

The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

Winter 2022-23

Where are we now?



Artist: Delia Robinson

Open Seven Days a Week

Monday-Saturday 9 AM–7 PM Sunday 10 AM–7 PM

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About This Newsletter



Where are we now? Many of us are wondering this about our Co-op. In many ways we are still where we were.

After 50 years we're still alive (see photos of our 50th birthday party and our 50th banner). Still in the same building we've inhabited since we first became a store in 1978. (Starting in 1972 we were a pre-order co-op.) Still supporting the arts and community (see invitation to join our 50th art show in the Community Center, p. 16). Still struggling financially (see Treasurer's report, p. 10). And of course we still love food, as in the recipes you can make (pp. 7, 11, 17) and the treats you can buy in our store from the local Red Door bakery (see interview, p. 14) and other local bakers.

And we're still becoming, with co-managers now — not the first iteration of a management system for a small business with a democratic vision (see General Manager's report, p. 8, and Co-managers' profiles, p. 9). We're still dreaming of what we might become — by improving where we are or by moving and serving our community in new ways (see fall 2022 newsletter on our website plainfieldcoop.com).

As we study the possibilities and come up with numbers (see President's report, pp. 4-

6 and Rose Paul's Update on the USDA grant, p. 12), how do we take into account things that can't be quantified — the energetics of our Co-op, like the enthusiasm, vision, devotion and steadfastness needed to carry us forward?

We welcome your contributions of letters, photos, cartoons, poems, whatever, sent to the editor. Deadline for the spring issue is March 1 to be published late March-early April. ❖

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Cover picture

Title: 3 Men Named Merlin Accidentally Meet at Stonehenge

Artist: Delia Robinson

Part of Plainfield Co-op Art Show commemorating the Co-op's 50th year

On Board!

President's Report by Cat Klarich

2022 marks the Plainfield Co-op's 50th year in existence and what a year it has been! From bridge closures to supply chain issues, the Plainfield Co-op showed its resiliency and proved that this little store is truly a cornerstone in the village of Plainfield. Whether you are a founding member or a regular shopper, we value your support. (And we sure do need it!)

So, what's new at the Plainfield Co-op? The Co-op has transitioned to a Co-management structure and is pleased to announce the hire of the Co-op's very own Stanzi Scribner as the new Administrative Manager! Stanzi has worked at the Co-op for 5 years—starting as a sub, working as a cashier, learning the ropes of buying and receiving, eventually finding her groove as Administrative Assistant. We are excited to work with Stanzi in her new capacity as Administrative Manager. Together with Floor Manager Jezebel Crow and outgoing General Manager Jamie Lewis, the management team is poised to lead the Co-op. It's a dream team! Staff member Cullen Partin reflects on the new management structure, "We currently have a staff that is in agreement on the nature of our managerial situation. ... Stanzi being promoted to manager duties strengthens this consensus and support, as it shows the team (and the community) that we can do this together."

"You can't get there from here," someone said to me when the bridge to the village was closed for repairs. By the time I explained the detour, the bridge was open for traffic. (Fine, it was my brother, and he never visits anyway!) The staff deserve all the credit for mitigating the inconvenience and loss caused by the bridge closure. Whether it meant using a personal truck to pick up an order of perishables or using a neighbor's freezer (thanks, Dan!) the amazing staff handled

this challenge with resolve. As predicted, the bridge closure had a negative impact on our sales—a loss of a sobering approximately \$6,000 per week. Treasurer John Cleary offers a detailed financial snapshot in his report.

We are excited that the USDA Rural Development Grant process is well underway. Please refer to Rose Paul's report for details. This grant is a big deal for us as we marry the work we've done leading up to this point with the current efforts of volunteers and consultants to assist the membership in assessing our options to stay or move. The straw poll at the annual meeting indicated the membership is open to a move. There is prime real estate for sale on RT 2—Allenwood Stables and Plainfield Hardware. There is also strong support for the Co-op to stay in the village and expand in place.

Why should we do this feasibility study anyway? It comes down to this basic principle: the Co-op is owned by you, the membership, and the decision to stay or to move requires information and discussion leading up to a vote. Expanding the Co-op is the plan; where is what we are going to find out. This process can be grueling, and we understand folks want results faster than we can deliver. Here's the deal: the Co-op is not in a strong position to jump on real estate or expand in our current location, without additional information, financials, and a developed business plan. The member-owners need to understand what, when, and how we plan to expand. We are working towards that plan and will keep you, the membership, involved in the process. Please put your trust in the Board and Co-op volunteers as we take time to practice due diligence.

On Board, continued >>>

On Board >>

The Board wants to recognize Gaye and Rich Christiansen, owners of Plainfield Hardware, who invited us to discuss this opportunity and have been with us every step of the way—opening up their doors, books, and hearts to help the Co-op “clear the runway” if the members decide on this option. “We just want what is best for the Plainfield Co-op,” Gaye told me recently. Another neighbor, Jonathan Matthew of Allenwood Stables, has also been a cheerleader for the Co-op, hosting an open house for the membership this summer. These neighbors' community-minded spirit and willingness to work with us, is what makes Plainfield so special.

I also need to give a shout out to our new Board members: Treasurer John Cleary, Board member Claire Dumas, and Vice President Anne Van Couvering, who have

all graciously stepped up. And to Rose Paul, who is now our Secretary. She has taken on a lot and doesn't hesitate to take on just one more thing. It is a pleasure working with this talented bunch!

A special thank you to Glenda Bissex, newsletter editor, who went above and beyond, donating 125 print copies of the fall newsletter to distribute! This newsletter is an important tool for the Board to communicate with the membership and we appreciate the help getting them word out. Kudos to the amazing Alexis Smith for her gift to the Plainfield Co-op — a beautiful sign displayed on the opposite side of our sign with an homage to the heroic Plainfield Fire Department. Thank you, Alexis! More good news — the new and updated website will be live soon! Please be sure

On Board, continued >>



Our Farmers Thank You

Since 1919, the farm families of Cabot Co-op have been passionate about making the world's best cheese. We use only the purest ingredients to craft our creamy, delicious classics. Just maybe, that's why we've won every major award for taste. Learn more at cabotchese.coop



On Board >>>

Member Coordinator Leah Tedesco has your email so you don't miss important information, like golden birthdays or the seasonal sales flyer: membership@plainfieldcoop.com.

Despite the financial pickle jar we are in, the Plainfield Co-op is still open, providing an essential service to the community. We need the members to rally around the Co-op and simply shop here more, especially during the lean winter months. Please let us know how we can improve: board@plainfieldcoop.com. Whether it's rounding up your spare change or volunteering your time on a committee, we value your contributions.

I'll see you at the Co-op! ❖



Sign credit: Alexis Smith

EAST HILL TREE FARM

Nursery for Fruit Trees, Nuts, and Berries



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

Recipes collected by Debra Stoleroff

Quiche

(It's been so long I don't know where I got the recipe)

Quiche is one of the easiest and most satisfying foods to bake. Once you have a basic recipe for the custard, your choice of fillings is endless.

My favorite quiche custard recipe:

- 3 eggs
- 1½ cups any combination of milk, cream or half-and-half
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp or more of black pepper

Optional:

- 1 tsp or more of minced garlic flakes (don't use garlic powder or garlic salt)
- Touch of hot sauce for a little zing – but not chipotle hot sauce

Blend the eggs, add the dairy, salt, pepper, garlic and hot sauce. Let sit until you are ready to pour into the pie plate.

Possible fillings:

NOTE: always sauté onions and garlic, with salt and pepper, then sauté any of the following veggie combinations OR make up your own:

1. Broccoli, mushroom – with sharp cheddar and grated Romano cheese
2. Spinach, mushrooms – with feta cheese
3. Red pepper, kale, mushrooms – with goat cheese
4. Make up your own combination

Putting your quiche together:

1. Make your favorite pie crust or use a store bought one, put it in a pie plate
2. Prepare the egg custard and let sit until you are ready to pour into the pie plate
3. Sauté the filling combination. Place the filling at the bottom of the crust
4. Grate or break your chosen cheese into small pieces, mix into the custard
5. Pour the custard into the pie plate on top of your filling
6. Gently mix the filling and custard with a wooden spoon so not to break the crust
7. Bake at 350 °F until firm (about 40-50 min).



More recipes on pages 11 & 17

General Manager's Report

by Jamie Lewis

This will be the last article I write for the Co-op newsletter as I am moving on from my position as General Manager. I want to give you some information about the management transition process and what you might expect going forward.

During my time at the store there was a single manager, the General Manager, with the combined duties of what in a larger store would be a management team. Since we are such a small store that model seemingly made sense, and yet it placed a lot of roles and responsibilities on one individual. The position combined general operations, financial, human resources, and floor manager duties into one. Quite a few hats to wear to be sure! From my understanding there have been several different management structures at the Co-op over the years, including at one point a collective.

Upon making the difficult decision to leave and upon thoughtful consideration, I and the Board agreed on moving forward with a plan for a new Co-management model consisting of a Floor Manager and an Administrative Manager. This will have the benefit of shared duties and responsibilities as well as having, however small, a management team that can support each other. Without drilling down into the minutiae of every aspect of each job description I will outline the basic points.

The Floor Manager provides store employee supervision and covers all aspects of daily operations including buying, receiving, customer service, and staff support. The Administrative Manager handles such duties as payroll, vendor payments, employee onboarding, banking, keeping up to date with insurance, taxes, etc. The two roles share re-

sponsibilities for finance, human resources, staff evaluations and relations. They also both report to and are liaisons to the Board.

I am pleased that we were able to successfully hire from within for these positions. Jezebel Crow was hired for the Floor Manager job a while ago, and Stanzi Scribner (as of the writing of this article) was recently hired for the Administrative Manager job. They are experienced, tenured and valuable members of our staff. I can say with confidence that they will make a great team and I believe will do well serving as Co-managers. Through my remaining time at the Co-op I will continue to work with and train both of them in their new roles.

I have learned so much in my time working at the Co-op. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with many wonderful, bright and interesting people—employees, members and all.

I appreciate and am grateful for the opportunity and experience. It truly is the people that make and will continue to make this place special and successful into the future. ❖



Welcome, Co-Managers

Jezebel Crow

I have been working at the Plainfield Co-op since August 2015. I started on the Cinderella Shift, which is what the weekend closing shifts were known as once upon a time. I moved on to mostly produce shifts, loving working with the local farmers and real, healthy food. I started buying for the Herb department, then took on Cheese, Coffee, Bakery, and eventually Produce. As other departments opened, I took them on, so now I buy for Refrigerated, Dairy, and Meat. When Jamie announced that he was stepping down as the General Manager, I said I would be happy to step up and facilitate the operation of the store.



When I am not at the Co-op, I live out in the woods in a cabin I built by hand. I keep chickens, goats, mules, and dogs. I read voraciously and study astrology and mycology.

Stanzi Scribner

I started at the Co-op as a Sub back in the fall of 2018, and once we switched to only curbside pickup during COVID, I started working regular shifts 3 days/week. I enjoyed having regular shifts here and learned so many different things. When Peter asked me if I was interested in becoming a permanent/regular employee, of course I accepted. I continued as a cashier, training in various different areas of the Co-op so I could be as useful as possible and cover in any area if needed, but I still felt like I wanted more from my job here. When the Administrative Assistant position was brought to my attention, I jumped at the chance and in September of 2021, I was promoted. Since then, I've loved having a new perspective, working more behind the scenes and making sure payroll is processed every 2 weeks, vendors are getting paid weekly, and that we have the supplies we need for the store (among other things). Of course, when I saw the Administrative Manager position come up, I couldn't resist applying for it as well, furthering my career and taking on even more responsibility than I've had here in the past. I am so excited for this opportunity to work alongside Jezebel as co-managers, and can't wait to see what the future holds for the Co-op.



Treasurer's Report

by John Cleary

After being elected to the Board at the Annual Meeting this summer, I took on the role of Treasurer in October and have worked hard to understand the financial position of the business. 2022 has been a tough year for the Co-op, as it has been for many businesses. Inflation has caused our cost of good to rise along with other operating expenses. As consumers face rising prices, less money is available in family budgets for both essential and discretionary spending. Our small store can't compete on price with large grocery stores but plays a critical role in creating community, supporting local businesses, and providing food security in our small village. It needs our support if we want it to continue.

Gross sales continue to be below 2021 and the store has faced monthly losses. Gross margin has improved in Q3 (July-Sept.) over the first half of the year but is still falling slightly short of the 35% goal. Fewer people have been shopping at the Co-op throughout the year, with an additional reduction in sales during October while the bridge was closed. The Co-op has applied for ARPA funds from the Town to offset some of the losses from the bridge closure.

Here is a snapshot of the Co-op's year-to-date financials compared to last year.

	January- October 2022	January- October 2021
Gross Sales	\$904,205	\$1,026,793
Profit (Loss)	(-\$91,599)	(-\$10,566)

While this is sobering, almost half of the losses were from Q1 (Jan.-Mar.), with improvements through Q2 and Q3 (April-Sept.). These improvements have come through better management of margins and inventory as well as reductions in labor costs. The Board is working closely with staff to bring the business back to stability. We recently completed a 5 year renewal of our \$45,000 line of credit with the Co-operative Fund of New England. The line of credit is currently being fully utilized.

The Co-op recently applied for a forgivable loan from the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA). The "Short Term Forgivable Loan Program" was created with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support businesses experiencing capital shortfalls as a result of the Covid-19 public health emergency and changes in the economy that resulted. This loan would be forgiven if the terms of the program are met and the funds are properly used for qualifying operating expenses. If received, this loan would give the Co-op the breathing room to continue to operate while the larger issues of scale and location continue to be worked out. In the meantime—shop local! ❖



Chicken Maffe

One year a refugee family staying with Jean Lathrop and David Palmer offered to teach us how to make foofoo and maffe. Maffe is a West African dish that comes from many different countries. There are many variations but it always has tomatoes and peanut butter. For ease, you can substitute the foofoo with white rice.

Ingredients

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

- 12 large cloves garlic
- 1-inch piece of ginger, peeled
- salt and black pepper
- crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 pounds bone-in chicken, skin removed OR a combination of skinless chicken breast and thigh
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 6 ounces tomato paste or a 15 oz can of diced tomatoes
- 1 cup creamy unsweetened peanut butter
- ½ pound green cabbage, cut into 2-inch wedges
- 3 medium carrots, peeled, cut in 2-inch lengths
- 1 medium sweet potato or combination of sweet potato and butternut squash
- 12 ounces Yukon Gold potatoes
- optional chile or hot sauce to taste
- white rice, cooked, or foofoo



Preparation

1. Finely mince 6 cloves garlic and the ginger with a pinch of salt, plenty of black pepper and crushed red pepper flakes to taste. Season chicken all over with salt, and rub with the garlic mixture. Marinate for three hours or overnight, refrigerated.
2. Finely chop the remaining 6 cloves of garlic. In a large Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high heat. When it is hot, add the onion, chopped garlic, 2 teaspoons salt and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes, until the onion starts to become translucent. Stir in the tomato paste (or diced tomatoes), and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes, until the paste and onions have combined and are a shade darker. Stir in 6 cups water, scraping up any browned bits.
3. Add the chicken, bring to a boil and turn heat down to a moderate simmer. In a mixing bowl, stir a cup of the cooking liquid into the peanut butter, a splash at a time, to loosen it. Pour the peanut butter mixture into the pot, and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the cabbage and carrots, and simmer 10 minutes. Peel and cut the sweet potato/butternut squash and potatoes into edible chunks, add them and simmer 30 minutes, until the vegetables and chicken are tender and the sauce is like a very thick gravy. (The oil will be separating in the sauce.) If the chicken and vegetables are tender but the sauce is still a little loose, remove them, and let the sauce cook down. Add the chile if using. Taste, adjust seasoning with salt.
4. Serve over white rice or pick up the stew with a piece of your foofoo ball.

Update on Co-op Rural Business Development Grant

by Rose Paul, Secretary

Three Co-op advisory committees, working with our partner Jon Ignatowski from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, are making progress on our USDA Rural Business Development grant. The grant award of \$29,931 will help our Co-op develop detailed financial information on two options: stay in our current location and possibly expand the building, or move to a more visible location on Route 2. The grant will also pay for someone to help get this information out to members so we can make an informed decision about these two options.

The work has four parts:

- 1) update designs for an expansion of the Co-op's existing structure at 153 Main Street and provide construction cost estimates
- 2) analyze and compare the economic viability of that expansion versus purchasing, retrofitting, and relocating in a more visible location
- 3) engage the Co-op's membership in choosing its best option
- 4) develop an Action Plan in response to the analysis and choice.

► Expansion Feasibility & Design

The Design Advisory Committee issued a request for bids to over 30 architecture firms. We received two responses, and the committee chose Coe and Coe Architecture of West Glover, VT. The architect will review the Co-op's existing building surveys and its existing, preliminary expansion plan in order to move the planning a step further. The historic nature of the building and certain physical constraints will be considered. The architect will provide documentation of

existing conditions of the building and a preliminary schematic concept for an expansion, as well as preliminary construction cost estimates. This is a first step towards a more robust design. Working with the Advisory Committee and Co-op staff, the architect will suggest workable solutions to structure, site, accessibility, and environmental issues.

► Financial Feasibility

A Market Study in 2018 considered the opportunities available to the Co-op to expand at its current location or relocate to a site (to be determined) on US Route 2. The Financial Advisory Committee issued a request for bids from financial consultants on 11/16/22, and proposals are due on 12/11. The committee will choose a consultant who will review the 2018 market study and update it for changes in costs and in the competitive environment. The consultant will also analyze and compare the economic viability of rehabilitating/expanding the existing structure at 153 Main Street (information to be provided by the architecture consultant) with the cost of moving, purchasing a building, and setting up a retail store at a new, more visible location.

The financial consultant will develop pro forma financial statements in an Excel workbook to estimate:

- a) costs to develop in each scenario
- b) projected sources of funds along with the cost of any required debt
- c) 10 years of projected future operating results, based in part on current financials

Update on Grant, continued >>

Update on Grant >>

The financial feasibility study will provide the Co-op membership with the information needed to decide whether renovation/expansion or relocation is the best option for the Co-op's growth and sustainability.

► Internal Readiness

The Internal Readiness Advisory Committee has circulated a request for bids for a consultant and bids are due on December 23. The consultant's work is aimed at helping the Co-op develop a plan for sharing information from the grant-funded studies. This work will help to: uncover operational hurdles to project implementation; clarify Board and staff roles and responsibilities; outline a project communication plan; and understand internal accountability. The result of this work will be a vote by the membership regarding which option (expand or move) the Co-op will pursue.

A key component of internal readiness is a test campaign to understand the capacity for member donations and member loans (owner equity). The consultant will work with Board members to conduct a test campaign to determine a feasible

member loan/giving goal; identify key donors; validate the project; determine the strategic focus of any campaign; and help with communication plans.

► Business Action Plan

The culmination of this feasibility work will be a Business Action Plan that assists the Co-op Board, membership, and staff to move the chosen option forward. This action plan will highlight major phases, action steps, time frame, and potential funding sources for moving the chosen concept to implementation. A communications plan will support member and non-member communication at all stages of the project.

If anyone reading this update is interested in joining one of the three advisory committees, please contact board member Rose Paul at rosegeo@myfairpoint.net. The Internal Readiness Advisory Committee in particular could use a couple more members. And we need a few more Board members as well. Please consider helping the Co-op to chart a path forward! ❖

Co-op T-shirts

by Leah Tedesco, Membership & Marketing Co-ordinator



Black Plainfield Co-op "produce wreath" t-shirts and hoodies are back in stock. We also still have plenty of reusable shopping bags of the same design, plus some pastel t-shirts with our logo. Ask a floor staff member for details.



What's Behind the Red Door?

by Gail Falk

Well, actually, the door isn't red.

The door to the former site of the bakery in downtown Marshfield was red, recalls Dave Mangan, owner of Red Door Bakery that produces the luscious pies, bars, cookies and breads that have been a Plainfield Co-op staple for years.

Mangan says the red door on the bakery logo symbolizes the simple old-fashioned values he sees as the essence of the company. All baked goods are made from scratch using local products, such as Cabot butter and King Arthur flour. Although not organic, the products are "clean," he says – "no additives, no ingredients that that my mom or your grandmother would not have had in the kitchen." The company keeps the batches small, rolling out pie crusts by hand and baking bread and pies four days a week so the food can go out absolutely fresh. "It's a balance," Mangan says, "to keep it simple and local and fresh and affordable and still make a living."

All the company's owners and employees are family members, descendants or spouses of the bakery's founder, Denise Mangan, who bought the Marshfield Café in 1993. The café was popular dur-



Photo credit: Gail Falk

ing the summer months, but business waned in the winter. When he graduated from high school, Denise's son David worked with his mother to move the business to the basement of a nearby building in Marshfield big enough for a small commercial kitchen. By 1999, the Mangan family had closed the café, and the business became Red Door Bakery, LLC, a wholesale bakery that made and delivered breads and pies to stores in Central Vermont.

In 2007 the bakery purchased the recipes, equipment and trade name of Halleluia Bakery, which had been part of a commune in Walden that closed. When Red Door started making Halleluia's

Red Door Bakery, continued ➤➤



Photo credit: Gail Falk

Red Door Bakery ➤➤

popular cookies and bars, such as zebra bars and Yes! Bars, the business quickly outgrew its basement location. After struggling for years with the logistics of moving supplies and products up and down a three-level basement, Red Door moved to its present headquarters in a spacious single floor building with ample parking on Beaver Meadow Road, west of Marshfield village.

Mangan says the bakery puts about 50,000 miles a year on their van delivering baked goods to stores in a region

bounded by Woodstock to the southeast and Georgia to the northwest. The bakery's biggest customers are the large co-ops in Middlebury, Burlington, and White River Junction. Apple pies are consistently the most popular product, but 7-layer Yes! Bars and chewy chocolate chip cookies are also big sellers.

Mangan's son designed a professional-looking website for the company, and they now sell baked products online. The website features a photo of Red Door's float in the Cabot Fourth of July parade, decorated with explicitly religious messages interspersed with American flags. When asked

about this choice of a photo, Mangan says he picked the photo to highlight community participation. "Lord Jesus has held our family together," he adds, but the goal of the business is not to promote religion. "We're a family-owned and operated business. Being a bakery is what we do," he says.

Mangan is aware of the Plainfield Co-op's struggles. "I see them crowded and bursting at the seams like we were [before moving to the new space]. I hope they can make it," he says. ❖



Photo credit: Red Door Bakery

How is the Round-Up Money Used?

by Gail Falk

Staff came up with the idea of asking customers to round up when they check out, according to Jezebel Crow, Co-op co-manager. The money raised is turned over to the Building Committee to help with maintenance of the aging building. The staff is hoping that enough money can be raised this year to replace the siding on at least one side of the building. Although the staff recognize that the Co-op may be moving to a new location, renovations will add to the value of the building when it is eventually sold or repurposed, Crow explains.

Plainfield Co-op's 50th Anniversary Group Art Show in the Plainfield Community Center Gallery

Featuring the work of:

Matthew Denton, Dan Dolan, Erok, Nicolas Hecht, Ethan Hubbard, Katah, Sam Kerson, David Klein, Jerome Lipani, Jason Mallery, Daniel Marcus, Takako Nagai, Helen Rabin, Elinor Randall, Delia Robinson, Peter Schumann, Bram Towbin, Golden True & More!

- Some pieces are available for sale with artists' donations going to the Co-op Expansion Feasibility Study.
- If you are interested in contributing work to this ongoing 50th Anniversary Group Show, please contact:
Alexis at VtPieGirlCo@gmail.com or jeromelipani@gmail.com
- The Community Center Gallery is open during Co-op hours. (Key available at the register.) Come upstairs and check out the show!



Takako Nagai painting

The Community Center is available to rent for your meetings, work, classes and events. Free Wi-Fi and baby grand piano.

- Schedule with Leah at the Co-op (membership@plainfieldcoop.com).
- Check calendar availability at plainfieldcoop.com/CC-Calendar.php (may not necessarily reflect latest rental use updates).
- Space also available by scholarship for community-based, not for profit events.

Vanilla Crème Brûlée

By Mark Bittman from the NY Times

Five simple ingredients – cream, vanilla, salt, eggs and sugar – make for an exquisitely rich and elegant dessert. Most crème brûlée recipes require the use of a small propane torch to achieve the crackly sugar top, but this version offers a simpler (and safer) solution: your oven's broiler. One thing to note: Be sure to let the custard set for several hours in the refrigerator before brûléeing the top, otherwise you'll end up with soupy custard.

Ingredients

Yield: 4 servings

- 2 cups heavy or light cream, or half-and-half
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 5 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar, more for topping



Preparation

1. Heat oven to 325 degrees. In a saucepan, combine cream, vanilla bean and salt and cook over low heat just until hot. Let sit for a few minutes, then discard vanilla bean. (If using vanilla extract, add it now.)
2. In a bowl, beat yolks and sugar together until light. Stir about a quarter of the cream into this mixture, then pour sugar-egg mixture into cream and stir. Pour into four 6-ounce ramekins and place ramekins in a baking dish; fill dish with boiling water halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until centers are barely set. Cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours and up to a couple of days.
3. When ready to serve, top each custard with about a teaspoon of sugar in a thin layer. Place ramekins in a broiler 2 to 3 inches from heat source. Turn on broiler. Cook until sugar melts and browns or even blackens a bit, about 5 minutes. Serve within two hours.



Artist: Matthew Denton

Advertise in the Newsletter

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

Electronic graphics files are preferred, but we are able to work with any clear copy. For questions about ad copy contact Elizabeth Mathai, elizabethmathai@yahoo.com.

Page Size	Ad Dimensions width x height	Single Issue	4 issues; prepaid, consecutive
Full page	5" x 8"	\$75	\$240
Half page	5" x 4"	\$50	\$160
Quarter page	5" x 2" horizontal	\$25	\$80
Quarter page	2.5" x 4" vertical	\$25	\$80

Plainfield Co-op's 50th Anniversary Celebration at Plainfield Town Hall Opera House

Photographs by Bram Towbin



More photographs on Bram's site:
<https://plainfieldvt.wpcomstaging.com/2022/11/13/coop-birthday/>

50th Anniversary Collage, continued; Photographs by Bram Towbin



Artist: Matthew Denton



50th Anniversary Collage, continued; Photographs by Bram Towbin



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Birthday!

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