

# The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

*Summer 2023*

**BUY LOCAL**



***Open Seven Days a Week***

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

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# About This Newsletter



Our Co-op is all about cooperation, of course, and it's also all about LOCAL.

Do you know where your food comes from? Most people don't—they're far removed from the growers and the middlemen.

We are privileged to know many of the producers of our food. (See Jezebel Crow on Local Produce.) They are our neighbors. They are part of our community. We trust them. If we don't know them, Gail Falk's regular in-depth interviews with some of them bring them closer. (See Blackbird Organics.) The internet is packed with recipes but not from LOCAL cooks. (See Dennis Murphy's recipes as collected by Debra Stoleroff.)

The Plainfield Co-op started off as a pre-order group, buying in bulk, then breaking down orders in members' homes. We couldn't handle any fresh produce or perishables (though you could order snowshoes, wood stoves, and other necessities of life in rural Vermont). It was a great day when we got a building—the old Grange Hall that still houses us today. With the building came many new responsibilities. Over the years it has been kept intact and functional through the cooperative efforts of many LOCAL volunteers. (See Building Committee report on repainting part of the exterior and Jason Mallery interview.)

Having a building is expensive. So is running a store that's open seven full days a week instead of two afternoons. We have paid managers and staff who are

all LOCAL people. We support our community by buying LOCAL products and hiring LOCAL people, and they in turn support us.

Many of us are members (anyone can join) and get to make decisions about our Co-op by joining the Board (see President's report), working on a committee (see list on p. 2), and voting directly at Annual Meetings on the future of the Co-op.

It's our privilege and our responsibility because it's all LOCAL.

We welcome your contributions of letters, photos, cartoons, poems, whatever, sent to the editor. Deadline for the fall issue is Sept. 15 to be published in early October. ❖

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# On Board!

by Cat Klarich, Co-op Board President

Rallying around the members of our community during the best of times and the worst of times proves that the Co-op is so much more than a grocery store. Together we mourn with Leah Tedesco's family the loss of their son and brother, David. On behalf of David's family and friends, thank you for your love and support during this difficult time. In the midst of sadness, there is also joy—on June 11th, Stanzi's family got bigger when they welcomed a healthy baby boy! We've set up gift cards in each of their names that can be loaded at the register if you are inspired to give. We are a Co-op family and we have to stick together through the ups and downs.

Speaking of downs, there is our bottom line. Please dive into Treasure's report for a snapshot of the Co-op's current financial condition. We are finishing up our work with the grant-funded consultants and are inviting you to join the discussion about the Co-op's future! **Save the Dates! We will be holding two community forums on July 19th and August 10th in advance of the Annual Meeting on August 27, 2023.** Secretary Rose Paul has been acting as Board liaison for the grant and does a thorough job explaining the different parts of the grant and the work done cooperatively by the Board, staff, working members, and consultants. A million thanks to our members who volunteered to be part of the different working groups. We value your expertise! Rose's article offers a glimpse into the information we are going to discuss when we meet. Please read it twice because she also provides the details on the dates and times of the meetings. Thank you so much for your hard work on the grant, Rose!

There is a lot of information to disseminate—look for updates on the website, in member emails, and other online platforms prior to the community forums and Annual Meeting so you have time to do your homework! The Board of Directors has resumed meeting in person at the Community Center on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 pm. We are also Zooming the meeting so you can choose to join us virtually. Zoom link: <http://zoom.us/j/8024548579>

Now is a critical time for good leadership at the Co-op. We have conceptual drawings for a possible expansion, an updated Market Study, and ten-year projections of several scenarios. If that sounds exciting, you should consider joining the Board! There must be one or two of you reading this who are inspired to offer your special set of skills to the Co-op. If you've considered joining the Board, or are on the fence, please feel free to reach out to us directly [board@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:board@plainfieldcoop.com) We want to hear from you! (Contact info for individual Board members is on p. 2.)

A friendly reminder to be sure your membership dues are current so you can vote at the Annual Meeting! Don't miss out on important notifications by confirming the Co-op has your updated Email!

Because they are the boots on the ground that make it all possible—a big shout out to the entire Co-op staff who are working their tails off. Thank you so much for keeping the store open and awesome with the best music in town! Props to Co-managers Jez and Stanzi, with Dan covering maternity leave—yay Dan! The Co-op is our village grocery

*On Board, continued* >>

store, but it's so much more than that. It's 50 years of food security, a cooperative member-owned business, an employer, a community center. One big family, right?!

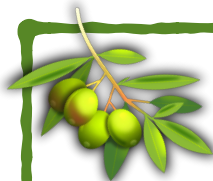
We support the Co-op because that's what family does. By keeping your food dollars local, you invest in your community and ensure that Plainfield stays a vibrant and thriving place to live. Thank you for your support. ❖

## Local Recipes collected by Debra Stoleroff

As soon as the newsletter committee decided 'local' would be this newsletter edition's theme, I knew I had to find "the box." "The box," the recipe box, sat on the Co-op counter for many months about 20 years ago. At that time I had an idea to make a book of Co-op members' favorite recipes. Members stuffed their recipes into "the box." The recipe book never came to be, but since that time I have occasionally published recipes from "the box" in the newsletter.

The first set of recipes I came upon after opening the dust covered, mostly broken cardboard archive were from Dennis Murphy. DENNIS!!!! Wonderfully, talented, humor-filled Dennis! It may be 15 or more years since he passed. He was a musician who influenced many musical groups in Central Vermont via his role as a Goddard professor of ethnomusicology. He is known for composing the delightful operetta "A Perfect Day" and for bringing the gamelan to Plainfield. He also played in many bands including the Gamelan and Nisht Geferlach Klezmer band. He, Pat and family lived on Gray Rd. in Plainfield. Dennis has been much missed by many over these years.

For this issue, I have included three of the recipes (with notes) that Dennis contributed to "the box": Goatbiscuits, Olive/Nut Sandwich Spread and Healthful Marinated Onions.



### Olive/Nut Sandwich Spread

1. Chop some walnuts, "medium-fine"
2. Chop some green olives, "medium-fine" — about the same amount as the walnuts.
3. Stir in some 'nayoanise' or similar fake mayo (or the real thing if you prefer) to make a spreadable mixture



This stuff has 3 disadvantages:

- a) It sounds awful
- b) It's packed with salt and grease
- c) It tastes so good that you're likely to eat far too much of it



# USDA Grant Update: What we've learned so far

by Rose Paul, Board Secretary

The Co-op Board and co-managers have been working with financial and architectural consultants to figure out if it is possible to either expand our building or move to a larger location on Route 2, and whether we can afford either scenario.

This work is paid for by a USDA Rural Business Development Grant. We applied for the grant because our Co-op is gradually losing ground financially and this has been happening slowly for several years. Our sales are declining, so people are shopping less and less at the Co-op. Would a larger store with a greater variety of products attract more shoppers? And could we afford to take this bold step?

## ► Building Expansion

We hired Coe and Coe Architecture based in Glover to create a conceptual drawing of a two-story expansion for the existing Co-op building. James and Nella Coe estimated that the costs to build a two-story addition would be about \$1.1 million, and they estimated the cost to build a one-story addition would be about \$566,000. (Please note these are draft numbers as of June 15, 2023) The Co-op has a conceptual drawing of what the two-story addition would look like. It includes an elevator which would cost about \$200,000 but there are grants that might cover much of this cost. If the Co-op built the two-story addition, it is likely we would have to use the entire second floor as retail space to help pay the mortgage. Both the one- and two-story addition would include space for a grab-and-go food and coffee area. The architects' work is still in draft form and final costs and final concept drawing will be coming soon.

## ► Finances

Three financial specialists from Columinate, a firm that focuses on helping co-ops, have given us financial projections to think about. First, our 2018 Market Study was updated to help us learn what kind of sales we might expect if we expand our building or move to a larger Route 2 location. Our sales potential is limited because of competition by Hunger Mountain and a limited customer base driven by our rural population.

Co-op sales over the past three years have averaged a little over \$1.1 million. The 2023 Market Study forecasts that if the Co-op building were expanded by 660 square feet (about all that we could squeeze onto our small lot), sales might increase by \$300k in the first year. This option is compared with sales generated by a co-op store of 3,000 square feet on Rt 2 (the recommended size for the trade area) which might add to our existing sales by a little over \$1 million in the first year. This greater sales forecast is due to a larger store size and higher customer visibility on Route 2.

Then the consultants developed ten-year projections for revenues and expenses in several different scenarios—Co-op stays “as is”, Co-op expands, Co-op buys the Allenwood horse farm property and builds a new building, and Co-op buys Plainfield Hardware. These ten-year projections are called *pro formas* and they enable us to look at expected finances for each year of the ten-year period. The projections include a lot of assumptions and rely on some market averages for stores of our size and type. Even so, they are very detailed on both the revenue

*USDA Grant Update, continued* >>

and expense side. Although the numbers are still considered draft (as of June 15, 2023) and may change a bit, they give us a much clearer picture of what we might be able to afford, given that any change to the Co-op (expand or move) would involve taking out a substantial loan.

There is mostly bad news to report on this front. It is simply unaffordable to buy the horse farm property and build a new building there. This is considered the most expensive of all our options, and it comes with the complexity of managing unrelated buildings by renting them out.

It is also unlikely we'd be able to make our mortgage payment on an expansion of our existing building, even if it is just a one-story expansion, after 2026. The projections for a building expansion do not include potential grants, loans and private donations, which would change the forecast, but nevertheless we'd likely spend down our cash over the first few

years after the building is expanded, and we'd have to close.

Even staying "as is" in our present location looks gloomy, as we factor in the big Route 2/Main Street reconstruction project that is scheduled for 2028. Our profitability simply cannot absorb the big impact this road project will have, based on actual impacts we incurred the last two times the Main Street bridge was closed. On top of that, we are missing our target profit margin nearly every month, labor costs are high relative to total sales, and we are late in making payments to our vendors. The forecast shows our cash reserves dwindling, as indeed they are now, until the Route 2/Main Street project causes us to close.

The one scenario with a positive forecast is purchasing Plainfield Hardware. In the words of the consultant, "This option carries substantial risk *and* potential reward for the Co-op." There is the potential for profitability and building up cash

USDA Grant Update, continued >>

## Goatbiscuits (humans like them too!)

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 TBL baking powder (Featherweight brand is best)
- 1 ½ TBL sesame seeds
- 3 TBLs olive oil

### Preparation:

1. Stir ingredients violently in a bowl with enough cold water to make a stiff mixture
2. Knead a few times, then flatten on a floured board and cut into whatever shape you like
3. Bake at 450F for 17 minutes.



*Debra note: 1 TBL of baking powder seems like a lot of baking powder but I checked other biscuit recipes online. They too included 1 TBL of baking powder.*

## USDA Grant Update >>

reserves while at the same time paying back a business loan. However this forecast comes with the warning that the Co-op must carefully maintain its target profit margins not just for the grocery business but all the other kinds of products now being sold such as hardware, deli, greenhouse and seasonal. The model assumes that the two staffs are combined and that there are no layoffs, but that attrition of staff over a few years results in a healthy ratio of total labor costs being no more than 26% of total sales.

There is a final report that summarizes all the financial forecasts, and an additional brief report focused on acquisition of Plainfield Hardware. These are available on the Co-op's website. We expect some form of report from the architects as well, which we'll also post. We urge

Co-op members and everyone interested to read these reports, come to information meetings, and ask questions.

Your opinion as a member of the Co-op will decide which direction we take—stay “as is,” expand or move, or even close down. The Board will hold two informational meetings this summer, one in person at the Plainfield Recreation Field on Wednesday July 19 at 6:30 (rain date July 20), and one by zoom on Thursday August 10 at 6:30, which will be recorded. We intend to administer a survey to members and the community and we'll report the survey results at the August 10 meeting.

Our annual meeting will be Sunday August 27 at 4:00 (rain date September 3) at the Plainfield Recreation Field and your vote counts! Please attend. The Co-op's future depends on it. ❖



## 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](http://cabotchese.coop)





# Treasurer's Report

by John Cleary, Board Treasurer

The Co-managers and staff have been working hard to improve the profitability of the Co-op and significant improvements have been made. The number of overall staff hours has been reduced (mostly by gradual attrition) generating a 25% reduction in total wage costs. Please thank the staff for doing more with less when you see them around the store. The Co-op continues to face the headwinds of declining sales compared to previous years. While expenses have been reduced significantly, the Co-op still experienced a loss for the period of Jan.-May 2023. This is typically a slower season for the business and sales pick up during the summer and fall months. The categories that experienced the largest decline in sales compared to the same time period in 2022 were Produce and Grocery. The categories that experience growth in sales were Meat/Fish, Refrigerated, Deli and Beer/Wine.

The Balance Sheet of the Co-op remains stable. A Balance Sheet shows assets and liabilities at a point in time. Looking at these numbers at the end of May 2023 compared to May 2022, there are not significant changes. Cash on hand is slightly lower, Inventory is slightly higher resulting in current assets about \$1000 higher than last year. Liabilities have increased with accumulated accounts payable higher than last year. The VEDA forgivable loan shows up as a liability but will not have to be repaid since it was spent on allowable expenses. We continue to pay down the loan from the Cooperative Loan Fund of New England, with a balance of \$35,990 compared to \$42,265 at this time last year. Maintaining a low debt load is important to the Board and Co-op members.

A Profit and Loss Statement shows monthly and annual profitability by comparing income and expenses. The Co-op achieved a monthly profit in February and March, with losses in January, April and May. Gross margins have increased compared to 2022, but still fell short of the target margins established in the 2023 budget. This is a major area of focus to improve overall profitability. Looking at the budget and the improvements that have been made so far this year, achieving an annual profit in 2023 is still an achievable goal. Paying down the accumulated balance of Accounts Payable (payments to vendors) is a significant challenge to the business. ❖

## Profit and Loss Summary (January - May)

	2023	2022	Variance	% change	Notes
<b>Total Sales</b>	405,737	425,285	-19,548	-4.50%	Decline in total sales creates challenges
<b>Cost of Goods</b>	283,096	302,654	-19,558	-6.40%	Cost to purchase items for resale
<b>Gross Profit</b>	122,641	122,631	10	0%	Amount of \$ to run the business
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	148,131	180,901	-32,770	-18%	Managers have cut costs significantly
<b>Profit</b>	-25,490	-58,270	32,780	56%	Major improvement, still a loss

# ORGANIC MEGA-CORPORATIONS: A Challenge to Cooperatives

Cooperatives are based on people working together for the benefit of all, not competing and consolidating for the benefit of investors and top management. So this statement posted on our bulletin board recently by staff member Cullen Partin caught my attention. The tiny Co-op entryway is not conducive to reading anything at all lengthy, thus we reprint it here since it has inspired the theme of this summer's newsletter: BUY LOCAL.

Glenda Bissex, editor

Dear Members,

There are 2 natural/organic food distributors in the country (and for the most part, the world). These 2 distributors are competing to be monopolies, United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI) being the largest and most successful.

As corporations, both own (or are owned by umbrella companies that own) the major natural/organic food producers like Field Day (UNFI) and Cadia (KEHE). Prices are fixed based on controlling food markets from the top all the way down to the bottom (squeezing out even the smallest producers).

This is where a lot of our products (nearly all in the case of bulk and grocery) come from, translating into a dependency on corporate investors to the expressed detriment of local providers and consumers. Thus, the function of the Co-op in prioritizing local producers is undermined.

What can we do?

Look to the community! Ask yourself, "What can we produce here in Vermont that will substitute dependency

on corporate investors with dependency on community?" Nuts? Beans? Grains? We won't know if we don't try! Ideas can be directed to the staff (check out the buyers' board).

Items we sell from corporate distributors that we'd rather sell from local vendors:

- CEREAL
- COOKIES
- CHIPS (& SNACKS IN GENERAL)
- SOUPS & SAUCES
- FROZEN FRUIT & VEGGIES
- BEANS & RICE
- OATS, GRAINS & FLOUR (ALMOST THE ENTIRE BULK SECTION)
- TEA & OTHER HERBS & SPICES
- DOG FOOD
- PEANUTS (PEANUT BUTTER) & OTHER NUTS



# Local Produce

by Jezebel Crow, Operations Manager

Vermont may be losing dairy farms, but it is gaining small, organic vegetable farms. Here at the Co-op, we do our best to support all local products, but the produce department shines as the leader in Vermont grown fruits and vegetables.

In the past year, we sold \$62,200. worth of local produce. In fact, it accounts for 6.31% of our net sales. The peak of the season came in August; however, we carry produce from local farmers year round. Even in February, we sold \$3,338 worth of local produce. In total, about 39% of our produce sales were local.

We're a tiny store, but I think we make a big difference in the lives of our local farmers, and in the health of our community.

Some of our most local farms are: Blackbird Organics, Flywheel Farm, Dog River Farm, Harvest Hill Farm, Friends and Neighbors Farm, Robin Taylor, Owl Hill Farm, and Fly Catcher Farm.

Your favorite items are local corn, strawberries, spinach, and Robin Taylor's cantaloupes / musk melons.

In my opinion, eating local trains us to crave food at its peak nutrition and flavor. If you eat one of Robin's melons on a hot August evening, it will be a hard experience to replicate in January with a sad melon from afar. There is no comparing Blackbird Organic's strawberries to Driscoll strawberries shipped from California. Local strawberries are like candy. If you get clever and can or freeze local produce, you can have it year round. By the way, if you are a canner, talk to Jezebel about ordering flats of berries, tomatoes, or what have you.

While we managed to keep the Co-op in local roots and apples all winter, the best days of eating local are just around the corner. Join us at the Co-op for all the local lushness that summer can offer and support your local farmers, too. ❖

## Healthful Marinated Onions

1. Cut thin onion rings
2. Put in a bowl with a mix of cider vinegar, water (50/50) — enough to half-cover the rings.
3. Stir now and then for a couple of hours (the onions are "done" in about 2-4 hours).
4. This might taste bitter to some people — in which case, add a bit of sugar too.



*Debra notes: There are many variations for this recipe. Some people use varying combinations of cider vinegar, rice wine vinegar and white distilled vinegar for pickled onions. I know people who don't use water at all. As well, some who heat the liquids before pouring them on the onions. Any way you make pickled onions they are a tasty addition to salads, tacos and much more!*



# The Blackbird Organics Story

by Gail Falk

*For the past five years Kagen Dewey and Elise Magnant have been supplying Plainfield Co-op shoppers with organic produce raised on land they leased from Littlewood Farm. Last November they moved to a farm of their own.*

Last fall the stars aligned for Blackbird Organics. Longtime Co-op member Elinor (Randy) Randall and her daughter Dorigen Keeney decided to sell their 86-acre farm on Maple Hill. Maggie Donin of the Vermont Land Trust learned that Kagen Dewey and Elise Magnant were looking for a farm where they could settle permanently and expand their farming operations. She brought Randy and Dorigen together with Kagen and Elise up on Maple Hill, and it was pretty much love at first sight.

Who wouldn't love the beautiful west-facing rolling hills of hay fields and forest with sweeping views of the Green Mountains? The farm came with eight tillable acres, a house, barn, chicken coop, Randy's art studio, a stunning crafted stone wall, two ponds, apple trees, a guest or rental cottage, a large woodlot in Current Use – and Borzo the cat.



*Elise Magnant*

Buying a farm is no simple matter if you are not independently wealthy, but Blackbird Organics found itself with the kind of wrap-around support that Vermont can offer young farmers. Randy had already deeded a conservation and agricultural use easement on the land to the Vermont Land Trust, which sees supporting young farmers as one of its core missions. This lowered the price considerably. The Land Trust could offer a bridge contract while Kagen and Elise worked out the details of moving, financing and starting a farm. Nikki Lennart, a Farm Business Specialist at the Intervale in Burlington, helped Kagen develop a business plan, apply for grants, and learn bookkeeping, as well as connecting him with resources from UVM's Extension Service.

“Dorigen acted very generously through the whole process,” Kagen says, letting them move into the house and start



*Borzo immediately welcomed Kagen to the farm*

*Blackbird Organics, continued >>*

excavating and building the greenhouse while negotiations were still in process. Over the winter, Kagen and Elise completed construction of a spacious, sturdy greenhouse, so that just five months after moving in, they were able to welcome neighbors and friends to a big spring plant sale in late May.

Describing the work ahead to convert the farm to organic vegetable and fruit farming, Kagen muses about the land's evolution over the past hundred years from forest to sheep farm to dairy to hay farm with artist, and now to organic vegetables. (Neighbor Barry Kopecky has been haying the fields for 30 years, but he's told Kagen he is ready to be done.)

To convert hay fields for vegetable crops, the first step is to plow up the sod. After plowing, they will plant cover crops, which are easier to till. "Agriculture fundamentally involves disrupting nature," observes Kagen, "but there are wide variations in how that is done. Every choice involves trade-offs, so it's important to be mindful of how our activity fits into the big picture."

"The farm is an ecosystem," he says, "and we are just one species in it. As a farmer, you are a link for consumers to tie into the food web. If you are eating our produce, you are a part of our farm's ecosystem. I think the Plainfield Co-op and its membership understand that, which helps us feel supported in caring about how we do what we do."

Kagen says that at the new farm he is trying to "recognize at every step the character of the land," getting to know the microbial community and understand the hillside microclimate, which is different from the river valley fields at Littlewood. Much of the open land has "wonderful depth of arable soil," he says, deposited eons ago on the leeward



side of this glacial hill. He is thinking about pasturing chickens on some of the less tillable land.

As he muses about the possibilities this beautiful farmland offers and how he hopes to be a good steward, Kagen says "I cannot overemphasize how lucky we feel to be here."

Blackbird Organics has a lease to continue to grow crops at Littlewood Farm. This year they are growing sweet corn, strawberries, and peppers, among other things, and Kagen sees the extra acreage as making it possible to rotate and rest fields on the two farms. Meanwhile, over at Littlewood Farm this spring, Betsy Ziegler and Joey Klein put on an annual plant sale, as they have for decades. Joey was there once again in charge of the plants, offering his wisdom and advice to gardeners old and new.

Joey is uncertain what the future holds for Littlewood Farm. He is pleased to lease the fields to Blackbird Organics for now, and, speaking of Kagen and Elise's new farm on Maple Hill, he says with conviction, "I wish them all the luck in the world." ❖

*Photo credits: Gail Falk*

## REMEMBERING RANDY KEENEY

Randy has left us but her legacy remains. Most immediately in her farm, just up Maple Hill Rd. from Plainfield village, the home now of Kagen Dewey, Elise Magnant and Blackbird Organics. Read the feature on them in this newsletter. Randy was an artist, a lover of horses, a great supporter of the Plainfield Co-op, and much more.

Many of you have memories of her to share. Please send your stories, photos, quotes this way. The fall issue of the newsletter will include remembrances of Randy. If there are too many to include in a newsletter, we can put them in a link. While you're thinking of it, send remembrances to the editor: [songboat@vtlink.net](mailto:songboat@vtlink.net).

Thank you,

Glenda Bissex



*Randy; photo supplied by Elise Magnant*

# EAST HILL TREE FARM

Nursery for Fruit Trees, Nuts, and Berries



**3499 East Hill Rd. Plainfield, VT**  
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# One Staffer's Perspective

by Deb Barnwell



One of the fun parts of being a Co-op buyer is discovering new, local suppliers— neighbors who are makers and growers of all sorts of interesting things. We have MANY! So, while I was helping out with the Cutler Memorial Library plant sale a while ago, I learned there was a young man making a stir with his talks on growing herbs and making his own tea blends. He was making quite the impression on folks and he had a big jug of cold brewed iced tea and was giving away free samples. On a warm day that was a nice treat! I moseyed over to check out his wares and learn more.



*Photo credit: Deb Barnwell*

His name is Ezra. His grandmother and mom give him some help and guidance, but Ezra's is the driving passion behind End's Blends. Ezra is, if I remember correctly, nine years old. He started when he was six. He and his family live in Cabot and are members of The Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe. They have his tea served in his Cabot school classroom on a daily basis as a way to refresh and calm down during the school days. On their website he is quoted:

"I am 6 years old and decided that I want to share my love of tea with as

many people as I can. Thanks to Miss Lynn, and her preschool program I realized that I loved tea at the very young age of 3. It wasn't until recently (summer 2021) I decided to make my own blends. There is literally tea all around my house. Working with my grown-ups to identify the plants in my Vermont yard and their uses we began harvesting and drying most of my blend ingredients. While I do have grown-up guidance, I chose my brand name and blend names from way too many choices."

I was thoroughly smitten and bought a couple of bags for my own

use, then I remembered I could buy and stock his teas in the Co-op! I am in the process of working out the logistics but E.N.D.'s Blends teas will be coming to our Co-op sometime this summer. They are very local indeed, especially with the Abenaki heritage they bring. I am excited to be able to give Ezra's small business and his entrepreneurial spirit a little boost!

Aside from adding a new vendor to my

*One Staffer, continued >>*

*One Staffer >>*

list I am working on keeping my herbal and tea inventories well stocked, and looking to switch up my inventory a bit to keep things interesting. But fear not, the staples you rely on will, to the best of my ability, remain on the shelves. I also hope you're liking the new labels I'm working on. As buyers and vendors change over the years the labels on the jars have gotten a bit hard to keep up with. I've been bringing empty jars home and have been spending lots of time soaking and scraping old labels off and hand lettering new ones for greater visual consistency in my herb corner.

I've gotten almost two shelves done. Only three to go!!!

I wish you a happy, healing, peaceful summer. You can make some wonderful, restorative iced teas from the loose herbs in the bulk herb corner as well as from the boxes of bagged tea. Adding some milky oats and chamomile to some mint tea will help to restore your nerves and add some calm to your days. Peace.



## **HEALING SESSIONS**

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Pagan Events \* Culture Building Programs  
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at

**Grandmother Cherry Sanctuary**  
*Community healing, gathering, respite & retreat  
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**EmpowR-Transformation.com**



# Pesticides in Produce

EWG, the Environmental Working Group ([ewg.org](http://ewg.org)) tests for and rates pesticides in produce every year. The top three conventionally grown, pesticide-laden produce items this year are strawberries; spinach; and kale, collard & mustard greens. Fortunately, we can buy local, organically grown versions of this produce at our Co-op, supporting our community while safeguarding our health.

Here is this year's list of the most toxic conventionally grown produce, from most pesticide residue to less:

## EWG's Dirty Dozen

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Kale, Collard & Mustard Greens
4. Peaches
5. Pears
6. Nectarines
7. Apples
8. Grapes
9. Bell & Hot Peppers
10. Cherries
11. Blueberries
12. Green Beans

## EWG's Clean 15


1. Avocados
2. Sweet Corn
3. Pineapples
4. Onions
5. Papaya
6. Sweet Peas
7. Asparagus
8. Honeydew Melons
9. Kiwi
10. Cabbage
11. Mushrooms
12. Mangoes
13. Sweet Potatoes
14. Watermelon
15. Carrots



## RENT THE COMMUNITY CENTER



**Plainfield Community Center is OPEN**

**Free Wi-Fi and Baby Grand Piano** 

Space available for a variety of events:

- ◆ Classes/Workshops
- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Parties
- ◆ Special Events
- ◆ Art Gallery Exhibitions

◆ **Co-op sponsorship**  
may be available for  
community-based  
not-for-profit events

More information: See [plainfieldcoop.com/community-center/](http://plainfieldcoop.com/community-center/)

Questions: Contact Leah [membership@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:membership@plainfieldcoop.com)

Art Gallery: Contact Alexis [VtPieGirlCo@gmail.com](mailto:VtPieGirlCo@gmail.com)

Co-op members \$9/hour; others \$15/hour

Events: Co-op members \$35; others \$50

## Advertise in the Newsletter

Deadline for the Fall issue is September 15. 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](mailto:elizabethmathai@yahoo.com)

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

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

## Building Committee Report

by Mike Brosky

Late this past winter the Building Committee met to plan for improvement projects in the summer and fall. The main question we were trying to answer was how could we best improve the appearance of the building while at the same time tacking necessary fixes to keep the structure in good repair. The other constraint we had, of course, was capital resources to pay for labor and materials. One idea we kept coming back to was painting the exterior. As many can see, the exterior of the building is in dire need of new paint and in some cases, replaced clapboards. While taking on the entire exterior all at once would be incredibly challenging if not impossible considering the cost, starting with one side this year seemed realistic. The decision was made to focus on the front of the building facing the parking lot. Building Committee member Jason Mallery, who is certified in lead-abatement, offered to lead the project. Jason is also handling the surface preparation and painting of the highest to reach spots. Already he has erected the neces-

sary staging (it's hard to miss!) and has begun scraping the uppermost section. In addition to painting, three of the windows will also be replaced.

The project is expected to take most of the summer. The Building Committee will be announcing dates in late July and August for volunteers to help with scraping and prepping the lower, easier to reach portions of the building — stay tuned!

One of the main factors allowing this project to go forward is the Round Up campaign. This fundraising campaign asked Co-op shoppers to round up to the next highest dollar amount when paying for their groceries. We're happy to report that thanks to the dedication of our Co-op Community there is \$3,739 available for use in the painting project. This will pay for needed materials including paint as well as the replacement windows. ❖



## JASON MALLERY

◆ Who's that up there on the top of the scaffolding on the face of the Co-op building?

Jason Mallery.

◆ What's he doing?

Scraping off the old, peeling paint in preparation for the new paint job. He sprays the boards with water before scraping so there's no dust. The chips fall into the plastic pocket below.

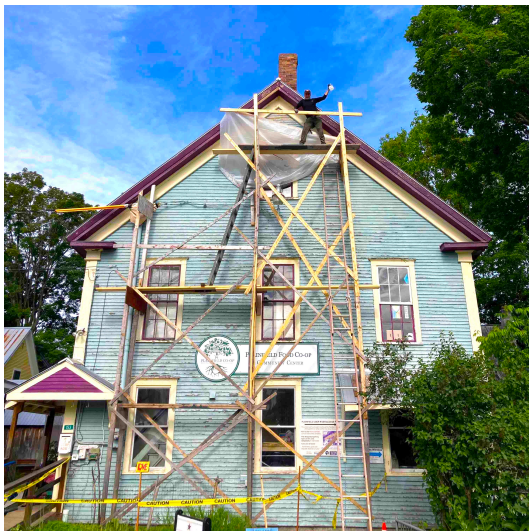
◆ Is anyone helping him?

Not yet. He's a contractor, experienced with high scaffolding and certified in lead stabilization and containment. Nobody else on the Building Committee is so qualified. But when the work moves down lower on the building in late July, volunteers will be needed and welcomed. Is that YOU??

Although Jason is a contractor, he is first of all a teacher, the lead teacher at All Together Now, where he's taught young children for seven years. He's also an artist and musician. And he has long and deep Co-op connections. His mom and dad were part of the original Co-op. When Jason lived in Plainfield in the 90's, he was a working member—and his son did his hours for him.

His life has never been driven by making profits. He left the Museum School in Boston when he felt the classes were too directed at creating art that would sell; his interest was in the process.

As he donates his time for our building, he feels that the building is thanking him for his love.



*Photo credit: Mike Brosky*

**SAVE THESE DATES – see p.8**

**Community Forums**  
**July 19th & August 10th**

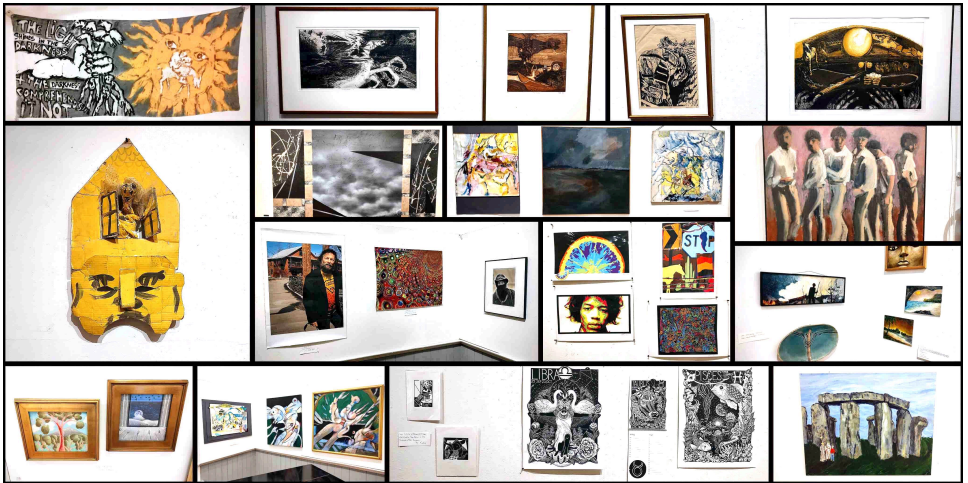
**Annual Meeting**  
**August 27, 2023**

# Notes from the Community Center

by Leah Tedesco, Membership and Marketing

Our free pile has been dubbed the Community Freecycle. Thanks to Lucy Blue *et. al.* for your continued help in making it look great!

The Plainfield Community Center Gallery is currently hosting the Co-op's 50th Anniversary Group Art Show with original works from artists who have exhibited here over the last 50 years. Please join in! There is room for more artists to contribute, and the show will be up until the end of November, concluding our 50th year. Stay tuned for the upcoming group art show celebration event in July. ❖



*A heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to supporting our Membership & Marketing Coordinator, Leah Tedesco, and their family regarding the loss of their son, David Hill III. ♥*