

# Middlebury Co-op Newsletter

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April 2015

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative**  
9 Washington Street, Middlebury, Vermont, 802-388-7276

## **Inclusive... Fair... Humane...?**

**Reflections on the NOFA-VT Winter Conference**

**by Joe Pearl**



I recently had the pleasure of spending a freezing Valentine's day attending workshops and participating in conversations at the NOFA-VT Winter Conference, an annual event that draws more than 1000 people to Burlington over three days to learn and share about food, farming, and the environment. With an overwhelming range of programming available, my challenge was to navigate through all the offerings to find information that would be relevant to my position in the Produce department at the Co-op and also my interests as an aspiring food producer. What I found was provocative and challenged me to dig deeper, but also provided me with useful resources.

The conference's theme this year was *Growing the Good Food Movement*, with the goal of increasing conversation about "farm and food equity, building a fair and just food system where everyone has access to healthy food, and where the farmers and farm workers who grow that food receive respect and a living wage." Appropriately, the day was kicked off with a keynote speech by Natasha Bowens, who, having noticed that people of color are largely absent from the conversation about local and sustainable foods, went on a photojournalism tour of the country to meet Black, Native, Asian, and Latina farmers, and to learn about the challenges they face as well as the culture and resilience they bring to their work. Her new book, [The Color of Food](#), is full of the voices and faces previously sidelined from the conversation, and will be released this April 10<sup>th</sup>. More information on the book and her work is available at [www.thecoloroffood.com](http://www.thecoloroffood.com).

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## **The Middlebury Co-op Newsletter**

A Monthly Publication of the  
Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative  
1 Washington Street, Middlebury, Vermont 05753

Editor - Reiner Winkler

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*The purpose of the MNFC Newsletter is to provide a means of communication between the Co-op and its membership. Its aim is to provide a forum, which promotes an awareness of social, health-related, political, economic, technological, and environmental issues as they relate to food and other products sold by the Co-op. In addition, the Newsletter provides a medium to introduce the Co-op and its products and services to the general public. The format is intended for educational debate and discussion. Your letters of opinion and article submissions are welcome and encouraged. The views expressed in the MNFC Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative as a whole.*



**Call 802-388-7276, or e-mail us at [mnfc@together.net](mailto:mnfc@together.net)  
Visit our website at [Middleburycoop.com](http://Middleburycoop.com)  
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### **Middlebury Co-op Ends Statement**

*MNFC member owners, customers,  
and the community benefit from:*

- ◆ **Healthy Foods**
- ◆ **Vibrant Local Economy**
- ◆ **Environmentally Sustainable  
and Energy-Efficient Practices**
- ◆ **Cooperative Democratic Ownership**
- ◆ **Learning About These Values**



**Dear Members and Friends of Middlebury Co-op,**

As I'm writing this, the sun is beaming from a bright blue sky. Snow and ice are seriously starting to melt. A wonderful Spring coming our way?!

This Newsletter issue features staff member Joe Pearl's thoughtful reflections on a conference he attended in February about *Growing the Good Food Movement*. Joe challenges all of us not only to educate ourselves about what qualifies as good food but also to *contribute* to better food practices.

Staff member Wendy Stewart invites you to try the world-renowned Cashel Blue cheese from Ireland (page 12), and staff member Kathryn ("Kat") Cyr has some excellent baking tips for you. As a special treat, Kat shares the Co-op's Key Lime Pie recipe with you (page 16)!

Our featured companies this month include Maple Meadow Farm, Lotus Foods, Seventh Generation, Newman's Own, and Gringo Jack. Lotus Foods (page 7) may answer some of the questions you have had about growing and cooking whole grain rice.

The Co-op Board recently convened for their annual board retreat. Board member Kevin Lehman shares some of his thoughts about the retreat.

The *Co-op Conversations* are in full swing. General manager, Glenn Lower will address once more the complexities of the Patronage Refund System. Make sure to inform yourself well... you will soon be asked to cast your vote on the issue.

The last two pages of our April Newsletter will touch on some Co-op news you should know about.

Happy Spring cleaning, digging up the garden, and walking in milder weather!

*Reiner*





## Dried Fruit

Are you a bargain shopper? Consider dried fruit! It is sweet, nutritious, with rich concentrated flavor. It provides high energy, is excellent food for picnics, snacking, camping, hiking, or biking. It is great during long car rides or as a healthy quick energizer.

At the Co-op, you'll find pineapple, prunes, mango, apricots, pears, cherries, even persimmons, oranges, and goji berries without any added sugar. And don't undervalue the humble raisin! At the Co-op, you'll find Thompson, Flame, Golden raisins, and currants (which are a kind of raisin).

Dried fruit costs a lot less than the same quantity of fresh fruit. Nine pounds of fresh apples become 1 pound when dried. Six pounds of fresh apricots or 3 pounds of fresh plums become 1 pound dried.

During the month of April you'll find much of our dried fruit on sale. Check it out!

Are you a member - owner of Middlebury Co-op? Then you know that you receive discounts at over a dozen Middlebury community businesses. **Middlebury Sweets**, Vermont's largest candy store, located on Ossie Road in East Middlebury, offers a 10% discount to all Co-op members. For more information, call the store at 388-4518,



## Maple Meadow Farm

Salisbury, Vermont

*Maple Meadow Farm* is family owned and operated by George E. and Jackie Devoid, the second generation of Devoids. The third generation, their daughter Jen and her husband George are also part of the family farm.

*Maple Meadow Farm* produces fresh shell eggs for sale and distribution throughout the State of Vermont and into the Ticonderoga-Port Henry area in New York. They sell wholesale and have a retail store on site at their Farm.

*Maple Meadow Farm* has 65,000 hens laying eggs in their barns. By Vermont standards this is large, but by national standards tiny. They compete for market space with farms that have millions of hens! The farm remains family-operated. Focus remains on product quality and customer service.

Several years ago, following in part a request of Middlebury Co-op, the Farm introduced cage free hens, of which there are now over 6,000. The hens have free run of the whole barn. This state-of-the-art facility is equipped with plastic, mesh-covered raised platforms where the hens walk. There are a series of nesting boxes in the middle for the hens to lay their eggs. The boxes are dimly lit to create an inviting environment for laying. The eggs are then gently rolled into a central conveyor belt, washed, sorted and sold through local stores with the new "cage free" label. *Maple Meadow Farm* is the only egg farm in Vermont to offer all natural cage free eggs.



During the week of **April 2 — April 8**, Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**, in addition to their regular member discount, on all *Maple Meadow Farm* eggs.

## Lotus Foods

Richmond, California

*Lotus Foods* is a company that focuses on importing handcrafted rice from small family farms to the United States. The company, based in Richmond, California was founded in 1995. Following is a list of frequently asked questions and responses by the *Lotus Foods* company:

### ***What does heirloom mean?***

Heirloom is a term used to refer to plants that are grown from indigenous seed stock. Often, these seed stocks are ancient and have been used in a region tradi-



tionally. These seeds have not been hybridized or genetically engineered.

***Why Is Forbidden Rice® called forbidden?***

During the days of the Ching and Ming dynasties *Forbidden Rice* was exclusively reserved for the Chinese Emperors to ensure their longevity and good health. Eventually, common people were allowed to eat the rice. Forbidden Rice has the darkest bran layer of any whole grain rice. It is this bran layer where all the minerals, vitamins and fiber are stored. Forbidden Rice is also very high in a class of antioxidants called anthocyanins and could be considered a "superfood." For such a dark whole grain rice, it is extremely convenient, cooking in only 30 minutes and producing a roasted nutty taste with a hint of fruit or floral at the finish. In Chinese



**LOTUS  
FOODS**  
RICE IS LIFE

medicinal they say that Forbidden Rice is a blood tonifier, aids in the circulation of the blood and is high in chi. Learn more about this amazing rice, and the "Black Dragon River" region where it is grown. Available at Middlebury Co-op!

***Should I rinse my rice before cooking it?***

Rinsing rice is a personal preference. Here at Lotus Foods, we do not rinse our rice because we prefer to keep all the nutritional value of each grain.

***Should rice be soaked prior to cooking?***

All grains contain phytic acid (an organic acid in which phosphorous is bound) in the outer layer or bran. Whole grains, in particular, may be difficult for some people to digest. As little as seven hours of soaking in warm water will neutralize a large portion of phytic acid in grains and vastly improve their nutritional benefits.

***What is the meaning of whole grain?***

Whole grain means that the germ and bran layer on the rice is left intact. All rice starts as a whole grain; when the germ and bran layer is removed, you then have white rice. Most of the nutritional value in a grain of rice is within the germ and bran layer. This layer is most often brown (as in brown rice), but can also be red (as in Bhutanese Red Rice) and black (as it is in the Forbidden Rice). There is extensive scientific evidence documenting the fact that incorporating whole grains into the diet promotes health and can prevent a number of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancers.

***What makes some rice "aromatic"?***

"Aromatic" is a term given to numerous varieties of rice characterized by a pronounced nutty aroma and flavor, often compared to popcorn. Jasmine

Rice is, perhaps, one of the best-known aromatic varieties, although there are others, such as our Forbidden Rice®. It is believed that the aroma is produced by a much higher proportion of a naturally occurring compound found in all rice, 2-acetyl-1-pyrroline.

***What do the different colors of rice mean?***

All rice starts as a whole grain, which means that the germ and bran layer are intact. When these are removed, you have white rice. The most common bran layer for rice is brown. But there are also red and black rices. The darker the bran layer, the more nutritional value the rice has. So our Forbidden Rice®, which is a black rice, is the most nutrient-dense rice you can buy. Some rices are only partially milled, so some of the bran layer is left on. These rices tend to be light tan, pink or even a striated color. Our *Madagascar Pink Rice* is an example of rice that is partially milled. It still retains a high level of nutrition, but cooks faster and has a texture that is closer to white rice. Available at Middlebury Co-op!

***How can I be assured that products from China are not toxic?***

We have been working with farmers who grow our Forbidden Rice® and Organic Jade Pearl Rice™ for many years. The "Black Dragon River" region where these rices are grown is one of the few areas in China that can be certified organic, due to the pristine nature of the land and waters there. We test each container of rice that we receive for pesticide residue or other toxicity. While we have never had reason to do so, if any container of rice were found to be contaminated, we would reject it.

***I am diabetic. Can I eat rice?***

Yes. However, if you have diabetes, you should eat the whole grain rice since these grains have a low glycemic index. Whole grains do not turn into sugars rapidly and can be digested at a more even rate so there will not be a spike in blood glucose levels.

***What is the glycemic index?***

Not all carbohydrate foods are created equal, in fact they behave quite differently in our bodies. The glycemic index or GI describes this difference by ranking carbohydrates according to their effect on our blood glucose levels. Choosing low GI carbs - the ones that produce only small fluctuations in our blood glucose and insulin levels - is the secret to long-term health reducing your risk of heart disease and diabetes and is the key to sustainable weight loss. All of our whole grain rices have a low glycemic index of 55 or less.

During the week of **April 9 — April 15**, Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**, in addition to their regular member discount, on all **Lotus Food** products.



## Seventh Generation

Burlington, Vermont

*Seventh Generation, Inc.* sells cleaning, paper, and personal care products designed with human health and the environment in mind. Established in 1988, the Burlington, Vermont based company remains an independent, privately held company distributing products to natural food stores, supermarkets, mass merchants, and online retailers.

*Seventh Generation* focuses its marketing and product development, on sustainability and the conservation of natural resources, using recycled and post-consumer materials in its packaging, and biodegradable, and plant-based phosphate- and chlorine-free ingredients in its products.

The company attributes the name *Seventh Generation* to the *Great Law of the Iroquois* which states that ***in our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.***

During the week of **April 16 — April 22**, Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**, in addition to their regular member discount, on all *Seventh Generation* products.



## Newman's Own & Newman's Own Organics

*My profits will be divided between a number of tax-deductible charities and causes, some church-related, others for conservation and ecology and things like that.*

*Newman's Own* is a food company founded by actor Paul Newman and author A.E. Hotchner in 1982. The company gives 100% of the after-tax profits from the sale of its products to Newman's Own Foundation (a private non-profit foundation) which, in turn, gives the money to various educational and charitable organizations.

The brand started with a homemade salad dressing that Newman and Hotchner prepared and gave to friends as gifts. The successful reception of the salad dressing led Newman and Hotchner to commercialize it for sale. After that initial item, financed by Newman and Hotchner (\$20,000 each as seed money), pasta sauce, frozen pizza, lemonade, fruit cocktail juices, popcorn, salsa, grape



juice, and other products were produced. Newman's Own Lemonade was introduced in 2004 and Newman's Own premium wines in 2008. Each label features a picture of Newman, dressed in a different costume to represent the product.

In 1993, Newman's daughter Nell founded *Newman's Own Organics* as a division of the company, later to become a separate company in late 2001. It produces only organic foods including chocolate, cookies, pretzels and pet food.

At the Co-op, you'll find *Newman's Own Salad Dressings* and **Lemonade**. Under the *Newman's Own Organics* Label, the Co-op offers **Fig Bars, Crème Filled Cookies, Ginger Cookies, Pretzel Sticks, Peanut Butter Cups**, and more.

During the week of **April 23 — April 29**, Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**, in addition to their regular member discount, on all *Newman's Own & Newman's Own Organics* products.

## Gringo Jack

Manchester Center, Vermont

Gringo Jack... in their own words:

*We're just a bunch of gringos up here in Vermont. But we're doing your BBQ, and your salsas, and your chips better than anyone. Spices, textures, flavors to knock your socks off. And we're doing it all natural, with no preservatives or anything yucky. Just fresh and authentic ingredients, for a fresh and authentic taste.*

*Salsas and sauces so authentic, you can taste the provocative flavor of every chile, every spice. All natural and slow cooked, always in small batches to ensure quality and flavor. Strong yet subtle, piquant spice in every taste.*

*Open one of our jars and instantly transform any meal into a spectacular Mexican banquet!*

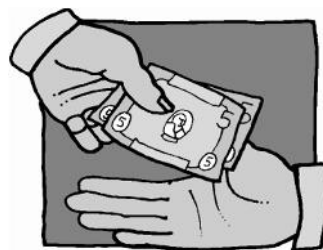


During the week of **April 30 — May 6**, Co-op members will receive a **30% discount**, in addition to their regular member discount, on all *Gringo Jack* products.

**Inclusive, Fair and Humane** *continued from page 1*

How does our community fit into this? Ms. Bowens' argument is that if we truly care about the messages of equality, health, and sustainability built into our movement for better food, then donating to the food shelf or paying a few extra cents for produce to improve worker conditions thousands of miles away merely scratches the surface of what we need to do as consumers. It is imperative that we ask more questions about who is producing our food, and work to learn from, amplify, and empower voices that are currently unheard. A strong local example of this is the *Milk With Dignity* campaign by Migrant Justice, which you can learn more about at [www.migrantjustice.net](http://www.migrantjustice.net). And while Vermont's population may be 95% White, Vermont farmers are 99% White—but programs such as *New Farms for New Americans* in Burlington (which you can find through Google or Facebook) seek to reduce this discrepancy by helping families relocated from Africa and Asia to improve their health and self-sufficiency through access to farming and gardening resources. In short, it is a truly exciting time to be involved in the good food movement—but as consumers, it is up to us to make it truly a movement for *good*.

Other workshops and discussions I attended throughout the day drilled home a similar message—we have significant learning to do. First, a workshop on calculating your costs of production really hit home for me, since in the produce department we are in close contact with dozens of local farms, and we think constantly about what price we can ask consumers to pay for products. Though I've worked on several farms, this was my first time playing the boss—and within fifteen minutes of calculations, I'd already lost my fictional farm almost \$1,800 by trying to charge buyers only \$5 for organic eggs while paying my workers a living wage of \$15/hour. What are the options, then? Charge \$7 for a dozen eggs, pay your workers \$8/hour, or do all the labor yourself for no pay? Decisions get hard when you try sitting in the driver's seat. Luckily, the UVM extension service has numerous resources to help new and seasoned farmers estimate costs and arrive at prices that will earn them a fair living.



In the end, it is up to us as consumers to use our buying power to celebrate food producers who are doing the right thing for our communities and our planet, not to mention our taste buds. Though products that are local and organic may be more expensive, these costs reflect the true cost of production while honoring the producer's right to make a profit and their duty to pay their employees a fair wage.

Another workshop I attended was led by the Domestic Fair Trade Association, which discussed their critical reviews of Fair Trade labeling that is intended to help consumers know if food producers and their communities have been given a good deal for their work. You may recognize names labels such as “Fair Trade USA” or the “Rainforest Alliance,” but labels can be deceiving. On the organization’s website, [www.fairfacts.thedfta.org](http://www.fairfacts.thedfta.org), you can learn which Fair Trade labeling organizations actually put their money where their mouth is—“Food Justice Certified” scores highest, as the only organization so far to achieve more than three stars. This was a bit of a shock to me, and reminded me that green-washing doesn’t just impact the energy sector, but food as well. We have to educate ourselves to know which labels have meaning, and who we can trust and support.

This point was drilled home one final time during a discussion I went to about “humane” meat production. “Humane” is not a verified term—anyone can use it (except *Perdue*, who agreed to drop the word from their chicken after two lawsuits), so once again consumers are swamped with a plethora of labels with phrases such as “American Humane Certified” or “Global Animal Partnership.” At the discussion, I learned of the resource [www.humaneitarian.org](http://www.humaneitarian.org) which seeks to help consumers understand what humanely raised meat is, and what different phrases and labels can really tell us.



All in all, it was an exciting but exhausting day. I feel somewhat daunted by the numerous steps that need to be taken if we are to make our food movement more inclusive, fair, and humane—truly a movement for *good* food. However, there are many truly *good* people working on these issues and many excellent resources available. I’m excited to continue to educate myself, and to figure out how I can contribute to a better food movement, both tomorrow when I shop for dinner ingredients and in my future choices and plans. I challenge you to do the same—good luck!

**Joe Pearl is a member of our Middlebury Co-op staff**

### **Drink the Spinach Water**

*Another bit of traditional wisdom with good science behind it: The water in which vegetables are cooked is rich in vitamins and other healthful plant chemicals. Save it for soup or add it to sauces.*

Food Rules, by Michael Pollan



## Cashel Blue

By Wendy Stewart

*Cashel Blue* is a relatively new cheese developed by Louis and Jane Grubb in the mid 1980's in Tipperary County, Ireland. The Grubb family has lived in Ireland since the

1600's aft leaving England for political reasons. At first they worked as millers and butter makers on their farm near Rock Cashel — a dramatic limestone outcropping in the Suir river valley. Jane and Louis wanted to diversify their family farm, and fill a void in their country's cheese making business. Until they began making *Cashel Blue* there were no other cheese producers to speak of. The milk comes from their closed herd of Friesian cattle, and it was not until recently that they began purchasing milk from neighboring farms.

The paste of this semi-soft cheese is ivory with blue-green veins running through it. *Cashel Blue* has a firm and crumbly texture when young, with a tangy, sweet taste. It becomes creamier with age, developing a stronger rich and zesty flavor like *dried herbs and woody-leaf molds*. The natural rind is beige with gray, blue, and green molds, and can develop a pinkish caste as it matures. It is wrapped in a distinctive gold foil. The wheels are five inches high and six inches in diameter, and weigh around three pounds. Vegetarian rennet is used, and penicillium roqueforti makes this blue cheese blue. It is aged from six to twelve weeks.

*Cashel Blue* keeps extremely well, and is often referred to as “Reliable Cashel”. It has also been described as “The Gorgonzola of the North”. It makes a great choice for a dessert cheese, by itself, or as an addition to a cheese platter. It is delicious served on crackers, or on whole wheat or walnut bread. I love blue cheeses on one of the *Maine Crisp* crackers, which are made by Karen Getz, a former MNFC staff member! She and her husband, Steve, a former MNFC board member together made *Dancing Cow* cheese for several years, one of which was a lovely blue cheese called *Lindy Hop*.

*Wendy Stewart is a member of our Middlebury Co-op staff*

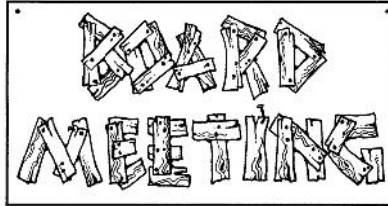
*What happens to the hole when the cheese is gone?*

Bertolt Brecht

# Notes from the Board

by Kevin Lehman

As I sit down to write this article, I am feeling especially excited about the future of the Co-op. I am truly inspired by my fellow Board members, the hard-working folks who contribute to its success, and all of the people that make the Co-op the special place that it is.



Late February, the Board held its annual all-day retreat. It was an opportunity for ten board members and four staffers to gather in a cozy living room in Middlebury and work together to consider our future. We did a deep dive on a couple of big issues— store expansion and patronage dividends.

I'd like to say first hand what struck me about our annual board retreat. I feel very grateful to be a part of such an amazing group of leaders who care deeply about the future of the Co-op. I was also reminded again how fortunate we are to have Glenn Lower as our General Manager, to steer our ship through smooth and stormy waters.

Here are some things that stood out:

- Patronage Dividends make a lot of sense for the Co-op. I encourage everyone to please read the informative cover story in the March issue of this newsletter to learn more about Patronage Dividends. This system, which has been adopted by many other food co-ops both in Vermont and elsewhere, allows us save on taxes and interest, while giving us increased flexibility in how we use and share our profits.
- We discussed the various ways we could expand the Co-op to meet increasing demands for our products and services. We asked ourselves how this ties into our community and the larger mission of the Co-op. I am excited about our potential for better serving our existing customers and the possibilities for earning new ones. I'm thrilled when I think we can give more people access to local, healthy responsibly sourced food. Keep your eyes peeled—more to come on this.

As Board members who serve our member-owners, we need to develop both our ears and our voices. Effective communication involves both the ability to convey heartfelt beliefs, as well as the ability to listen with an open mind. We practiced both at the retreat.

**Kevin Lehman is a member of our Middlebury Co-op Board of Directors**



## Welcoming Change

by Glenn Lower, General Manager

Middlebury Co-op is part of an international network of cooperatives that vary widely in size and mission. In Vermont alone we have energy co-ops, agricultural co-ops, and credit union co-ops as well as food co-ops like ours. The one thing they all have in common is that they are member-owned.

In recently creating our Co-op's Long Range Plan, our leadership team came to realize that it's high time for us to make use of a very powerful financial tool: the Patronage Refund System, which allows us to share our profits with our membership in a business-responsible way. Most U.S. co-operatives use this system successfully. At Middlebury Co-op, we hope to implement this change by the end of May. In order to do so, we need you, our member-owners, to approve of this change.

### **Why are we voting on this change?**

Going to a patronage refund system requires a by-law change which can only take effect if approved by member-owners. This is one way the co-op assures its owners stay involved in any significant decisions. The vote will be conducted by mail during the month of May.

### **What will be different?**

Instead of providing member-owners with a 2% discount at checkout, they will receive an annual dividend based on the Co-op's yearly profits and the value of their purchases throughout the year. All other discounts currently offered (senior, Food for All, member working discounts, etc.) will continue unchanged and apply at checkout as before.

### **Why is the leadership team recommending this change?**

Our research over the past few months has convinced us that patronage dividends offer the Co-op significant advantages over the current system.

These include:

- \* A more transparent management tool
- \* A faster path to achieving our Long Range Plan
- \* Significant federal tax savings ... as much as \$500,000 over eight years!
- \* Lower borrowing costs for store improvements
- \* Protection in lean years
- \* A proven way to harness the power of cooperation

**“What’s in it for me?”**

Shifting to a patronage dividend system will offer a number of benefits:

- \* Long-term stability for your investment in the Co-op
- \* A stronger voice regarding how Co-op profits get used
- \* Increased education opportunities
- \* A quicker and cost-saving route to a more comfortable shopping experience

**How to learn more or share your opinions?**

- \* Read the article in the March Newsletter (copies are available at the store or on the Co-op web site)
- \* Visit the display table in the produce section of the store
- \* Drop your comments and questions in the Co-op Conversation box.
- \* Post a comment on our blog at [co-opconversations.blogspot.com](http://co-opconversations.blogspot.com)
- \* Write to the General Manager at [gm@middleburycoop.com](mailto:gm@middleburycoop.com), or call Glenn directly at 388-7276.
- \* The Board contact is [board@middleburycoop.com](mailto:board@middleburycoop.com) or Board President, Jay Leshinsky, at 388-3850.
- \* Come to a scheduled Co-op Conversation meeting at the Co-op.

Sunday, April 12 ..... 11:00am

Wednesday, April 15 ..... 5:15pm

*Thank you!*

*I hope everyone that is reading this is having a really good day. And if you are not, just know that in every new minute that passes you have an opportunity to change that.*

Gillian Anderson



## Hot and Cold: The Baker's Best Friends

by Kathryn Cyr

Our romantic ideas of the baker at work make us think of the early hours of the morning, the smell of coffee, and most importantly, the ripping hot ovens making magic. Those ovens are throwing some serious heat, and if you look through the bakery window and watch your favorite baker at work, you will see that the ovens are always at the center of the action. What you probably can't see is how cleverly the baker uses the opposite extreme of freezing cold to help create some of the tastiest baked goods.

We all know that the freezer is useful for storing fruits and berries that otherwise have a short shelf life but it might surprise you to discover that the baker also has their freezer stocked with baked goods at all different stages in the process. You might find doughs for cookies and scones, pie crusts, puff pastry, cakes, croissants, pre-baked breads, and maybe even some creams. Of course, pros aren't the only ones who can use the freezer in their baking process. Here are several reasons to do the same at home.

### **Economy of scale**

If you are a busy person then it makes sense to make two or three batches of something while you have all the ingredients and equipment out in your kitchen. This eliminates another round of prep and clean-up and makes you look especially well prepared when guests come over. Cookies and scones are good examples of this. You can freeze individual cookies pressed between pieces of parchment paper and bake only what you need at any given time. For scone dough, shape it into a round and cover tightly with two layers of plastic wrap. When you're ready, just pull it out of the freezer, cut it while it's still frozen and bake as usual for a quick, hassle free breakfast treat.

### **Storage and Shelf-life**

If your mom's birthday is in July and you can't stand the thought of running the oven in the summer, no worries! Bake the cake up to three months ahead, cover tightly with two layers of plastic wrap, and freeze. Come time, just thaw the cake and frost it with mom's favorite buttercream. After you thaw the cake and before you frost add a little more depth to it by brushing a sweet flavored syrup over the cake for it to absorb. I love a simple syrup with rose-water for yellow or white cakes. By freezing you can also extend the shelf life of items. Pie crusts can be refrigerated for only a short number of days before use but if you can't get around to making that pie you can freeze the dough and it will last much longer. If you choose to make pie in the middle of the hot, humid summer you will probably also choose to use your freezer for quick



chilling of the pie crust between periods of working with it. To freeze pie dough, roll it out onto plastic wrap into a flat round large enough for your pie plate. Place another piece of plastic wrap on top of that and fold it into quarters. Double wrap the assembly and freeze. When you are ready to use the crust thaw it out in the refrigerator until it's workable. Too much plastic, you say? You can reuse the wrap for the same things, just store the used film in a ziplock baggy in the freezer until you need it again.

### Flavor maturation

Baked goods often taste better when they have been frozen. Think of it the same way as the flavors of a soup or stew... when all the ingredients have had a chance to meld and hang out together they intensify and pop. The famous *Bouchon Bakery* says that their beloved macaroons taste better after a period of freezing from 24 hours up to two weeks. Keep in mind, you must properly wrap your items for best results. If you wrap something incorrectly or forget about it for a year it will inevitably get some freezer burn and probably take on the flavors of some other mystery items you've forgotten in the back of the freezer.

As a rule of thumb for freezing baked goods I like to think of FFF: Fat Freezes Fine. Your ingredients will be kept in tip-top shape, too, if you freeze them. Good examples are butter and nut flours (high in fat) and freezing will keep them fresher longer.

Note: Things that typically don't freeze well are milk and other dairy (the exception is butter because it's a fat) and products containing gelatin. If you want to freeze a cream stick to one with a high fat content.

If you are still a skeptic, here's a recipe to try. Believe it or not, we freeze our own deli-made Key Lime Pie before we sell it! Make it now, freeze, and enjoy it later when the weather starts to warm up and you're craving something cool and refreshing.

## MNFC Key Lime Pie

1 Graham Style Pie Shell	4 egg yolks
1 can sweetened condensed milk	½ cup lime juice



- ⇒ Whisk the egg yolks and sweetened condensed milk.
- ⇒ Add the lime juice and mix well.
- ⇒ Pour into the pie shell.
- ⇒ Bake for 10 minutes in a 350 degree oven.
- ⇒ Remove from oven and chill. Serve right away or you can freeze it whole or by the slice and thaw whenever you need a sweet treat.

**Kathryn Cyr is a member of our Middlebury Co-op staff**

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** is a great way to for consumers to buy local in season food directly from the farmer. Purchase a “share” from a farmer before the season starts, and in return get a box of seasonal produce each week throughout the growing season.

Many farms in the area offer CSAs. *Lewis Creek Farm* offers a CSA with pickup right here in the Co-op parking lot. Pick-ups are Wednesdays from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

For more information or to sign up go to [www.lewiscreekfarm.com/csa.html](http://www.lewiscreekfarm.com/csa.html) or call Hank at 802-453-4591 or email at [LCfarm@gmavt.net](mailto:LCfarm@gmavt.net)

**All Flora supplements will be 30% off  
throughout the month of April**



## **Jim McIntosh**

### **10 Years at Middlebury Co-op!**

Ten years ago, Jim started working with us in the Bulk Foods department... he's still going strong! During this past decade, Jim has filled countless bulk food bins, scooped innumerable amounts of peanut, almond, cashew, and sesame butter, and filled thousands of Vermont maple syrup jars. And don't forget the inconceivable number of frozen fruit and vegetables packaged! In addition to helping keep our bins filled and shelved stocked, Jim also orders the Co-op's Bulk coffee. Jim has been part of our journey into our no-longer-*new* store and gone with us through growth spurts and changes. Thank you, Jim!!

## Co-op News...

On Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, we will go **bag-less!** Please bring your own shopping bags. Should you forget, we will supply you with cardboard boxes.

We encourage you — not only on Earth Day — to **bring your own bags and containers** whenever you are shopping in Produce and Bulk. Reuse your plastic and paper bags, bring your glass or plastic jars (mark the weight of the container on a piece of masking tape right on the jar), some mesh bags are excellent for produce such as baby spinach, mesclun, or other greens. Some of our customers purchase coffee beans in reused bags and store the beans at home inside a glass container. If you'd like a cup of steaming hot coffee, bring your own mug. And bring your own containers for honey and maple syrup. You pay less too!

If you would like to receive your monthly Co-op Newsletter **electronically**, give us a call and let us know ("Member Services" 388-7276). If you do receive your Newsletter electronically, you may pick up a paper copy at the store if you need one.

We have noticed that some of our customers **bring in a shopping cart** or two when entering the store. Thank you!

Save the date!  
We will celebrate

## **Green Up Day at the Co-op On Saturday, May 2nd, from noon to 3pm**

If you wish, that same morning,  
you may pick up Green Up bags at the Co-op.

*What is the use of a house if you haven't  
got a tolerable planet to put it on?*

— Henry David Thoreau