

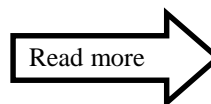


БОРЩ — Borscht

The Russian word for this wonderful soup is rendered in the English language usually as *Borscht*. It really should be Borschch, though, as the Cyrillic version includes the sound of *sh* followed by a sharp *ch*, at the end. In any case, Borscht is a most tremendously hearty, nutritious, delicious soup whose flavors, if prepared well, will transport you straight to a supper table somewhere in rural Russia during the time of Tolstoy. You'll find yourself near a warm fire inside a simple peasant's hut, while outside the wind is howling and the snow drifting, perhaps a troika arriving with tinkling bells bringing friends to join you for the meal.

Borscht is most popular in Eastern Europe. The word is of Yiddish origin, which can be further traced back to Proto-Indo-European roots meaning *hogweed*, which used to be the main ingredient of Borscht. It was the Ashkenazi Jews that brought the recipe from the Ukraine to America.

Traditionally Borscht is made with bone broth, sautéed vegetables, and fermented beet root juice (slices of beet root are covered with pre-boiled water and left out for several days for bacteria to ferment some to the beet sugars). Some borscht is made with broth of beef, ham, lamb, poultry, sausage, or even fish. Vegetarian broth is often made with mushrooms. Vegetables may include beet root, green cabbage, potatoes, onions, and tomatoes; also tart apples, turnip, zucchini, and bell peppers.



There are countless recipes for Borscht. In Poland and the Ukraine the recipes vary by region and can be quite different from one another. The soup can be eaten hot or cold, it can be blended or chunky, and it can be made with fermented beet juice which gives it a sweet and sour taste. Borscht can be served as a refreshing summer dish or as a warm and soothing meal on Christmas Eve. The vegetables can be sliced, cubed, or julienned. Borscht is often served with sour cream or yogurt, parsley, scallions, hot peppers, or fresh dill.

The recipe I'd like to share can be found in the Moosewood Cookbook, by Mollie Katzen. This recipe serves 4 people. I like to prepare about twice as much to have lots of left-overs for the coming days. You could also blend some of the left-overs into a broth that will be most soothing on a cold February night after a day's hard work.

Reiner

2 tablespoons butter	½ teaspoon dill weed
1 ½ cups chopped onion	1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
1 ½ cups thinly sliced potato	1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon honey
1 cup thinly sliced beets	1 cup tomato purée
1 large, sliced carrot	
1 stalk chopped celery	topping:
3 cups chopped green cabbage	fresh dill weed
1 teaspoon caraway seeds	sour cream (the Co-op's <i>Wallaby's</i> organic sour cream is excellent!)
4 cups vegetable stock or water	chopped tomatoes
2 teaspoons salt	
black pepper	

- ⇒ Place potatoes, beets and veggie stock (or water) in a saucepan and cook until everything is tender (save the liquid).
- ⇒ Begin cooking the onions in the butter in a large kettle. Add caraway seeds and salt. Cook until onion is translucent, then add celery, carrots and cabbage. Add liquid from beets and potatoes and cook, covered until all the vegetables are tender. Add potatoes, beets, and all remaining ingredients.
- ⇒ Cover and simmer slowly for at least 30 minutes. Taste to correct seasoning.
- ⇒ Serve topped with sour cream, fresh dill, and chopped fresh tomatoes.





Dear Member-Owners,

It is my goal to give you regular updates as our expansion planning unfolds during 2016.

January was spent pulling together our team and beginning the design process. I reported last month that we hired the local firm, *Vermont Integrated Architecture*. In addition, we will work with *Otter Creek Engineering* as civil engineers. *LN Consulting* will be our mechanical engineers, who specialize in energy efficiency. And *Engineering Ventures* will be our structural engineers.

As I write this article in early January, we are beginning to interview for a construction management firm believing that with our complicated downtown project, we'll need them at the table early as we develop the project. The challenges of our site will take some very creative out-of-the-box solutions! If everything continues to go smoothly, we would break ground in March 2017.

Our vision: Designing a store that dramatically reduces our environmental footprint, increases our social footprint, while adding much needed space, and create a store in which people love to shop and work.

We hope that by late February, member-owners will receive visual updates on schematic design and site plans on display in the store, information on the website and social media. We will also invite you to open informational meetings.

We'll let you know about the times.

It's going to be very exciting! Even more so because this year is our 40th anniversary. We'll have lots to celebrate!

Yours,

Glenn Lower, General Manager



**Interview with Co-op
Staff Member
Hannah Murphy**



Reiner Winkler: Hannah, what brings you to Middlebury?

Hannah Murphy: I grew up on the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, on the south side of the lake. I came to Middlebury to study Conservation Biology.

RW: How did you like your experience at Middlebury College?

HM: I really liked the academics; but socially I felt a bit out of place. I had grown up on a farm in a fairly working class part of the country. I enjoyed my junior year abroad in Aberdeen, Scotland, where I studied Marine Biology and Botany. During my time there I explored some of the islands, including the Shetland Islands and the Hebrides.

RW: After Middlebury College you started working with us at the Co-op. That was about nine months ago, right?

HM: Yes, I was not ready to devote myself to the very competitive life of science research. So I started working at the Co-op.

RW: What is it like to work as one of our cashiers?

HM: I like it most of the time. But it can be very demanding. As a cashier, we check out our customers while at the same time dealing with a lot of questions, such as where to hang a poster or placing special orders. Customers inquire about products from the Wellness department... about all departments really! Some customers voice their dissatisfaction about some of the products or simply ask for recipes. Most interactions are positive, but I do need time to recharge after my shifts!

RW: As a shift leader you have additional responsibilities.

HM: Yes, after 5pm I may help with a lost wallet, credit card or car keys. I make sure cashiers have sufficient change on hand. On occasion I may have to deal with an unhappy customer.

RW: Did you know all the foods that are coming through at the register when you started?

HM: Most of them. I grew up on my parents' farm and we shopped at a local co-op. I remember *Marquette Food Co-op* when I was only eye-height with the cash-out counter. The only type of food I am not as familiar with is many of the packaged items. I am celiac and don't purchase most of them.

RW: Celiac?

HM: Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease. Your own immune system attacks your small intestine and causes inflammation. To deal with it, I have been living on a gluten free diet for ten years now.

RW: Were you born with celiac disease?

HM: : Perhaps. I don't really know. I was very skinny as a child. When I was 12 years old, I had terrible skin problems and was severely under weight. Doctors knew about food allergies but not much about celiac disease, and there weren't good tests available for the disease. One doctor finally suggested I should try to avoid gluten. I started a six week gluten free diet. For five weeks there were absolutely no changes, and then suddenly everything cleared up! My skin got better, I felt better, and I started to gain weight. Within a few months I gained almost 40 pounds.

RW: That's remarkable! What a major life change! Do you find it easy

now to live on a gluten free diet?

HM: I have gotten used to it. It's so much better these days! Our Co-op has just about everything you need, and even restaurants can accommodate for your gluten free choice.

RW: Are there some gluten free products at the Co-op that you especially recommend?

HM: *West Meadow Farm Bakery!* All their breads and products have nice texture and taste. I'm also fond of the *Panabel Pizza Dough* we sell. *Tinkyada* offers excellent rice pasta products.

RW: What is your favorite cheese?

HM: I am very fond of Drunken Goat and *Blue Ledge Farm La Luna*. I'm also excited about the Middlebury Blue which, unlike most other blue cheeses, is gluten free.

RW: Blue cheeses are not always gluten free?

HM: Unfortunately not. When the blue mold is inserted into the cheese, a glutinous binder is often used.

RW: Do you find it safe to buy gluten free products from our bulk bins?

HM: Yes, but only from the bins that are far away from the wheat, barley, rye, and oat products. I especially appreciate the Gluten Free Bulk unit next to the Produce area. I'm also fond of millet and

sorghum flours. They are good to work with and deliver nice taste and texture.

RW: What do you think about our Co-op expansion, Hannah?

HM: I am excited about gaining more room. My concern is losing some of our Co-op integrity. I like our buying criteria and Ends statements. I don't want to have them compromised. Above all I don't want to lose working with our small food producers! Sometimes co-ops lose their connection with the small farmers when they expand. When I shop, I look for small farm products. The

other issue is the community feel. I do feel optimistic, though, that we won't lose our sense of community. It's a great strength of our Co-op.

RW: Any future plans or dreams?

HM: I just started attending the Herbal Medicine School in Montpelier. I will be a student for three years, which is something I am very excited about!

RW: Thank you, Hannah!

Favor the kinds of oils and grains that have traditionally been stone-ground.

When grindstones were the only way to refine flour and oil, flour and oil were generally more nutritious. In the case of grain, more of the germ and fiber remains when it is ground on a stone; you can't get white flour from a stone. The nutritional benefits of whole grains are impressive: fiber; the full range of B vitamins; and healthy oils, all of which are sacrificed when the grain is refined on modern roller mills (highly refined flours are little different from sugar). And the newer oils that are extracted by modern chemical means tend to have less favorable fatty acid profiles and more additives than olive, sesame, palm fruit, and peanut oils that have been obtained the old-fashioned way.

from Michael Pollan's *Food Rules*



Staff Interview:
Karin Mott



Reiner Winkler: Karin, as head of the Marketing department, Education and Membership, you take care of a lot of things. You advertise our Co-op with the local newspaper, radio, and TV; you organize almost all of our Co-op sales programs, you update our web page and social media; you also organize our Co-op events...

Karin Mott: Yes, all of those things and more, but with a lot of help from my staff and from the Co-op in general. Especially for events, I rely on the support of staff, volunteers, board members, local non-profits and local producers to make them happen. Our events are always a lot of fun, but more importantly, they help us to promote our Ends.

RW: Co-op Ends?

KM: Oh yes, the Ends! These are what really set us apart from most other types of businesses. The Co-op has five Ends – the reasons why we exist. Each of our events helps to promote these.

Around the beginning of November, we host our Empty Bowl Dinner, to help make Healthy Foods – our first End, more accessible to more people. The proceeds for this dinner are donated entirely to our two local area Food Shelves (HOPE and CVOEO), to help them purchase good food for more people.

Our Fall Harvest Fest is a celebration of our second End – Vibrant Local Economy. Local Producers are the stars at this event, providing free samples of their tasty wares and lots of first hand info about them.

Around Green Up Day, we celebrate our third End – Environmentally Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Practices. We host around twenty non-profits who specialize in these areas, helping to spread the good word about ways to “keep it green”.

Every first week in June, we promote our fourth End – Cooperative Democratic Ownership – at our Annual Meeting and Celebration. Members get a chance to meet our Board of Directors, our General Manager, and hear all about how the Co-op is doing.

Our fifth End is to Learn About the First Four Ends, and it is certainly my hope that these events, and all of our

marketing and education efforts help to contribute to this!

RW: What is Food For All?

KM: Food for All is a Member Assistance Program. About four years ago, we started this program to help make us more accessible to folks who are food insecure. Food For All members get 10% off of everything (excluding alcohol, by law), every day. Plus, we sponsor their membership. Applications are available at the Co-op, near the registers, or on our website at middleburycoop.com. Call and ask for anyone in Membership Services to find out more (388-7276)! As of today, around 180 households are benefitting from this program.

RW: Tell us about the Co-op Deals.

KM: The Co-op Deals Program is a sales program, coordinated by the National Cooperative Grocers, a bigger co-op, made up of lots of member co-ops, like ours! Co-op Deals change over every two, three, or even four weeks, and that can be hard to keep up with. Check out the fliers at the front of the store and on our web site, to be in the know about what's on sale, next. There's also a great coupon flier at the front of the store from NCG, too!

RW: What about the Weekly Sales Program, at the front of the store?

KM: Our weekly sales program runs from Thursday through Wednesday. Each week, we pick a theme,

pick six items to fit into this theme, price them really close to wholesale, or even at wholesale, and put them together, for your convenience, at the front of the store. We try to include a coordinating recipe and/or educational piece to complement these products.

RW: Any favorite theme you can think of?

KM: One of my favorites coming up at the end of this month is "Soup". I always like it, because soup ingredients really showcase what I think of as our core food values – affordable, healthy, whole foods. Soup can be vegetarian or carnivorous, gluten free or packed with starch. It's easy to make and store, and can fit into any lifestyle.

RW: What about Member Deals?

KM: Member Deals are one of the best parts of being a member at the Co-op! Every week, we feature a producer who we feel embraces our Ends. Lots of those producers happen to be local, but lots of others get featured because of their sound business practices, environmentally conscious behaviors, fair trade status, and a host of other qualities. These producers get a special display in the store, we post a biography of them, and beautiful photos, and members get an extra discount (usually 20% - even 30%, sometimes) on their products, that week.

RW: ...on top of other discounts they may receive, right?

KM: You got it – that means 20% off, on top of say, your 5% Senior Discount.

RW: It must be challenging at times to justify including some producers and not others.

KM: Very much so. No producer is perfect, and often one who supports several of our Ends may be weak in supporting another. For instance, it feels great to feature a local dairy, but not so great when you know that their practices may be harming the environment. There are also lots of great smaller companies out there who have great individual practices, but are owned by much larger blanket corporations without such shiny reputations. We try to celebrate the good parts!

RW: We have a relatively new program at the Co-op, called Co-op Basics – what’s this all about?

KM: Co-op Basics is awesome! Just look for the purple signs around the Co-op. They’ll lead you to super affordable prices on products that lots of folks have on their every-week shopping lists. We’re expanding this program, as we speak, so keep an eye out for new additions!

RW: Karin, you are known among staff as knowing a lot about food. Do you miss being out on the retail floor at all?

KM: Yes I do! I love my job, and most of the time, now, I spend at my desk. But, I’m lucky enough to get out on the floor every Tuesday

night, during my weekly Manager-on-Duty shift. I get to see our fabulous shoppers face to face and work with our staff on the floor. I love just making things look pretty and answering customer requests. I love the puzzle of helping someone find just what they want – sometimes when neither of us knows what that is, yet!

RW: Any favorite kinds of food?

KM: Too many to count. I love almost everything, for better or worse! But, right now, I’m really loving Vietnamese Pho. I had the best of my life last summer in Philadelphia, and I’ve been running around trying to recreate the experience ever since. Pho is usually a bone broth, supplemented by soft noodles, veggies and a protein that is often cooked right in the broth at service. A bowl of that makes me feel like I’ve done something good for the rest of the day.

RW: What do you think about the upcoming Co-op expansion?

KM: Well, I was here for the last expansion, and that certainly went well. But, having been through one once before, I know how much work it will be, during and after. So, I’m a little more cautious, this time. The most important thing I hope for in this incarnation of our Co-op is that we become a place that’s more convenient, welcoming and accessible to more people. We’ve got a pretty great track record, so I feel good about it.

RW: Thank you, Karin!



Bionaturae

North Franklin, Connecticut

Some 20 years ago, a group of young Italians and an American enthusiastically created an organic selection of authentic Italian foods. Bionaturae® was born in 1994 and was quickly embraced by the American consumer as the premier brand of organic foods from Italy. Bionaturae has remained a

family-oriented, privately owned company, with a heartfelt devotion to quality and tradition.

All Pastas Are Not Created Equal

Organic Durum Semolina and Whole Wheat Pasta are made with wheat grown in Italy on small family-owned farms that have been using traditional agricultural methods for centuries. All ingredients are certified organic and are grown and processed without the use of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. The pasta is made with artisanal production methods of the past. Antique bronze dies, which create the shape of the pasta, are used in the *Bionaturae* factory to press semolina pasta shapes with a rough texture that better absorbs sauce. Most present-day pasta factories use Teflon® dies, which is more expedient but compromises quality. The drying process is also a key to the delicious flavor of this Italian pasta. Slow drying at low temperatures helps to preserve the flavor.

Gluten Free Pasta

You no longer have to sacrifice great taste and texture to get a delicious gluten free pasta meal. It took over a year of experimenting to create the recipe for *Bionaturae* gluten free pasta. The pasta is made with organic rice flour, organic rice starch, organic potato starch and organic soy flour. It cooks like traditional pasta to an "al dente" texture and there is no need to rinse it before adding your favorite condiment. Whether you must eat a gluten free diet or are just looking for a change from wheat, come try this product made in the Italian tradition.

Al Dente

The glycemic-index rating for pasta is 55, while whole wheat pasta is 40. Comparatively, white rice is 82 and white bread is 100. The more you cook pasta, the higher the rating. Please test your pasta frequently and become accustomed to eating it "al dente", as they do in Italy.

Foods with a glycemic index of 100 or above are very quick to release sugar into the bloodstream.

Here is a list of fun *Bionaturae* pasta shapes, many of them are really fun to say

out loud: Penne Rigate, Fusilli, Chioccirole, Rombi, Rigatoni, Gebbetti, Spaghetti, Capellini, Linguine, Tagliolini, Pappardelle, and Elbows. Try them all!

At the Co-op, we offer also Bionaturae Crushed Tomatoes, Diced Tomatoes, Whole Peeled Tomatoes, and Olive Oil!

Buon Appetito!

Source: www.bionaturae.com

During the week of **February 4 through February 10**,
Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**
on all *Bionaturae* products.



Auracacia Weaverville, California

Aura Cacia was founded in 1982 in Weaverville, California. The founders realized the power of essential oils and began spreading the word about aromatherapy. The more people learned, the more they demanded essential oils and other natural aromatherapy products — a process that is continues today.

When Frontier Natural Products Co-op purchased the company in 1993, Aura Cacia was well-established as the market leader in aromatherapy. Frontier had been selling essential oils in response to member requests since 1978 and already had expert quality testing and sourcing capabilities in place. The combination of established quality expertise and the market leadership of the Aura Cacia brand melded into a popular, premium-quality aromatherapy line. Aura Cacia continues as the quality leader in aromatherapy today via our Source To Shelf Strategy. Our ethical and sustainable sourcing program, Well Earth®, and our in-house sophisticated testing capabilities, allow us to guarantee the quality of our essential oils. In the face of increasing adulteration and quality exaggeration in the marketplace, this is peace of mind for our customers.

Find out more at www.auracacia.com

During the week of **February 11 through February 17**,
Co-op members will receive a **30% discount**
on all *Auracacia* products.

Lundberg Family Farms Richvale, California



Committed to producing the finest quality rice and rice products for your family. Since 1937, the Lundberg family has been growing healthy, great tasting rice while respecting and sustaining the earth. Today, the third and fourth generations carry on the family heritage by using eco-positive farming methods that produce wholesome, healthful rice, rice cakes, rice chips and risottos while improving and protecting the environment for generations to come.

Lundberg Family Farms has been an early leader in organic farming, energy conservation and renewable energy, providing safe and fair working conditions, and many other practices that are environmentally and socially responsible. However, with one of their core values being continuous improvement, they know there is always more to do when it comes to sustainability and inspiring greater change beyond just us.

As a member of the Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA), Lundberg Farms have signed a pledge committing to reporting annually the company's performance in the 11-action categories that include organic and land use, distribution and sourcing, energy, climate change and emissions, water use and quality, solid waste reduction, packaging and marketing materials, labor, animal care, sustainability education, and governance and community engagement.

Each year, *Lundberg Family Farms* audits their performance in these areas, publishes the findings, and makes them available to their customers and consumers

During the week of **February 18 through February 24**,
Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**
on all *Lundberg Family Farms* products.



Stonyfield

Londonderry, New Hampshire

Earth Efforts:

Organic farming has always been at the heart of our Earth-friendly yogurt business. In one year alone, our organic ingredient purchases keep more than 185,000 pounds of toxic persistent pesticides from the air, water and land. But *Stonyfield's* Earth Efforts reach far beyond organic farming. We're continually refining the art of making more yogurt with *less* environmental impact per cup. We organize these efforts around a handful of impact areas, like facility greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; milk production; sustainable ingredients; water; transportation and distribution; waste; and sustainable packaging.



Stonyfield environmental milestones:

- 1997 First US manufacturer to offset all Greenhouse gas emissions from facility energy use.
- 2005 Installed on our *Yogurt Works* roof, New Hampshire's then largest photovoltaic solar array.
- 2006 Our new wastewater treatment equipment converts waste into biogas.
- 2008 Our new green office building uses 40% less energy than a similar building built to code.
- 2010 Introduced the first yogurt cup made from plants.
- 2012 We begin using biodiesel fuel (made from waste vegetable oil) in some of our trucks.

Find out lots more at www.stonyfield.com

During the week of **February 25 through March 2**,
Co-op members will receive a **20% discount**
on all *Stonyfield Farm* products.





Glenn Fulop 10 Years at Middlebury Co-op!

Ten years ago Glenn started his Co-op career in the Check-Out department... the fast-paced department that touches every customer in the store.

As Assistant Front End Manager, and Manager on Duty, Glenn's depth of experience in life and work, including eight years at Weaver's Way Co-op in Pennsylvania, were quickly invaluable to the Middlebury Co-op staff and membership.

It was Glenn's personality, however, his work ethic, humor, kindness, and grounding presence, especially in the throes of challenging, busy times, that won the hearts of the staff.

He's a Co-op treasure, one coworker says. So true!

Two years ago, Glenn decided to redirect his energies to the Wellness department, where he is highly appreciated for his calm and kind approach by customers and staff alike.



Thank you, Glenn! And... congratulations from all of us!

The Woman Who Chose to Plant Corn

Charles Eisenstein

Not long ago, a Diné (Navajo) friend of mine, Lyla June Johnston, sent me a one-line email: “I am not going to Harvard... I am going to plant corn.”

Her statement signals a profound divergence from the path she’d set out on when she was an undergraduate at Stanford University. She is choosing instead to learn the lifeways of her culture, to become fluent in her language, to relearn traditional skills, to be intimate with the land. The dominant American culture does not encourage such a path.

We’d talked about it before, her decision to take a prestigious graduate course at Harvard. The usual themes came up: the doors that might be opened, the credibility that might be turned towards a good cause. I remember observing how common it is to adopt the values and mindsets of the environment in which one is immersed – to become a creature of the very system one sets out to subvert. We appreciated the toxicity of the story, “See, a Native American woman can make it big too and go to Harvard.” Toxic, because it celebrates the very same system of status and privilege that has marginalized the worldview, culture and value system she comes from.

It is often said that people like Lyla are role models for others of like background. Role models for what, though? For being bribed into complicity with the oppressor? For joining the world-devouring machine? For sacrificing local relationships and culture to the melting pot? Certainly, Lyla could rise high in the world symbolized by Harvard; she could become a professor herself one day, teaching young people anti-colonialist thinking. Nonetheless, all that instruction would be happening within a container – a classroom inside a course inside an elite university inside a system of higher education – that implicitly contradicts all she would want to teach. Her students would be thinking, “Sure, but in the end she is benefiting from the system too.”

Then there was the matter of a Harvard degree opening doors. The question is, doors to what? To be sure, many people today are more likely to listen to a native woman who also happens to be a Harvard PhD than to one who



“only plants corn”. The door to the prestigious conferences, the think tanks, the halls of power would be closed. (Or so it would seem. Actually there are back doors to such places.) And that would be a shame – if indeed such places constituted the fulcrum of change in our society, if indeed such places are where the Important things are happening. Certainly, what is happening on Wall Street and Washington is more important than anything that goes on in a cornfield, right? Certainly, it is the people of talent and worth that get to rise to positions of power, and those of lesser gifts and lower cultural development who must settle for the fields, the hearth, the humble realms, right?

Wrong. What we see as the locus of power in the world is an illusion, born of the theory of change that our cultural beliefs dictate. It is one kind of revolution to enter the halls of power with the intent to turn them against themselves; to (paraphrasing the Caribbean-American writer Audre Lord) use the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house. It is a deeper kind of revolution to recognize the limitations of those tools, and to know that change might originate in the people and places we have seen as powerless. Lyla and the many people I meet like her no longer believe that the smart people at Harvard and Yale are going to find the answers and fix the world; therefore, they no longer seek admission to the elite club of world-fixers.

Lyla’s decision is also a sign of changing times. In past generations there were a few who overcame inconceivable obstacles to go to college, to make it in the White Man’s world. Their presence there was an affront to a ruling ideology that considered them part of an inferior race. Their achievements helped to unravel that story, both in the eyes of the white people and, more importantly, in the eyes of those of their own culture they inspired. Today, though, elite institutions salivate over people like Lyla, because their presence buttresses a new, more insidious story: a story of ‘equal opportunity’ and ‘diversity’ that obscures the ongoing systemic oppression of minorities, and ignores the demolition and absorption of their cultures into the dominant monoculture. I am not saying there is not important work to be done within the institutions of power. I am only saying that such work is no more urgent than the work that older cultural frames validate, but that ours does not. Nor would I condemn anyone who chooses to work within the system. Some of us have gifts that are well suited to that work. But let us not overvalue what goes on in the halls of power; let us not blindly adopt the metrics of success that the establishment offers. It may very well be that a sense of purpose, play and life keeps you in the system; or it could be its ubiquitous bribes and threats. We can all tell the difference when we are honest with ourselves.

Who can know the effects of the story of The Woman Who Chose to Plant Corn? What I do know is that such choices operate levers of power that are invisible to our culture’s Story of the World. They invite synchronicity and

induce the unexpected. They bring us to places we didn't know existed. They create movement in a new direction, whereas abiding by the conventions of the dominant system merely adds to its inertia.

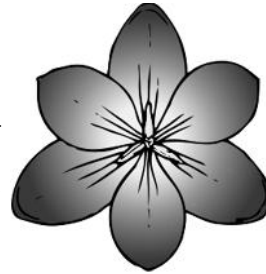
We are done with a world in which the logic of power is more important than the corn. When enough people live by that, the powerful will make different choices as well, acting in their role as barometers and channels of collective consciousness.



Please do not mistake Lyla's choice for an exercise in ideological purity, as if she wished to avoid the taint of power. A better explanation is that she knows that Harvard is not where the action is. There are other paths to walk that are no less important, and it is crucial that someone walk them. I see more and more young people seeking them out today, from within the dominant culture and from its margins. They are walking out of our civilisation's Story of the World; some are not even entering it.

The best and brightest are abandoning the ship, and even those who remain aboard are participating half-heartedly as they sense the inevitable shipwreck. Eventually even going through the motions of complicity becomes intolerable, as our hunger to live a meaningful life draws us towards a new and ancient story of interconnection, interbeing, and social, personal and ecological healing. Yet few of us are free of the programming of our youth, our indoctrination into the values of system; therefore our exit can be messy, subject to hesitation, relapses and diversions. As Lyla told me more recently, "While I know intellectually why I am doing this, I am still so brainwashed it is hard to really know it from my body."

When I say I hope that many others follow Lyla's example, I do not mean to offer her as an ideal of impeccable integrity. Like many of us, she has no map to follow into this uncharted territory of our civilization's transition; she has only a compass and, if my own experience is any guide, it is a wobbly one at that. It points towards a healed and just world, and guides us into its service. When enough of us follow it, however imperfectly, we will cut new trails leading out of the maze that entraps our civilization.



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Charles Eisenstein is an author and speaker who addresses a wide variety of pressing issues of our time. For more information or to find other thoughtful essays of his go to charleseisenstein.net.

Beets — A Bit of History

They are said to have grown in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The Elizabethans enjoyed them in tarts and stews. Thomas Jefferson planted them at Monticello. Medieval cooks stuffed them into pies. The colorful, sweet root vegetable known as the beet tends to spark an impassioned response from folks who either love it or loathe it. In the anti-beet camp are President Obama and his wife Michelle, who asked that they not be planted in the White House's organic vegetable garden. Many complain that beets have an "earthy" taste, which isn't far off the mark. Beets contain a substance called geosmin, which is responsible for that fresh soil scent in your garden following a spring rain. Humans are quite sensitive to geosmin, even in very low doses, which explains why our beet response ranges from one extreme to the other. Some people adore the sweet and earthy flavor of beets, while others can't stand the thought of them.



Beets are most commonly a dark red color, however they also come in other hues ranging from white to yellow to a "candy cane" red-and-white variety known as Chioggia. Not only are they colorful and full of flavor, they are rich in antioxidants, folic acid, potassium, and fiber. They also contain unique antioxidants called betalains, which are currently being studied as a potential weapon in the fight against cancer. Betalains give beets their red hue. The rosy betalain-rich juice of red beets was used as a cheek and lip stain by women during the 19th century, a practice that inspired the old adage "red as a beet." Humans originally ate beet greens but not the thin and fibrous roots, which were occasionally used in medicine. The large beet leaves and stalks were consumed like chard, a close relative. Despite only growing well during spring and fall, beets were so well regarded in Ancient Rome and Greece that methods were developed for producing them during the hot summer months. The root part of the beet was cultivated for consumption in either Germany or Italy, first recorded in 1542. Its earliest form more closely resembled a parsnip rather than the bulbous shape we're now familiar with, which began appearing near the end of the 1500s. This variety is thought to have evolved from a prehistoric North African root vegetable. Soon it became the most recognizable form of beet, but it wasn't a worldwide culinary success until two centuries later. Northeastern Europe was the first area to embrace the beet root as a dietary staple; it was valued as one of the only vegetables that grew well throughout winter.

In 1747 Andreas Sigismund Marggraf, a chemist from Berlin, discovered a way to produce sucrose from beets. His student, Franz Achard, perfected this method for extracting sugar, leading him to predict the inevitable rise of beet beer, tobacco and molasses, among other products. Though not entirely convinced that beets had a bright future, the King of Prussia eventually subsidized a sugar beet industry. The first plant was built in what is now western Poland. It turned out to be a solid investment. Today, around 20 percent of the world's sugar comes from sugar beets. Beet sugar production requires 4 times less water than sugar cane production, making it an attractive crop throughout Europe as well as in more arid countries like Egypt.

Beets have long been considered an aphrodisiac in many cultures. Ancient Romans believed that beets and their juice promoted amorous feelings. Frescoes of beets decorate the walls of the Lupanare brothel in Pompeii. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite, the goddess of love, ate beets to enhance her appeal. This quaint folklore actually has a basis in reality. Beets are a natural source of tryptophan and betaine, both substances that promote a feeling of well-being. They also contain high amounts of boron, a trace mineral which increases the level of sex hormones in the human body.

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