

# The Compost

**WILLIMANTIC**  
**FOOD**  
**CO•OP**

**Vol. 31, Number 4**

**Holiday 2009**

**91 Valley Street  
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860.456.3611**

**willifoodcoop@snet.net**

**www.willimanticfood.coop**

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10:00am - 5:00pm

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### **Co-op Scoop** *Alice Rubin*

There's a lot going on these days – some of it good, some of it not so good. While the economy seems to be less volatile, there is still a lot of uncertainty. Food prices have not been rising as they had been, but I don't feel like we can count on it remaining that way. Job security is still a great worry for many, and that clearly affects spending. We all still seem to be in the thrifty mode.

At the Co-op, we are working hard to keep prices down, while still covering our expenses and making enough money to reinvest in our store. I have been telling you about expanding our bulk department, one of the ways we can offer savings to everyone, and make our business stronger. This is an example of reinvesting in our business for the good of the membership. This project has been difficult for a variety of reasons, so it won't be happening on the time line I had anticipated. I will keep you posted on the progress. Our work to offer better discounts on sale items and to change them more frequently is off and running. It has taken awhile for all of us to get in the groove with this, but it is smoothing out and seems to be working well. It is not perfect for everyone – we have a diverse group of shoppers. A fair number of people shop at the Co-op only once a month – some because they live too far away to make the trip more often than that and still be cost effective. If this is you, it may mean that you miss an entire sale. We do have the sale flier posted on our website – [www.willimanticfood.coop](http://www.willimanticfood.coop) - you can always look there to help plan your shopping trip. We also have many shoppers that shop once a week, or more. For these people, our new sale cycle really helps them to save on their purchases.



As we work toward making the Co-op a better place to shop and a healthy business, we are also working to make our community a better place. We do this in a multitude of ways. We offer a place for people with special needs to gain job experience. Donations from the register boxes add up to around \$100 each month, which go directly to one of the non-profits in the area. Food donations are collected and delivered to the Covenant Soup Kitchen each week. Additionally, the Co-op won two mountain bikes from Honest Tea, which were raffled off to benefit the Soup Kitchen. Countless gift certificates and gift baskets are donated to various other organizations' fund raisers as well. I am very proud that the Co-op is able to do this; giving back to the community that sustains us. In hard times, the response often is to tighten our belts and give less just when everyone around us needs more. To be able to give is not to be taken for granted. Thank you all for making the Co-op a strong enough business to be able to contribute so much. 🌱

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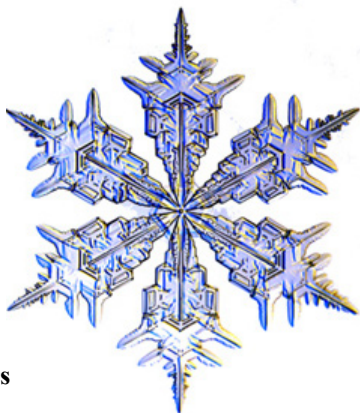
## Calling All Members!

*Phoebe C. Godfrey, President, Board of Directors*

Greetings Members! It is my pleasure to currently be serving as the Co-op Board president. These are indeed exciting and very challenging times and I see the Co-op as playing a key role on our local stage. Let me explain. As many of you may know according to the International Panel on Climate Change the rate of climate change is much faster than had been predicted. What this means is that in the near future, we may well see increasing negative changes to the lives of all living beings on the planet. In fact, I am currently reading for one of my classes at UConn (I teach sociology) a book called Fighting for Love in the Century of Extinction by Eban Goodstein who cites the journal *Nature* from 2004 that by 2050 "Up to a million terrestrial species" are slated for extinction. That is "35 percent of the estimated creatures and plants inhabiting the planet" (p4). Talk about depressing! However, I firmly believe that we are all in some way or another part of the solution.

As members of the Co-op we have made a definitive choice to spend our money on food that is produced as sustainably as possible, be that it is local, organic, fair trade, unprocessed...etc. Yet spending our money in order to eat is just the beginning, there is so much more work to be done in our communities, our schools, our places of worship, and our homes. As such I would like to invite all of you to take your next step (whatever that looks like) to increase your level of community involvement. Imagine what would happen if all 5000 plus Willi Food Co-op members did just that? We're talking about a lot of people, a lot of talent, a lot of commitment, a lot of knowledge, a lot of resources, a lot of what we need to positively change society's path. So the question is thus how to proceed? A partial answer is that we are in the process of setting up a blog on the Co-op's website for the exchange of our ideas. For example, I would like to see a group of members commit with me to creating more community gardens in Willimantic, outreaching to people who do not know about the Co-op. Further, I'd like to see another group of members get more involved with the local schools to help further children's knowledge of the importance of healthy, locally grown food. Many kids do not know anything about how food is grown or where it comes from and this is a role that the Co-op can play.

These are my thoughts, what are yours? What are your visions for the future of the Co-op in light of the future of this planet? Say your ideas out loud, write them down, post them on our blog. We want to know. In fact we need to know, because without all of us making a positive contribution, the future looks very bleak. Yet the beauty of the future is that it is not fixed. So let's get organized and see what we can create co-operatively!



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## Farm Report '09: Year of the Slug

Markus



Now...I'll try my darndest not to sound like a paranoid conspiracy theorist, but it may not work.

I mean..., what are the chances that a year in which home/market garden seed sales reached record levels, also brought the worst growing season that any living New England farmer has witnessed. Coincidence? Purrhaps. Imagine, however, if all of those seeds we bought this past year, even if we actually only got around to planting half of them, met with favorable conditions, and grew and flourished unabated. Local yields would have been astounding. We wouldn't have known what to do with all those tomatoes and squash and cucumbers. We certainly would not have needed to buy very much, if any. (Hmmm) Years of tomato sauce, pickles, and canned pumpkin in the pantry. Farmers Markets, which have in recent years received widespread public appreciation and mainstream press coverage, would have offered a diverse bounty of fresh produce items, bettering any supermarket's warehoused fare, further solidifying this local economic business model's place within the mainstream. This scenario might have proven "annoying" to the large growers and distributors to the west and south which supply our area with nearly all of our produce. This is a multi-billion-dollar industry we are talking about and those bottom lines are extra tight these days. So, what am I getting at? Why all the suspense? How was a sinister plot carried out by the high rollers and heavy hitters of a cut-throat industry?....Two Words: *Weather Machine*

Doesn't it all make sense now?!

All kidding aside, it has been a remarkable series of unfortunate events which culminated in a devastating year for the area growers. First, we received double-digit rain accumulations in both June AND July, which brought far too much water at a time when crops needed SUN. These conditions immediately slowed plant growth, especially for longer season crops like cucumbers and squash resulting in poor yields. The squash family plants rely heavily on pollination for fruit to form well, which is greatly hindered by long periods of rain (*Weather Machine*). These conditions also encouraged pestilence, the aforementioned slug getting top billing this year, hordes of which devoured multiple successions of young plantings of crops like lettuces, leaving our area devoid of such produce during a time of year when normally plentiful. Without much sun or heat, slugs were not forced into hiding, thus able to linger among the crops for days at a time. Then, it

turns out that all or most of the tomato transplants sold by "box stores" such as Wal-mart and Home Depot carried a water mold pathogen with a fancy Latin name, though commonly referred to as late blight. The source of all said plants were traced back to a single grower in the south (*Collusion*). Late blight is not often a problem for growers during "normal" years, since dry, sunny periods of June, July, and August interrupt its life cycle. Water molds require a consistent source of water and living plant tissue in order to continue to propagate, which is exactly what we got (*Weather Machine*), and therefore, many growers in CT lost their entire crop of tomatoes as well as significant losses of potatoes.

Life continues, however, and I don't want to dwell too gloomily upon the recent past (like the damaging winds and hail storms). Many growers were able to replant mid-season with fall/winter crops, and September and October were beautiful, so these items grew nicely, though by that time the low light levels and cooler temperatures slowed plant growth. Naturally, there is next year to get ready for, and we certainly have learned this year that there is much to get ready for. Gardeners should make sure to eliminate all sources of late blight so that it can't over-winter and propagate next year. Kim Stoner of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station covers this subject in a recent article in CT-NOFA Fall 2009 newsletter, *Gleanings*: (No mention of the weather machine, however) Tomato plants should be cut and tilled under resulting in no living tissue for the pathogen to survive upon. Potatoes, which give off their own heat in storage or in compost piles, need to be eaten or destroyed. The late blight pathogen may be able to survive in a compost pile and be spread next spring, so we should be thorough in this regard. When buying potato seed next year, look for seed that is certified disease-free. Make sure to rotate crops so the same plant family is not growing in the same place every year. Purchasing tomato seedlings from a reliable source seems like a good idea for the next few years. These are just a few concerns, there is much information available from the CT agricultural experimentation station and UCONN extension service <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/index.html>. With diligence and a little luck, this time next year, we will be celebrating the year of the tomato with nary a mention of... *Weather Machine*. 🌱



## A spectacular turnout for the Downtown Country Fair! *Kristin Fortier*

What a beautiful sunny day we had for our fair on Sunday, Oct. 4th. From blocks away, the colorful vendor tents looked happily nestled in the Co-op's parking lot, where attendees could find wares including, pottery, jewelry, bags, accessories, sculptures, photography, lights, furniture, and hand made soaps. Bagpipes, played by our fair's MC Will O'Hare, called out, highlighting the start to a fabulous day. Amaranth stalks and golden cornhusks fluttered in the breeze as the musicians played. Whether you were right in front of the stage or milling around the vendors, you were moving, dancing, and swaying to the performers of the day.

The kids certainly did not want the festivities to end, as there were so many activities to choose from: stiling, leaf stamping, and of course, balancing on the giant spool. Whether they were gripping the turn handle on a traditional corn grinding machine or learning to steady their hands at the pottery wheel with Art Tuttle, everyone stayed busy. Children's laughter and squeals melded with the music in the air.

Thanks to the food vendors, crafters, workshop leaders, musicians, farmers, and volunteers for

making a wonderful fair. Thanks to all of the artists who came up with creative and interesting Country Fair designs and to the design winner, William Stallman whose artwork can be seen on our T-shirts for the Fair. Thank you to Donnelly/Colt Progressive Resources and the Windham Area Arts Collaborative,

who donated our stage tent and stage respectively. But above all, I cannot say enough about the contributions of the Downtown Country Fair Committee members, who put in many hours of meetings, phone calls, letters, and elbow grease to pull off this event. If it were not for these lean few, there would be no fair for all of us to enjoy. Thanks again to Brenda Ballou, Kristin

Fortier, Karolina Fucikova, Linda Geer, Cindy Larsen, Markus Giangrave, Ursula Roskoski, Alice Rubin, Tina Shirshac, and the Walker Family.

Coming up in the next issue of *The Compost* will be a history of the Downtown Country Fair and what the fair has meant to many of you! Also, ways for you to get involved! Perhaps you have some specific skills or interest the fair could use to make it even better next year! How would you like to see the fair grow? Look out for it- next issue! 🌱



### Save The Date!

**Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**At the Windham Textile Museum**  
**Willimantic Food Co-op**  
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**Appreciation Party**

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## Market Basket Price Comparison

*Alice Rubin*

I spent a few hours last night, diligently combing the shelves of Stop & Shop and Big Y in search of products that the Co-op also carries. It wasn't quite a needle in a haystack, but if you were to count the number of products each of the supermarkets sell, the percentage of items all 3 of us have in common would be pretty low. The table at right shows the prices on products I could find that we do have in common.

After my adventure, I find myself aware of the difference not only between the Co-op and other food stores, but of differences between Big Y and Stop & Shop. Stop & Shop has their health food section, making it easier to shop (or compare prices) if that is what you are looking for. Stop & Shop was also littered with signs stating the savings you would realize over Big Y's prices. Big Y has integrated the products we have in common into their regular departments – mostly. It was a little confusing when I found things like an entire freezer full of Amy's frozen entrees, at the end of a seemingly random aisle. There were virtually no 'natural' frozen foods in the frozen food aisle.

Both Stop & Shop and Big Y have their own private label organic lines. But there seemed to be very little of it – some beans, pasta, snacks. Other than the house brand, very little organic food was available.

So, beyond prices, which this comparison shows vary little, I think a lot of food shopping is what you are looking for and what you are used to. 🌱

		Stop & Shop	Big Y	Co-op
Avocado	Conv/ea	\$1.25	\$1.50	\$0.95
Bananas	Conv/lb	\$0.59	\$0.79	\$0.85
Lettuce, Iceberg	Conv/ea	\$1.29	\$1.49	\$1.59
Pepper, Green	Conv/lb	\$1.99	\$0.98	\$1.49
Pepper, Red	Conv/lb	\$2.49	\$2.49	\$2.45
Potatoes, Russet	Org/lb	\$0.80	\$0.99	\$1.75
Potatoes, Red	Org/lb	\$0.99	\$1.40	\$1.75
Potatoes, Gold	Org/lb	\$0.99	\$1.19	\$1.75
Cucumbers	conv/ea	\$0.67	\$0.79	\$0.59
Carrots	Org 2 lb	\$2.58	\$2.49	\$2.55
Green Mountain Gringo Salsa	16 oz	\$3.79	\$4.79	\$5.19
Short Grain Brown Rice	10 lb	\$7.99	\$7.94	\$13.50
Nasoya Organic Tofu	14 oz	\$2.50	\$2.99	\$3.35
Light Life Organic Tempeh	8 oz	\$3.29	\$3.19	\$3.79
Conventional Oats	42 oz	\$4.49	\$4.69	\$2.94
Madhava Agave Nectar	11.5 oz	\$3.99	\$4.39	\$4.19
Wasa Hearty Rye Crackers	9.7 oz	\$2.99	\$3.29	\$3.19
Barbara's Puffins Cereal		\$3.59	\$5.49	\$5.19
Cabot Extra Sharp Cheddar	8 oz	\$3.19	\$3.59	\$4.75
Cinnamon	2.37 oz	\$2.99	\$2.79	\$1.42
Chili Powder	2.4 oz	\$5.69	\$2.43	\$1.99
Bulk Coffee Conventional	1 lb	\$8.49	\$7.99	\$8.29
Conventional Spaghetti	1 lb	\$1.33	\$1.20	\$1.25
Eggs, Brown Cage Free	dozen	\$3.19	\$3.29	\$3.25
Amy's Burrito Especial		\$2.29	\$2.63	\$3.35
7th Generation Dishwashing Gel	45 oz	\$4.29	\$4.99	\$6.55
7th Generation All Purpose Cleaner	32 oz	\$3.99	\$4.99	\$4.49
Pirate's Booty Puffs	4 oz	\$2.99	\$2.99	\$2.99
Heinz Organic Ketchup	15 oz	\$2.49	\$3.49	\$3.19
Farmer's Cow Milk	1/2 gal	\$2.79	\$2.99	\$2.49
Total		\$89.99	\$94.25	\$101.07

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## Helen's HABA Review *Helen Scanlon*

I have two wonderful products to share with you: Nature's Edge Herb Farm Shampoo Bar and Co-op 108 "Corfu" Body Oil.

First off, Nature's Edge Herb Farm Shampoo bar: this long lasting shampoo bar gets hair super-duper ultra CLEAN and it smells wonderful—rosemary, spearmint, peppermint with some coconut oil really adds to the whole olfactory experience.



I recommend this shampoo for frequent travelers—no bottles to leak all over your luggage! And, for those who use a lot of styling products, it's a great clarifying shampoo. It's sure to completely clean your hair of all build-up. I bet it would be great for all hair types, but if your hair is a little on the dry side, like mine, use a bit of your favorite conditioner for some extra moisturizing. And, if your hair is a tad oily and in need of some volume—this is the stuff for you. It will snap your hair back to life and give it some lift and shine. Gentle on the scalp, too. Fantastic product and it's made locally in Canterbury, CT!

Secondly, it's the incredible Co-op 108 "Corfu" body oil. First things first—it comes in a handy pump style bottle (no mess!) and the bottle is a beautiful cobalt blue. Niiice. The label says "for velvety skin" and they ain't kiddin'. The jojoba and almond oil really got to work on my dry elbows, heels and hands, and it left my skin, well, velvety---and---get this---no greasy residue! (Clouds part and angels sing). I have to admit I don't use body oils that often as they can leave a slippery, oily residue. But, now I am a believer---Co-op 108's body oil does exactly what it supposed to do: moisturize and velvetize skin without a mess. Additionally, a little bit goes a loooong way. Just a little dime-sized dollop treated my hands with some to spare. Did I mention the aroma? The Corfu oil features orange oil and thyme and it smells absolutely luscious, spicy and fruity at the same time. This little blue bottle packs a wonderful wallop of sensory fabulousness. Wowie zowie, it's a keeper.



Many thanks to Cari for the fantastic HABA section. So many great products! You rock, Cari!

Until next time, remember to treat yourself now and again. You're worth it. ♪

## Greetings from the Department of Fruit and Nuts *Jon Campo*

Things here at the co-op are extra busy as we prepare for our busiest season of the year. As always, one of the best parts of my job is talking with you, our owner-members. You all inspire me, challenge me and generally keep things interesting here at the co-op. In spite of all the ever-present gloom and doom in the world, this is an exciting time for co-ops and small food producers. I've really noticed that there seem to be more folks taking an interest in local food, cooking and baking from scratch, and generally being more serious about eating intentionally. Things I never thought I would live to see are actually happening. Andy, a local farmer, is growing local wheat organically, and we have it in stock. This is more than I ever dared hope for. One of our local bakers is looking into having it milled so we could sell fresh bread baked with local wheat.

In Bulk Food news, we have a new supplier from Auburn Mass, that is selling us walnuts at a really good price, and I'm very happy with the quality. Try them, I think you'll agree. From the same source we are again getting yogurt peanuts, which we have been missing since the great peanut scare of 2008. From Grandy Oats in Maine, we have several delicious new products, an anti-oxidant trail mix, and maple-roasted walnuts and cranberries (these would be a great cocktail party snack), and a really different product, Maine nori-roasted sesame cashews. We also have a new peanut crunch from A.L. Buzzini in N.Y.C. that is selling really well. We also sell their sesame crunch and honey nut and seed crunch in prepacked bags.

I guess this is a good place to talk about out of stock

## The Mindbody Connection

**Linda Jacques**

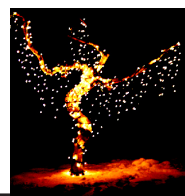
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issues in the bulk department, and the store in general. There have been several long term out of stock and recall issues in the last year. I get the feeling sometimes when talking to shoppers, that folks think that we have many different sources to consider when ordering products, and at one time this was true. Unfortunately, in this brave new world of certified organics, consolidation, mergers, downsizing, and “approved food sources,” our choices have pretty much been reduced to one or two distributors. This is why when one distributor discontinues, say, organic popcorn, we could be out of it for a long time. Recent issues have been bulk sea and “Real” salt (dropped by our supplier), all local to New England beans (crop failure), and imported bittersweet chocolate. Yesterday I was informed that our biggest distributor will no longer carry almond butter. Last month it was organic peanut butter.

And don’t even ask about raw tahini. ‘But wait’, you say, ‘I was just about to ask about that’. Well, let me tell you. In all my years here I’ve never had so many questions about a product that all most no one bought when we could get it. Here is the scoop as best I understand it: There have been numerous food recalls of raw tahini due to salmonella contamination. Raw tahini manufacturing is a little different than most other raw nut and seed butters in that the seeds are very tiny and hard to screen for potential contaminants. Pathogens can contaminate the seeds and plants and can make it into the product stream. Without the step of roasting there is no way to assure that these pathogens have been killed. Producing raw seed butters poses a health risk (liability) and a sales risk (food recalls). Manufacturers hate risks. If there should happen to be a recall, companies must absorb the cost of the recall incurred by distributors as well as the cost of the product that must be destroyed. Large producers

are likely to have insurance (expensive), but small and medium sized companies may not. Most producers I contacted have no plans to sell raw tahini now, or in the future. Both Maranatha and Once Again Nut butters have said they will absolutely not return raw tahini to their product lines. There are a few exceptions like the Rejuvenative Foods (in stock in the bulk cooler) and a few other small vendors, all out of stock presently. Incidentally, you can make your own nut or seed butters yourself in any food processor, adding a little oil and or lemon juice as needed. If you decide to try making your own tahini, as I have, do yourself and your loved ones a favor, and toast those sesame seeds first.

Once again, the social season is upon us and the Co-op is ready to help you out with your holiday entertaining. Having attended several swanky parties recently, I’ve been reminiscing about my old catering days. Here are a few useful tips to keep in mind when planning your party. Keep it simple. The point of having a party is for yourself and your friends to enjoy each others company, and making yourself a frazzled mess only defeats the purpose. I always have one hot item like a tofurky or ham or whatever, then a few interesting dishes that complement that item. I always serve a bowl of marinated olives, a roasted nut, a cheese tray, a raw vegetable tray with dip, rolls or bread, and a cookie or other sweet. I used to make elaborate punch, but found that folks prefer wine, beer, and champagne. You can always make spritzers, Keir-royals, and champagne cocktails. A lot of this can be done way ahead, and you can set the table and get dishes ready days in advance. Have fun and don’t be afraid to ask if we can help you with product suggestions or recipes. I’ve become addicted to the web-site “101 cookbooks.” It’s become my go-to web-site for new recipes. See you at the Co-op and Happy Holidays. 🌿



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**The Co-op will once again be offering handmade gifts for sale during our Holiday Tables: November 30th through January 4th.**

If you are interested in selling your items please speak with Shandra, Monday- Thurs 8 am- 4pm. (860) 456-3611 or email [shandra@snet.net](mailto:shandra@snet.net)

If you would like to receive The Compost by email, please email Shandra at [shandra@snet.net](mailto:shandra@snet.net).



**Willimantic Food Coop  
91 Valley Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226**

### **Cheese Ball**

8 oz bulk cream cheese  
1 oz blue cheese  
1/4 lb Grafton sharp cheddar  
1 garlic clove  
Dash Tabasco  
1/4 cup chopped toasted walnuts



Combine the cream cheese, blue cheese, and cheddar cheese in a bowl. Add the garlic and Tabasco and blend until well mixed. Chill 2-3 hours. Form into a ball. Roll the ball the walnuts, patting the coating in firmly. Chill; remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before serving. Enjoy!

Adapted by Jon from the Fannie Farmer Cookbook by Marion Cunningham.



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