958	-7,958
Other Assets	0	44,095	10,078	47,131	47,385
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	123,106	129,825	138,281	138,499	154,370
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>					
<b>Liabilities</b>					
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Accounts Payable	37,623	46,527	52,497	39,056	47,617
Other Current Liabilities	3,134	3,280	4,276	14,433	13,376
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	40,757	49,807	56,773	53,489	60,993
Long Term Liabilities	43,755	36,182	27,926	20,194	18,138
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	84,512	85,989	84,699	73,683	79,131
<b>Equity</b>					
Common Stock	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972
Retained Earnings	22,107	35,320	30,967	47,611	58,729
Net Income	10,515	2,544	16,643	11,233	10,538
<b>Total Equity</b>	38,594	43,836	53,582	64,816	75,239
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	123,106	129,825	138,281	138,499	154,370



# Love Your Local Berry Growers

by Mike Peabody, Produce Manager

I'm quite fond of berries. I love finger food, as well as fresh produce, so berries are a great answer to the want. I also love the varieties of shapes, sizes, colors, and seasons that come with the sweet little fruits. They come on like a parade through the summer and disappear in the fall. We are entreated to enjoy their short lives as they appear to us.

Berries love sunshine and just a bit of rain. The problem is, when ideal ripening conditions arrive, the fruits instantly begin reaching perfection, sometimes in as little as a day or two, and don't stop until the weather changes, at which point they will begin rot if they don't stay dry for most of the day. The window for a good harvest on a single planting may not even last two weeks. You may recall a couple of years ago

there had been a strawberry flood in the markets. Stores had two-for-one deals, restaurants put them in everything, and the big organic farms in Florida and Virginia were dumping product on the conventional market because they had reached saturation with the certified fruit. This was caused, in large part, by a partial freeze in the South which had slowed or destroyed much of the crop. To compensate, new plants and fields were brought online, only to be caught in a heat wave that not only brought the newer strawberries to harvest, it also revived a good amount of the plants which had been lost to the cold. Suddenly, there were too many strawberries but they had to be harvested, just the same.

I once worked on a farm that produced strawberries as a pick-your-own crop. They are prone to disease, insect damage, bird attacks, over-picking, and a few other tragedies of agriculture. In fact, one of the only cost-effective ways to include them as a crop is to take them on as a pick-your-own, since that externalizes the labor involved in harvesting. The plants were manageably productive for a couple of years and then had to be replaced, often including a complete shift to another part of the field. To do a total reset like that involved riding on the back of a tractor, breaking clumps of prepackaged strawberry plants into thousands of starts, and dropping them into holes the tractor punched in the soil ahead of you. Then, the new field had to be



*continued on next page*

mulched and covered with some kind of heat-retaining fabric like reemay, which was then weighted or sandbagged into place to keep the wind from peeling the cover away and exposing the plants to frost. The whole affair took most of two days to finish less than one acre, and before the snow fell, most of the cover had been lost and replaced at least once.

I wondered why they never tried to “put the harvest back,” given how much space strawberries occupy and the work they entail. Frozen strawberries are always in demand. It just seemed prudent to not let the field go to waste, since anything a farmer pays to plant, cultivate, and fertilize but which fails to yield harvest is a detriment. Yet, at that time and from every strawberry-raising farmer I’ve met since, the opinion is that they are barely worth the effort to keep for pick-your-own, let alone hand-picking and freezing them, storing for a possible later sale. To date, Littlewood Farm is one of the last pick-your-own strawberry operations in Central Vermont, and the only certified organic

one I know of, for sure, outside of the Intervale. Littlewood is also one of the only operations to bother harvesting strawberries for retail, which is why I feel especially fortunate to be able to receive their fresh fruit.

Most berries carry this burden, in some way. Blueberries last a while longer but require some intense fertilizer management. Blackberries and raspberries are a bit more durable, to my understanding, but birds like them just as much and their thorny canes make for a difficult harvest. In any case, berry growers are not goofing around. The plants are a commitment and they occasionally produce next to nothing. At Plainfield Coop, we are very lucky to have as many fresh and frozen berry growers to choose from, at any point in the year. Other, larger stores may not even have a single farm which can choose the retail avenue to showcase these precious jewels of summer. I don’t mean to tell you what to do but please, if you meet a berry grower, buy something and thank them for their work. They know best how difficult it can be and it doesn’t cost anything to be appreciative. ♦

# Littlewood Farm



*Growing organic produce  
for the  
Plainfield Coop since 1988*



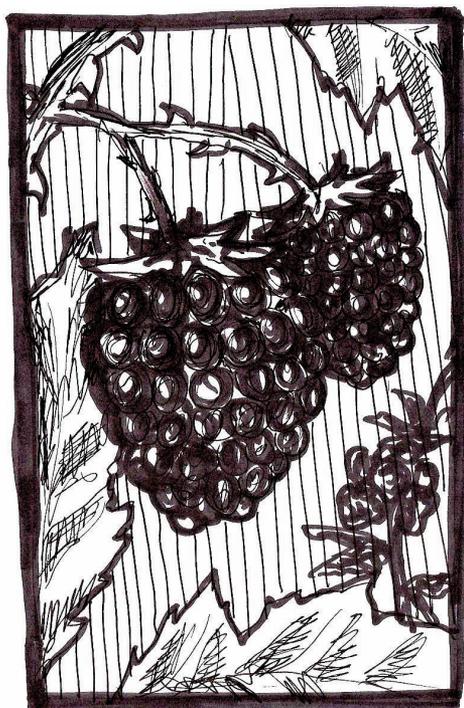
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End of Recreation Field Road, Plainfield  
[www.littlewoodfarm.org](http://www.littlewoodfarm.org)\*454-8446\*[littlewoodfarm@gmail.com](mailto:littlewoodfarm@gmail.com)

## Berry Herbs: Home to the Spirits *by Dorothy Wallace*

Berries as herbs? According to the Herb Society of America an herb is “any plant that may be used for pleasure, fragrance, or physic.” Similarly, Rodale’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs defines an herb as “a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities.” So, berries it is! The berries you will find in the herb aisle of the Co-op include elder, hawthorn, and Schisandra (wu-wei-zi).

Elderberries (*Sambucus nigra*) are packed with good-for-you properties. Dried elderberries—in pies, pancakes, jam, wine, tea, syrup, or tincture—have long been used to maintain health during the winter. Traces of the berry have been found in Stone Age sites



and the legends surrounding it come from long, long ago. People in the northern hemisphere have long felt a spiritual connection to the plant. The Norse believed it to be the home of the goddess Freya. Hulda, Holda, and Hylde-Mlkoer (all synonymous with “elder”) are some of the names for a goddess and/or folk figure who, as the spirit of the elder plant, would haunt anyone who cut down her abode. Contrarily, it was believed to both attract witches and to ward them off. Cradles made of elder wood would attract bad witches or fairies to come and pinch the baby until it was black and blue. On the other hand, branches gathered on the last day of April and put up on doors and windows would ward off witches. It was believed that it could not be struck by lightning, so it was planted near houses. Twigs were carried as a charm for health and good luck. A long-held, persistent belief is that an elder bush or tree must be approached with utmost respect and gratitude and permission asked before any part is taken from it. And it does need to be approached respectfully! The leaves, roots, stem, and the raw berries contain cyanogenic glucosides which release cyanide. Ripe cooked or dried berries are, however, nontoxic. Ancient healers, medieval wise women and men, and modern-day herbalists, all recognize the power of elderberries.

Hawthorn trees and bushes (*Crataegus monogyna*), sometimes referred to as haws, also were supposed to be homes to the denizens of folklore—particu-

*continued on next page*

larly Celtic. Thomas the Rhymer, the thirteenth century Scottish mystic and bard is said to have met the Fairy Queen by a hawthorn bush. She led him into the fairy underworld where what felt like a short journey turned out to be seven long years. There are many tales of unwitting travelers being way-laid by the fairy or wee folk who inhabited and protected the “lone bushes” or isolated hawthorns that dotted the landscape. As with the elder, these plants could not be damaged in any way without incurring the wrath of their other-worldly protectors. Also known as May trees, garlands made from the blossoms and large leafy branches were set outside houses as blessings. However, it had a dark side. Bringing them inside was strictly taboo because it was thought they brought disease and death. These contradictory beliefs can be somewhat reconciled when the power of the herb is considered. In the nineteenth century, an Irish physician included them in his “secret remedy” for heart disease. Modern science corroborates his practice. It is now known that it dilates blood vessels, thus lowering blood pressure. It also lowers cholesterol and has an effect on heart muscle, helping a damaged heart work better. In Germany, there are several hawthorn-based medications available.

Chinese folklore maintains that Schisandra (*Schisandra chinensis*) can “calm the heart and quiet the spirit.” One of the 50 fundamental herbs of traditional Chinese medicine, it is known as the five-taste fruit. This flavor encompasses sour, sweet, bitter, warm, and salty. It is mentioned in the earliest text of Chinese herbal medicine, which touted its use for enhancing wei chi,

## REFRESHING SUMMER DRINK

from *Debra Stoleroff*

Makes approximately 1½–2 quarts

3–4 tea bags of Tazo Passion Herbal Infusion (depending on desired strength)

4 cups boiled water

8 oz. pear juice

8 oz. berry juice (strawberry, raspberry, etc)

2–4 cups cool water (depending on taste preference)

Boil 4 cups of water. Pour over tea bags in large glass container. Let cool.

Add pear and berry juice. Add water to desired taste. Cool in refrigerator.

the defense energy of the body. Early Russian hunters used the berries and seeds as a tonic that improved night vision and reduced hunger, thirst, and fatigue. Pharmacological studies have shown that Schisandra berries are excellent adaptogens—that is, they have a balancing effect on the body regardless of its current condition—and they protect the liver.

All of the berry herbs can be powdered into capsules, made into tinctures, and added to baked goods. To get started on the delicious road to health, make yourself a pot of berry tea. Start with 1 to 3 teaspoons of berries and a little over a cup of water (some will evaporate). Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, and then let steep for another 15 to 30 minutes. Strain and enjoy. Experiment to find the strength and flavor that suits you best. Let the potent spirits that inhabit these plants reside in you. Your immune system, liver, and heart will thank you. ♦

Board Report, continued from page 6  
and programs that encourage the feeling of living in community. Community is defined as a group of people who have been able to accept and transcend their differences regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds.

*Our community will have more awareness of the quality and source of our food.*  
The Co-op will use a variety of tactics to educate customers about the quality of food sold as well as where the product is sourced.

There are many ways of looking at this. I have heard from people who think that canned food, even organic is not healthy. I have also heard from

**breakthrough**  
piano method has students playing immediately!



"I'm so happy and surprised by my progress. Already I have a play list of twelve songs and three structured improvisation pieces in the works. Each lesson is tailor-made to match my progression and I am encouraged not to feel hurried or impatient with the learning process. I'm amazed at how a positive, tolerant attitude towards myself as I pick out a new piece impacts the entire experience."

— Alex Noyes, student, Plainfield, VT

## Free Introductory Session

**Nicholas Mortimer**

Licensed Simply Music Teacher

loveplayingpiano.org

802-595-1220

simplymusic.com

**ages 4 to 104**



people that they have felt like they lost a sense of choice because products have been pulled because of some of these issues and they no longer feel like they have an affordable option. How important are ecological and social justice issues when you make shopping choices?

This is cultivation time. We can improve on what we've planted and continue to nurture it, as well as grow and expand upon what we've already done. As always, we, the board, encourage you to be a part of this process. Again, my phone number is 802-595-3623, and my email is kairos.chris@gmail.com. ♦

## **RHUBARB SAUCED CARROTS** from Randy

• 1 lb. carrots, scrubbed and cut into ¼-½" circles. Boil 1 min. in small amount of water.

• 2½ Tbs butter

• 2 tsp. sugar

• 1 Tbs. currant jelly

• ½ c. chopped rhubarb

• 1 tsp. shredded orange peel

• 1½ tsp. brandy

• parsley

• salt & pepper

• In fry pan, melt butter, add carrots and sugar and jelly; toss and cook until tender.

• Add rhubarb and orange peel. Cook 5 mins.

• Stir in brandy until liquid is gone.

• Sprinkle on salt & pepper and parsley.

## Community Center Report *by Doni Cain*

The Community Center has been fully booked for the past three months now with no more than a couple of unrented days a month. We have been making small improvements over the past year but lately members and renters alike feel it's time for a major spruce up. Many of our long time weekly and monthly renters as well as the Co-op staff and working members are interested in working together to spruce up the space. We are looking at getting/making new tables, new chairs and couches, building a stage, changing the lighting, and repainting the space.

There will be a planning meeting on Thursday June 7th at 5:30 to discuss the sprucing up. We will be discussing what funds/resources we have, what changes we want to make and be picking out colors for the new paint.

Then in the middle of June there will be a reopening party. Many ideas are currently being worked out for this party and a lot of the planning for the reopening will be done at the May 31st planning meeting. Ideas for the reopening party include a puppet show on our new puppet stage, a tea party with table service, great homemade food, live music and possibly a short movie.

Don't forget to keep an eye on the Community Center Calendar in the entry of the Co-op for events and workshops taking place in the Community Center. We still have Capoeira classes, plays, yoga, Ecstatic Dance, Movie Night and much much more. If you have any questions feel free to call me at home, 454-1478, or email me at [CommunityCenter@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:CommunityCenter@plainfieldcoop.com). ♦

# PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER



**Space available for your:**

**Classes**

**Meetings**

**Parties**

**Workshops**

**Art Gallery Exhibitions & Special Events**

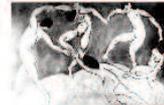
\$9/hr. for Co-op Members, \$15/hr. for Non-Members

Events: \$30 for Members, \$50 for Non-Members

Scheduling Book at Co-op Register

More Information? Call Jessi 454-8579

*Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op*





## **"Bread and Puppet Theater, an Emergent Mosaic"** by Mark Dannenhauer:

a Photographic Exhibition and Events at the Plainfield Community Center Gallery  
June 1 to July 15, 2012

### *About the Exhibition*

The Plainfield Community Center Gallery, Main Street, Plainfield, VT will host "Bread and Puppet Theater, an Emergent Mosaic," an exhibition of photographs and related events on the Bread and Puppet Theater by photographer and long-time puppeteer Mark Dannenhauer, of Shutesbury, MA. The photographs show a wide range of the Theatre's work from 2004 through 2011, including indoor and outdoor performances in Glover and on tour, parades, and the Bread and Puppet Museum. Photographic prints will be available for purchase during Co-op hours. The Exhibition runs from June 1 to July 15, 2012.

### Exhibition Event 1

## **Opening Reception, June 1, 2012**

The exhibit opens with a reception on Friday, June 1, 2012, from 5 to 8 PM. Meet the photographer, have prints signed, mingle with Bread and Puppet people past and present, add your piece to the Emergent Mosaic ABC Book.

## Exhibition Event 2

### **Bread and Puppet Emergent Mosaic Panel July 2, 2012**

On Monday, July 2, 2012, from 7 to 9 p.m. will be a live Emergent Mosaic panel discussion led by Mark Dannenhauer featuring Bread and Puppet participants including touring puppeteers, community and family members, and others. Mark has been working on the Bread and Puppet Emergent Mosaic Project over the past several years. Bread and Puppet participants—including performers, audience, producers, families—create an emergent mosaic of the Theater's history in their own words, photography and digital media.

## Exhibition Event 3

### **The Bread and Puppet Emergent Mosaic's ABC Book. Throughout the Exhibition**

Ongoing, during Gallery hours, June 1 to July 15, 2012. The Exhibition's Bread and Puppet ABC Book is another piece of the Emergent Mosaic Project. There will be a large loose-leaf notebook in the gallery. Attendees are invited to add writings, drawings, and/or photos for their favorite letter to a loose-leaf notebook in the Gallery. Come and help create the Emergent Mosaic Bread and Puppet ABC Book

For additional information on the overall Exhibition, please contact Alexis Smith, 802-371-7239.

For additional information on the photographer and the events, please contact: Mark Dannenhauer, 413-259-1096, [ninots@crocker.com](mailto:ninots@crocker.com) ♦



# The Magick of Elderberry: A Powerful Antiviral Herb

by Jill Frink Thompson

I remember the first time I saw an elder tree in full bloom. I could not believe how beautiful this tree was. The clusters of white flowers were so fragrant and delicate in the heat of the summer, it seemed they would melt. I visited that tree many times. Like so many others before me, I felt drawn to this plant.

Almost every culture has an association with the elder tree (*Sambucus* spp.), and every part of the plant has been used as medicine. The bark and root bark were once used as "violent" purgatives, but they are now known to be much too strong to be considered for that purpose. The inner bark and leaves are used topically for bruises.

The leaves are also used externally as a bug repellent on both people and crops. The flowers used externally soothe dry, itchy or sunburned skin. Taken internally they are antiviral, anti-inflammatory, cause sweating, and are diuretic and expectorant. The berries have the same action as the flowers and are considered more of a tonic herb.

The berries are my favorite medicine of this plant. I love to see the drooping branches filled with ripe, juicy berries. Every year I go out, gather the berries and make syrup. If you have kids in school you will want to learn how to make Elderberry syrup! In my house, we go through a quart or two in the months of August and September alone! The basic recipe below is my favorite.

Many scientific studies have proven the antiviral effects of *Sambucus*. Elderberry is very active in aiding the body in its efforts to rid itself of viruses. The unique properties of this plant render viruses harmless by directly affecting their chemical makeup. Bioflavonoids present in the berries and flowers also contain powerful antioxidants, which protect healthy cells and help to rid the body of excess free radicals.

*continued on next page*



*Credit: Owen Bissex*

## Elderberry Syrup

3 cups fresh elderberries, or  
1 cup dried berries  
3 cups filtered water  
1½ cups honey  
1 ounce fresh ginger root, grated  
Black cherry concentrate (optional)  
Juice of 1 lime  
1 ounce echinacea tincture (95%)  
alcohol

1. Combine berries, ginger and water in stainless steel or glass pot. Heat on medium until simmering.
2. Continue to gently simmer uncovered for 45 minutes to an hour, or until reduced in volume by half.
3. Remove from heat. Strain well through cheesecloth, squeezing the

juice from the berries. Allow decoction to cool slightly.

4. Measure liquid and combine with equal parts honey.
5. Add all the lime juice and, if you choose, black cherry juice to taste.
6. When cooled completely, add echinacea tincture.
7. Pour into glass jar, label with date, and store in the refrigerator for up to a year.

Take between 1 teaspoon and 1 tablespoon twice daily during the cold and flu season. For children ages 2-5, use half the adult dose. Dose for ages 6-12 is 1 teaspoon twice daily. Nursing mothers can take 1 tablespoon 5 minutes before nursing to pass the benefits along to the baby. ♦



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## Berry Recipes *from Debra Stoleroff*

It is my opinion that the best way to eat berries is fresh off the bush, vine or plant. Put them over anything—ice cream, yogurt, pancakes, whipped cream, etc. However, the second best way to eat berries is to freeze them and use them later in the year in smoothies, muffins, pies, cakes, etc. Below is a three-in-one recipe. Takes forever to make, but is better and less caloric than an ice cream cake.

**The Berriest Bombe** *from the Great Good Food Cookbook by Julee Rosso*  
serves 12

- 1 recipe Black Raspberry Sorbet (*see right*)
  - 1 recipe Blackberry Frozen Yogurt (*see right*)
  - 1 recipe Bombe Fruit Sauce (*see right*)
1. Line a 1½ quart Pyrex bowl with heavy foil. Press the foil against the bowl snugly, leaving no gaps or loose spots. Let the ends hang over the bowl. Place the bowl in the freezer for 2 hours.
  2. Spoon the sorbet into the prepared bowl. Using the back of a spoon, spread the sorbet over the bottom and up the sides of the mold, forming a ¼" thick layer. Freeze until firm, about 2 hours.
  3. Spoon the yogurt into the center of the sorbet layer and smooth the top. Freeze the bombe until firm, 3 to 4 hours.
  4. To serve, remove the bombe from the freezer. Using the edges of the foil, carefully lift the bombe out of the bowl and invert it onto the serving dish. Peel off the foil.
  5. Serve with Bombe Fruit Sauce.



### **Blackberry Frozen Yogurt**

- 2 cups blackberries
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 Tbs. Triple Sec
- 2 Tbs. frozen orange juice concentrate
- Zest of 2 oranges
- 1½ cups nonfat plain yogurt

1. Place the berries and sugar in a blender and puree. Remove to a large bowl.
2. Stir in the Triple Sec, orange juice, and zest, blend thoroughly. Fold in the yogurt until completely blended. Chill for 1 hour.
3. Transfer to a traditional ice cream maker and churn or transfer the mixture to an ice cream machine and follow manufacturer's directions.

### **Black Raspberry Sorbet**

- 1½ quarts of black raspberries, rinsed and dried
- 1 cup sugar
- ¾ cups fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup crème de cassis

1. In a blender or food processor, combine all of the ingredients and blend until smooth.
2. Strain the puree to remove the seeds, and chill until very cold.
3. Transfer to a traditional ice cream maker and churn or transfer the mixture to an ice cream machine and follow manufacturer's directions.

### **Bombe Fruit Sauce**

- ½ cup frozen cran-raspberry juice concentrate, thawed
- ¼ cup Framboise
- 3 cups blueberries
- 2 cups raspberries

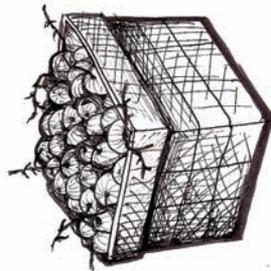
1. In a medium-sized saucepan, place the juice and Framboise. Over medium heat, reduce the liquid to 1/4 cup
2. Add the berries and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool before placing atop the bombe.



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