


**Middlebury Co-op
Newsletter**

Open 7 Days A Week, 8 to 7
 Nine Washington Street
 Middlebury, VT

**July/August
2016**

Price Perceptions


Sheila McGrory-Klyza



I have recently finished up my term on the Board of Directors and decided not to run again because of other commitments, but I heartily congratulate the new Board members and wish them well. They will be joining a group of dedicated, interesting, kindhearted people who are a joy to work with.

Everyone on the Board has his or her own set of life experiences and approaches the work from his or her unique perspective, but they all are committed to the wellbeing of the Co-op community and want to see MNFC thrive. As they tackle the challenges of the expansion and try to balance all the competing needs and limitations, I'm certain that they will arrive at the best possible outcomes.

One of the biggest challenges the Co-op faces is cost. Based on research conducted in recent years, and on anecdotal evidence Board members have gathered over the years, the Co-op is perceived by many as being too expensive; affordable only to the elite.

Read more 

In fact, not long ago I had a conversation with a friend who strives to make healthy meals for herself and her family and who, like most people, needs to watch her spending (as do I, especially now with two daughters in college). She was bemoaning the prices at MNFC and stated that much of what the store carries can be found for less money at other stores in town. In some cases, she's right. This is because large chain grocery stores have purchasing power and storage capacity that the Co-op does not have. Chain stores also pay their employees less and provide fewer benefits. They do not commit as much time and energy into being environmentally conscious. They do not support the local farmers and food producers at the same level as the Co-op, nor the greater community. The Co-op gives back to Addison County in so many ways: supporting the local food shelves; providing educational events related to healthy, local food; supporting lower income families through the Food for All program; providing cooking classes at the Hannaford Career Center; and supporting the Addison County Gleaning Program in partnership with HOPE, to name but a few.

Yes, some of the products the Co-op carries are slightly more expensive than what you can find at a chain store. But the reverse is also true for certain items — they are less expensive at the Co-op than at large chain grocery stores. And our buying criteria are much more stringent. Nothing on our shelves has added preservatives, colors, and flavors; added hormones and antibiotics; or trans fats, high fructose corn syrup, and parabens. Nothing on our shelves has been involved in animal testing, and none of our produce is irradiated. Yes, some “trusted” products have been bought up by large conglomerates and they still can be found in the store. In this case, we leave the decision up to Co-op consumers about whether they choose to buy those products, or not.

Despite the perception about high prices, it is possible to shop at the Co-op inexpensively. The bulk section, one of my favorite parts of the store, offers myriad possibilities for a nutritious, low cost meal. “Co-op Basics” products (look for the purple label) offer competitive prices on basic items, such as bread, milk, juice, and cereal. Weekly member-owner discounts offer 20% off of selected items (love those deals!). And Patronage Dividends provide cash back to member-owners based on how well our Co-op has done that year.

But none of these cost savings is the main reason I shop at MNFC. I shop at MNFC because of our Ends. Some of these are tangible goals, and some are intangible values. The Board works hard to meet the tangible Ends, and holds the intangible Ends up to constantly aspire to and, thereby, attain. I'm proud and humbled to have been a part of this vital process.

Our Co-op Ends state that...

... MNFC member-owners, customers,
and the community benefit from:

- ◆ Healthy Food
- ◆ A vibrant local economy
- ◆ Environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient practices
- ◆ Cooperative democratic ownership; and
- ◆ Learning about these values



**Newly elected
to our Board of Directors:**

R. J. Adler (re-elected)
Ann La Fiandra
Amanda Warren

Welcome !



Staff Interview with Melinda Bachand



Melinda, as our Co-op's bookkeeper, what are your responsibilities?

I am responsible for our bills to get paid. We purchase lots and lots of food products from our vendors. They expect to be paid for their goods. Payment must be accurate and it must be on time. A late payment to a vendor is like an employee receiving her paycheck late.

How many checks do you write?

We send out about 150 checks per week. That means we process around 100,000 dollars worth of invoices.

I know that some of our payment can be large sums of money, for example when we pay our main distributor, *United Natural Foods*. But we also write some

small amounts, isn't that right?

Yes, some of our checks can be as small as \$12. Local vendors bringing us eggs, fiddleheads, ramps, home-baked cookies or raspberries, often deliver small amounts of product.

That's how we differ from some other retail stores.

Yes, our support of the local food economy is serious.

How many checks go out to local food producers?

43 percent. 33 percent of our overall sales are local; but the amount sold is often smaller, therefore the number of checks going to Vermont farmers and food producers is much higher.

Melinda, there are other services you provide at the Co-op. Our customers have seen you running the register, for example.

I wear lots of hats, which is a good thing because it helps me to learn. Bookkeeping is a somewhat solitary job, it's quiet and very focused. I don't meet our members and customers directly. When I help run the registers, which I do when there is a need, I get to meet many of our members and customers. I welcome the challenge! Customer service is never quiet and focused. When it comes to customer service, you never know what comes next. And then there is the challenge of distinguishing between parsley and cilantro and bok choy and baby bok choy.

I have also started writing entries to acknowledge our employees' longevity. When a staff member has worked with us for 10, 15, or 20 years, I write about him or her, celebrating the achievement.

We have quite a few staff members who have worked with us for many years.

We have a wonderful mix of long-term and new employees. Long time staffers provide a solid foundation, new staff members bring fresh energy. Both are needed.

I couldn't agree more! What are some other hats you wear?

I receive and direct countless phone calls. I order office supplies, keep track of credit card purchases, and help with IT problems.

You work with us for 40 busy hours per week. The rest of your life is calm and cozy, I hope?

[laughs] We have two boys. Connor is 11, Elijah 13. I like to spend as much time with them as possible. Add yard and house work...

... and you have a full life! Tell us about music and writing, Melinda.

I love music! Most varieties of music. I travel to attend festivals on occasion, in Boston, New York, Montreal, or even further away. I attend some Broadway shows, I go to Vermont Symphony Orchestra performances, I attend some rock concerts, and I love the Blues! I like *Blues Night* at 51 Main in Middlebury; the open mike shows never cease to amaze me.

Do you play music yourself?

I have played the piano since I was 12 years old, I strum some basic chords of the guitar, and I love to sing. I studied opera... a long time ago.

But even more than music, I am passionate about writing! Writ-

ing is my real creative outlet. I have not published a thing, haven't even tried; it's the act of writing that is important for me. I work with a group of people; we read and critique each other.

That takes courage!

Yes, writers can be brutally honest, so we have to find diplomatic ways to respond to what we are given to read. We have to become familiar with what I call the *Oreo effect*.

We have to become aware of the sweetened Crisco that's inside – that's the bad stuff – but the sweet stuff is surrounded by nice cookies on both sides – we must learn to accept that too.

**Thank you,
Melinda!**



Gelato is Italian for “ice cream.” Gelato doesn’t contain as much air as its American counterpart and therefore has a denser texture.

At the Co-op you’ll find the *Vermont Gelato Ice Cream Company’s* crazy flavored gelato, including Chipotle Chocolate, Fig Brulée, Local Vermont Honey, and not-so-local Tahitian Vanilla. VT Gelato is located in Brattleboro.

A second Vermont gelato maker is *Leonardo’s* from Barre. They offer delicious flavors such as Cappuccino, Coconut, and Chocolate Chip.

Frozen non-dairy desserts can be made with soymilk, coconut or almond milk, or even cashew milk. They can be just as delicious as some of the best ice cream.





Staff Interview with Casey Ryan



Casey, what is a production cook?

As a production cook I make sure that all the options we offer in our Deli case are available. Whatever is running low, I will replenish. Customers really don't like when we are out of something. I work the later shift of the day, so I often continue what one of my co-workers started in the morning. I am responsible for preparing salads, baked salmon, sandwich sauces... I usually have four or five items going at the same time. It's a lot of multitasking. Many items have not changed for a long time, but once in a while we add a new item which can affect production work quite a bit!

What are some popular items?

Our Tempeh and curry chicken salads are quite popular. And the quinoa salad, which is one of my personal favorites.

Do you follow a very specific recipe or do you sort of follow your intuition?

Consistency is very important! I follow our recipes closely. Customers expect the potato salad to taste the same as it did yesterday or last week. We are open to suggestions and making changes, such as adjusting the salt; but sometimes we have to realize that we cannot please everyone all the time. Some salads can be a major production, such as our sweet potato salad, which can take three hours to prepare. Cooking takes time, attention and care.

Have you always enjoyed working with food?

I cared for good healthy foods when growing up. After being home schooled, I went to live in Orlando, Florida, before I returned to Vermont and came to Middlebury. In Orlando I worked for *Starbucks* and *Chipotle Mexican Grill*.

It must have been some kind of culture shock to move from a Floridian city to small town Vermont!

Well, I grew up in Rochester, Vermont. I went to study in Orlando and stayed for seven years, before coming back to Vermont. I am especially glad to have left working for a big corporation. Both *Starbucks* and *Chipotle* were decent employers; but knowing that all the money made would flow out of the community didn't feel good. Also, whenever there was any kind of problem or challenge, we had to go through all kinds of channels to get some answers, which usually never came. No one was empowered to do anything! It's so different at the Co-op! You can feel it's a community store. I was the first person hired after Nick became manager of the Prepared Foods department. It's so easy to work with Nick, and the Deli is doing really well.

The Deli is doing extremely well. I am amazed how you keep up with the increasing flow of customers. What do you think about expanding the Co-op?

Expansion is an exciting idea! As it stands now, we cannot add too many new food choices, even though our customers would like to see them. We simply don't have space for additional workers in the kitchen.

Casey, on staff we know about another passion of yours: music.

Yes, I love music. I have a degree in music recording. It's what I studied in Orlando. I record all different styles of music, jazz, rock, folk... My own focus is rap. I am working these days on a piece that is based on the story of *Alice in Wonderland*. My alias is the Cheshire Cat. I am intrigued by the possibilities of other worlds and dimensions and *Wonderland* is an easy access point for most people.

Do you perform?

I am networking a lot. I add the bass to musical pieces that are being sent to me. Recently one of "my" pieces made it to *Spotify*, a web-based music forum. It's kind of fascinating to hear

yourself on a platform like that. I will be playing with my dad in Rochester on the Village Green, on Sunday, July 31st. I'll be singing... and playing bass, of course. I would love to see you there! It starts at 6:30 pm.

Thank you, Casey!



We subsidize high-fructose corn syrup in this country, but not carrots. While the surgeon general is raising alarms over the epidemic of obesity, the president is signing farm bills designed to keep the river of cheap corn flowing, guaranteeing that the cheapest calories in the supermarket will continue to be the unhealthiest.

— Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*.

Imagine if we had a food system that actually produced wholesome food. Imagine if it produced that food in a way that restored the land. Imagine if we could eat every meal knowing these few simple things: What it is we're eating. Where it came from. How it found its way to our table. And what it really cost. If that was the reality, then every meal would have the potential to be a perfect meal. We would not need to go hunting for our connection to our food and the web of life that produces it. We would no longer need any reminding that we eat by the grace of nature, not industry, and that what we're eating is never anything more or less than the body of the world. I don't want to have to forage every meal. Most people don't want to learn to garden or hunt. But we can change the way we make and get our food so that it becomes food again—something that feeds our bodies and our souls. Imagine it: Every meal would connect us to the joy of living and the wonder of nature. Every meal would be like saying grace.

— Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

Co-op Member Deals

Check out our Member Deals for the coming two months, July and August. For further information about the companies and their products, go to our website middlebury.coop.

Middlebury Co-op members will receive a **20% discount** on all of the company's products during the week they are featured.



July 7 — July 13

Orca Bay

July 14 — July 20

Blue Diamond

July 21 — July 27

Black River Meats

July 28 — August 3

Cabot

August 4 — August 10

New Leaf Farm

August 11 — August 17

Vermont Smoke & Cure

August 18 — August 24

Orb Weaver Farm

August 25 — August 31

Vermont Coffee Company

Ice Cream

America's favorite dessert is thought to have originated in the mountains of ancient China, with snow probably used as the base. Today's ice cream is made with a combination of milk products (usually cream combined with fresh, condensed or dry milk), a sweetening agent (sugar, honey, corn syrup or artificial sweetener) and sometimes solid additions such as pieces of chocolate, nuts, fruit and so on. According to FDA regulations, ice creams with solid additions must contain a minimum of **8 percent milk fat**, while plain ice creams must have at least **10 percent milk fat**.



Commercial ice creams usually contain **stabilizers** to improve both texture and body, and to help make them melt resistant. Many also contain artificial coloring.

Those made with natural flavorings (e.g. chocolate) will be labeled simply *Chocolate Ice Cream*. If the majority of the flavoring is natural with a boost from an artificial-flavor source, the label will read *Chocolate -Flavored Ice Cream*; if 50 percent of the flavoring is artificial it will read *Artificial Chocolate Ice Cream*.

All commercial ice creams have **overrun**, a term applied to the amount of air they contain. The percentage of overrun ranges from 0 (no air) to 200, a theoretical figure that would be all air. The legal overrun limit for ice cream is 100 percent, which would amount to half air. Ice cream needs some air or it would be rock-hard. But one with 100 percent overrun would have so little body that it would feel mushy in the mouth, it would also melt extremely fast. An ice cream with the more desirable proportion of 20 to 50 percent overrun (10 to 25 percent air) would be denser, creamier and eminently more satisfying. Since the overrun is not listed on the package, the only way to be absolutely sure is to weigh the carton. Ice cream with a 50 percent overrun (25 percent air) will weigh about 18 ounces per pint (subtract about 1.5 ounces for the weight of the container). The weight of the ice cream will be proportionately higher with a lower percentage of overrun.

During **storage**, ice cream has a tendency to absorb other food odors and to form ice crystals. For that reason, it's best not to freeze it for more than 2 to 3 days. Sealing the carton airtight in a plastic bag will extend storage life up to a week. Ice cream is used for a plethora of delicious treats including Baked Alaskas, Banana Splits, and Ice Cream Bars, sandwiches, and cakes.





Chèvre

Wendy Stewart



Chèvre is the French word for *goat*, and in the cheese world includes a broad and diverse family of cheeses made with goat milk. Most of the goat cheese is produced in the Loire Valley, Southeast of Paris. The Saracens, who were people of Arab descent, brought goats to this part of France. In the 8th century the Saracens left the Loire region, but their goats and cheese making techniques remained. Over the ages, the art of making chèvre has evolved in many directions. There are nine French chèvres that fall under official protection designation status.

Since chèvre is considered a fresh milk cheese in the U.S., it must be pasteurized. The texture ranges from moist, creamy, and soft to dry and semi firm. It can be quite soft and slightly granular, which makes it easy to spread. The flavor is often on the mild side with floral overtones. However, some chèvres have a stronger, almost musty taste. Very little rennet is used to make chèvre. The curd is not heated or cut or pressed - instead it is drained in molds with small holes to allow the whey to drain off. After reaching the desired consistency the surface can be covered with powdered charcoal, or a number of different herbs, spices, or fruit.

Chèvre comes in many interesting shapes: besace (beggar's purse), bi-corne (two horns), bondon (a wine cask stopper), bouchon (cork), boule (ball), bouton (button), brique (brick), brochette (skewer or stick), buche (log), carré (square), cerise (cherry), clochette (small bell), cover (heart), crouton (horse dropping), figue (fig), fleur (flower), lingot (bar), médaillon (medallion), pave (paving stone), pyramid (pyramid), quatre fenille (four leaf clover), round (round), and taupiniere (molehill).

Chèvre is often served with crusty bread or bagel lightly broiled, or on salads with nuts, capers, and herbs, or melted into sauces for pasta or vegetables.

Our Co-op first began carrying Vermont Butter and Cheese chèvre logs in the mid-1980s. Then in 2002 Greg Bernhardt and Hannah Sessions

started their Blue Ledge goat chèvre production. The Co-op was their first distributor. In addition to their fresh chèvre they also make a two month aged chèvre called *Crottina*. Our newest chèvre producer is *High Pond* chèvre from Brandon. In addition to plain chèvre, they make garlic/herb and cranberry/maple during the cooler seasons.



Coconut Quinoa

Ian Ross

The year 2016 has significant meaning to me for several reasons. This August marks 10 years of employment at MNFC and 10 years of fatherhood. My oldest daughter, Joyce, is my indicator of how long I have worked at the Co-op, as she was born the day before I was offered my job and two weeks prior to starting in the Deli.



In celebration of my anniversary, I would like to share one of my favorite recipes, that I developed myself after some experimenting with quinoa, when it was still a new grain to me. I hope you will enjoy it!

Coconut Sesame Quinoa Salad

developed by Ian Ross

1 cup quinoa	1/2 cup lemon juice
2 cups vegetable stock	1 teaspoon turmeric
1 green pepper, diced	1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
1 small red onion, diced	1 teaspoon lemon zest
1/4 cup olive oil	

- ⇒ Combine quinoa and vegetable stock, bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, let sit for 5 minutes, fluff and cool.
- ⇒ Combine and toast coconut and sesame seeds.
- ⇒ Once quinoa is cool, mix all ingredients together.



Brazil Nuts

The Amazon dense forest holds many unique plant species. One of them is the Brazil nut. This nutritious nut, first cherished by the native Amazonians, is now available world-wide, providing high amounts of protein, fats, and other essential nutrients.

Brazil nut trees are at home in the non-flooded forests of Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru. They are one of the tallest, and long-living plant species among all tropical rain forest areas. Each tree can grow up to 50 meters high with a large straight stem and wide umbrella like foliage canopy near its top. The tree's life span lifespan can be 500 to 700 years.

Each mature tree bears up to 300 fruit pods in a season. A brazil nut pod features a thick outer shell as do coconuts, and may weigh up to five pounds. It takes about 14 months for the fruit to mature after pollination. Upon maturity, the pod falls from the tree. The pods may remain intact even after falling from such a tremendous height. At their natural habitat, brazil nut pods exclusively depend on certain rodents to free and disperse the seeds for germination.

Internally, each fruit pod contains 10-25 seeds (kernels), arranged in segments. Each kernel in turn is encased within its own thick dark-brown shell. A ripe white meat kernel has a sweet distinctive flavor.

Brazil nuts are high in calories, contain large quantities of vitamins, antioxidants and minerals. Their high caloric content is mainly due to their fat contents. However, much of this fat content is mono-unsaturated fatty acids and oleic acid, which are known to help lower LDL or "bad cholesterol" and increase HDL or "good cholesterol" levels in the blood.

Brazil nuts are also a very good source of vitamin-E, a powerful lipid soluble antioxidant, that helps maintain cell membrane integrity and helps protect the skin from harmful oxygen-free radicals.

Brazil nuts hold exceptionally high levels of selenium. Just 1-2 nuts a day provide enough of this trace element. Adequate selenium in the diet helps prevent coronary artery disease, liver cirrhosis, and cancers.

Additionally, these creamy nuts are an excellent source of the B-complex group of vitamins such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, vitamin

B-6, and folates. Altogether, these vitamins work as co-factors for enzymes during cellular substrate metabolism inside the body.

Extracted Brazil nut oil is often used in massage oil and body care products. Its emollient property helps keep skin well protected from dryness.

Ideally you may want to purchase Brazil nuts in the shell. However, as they are hard to find, choose refrigerated shelled Brazil nuts. Store them in a dry cool place. Organic nuts are best.

Enjoy Brazil nuts out of hand or as part of mixed nuts or a trail or snack mix. They are good raw or roasted and salted.

Brazil nuts are excellent in fudge, puddings, pesto, and chocolate bars. Coarsely ground brazil nuts can be sprinkled over fruit or vegetable salads.

You can also add Brazil nuts to soups as well as meat and vegetable dishes. At the Co-op, you'll find organic Brazil nuts in our Bulk Foods Refrigerated section and as part of our Mixed Nuts in one of our Bulk bins.



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