



under the sun

FREE!
FALL 2018

MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

the co-operative issue

A CO-OP FOR EVERYONE

Find a Co-op Near You

BETWEEN THE ROWS

Gardening for Every Family Member

FOOD FOCUS

Sweet Potatoes

THE DEEP DISH

NOFA Visits Cobb Hill Housing Cooperative

Orson McKerchie (son of worker-owner Tamara McKerchie) enjoying a Real Pickle at Atlas Farm.
Photo Credit: Valley Lightworks.



MIDDLEBURY
NATURAL
FOODS
CO-OP

OPEN 8:00AM / 7:00PM EVERYDAY
9 WASHINGTON STREET / MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT
(802)388-7276 / middlebury.coop
EVERYONE WELCOME!

WHY DOES THE CO-OP EXIST?

The Co-op exists to help our member-owners customers and the community benefit from:

- HEALTHY FOODS
- VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY
- ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE & ENERGY EFFICIENT PRACTICES
- COOPERATIVE DEMOCRATIC OWNERSHIP
- LEARNING ABOUT THESE VALUES

WHAT IS OUR BUYING CRITERIA?

Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op strives to select products that are local, organic, and free of:

- ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES, COLORS, FLAVORS
- ADDED HORMONES AND ANTIBIOTICS
- TRANSFATS • PARABENS
- HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP
- ANIMAL TESTING

To contact the Board of Directors:
board@middlebury.coop
(802) 388-7276

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BECOME A MEMBER!

- DISCOUNTS AT LOCAL BUSINESSES
- MEMBER DEALS • PATRONAGE REFUND
- A VOICE AND A VOTE

membership@middlebury.coop



under the sun

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Dear Co-op Friends,

Have you ever wondered... "What's so great about a Co-op"? When my wife and I moved to the area in 1991, one of our first tasks was finding food! The choices back then were: Grand Union, A&P, IGA, Greg's Market, and the food co-op. Of these four, the Co-op is the only choice still in business. We are fortunate to have amazing community support, but are also bolstered by the cooperative model, which gives Co-ops staying power.

My wife and I found the Co-op because it shared an entrance with the auto parts store next door. We'd never shopped at a natural foods store before, and it looked a little sketchy at first glance. It was tiny, dark, really narrow and hard to navigate - definitely rough around the edges. We didn't know anything about the importance of buying organic or local foods. Regardless of our shaky introduction, we quickly discovered great food and great people. We've been here ever since, and it's still about great food and great people.

Co-ops exist primarily to meet the needs of their member-owners. This fact that a co-op is community-owned is one of my favorite reasons to shop at and belong to a Co-op. The people who live near the business and use it regularly are the owners. This stands in stark contrast to corporations with shareholders who live far away and may never patronize the business they own. When you walk into a store that you own with the rest of the community, there's a totally different feel to the experience. You take more of an interest in how the business is doing. If it's not meeting your needs, you are more motivated to speak up and be heard, and BOY our members aren't afraid to let us know what they think! As employees of a store owned by our customers, it's even more important that we listen to their concerns and work hard to meet their needs.

Membership in a co-op is voluntary and open to everyone. Anyone can join. One of my favorite Cooperative Principles is the idea of one member = one vote. It doesn't make any difference how long you have been a member or how much you have invested in the Co-op. Everyone has an equal stake in the operation. This is really different than corporations owned by shareholders, where the biggest shareholders have the most voting power and make all the big decisions.

And yet, can you imagine a meeting with 5,000 people trying to make a decision? It's actually one of my worst nightmares. We would never agree on anything. Being an owner of a food co-op does not mean you carry the burden of all the decisions. Because we are owned by over 5,000 households (mostly in Addison County and surrounding VT and NY) we can't have everyone participate in decisions. Co-op member-owners elect representatives to the Board of Directors to act in your best interest. The Board sets the direction for the co-op, hires the General Manager (who hires the staff), and provides the boundaries within which the co-op must work. The board is accountable to member-owners that we are making progress toward our mission.

Our Co-op started as a buying club in the early 1970's. Families came together monthly to pre-order cases of healthy food they couldn't get from their local stores. The Co-op has evolved over the decades to meet the growing needs of more of the community, including support of more than 400 local producers. Will Stevens of Golden Russet Farm once said, "now that's what I call homeland security!"

Another friend in the co-op world said that "community well-being is supported through healthy food, local economics and meaningful relationships." I am so thankful that our food co-op provides all of these things.

Hope to see you around the store this fall.



Glenn Lower, General Manager
Middlebury Natural Food Co-op



a word from the board

AN ITALIAN VERMONT SHARES HER ROOTS

By: Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi



Every summer, we spend a couple of weeks with family and friends in the foothills above Lucca in northern Tuscany, the area my father was from. When we are here, our conversations and our activities seem to be centered mostly around food. As we have breakfast we discuss what we will have for dinner (lunch is always an interesting and often bizarre combination of leftovers). These are lively and fun debates in which everybody participates, that at times almost become negotiations. This means that we do our grocery shopping on a daily basis, in late morning, as many people do here (also because refrigerators tend to be small). We usually shop in two very different places: the Esselunga, a big nearby supermarket that is part of a huge national chain, and Da

Antonio, a small, very local grocer just down the hill.

At the Esselunga one can find just about anything, but even at a big-scale store like that, whenever possible the emphasis tends to be on local: produce, meat, cheese, cold cuts and wines are all staples that feature both in the local agriculture and the local cuisine. Packaging is a big issue here, too, and there is a growing, vocal movement to reduce it. For starters, at the Esselunga the bags for produce and the shopping bags available at the cash registers must be of biodegradable material, and customers are charged a small sum for them. As a result, more



people bring their own bags—a small step perhaps, but a start.

Da Antonio, on the other hand, could almost be defined "hyper-local". It is in Vinchiana, a small village in the bent of the river, with virtually no space to park—many customers just walk. Antonio, the owner of the store, together with his wife Francesca, is a "norcino:" he raises pigs and then makes cold cuts and sausages for which he is (locally) famous. His produce also comes from the area, as does the bread (different kinds of the typical Tuscan "pane sciapo," bread without salt to soak up the salty sauces and condiments). Here everybody knows everybody by name and when walking into the store, I always feel like I am entering a community into which I am welcomed anew every year. It is a rare instance when one leaves the store without a new recipe or some news about the area and its community. This is definitely an experience of "slow-shopping," where one cannot be in a rush and the relationships are just as important as the foodstuff one comes in to buy. This "texture" is almost tangible. To me, there is something optimistic and positive in the fact that Antonio can keep on thriving less than two miles from the Esselunga (and several other supermarkets).

Almost everybody here has a vegetable garden, so the summer is also a time of preserving, in order to stretch the plenty of summer well into fall and winter. Tomatoes are canned, cucumbers pickled, capers salted, and berries turned into jams. This year green beans have done extremely well, so much so that there is a level of "green bean saturation" resulting from the fact that the first ones were picked in May and they are still going strong now, in mid-August. As such, this makes me think of what happens with zucchini in Vermont! Friends know not to bring them to friends, but in the end they still do.



The Author's Family Dining Table in Italy

Besides what people plant in their garden, something that always strikes me is how people know the land and its edible flora. In the good season, our friend Mariano walks the hills and picks wild plants and herbs (he knows more than thirty) that end up in the "ribollita," a soup of vegetables, beans, and herbs (and almost any leftover that is in the fridge) that cooks for hours (and the more it cooks, the better it tastes) that his wife Michela prepares in great quantities and then freezes for the winter months.

I am not trying to paint an idyllic picture as all this, of course, comes with challenges, difficulties, and lot of hard work. What I love and appreciate is that from the supermarket to the ribollita, there is a strong connection to the land and the community, that I also see and appreciate in Vermont.



CONTACT THE BOARD
board@middlebury.coop

IN THE SPOTLIGHT...



As we celebrate co-op month this October, we wanted to shine a spotlight on a worker-owned cooperative aiming to change the food system by making pickles - Real Pickles!

The Real Pickles story begins in 1999 when Dan Rosenberg attended a traditional pickling workshop during a NOFA conference. Armed with this new skill, he began pickling locally-grown vegetables as a way to preserve the harvest so that he could continue eating locally during the winter months. He was further inspired by the work of Dr. Weston A. Price, a researcher who traveled the world in the 1920s and 30s studying the diets of indigenous peoples, finding that those eating traditional diets including fermented foods enjoyed a high level of health completely unknown in industrialized societies. After two years of experimenting with recipes

and honing the craft, Dan was ready to launch the business. From the very beginning, he prioritized local/regional food and organic agriculture. Real Pickles would buy its organic vegetables only from Northeast organic farms and sell its products only within the Northeast. A year later, the business began operating out of the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center in Greenfield, MA, a business incubator kitchen created to boost the local agricultural





By 2009, Real Pickles had outgrown the incubator kitchen and was ready to settle into their own home. They purchased a century-old industrial building in Greenfield, MA and transformed it into a solar-powered, energy-efficient, organic pickling facility. The move allowed for a significant expansion, tripling their purchases from local farms in the years to follow. Their success demonstrates that there is a real and growing demand for raw, fermented vegetables and that consumers value a business as deeply committed to social responsibility.

In 2013, with a goal of preserving their social mission for the long term and with the help of a successful community investment campaign, Real Pickles took the exciting step of transitioning their business to a worker co-operative. They are proud to join the ranks of other co-operatives that are supporting local ownership, workplace democracy, and contributing to the co-operative economy!

economy by providing a venue for making value-added foods with local farm ingredients. Dan was soon joined by Addie Rose Holland and the business began to grow.



the inside scoop

Interview with Jen Alderson, MNFC Grocery Manager
by Karin Mott

Karin: Jen, you came to us just over a year ago, from way out west. How did this happen?

Jen: I'm originally from Washington State but was working in Idaho - kind of a food desert. I wanted to work at a Co-op in a place with a real local food scene - Vermont is packed with both Co-ops and local producers. Also, my partner is an avid hiker, so mountains were a must!

Karin: What do you miss most about your home out west?

Jen: My entire family lives there - every aunt, uncle, and cousin!

Karin: This isn't your first experience working at a Co-op. Can you tell us about the role you played at a Co-op in Idaho?

Jen: For nearly three years, I served as the General Manager of a "baby-sized" Co-op in Idaho. I helped manage a store move and the addition of a café and served as a jack of all trades in my position. After some time, I felt like I had grown in the position as much as I could. I was eager to work with a cooperative team of peers and mentors and to narrow my focus to a specific department. I've found all of this and more in my role as Grocery Manager at Middlebury Co-op.

Karin: What does the Grocery Manager do, exactly?

Jen: I oversee six sub-departments: Beer, Wine, Tax 1 (cleaning products), Grocery, Frozen, and Meat. What this means is that I am responsible for making sure that my team has the tools they need to collectively provide the best experience for everyone who is impacted by our products, from the relationship we have with vendors to the moment our shoppers put them in their carts.

Karin: How do you decide what lands on our shelves?



Jen: First off, all products must meet the requirements of our Buying Criteria. After that, we subject every product to the rigors of "category management". Every product must earn its place on our shelves, holding up to serious number crunching to help determine how it contributes to our Co-op's health. Ultimately, it is customers who "vote" for products with their shopping dollars. I read every customer suggestion, and we keep a database of them for future reference.

Karin: Do you have a "lesson learned" from your work as a General Manager?

Jen: Yes - "have a happy team". This means that joy needs to be a part of your daily plan. Leading with joy should lead to a happy team and subsequently, to happy customers.

Karin: Do you have any special hopes or dreams for the Grocery Department?

Jen: I just want us to keep improving, becoming stronger, smarter and more efficient. We're already living the dream!
Thank you, Jen. You're awesome.





RALLY FOR CHANGE

ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER, MAY 10TH - 16TH
YOUR CO-OP WILL MATCH YOUR DONATION

NOV
8TH - 14TH



Lily of HOPE and Donna of CVOEO, celebrating a recent Rally for Change

One in 5 children and youth in Addison County knows hunger. Over 3,500 Addison County residents participate in the 3Squares VT program.

There are more than 20 summer meal sites in Addison County. Senior meal sites serve our older citizens several times a week all summer long. This is a reality that our local Food Shelves, CVOEO and HOPE, confront every day.

Round up your total at the registers 11/8-11/14 for our Local Food Shelves - CVOEO and HOPE - the Co-op will match your donation.

We asked CVOEO and HOPE to pass along a few facts about their organizations, to help us better understand how they serve our community:

CVOEO: CVOEO is a nonprofit corporation formed in 1965 to carry out the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 in the Vermont Counties of Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle. CVOEO is one of five Community Action Agencies in the state of Vermont. Its mission is to address fundamental issues of economic, social and racial justice and works with people to achieve economic independence. Its vision is to bridge gaps and build futures. The largest sector of individuals served by CVOEO is employed. They could be classified as underemployed or working part-time, but they are working. They are begging for more hours, hustling every penny and still not able to cover their bills. Using the food shelf is a necessity for these individuals and families. Over the past year, CVOEO's Food Shelf in Middlebury served 1,896 households with 3,464 individuals in multiple visits: 745 of this number were under the age of 18, 730 were seniors and 1,063 of that number are people with disabilities. We are located at 54 Creek Road in Middlebury. Find out more at cvoeo.org or call Donna Rose at 388-2285.

HOPE: Use of the food shelf has risen to an average of 650 people/month. Typically, 33% of people served are children, and 6.5% are elderly. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we are still able to meet the increased needs of food insecure households. Our farmers are amazingly generous, and our local food access program continues to grow, allowing us to provide fresh, healthy, locally grown food to people in need. This has a positive impact on the health of our clients, which, in turn, helps strengthen our community. One client recently told us he'd been able to lose over 60 pounds over a period of 9 months, due to being able to obtain fruits and vegetables at HOPE. Another told us that without our food shelf she would be unable to provide sufficient healthy food for her small boys. Find out more at hopevt.org.

Rally every time you shop!
When not featuring a specific non-profit, donations are given to Addison county's food shelves.

Planning a Garden for Every Family Member

Plan your gardens and landscape as if your family was a co-op! Having a voice allows everyone to feel like a part of the project and responsible for its health. Bring the family together, sit around the kitchen table, and brainstorm everyone's ideas of beautiful plants, delicious edibles, and other priorities. A rough map of your garden space is a great surface to gather around. Consider placing post-it notes with everyone's ideas to narrow down.

EDIBLES - If growing food, think about if your family prefers to grow the staples you use a lot of, or if you want to learn how a variety of plants grow. Also remember you can have two gardens in one season. A second planting of carrots, beets and greens will last well into October and November. If some family members want kale and others want lettuce in a space that only allows one option, consider one in the spring and another in the fall. Here are a few of our favorite edibles to grow, especially with children:

Garlic- Planted in fall, garlic will be the first and finest green display in spring that requires minimal care. Your late July harvest will free up space for later vegetable crops too.

Peas - An easy-to-plant, early season veggie that gets kids pumped for gardening. Witness a flower turn into a pea pod, plus sweet shelling peas are a discovery to open and tasty to eat.

Potatoes - They're fun to plant and are like buried treasure to harvest. Worried about space? Potatoes can easily be grown in deep containers or raised beds.

Herbs- Not only are these valuable in the kitchen, but they open another sensory world. Introduce kids to fragrant rosemary, basil, chamomile, mint, and more.



Cranberry Groundcover



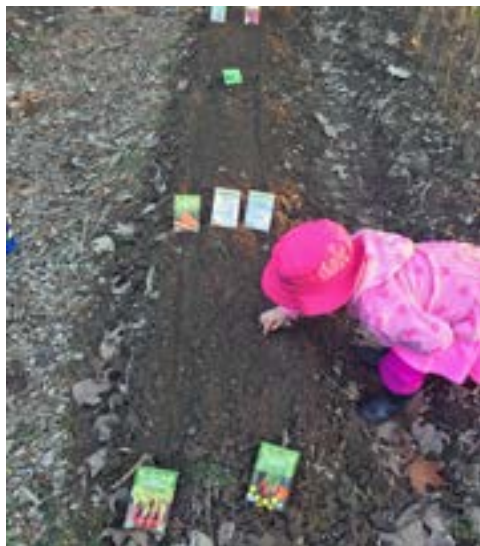
Honeyberries

Fruits- Berry bushes like honeyberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries are enjoyable for years to come. There are varieties available for small spaces too, even patio planters.

ORNAMENTALS - Perhaps flowers are a must for your family. Picking your own bouquets throughout the season will provide years of enjoyment. Plant low-maintenance perennials like peonies, echinacea, and Black-eyed Susan that bloom across seasons to extend color. Early-blooming trees like crabapples and serviceberry add color to the landscape and fruit for birds. Maples and oaks are lovely for their fall foliage and shade. Flowering shrubs like clethra, winterberry, and hydrangea can add privacy, blooms and wildlife value all in one. Go crazy with bulbs! Some can go right into the yard, others in shrub and perennial beds. Plant dozens and don't forget allium! Their balloon-like spikes bloom in purple, blue and white globes in spring. For very little work and money, your spring will come early and beautiful when you plant bulbs.

PLANTING - Fall is an excellent time to plant tree and shrub fruits, and is the time to plant bulbs. Apple, pear, cherry and plum trees will get a head start on next spring's growth if planted in the fall. Protect young trees from rodents with a wire cage or plastic tree collar around the base.

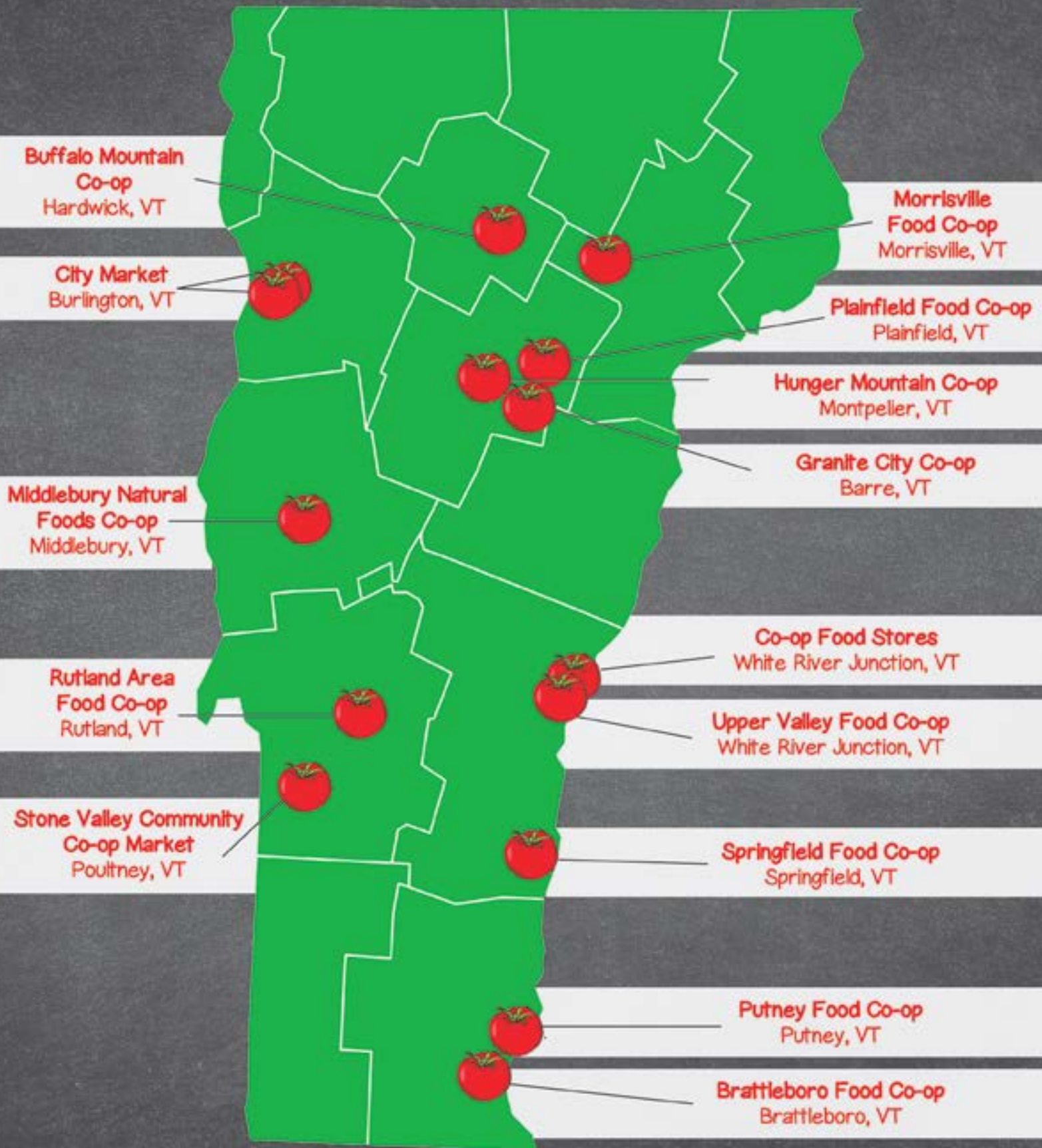
MAINTENANCE - Ultimately the garden is the most fun when it's low-maintenance and not a burden. Sustainable groundcovers reduce weeds and mulching. Creeping sedums, bearberry, low-growing junipers, even fruiting cranberry (yes like the kind at Thanksgiving) are all things that can be used to protect your soil, add to the landscape, and make time in the garden more enjoyable for all!



Winterberry



Vermont Food Co-ops



Regional Food Co-op Impact



LOCALLY OWNED BY
130,000
people like you
PROVIDING
2 THOUSAND
good local jobs
GENERATING
\$315 MILLION
in shared annual revenue and
PURCHASING
\$60 MILLION
in local products every year
WWW.NFCA.COOP

Your **LOCAL FOOD CO-OP** *A Different Kind of Grocery Store!*

When you shop at your local food co-op, you're getting more than healthy food for you and your family. You're also building a better world. That's because a food co-op is owned by its members -- people like you who live and work in the community.

By joining your local food co-op, you're helping to:

-  **Keep It Local.** When you buy your groceries at the co-op, you are keeping more of your money in the community, supporting local producers, and building shared wealth.
-  **Provide Good Jobs.** A recent study of food co-ops in our region found that average wages were 19% higher than in other food and beverage stores, and more people were employed full-time.
-  **Support Sustainability.** Food co-ops have been pioneers in promoting organic farming, bulk products, and Fair Trade, and support a healthy environment through recycling, renewable energy, and efficiency.
-  **Build Community.** Co-ops empower people to build a more inclusive economy. Last year, your Neighboring Food Co-ops donated \$665,000 to organizations building stronger communities. This includes donations of over \$50,000 from Middlebury Co-op to organizations right here in Addison County.

There's a Co-op for Everyone

There are over 2.5 million cooperatives around the globe, including food co-ops, agricultural co-ops, housing cooperatives, artists' co-ops, credit unions, and even cooperative sports teams! Despite our diversity, we are all unified by the Seven Cooperative Principles, which are a set of ideals that form the basis for how cooperatives around the world operate. They were created in 1844 by the founders of the very first co-op, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in Rochdale, England, and we are still guided by this same set of principles today. In short, cooperatives exist to meet the needs of their member-owners and their communities. They are democratically controlled by their member-owners through an elected Board of Directors, and the profits generated by cooperatives are equitably distributed back to the member-owners and the community through patronage dividends and community philanthropic activities. "When you shop at your local food co-op, you're getting more than good food for you and your family," said Erbin Crowell, Executive Director of the Neighboring

Food Co-op Association (NFCA). "You are also joining with other people in your community to build local ownership, provide good jobs, support your local farmers and producers, and build stronger, more vibrant communities." From food co-ops to farmer co-ops, worker co-ops to credit unions, and housing co-ops to energy co-ops, many different types of co-operatives contribute to our communities and the economy. Vermont's directory of cooperatives lists nearly 50 co-ops, including food co-ops, energy co-ops, housing co-ops, credit unions, even a yarn spinnery and a ski area! In the United States, 1 in 3 people are members of at least one co-op or credit union. Nationwide, cooperatives create 2.1 million jobs and generate more than \$650 billion in sales and other revenue annually. Because they are member-owned, co-ops empower people from all walks of life to work together to build a better world. There's truly a cooperative for everyone!

- *Emily*



A Sampling of the Diverse Range of VT Co-ops

Burlington
Co-Housing
Burlington, VT

**BURLINGTON
CO-HOUSING**

Mad River Glenn
Ski Area
Fayston, VT



Vermont
Electric
Co-op
Johnson, VT

Cabot
Cooperative
Creamery
Cabot, VT

Catamount Solar
East Montpelier, VT

East Warren
Community Market
Warren, VT



Acorn Energy
Co-op
Middlebury, VT



Vermont Computing
Cooperative
Randolph, VT

Kula Cooperative
Rutland, VT



Members Advantage
Community
Credit Union
Windsor, VT

River Artisans
Cooperative
Windham, VT



Green Mountain
Spinnery
Putney, VT



Brattleboro Holistic
Health Center
Brattleboro, VT

Food Focus: Sweet Potatoes

I like to play a game with my pantry products - it's called "who's the best canned good to store up for the end of the world?" I line up the cans in my cupboard and compare the nutrition labels - Sweet Potato Puree almost always comes out on top. Even if you aren't a member of the "prepper" club, these sweet brown tubers pack a density of nutrition that begs your respect. Sweet Potatoes are one of the best sources of Vitamin A, are very high in Vitamin C, Manganese, Copper, Pantothenic Acid and Vitamin B6, and they pack a potassium punch!

Sweet potatoes are not very aptly named, as they are only distantly related to the potato, and do not even belong to the nightshade family. The sweet potato plant is actually a member of the morning glory family and is botanically very different from the yam. The plants grow well in many farming conditions and have few natural enemies, so pesticides are rarely required in their cultivation. Most varieties do not tolerate frost, so growing them in Vermont can be a challenge. Sweet Potato plants are grown from stem or root cuttings, called "slips", while the seeds are normally only used for breeding.

At the Co-op, for most of the year our sweet potatoes are locally and organically grown by Laughing Child Farm in Pawlet, VT. One of the



farmers at Laughing Child, Timothy Hughes-Muse, recently shared about the marathon operation that takes place each year to get sweet potatoes planted at his Vermont farm. Here's how they did it this year, in Tim's words:

A former employee of ours moved to Raleigh, North Carolina and wanted to make a trip to Vermont to visit friends. So, he rented a 26 ' box truck and put his motorcycle in the back, then drove it to the farm in North Carolina that grows our slips for us. He loaded the 250,000 slips into the truck and around the motorcycle and headed north. He pulled in about midnight. I unloaded the truck, and we started planting that next morning at 6 am. For planting, we run two shifts from 6-1 and from 1-8, and it takes five days.

While sweet potato planting is a herculean effort, the plants are relatively trouble-free during most of their summer growing season. The folks at Laughing Child Farm say that this is one of the reasons they chose to grow them - it leaves their summers free to spend more time with their kids...aww.

There are three main varieties of Local Organic Sweet Potato that you'll find on your Co-op's shelves. Tim from Laughing Child describes them for us, here:

Beauregard: *Its firm texture makes it ideal for*



soups and stews. Cook slowly for superb sweetness. It is a mainstay of the northern sweet potato growers because it produces reliably in a variety of soils and weather conditions.

Carolina Ruby: Easily the favorite of our children, but only because of the bright sunny inside and purple outside. A touch sweeter than Beauregard and a pleasure to eat because of their color. Rubies have rough skin and are prone to splitting and cracking, leading to more culls in the field during harvest, but they are worth it!

Covington: Like orange silk. When slow-cooked (by this we mean cooking in an oven or stove-top rather than a microwave), this is as sweet as sugar and makes the smoothest puree. If you smash your sweet potatoes, buy Covington. Smooth skin makes it a good looking tuber.

Local Organic sweet potatoes are the rule for most of the year at the Co-op, but during the summer months, we rely on a few Organic varieties from farther away. You'll probably recognize:

Garnet: Firm and moist, these sweet potatoes hold their shape well in soups and stews.

Jewel: With their fluffy, starchy texture, the Jewel is the potato to pick for mashing and baking.

For the more experimental tuber taster, try:

Japanese: Golden fleshed and red skinned, it's most likely to turn up on a tempura platter.

Purple: This potato is a little dryer and denser than it's counterparts, and it's actually purple on the inside – how fun is that?!

Batteries?...check. Bottled Water?...check. Sweet Potatoes?...check!!! - **Karin**

Baked Sweet Potatoes with Avocado & Sour Cream



Ingredients

4 large sweet potatoes
2 tablespoons canola oil
kosher salt & black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 avocado, sliced
1/4 cup chopped, toasted pecans
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat parsley leaves
8 ounces sour cream

Directions

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Rub the sweet potatoes with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Bake on a rimmed baking sheet until tender, 40 to 50 minutes.
2. Split the potatoes open lengthwise and drizzle with olive oil. Season with 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper.
3. Top the potatoes with the avocado, pecans, parsley and sour cream.

Modified from a recipe by Real Simple Magazine

The Deep Dish

COBB HILL HOUSING COOPERATIVE

By Maggie Kempner, NOFA VT



The Folks at Gewalt Farm - part of Cobb Hill Housing Cooperative

When I arrived at Stephen, Leslie and Kerry Gewalt's dairy farm on a cloudy Sunday afternoon in August, their 11-year-old daughter Maeve was busy clipping her Jersey cows' coats to get them ready for showing at the Cornish Fair. Clipping can be a tricky job, Kerry told me, but Maeve has been showing cows with 4-H for 3 years now, and she's getting the hang of it. As we stood outside the barn, Maeve patiently explained to me the difference between showing in 4-H and "open" showing, and introduced me to two of the farm's summer yearlings, Colette and Velda.

Stephen, Kerry, Maeve, and their 46 Jersey cows reside at Cedar Mountain Farm in Hartland, Vermont. Also living on the farm are several chickens, 4 Fjord horses (Cassima, Tristan, Isolde and Elsa), and one small but feisty Jack Russell Terrier named Maisy.

Stephen and Kerry have been farming together since 1995, and moved from Plainfield, New Hampshire to the land they're farming today in Hartland in 1998. They make their living selling milk from their Jersey herd, and making cheese sold under the Cobb Hill Cheese label. Like many of Vermont's farms, Cedar Mountain is diversified. In addition to the dairy and cheesemaking operations, they raise bull calves to sell as beef, grow vegetables in their 3-acre

market garden, and make compost they sell primarily to neighboring farmers and home gardeners.

I had arrived during afternoon chores, so as we talked, Stephen brought the horses in from the pasture, with help from Maisy and her not-quite-herding-dog's instincts. Maisy always needs a job to do, Stephen explained, and although Jack Russell's were not bred to be herding dogs, she likes to help with bringing the cows and horses in each day.

We stand outside the barn next to a suite of horse-powered farm implements, which look like antiques but are in regular rotation, while Stephen tells me the story of Cobb Hill, the cohousing community of which Cedar Mountain Farm is an integral part. Cobb Hill was founded by Donella "Dana" Meadows who, in her time, was an environmental professor at Dartmouth and author of **The Limits to Growth**, a groundbreaking study of the earth's capacity to withstand the impacts of human population and economic expansion. It was this type of deep systems thinking that inspired Dana to start Cobb Hill in 1997, founded on the principles of sustainability, resilience, and intentional living.

By 2002, construction was complete on 23 homes, all built for maximum solar gain and

with the overall goal of a substantially reduced carbon footprint. Today, the cohousing community is home to 23 families and multiple working farms, including a sugaring operation and a cheesemaking business, in addition to Cedar Mountain.

Unlike more traditional models of residential development, the homes are clustered together on the hillside rather than being surrounded by individual lawns and driveways. Clustering the homes allows families to share resources, like the single wood-fired boiler that heats them all in the winter, and the common house where everyone can do laundry and share meals. It also maximizes available working land.

When Cobb Hill was founded, the community worked with the Upper Valley Land Trust to sell the development rights on all of the land except for the few acres where the homes sit. Through the sale of the development rights, they were able to permanently subsidize one of the housing units to make it affordable for a farm family to live there. Matching funds provided in part by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), allowed for two additional housing units to be subsidized, ensuring that they too will remain affordable for lower income families.

Back on the farm, while Stephen gets back to chores and Maeve shears diligently in the barn, I wander through one of the large community gardens, where unique varieties of tomatoes flourish, and deep green sweet potato vines cover the ground. Things are thriving here, and I think of my own sometimes neglected garden at home, with just my two hands to tend it. Any gardener will tell you it's a labor of love, but here it seems many hands really do make light work, or at least a bit lighter.

Stephen explains that everyone in the community owns the farmland and buildings together, except those that he and Kerry have built themselves since they moved there nearly 20 years ago. It's wonderful that because everything is collectively owned, they only had to buy 1/23 of the land, and they benefit

from subsidized housing due to the sale of the development rights. On the other hand, Stephen says, they have invested 20 years in the land here, and if they were to leave, all they could take would be the equipment they've purchased and the systems they've created. The fertility of the soil, and the land they have stewarded with care over those two decades, would remain. Because of the unique ownership structure, it may also be more difficult to find a buyer in the future who fits the bill, and to whom the cohousing model appeals.

In the meantime, Stephen, Kerry and Maeve seem content with the life they've built among 22 other like-minded families. In 2013, Stephen wrote a book, published by Chelsea Green, titled **The New Horse-Powered Farm**. Talking with him on the farm that day, his love of working with draft horses was obvious, and he says the horses have helped keep farming alive for him. Kerry has made a name for herself in the dairy breeding world with her skill in herd improvement, and has sold several heifers in national sales in recent years.

As for Dana, Stephen told me, in addition to being a scientist, writer, and professor, she was also an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi, as part of his non-violent movement for an independent India, spun cloth on a charkha (or spinning wheel) for an hour each day, as a symbolic vigil and a form of resistance against British rule. Through his teachings, spinning "khadi" (or handspun cloth) was elevated to represent an ideology of freedom, self-reliance, and self-governance. Dana carried this idea throughout her life and today, it is reflected in the community the Cobb Hill has become. Like Gandhi with his spinning wheel, Stephen said, Dana wanted to create a practical expression of the world we'd like to see.



CO-OP CALENDAR

WEEKLY SALES*, MEMBER DEALS*, & EVENTS

27th ANNUAL EMPTY BOWL DINNER



Saturday, November 3, 2018

6:00 pm - Dinner at 6:15 pm

Middlebury United Methodist Church

Proceeds benefit:

HOPE & CVOEO food shelves

LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS AVAILABLE

\$30/per person

Additional donations are always welcome.

Thank you.



OCTOBER

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
STONE LEAF TEA HOUSE
10% OFF



10/4 - 10/10 CO-OP MONTH

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF ORGANIC VALLEY

10/11 - 10/17 NON-GMO MONTH

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF LOTUS FOODS

10/18 - 10/24 FAIR TRADE MONTH

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF EQUAL EXCHANGE

10/25 - 10/31 HALLOWEEN

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF SCOTT FARM

NOVEMBER

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
COUNTY TIRE
10% OFF PARTS/5% OFF TIRES



RALLY FOR
CHANGE FOR
CVOEO & HOPE
11/8-11/14



STORE
CLOSED
11/22

11/1 - 11/7 HOLIDAY BAKING

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF BOB'S RED MILL

11/8 - 11/14 THANKSGIVING EARLY BIRDS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF ELMER FARM

11/15 - 8/21 THANKSGIVING

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

11/23 - 11/28 HOLIDAY GIFTS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF BADGER

11/29 - 12/5 HANUKKAH

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF VERMONT CREAMERY

DECEMBER

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
DANFORTH PEWTER
10% OFF



HOLIDAY
HOURS
9AM-4PM
12/24



STORE
CLOSED
12/25

12/6 - 12/12 HOLIDAY PARTIES

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF TROIS PETITS COCHONS

12/13 - 12/19 HOLIDAY STAPLES

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF BIONATURAE

12/20 - 12/26 STOCKING STUFFERS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF KRIN'S BAKERY

12/27 - 1/2 NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF NIMAN RANCH

*PLEASE NOTE, WEEKLY PROMOTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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