

Summer 2018

The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

GROWING SEASON



Hours: 7 days a week 9am–8pm

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Photo of Kevin Levesque supplied by him

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August 15 for the Fall issue

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When your copy is submitted, send a check made out to Plainfield Co-op to:

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



About This Newsletter

“**Growing Season**” is the theme of this issue. Local farmers are growing lovely green produce for us, soon to be followed by red (as in strawberries). Our Co-op is growing through a new management structure that staff and Board together have been creating. Find more in the following pages about these growings.

We thank Tracey Hambleton for stepping up to do the cover, design, and layout for this issue in Sarah Albert’s absence. Tracey, an artist and co-owner of the Marshfield Inn, was our former layout and design person.

We thank Bob Fancher for continuing to produce the digital versions of the newsletter. Lorraine Checchi, with the assistance of our Twinfield volunteer Eliza Cleary, does distribution of our print edition, and has been responsible for procuring ads that help support the newsletter. She no longer has time to handle advertising so we are looking for someone else to do that. You?? (You get a working member discount.) Contact the editor.

We thank you for reading this newsletter as we try to keep you informed of what’s going on at the Co-op, as we share recipes for using seasonal foods, and as we give you information about the sources of our food so you may eat more healthfully and mindfully.

We welcome your contributions to this newsletter--art work, photos, letters, articles, relevant poems, questions, suggestions. Submissions are due to the editor by August 15 for the fall issue.

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PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER



Space available for your:

Classes

Meetings

Parties

Workshops

Art Gallery Exhibitions & Special Events

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

Events: \$35 for Members, \$50 for Non-Members

Scheduling Book at Co-op Register

More Information?

Contact Rosemond London at the Co-op



Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op

Letter from the President

Jean Hamilton, President

Remember just a month ago when we were digging ourselves out of one last snow storm?

And now... Green! Summer! Gardens! BBQs! Yeehaw! Some recent spring sightings I have enjoyed at the Co-op are:

- **A group of grownups giggling like school children** over their ice cream bars in celebration of the season's first hot weather.
- **Local spinach, local lettuce, local asparagus and soon local strawberries.** Anji is a top-notch produce curator, selecting truly fresh produce from the talented farmers in our community. Who knew lettuce could have so much flavor and vitality?
- **The front garden, freshly mulched and tended,** sprouting surprising and unusual flowers. Thanks to our visionary gardener (Laura), our compost donor (Nicko), and everyone else who voluntarily cultivates this shared, simple pleasure.

Spring also brought our Annual Meeting, which is described in detail later in this newsletter. In addition to the fun of shared food and music, the Meeting offered a time for the board and staff to connect with our member owners. In an era of fraught communications (ugh, facebook), it was heartening to witness our Co-op engage in productive discussions of challenging market conditions, a new staffing structure, and strategies for success. Once again, I am struck by how many of our neighbors courageously and collaboratively team up to keep the Co-op marching forward, delivering world-class food, community, meeting space, information, and entertainment to our small, rural towns.

In service to our membership, the Board continues its focus on strengthening the Co-op by investing in the operational and financial solvency of the Co-op. Over the last few years, tight finances have led to deferred maintenance on both physical and operational aspects. With this in mind, the Board continues to pursue the 2016 Strategic Plan, making incremental investments as we develop a road map for how to move forward with strength.

A primary focus of securing the financial position of the Co-op is improving the store's revenue stream and cash flow position. We invite members to consider a pre-pay gift card for themselves (see Annual Meeting article), to help save money by using cash or check (instead of credit/debit, which incurred \$18,000 in fees to the Co-op in 2017) and to prioritize the Plainfield Co-op as a primary store. You know what they say, "Use it or lose it!"

Immediate physical improvements include improving the produce washing station (long overdue) and expanding office space for the staff. The new office is

being built in the upstairs 'kitchen' next to the community center. The 'kitchen' will no longer be available for general use, which has generated some concern. This represents one of the difficult choices we face of how to best meet the goals of maintaining a viable store and serving the community. No permanent changes are being made to the upstairs room, so that we can open it back up for community center use when we develop a better solution for providing functional office space for our staff. Thanks to Mike, Joe John, Jason, Kathleen, Buffy, Rosemond, Allen, Sam, and everyone else who have contributed important ideas and volunteer time to developing the best possible outcome.

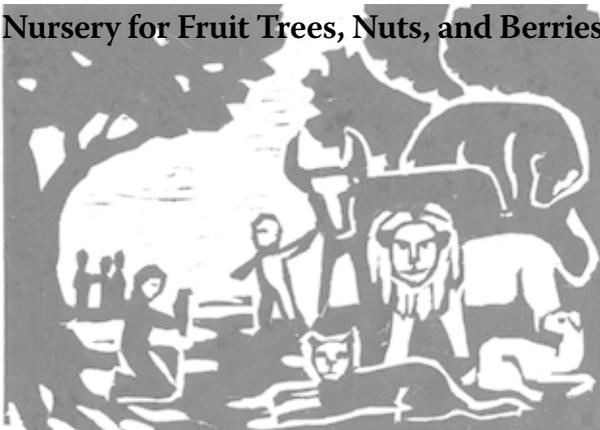
Last, but certainly not least, we are happy to announce Kevin Levesque as the new General Manager of the Co-op. The Board (and Staff) are excited about Kevin's prior work experiences in grocery, natural foods, and small businesses. Also, he lives right in Plainfield village. And, he has been a member of the Co-op for 2 years! Please read on in the Newsletter for a letter from Kevin introducing himself, and join us in welcoming Kevin to this new role within our Co-op.

There is lots going on at the Co-op and plenty of room for you to participate as shopper, a member- worker, a strategist, and/or a community organizer. You are always welcome to share your ideas with the Board by contacting us or joining our monthly meeting (4th Monday at 6:30 in the Community Center).

Wishing everyone a happy summer!

EAST HILL TREE FARM

Nursery for Fruit Trees, Nuts, and Berries



3499 East Hill Rd. Plainfield, VT
Check: www.easthilltreefarm.com

2018 Annual Meeting

by Gail Falk

Members, staff and friends of the Plainfield Co-op gathered on April 29 for the Co-op's annual meeting. Following guitar music by Doug Perkins, a potluck snack buffet, and a rousing paean to the Goddess of Fruit led by John Harrison, the group got down to business. Pete Boyle and Jay Herbert were elected to the two vacancies on the Board of Directors.

President's Report

In her President's Report, Jean Hamilton said that Co-op had 504 member/owners as of the date of the meeting. Membership has been increasing gradually (70 to 80 new members per year). Jean emphasized the importance of recruiting new members as member ownership is the core of the Co-op's strength.

Mike Brosky, chair of the Building Committee, said that the Building Committee's next major project will be developing staff office space on the second floor in the kitchen area.

Jean presented the Financial Report, which was prepared by the Co-op's new treasurer, Alicia White. She described 2017 as an up-and-down financial year. The year ended with the Co-op being debt-free, having paid off all loans. However, as the result of losses at the end of the year, the Co-op had no profit, and there will be no member patronage dividend for 2017. See the Financial Report elsewhere in this issue.



Jean referred to a graph showing how the Co-op's expenses break down. Most of our expenses are for the cost of the products we sell and for staff compensation; we cannot cut back in either of these areas without damaging the basic operations of the Co-op. Jean highlighted costs of \$18,000 in 2017 for credit card processing fees. This is an area where we could find substantial savings if members would pay by cash or check, and avoid using credit cards for small purchases. Jean urged customers to prepay their purchases with a check or one-time credit card payment.

Jean said the Board continues to be guided by the goals of the Strategic

Plan but the Co-op made little progress in implementation last year because staff were unable to take on more work. The Expansion Finance Committee and the Board decided that building expansion plans should be guided by the results of a Marketing Survey. The Co-op has retained a nationally known expert and is in the midst of that process.

Management Restructuring

Karen Starr (staff) and Sarah Phillips (board) jointly described the intensive management restructuring process which has been happening since December, led by the Management Review Group, (two staff and two board members). Karen explained that the Management Collective, which led operations of the Co-op for many years, concluded that their present structure was not working. Unable to come up with a new structure, the MC asked the Board to take leadership of the restructuring process. Sarah and Karen emphasized that this was a process that was requested by the Management Collective and not something imposed by the Board. Karen emphasized the “collaborative” and “respectful” nature of the process.

The Co-op has a new staffing structure, and new wage structure. Two new positions for General Manager and Administrative Manager were under recruitment at the time of the Annual Meeting. The new

wage structure will significantly increase staffing costs, will bring the Co-op closer to paying all staff a Livable Wage, and will base compensation upon a combination of responsibility, performance, and longevity, as compared with the previous structure, which was based almost solely upon longevity.

Question and Comment Period

There was a lively discussion primarily focused upon the new staffing and management structure and the process for getting there. Here are highlights:

Joseph Gainza asked how the new wage structure will affect the Co-op’s financial status. Jean answered that we will need a 19% increase of revenue to pay the recommended wages. She said this should be looked at as a strategic investment, and that the Board is looking at borrowing to get started. Karen added that we need to increase sales and we need to have staff with the skills to increase sales and with needed leadership skills.

Brian Tokar expressed appreciation for the deliberation and care with which

the management restructuring is occurring.

Rosamond London said that staff are equal co-workers regardless of different positions; they have different roles but all are equally important.

Dawn Fancher said that the materials that went out said



that this was a move to a “healthier” management structure, and she found that wording hurtful. She said we have lost something, even if it was the right decision.

Sara Norton expressed appreciation for the presentation and for all the work that went into it. She said it is “a jittery thing” to shift to a vertical structure and was glad for the acknowledgment of loss. She asked how the new approach is embedding safeguards and accountability. Jean answered that these questions and perspectives are important and will be discussed by the Board.

Paula Emery asked how many FTES (Full Time Equivalent staff) do the work of the Co-op. Jean said 8. Karen said most staff work only 20 hours, and prefer part-time schedules. Paula suggested we could reduce staff if more working members did tasks now



done by paid staff. Sarah answered that the goal is to get more working members, but the Co-op needs staff with time and skills for recruitment and supervision of working members.

Betsy Ziegler asked how we will get out the message about the changes at the Co-op; how will

we “bump it up”? Sarah answered that there is a key new 10-hour-a-week position for marketing and membership.

Glenda Bissex said she is relieved to know that the restructuring came from staff and not from “the top.” She wanted to know how the new managers will be introduced to the community. Jean and Sarah said that needs to be planned.

Joseph Gainza expressed appreciation for the changes. He said he had not heard the term “member/owners” during the meeting. He said he hopes that the new managers will have a strong understanding of the Cooperative Movement.

Nancy Ellen observed that the MC worked really well for years but it stopped working because “we didn’t have accountability to one another in the MC.”

With no more questions, Jean Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.



The Co-op Board Members



L to R: Giordano Checchi, Peter Boyle, James Herbert, Chris Jackson, Jean Hamilton, Sarah Phillips, Alicia White.

New Member: *Peter Boyle*

Pete Boyle has lived in Vermont for thirty years. He has two grown children, Christopher who is an educator in China, and Kayleigh who is an organic farmer in Western Mass. The move to Vermont was largely to raise them in this incredible state.

Pete currently lives in Brookfield with his wife Sally on a small farm that includes horses, chickens, and too many dogs. Pete has recently retired but owned and operated businesses for forty years, most recently Berlin Optical Expressions. Pete also owned small restaurants in South Jersey before moving to Vermont, and hopes to bring that experience to the Plainfield Co-Op Board.

A real supporter of local foods, he was on the committee that started Growing Local Fest. Pete lived in Plainfield for a short time and loved the Co-op, appreciating its authenticity and importance to the community.

New Member: *James Herbert*

Having worked in various capacities in the organic farm scene over the last twelve years, James hopes to bring to the Plainfield Co-op board an empirical understanding of the challenges currently looming for food producers, distributors, and retailers.

He and his son live in Marshfield; they are both excited to have landed in this community. Recognizing that the Co-op is a food hub for many folks in eastern Washington County, James would like to help maintain the store's financial health, aiming to thereby buffer its roles as a community center and marketplace for local farmers.

He believes that the difficulties facing small-scale growers are not insurmountable, especially in a community such as Plainfield, where the desires for self-sufficiency and economic interdependence feed into one another. Indeed, this is an opportunity for revitalization and community involvement, and he would like to play a part in the process!

2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

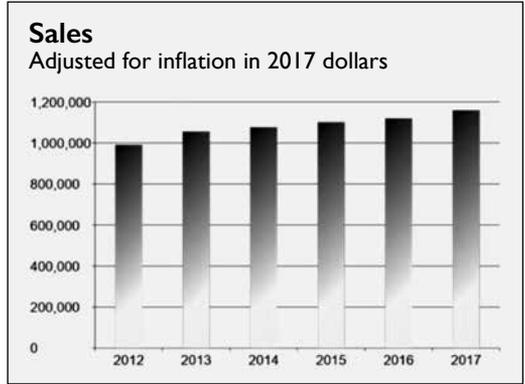
Alicia White, Treasurer

What Happened?

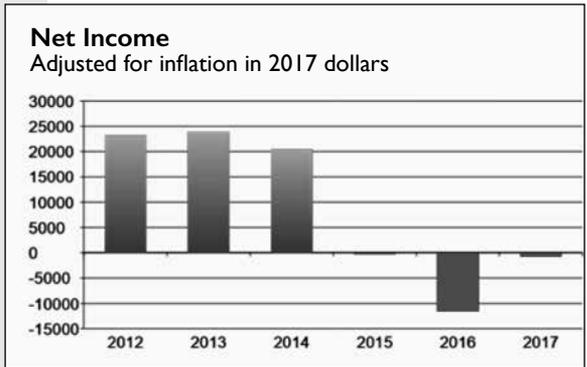
- January through September went well. Sales were up and the profit at the end of September was +\$18,831.
- Everyone was confident that 2017 would be a good year.
- Quarter 4: capital expenses (new software, failed cooler), shrinking margins, low sales.
- Q4 and Year End accounting posted some unexpected expenses.
- We finished the year with a small loss.

What We Learned

- The Co-op works on a very tight budget and it does not take much to change a good year into a bad one.
- Our accounting systems have been confusing and need improvement
- 2018— Re-building a strong foundation!

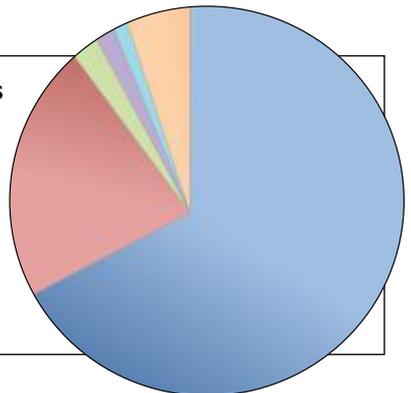


Sales increased 3.7% from 2016 to 2017 (adjusted for inflation).



2017 Expenditures

- Cost of goods
- Staff Compensation
- Utilities
- Credit card fees
- Bookkeeper
- Everything else



Other Metrics

- **Quick Ratio** measures our ability to pay short-term obligations (payroll, money we owe vendors, etc.).

- This is a new metric that more accurately measures our ability to pay our vendors.

- Target is 1.0 or greater.

- 2017 year end, the Quick Ratio was .30

Using the new measure: Quick Ratio = (total current assets -inventory -restricted accounts)/total current liabilities (\$108,328 -\$57,090 -34,515)/\$55,585 = .30

- **Debt to Equity Ratio**

- Total Liabilities (loans, payroll, money we owe vendors, etc.)
+ Total Equity.

- Target is 1.5 or lower. 2017 year end, the Debt to Equity Ratio is 0.38.

- **As of 2017 year end**, we owed \$0 on loans.



What Do You Think about the Co-op's New Management Structure?

Nearly ten years ago, the Co-op undertook a bold change to its management structure. Instead of running like most businesses, with a pyramid-shaped structure and a general manager at the top, the Co-op Board entrusted the management of the store to a group of staff who together were responsible for the Co-op's success and who each had equal say in decisions. For many years, between seven and nine staff ran the store collectively; no major decisions were made without the agreement of all, and no member of the collective had individual authority over any other staff. Collective members were all paid the same based on seniority. For many years the system functioned well, but recently a combination of factors caused a breakdown of the management collective's ability to run the store effectively.

At our April Annual Meeting the Board and staff announced to the member/owners that the Co-op is in transition to a new management structure. The end of our management collective is an emotional step for many, who worked hard to get the collective going and who had been proud of the Co-op's non-hierarchical business structure. To gauge reactions, the Newsletter interviewed several staff and members and asked their opinion about the change.

◆ **Brian Tokar, Co-op member, former Board member**

At first, I was stunned with the news that we were going to hire a general manager. But after talking to board members and staff, it seemed clear it was a bad situation, and change was needed.

Twelve years ago, the Board brought in a manager from the outside who didn't have an inclusive style and didn't believe in participatory staff decision making and was intimidating. Soon after the longtime manager Ellen was pushed to resign, followed very quickly by other resignations, emergency

member meetings and several board resignations and an interim period where there was a three-person co-management team, that dropped to two managers. Then one of those managers was fired in 2009.

Everyone was dissatisfied, and the Co-op was in trouble. I was on the Board then. Out of this crisis, the staff researched other management models and brought to the Board a proposal for collective management. The Board discussed the proposal and adopted it during the summer of 2009 (this proposal included a position for a collective coordinator. I don't know what happened to that).

continued on page 14

Introducing the Co-op's new General Manager, Kevin Levesque

My wife, Steph, and I moved to Plainfield in March of 2016. However, it was back in 2012 that I started to frequent Onion River Campground and Positive Pie on my pilgrimages through the Green Mountain State. We decided to move to Plainfield mostly because of the warm, welcoming vibe from the house and town. Plainfield has so much character, life, and buzz. Fast forward to 2018, and our family now consists of two beautiful dogs, Rosie and Franklin. We love taking our dogs on the rail trail, around the village, and down to the Winooski river by the Recreation Field. Personally, I spend my limited down time playing with the dogs, enjoying games, traveling to new places and being a foodie inspired by Vermont's own agriculture.



To me, the Co-op is the heart of our village and the place where I first discovered our community. Our Co-op is also an extremely convenient place to find daily necessities, along with gems from local farmers and artisans. Additionally, our Co-op provides a local place for our neighbors to work, which is vital to developing a sense of community. I hope to bring my previous experience working in grocery markets and small businesses to the Plainfield Co-op. Mostly, I look forward to community outreach, adding the use of various data tools to our merchandising and business planning, and continuing to build relationships with our local providers while harnessing the passion our member-owners have for the Co-op. It's extremely satisfying to know how much effort and commitment the Co-op members already put into the beloved building and its daily operations.

Thoughts from the Board, as presented at the Annual Meeting:

We do not believe that

- Changing the management or staffing structure will solve all of our problems
- Shared management does not work (we are proposing shared management with two senior managers)
- We should try to be just like Hunger Mountain
- Management and staffing will stay this way forever (implement, reflect, adjust and so on)
- A general manager will have all the answers and all the skills we need to be strong (it will always take a strong committed skilled team working together)

continued from page 12

We worked really hard to move to collective management research, and this worked very well for many years, but we've not been able to pay staff at a rate of compensation to bring in and keep people with the skills the Co-op needs to sustain collective management.

I trust the commitment and clarity of the people involved in the process. We need to give it a try. I would like to think of it as a point on a path back to a more horizontal management. I would like to see the general manager become a collective coordinator in the future.

I was pleased we were given assurance at Annual Meeting that there would be a participatory spirit. Hopefully we will find someone (to work as manager) who has the perspective to bring an inclusive style. I recognize that we are in a difficult economic climate and for our Co-op to thrive, we have to have strong, skilled leadership.

◆ Daniel Marcus, Co-op member

I know that the Co-op has been struggling (I have friends who work there). With the economic downturn, it is not surprising that the Co-op was struggling.

It is extremely important to keep the Co-op in the Village. It's key to who we are as a community. Anything we can do to keep it going, we should do.

From listening at annual meeting, I think the changes are very helpful. People I trust have made the decision. It looks hopeful.

◆ Karen Starr, has worked at the Co-op since July 2011. She has worked at two other cooperative grocers (Onion River in Burlington for three years and Albany for five years). Karen was a member of the Management Collective. She was one of two staff representatives on the Management Restructuring Group.

At one point the structure (collective management) was working, but for the last year and a half it wasn't. There was no sense pretending that we had a functional collective, because we didn't. We went to the Board because the Management Collective couldn't make a decision about how to proceed. Restructuring is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.

The process was really respectful. All the strength of this organization came out in the restructuring process. The board has some brilliant, dedicated members. People have had ample opportunity to be heard. No one was railroaded.

Structure change doesn't solve all the problems, but I am looking forward to the change. This will return management to a functional system. It will build up staff to

have the level of skills they need. Before, we never made an effort to pay people what they needed and to attract people with skills

The new manager has to have the values, to be able to provide mentorship and to work collaboratively.

I am fiscally conservative. But borrowing to increase compensation levels has to happen. We have to invest in this place and in the staff, or else we will go under. I think this place can really make it.

◆ Marge Yoder has worked at the Co-op for 11 years and lived in Plainfield for 20 years. She worked under the two general managers who were here and was part of the formation of the Management Collective.

I was part of the Management Collective when we started it. It worked really well – until it didn't work. We (MC members) were pulled in too many directions. We all had too many roles because we were all trying to do everything. None of us were qualified in some areas. It got to where we couldn't make deadlines. This made us stressed out and dissatisfied.

Before we turned it over to the Board, we tried a lot of things. We invited Buffalo Mountain and they came down and told us what they had done. I went with Nancy Ellen

and Jeannine DeWald when we approached the Board and told them we could not do it on our own and asked them to help us with it. They were taken by surprise. They had no clue this was going to happen.

The [General Manager] recruitment process has been extensive. We interviewed people from several different states. We cast a wide net, and there was no quick decision. There was a staff/board hiring committee and staff had opportunity for input.

I am really looking forward to the change. I think it is very, very positive.

◆ Comments from a working member who prefers not to be identified by name.

Someone like me wants to be distrustful of hierarchical structures, but from watching and listening how they went about it, and knowing that the impetus came from the Management Collective, I am positive and hopeful.

I can see that to run a successful business in a competitive capitalist economy, you need to have a very tight structure, and maybe a collective structure is better when you are doing something with a more relaxed time frame and you can afford to have an ebb and flow.

Who's Paying for Your Strawberries?

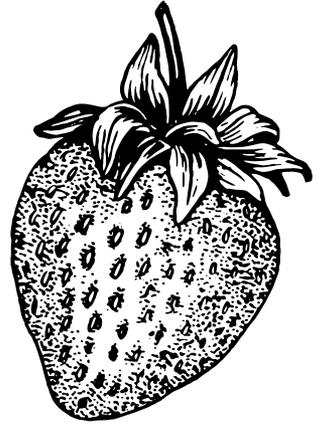
The Bigger Picture

by Glenda Bissex

Conventionally raised strawberries are rated by the Environmental Working Group as highest in pesticide residues of any fruit--residues you cannot wash off. Nearly 300 pounds of pesticides were applied to each acre of strawberries in California, where most fresh strawberries sold in the U.S. are grown.

Most of the chemicals applied were fumigants, poisonous gases injected directly into the ground to sterilize the soil before planting. The most notorious strawberry fumigant is methyl bromide, which also destroys the earth's protective ozone layer. Fumigants kill every living thing in the soil. Yet the soil, organic farmers understand, is itself a living organism, the basis for all plant life that in turn is the basis for all animal life. So the earth, now and into the future, is paying for your conventional strawberries.

The farm workers and their families are the people paying most directly--paying with their health and sometimes their lives. The workers are largely immigrant Latinos and Latinas, most poorly paid and poorly treated. So racial and social injustice are part of the bigger picture.



"Strawberries are the hardest crop to work because you have to follow the tray tractor, stooped but working fast to keep up. Breaks are rare, even when you are thirsty; the days are long and it is backbreaking work. I've been sprayed by pesticides many times. Each time, it made me sick with headaches and nausea. I believe most of the people I work with have been exposed to pesticides. If they aren't spraying in the field where we are working, the chemicals drift from one field to the next." -*Rufina Vazquez, field worker*

Organophosphates, widely used on strawberries and other crops, were developed by the Nazis during World War II as nerve gas agents. Later, the chemical companies adapted the organophosphates to be used as pesticides. While consumers aren't breathing in these chemicals or living with them on their clothing, we are unavoidably taking them into our bodies when we eat conventionally grown strawberries.

Organophosphates harm both water and wildlife.. Chemicals pollute streams and rivers and ground water. So earth, air and water--the basic

elements of life--are all affected by how our food is produced. More damage occurs from the toxins released in the refrigerated transport of tons of strawberries from California thousands of miles across the country.

All strawberry growers—organic and conventional—want to start with virus-free plants. But since it is difficult to grow virus-free plants in non-fumigated soil, the chemicalization of agriculture perpetuates itself.

“The transformation of strawberries from an occasional treat to a cheap and abundant supermarket staple should serve as a cautionary tale about the consequences of chemically driven industrial agriculture” (EWG). Being mindful of what we eat means seeing the bigger picture of every food on our plates, knowing how it was produced and what the effects of that production were.

You pay more for organic strawberries. But look who’s paying with their health, and sometimes their lives, for “cheap” strawberries.

We all want to eat strawberries in the summer, and not everyone can afford organic berries. But for those who can, think of who and what you are saving—so many living beings and the environment that supports us all.

“In my work translating for farmworkers, I’ve heard so many horror stories. One woman lost her baby in the field, miscarrying her pregnancy because of repeated exposure to pesticides after feeling faint and nauseous in the fields. The same woman gave birth to a baby with abnormalities. Pregnant farmworkers are forced to work up until the baby is born. The work is harder for them, but they do it to support their families. So often, these women have deformed babies; some are born with no strength in their bones. Many of these children develop speech problems. But these problems belong to more than just the farmworker. The affected include the communities around the farms, the children, and the schools.”

*-Celia Mendez, translator
(both from Earthjustice.org)*

Organic strawberry plants are available from East Hill Tree Farm in Plainfield.

Organic strawberries are available at local co-ops and often at farmers’ markets.

You can pick your own at Dog River Farm in Berlin, and at Cedar Circle Farm in East Thetford; both farms also have produce stands where you can purchase organic berries. Flywheel Farm in Woodbury grows organic strawberries and has a farmstand on Route 14.

Strawberry Recipes

from Debra Stoleroff

Every year one of my first garden tasks is to clean and mulch the strawberry bed. I just can't wait to pick the scrumptious berries. I love to eat them fresh but when they are abundant I look for creative ways to enjoy their yummy-ness. The newsletter committee unanimously asked for a host of strawberry recipes in this edition. Here is a variety of really easy and a little more time-consuming strawberry recipes.

Strawberry Lassi

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup chopped ripe strawberries
- whatever sweetening you prefer (amount is up to you)
- A dash of ground cardamom (optional)
- Ice (optional)



Preparation:

- Blend strawberry, yogurt, milk, sugar and cardamom in a blender until smooth. That's it!
- If you want a more milkshake consistency and it's a hot day, either blend in some ice as well or serve over ice cubes.
- The lassi can be kept refrigerated for up to 24 hours.

Strawberry Spinach Salad

This is one of those recipes with which you just need to experiment with amounts.

INGREDIENTS:

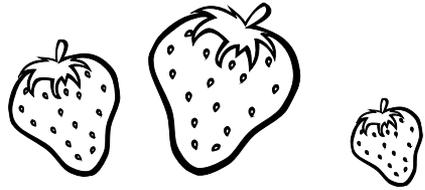
- Spinach
- Strawberries
- Almonds or pecans
- Feta

- Balsamic Vinaigrette – I make my own balsamic vinaigrette using 2/3rds balsamic vinegar and 1/3 olive oil. I add salt, black pepper and garlic flakes to taste.

Put spinach, strawberries, nuts and feta into a bowl. Add vinaigrette. Gently toss to coat spinach evenly with dressing. Serve immediately.



Meyer Lemon Semifreddo with Summer Berries



Jean Hamilton requested a semi-freddo recipe. I've never made semi-freddo and wasn't satisfied with the strawberry semi-freddo recipes I found. But when searching I came upon this Myer's Lemon Semifreddo with Summer Berries recipe from Bon Appetite. Clearly, you can choose whether to use just strawberries or a mix of any kind of berries.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 1 3/4 cups chilled heavy whipping cream
- 1 1/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 7 large egg yolks
- 1/2 cup fresh Meyer lemon juice or regular lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons finely grated Meyer lemon peel or regular lemon peel
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups mixed fresh berries (such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries)

PREPARATION

1. Line 9x5x3-inch metal loaf pan with plastic wrap, leaving generous overhang. Sprinkle almonds evenly over bottom of pan.
2. Using electric mixer, beat whipping cream in large bowl until soft peaks form. Refrigerate whipped cream while making custard.
3. Whisk 1 1/4 cups sugar, egg yolks, lemon juice, lemon peel, and salt in large metal bowl to blend. Set bowl

over large saucepan of simmering

water and whisk constantly until yolk mixture is thick and fluffy (about 4 minutes).

4. Remove bowl from over simmering water.

5. Using electric mixer, beat mixture until cool, thick, and doubled in volume (about 6 minutes).

6. Fold in chilled whipped cream.

7. Transfer mixture to prepared loaf pan and smooth top. Tap loaf pan lightly on work surface to remove air pockets. Fold plastic wrap overhang over top to cover.

8. Freeze semifreddo until firm, at least 8 hours or overnight.

9. Gently mix all berries and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar in large bowl.

10. Unfold plastic wrap from top of semifreddo and invert dessert onto platter; remove plastic wrap. Dip heavy large knife into hot water; cut semifreddo crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Transfer to plates; spoon berries alongside and serve.



Strawberry Coffeecake

This Strawberry Coffeecake recipe is from Gail Falk, who got it from Helen Laben Jordan. Gail writes: This was part of a packet Helen Laben Jordan distributed several years ago at the Montpelier Farmer's Market to encourage people to cook with local ingredients. I've made it a few times, and it's good and simple.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/3 cup cornmeal
- 2/3 cup whole wheat bread flour
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 t. baking powder
- 3/4 cup butter, room temperature
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup sliced strawberries



- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Mix together cornmeal, salt and baking powder in a large bowl.
- In another bowl, use a wooden spoon to press together whole wheat flour and butter until well incorporated.
- Stir in eggs and honey.
- Add half of flour mixture to egg mixture. Stir well.
- Add yogurt. Stir.
- Add remaining flour.
- Fold in strawberries.
- Pour batter into creased 9" cake pan and bake 45-50 minutes, until inserted knife comes out clean.



SAVE MORE
By Buying
Products on Sale

Look for the yellow price tags when you're shopping at the Co-op. They indicate products that are on sale.

Strawberry-Cucumber Ice Pops

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cucumber, peeled
- 4 cups whole strawberries or 2 1/2 cups cut strawberries
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Pinch of kosher salt

Preparation:

- Puree cucumber, strawberries, lime juice, sugar and salt in a blender until smooth
- Pour into ice-pop molds and freeze until solid. (If you don't have ice-pop molds you can use paper or plastic cups. Cover individual cups with wax paper or aluminum foil, then insert popsicles sticks).
- When ready to eat, dip frozen popsicles briefly into hot water to release.



Smart TIP!

Easier Than Using A Credit Card— PRE-PAY YOUR GROCERIES

A Guilt-free, hassle-free way for members to pay for groceries at the Co-op (suggested by our president, Jean Hamilton):

In 2017, the Co-op paid out \$18,000. in credit and debit card fees! Think what improvements could have been made with that money, or even part of it.

There is an EASY way members can contribute to the Co-op without spending a penny. A way you can pay at the checkout counter without waiting to have your credit card approved, or holding up the line while you write a check so as to be guilt-free, or even opening your wallet!

Here's how it works: Buy a gift card for yourself of any amount with cash, check or a credit card you only need to use once. There is no actual card to carry, however; it's all in the register. When you give your member number to the cashier, your gift card balance shows on the screen, and you just deduct your bill from that. You can't overdraw, and you're not donating to a big bank.

But what if you really want those rewards offered by your credit card company? Consider who's paying for the rewards. They're coming from the fees paid by merchants, including your Co-op. There are no free lunches.

Try local salad greens, Everyday Matzoh (Patchwork Farm), and a lovely wheel of Lazy Lady Cheese.

Chloe's been raving about *Per's Smoked Fish Spreads* out of Greensboro Bend. Creamy, lightly smoked, umami-ful, we all agree every flavor is very delicious. Make your people happy and bring some *Per's* to the next cookout.

What's summer without **ice cream**? Whether you are looking for organic, local, dairy-free, sandwiches, popsicles, bars... we've got you covered. New to the freezer is a local ice cream from *Wilcox Dairy* (Arlington, VT).

...and summer BUGS!

New bug sprays coming in from *YAYA Organics* in Contoocook, NH. Yaya is a women-owned business dedicated to making effective, natural health and beauty products. After scouting the market, Karen has determined that Yaya's Squito Ban and Tick Ban will help us all rest easy while playing outside.

Summer is a play hard, work hard season for us, isn't it?

If your body is tired from all that gardening, hiking, SUPing, and softballing treat yourself to a CBD bath bomb handmade in VT by Homegrown Health Botanicals.

Hooray, Summer!

The Suggestion Box

- Q:** The Alden's half gallons of ice cream here are \$12!! That's double what they cost at Hunger Mountain. Ice cream is a staple!
- A:** Sadly, our price is the real cost. The worldwide shortage of vanilla has caused a spike in the cost of ice cream.
- Q:** Can we carry Avalon Organics Anti-Dandruff Shampoo and Conditioner?
- A:** On the shelf.
- Q:** Powdered sugar please.
- A:** We have it. It is in the baking area.
- Q:** Are All Souls Tortillas coming back into stock?
- A:** They never left! Just different packaging. Still in the freezer.
- Q:** I'm looking for Rose Water.
- A:** We have this in Health and Beauty.
- Q:** Please carry "working man's beer" like PBR Tall Boys.
- A:** We do have Narragansett. We've tried to carry PBR in the past, and it didn't sell well. But we will try again.

Here are products customers recently requested which we now have in stock:

Organic oat milk
Blake Hill preserves and marmalades
Amy's Porcini with Rice soup
Raspberry Kombucha with Chia
Blue Diamond Nut Thins
Field Roast Vegan Cheese slices
Effie's cocoa cake
Rapunzel Vegetable bouillon in jars.