



91 Valley Street
Willimantic, CT 06226
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STORE HOURS

8:00am - 8:00pm
Every Day

CONTENTS

Co-op Scoop.....	1
Downtown Country Fair.....	2
Riverfest.....	4
Wellness Review.....	5
Plastic Challenge.....	6
Co-op Month.....	8
Movie Screenings.....	9

THE COMPOST

Vol. 40, Number 3 Fall 2018

Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin*

Wow! What an incredibly busy Summer it has been at the Co-op! Remember when we used to be closed on Sundays during July and August? Well those days are long gone. Our 'new hours' 8 am – 8 pm every day have been well received, especially the later closing hour on Sunday. Certainly, some days are slower than others, but there has been little down time at the Co-op.

Thank you all for participating in our Wooden Nickel Vote to see what the general feeling is about removing our Non-Member surcharge. I got a good amount of feedback on both sides and in the end, there was not a clear answer, so no changes will be made to our pricing structure at this time. In the future, we may present a concrete plan with a formal membership vote – a vote that ensures one member, one vote! Stay tuned!

Our work toward developing our property across the street continues. We hired C & H Architects out of Amherst, MA to propose three different scenarios for the use of the property that will meet our needs far into the future, in the most energy efficient way possible. I am excited to work with them, and we will be sharing more information as soon as we can.

We have plans for a bunch of special events this fall – starting with a big sale in the bulk department! 10% off of everything we sell in bulk! And some extra special deals as well. Also on sale will be all of our 'alternative' packaging – shopping bags, Beeswrap, glass jars (sorry, not canning jars) and all of the accoutrements of shopping that help to reduce waste.

To increase our awareness of the impact plastic has on our planet, please read Cari's article on page 6 and learn all about our Plastic Project! We can make a difference! To further learn about the impact our choices have on our planet we will be showing the movie "A Plastic Ocean" on Sunday September 23rd at the Mansfield Library's Buchanan Center. Sena Wazer will be there to share the work they are doing toward saving our oceans as well.

Then we are on to The Downtown Country Fair on Saturday September 29th. Come down to Jillson Square and see the many wonderful crafts made in the Quiet Corner of Connecticut, eat some great food and shop at the Farmers Market. Music will be playing at the Shaboo Stage as well!

October is Co-op Month! To honor our history we will be showing the movie Food For Change on Friday October 19th, again at the Mansfield Library's Buchanan Center. This movie chronicles the history of food co-ops and the amazing things they have accomplished.

And...October is Non-GMO month! On Saturday October 20th the Co-op will be donating 5% of our sales to the Non-GMO project to support the work that they do toward verifying that the food labeled Non-GMO really is.

That is all we have planned for right now – see you at the Fair! 🥕

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Alice Rubin

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Produce Manager
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20th Annual Downtown Country Fair

Winky Gordon

Coming soon, to a downtown near you—a country fair! Saturday, September 29th, 10:00am to 4:00pm, Jillson Square, for the best price: free.

The first Willimantic Downtown Country Fair took place largely in the parking lot behind what is now the Windham Theater Guild. I was the one to line up which vendor was going where and to mark out the spaces on the pavement with chalk. It was a labor of love. The fair has since migrated, first to the parking lot beside its current location on Valley Street and now to the green on Jillson Square. I remember the first discussions about the fair and the idea that “the country” should not be for just those who can get there, but that its joy and pleasures could be brought into the city. The radical notion was that good food, original crafts, creative activities should be available to everyone, that we could bring that kind of vitality onto the streets in Willimantic. And so the Willimantic Downtown Country Fair was born, 20 years ago.

The event is free to all but you might want to bring some cash to purchase food from one of the several vendors, all local: Grounded, Not Only Juice, Pleasant Pizza, Fenton River Grill, Maharaja. Or you may want to buy a present for someone – or yourself – from one of the 50 craft vendors, all of whom are from the “Quiet Corner,” comprised of Windham, Tolland, and New London counties. The Fair will coincide with the weekly Willimantic Farmer’s Market, so you can also stock up on produce and products from area farms. You won’t leave empty handed – or bellied.

The band line-up crosses several genres: Echo Uganda, Quiet Corner Fiddlers, Bentetu, Dutch Tulips, Sarah Lou Richards with John Clark. Stay the day and you’ll hear traditional music from Uganda, fiddlers fiddling, a Latin band, fuzz-rock, alt country. Young and talented Emma Smith will lead story telling as she did last year. There will be activities for kids. And there will again be an opportunity to join in the easy-to-learn circle dance to the song “Willimantic, USA.” You can sing along as well. Bet you didn’t know there was such a song. There really is, sung by the Yankee Nutmeggers in 1956. Look it up on YouTube if you don’t believe me.

This year the Willimantic Food Co-op, sponsor of the Fair, is especially emphasizing the importance of waste reduction and of recycling. Food vendors will be serving on compostable food ware. And in light of China’s ban on several kinds of plastic it used to purchase for recycle, the Co-op will be providing metal utensils that they have been collecting for months. Fair attendees can also learn about the benefit of repairing “stuff” rather than throwing it away when it doesn’t work perfectly. The Repair Café – an ongoing project that helps people learn to fix their “stuff” when it’s broken- will be on hand, with a community sewing project.

The Downtown Country Fair takes place the same day as the RiverFest, sponsored by the Willimantic White-water Partnership (details on their facebook page). Paddle from Eagleville to Willimantic and then hop on over to the Country Fair – a full day of adventure, fun, and community. Don’t miss out! 🥕



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



La FERIA
de la **CIUDAD**
De WILLIMANTIC
el **29 De SEPT.** De **10 A 4**

MUSICA • ARTESANIAS



COMIDA • JUEGOS

SEAMOS ECOVERDE EN EL 2018 • NO UTENCILIOS DESACHABLES!

GRATIS! • TODOS SON BIENVENIDO!

MERCADO
de **GRANJEROS LOCALES**

JILLSON SQUARE
WILLIMANTIC • CT

De **WILLIMANTIC**



RIVERFEST

Willimantic Whitewater Partnership

Annual Community River Celebration

**Saturday
September 29th**



**28 Bridge Street
Willimantic**



**Eagleville-Willimantic Paddle:
Shuttles from 10 am to 12 noon**

\$10 per person, \$25 per family

On the River: Live Music, Scavenger Hunt, Guided Nature Tour

PLUS: Enjoy Food Trucks & the Co-op Country Fair after-party!

www.willimanticwhitewater.org

Hello, Co-ops!

For this issue of *The Compost*, I get to share with you the wonders of *Schmidt's Wondermint* tooth and mouth paste, and the fragrant magic of *Herb Garden Naturals Balance* scented oil.

The question of the day: does our toothpaste really matter when it comes to maintaining good health?

The short answer is yes, our toothpaste matters. Many commercially-produced, name-brand toothpastes contain sodium laurel sulfate, or SLS. SLS is an emulsifier and foaming agent that has been classified as a “moderate hazard” by the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetic Safety Database and “has been linked to cancer, neurotoxicity, organ toxicity, skin irritation and endocrine disruption.” (Source: [Livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com)).

Then there's PEG, another common ingredient in commercial toothpaste. Good (or not so good) ol' polyethylene glycol. It's a petroleum-based compound that smoothes the texture of toothpaste—but we really should not ingest petroleum due to evidence of it messing with our liver and kidney function, as well as being a potential carcinogen.

These chemicals are absorbed into our bodies quite easily through the lining of our mouths. Each time we brush with a chemical-laden toothpaste, we invite SLS and PEG to set up shop. Is there a solution? Is there a health-conscious way to brush our teeth?

Yes! The Willimantic Food Co-op has a plethora of healthy, pure toothpaste, and I reviewed a particularly yummy one called *Schmidt's Wondermint*. SLS-free, PEG-free, fluoride-free, dye-free, and no artificial flavors. Too good to be true? How does it taste? and does it really clean my teeth? Yes and yes! It's smooth and flavorful, and went to work on the garlic bread I had for lunch—my mouth was minty and fresh as a breeze. And, no after-taste. Bonus: Schmidt's naturally whitens teeth as well.

What are you waiting for? Add a pure, all-natural toothpaste to your health regimen: get thee to the Wellness aisle at the Co-op!

Now, on to something fun and fragrant—*Herb Garden Naturals* scented oil in Balance, featuring the super-relaxing scents of ylang ylang and rose. It's amazing, it's awesome, and you need to get this. The end.

No wait—I'm not done! Let me back up a little—this lovely little oil is super smooth, it's emollient, and it smells like the best dream you ever had except you're awake. You can use it for a massage, a bath, or just as a moisturizer for tired, dry skin. And—ready? You support a Connecticut-based business with every purchase. Check them out:

Herb Garden Naturals is a woman-owned company located near the shoreline of Connecticut. We can see the water in the winter if we go to the top of the rocky hill behind our house and peer through the branches. It's about a mile off, as the seagull flies.¹

Sounds incredible, huh? But wait, there's more about their products:

...(they are) good for your skin, gentle and cleansing and pleasing to the eye and nose. I add herbs that are known by herbalists...I add salt from the Dead sea, and special clays, seeds, oats, pumice. My scents are from essential oils which are distillations of real plants - unlike fragrance oils which are proprietary chemical mixtures made to replicate natural scents.²

Find the magic in the Wellness aisle, this scented oil is really, really nice. And since I am certified fragrance snob, it must be noted that the ylang-ylang and rose scent combo is warm and playful, with just enough soft, buttery notes to make you forget all the stress of just about everything. (Wow, right?) A new favorite for me!

Until next time, treat yourself to some good health and fragrant magic! The Willimantic Food Co-op Wellness department has exactly what you need. 🌿

1 source: <https://herbgardensoap.com/pages/about-us>

2 source: <https://herbgardensoap.com/pages/about-us>



The Cooperative Plastic Challenge *Cari Nadeau*

As the worldwide discussion about the plastic problem explodes, we at the Coop want to do something to bring attention to it locally. So, we created a plan to do just that.

I kept track of all my plastic use for the month of June. I wrote down everything plastic that I put into the garbage can or the recycling bin. I included the plastic that went into the recycling bin because the amount of plastic that actually gets recycled is pretty dismal, especially now since China has put a ban on importing plastic waste. Even if they were still accepting it, the manufacturing and recycling of plastic is a highly toxic process, hardly making recycling a sustainable solution.

For the month of June, I created 2.12 pounds of plastic garbage and recycling. Over a year, that adds up to 25.44 pounds. The Globalist, in a 2017 article, states that "...an average person living in North America or Western Europe consumes 220 pounds of plastic each year, mostly in the form of packaging."

While my plastic use is considerably less than the average person, I still want to, and can, do better. I'd say about 95% of my plastic was from food packaging. The rest were supplement bottles and some shipping materials. I buy very little as far as consumer goods (besides food), so I didn't have any packaging other than this.

What I Learned By Doing This Experiment

My plan after finishing this for the month of June

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was to jump headfirst into a worldwide plastic challenge for the month of July, called Plastic-Free July. The challenge was to use no single-use plastic for the entire month. Well, I failed miserably on day one and realized that, in a plastic- dependent society, this task sounds much easier than it actually is. Almost everything, food and otherwise, either comes in plastic or has some component of it that is plastic.

If I were to actually succeed in this challenge, I would have to give up meat for the month, which my body does not take kindly to. Even the animals we raise on our own property are wrapped in freezer paper, which is lined with plastic to help keep it fresh in the freezer. I would have to prepare every bit of food that would go into my mouth ahead of time at home, but food planning is not exactly my strongest skill. I would have to give up the Cashew Cheese that makes eggs special again. Even canned beans and tuna cans are lined with plastic. Ouch.

Could I do all of this for a month? Sure, with some planning and dedication I could probably do anything for a month. But, I'm not interested in what I can will myself through for a month, but sustainable changes that will last me a lifetime, without having food prep consume my life.

Moving Forward

Since most of my plastic use was food packaging, I'm focusing on ways to reduce this. The main thing I plan on doing is working on getting better at meal planning and batch food prep for the week. This means I'm almost exclusively using things from the bulk and produce departments, avoiding the packaging on other items in the store.

I tried batch-cooking most of my meals for the week a couple of months ago and it was a great week. I wasn't stressed at all about meals, ate only my home-cooked food, and felt better than usual. I had my own nourishing food that satisfied my hunger so I didn't grab the bag of chips or cookie (who am I kidding? cookies) that I would

continued on page 7

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233 Main St., Manchester
www.nefamily.coop

Plastic Challenge *continued from page 6*

have grabbed when my hunger wasn't satisfied by snacks or a to-go meal. I truly believe that food cooked at home is the most filling and nourishing food we can eat. It is an act of love to prepare our own food.

The Coop Plastic Project: A Movie and a Challenge

To bring awareness to the plastic issue, we are teaming up with Sena Wazer to present the movie, *A Plastic Ocean*, on Sunday, September 23rd, at 6pm at the Mansfield Public Library's Buchanan Center. Sena will facilitate a Q&A after the movie to answer all of your questions. We invite all Coop members and friends to join us for this free film viewing.

At the movie and in the store, everyone will have the opportunity to sign up by email for the Coop's October Plastic Project. The first two weeks of October will be a prep time. We'll send you educational and inspirational emails to prepare you for the next two weeks, where we'll ask you to make at least 3 changes in how you use plastic in your life. An example would be to commit to using a reusable water bottle instead of buying water in plastic, using a reusable coffee cup at the coffee shop, and using reusable bags for grocery shopping and produce. In-store during October, there will be a merchandise display full of our favorite plastic alternatives to help make the changes a bit easier.

At the end of October, we'll ask for your feedback on the project. Was it a personal challenge, a family effort? What will you continue to work toward? We would like to compile the "data" from our challenge and report back in a later issue of The Compost. The hope is that by changing old habits, new ones will stick and encourage us to make even more changes as time goes on.

Of course, it's not totally practical to think we can just stop using plastic altogether. In the bigger picture of plastic use, we as consumers will need to tell companies what we want: packaging that is plastic free and sustainable. How realistic is this? Honestly, I don't really know. I do find it pretty hard to believe that we can replace some-



Want to reduce your PLASTIC use?

Join our **Guided Challenge:**
A month-long initiative to help reduce your family's reliance on plastic.

September 23rd, 6:00pm
Buchanan Center, Mansfield Library

See the Co-Op's screening of the award-winning documentary, *A Plastic Ocean*, with Q/A and guest speaker, Sena Wazer, ocean advocate.

Month of October
Inside the Willimantic Food Co-Op

Sign up to receive educational and instructional emails about reducing plastics at home.

Commit to making 3 lasting changes that will drastically reduce your plastic consumption.

Check out the Co-Op's wide variety of plastic-free options at 10% off all month!

one's heart and build robots that can basically run your life for you but we can't design or discover a packaging material that is a sustainable alternative to plastic... I think it's more a political issue than a materials issue; selling plastic is big money.

I don't see the overall goal to be reduce, reuse, recycle, but to be refuse (buy less stuff), reduce, reuse, recycle, rot (compost). It's undoubtedly difficult in a consumer culture, but as awareness of the issue grows, I think we'll see more people refusing to buy things that aren't in line with their goals for the environment. Even sustainable plastic substitutes would be made from the earth's resources; there is always an environmental consequence to everything that we as humans produce.

While reducing our plastic use is absolutely crucial, so is living a guilt-free life. So, the point of this whole thing is to do the best you can without making yourself crazy. We can also support the innovative people and organizations who are working on creating packaging alternatives. There are many people, just like you and I, who are coming up with solutions to this problem right now, as you read this article.

Sign up now for The Plastic Project! Email Cari @ cari.nadeau@willimanticfood.coop 



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CO-OP Month 2018: Co-ops See the Future

This October, we are joining over 40,000 co-operatives and credit unions across the United States in celebrating Co-op Month, observed nationally since 1964. This year, the National Cooperative Business Association has chosen “Co-operatives See the Future” as the theme for the month, inviting co-op members to work together to make the world a better place now and for future generations.

“From healthy food to organic agriculture, Fair Trade to building stronger local economies, good jobs to alternative energy, food co-ops have been pioneers, empowering people to work together to make the world a better place,” said Erbin Crowell, Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA). “And as our co-ops look to the future, we are working to build a more fair, sustainable, and inclusive economy that works for everyone.”

A little over a decade ago, the co-ops that would later form the NFCA began envisioning how the future might be different if they worked together. As a first step, they commissioned a study to better understand their shared impact. At the time, few would have guessed that these 17 co-ops had a combined membership of 64,000 people and annual revenue exceeding \$161 million. They also had a dramatic impact on local economies, including sales of more than \$52 million in local products and jobs for over 1,200 people. Taken together, food co-ops in Vermont were among the top 25 employers in the state!

This year, the NFCA surveyed the same co-ops to see what had changed over the past decade. Though one co-op from the original study has since closed its doors the others have continued to grow, with overall membership expanding 38% to more than 88,000 people who, together, own their local grocery store. Shared revenue has also increased 39% to over \$224 million, with sales of local products growing to \$64.7 million. Employment grew 20% to 1,485, while wages grew 69%, from \$28.6 million to almost \$48.3 million, reflecting the commitment of food co-ops to more sustainable jobs.

During the same time, the NFCA as a whole has grown, and now includes 40 food co-ops and start-ups, locally owned by more than 144,000 members and

employing over 2,300 people. Together, these food co-ops generate shared annual revenue of \$329 million in revenue, including sales of \$90 million in local products. Food co-ops are not alone in their contribution to more resilient local communities. From farmer co-ops to worker co-ops, credit unions to mutual insurance, and

housing co-ops to energy co-ops, co-operative businesses operate across the U.S. economy where 1 in 3 people are members of at least one co-op or credit union. Nationwide, co-operatives create 2.1 million jobs and generate more than \$650 billion in sales and other revenue annually. Because they are member-owned, co-ops are driven by the needs of the people who work there or use their products and services, rather than maximizing profit.

Learning more about co-ops is easy at your Neighboring Food Co-ops: Just look for the “Go Co-op”

signs that identify products on the shelves that were made by co-operatives. You may be surprised by what you find, including dairy products from Cabot Creamery Co-op and Organic Valley, fresh produce from Deep Root Organic Co-op, fairly traded coffee, tea and chocolate from Equal Exchange, seeds and bulbs from FEDCO, naturally fermented vegetables from Real Pickles, Northeast Grown frozen fruits and vegetables from your Neighboring Food Co-ops — and many others. 🥕



Food for Change Screening Oct 19

The Willimantic Food Co-op to Host Screenings of *Food For Change* During National Co-op Month!

The film examines food co-ops as a political & economic movement.

NATIONWIDE - October is National Co-op Month.

Food co-ops in 43 cities in 22 states are bringing their story to the American public in the documentary, *Food For Change*.

A local screening of *Food For Change*, an 82-minute film, sponsored by the Willimantic Food Co-op will take place on Friday October 19th.

Food for Change tells the story of the cooperative movement in the United States in a way that is both entertaining and informative. It includes interviews with co-op workers, rare archival footage, and narration by the film's director, Steve Alves.

"It's American history, from the Great Depression to the present, with co-ops as the protagonist," says Alves, "one part food and two parts politics, to three parts economics."

Alves tracks the co-op movement's quest for whole and organic foods, and their focus on sustainable food systems. The film profiles several food co-ops that have revived neighborhoods and entire communities.

No other film has examined this history.

Steve Alves is an internationally acclaimed filmmaker and member of the Franklin Community Co-op in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

With the film, co-ops can raise the public's awareness of their unique place in our country's economic and political landscape.

"Today we're experiencing both a renaissance and a challenge to American food co-ops," says Sean Doyle, General Manager of the Seward Co-op.

"Many co-ops from the 1970s have grown to be successful and dynamic businesses with sales in the millions.

Many of these are now being challenged in the organic and natural food foods market that they created. We want the public to know our story and the change we represent." 🌱

Join Us for these FREE Special Movie Screenings

In conjunction with the October **PLASTIC PROJECT**, the Co-Op is presenting:



A PLASTIC OCEAN

An eye-opening documentary film on how plastics are wreaking havoc on our oceans. Not only harming wildlife, microplastic toxins are rapidly entering the food chain, effecting all life, including humans.

6:00pm, September 23rd

**The Buchanan Center at
Mansfield Library**

Refreshments and Q&A with
Guest Speaker

OCTOBER is National Co-Op Month!

Food for Change is a documentary focusing on food co-ops as a force for dynamic social and economic change in American culture.

FOOD FOR CHANGE

6:00 pm, October 19th

**The Buchanan Center at
Mansfield Library**



**THE WILLIMANTIC
DOWNTOWN COUNTRY**

F A I R

SEPT. 29 FROM **10 to 4**

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FOOD • GAMES

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