



The Compost

WILLIMANTIC
FOOD
CO•OP

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Holiday 2010

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STORE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 8:00pm

Saturday
9:00am - 6:00pm

Sunday
10:00am - 5:00pm

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Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin, General Manager*

We've all been busy at the Co-op this fall. Business has picked up after a pretty quiet summer. While sales were not terrible, I think that we really felt the impact of the great success of Farmers' Markets. Almost every town has one now. It is a great thing, don't get me wrong. What could be better than buying produce picked that morning, directly from the farmer? I am glad that the farmers are able to sell most of their crops at retail. They probably still don't get paid for all of the time that they put into farming. But it was hard for the Co-op to get local produce this summer. We can't pay retail, and then we mark it up to sell to you, and most farmers just can't afford to be paid wholesale if they don't have to. I don't know how this will play out in the future. It seems like we need more farmers growing more food. It seems like the greatest barrier to this is access to land. You don't need a lot of land to grow a good amount of food - a lot of farms in Connecticut are only a few acres. But land here is expensive. And it is really hard work to grow the quality of produce we have all come to expect. Gone are the days when you knew the produce was organic by the funky way it looked. I don't even try to grow salad greens anymore. Not when I can buy the most beautiful, diverse array of greens, grown just a few miles down the road from the Co-op.

Locally grown food was also the topic of several community meetings I attended this fall. The first event was the Connecticut Food System Alliance Summit. It was held in Hartford at Billings Forge. The attendees were from a wide variety of related organizations, and they are all about getting good food to people. Here, the key note speaker was from New York City, and she spoke of the many efforts being made to bring fresh food to the city. The stories were inspiring. We then broke up into several different focus groups - affordability and accessibility, institutional and retail distribution, nurturing farmers, and group sustainability and continuity. There was a lot of information, passion, and ideas packed into those discussions. The hope is that out of this meeting some working groups will be formed to further explore the issues and find ways to take action and improve our food system.

The second event was the Farm to Table Dinner, put on by the Achieve Leadership Team. Kathleen Krider, our Board vice president, who is a member of the Leadership Team, told me about it. The dinner was held at the Hole in the Wall Camp in Ashford. It was a beautiful spot for the event, which was a dinner made from all locally grown foods. I don't even know how many courses there were, there were so many, and they were all delicious. I ate too much, so much that I knew I would never stay awake for the speaker - Dr. David Katz - although I wanted to. The theme of the whole event was "to promote healthy eating and



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active living to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and create a healthier community for our children.” Many Co-op members were in attendance as diners, speakers, and organizers. This meal felt like a piece of the Co-op in many ways.

Most recently, I attended a meeting entitled ‘Plant the Seed for Northeast Connecticut’s Food Policy Committee.’ This group was brought together by the Northeast District Department of Health. It too, was a very diverse group – farmers, health care providers, town officials and others. A lot of the conversation focused on the need to get fresh, locally grown food into institutions, schools, and government programs. It was heartening to hear this vision from so many different viewpoints.

Finding how the Co-op fits into this larger picture will be challenging, but I think it is important since the Co-op’s purpose is greater than just selling food. How each of us spends our food dollars shapes so many pieces of the puzzle – land use, labor, energy use. It is a big and important role we all share.

But, back to the more mundane business of selling food – our plans for a Meat Buying Club are progressing. The freezer has been ordered, and a group of members has begun meeting to research local producers. We are creating a questionnaire so that we can understand how each farm produces their meat: how the animals are raised, fed, and slaughtered. We need to create a system to work with producers, and then we need to actually find a supply. The success of the Farmers Markets’ has also affected the availability of locally raised meat. A flier about the Buying Club will be at the registers as soon as we are ready to have people sign up to order.

When we purchased the meat freezer, we also ordered a new freezer for back stock. We have been using 2 old stand up kitchen freezers that we moved with us from Meadow Street.

The new one will increase our energy efficiency and save time and labor defrosting them. When was the last time you defrosted a freezer? The bulk department expansion will be happening this winter, after the holidays. I think it will be worth the wait

So, as another year winds down, and a new one amps up, the Co-op continues to do what it does best, sell the best food it can at the best prices. I hope you enjoy your holidays, which ever you choose to celebrate. And if you can, help others celebrate too by donating to any of our community’s Soup Kitchens, Food Pantries and Shelters. 🌱

WANTED!

Working Members to help
with Tasty Thursday Food
Demos.

3:45- 6:15pm

Interested? Please email
Sarah Keleher:
alliswell13@sbcglobal.net



Farewell

Thank you to Annie Brooks for all your contributions to the Co-op, and especially for your great work editing *The Compost*. Best wishes for success in your next adventure.

You will be greatly missed.

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Connecticut Science Center Finally Wakes up

I want to thank any and all Co-op members who supported Hosmer Mountain in its fight to end the CT Science Center, cafeteria's wasteful process of discarding Hosmer's returnable empty bottles.

Background: From 2009 to 2010 Restaurant Associates, (RA) a food service company hired by the Science Center refused to return any Hosmer bottles despite being informed from day one that they would save almost 25% on their bill while simultaneously saving a lot of energy through a re-use vs. recycling model. After months of this, Hosmer wrote to four Science Center officers describing the situation and reminding them of their green mission. No response. We again confronted RA, debunking their excuses of labor cost, vermin, space, and no wait staff. They agreed to "try harder." After a continuing return rate of 0%, we again contacted Science Center management and also enlisted aid from DEP and several teachers at Bacon Academy who generated a letter barrage from their students before school ended in June. I was called by RA and threatened of being "cut loose" if we did not stop communicating with Science Center hierarchy.

Eventually, we requested that State Rep. Susan Johnson assist us. Roger Adams at The Chamber wrote a letter of support, and I made a plea at the Co-op annual meeting. An excellent summary soon appeared in the Hartford Advocate on July 7th (see <http://www.hartfordadvocate.com/featured-news/science-center-cafe-finally-agrees-to-return-reusable-bottles>).

Energy guru, Dr. Robson, proved our model did have environmental merit, by quantifying the actual energy wasted by using glass bottles once (recycling) compared to sterilizing them repeatedly (re use). The 344 cases of 24 bottles that were tossed, wasted enough energy for 26,000 homes to leave a light bulb on and go to work for an 8 hour day.

The return rate by R.A. is now averaging 35%. A big improvement, but I feel like they could achieve 80% or more if crates were conveniently displayed with a sign "RETURNABLE BOTTLES - SAVE THE EARTH-

PLACE BOTTLES IN CRATES."

A recent meeting between Hosmer and CT. Science Center officials (including the president and CEO Matt Fleury) took place at Rep. Johnson's office in Hartford. The air was cleared and both organizations better understood one another. They may even promote Hosmer's mode, which would be wonderful.

What I have taken away from the ordeal is this: Doing the right thing can be surprisingly difficult and frustrating. There are people and organizations out there (like R.A.) that want you to shut up and go away; to not comply takes a lot of effort, but it needs to be done.

Thanks again,

Bill @

Hosmer Mountain 🌿



Board Update Annie Brooks

After a very successful Board of Directors retreat in August, the Board has been working hard to revise and condense the Policy Governance Manual. To assist with that, the Board has formed various committees to closely analyze different segments of the manual. The committees include a Board Perpetuation Committee, a By-law Revisions Committee, and a General Manager Personnel Committee. This revision process will take some time; however, it is our hope that once it is completed the Board will be able to serve the membership more efficiently and effectively.

In addition, as the Board continues to get organized, we will begin soliciting feedback regarding what direction in which the membership would like to see the Co-op moving. This is an exciting, transformative period for the Co-op, and it is up to the membership as to what we want to do with it.

The Board of Directors meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Mount Hope Montessori School, and they are open to the membership.

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Helen's HABA Review *Helen Scanlon*

For this review, I was given the distinct pleasure of sampling two of Pam Brundage's spectacular, locally-made products.

First, the heavenly Lavender and Rosemary Face and Body Cream. Oh my. Not only does this cream get to work on rough, dry skin like a pro—it smells absolutely incredible. I am all about products that smell good—I am a bit of a fragrance addict—and this cream really delivers the calming combo of earthy, bright rosemary and soothing lavender.

In addition, Pam Brundage's formula really works well as a night cream. Wait, that's an understatement, let me try that again: this is one of THE best night creams I have ever tried, no fooling. It's protecting, super-duper emollient and delivers the goods all night while you sleep. Go to bed with a sandpaper-y, tired complexion and wake up with a face like a rose petal. It knocked my socks off. If you suffer from a dry, wind-whipped winter complexion, Pam's Rosemary and Lavender Cream will do the trick as a day moisturizer. Perhaps put a light SPF over it, and you are set to go. Bring on the cold, snow, and sun, (helloooo skiers!).

Rough elbows and chapped hands? No problem. With a dryness fighting team of oils, aloe, and beeswax—you will be chapped and rough no more. There's vitamin C, E and borax in there, too. Does it get any better than that? No, it doesn't. Pure, gentle, powerful, and age-fighting, Pam Brundage's Rosemary and Lavender Face and Body Cream is now a skin care essential to this reviewer.

Another fantastic Pam Brundage product is her Arnica Salve. It is healing and soothing for bumps, bruises and soreness; I used it on my poor neck after spending too much time hunched over a computer and scrunching my shoulders to yak on the phone. My goodness. It has a wonderfully smooth texture and as I massaged it into my neck and shoulders, I could feel the tension melt away. Arnica has gentle anti-inflammatory properties, and is useful for muscle

strains, sprains, and soreness. Pam's salve has olive oil, vitamin E, and lovely lavender. Rub it into sore muscles and joints, and do not put it on broken, severely chapped skin. You'll be feeling better soon.

Bring on the cold weather, I can handle it! Dry winter skin? Bring it on. Sore muscles? Whatever!

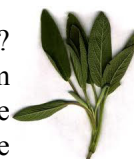
Many thanks to Pam Brundage for her fantastic products. Until next time, remember to stop and smell the lavender. 🌿



Thanksgiving Musings *Angela H. Fichter*

November brings more gray skies than any other month in the year. That is why God gave us the idea for stuffing. I don't mean stuffing your mouth (though that is a tried and true antidote for seasonal affective disorder). I mean stuffing you make and eat on Thanksgiving or other festive times. On Thanksgiving day, I walk out into my herb garden and pick some fresh sage for the stuffing. Yes, basil is nice with salads and Italian recipes, but it blackens and dies at the first whiff of frost. Not sage. Sage is Queen of the herb garden and is a hardy perennial. Mine has been in its garden bed for many years. When the lower stems get too profuse or too woody, I snap them off low on the stem, and new branches grow. Throw the woody stems you cut onto a burning fire. What a nice smell! The plant makes beautiful blossoms in June. The leaves will still be in good shape at Thanksgiving.

What to do with the sage leaves you just cut? Rinse them off and pat them dry. Then cut them into small pieces. For those of you who are wicked carnivores, here's a recipe. First choose a large skillet with sides of a couple inches and with a tall lid that has sides on the lid of a couple inches. You will only use the lid at the very end of the recipe, but you'll need it then. Dice up at least half a loaf of 100% whole wheat bread and dice up a few apples. Take a pound



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of ground pork (it looks like hamburger, but it's pork). Pull it apart so it covers the bottom of the skillet. Keep turning the various pieces of pork over to assure doneness. Cook it until it is fully done, but not hard. When done, put it on a large plate on top of several paper towels to drain. Pour off the pork grease. After the grease has cooled, discard it. Add oil to the pan until the entire bottom is covered. When the oil is hot, add the seasoning: black pepper, dried mustard, your finely diced sage. Stir. Then add your diced onions. Cook till the onions are clear, while stirring. Stir in fat handful of cashews. Add a fat handful of raisins and stir them in. Now add some organic chicken stock, just enough to moisten the ingredients in the pan. Stir thoroughly. Add the diced apples and stir. Add the pork pieces and stir. Then add the diced bread and add more chicken stock. Carefully fold in the bread cubes, being sure that the bread and pork pieces are thoroughly coated with the other ingredients. Add a little more stock. Cover tightly with that tall lid and simmer. Every once in a while, fold the entire pan contents over so that the bread cubes are fully steamed. You may need to add more stock.

The vegetarian version: Start out with the herbs and spices in the oil. Since you will not be using chicken stock, you will need to add salt. Also add some allspice. Since you will not be using pork, add some butter. Along with raisins, add diced dried apricots and prunes. The question is what to use to moisten the bread cubes. Instead of chicken stock, try a very diluted apple cider. Maybe a little white wine.

The idea of the pork and apples came from a farmer (in the bad old days I would have said farmwife, but both she and her husband are farmers).

The next step is to enjoy your meal. Then go outside

and play in the snow. Then come in and eat some more. This came from my grandmother, who was born in Palmer, Massachusetts in 1891. Either it's global warming, or maybe the Palmer/Springfield area is colder than Scotland, Connecticut, but we've lived here for decades and never seen snow on Thanksgiving. Bon appétit! 🍴

News from the Bulk Department *Jon Campo*

Happy Fall everyone. I hope you all have your cozy wool blankets out. We just had our first really good freeze, and I'm starting to think about the holidays. As it happens I have just helped my friend host a small fundraiser, and if this event is any indication the snack trend this fall is nuts. The guests at this party all pretty much ignored a very elegant cheese board in favor of the Tierra Farm Curried Cashews. I am ordering a few new flavors of their organic nuts for the holiday season. (I have to think of my Christmas Party guests). So my advice this fall is go nuts. Also new is some really great Valrhona chocolate from France. I have been trying to get this product for years, but none of our suppliers had it. When I worked as a pastry chef, this was the only chocolate I used. (I made chocolate mousse with it for the fundraiser - a big hit) When Bruce started ordering cheese from Seacrest Foods in Boston, I was thrilled to discover that they sell it. We now have the bittersweet chocolate and the cocoa powder. Expect a full report with recipes in the next newsletter. I suggest if you do try it, don't just eat it out of the bag (although you will be tempted when you smell it), but make something with it. The flavor is totally different combined with other things. There is so much interest in using chocolate as a therapeutic food it's incredible. We were sold out of raw cacao powder for weeks, and I had a hard time getting more. Fortunately it is back in stock, and I have a good supply. Because you asked, I have picked up organic raw cacao nibs, which taste like dirt to me, but apparently are super healthy. Also new in this line is organic chocolate-covered coffee beans from Tierra Farm. We have always had this



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product, but from other suppliers. Tierra Farm roasts their own coffee beans fresh and then immediately dips them in organic chocolate, so they are very fresh and crunchy. These are great as an after dinner treat served with coffee. So our chocolate department has grown by leaps and bounds, but there can never be enough chocolate, right?

Not exactly bulk, but necessary for your holiday entertaining, are various olives that are also coming from Seacrest Foods. Please let me know which ones you like. For other quick cocktail munchies, I can also recommend Maple Roasted Walnuts from GrandyOats in Maine, and maybe our new snack mix from Arcade Snacks. Also, the cheese crisps that got rave reviews from the guests last weekend, recipe following. Note that these contain no gluten, and no carbohydrates, so everyone can enjoy them (except vegans of course). Speaking of gluten, it's never been more fashionable to be intolerant. It seems like everyone's talking about their gluten problem, so for holiday entertaining you can't go wrong by going gluten-free. Gluten-free baking can be a big pain in the neck, but we have a new line of GF mixes from King Arthur Flour to make things easier. I know what you're thinking - you've tried the gluten-free mixes before. But I've tried these, and they are good, really. And King Arthur Flour is a worker-owned Co-op, so enjoy. If you want to try some scratch baking, we also have lots of wheat-free baking items in bulk, and if you have any questions, I would be happy to help if I can.

This is probably as good a time as any to bring up the whole topic of gluten in bulk foods. If you are not just intolerant, but celiac or some sort of gluten allergy, then sorry for your troubles, but you really can't shop the bulk department at all. We do our best to prevent cross contamination, but a certain amount is bound to occur. We recently had a problem with a batch of buckwheat that had barley in it. Unfortunately, this has to be kind of assumed when it comes to bulk commodities. Things that get harvested and bagged up in such huge quantities are bound to contain a certain percentage of stray seeds and grains. You would really need to buy products that are sold in sealed

packages that clearly state that the product is gluten-free.

I wish you all a happy and gluten - free Holiday season and a very happy new year. Stay warm. 🌿

Pumpkin Bread

Adapted from the Fanny Farmer Cookbook by Marion Cunningham.

1 ½ C flour	¼ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp salt	¼ tsp cinnamon
½ C organic sugar	¼ tsp mace
½ C succanat	¼ tsp allspice
1 tsp baking soda	½ C toasted walnuts
2 eggs beaten	½ cup canola oil
1 C pumpkin puree	

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x5x3 loaf pan

Wisk together the flour, salt, sugar, succanat, and baking soda. In another bowl mix in the pumpkin, oil, eggs, and ¼ C water. Add the spices. Combine the rest of the dry ingredients to the mixture, but do not overmix. Stir in the nuts. Pour into baking pan. Bake 50-60 minutes. Turn out onto a rack to cool. 🌿

Cheddar Walnut Crisps

Makes about 60 crisps. May be stored layered in parchment paper, in an airtight tin.

2 ½ oz aged cheddar cheese, grated (1 cup)
 2 ½ oz Parmesan cheese, grated (1 ¼ cup)
 2 oz walnuts, coarsely chopped (1/2 cup)
 2 tbl fresh thyme, finely chopped (1 tbl dried)

Preheat oven to 400°F and set oven rack on the middle level. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Combine the cheeses in a small bowl. Drop the mixture by rounded teaspoonfuls on the lined baking sheets, leaving about an inch between them. Flatten the cheese mixture with the back of a spoon.

Sprinkle the top of the cheese circle with a little of the chopped nuts and thyme. Bake for 5 minutes until the crisps are bubbling and the edges are golden brown. Let stand for several minutes, then slide off the paper with a spatula. Blot the crisps gently with a paper towel and serve at room temperature. 🌿

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Greetings from the Spice Department! *Maiga*

Cold weather is here and the holidays are upon us. Most likely you're thinking about turning on the oven and getting some baking done. This is the time of year for spices to really shine in seasonal favorites like apple pie, gingerbread and holiday cookies. We'll be offering more sales on herbs and spices in the coming months to draw attention to our bulk herbs and spices, and maybe encourage you to try cooking with a few you've never tried before. But to kick things off I've chosen some 'classics' to try for this Holiday Season. Happy baking!

Cowboy Cookies

Makes about 30 cookies

2 cups all-purpose baking flour 2 large eggs
1 tsp baking soda 1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp salt 1 1/2 cups oats
1 tsp baking powder 10 oz. chocolate chips
1 tbsp ground cinnamon 3/4 cups pecans
1 cup butter, at room temp 1/2 cup unsweetened,
3/4 cup granulated sugar shredded coconut
3/4 cup packed light brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment.

In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder and cinnamon and set aside. In another bowl, beat together butter and the sugars until creamy. Add eggs one at a time. Stir in the vanilla. Slowly add the flour mixture. Stir just until completely mixed. Add in the oats, chocolate chips, pecans and coconut just until all the ingredients are incorporated fully.

Drop the dough onto the cooking sheets. If you have an ice cream scoop with a release lever, you can use that. Make sure you leave about 3" of space between the cookies.

Bake until the edge of the cookies are a golden brown color. Baking time is between 15-19 minutes. When they're done in the oven, place the cookie sheet on top of a cooling rack for about 5 minutes. Then transfer the cookies to the cookie rack and let cool completely.

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Everyday Cake

Adapted from Orangette.blogspot.com.

1 stick (4 oz.) unsalted butter, 2 tsp. baking powder
softened 1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar 1/2 cup plain yogurt,
3 large eggs at room temperature
2 tsp. vanilla extract grating of nutmeg
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour to taste
1 cup white whole wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 9-inch springform pan with butter or cooking spray.

Blend the butter and the sugar until light and fluffy. One by one, add the eggs, beating well after each addition. Add the vanilla extract, and beat to blend.

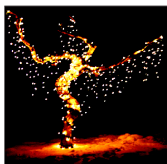
In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg.

Add about 1/4 of the flour mixture to the butter mixture, and stir to incorporate. Add 1/3 of the milk or yogurt, and stir again. Add the remaining flour mixture in three more doses, alternating each time with a bit of milk or yogurt, and beating to just combine. Using a rubber spatula, scrape down the sides of the bowl and stir to incorporate any flour not yet absorbed.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, spreading it evenly across the top. Bake for about 35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. (This cake seems to want to brown quickly on top, so after about 20 minutes, you might want to peek into the oven and tent the cake with aluminum foil, if necessary.) Cool in the pan on a rack for 20 minutes; then remove the sides of the pan and continue to cool.

Serve slightly warm or at room temperature.

This cake stores best at room temp covered in plastic wrap. Expect the flavor to be even better on the second day.



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