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STORE HOURS

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THE COMPOST

Vol. 40, Number 2 Summer 2018

Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin*

Just like the seasons change, our building project continues to change. And like the unpredictable weather patterns we have been experiencing – cool, cooler, wicked hot, cold – our plans for 87 Church Street also continue to fluctuate. The lot has been cleaned up (thank you D & W Development) and flowers have been planted (thanks to our Public Works Department for the planters!) The small storage building right next to the Harp had to be torn down as it was in danger of falling down, and a plan is being drawn up for the kitchen space and equipment we will need. More financial projections are also in the works.

I often ask myself, why is this so hard to figure out? I am not sure, but I do think that in the end, we will wind up with something really great, something worth waiting for. We will continue to work on this puzzle and keep you all in the loop.

Another puzzle we have struggled with over time, is the Non-Member Surcharge. A few years ago we had a group of Member-Owners that met to discuss what being a Member-Owner of the Coop means and how we can make the Coop be as welcoming to everyone in our community as we can be. One of the more unfriendly things we do is charge non members 10% above shelf price. We are always careful to ask non-members if they know about the surcharge and if they don't know, we charge them member price. But what if we no longer charged that 10% to non members...why become a member if you aren't going to save 10%? How many of you joined just to save the 10%?

One of the first questions that comes up when I talk with people about this is: Why not make the shelf price the non member price and then give all Member-Owners a 10% discount? One reason not to do that is that unless someone was really paying attention all of the time, we would look like the most expensive store in New England! No one would consistently remember to subtract 10% when deciding whether or not to buy something. We have been working very hard to change the perception that the Co-op is an expensive place to shop. We are constantly doing price comparisons and lowering prices.

If we eliminate the 10% surcharge, what would entice someone to join the Co-op? How much of the reasoning would be monetary and how much would be philosophical?

If becoming a Member-Owner of the Willimantic Food Co-op required the same \$120 refundable equity investment as now, but rather than entitling you to save 10% because now everyone would pay shelf price, all Member-Owners would get these financial benefits:

- 10% off coupons 4 times/year
- Member only sales
- Pre order discounts on case amounts
- Option to be a working member

Being a Member-Owner also would continue to have the benefits of:

- Running for the Board of Directors
- Voting in Board elections

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General Manager

Alice Rubin

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Wendy Jakoboski

Produce Manager

Bruce Oscar

Facilities Manager

Patty Smith

Operations Manager

Sasha Bajjo

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Assistant Front-end Manager

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Newsletter

Sasha Bajjo

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Alice Rubin

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Annual Member Meeting *Linda Brock*



The Willimantic Food Co-op's annual meeting on April 22 was attended by about seventy member-owners, who enjoyed presentations on the Co-op expansion project and the Town of Willimantic's plans for the adjacent Jillson Square area; the annual report of the Co-op's financial status; lively discussion of the proposed changes to the Co-op bylaws; and a delicious supper catered by Not Only Juice.

Treasurer Joanne Todd reported that the Co-op is in a strong financial position: WFC continues to experience sales growth (unlike many Co-ops nationally), and with about 7000 active members, has owner equity nearly double that of only eight years ago.

The slate of candidates for the Board of Directors was approved by member vote. Kirk Begg was re-elected to the Board and now serves as its President, while Raluca Mocanu and Charlotte Ross are new board members.

The proposed changes to the Co-op bylaws were also approved by member vote, following extensive discussion especially of the part on voting in absentia by "proxy authorization." Those with questions are encouraged to read the Q&A in the meeting minutes (posted online and in-store), and to contact the Board for further information. Work will continue on making the bylaws more easily understandable by the majority of us who lack a law degree. If you would like to be part of this work (and would like to earn a working discount) we are hoping to have some members join our bylaws subcommittee! Please contact Alice at alice.rubin@willimanticfood.coop.

Guests Jim Bellano, Windham Economic Development Director, and Tom DeVivo, Windham Town Council, discussed proposed plans for the Community Center planned for Jillson Square, and the "Shaboo Stage" band shell (which will be in use by August). Current parking lot entrances will become a connector road between Main and Valley streets, and a 240-space parking garage is proposed between Meadow and Valley Sts. by the police station.

Kirk Begg gave an update on the WFC expansion project: the Co-op is working with a variety of consultants on a plan for incremental growth involving the land at 87 Church Street across from the store. The vision is for this to include a "green building" on the new grounds, providing space for a kitchen, storage, and offices, as well as meeting and break-room space. Separately a "store reset" in the Valley St. building will support additional goods and services for members and shoppers.

Here's to another successful year for WFC, focused on healthy, sustainable and local foods! 🥕

2017 Treasurer's Report *Joanne Todd*

I get a kick out of the new bumper sticker that says “I own a grocery store with my friends.” The Co-op truly is something we all own together. Our big financial news in 2017? For the first time, the Willimantic Food Co-op owns real estate! We were fortunate to have adequate cash to make the acquisition and commit to our presence in Willimantic. After the purchase, the Co-op still has strong cash resources of \$685,823 at the end of 2017. With this property, you’ll see \$45,928 in land and \$279,713 in building assets on the Co-op’s financial statements.

Total owner’s equity increased to \$1,548,203 which includes solid 2017 net income of \$83,503. 2017 sales were \$5,335,332, a 3.4% increase over 2016. The Co-op paid \$715,560 to local vendors in 2017. This represents a significant contribution to the local region and the Co-op’s important role in the surrounding food and agricultural economy. In addition, the Co-op made \$18,147 in donations to local organizations. One of the many recipients was Grow Windham, where Willimantic Food Co-op is a founding member. Grow Windham collaborates to build a stronger community and local food system – a good fit with our Co-op’s mission. There are other community contributions beyond donations – think of the Downtown Country Fair, food collections for the Covenant Soup Kitchen, offering discounts to local restaurants and food producers, and more.

This grocery store that we own together is doing well.

Willimantic Food Coop Statement of Financial Condition 31-Dec-17

	12/31/12	12/31/13	12/31/14	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/17
Assets						
Cash and Equivalents	301,432	510,800	565,106	726,201	837,703	685,823
Investment: Coop Fund of New England		50,000	51,188	51,972	52,770	53,578
Accounts Receivable	20,978	17,026	10,688	12,806	14,057	12,021
Inventory	231,460	224,553	248,078	280,326	291,122	291,654
Prepaid Expenses	8,165	8,415	29,591	9,017	12,922	26,849
Total Current Assets:	562,035	810,794	904,652	1,080,323	1,208,574	1,069,925
Fixed Assets						
Leasehold Improvements	395,939	379,764	362,341	356,997	339,573	322,149
Equipment/Fixtures	135,864	146,393	131,130	100,295	107,800	148,696
Land						45,928
Building						279,713
Total Fixed Assets:	531,803	526,157	493,471	457,292	447,373	796,486
Building Expansion Project					59,176	
Other Assets	18,340	23,828	38,523	43,550	53,984	89,360
Total Assets:	1,112,178	1,360,779	1,436,646	1,581,165	1,769,107	1,955,771
Liabilities and Owner's Equity						
Accounts Payable	86,102	98,539	122,514	146,088	180,404	220,962
Accrued Expenses	54,548	94,860	71,826	117,540	135,392	184,878
Member Loans - Long Term	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Loans	-	-	-	10,021	5,875	1,728
Total Liabilities	140,650	193,399	194,340	273,650	321,671	407,568
Owner's Equity						
Paid in Member Equity	638,803	675,404	720,302	769,923	823,960	885,265
Donated Member Equity	3,657	3,657	3,657	4,151	4,181	4,385
Retained Earnings	329,068	488,319	518,348	533,442	619,295	658,553
Total Owner's Equity:	971,528	1,167,380	1,242,306	1,307,516	1,447,436	1,548,203
Total Liabilities and Owner's Equity:	1,112,178	1,360,779	1,436,646	1,581,165	1,769,107	1,955,771

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Treasurer's Report, continued from page 3

Willimantic Food Coop Income Statement 31-Dec-17

	12/31/12	12/31/13	12/31/14	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/17	% change
Sales							
Package Grocery	959,380	1,041,842	1,127,602	1,160,227	1,218,507		-2.43%
Produce	750,721	843,751	904,338	944,801	1,047,354	1,093,370	4.39%
Bulk	666,217	743,489	839,981	907,851	878,973	960,689	9.30%
Refrigerated Grocery	432,918	465,039	513,649	548,269	592,291	613,784	3.63%
HABA	402,796	419,422	462,407	525,848	623,315	731,010	17.28%
Other	548,548	591,040	594,356	664,940	798,886	747,624	-6.42%
Total Sales:	3,760,580	4,104,583	4,442,333	4,751,936	5,159,326	5,335,332	3.41%
Cost of Goods Sold							
Package Grocery	567,221	611,888	664,737	677,703	717,194	703,280	-1.94%
Produce	510,516	579,075	633,442	685,375	752,987	762,734	1.29%
Bulk	431,218	476,150	532,667	520,349	532,147	566,102	6.38%
Refrigerated Grocery	323,430	343,343	378,664	405,138	421,422	431,346	2.35%
HABA	236,846	244,866	266,413	292,316	339,225	398,755	17.55%
Other	365,635	385,723	400,346	482,872	510,011	497,950	-2.36%
Total Cost of Goods Sold:	2,434,866	2,641,045	2,876,269	3,063,752	3,272,986	3,360,167	2.66%
Total Gross Profit (Loss):	1,325,714	1,463,538	1,566,064	1,688,185	1,886,340	1,975,165	4.71%
Overhead Expenses							
Salary, Wages & Benefits	783,523	853,225	944,708	1,070,691	1,136,976	1,265,417	11.30%
Discounts - Workers	112,399	122,547	134,153	142,530	161,647	139,096	-13.95%
Rent	53,242	54,917	56,476	57,348	58,011	60,000	3.43%
Depreciation	48,330	44,939	48,061	48,619	37,366	36,859	-1.36%
Utilities	33,054	34,359	38,799	32,145	33,070	31,928	-3.45%
Other Expenses	148,491	180,515	250,086	313,895	371,669	313,738	-15.59%
Total Overhead Expenses:	1,179,039	1,290,502	1,472,283	1,665,229	1,798,739	1,847,038	2.69%
Total Operating Income (Loss):	146,675	173,036	93,781	22,956	87,601	128,127	46.26%
Total Other Income:	14,670	10,402	24,232	18,112	25,285	28,374	12.22%
Other Expenses							
87 Church Street						30,336	
Income Taxes						42,662	
Total Other Expenses:	12,121	24,187	46,660	25,973	27,034	72,998	170.02%
Total Net Income (Loss):	149,224	159,251	71,353	15,094	85,852	83,503	-2.74%



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Interview with Joshua Fiagbedzi *Emily Fiagbedzi*

Tell me about your upbringing? I'm the oldest of four children and I grew up in the bustling capital city of Accra, Ghana. My mother owns a mini-grocery store or what we call provision shop and my Dad is an electrical contractor. I spent many hours every week helping my Mom market and sell her items in the grocery store, which prompted my interest in business and marketing. I have both a diploma and a Bachelor's in business with a concentration in marketing.

Tell me about the work you did in Ghana?

I have always had a deep interest in supporting my community. This led me to a position with Hopeline Institute, a non-governmental micro-finance and business training organization in Ghana. I worked with Hopeline Institute for seven years as a field relationship officer, where I mobilized community members in three different regions of Ghana into community savings and loans associations also known as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). The community participants were all owners of micro-businesses including taxi services, farmers, small shops, restaurants, beauty salons, and more. However, these micro-businesses did not always have access to banks or credit for their businesses. Thus, I would help organize them into groups and train them on the VSLA model so that they could save money with each other and give out loans to support each other's businesses. The loans often earned interest and would then be shared as profit for the group. It is an incredibly effective and accessible model that has been used in emerging markets around the world. Additionally, I would provide financial and other relevant training and education programs. On topics where I did not have the expertise requested by the groups, I would identify and bring others with the relevant expertise to the groups. After Hopeline Institute, I spent one year with JustHope International, helping them start a similar program with local farming communities and training farmers on conservation agriculture techniques. I loved working with the farmers and it solidified my interest in pursuing work related to community development and agribusiness.

What are some of the lessons you learned from your work in Ghana? Since I worked with community groups and focused on business development, three lessons stand out:

1) When a community has strong leadership, they are able to achieve a lot.



We are sad that Josh will be leaving his job at the Coop, but we wish he and his wife all the best in Boston!

2) When people are educated in financial management it can drastically change their economic well-being and positively impact their business' success.

3) Most of the time, money is not necessarily what people want to move forward. Mentorship, direction, and encouragement tend to be more powerful and impactful.

Briefly describe Ghana? Ghana is a hospitable country with rich cultural diversity, heritage, and history. There is endless sunshine, lots of heat, beautiful beaches, and great food and music. You should visit if you can.

What are some things you miss about Ghana? First of all, I miss my family. Secondly, the societal sense of community. Ghana is a communal society which greatly values relationships and emphasizes people first. Finally, I also miss the food. Specifically, my Mama's groundnut and okra soup.

What is your favorite Ghanaian proverb? "Until the lion learns how to write, the tale of the hunt will always favor the hunter." I will leave this to you to reflect and decode.

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Meet the Staff *Sasha Bajjo*

What a wonderful time we are having here at Willimantic Food Coop. The warm weather and sunshine have definitely brightened everyone's spirits, and we are having lots of fun getting all our good food and products out the doors and into your homes. Have you met some of our newer staff members? Here is more about them:

Julio joined our Grocery team earlier this spring. His hometowns are Homigueros, Puerto Rico, and Brooklyn, NY. What he likes best about the Coop? The extensive selection of natural products and the relaxed atmosphere provided. Right now, Julio's kitchen has mac -n- cheese and canned goods from the Coop. His favorite hobbies are music, nature, extreme sports, motorcycles, and the beach. Fun with fam.

Anthony (Tony/ Ant) joined our Cashier team last summer. His hometown is Brockton, MA. What he likes best about the Coop? Seeing all the amazing people, whether they're staff, member/owners, or working members. What's in Tony's kitchen from the Coop? "The Monet's Table burritos are delicious. They're like my guilty pleasure, except without the guilt." His favorite hobby is being with the ones who love him.

Emily joined our Cashier team this past winter. Her hometown is Coventry, CT. What she likes best about the Coop? All the awesome people she's met. Everything in Emily's kitchen is from the Coop! Her favorite hobby is drawing and writing. 🌱



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Up for review this time: White Mountains Organic Yogurt \$3.69/16 oz. jar; Gold Mine Natural Food Company's Kelp Noodles \$5.89/1 lb. package; Miyoko's Vegan Cheese Wheel \$9.49/6.5 oz. package.

Fun yogurt facts: both Genghis Khan and French King Francis are thought to have been avid consumers of yogurt. The concentration of probiotics is measured in Colony Forming Units (CFUs) that develop as a single bacteria divides over and over. Dr. Seuss did not make that up. The term probiotic simply means "live micro-organisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host by adding beneficial bacteria to the intestinal flora." (White Mountain Yogurt website.) The bacteria *L. bulgaricus* is so named because it was identified by a Bulgarian scientist. White Mountains Yogurt boasts that both "Doctors and veterinarians recommend our yogurt to their patients for digestive system support."

Although I can find no geographical reference for this, White Mountains Yogurt hails from Austin Texas of all places. Its tagline is "Tart is Smart." And tart it is; probably too tart for most kids. Cari led me to this yogurt and describes it as "tasty probiotics for a great price." In contrast to the goat's milk yogurt that is a staple in my fridge, White Mountains Yogurt is a little thin – it has no thickeners – and is definitely tangier. Unlike the goat yogurt (Redwood Hill Farm from the Coop), White Mountain has just four bacteria cultures in it: *L. acidophilus*, *L. bulgaricus*, *S. thermophilus*, *B. bifidus*. I'll let the nutritionists and chemistry geeks tell you why this does or doesn't matter; I don't know. It is also fermented a full 24 hours before packaging – hence the super tang phenomenon. It comes in a jar which is unusual but, the company boasts, is a better use of resources as glass is easily recycled. I'm thinking I might use the remaining yogurt for dressing or cooking.



Try some yourself. See if you, your family, and your animal friends like it!

While looking over the chickpea pasta that Nancy recommended – to be reviewed another time – my eyes went to the package of clear squiggly noodles on the shelf below. Kelp noodles – I kid you not. I am a fan of seaweed from way back and have especially enjoyed collecting it fresh. The idea of noodles from kelp was irresistible and so home they came to my kitchen. I made a quicky peanut sauce and ate the kelp noodles with it that very night and...they are unusual. The Sea Tangle website claims that these noodles have a neutral taste; not so. They definitely taste like the seaweed they are made from – not a problem for me. And they have an unexpected texture – kind of crunchy, not what I would expect from a noodle. But these are no ordinary noodles and I will definitely have them again. They need no cooking.

The kelp noodles are made from water, kelp powder, sodium alginate (an extract of another seaweed) and, because they are from seaweed, are loaded with trace minerals including iodine. They have zero fats, sugars, proteins, but rate 15% daily value of required calcium intake. Although the label sports "Gold Mine Natural Food Company" in the biggest letters (the importer of Ohsawa products), Kelp Noodles are made by Sea Tangle Company; both are in San Diego CA. Neither website identifies the source of the seaweeds but does assure that they test free from radiation and heavy metals.

Last but not least is the most unusual food I tested for this review: Miyoko's Vegan Cheese Wheel, garlic herb flavor. Marissa recommended this product and assured me that it's the best vegan cheese she's tried. Although the very concept of vegan cheese is off-putting to me as I've had some pretty rubbery, tasteless examples, this cheese is certainly not tasteless and its tex-

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Attention Busy Foodies: Selection & Savings at the Co-op! Carol Davidge

Rising gasoline prices have most of us scrambling for savings. But you don't need to sacrifice food quality, choice, or individual-needs diets. One can save enormous amounts of money and find better quality by shopping at the Coop. Savings are especially awesome in the Coop's bulk foods. The turnover is high so the nuts, spices, coffees, teas, flours, granolas, oils and treats are always fresh. (You also find packaged choices).

Too Busy to Cook? OMG!

Grab-n-go salads, meals, desserts, hummus, bean salads, tabouli, frozen meals, baked goods, fermented foods, locally-grown produce, fair trade, vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, non-dairy, low-fat, low-sodium choices, sweets, international foods, even treats for your pets. Gourmet selections in grab-n-go come from Monet's Table, Not Only Juice, Shayna B's, Culinary Expressions, and others.

Bulk Foods Cost Savings

Example: oatmeal- \$1.79 buys one, 2 ounce-single-cup serving at other grocery stores or 16 ounces (one pound) at the Coop. **Savings: \$12.71.** (That \$12.71 buys 4 gallons of gas, a meal out, a gift, a donation.) Other virtues: Save money, Eat organic, Create less waste.

Bulk food offerings at the

Coop:

- 30 coffees,
- 60 teas,
- 112 spices,
- 50 grains (27 kinds of wheat flours; rice, oats corn; gluten free, organic and non-organic, wheat and rye berries),
- 16 dried beans,
- 6 sugars,
- 7 trail mixes,
- 21 granolas,



Bulk foods manager Avery Gratton holding a 5 pound pre-packaged bag of organic coffee alongside the 30 varieties of bulk coffee.



Ancient Grains Granola, a favorite of John Studley



Nairn's Oat Crackers and Real Pickles Saurkraut, favorite of Carol Davidge

- 18 treats (chocolate, carob, snacks, jelly beans, chocolate covered pretzels, etc),
- dozens of nuts (unsalted, salted, flavored, mixed or individual nuts), dried fruits (cranberries, papaya, raisins, dates...), protein powders, seeds, honey, peanut butter, extra virgin olive oils, dates, olives, cheeses, treats for animals, shampoo, dish liquid, laundry liquid.

"The Coop has the best selection of bulk foods in the region," says Rebecca Gurland, chef, energy healer, teacher, and author of "Vegan Flair."*

"I found things there that I could find nowhere else, especially kefir," said Mrs. Alejandro Carbacho (former ECSU student from Argentina).

"I prefer Ancient Grains granola which has mostly nuts and seeds," said John Studley.

"I found low-sodium, organic tamari sauce that I could find nowhere else," said Rebecca McCormick.

"I prefer Ancient Grains granola for dietary reasons," said John Studley.

For me, the \$1.79 per pound thick-cut oatmeal is a low-cost nutty-tasting treat. I have numerous food allergies, so I look for texture, quality and variety. Particular favorites which I find only at the Coop: locally-grown produce, Good Neighbors hummus and tabouli, Real Pickles fermented foods, Berkshire Mountain Bakery's Sunny Flax and Rye breads, Nairn's Irish oat crackers. In my travels among the grocers, including health food stores, the Coop has the best of everything-price, variety, quality.

*"Vegan Flair", other books, cards and gifts are available at the Coop. 🌱

Co-op Scoop *continued from page 1*

- Voting on all major decisions i.e. By-Laws revisions, the purchase of 87 Church Street
As well as all of the less tangible aspects -
- Knowing that your equity investment and on going support of the Co-op via shopping helps to ensure our continued existence.
- Supporting the local economy through the Co-op's purchase of produce and value added products from farms and small businesses in our community.
- Providing employment that pays a living wage (after one year) and fair labor practices to more than 30 people.
- Being part of a group making significant donations to Non-Profits in our Community that make a difference in the quality of life in our area.

I really do want to know how our Member-Owners feel about removing the 10% surcharge to non-members. I would like to do a wooden nickel vote – sort of like a straw poll - to see what the general thought on making this change is. If it is a resounding – Get Rid of It!, then we will. If it is a clear – No Way – it stays. Somewhere in the middle, well, then I guess we'll have to vote!

I would also love to hear more about what membership means to all of our Member-Owners. Please write me a note, or email me at alice.rubin@willimanticfood.coop.

Thank you all for being part of our Food Co-op. 🌱

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Joshua Fiagbedzi *continued from page 5*

How did you end up in Connecticut? My wife, Emily, was accepted into a Master's program at the University of Connecticut. So, in the summer of 2016 we moved to Willimantic from Ghana. We specifically chose Willimantic because of the cultural diversity and the sense of community. We really appreciated all the community initiatives, programs, and businesses such as Grow Windham and the Willimantic Food Co-Op. Plus we thought the Frog Bridge was pretty neat!

What work do you do now? I work in the produce department at the Willimantic Food Co-op, and I manage the operations of Sersek Hydroponic Farm in Mansfield ("Our Farm" in the language of Palau), where I grow lettuce, basil, cilantro and parsley. Whenever I have the opportunity, I also enjoy volunteering at Tobacco Road Farms in Lebanon.

What are three words you would use to describe the Co-Op? Community, diversity, and sense of belonging. I really love working at the Co-op. It has been the place where I have found the most community during my time in Connecticut.

What is an interesting fact about you? I grew up in a diverse community of people from different ethnic and religious groups and learned to speak five different languages fluently as a child. These include English, Twi, Ewe, Ga, and Hausa.

What is something you wish everyone would consider? I wish that no matter where people came from they would see others as their brothers and sisters rather than strangers.

Is there anything else you would like to share? A smile can unlock the door of stress in someone's day. Additionally, keep shopping at the Co-op! It is an incredible community resource that needs to be supported. 🌱



Restaurant & Pub Brewery
967 Main Street, Downtown Willimantic
860-423-6777 willibrew.com
Fresh beer brewed here! Stop in for a bite & a brew!

Calling All Vendors & Artists!

Susan Beauregard

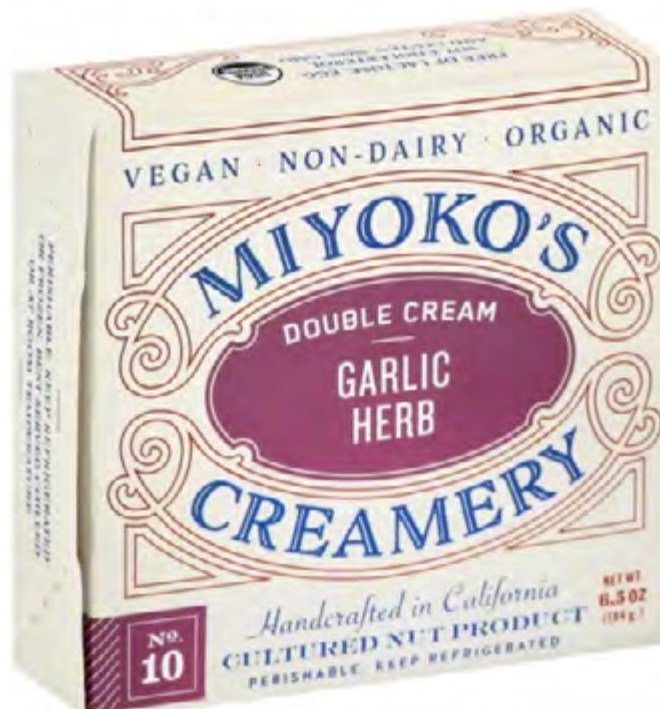


The Downtown Country Fair has become a popular tradition in Willimantic. It's a free and fun family event for all to attend that features live music, local food, regional artisans and craftsmen, and imaginative children's activities. Every year the Co-op strives to provide a fun, creative, and environmentally sound event that promotes local skills and craftsmanship, and this year is no different.

The 2018 The Downtown Country Fair will be celebrating its 20th anniversary on Saturday September 29th and we are looking for vendors! Are you an artisan or craftsman looking for a unique event to sell your creations? Are you a local food vendor looking to get your name out there? Are you a non-profit that is looking for a well-attended event to do outreach? Then purchase a vendor booth by contacting Alice Rubin at the Co-op at alice.rubin@willimanticfood.coop.

Vendors and not-for-profit groups pay \$10 for a 10x10 space. Only items made in the Quiet Corner – Windham, Tolland and New London Counties – will be accepted. Food vendors pay \$50 for a 10x10 space, permits are the responsibility of the vendor and the Co-op requests that locally grown produce be used when possible. You can get an application by visiting the Willimantic Food Co-op or by going to the website at www.willimanticfood.coop/events/downtown-country-fair/. 🌱

Food Review *continued from page 7*



ture is most agreeable. I am struggling how to describe the taste of this cashew-milk based cheese...tangy, garlicky, sharp even. Definitely reminiscent of a garlic herb spread you'd find in the cooler at the non-Coop supermarket. When I read that alcohol – an ingredient within an ingredient (miso) – is present, the taste made more sense. It's not boozy and probably will not offend anyone abstaining from alcohol, but it definitely jazzes up the flavor and contributes a sour element, in a good way. Its other ingredients include coconut oil, parsley, garlic, herbs, salt, nutritional yeast. It's not cheap and it's not low fat but it is certainly worth a try, especially if you are longing for a good vegan cheese.

Miyoko's is made in Petaluma CA. The website has some pretty compelling information about why to choose a vegan diet. One small fact: one acre of land yields the equivalent of 1/7th of a cow. Or it could be used to grow 80 cashew trees. Lots more info about water usage, protein output and so on. Although I applaud their intentions, I find their mission statement a little confusing: "The evolution of dairy is phenomenally vegan and we're leading the way." I get the point; I just want it to be more intuitive. Miyoko's – dairy, cholesterol, lactose and GMO free. Bring it to a party and see what people have to say. We carry a few other Miyoko's products, in the cheese cooler.

Okay Co-op shoppers, I'm out of room and time here. As always, take care and be kind – to yourself as well as others. See you at our store! 🌱

*** amyKstudio ***

Life is a garden:
Plant all your seeds.
Weed meticulously.
Dream lavishly.
Bloom vigorously.
Dance in the wind.

NEW ART EVERYDAY IN 2018

see the latest on Instagram @amykstudio