



# The Compost

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

**Vol. 36, Number 1**

**Spring 2014**

**91 Valley Street**  
**Willimantic, CT 06226**  
**860.456.3611**

**info@willimanticfood.coop**

**www.willimanticfood.coop**

## **STORE HOURS:**

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

Sunday  
9:00am - 6:00pm

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

2013 finished with the Co-op in a very good place. So good in fact, that we were able to make some substantial donations to local non profits. The Covenant Soup Kitchen and The No Freeze Shelter were our focus, and we also made smaller donations to WAIM, The Textile Museum, The Windham Garden Club and others [see page 5]. It felt great to be able to contribute to these organizations that do so much for our entire community.

As we head into 2014, we are fortunate to have a very strong staff. The energy and thoughtfulness that they bring to their jobs at the Co-op are making a large and positive impact on our business. It is an honor to work with such great people. As our sales continue to increase we have been able to invest more in our staff, increasing hours and pay. This extra staffing has enabled the Co-op to work on various projects that keep us moving ahead, not just holding the line. The Basics Program that both Patty and I have written about in the past is close to hitting the shelves. Our pricing, in general, is being looked at, item by item, to be certain we are as competitively and affordably priced as possible. The bulk department is getting a new layout, as well as a new bulk cooler. And, maybe even a 6 tap Kombucha set up.

The meat freezer that I wrote about in the last issue of The Compost is also in the works. Thanks to all of you for your input – it was overwhelmingly in favor of selling meat in the store proper. I appreciated that you took the time to let me know your thoughts, both for and against; it helped me to make a very hard decision. Because of space constraints and how our freezer is set up, it will take some doing to make this happen. We need to create additional freezer space – no one would be happy if we had less ice cream... so we are working on it.

Another big change is in our Accounting department. Pari, who has been hard at work keeping track of all of our bills – countless pieces of paper – payroll and all of our financial information for over 20 years, is retiring. It is a tedious and thankless, behind the scenes job that is incredibly important to the Coop. It has made a huge difference that this aspect of the business has gone so smoothly with Pari in charge, and I can't thank her enough. Taking on this important job will be Penny Barton-Zuckerman, a long time member. She comes to us with over 30 years of experience and I am excited to be working with her.

We are going into 2014 with an incredible Management Team – myself (General Manager), Patty (Operations Manager), Bruce (Facili-

## Willimantic Food Co-op

**General Manager**  
Alice Rubin

**Management Team**  
Penny Barton-Zuckerman  
*Financial Manager*  
Kristin Fortier  
*Front End Manager*  
Bruce Oscar  
*Facilities Manager*  
Steve Scanlon  
*Grocery Manager*  
Patty Smith  
*Operations Manager*

**Staff**  
Sasha Bajjo-Fournier  
Jason Borge  
Jonathan Campo  
Susan Chasin  
John Clark  
Chris Demorit  
Chris Dubis  
Chad Dunnack  
Mark Giangrave  
Avery Gratton  
Saige Johnson  
Jeffrey Nash  
Emma Ohlund  
Josh Ouellet  
Mario Perez  
Kara Peterson  
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Rita Tunador  
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Alice Rubin

ties Manager), Kristin (Front End Manager), Steve (Grocery Manager) and Penny (Financial Manager). Put that together with an incredible and hard working staff and the sky is the limit. We will work hard to make the Coop the best place to buy the best food in all of Eastern Connecticut. ♪

*Alice Rubin is currently General Manager of the Willimantic Food Coop, and has worked here since 1984.*

## Meet the 'Penguin Plunge For Hunger' Team!



*Back row, l - r: Chris Dubis, Sasha Bajjo-Fournier, Avery Gratton, Saige Johnson, Matt Woodward. Front row: Emma Smith, supporter.*

### **Want to Make a Change? Go Jump in a Lake (or River)! Sasha Bajjo-Fournier**

Greetings Co-ops! You may recall a chilling event from February, 2013.... The Penguin Plunge for Hunger! Some of the staff here (myself included) were crazy enough to jump into the Natchaug River at Lauter Park, along with other groups and individuals from Willimantic. Well, cabin fever got to us this winter-- Avery, Chris, Matt, Saige, and I dunked ourselves in the river once more! We had a lot of fun joining others for an exciting (if not chilly) way to give back to our community again. Thanks to many of our fellow members, the Coop raised and donated over \$600 to the Covenant Soup Kitchen; along with almost 200 other community members, total funds raised were approximately \$11,000 for this event-- wow!

So, what about the Covenant Soup Kitchen? Their mission aims to address local poverty, housing shortages, and to aid de-institutionalized members of our community. Find out more at [www.covenantsoupkitchen.org](http://www.covenantsoupkitchen.org)

Were you unable to donate to the Penguin Plunge? The Covenant Soup Kitchen always appreciates monetary and un-opened non-perishable donations year round. Thank you! ♪

*Sasha Bajjo-Fournier is a Floor Coordinator at the Coop. She looks forward to outdoor gardening in her spare time this spring, and her current favorite Coop product is Dr. Bronner's Almond Soap- All One!*

## Board Notes *Matthew Kyer*

"Are you a member?" You've probably been asked this question numerous times at the register as you pay for your groceries at the Co-op, but have you ever really considered what it means to be a member? You may, in fact, be a member of several stores, clubs and organizations, but I doubt you would equate co-op membership with that of BJ's, AAA, or a fitness center. Why is that?

As a member of the Willimantic Food Co-op, you are also an owner. This is true of membership at food cooperatives throughout the country. In fact, many food co-ops refer to their members as "member-owners" in their bylaws, and some are going so far as to ask shoppers at the register, "Are you an owner?" This subtle shift in terminology is the result of a conscious effort to increase member engagement. We're not talking about ownership in the corporate sense; rather, consider ownership here in the sense of supporting, promoting and cultivating. Food co-ops rely on their members to be active and engaged caretakers of the cooperative principals that are their foundation. That's why, as a member of the Co-op, you are entitled to something much more important than exclusive pricing. You are entitled to participate in the governance of the Co-op. You are, in fact, encouraged to do so. Attend annual meetings or meetings of the board of directors. Offer to serve on a committee or subcommittee of the board. Or simply vote. Whatever you do, know that your input and involvement as an owner isn't just appreciated, it's necessary in a cooperative democracy. 🌱

*Matthew Kyer is a first grade teacher in Coventry. He and his wife, Nan, have been members of the Willimantic Food Co-op for over 20 years. He can usually be found staring fondly at the cheese display.*

## Improving Efficiency at the Co-op *Patty Smith*

As member-owners of the Willimantic Food Co-op, you elect board members to represent your interests in the way the Co-op works and serves its members and the wider community. In turn, the board hires a general manager to run a retail store that is financially viable, in line with the Co-op's mission statement and cooperative principles, and that reflects what the majority of members say they want from their Food Co-op. The general manager then hires and manages the folks you see on the sales floor of the Co-op every day (and the ones who hide away in the office), who are there to provide friendly and knowledgeable customer service, first and foremost, but additionally do a host of other jobs to keep the store well-stocked, clean, profitable, and running efficiently, hopefully resulting in a place where member-owners, customers, and community members all enjoy shopping and spending quality time.



One of the best ways for Co-op staff to continue serving members and customers well is to always be improving efficiency – I'm sure as shoppers, we can all attest to the importance of efficiency at the check-out line. While we are somewhat limited in our store by space, and only have three full-service checkout lanes, we are constantly working to improve our systems and layout in order to move more customers through the store more quickly, so everyone can get on with their busy lives. Some of the

*Continued on page 11*

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## Helen's Wellness Review! Helen Scanlon

For this edition of The Compost, I bring you Nova Scotia Fisherman Apple Cider soap and Urban Moonshine organic bitters and herbal tonics.

First, allow me to share my joy at finding yet another soap that inspires me to write sappy prose: Nova Scotia Fisherman Apple Cider soap. Here is their product description:

*Our 100% natural, hand poured soaps are made from Olive, Palm, Coconut, and Organic Castor oils using the time honored "Cold Process Method." Reduced water content delivers a harder, longer lasting, more concentrated bar. Organic Shea butter provides extra moisture and a satiny feel. No artificial preservatives are added and all-natural scents are used.*

~www.novascotiafisherman.com

Did someone say organic shea butter? Shea butter is the most effective softening ingredient in skincare today—combine that with kelp, premium oils AND a most divine apple cider scent, and you have one heck of a heavenly bar of soap.

Nova Scotia Fisherman Apple Cider soap offers abundant suds, doesn't dry skin and smells like a crisp fall day. And, it's concentrated—so one bar will last a long, long time. A new favorite in the soap dish!

Urban Moonshine bitters come in a little bottle with a dropper, and are designed to boost the body's natural digestive action. From their brochure:

*Bitters are like a gym for the digestive system. When we taste bitterness on our tongue, it triggers a reflex action engaging the digestive system and waking up the function of the digestive organs---the liver, the stomach, gallbladder and pancreas.*

Makes sense, doesn't it? When you taste something bitter, what face do you make? Okay, then! Something probably just woke up. And they aren't kidding. This stuff is b-i-t-t-e-r! The one I tried features ingredients such as dandelion and burdock root, and ginger—that time-tested digestive Champion. These ingredients may help curb sugar cravings and relieve heartburn. Pretty cool!

I also tried their Joy tonic, featuring such happy ingredients as rose and lemongrass. How can

you go wrong with those lovely things? The Urban Moonshine tonics are meant to enhance our body's natural functions and promote health and happiness. Nice!


As always, I encourage you to talk with your healthcare professional before trying any new healthcare product.

These products are all available at your Co-op! Browse those aisles, take a look at what they have, try a tester if one is available, ask questions (the Co-op has the friendliest and most helpful staff around), and enjoy the healthful, wonderful items they have on the shelves. 🌿

In health and happiness,  
Helen

*Helen Scanlon is an author and artist from Hampton, Ct. Her book, My Horse, My Heart: The Morgan Horses of the University of Connecticut, is available at the Co-op.*

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*A four month share = 8 pkgs.		Pkg. Total	
**Chicken price based on avg. dressed wt. of 4 lb.		8 x Total = 4mo. share	

Order at 860-684-1311  
www.CTFarmTable.com

## Notes From The Bulk Desk *Jon Campo*

Happy spring everyone! I'm sure you have noticed that there have been some changes in the bulk department. I would like to thank everyone for your patience during the transition, and also kudos to Matt and Bruce who had to do all the heavy lifting while I was out sick. Hopefully by the time this gets to the printer, you will all have found where all the products landed. Also by now we should have received a delivery of the red corn meal from Still River Farm in Coventry, which was just going to the mill as I write this. Plus, Andy's local flour is now back in stock. Enjoy.

Other new products are FairTrade Apricots from Equal Exchange, white chocolate chips from Callebaut, some Caramel Easter treats from Marich Chocolates, and gluten free bulk tamari. Actually, we have a bunch of new gluten -free bulk food, but you won't see them labeled as such. We can't call any bulk foods gluten-free because of the risk of cross contamination, so look for labels that say "contains gluten-free ingredients" or something like that. All the Tierra Farm granolas are gluten -free, as well as the Chunks of Energy nuggets and the millet. As always, if you have any questions, just ask. 🌱

*Jon Campo has a background in culinary arts and has worked as a cook, baker and pastry chef, caterer, and, for the last twenty years, has worked in Co-ops in Vermont and Connecticut.*

### **The Co-op made the following donations to local non profits at the end of 2013:**

Covenant Soup Kitchen - \$5,000  
Windham No Freeze Hospitality Center - \$2,000  
Holy Family Shelter - \$500  
WAIM - \$500  
Grow Windham - \$1,000  
Victorian Neighborhood Association - \$100  
Windham Garden Club - \$100  
Joshua's Trust - \$100  
CT Eastern Railroad Museum - \$100  
Windham Textile Museum - \$300  
The Last Green Valley - \$100  
Access Agency - \$125  
Working Land Alliance - \$100

### **And to the following Cooperative/Food minded non profits**

Coop Fund of New England - \$500  
Food Coop Initiative - \$100  
New England Farmers Union - \$100  
Cornucopia Institute - \$100  
Food & Water Watch - \$100

## Congratulations to CLiCK!

After five years of planning, meeting, networking, and persisting, CLiCK has finally purchased a building – 41 Club Rd, Windham CT – the former Knights of Columbus Building! CLiCK, Inc (Commercially Licensed Cooperative Kitchen) is a 501c3 non-profit run on co-operative values serving the needs of the local community through its commitment to a just locally based sustainable and healthy food system. This newly acquired building is 5,600 sq feet, on 2.9 acres on the Natchaug River and has the possibility of a second floor when funding is available. There is already a small commercial kitchen that will soon be available for rent and we will be working on expanding it in the near future. Prices for kitchen rental and the equipment available, as well as other user information will be posted soon. See our website for more information!  
<http://clickwillimantic.com/>

### **CLiCK's Mission:**

•Education and training in the culinary arts and nutrition to a diverse demographic in Eastern Connecticut, an economically distressed area, including both individuals and their communities, to improve their skills, further their entrepreneurial goals and enhance their nutritional health, including a focus to improve the health of under-served populations; and

•Implementation of a sustainable social and economic development model by maintaining a licensed food preparation facility that will support local "farm-to-table" micro-enterprise development, educational opportunities, technical assistance and sustainability. 🌱

# click

## Commercially Licensed Co-operative Kitchen

41 Club Rd, Windham CT 06280

[www.clickwillimantic.com](http://www.clickwillimantic.com)  
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## Meet the Staff

### Penny Barton-Zuckerman

**Hometown:** Storrs

**What do you like best about the Co-op?** Love the products sold; love the co-op philosophy.

**What's in your kitchen from the Coop?** Just about all of my food comes from the co-op.

**Favorite hobby:** Gardening.



### Emma Ohlund

**Hometown:** Columbia, CT

**What do you like best about the Co-op?** Local products, community vibe, meeting new people, the good music choices!

**What's in your kitchen from the Coop?** Hummus, Equal Exchange coffee, avocado chips, cheeses, chocolate-covered almonds, dried fruit.

**Favorite hobby:** Hiking, adventuring.



### Kara Peterson

**Hometown:** East Lyme, CT

**What do you like best about the Co-op?** My amazing co-workers, and happy customers that make a positive and comfortable environment.

**What's in your kitchen from the Coop?** Produce of all sorts, coconut oil, Brown Cow yogurt, Hosmer ginger ale, Bagel One bagels, Abraham's hummus.

**Favorite hobby:** Listening to music and hula hooping! 🌿



### Spinach with Sesame and Garlic

*Asian spinach recipe with sesame and garlic. A simple Korean method for cooking spinach.*

**3 Tbsp dark sesame oil**

**1 Tbsp minced garlic**

**1 lb fresh spinach, soaked in water to clean, drained, excess water squeezed out, large stems removed and discarded, leaves roughly chopped**

**1 Tbsp sugar**

**1 Tbsp soy sauce (use gluten-free soy sauce for gluten-free version)**

**Salt to taste**

**1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds**

#### Directions

If you haven't already toasted the sesame seeds, do that first. Heat a stick-free skillet on medium high. Add raw sesame seeds and use a spatula or wooden spoon to stir. The seeds may make a popping noise and jump up, almost like popcorn. They will toast very quickly, so stir constantly until they begin to brown and smell like they are toasted. Remove from pan into a separate bowl as soon as they are done.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the garlic. As soon as the garlic begins to sizzle, add the spinach and cook, stirring occasionally, until the spinach is completely wilted. Turn the heat to low.

Stir in the sugar and soy sauce. Remove from the heat. Add salt to taste. Serve hot, warm, room temperature, or cold, drizzled with the remaining sesame oil and sprinkled with sesame seeds. Yields 2-4 servings.

*From Simply Recipes [www.simplyrecipes.com](http://www.simplyrecipes.com)*



## Willimantic Co-op Film Series-2014

With the worldwide charge from the United Nations 2014 Declaration as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) the Co-op will dedicate this year's film series to celebrating the family farmer! We've got some fabulous movies in store along with many local farmers and Q & A discussions after each film.

The IYFF's aim is to highlight how family farmers have a strong impact on food security, poverty, gender equality, opportunities for youth, and many other factors that could help improve the world as a whole. It is also promoted by the World Rural Forum, and has been supported by hundreds of farmer organizations and other societies. The overall goal for the UN and these hundreds of groups for 2014 is to encourage policymakers to focus on sustainability and development of the farmer. The agricultural systems of the world are incredibly important in reducing poverty and the number of malnourished people, and their existence helps promote stability. In addition, the World Rural Forum wants the world to focus on families of farmers and fishing, communal farming units, and indigenous groups to various localities. Hopefully, the UN will help convince the globe to focus on agriculture in order to fight poverty and hunger. Plus, it represents respect for the environment, and a commitment to biodiversity.<sup>1</sup>

According to newest census report from 2012, released on February 20th, 2014 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nearly 6,000 farms were operating in Connecticut -- up from about 4,900 just five years ago. Nationwide, the number of U.S. farms dropped to 2.1 million in 2012, which is

about a four percent decrease from five years ago. The average age of a farmer in the state is about 59. From 2007 to 2012, farmers under the age of 34 jumped by 65 percent. About a quarter of the state's farmers are women- about 1,500 farmers.<sup>2</sup> Locally grown and produced foods contribute \$3.5 billion to the state economy and represent 20,000 jobs. ([www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov))

Here at the Co-op we are always looking for more ways to connect with our area farmers and to educate ourselves about their produce, growing practices and of course to bring more organic and locally grown produce to you while keeping our local farmers in business! For more information, please visit: [www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en](http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en)

So let's take a look at the line-up!

**Sunday, April 13th-6:30pm:**

Out Here: A Film About the Hearts and Hard Work of Queer Farmers in the U.S.

*With guest speaker, Director, Jonah Mossberg, a queer farmer from Northeastern Connecticut.*

"Out Here" is a full-length documentary film created by the Queer Farmer Film Project. Completed after 4 years in production, it looks at the experiences of queer farmers across the country and asks – what does it mean to be a queer farmer, is agriculture a safe space

for queer people, and what are the relationships between food production and queerness? It is the filmmaker's dream that this project will give voice and visibility to queer people in agriculture and inspire a flagrant national discussion about gender and sexuality as they are related to our food system. [www.outheremovie.com](http://www.outheremovie.com)

**Sunday, June 8th- 6:30pm**

Food For Change : A story about Co-operation in America. What Kind of Food System Do We Want?

"Food For Change" is a feature-length documentary film focusing on food co-ops as a force for dynamic



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.borgenmagazine.com/un-declares-2014-the-international-year-of-the-family-farmer/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://wnpr.org/post/connecticut-farm-numbers-increase-bucking-national-trend?utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_campaign=FBWNPR2694](http://wnpr.org/post/connecticut-farm-numbers-increase-bucking-national-trend?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=FBWNPR2694)

social and economic change in American culture. The movie tells the story of the cooperative movement in the U.S. through interviews, rare archival footage, and commentary by the filmmaker and social historians. This is the first film to examine the important historical role played by food co-ops, their pioneering quest for organic foods, and their current efforts to create regional food systems. Additionally, the film shows how the co-op movement strengthens communities where they are located, enhancing local economies and food security. The goal is to educate a wide national audience about the principles of cooperation with a focus on food. [www.foodforchange.coop](http://www.foodforchange.coop)

### **Sunday, September 14th-6:30pm**

#### **American Meat: A Leave It Better Story**

*With guest speakers from Kindred Crossing Farm and Green Valley Farm.*

American Meat is a solutions-oriented documentary chronicling the current state of the U.S. meat industry. Featuring Joel Salatin, Chuck Wirtz, Fred Kirschenmann, Steve Ellis, Paul Willis, and farmers across America, it takes an even handed look at animal husbandry. First explaining how Americans arrived at our current industrial system, the story shifts to the present day, showing the feedlots and confinement houses, not through hidden cameras but through the eyes of the farmers who live and work there. From there, the documentary introduces the revolution taking root in animal husbandry, led by the charismatic and passionate Joel Salatin. Stories are shared of farmers across the country

that have changed their lives to start grass based farms, and everyday solutions highlight actions people can make to support America's agriculture.

[www.americanmeatfilm.com](http://www.americanmeatfilm.com)


### **Sunday, November 16th-6:30pm**

#### **Farmageddon: The Unseen War on American Family Farms**

*With guest speakers from Baldwin Brook Farm and others to be announced.*

Producer Kristin Canty's film, *Farmageddon*, documents as her quest to find healthy food for her four children turns into an educational journey to discover why she is denied the freedom to select the foods of her choice from the producer of her choice. The movie tells the story of small, family farmers providing safe, healthy foods to their communities who were forced to stop, often through violent action, by agents of misguided government bureaucracies. The movie succinctly poses and addresses the question "why is this happening in 21st century America?" Evoking both sympathy and anger for those farmers violently shut down by overzealous government policy and regulators, *Farmageddon* stresses the urgency of food freedom. Though the film deals with intense scenes and dramatic situations, the overall tone is optimistic, encouraging farmers and consumers alike to take action to preserve individuals' rights to access food of their choice and farmers' rights to produce these foods.

[www.farmageddonmovie.com](http://www.farmageddonmovie.com) 🌱



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## By Small Farmers, For Small Farmers: The Next Step in the Evolution of Fair Trade

*Phyllis Robinson*

The first Fair Trade farmer-owned certification system, referred to as the Small Producer Symbol (SPP, for its Spanish acronym) will arrive this fall on Equal Exchange coffees in food co-ops and natural food stores across the country. Ten years in the making, the SPP certification system represents the small farmers' persistent attempt to ensure a more just trade system for their fellow farmers everywhere. The colorful SPP logo will initially appear on Equal Exchange coffee bags and bulk coffee bins, and will soon become more prominent throughout stores. While the SPP itself is just a little logo, in actuality, the real symbolism of this new Fair Trade seal is anything but small. This bold step forward reflects the fact that today the very folks for whom the Fair Trade movement was built are taking a leadership role in shaping their own destiny. The potential impact this new system will have on small farmers, their co-operative organizations, and the entire Fair Trade movement could be quite profound indeed.

In the early 1980s, a division in the Fair Trade movement resulted in the creation of one international certification system with two distinct ideologies. The early founders of Fair Trade recognized that small farmer organizations trying to access the market were operating on an unfair playing field. The founders' goal was to create a system that could right the wrongs of hundreds of years of colonialism and unjust trade. Once the system was underway, other traders wanted a faster way to put Fair Trade products on the shelves and decided to open up the system to large-scale plantations. The fact

that plantations have one owner (versus being owned collectively by a democratically run, small farmer organization), and generally have more access to resources, it is usually faster and easier for them to move products from origin country to market. This means that plantations, with their ease in accessing bank loans, infrastructure, market information, technical assistance, and networks, will almost always carry the same advantage over small farmers that Fair Trade was designed to address.

Eventually, the international Fair Trade certifying system, Fairtrade Labelling

Organization (FLO) allowed plantations to become a source for almost all Fair Trade products, with the exception of coffee, cacao, and a few other categories. Small farmer coffee and cacao organizations, typically the most advanced and successful Fair Trade



producers, have been living with the fear since the division occurred that the Fair Trade system will one day open their products to plantations as well. Should this happen, many believe that they will once again become marginalized and lose their hard-won market access. After all, if it's easier to source coffee and cacao from large-scale plantations and still call it "Fair Trade," why wouldn't multinational corporations simply take the easier route and ignore the small farmer? In coffee, it took 15 years of Fair Trade before coffee farmers began to see a positive impact on their businesses and in their lives. Sourcing from plantations in tea and bananas has prevented the growth of a strong small farmer movement in these two categories.

The farmers' fear became more of a reality 10 years ago. At the 2003 annual Specialty Coffee Association of America conference in Boston, coffee certainly wasn't

all that was brewing. Alongside the aromas emanating from the brewing of exotic coffees, big trouble was simmering as well. The foreshadowing of conflict was evident from the loud voices and angry faces of representatives of small farmer co-ops, Fair Trade roasters, alternative traders, and other Fair Trade activists, all of whom were tightly packed in a room at the Hynes Convention Center listening to the words of Paul Rice, CEO of Transfair USA, FLO International's U.S Fair Trade certifying agency (today known as Fair Trade USA).

Rice was lobbying for a change in standards; he believed plantations should be allowed in the Fair Trade system as sources of "Fair Trade" coffee. He claimed that large companies and corporations wanted access to plantation products and that there wasn't enough small farmer Fair Trade coffee on the market. The crowd was wild with outrage. Most small farmer organizations had far more coffee than they could sell on Fair Trade terms and many more organizations of small coffee farmers were waiting for buyers to get themselves listed on the Fair Trade register of certified producers. Finally, against a storm of protest and outrage, Rice acquiesced and agreed to drop this controversial strategy.

Although Rice publicly backed down at the SCAA conference, small farmers, roasters, and other Fair Trade activists knew it was just a matter of time before the issue came up again. The pressures to grow a system quickly, the needs of plantations and big corporations, and the money behind it all, were heavy reminders of how decisions are made and how trade typically occurs. Sure enough, in September 2011, Transfair USA announced its decision. Taking the name Fair Trade USA, the organization left the international Fair Trade system that had given it birth. Just days later, it announced its new strategy, "Fair Trade for All", with a certification system allowing plantations in coffee and cacao.

Small farmer organizations weren't idle. The Coordinating Body of Latin America and the Caribbean (CLAC) had been meeting for

10 years to strategize how to keep Fair Trade from being stolen out from under them. Finally, they had their solution: the Small Producer Symbol (SPP). CLAC has now created its own certification system, run by the non-profit group, the Foundation of Organized Small Producers (FUNDEPPO). The system is impressive, with General Standards incorporating four dozen criteria for small farmer member organizations, including maximum individual farm sizes and a maximum percentage of farm work performed by hired farm workers. Buyers who use the SPP must meet nearly three dozen criteria, including a minimum of five percent annual volume growth in program purchases. Perhaps most impressive, the SPP is run and governed by the farmers themselves. After decades of this movement being essentially managed by offices thousands of miles away from source, farmers are now in the driver's seat.

This fall you will begin to see the first Equal Exchange coffee products appear with the SPP symbol on them. Trust that while other Fair Trade products may come from plantations, SPP coffee will never sell out. It will always be authentic. It will always be small farmer. ♻️

*Reprinted with permission from <http://smallfarmersbigchange.coop/2013/08/12/by-small-farmers-for-small-farmers-the-next-step-in-the-evolution-of-fair-trade/>*



*Creative Designs ♦ Custom Orders ♦ Expert Repairs*  
*Engagement Rings ♦ Wedding Bands*  
*Estate Jewelry*

723 Main Street ♦ Willimantic, CT 06226 ♦ (860) 456-3563

recent changes we've made are:

- Reviewing sales data and scheduling three cashiers at our busiest times
- Upgrading our Point-of-Sale (POS) equipment to run faster and more reliably
- Adding self-swipe, signature-capture pin-pads at each register

We have a few more tricks up our sleeve to further improve the check-out experience that we'd like to implement within the year:

- Adding a fourth "Customer Service" cash register, for returns, equity payments, pre-orders, and other transactions that don't require a scale.
- Retrofitting all four lanes so that cashiers have everything they need right at their fingertips – membership materials, catalogs, etc.
- Transitioning from paper gift certificates to scannable gift cards (more details on this later).
- Issuing Member numbers and/or scan cards to make it easier for cashiers to determine your member status within seconds.

While the last item on the list, Member numbers and scan cards, may be quite a departure from the "honor system" we've been using for years, it will also have the most impact on the efficiency of the checkout experience as well as the accuracy of our membership database. When we were a smaller co-op, that "honor system" worked relatively well and was sufficient to ensure members kept up-to-date on equity payments and received the corresponding benefits. As you can see from the chart above, there are now thousands of you out there who have invested money, time, (hearts, souls...) into the Food Co-op, and yet there are only a handful of cashiers on staff who have the pleasure of checking you out with your groceries in a timely manner. Our membership is growing exponentially every year, and it has become nearly impossible for staff to know all of our members by sight and name - although I am always impressed by how many shoppers our cashiers call by name - not to

mention knowing whether you are a fully-paid member-owner, or somewhere on your way to becoming one.

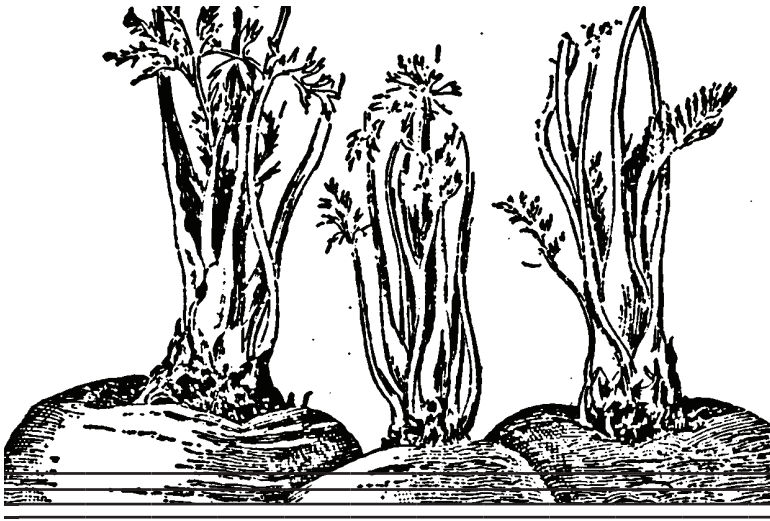
Often a transaction at the cash register involves the following activities (in addition to actually ringing up your groceries): Checking member cards, looking up folks in our antiquated excel database, processing payments with paper equity slips, and making new member cards to replace lost ones. This can be an arduous slog for cashier and customer alike, when you'd rather just get home and put that luscious-looking squash in the oven, and the cashier would rather not take up any more of your precious time. Meanwhile, behind you, the lines are getting longer, people are getting a little antsy, and when the cashier finally gets to the next customer, no one is looking forward to starting that whole process over again. The new system of member numbers and/or cards will create a consistent, efficient, accurate system that will eliminate the slightest bit of unnecessary aggravation from our day.

Here is the new scenario: You come up to the cashier, he greets you and asks for your member number. He quickly keys in your number or you hand him your Co-op scan card, key ring-size, which he then swipes past the scanner. Immediately, the cashier can tell if you are a fully paid member, whether or not you have a senior discount, or when your next equity payment is due. If you choose to make an equity payment, he rings it up with the rest of your transaction and cashes you out. No paper slip, no ten-minute trip to the other computer, no forgotten discounts. Blessed efficiency.

The staff and management of the Co-op hope that these efforts will continue to improve your shopping experience in the store, and that you'll always let us know how we can better serve you. 🌱

*Patty Smith has been a member of the Co-op for 17 years, and has been on staff since 2007. She has served as Point of Sale Coordinator, Assistant Bookkeeper, HR Representative and is currently the Operations Manager. She lives in Storrs, with husband Andy and daughter Emma.*





*You Are Invited*

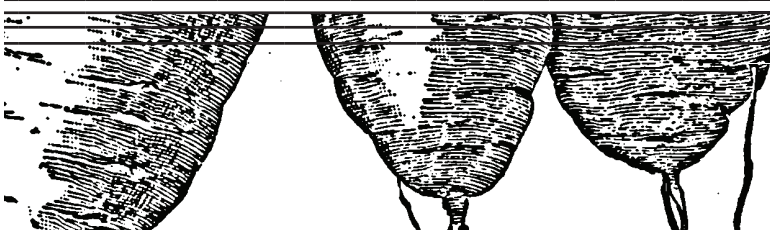
to the

**Willimantic Food Co-op Annual Meeting**

**Sunday April 6th at 6 pm**

Bruce Bellingham Ballroom at the Windham Town Hall

979 Main Street, Willimantic\*



*Please Join Us For...*

**A Potluck Supper** – Please bring your own place setting

**Guest Speaker Dan Kittredge** – Executive Director of the Bionutrient Food Association.

Dan has been farming organically for 30 years and has worked with growers across the country to increase the quality of the food supply. He will be speaking on:

- *The history of agriculture, food quality and nutrient levels in our food*
- *Correlations between food quality and our health*
- *Principals of biological systems – how they work and what they need*
- *Information and tools to help make consumers more able to ascertain quality in their food*

**And a bit of Co-op Business** – Board Elections, expansion ideas and planning

*\*Please use the back entrance*

Look for the  and save!

**Our Basics Program has finally begun!**

Look for the  on shelf tags  
to find high-quality, essential food items  
**at low prices!**

We ask for your patience as we ease our way into this program.

We will be adding more items over the coming months!