

The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

Winter 2019–2020



Hours: 7 days a week 9AM–8PM

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Advertise in the Newsletter: Spread the word about your business! Support the Co-op!

Deadline for the Spring issue is March 1, to be published late March. The newsletter is published quarterly in a black & white paper version and in color online. To place an ad, contact Elizabeth Mathai, ad coordinator, elizabethmathai@yahoo.com

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

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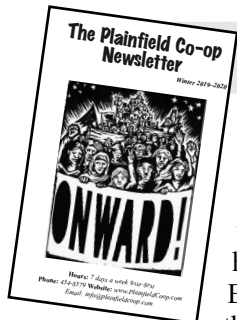
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About This Newsletter

Wither the Plainfield Co-op? It depends on us. Onward! is our theme this issue. We hear it from the Board, the Treasurer, the managers. What

have we succeeded in doing so far? What else do we need to do now? #1 is shop our Co-op.

Breaking news emails will come directly from the Board, as speedily as possible. The quarterly newsletter will continue to look at the bigger picture and explore issues in depth. We welcome your thoughts on the questions we are facing.

This is the first newsletter that will not be mailed to members, saving the Co-op hundreds of dollars. Members should have received email notification when the electronic newsletter was available. (If you didn't, check in the store that we have your correct email address.) Printed copies will be available in the store. Anyone can read the newsletter for free on the Co-op website.

We thank Erik Gillard for his forceful cover design. And Lorraine Checchi for picking up the newsletters from the printer and for having stuck on all those stamps and address labels in the past. Now she'll only need to deliver the print copies to the store.

Thank you all for reading our newsletter and supporting our Co-op. We invite your submissions for the next newsletter-photos, letters, poems, book reviews. Deadline is March 1.

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Board Report

by Les Snow

2020! A new decade is here, and the Board members of your Co-op are filled with appreciation, anticipation and activity.

Appreciation for all those who make the Plainfield Co-op the special organization that it is and for the facility that allows it to offer a wide array of healthy food and a beautiful community space.



Fresh Organic Pies

Bread & Puppet Shows & Exhibits

Horse Drawn Rides

Medicinal Hemp

Gallery Exhibit Curator
Plainfield Community Center

Massage Therapy

Over the years, and especially in 2019, community members have pulled together to help the Co-op fulfill its mission. Whether on staff or as a volunteer, people have taken on vital roles, and sometimes multiple roles, in service to the whole. We are so grateful to all!

Anticipation for the accomplishments of the Co-op in the months and years ahead. With such a history of support for the values represented by the cooperative and a willingness of all to work together for an even brighter Plainfield Co-op future, as the representatives of the member-owners, the Board members are excited about the work ahead!

Activity striving for excellence in governance. The community's love for and commitment to our Co-op is reflected and concentrated in the activities of the Board. Those activities are devoted to ongoing connections with the Co-op's ownership regarding the organization's purpose, clear delegation to management regarding that purpose and any operational limitations in attaining it, and related follow through with management to assure organizational performance. To those ends, the Board's activities in recent months have included:

- The special member-owner meeting in September to help the Board determine organizational priorities.
- Board development to replace outgoing members, have a more complete board and train new board members.

continued on next page

- A renewed search for a general manager. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, Kevin is transitioning out of his operations manager role in order to be more of a full-time parent and Jean is completing her time as part-time, volunteer general manager. Thank you both for the great work you have done for the Co-op and a big thanks to everyone else on staff for going “above and beyond” during this extended management transition period.
- Ongoing, scheduled monitoring of organizational performance relative to the Board’s stated goals. Given the challenges the Co-op faced in 2019, Kevin and Jean, with the support of staff, have done an excellent

job of balancing the work of managing while also keeping the Board apprised through monitoring reports.

The Board meets at least once a month. The usual time and place is at 6:30pm on the fourth Monday of the month at the Co-op Community Center, but an agenda is posted a week before each meeting. We set aside time for member-owner input at each meeting, so please stop by! The Board will be doing more in the coming year to reach out to the ownership, but your individual input is always appreciated. Also, be aware the Board meeting minutes are available on the Governance/Board of Directors page of the Co-op’s website and in the minutes book at the Co-op. ♦



Treasurer's Report

by *Giordano Checehi*

This is the last Treasurer's report before the year ends, and I feel compelled to start drawing a few conclusions about 2019 and what to expect for 2020.

The results at the end of October had shown an uninterrupted positive income for the last sixth months. November instead was a particularly difficult month, worse than expected. A power outage spoiled a large amount of merchandise in our refrigerated storages. The insurance covered the damage of the lost merchandise, but our financials suffered anyway because of the disruption of our normal operations. Still it made November the worst month of 2019. Revenues from sales are almost at budget level, and by the end of the year will be slightly above the \$1.2 million mark. Our CoGS (Cost of Goods Sold) remains higher than budgeted, and we will be showing a modest net income by the end of the year.

The Balance Sheet has not changed much since the previous reports. A few things are worth a comment. Our Account Payables (AP) have stabilized,

and less than \$17,000 are past due, but with an ageing that does not exceed 15 days. The "gift certificates," i.e. the roll-over credit extended by buying members to the Co-op, appears to have reached its maximum around \$7,500, and it has leveled off. Our liabilities still show our \$30k long term loan, with its principal being paid back at a trickle rate. But do not misinterpret this year's results. The modest income is mostly due to a drastic reduction in expenses that is coming from having kept a freeze on the hourly pay of our staff, and having run our Co-op with a volunteer temporary General Manager. This cannot be continued, and most definitely this is not a sustainable financial situation for the Co-op's future.

Looking at 2020, with a hired general manager, re-adjusted hourly pay for our staff, building a reserve to repay our loan, and budgeting for a very modest result, the Co-op revenues will need to be around \$1.3 million. This is the level of revenues that would allow us to stabilize our finances.

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Vermont Yarn Shop at Plainview Farm Plainfield's Local Yarn Shop

Featuring yarns made in Vermont, or made from Vermont fibers

858 East Hill Road
454-1114

Hours: Fridays and Saturdays
9 A.M. to Noon, or by appt.

We should all express our thanks to our staff and management, because we would not be where we are without their commitment and their enthusiasm. But we need a renewed effort from all of our members to spend more money at the

Co-op and reach higher targets. We need our members to show and to keep alive the same enthusiasm all the people who work at the Co-op have shown during 2019. ♦

	Q3	November 2019	Year To Date 2019	Budget YTD
Revenues from Sales	349,986	92,691	1,122,197	1,132,455
Cost of Goods Sold	239,210	76,966	761,454	729,288
Gross Profit	110,776	15,725	360,743	403,167
Expenses	95,349	28,980	352,291	398,524
Net Ordinary Income	15,427	-13,255	8,452	4,643

	Year End 2018	2nd QTR	3rd QTR	Year To date 2019
Accounts Payable	97,242	62,126	47,707	42,780
Gift Certificates	3,969	5,346	7,825	7,567
Member Equity	60,641	67,432	70,719	71,999
Net Accumul. Income	-47,269	3,972	19,985	8,265
Long Term Liability	5,000	31,053	30,481	29,416

Pledge Campaign

At the September all-member meeting, at the Plainfield Opera House many members filled out Pledge Campaign Cards. Altogether, those who made pledges promised to increase their 2019-2020 spending by \$20,743.00 over their spending the previous year. This added spending will go a long way toward helping the Co-op meet its budget and stay solvent in the coming year.

Over the next months we will continue to monitor sales and keep folks informed about how close they are coming to the goals they set for themselves by e-mailing quarterly updates. This is an ambitious campaign and we hope to reach our pledge goal and possibly exceed it with the help of member spending and our gentle coaching on individual member progress over the next months. We can do this together and this campaign is another step in keeping the Co-op alive and thriving over the next year.

— John Charles Nuss

Onward!

by Jean Hamilton, Interim General Manager

2019 was a topsy-turvy year for many of us, including our dear little Co-op. At the time of writing this newsletter we don't yet have year-end numbers, but it is looking promising that we will end the year with a modest profit. YAHOOO!!!!

This turn around is an indicator of what we can do when staff, Board, members, and shoppers work together to cultivate our Co-op. I am personally so grateful for everyone who made extra efforts and sacrifices to support the store and set us up for more improvements to come. Next time you are in the store, please take a moment to share some high-fives with your neighbors.

Over the last three months we've had several staff transitions. Our new staff members include Rinny, Rob, and Jonna who are primarily on the register and floor. Don't be shy about introducing yourself to the staff and sharing what you appreciate about the store. While we have welcomed new folks into our community, we have also had to say good-

bye to Anji, our long-time employee and produce manager. Thank you, Anji, for many years of dedication to working with local farmers, leaning into the Co-op employee structure, and providing loving touches to the Community Center.

In addition to these staff level transitions, we are also in the process of hiring a new manager. Many of you know that I have been supporting some of the big picture management duties as a volunteer while Kevin has been overseeing store operations. The Board, Kevin, staff, and I have been working together over the last quarter to consider different strategies to strengthen these positions. In October, Kevin announced that he would be stepping away from full-time work at the Co-op to support his family and pursue other projects. It has been such an honor to work with all the members of this team, including Kevin, the Board, staff, and membership. As of now, Kevin is planning to keep working part-time to support the management transition, and I will surely continue to support the Co-op where I can.

As we look into 2020, I hope that our entire community will consider what it means to have this asset in our town. Even though we are emerging out of 2019 in a stronger position than we started, we are still facing many of the same economic challenges. The Co-op still needs your financial and energetic support. Thank you for shopping, for volunteering, for joining the Board, and for sharing your positive energy with the staff. ♦



The Winter Struggle

by Kevin Levesque

It's no surprise that the majority of our customers live near the Co-op. Even less surprising, is that many of our regular shoppers walk to us on a daily basis, if not more than once a day. Probably the least surprising fact though, is that our sales really drop in the winter.

At the Plainfield Co-op, we do our best to not change an employee's hours and to keep it consistent throughout the year, and only add on hours during our busiest times with the understanding those hours are seasonal, but needed/available during the summer to better serve our customers. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and hours have had to be cut previously, partly due to declining winter sales last year in an especially harsh winter.

The winter brings a multitude of challenges to our small store: increased heating expenses, weather related delivery delays, store closures, higher potential for product loss, and overall decreased sales due to people naturally wanting to be out less. Our small store often struggles to hit vendor minimums for delivery, and the winter creates an extra layer of challenges on this front. For example, one bakery we order from requires we order \$100 worth of product to avoid a delivery fee – easy in the summer, but hitting that minimum in the winter is a guarantee for excess spoilage. As a result, we play a time-consuming game of hitting an order minimum to most likely waste product, or not hitting the minimum to avoid spoilage but pay an up-front fee for delivery. Unfortunately, these types of minor issues result in

higher pricing, or the temporary discontinuing of a brand for the season.

At our peak business, the Co-op was able to hit close to \$125,000 in sales in July and August – new records for us this year. However, from December through April, we struggled to get above \$95,000, and bottomed out in February to below \$90,000. We do our best to save up in the summer, and in 2019, more specifically cut down debt (which we did!). To have such a drastic drop in sales creates a yearly struggle. This winter, we truly need the continued support of our members to help us thrive and survive and enter the spring with a healthy balance sheet.

How can you help? If you want to leave the house less during the winter, then consider special orders. Special orders can amount to huge savings for members, and even more savings for working members! Everything from flour to pet food, to cases of pasta can be special ordered. Buy in bulk to save time and money.

Consider volunteering to help with deliveries in the winter so we can avoid additional fees to keep our prices low.

Most of all, keep shopping with us through the cold months, and consider purchasing more with us than normal during the winter. The fact of the matter is that many of our members leave town this time of year, and we won't see them return for months. We appreciate any support our members can provide to help balance the loss of these members. Thank you for your consideration. ♦

The Newsletter Editor

by Gail Falk

Like many urban young people of her generation, Glenda Bissex used to dream of a home in the uncrowded beauty of Vermont. She and her husband Henry were school teachers living in Cambridge, MA in the sixties. Once while driving northward, they decided to turn off the highway onto a small road, eventually passing a little white house with fire engine red trim and a breathtaking view of Camels Hump and the Worcester Range. Out front was a For Sale sign.

“That was it!” says Glenda, as she sits at the dining table of that very same house looking out at that very same view more than fifty years later. For a few years Glenda and Henry came to the farm house during vacations while they put in central heat and a new kitchen, and then, along with their three-week-old baby Paul, they moved to Plainfield full time in 1968.

Once here, they joined the community of ex-urbanites scattered among the hills of Plainfield, Marshfield, and the Montpeliers. Among this community were peo-

ple who missed the variety of foods they had been able to buy in the city. This was also a generation that was learning to cook in a different way from their parents, with whole grains and fresh organic produce, which they couldn't find at Bea's general store on Main Street.

Some of these "flatlanders" joined together to order bulk foods--beans, grains, oils, cheeses, nut butters--as well as cast iron cookware, snowshoes, and wood stoves for the young homesteaders who were equipping themselves to live in Vermont. Glenda first connected with the Plainfield Co-op in its infancy in the early 1970's. There was no store, only monthly order forms and a neighborhood distribution network. The bulk order for all members was trucked to a central location. There neighborhood coordinators would pick up the portion of the order for their area and break it down for each member, who would pick up their share at the coordinator's house. Neighbors took turns being the pick-up place, and friendships developed through the networks.

With the bulk grains and legumes came a new way of cooking. At first, Glenda says, “I was in dietary shock.” I remember my first neighborhood Co-op potluck. Everything seemed grey or brown. It was culture shock for me. I brought an apricot-glazed cheesecake – the brightest color on the table. It disappeared very fast!” In time, Glenda, like the others, learned to cook with whole grains from guides like *Diet for a Small Planet*.



Glenda and baby, 1968

Meanwhile the fledgling co-op branched out and offered organic fruits and vegetables. Glenda recalls a couple of young men driving all the way down to Georgia (the state) to get peaches. "They had a blast," she says. Most of the members were young, including Goddard students and faculty, and they had a lot of energy. Everyone was a volunteer.

By 1972 the cooperative buying network had grown to 300 families and needed a space of its own. The members incorporated and bought the Grange Hall in Plainfield for \$4,000.00. By 1978 we had an actual store! "I remember how we celebrated," says Glenda. "We could have a much wider range of products and access them more frequently." At first the store was open a few days a week, staffed by volunteers, but in time, with increasing hours, the Co-op hired paid workers and a store manager. In those days, says Glenda, "there was a strong co-op feeling. There was a good corps of working members; it was more of an expectation that one would volunteer. I remember packaging raisins," she says. "It was the worst job. They all stuck together."

In the 1970's, the store was on the first floor and the second floor became a flourishing community gathering place. There were monthly spaghetti suppers, movies, dances, a bike exchange, and holiday bazaar. Then the Fire Department closed the second floor because of safety hazards, she recalls. That interrupted its use as a community center, and after it was repaired to building code, it never recovered its former vitality.

In the decades that followed, the Co-op grew and matured, and Glenda grew literal and figurative roots in Plainfield. "When I moved to Vermont, I didn't

want to be just a consumer of culture any more," she says. "I wanted to create rather than consume." She became a vegetable and flower gardener (as her mother and grandmother had been) and planted fruit trees and Christmas tree seedlings (new ventures). She joined the Onion River Chorus. She raised her son. She taught part time in the Goddard Adult Degree Program and then became the first reading teacher at Twinfield in the days before special education. She wrote--nature essays and articles on learning and teaching. "I never yearned for the city again."



Although she now lives alone in her home on East Hill Road, Glenda says she does not feel alone. "I have come to value community in a way that I did not early in my life, and the Co-op is such an important part of that community."

Glenda had volunteered on and off to do typing and cut-and-paste layout for the

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Henry and Paul next to our house

newsletter when it was a xeroxed publication. She stepped in as editor in 2007. That was the period when the Co-op was in crisis after the beloved, long-time manager Ellen Bressler was fired or resigned (depending on whom you talk to); the Co-op could scarcely afford to pay its staff and stay open, and the membership was divided over a proposal to move the store to Route 2.

“I wanted to do some healing,” remembers Glenda, and writing was a natural way for her to do it as “I’ve been a writer all my life.” Including the voices of staff, members and producers, as well as the Board, was important to Glenda,

who has continued to edit the newsletter. She sees it as a key aspect of the Co-op’s mission to educate members on issues such as diet, the environmental impact of products, and organic vs. non-organic, as well as being an important forum for discussion of basic political, economic and philosophical issues and a means for the Board to communicate with members.

She has mixed feelings about the newsletter’s transition from a printed, mailed version to an electronic edition. She recognizes the economic advantages of electronic distribution, but “the electronic version disappears with a click. I like having it around to look back at.” (Print copies will still be available at the store.) She hopes the monthly sales flyer will become regular, and that the newsletter can focus on the educational and policy questions that it can do best. She would like the newsletter to focus on “the importance of local control, local products, local community, local everything. In the midst of this economy where bigger is better and profits are paramount, it’s so important to have working models of another way to go about things, another vision.” She would also like to see the newsletter grapple with how the Co-op can be a store that serves everybody in the community. “The newsletter is a place to examine how to put into practice our vision for the environment while still serving the broader community. Organic isn’t inherently more expensive to produce but the economic system makes it more expensive. Organic vs. non-organic has been a tension since the Co-op’s early days, and perhaps it will always be. ♦

- New Board Member -



Cat Klarich has been shopping at the Plainfield Co-op since moving to Maple Hill Rd. over 17 years ago. Cat grew up in Montpelier and shopped at the Hunger Mountain Co-op, way back when it was on Barre St! She remembers helping her mom and being rewarded with a carob-covered rice cake.

After starting a family, Cat and her husband decided to move to the country to take on a fixer upper, dialing into this area in large part because of the Plainfield Co-op. Being able to

buy good food locally was important to them.

Cat is a country girl at heart. Her mom was raised on a farm in Hardwick, the youngest of 15 children! Long before Cat was born, the farmhouse burned to the ground. Decades later, the farmhouse and barn were rebuilt by Cat's cousin. Their 50th family reunion was recently held in the new barn.

“It might sound strange, but the way I feel about the farm is the same the way I feel about the Plainfield Co-op. It offers a sense of belonging and community.” She insists there is no hidden carob-covered rice cake agenda.

Cat keeps busy managing the family business, hanging out with her husband, and trying to keep up with their three kids. She has no spare time, but squeezes in motorcycle rides, Friday night dinners, and performing stand up comedy. She is best reached at: catklarich@gmail.com ♦

PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER



Space available for your:

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Art Gallery Exhibitions & Special Events

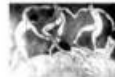
\$9/hr. for Co-op Members, \$15/hr. for Non-Members

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

Stories from the Co-op's Early Years (1971-1975)

from Jim Higgins' columns

Jim Higgins' stories are sometimes amusing, sometimes astonishing, sometimes heart-warming. He was part of the action at the Plainfield Co-op's beginnings, and is a superb storyteller. If you remember any of the people and events Jim portrays, his stories will be nostalgic. If this is all news to you, the stories may be eye-opening. All of us involved with the Co-op may draw solace and inspiration from this history.

These stories were published in newsletters from winter 2008-09 through fall 2010. They are too good to be collecting dust so the newsletter committee has asked that they be posted on the Co-op website. Here's just a taste:

As I have written previously in this history column, the Co-op, during its first year or so, was viewed as something of a gangly toddler, mostly given a free pass over its foibles. But once the Co-op embedded itself into the Grange Hall late in 1972 we entered a lively adolescent period where vigorous debate amongst the most activist members was the norm. The debates emerged at the monthly meetings and later spilled out to ad hoc sessions for deeper discussion.

The three most contentious topics on Co-op agendas in those early years were:

- Product line: organic vs. non-organic;
- Political line: general political activism vs. exclusively food politics;
- Growth: centralized model vs. decentralized.



The first group of Co-op managers, 36 years ago, were expert flyers. We were positively brilliant at flying by the seat of our pants.

We mostly got away with our suspect business practices because the conspiratorial and apocalyptic spirit of the times demanded bold behavior and our growing army of Co-op members (however, loosely defined) forgave our bone-headed excesses. Remember, we're talking here of the grim Nixon years—think Kent State and the 1972 Christmas bombings of North Vietnam.

Two early Co-op projects come to mind that exemplify this “flying” spirit. One was outrageously successful; a sterling example of the Co-op tweaking the “business-as-usual,” establishment, especially the sacred distributor-wholesaler-retailer scheme of things. The other project, far bolder and more visionary, became an instructive comedy of errors, human and cosmic.

Ball jars and boxcars

The success story involved Ball jars—our first “Let’s think really big!” initia-

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tive. The sturdy glass jars were a perfect product choice to launch our subversion. They were also a terrific metaphor for the times: they would help us put food away, they would help us prepare for the coming imagined collapse.

We broadcast the coming deal in a summer bulletin: „The Co-op is organizing a truckload purchase of Ball jars, order now.” Within weeks we had the cash in hand for a full truckload, and the stunning low-cost (a mere 5% mark-up over an already low truckload price) attracted many folks outside the typical Co-op loop.

Final price and delivery talks with the Ball company began, but not before some local feathers needed to be de-ruffled at the Plainfield Hardware store, the major retailer of Ball jars. I vaguely

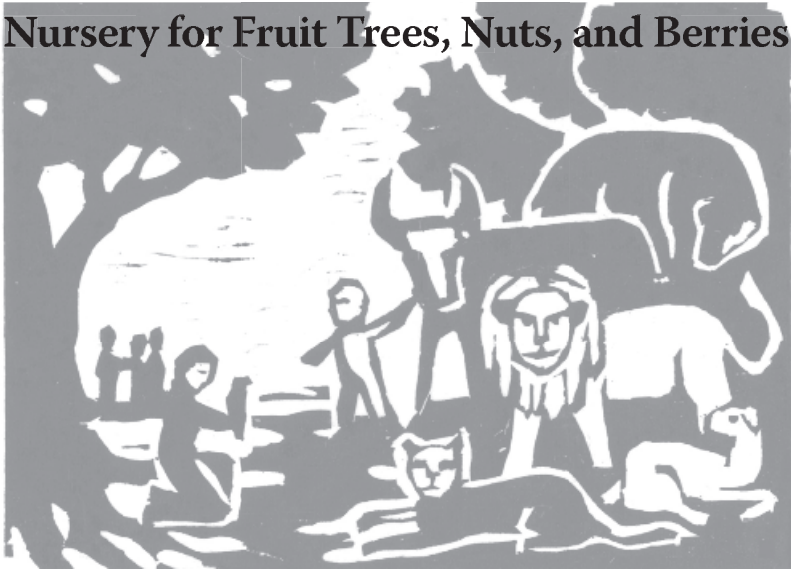
recall part of the “deal” being that the proprietor, Carl Johnson, could handle the accessories, replacement tops, etc.

We managers were besides ourselves with conspiratorial glee as the massive 18-wheeler backed into the narrow alley leading to the rear of the Co-op building. Dozens of volunteers answered the frantic call to help unload. It was our first success at large scale tinkering with “The System.” Soon we graduated to boxcars loaded with 80 tons of granite dust and rock phosphate up from Florida, then a truckload of Ashley wood stoves, and Stihl chainsaws, and skis, and snowshoes, and much more. Heady times indeed.

We would come down to earth soon enough. ♦

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Nursery for Fruit Trees, Nuts, and Berries



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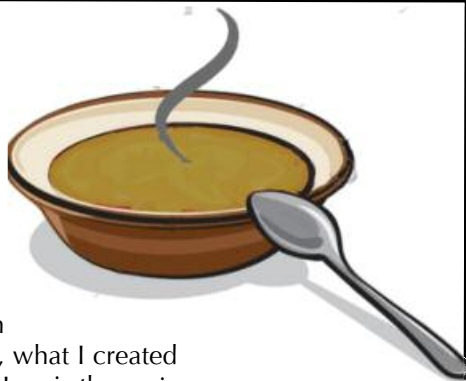
by Debra Stoloroff

I don't know which I love more during the winter months—being outside in the snow or inside cooking and eating comfort food by the woodstove. I share with you three favorite recipes I regularly prepare on those inside days.

Grandma Esther's Split Pea Soup

Created by Debra Stoloroff

When I was growing up, my Russian Jewish grandmother was famous (in our family), for her bagelach (sort of a baked blintz), pot roast (which I never ate) and split pea soup (which I stopped eating when I went vegetarian at 15). At 19, in college and living with friends, I worked to recreate a vegetarian version of her split pea soup. Amazingly, what I created was very close to the taste of her soup. Here is the recipe:



- 3 cups split peas
- 10-12 cups cold water
- ½ cup tamari
- 4 bay leaves
- ½–1 tsp black pepper
- 1 TBL olive oil
- onions (1 large or 2–4 medium)
- garlic (4 cloves or to taste)
- carrots (2–3 large)
- parsnips (optional)
- 1 cup texturized vegetable protein flakes (TVP) or barley

1. Pour split peas into a large pot (I use my grandmother's large old enameled cast iron pot).
2. Add 8 cups cold water and let soak for 2–4 hrs.
3. Add enough water to cover the peas plus 2" more and bay leaves, tamari and black pepper. Bring to boil, then lower to medium heat and cook.
4. In a separate pan (while peas are cooking), sauté onions and garlic. When onions are translucent, add onions and garlic to cooking peas.
5. When peas are starting to soften, add sliced carrots and optional parsnips.
6. Add more tamari and black pepper to taste.
7. When peas are soft, add TVP and cook until flakes are soft (about 1 minute).

Read Any Good Labels Lately?

From Dr. Bronner's All-One Toothpaste (available at the Co-op):

Dr. Bronner's was founded in 1948 by Emanuel Bronner, a third generation German-Jewish soapmaker. He used the labels on his superbly formulated ecological soaps to spread his message that we must realize our transcendent unity across religious and ethnic divides or perish: "WE ARE ALL ONE OR NONE!"

Dr. Bronner's believes in running a business that is good for its employees, society and the planet. As well as funding fair trade and organic projects, we dedicate a significant portion of our annual profits to funding positive social change. All full-time employees receive up to 25% of their salary as a bonus every year, get 15% of their salary as a profit sharing for retirement, and have 100% free health care for themselves and their families. ALL-ONE!



If you discover any good labels while shopping at the Co-op, submit them to newsletter editor Glenda Bissex at songboat@vmlink.net

Supporting the Plainfield Co-op

May-October

Free day use of the river and trails all season for locals!



Onion River Campground

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Simple Bread Pudding

Ingredients

- 2 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ stick) unsalted butter, more for greasing pan
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar or maple syrup
- Pinch salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ loaf sweet egg bread (challah or brioche) cut into 2" cubes (about 5–6 cups)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins or berries (optional)



Preparation

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a small saucepan over low heat, warm milk, butter, vanilla, sugar and salt. Continue cooking just until butter melts; cool.
2. Cube the bread and mix in the cinnamon and nutmeg (and raisins if you use them)
3. Meanwhile, butter a 4-to-6-cup baking dish and fill it with cubed bread mixture.
4. Add eggs to cooled milk mixture and whisk; pour mixture over bread.
5. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes, or until custard is set but still a little wobbly and edges of bread have browned. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Chai Tea

Morgan MacIver, a former student, brought a pot of this Chai tea to serve as part of her final presentation for one of her Renaissance¹ learning experiences. SOOO good! Now I often treat myself to it.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of water
- 5 cups of milk
- 20 cloves
- 2-3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tsp. cardamom
- 2 TBL fresh ginger
- 3 black peppercorns
- 1 TBL peppermint tea
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maple syrup or honey

Place water and all spices in a saucepan and heat to boiling.

Boil for three minutes, reduce heat and add milk, honey, peppermint and black peppercorns.

Heat until the chai almost boils. Turn off heat. Cover and steep for 10 minutes.

Strain and serve

1. Renaissance Is the name of Twinfeild's personalized learning program that I have directed for the last 20 years.





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