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THE COMPOST

Vol. 44, Number 3 Winter 2022

STORE HOURS

8:00 am - 8:00 pm
Every Day

Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin*

It has been a whirlwind fall! And I don't mean just the leaves! Our Board of Directors has really hit it, working toward our goal to reincorporate our Co-op as a real co-op. I am reminded in a big way just how much work it is to work cooperatively as a group. Our bylaws committee, made up of board, management and members have been working on revising our bylaws for several years and we now have a first draft. They are posted on our website, on the new Reincorporation page. Check them out. There will be plenty of opportunity for everyone to comment and ask questions before the vote we hope to take on reincorporating (with these new bylaws) as a cooperative early next year.

As Winter is moving in, it is a good time to hunker down, cook some good food and visit with family and friends. It is a good time to be thankful for our farmers who worked so hard through some of the most challenging conditions. The drought is just another reminder of how important and fragile our natural resources are. We all need to eat! We need our farmers to grow our food! It is pretty simple and not so simple all at the same time. Farmers are stewards of our land and many resources. I am thankful for each and every one of them!

I am glad that our Co-op plays an important role in this circle – being a source of income for farmers and a source of locally grown produce for our community. We all need each other. Think of all the fossil fuel saved by not transporting our food from who knows where. Think of all the time and packaging that is saved. Think of how fresh our food is. Think how fortunate we are!

We will be sharing our good fortune (and hard work!) again this year by making donations to non profits that provide essential services in our community. Wooden Nickel Voting will happen in December to decide how to divvy up our Caring for Community 'Pot'. Everyone will get a Wooden Nickel when they shop. Then you can use it to vote for one of the 4 Non Profits who will receive a portion of this money.

Many thanks to everyone who is part of our Co-op. Whether you shop, are a member, are a working member, a board member, a staff member, a vendor. Each of us contributes in our own way to make this great thing, the Willimantic Food Co-op. 🌱

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General Manager

Alice Rubin

Management Team

Kathy Leddy

Financial Manager

Wendy Jakoboski

Produce Manager

Patty Smith

Operations Manager

Marissa Ocegvera

Front-end Manager

Corry Elm

Assistant Front-end Manager

Staff

Jessie Bance

Maxwell Calverly

Michelle Aguayo Castro

Susan Chasin

Ben Coggins

Kara Croce

Chad Dunnack

Eion Foust

Kathe Gable

Jaron Gaier

Mark Giangrave

Avery Gratton

Catherine Hahn

Bob Jennette

Saige Johnson

Brandon Johnson Nickson

Chris Klaben

Gabi Lopez

Nancy McMerriman

Joe Rodriguez

Steve Scanlon

Dalian Segarra

Naomi Solares

Christopher Swift

Antoinette Thuillier

Julio Velez

Matthew Woodward

Board of Directors

Steve Bachiochi

Linda Brock

Matthew Coolbeth

Katherine Gavin

Kathleen Krider

Niti Pandey

Joanne Todd

Manager Representative

Alice Rubin

Newsletter

Ellen Embardo

Amy Kalisher

Alice Rubin

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The Board Plans for Leadership Change

General Manager Search Committee

Our General Manager, Alice Rubin, who has led the Willimantic Food Co-op through 40 years of amazing growth and wonderful change, has announced her retirement, which will likely happen in early 2024. Technically, Alice is the only employee who reports directly to the Board of Directors. The Board is working to hire a leader to continue to bring the Co-op forward in pursuit of the Co-op's ends. The Board's work started at the 2021 Board Retreat with an exercise that helped Board members identify the qualities that are important in that leader; a sort of first draft of wants and needs to get us started. It was a time of deep appreciation of Alice while envisioning a smooth transition into the future.

The Board's work continued in 2022 with the appointment of a General Manager Search Committee (GMSC). This committee is comprised of Director members Kathleen Krider and Joanne Todd and Owner members Hannah Moore and Jeremy Schwartz. The Board delegated the process of recruitment to the committee while retaining the responsibility of making decisions as representatives of the members. The Board, through the GMSC, has retained Carolee Colter of Columinate. Carolee is a seasoned consultant who specializes in Food Co-op Human Resource development and who has decades of experience in supporting boards in hiring general managers at food co-ops.

With Carolee's guidance and resources, the GMSC conducted a survey of the Board, GMSC members, and all staff to determine the qualities we felt were necessary in a capable leader who can work with the members and lead a talented team, while also working within the framework of policy governance. The qualities identified are: retail grocery experience, strategic thinking, collaboration, accountability, professional communications, self-motivation, advocating for the Co-op, embracing the Co-op structure, inter-cultural competency, managing people, and financial management. The Board discussed each of these qualifications at length, determining how they would express themselves. The GMSC is now working through the recruiting process. And we continue our gratitude for Alice's leadership during this lengthy and at times awkward experience.

We look forward to continuing all this good work in service to the Willimantic Food Co-op and its members. 🥕

Winky's Food Review *Winky Gordon*

Foods up this time: Curried Tofu Salad by (super local) Not Only Juice \$6.99/6 oz. container; Lavva Mango Pili Nut Yogurt \$3.29 5.3 oz container; Valrhona French Cocoa Powder \$12.99/lb. in the bulk aisle.

Depending on your age, you may recall tofu being almost exclusively the domain of vegetarians, considered fringe in earlier days. We relied on it as a major source of protein, no matter how bland the taste and objectionable the texture. Now it can be found jazzed up, practically main stream, and one of many plant-based “meats” on the market. According to the Good Food Institute (GFI), “In 2020, retail sales for plant-based alternatives grew twice as fast as overall food sales in the US. Sales for plant-based meat in particular grew 45 percent.” Interestingly, the article also goes on to flag concern about the industry’s ability to keep up with rising demand and calls for attention to “ingredient, infrastructure, and investment needs.” These are the issues that consumers – at least this one- are usually not aware of but that have an effect on our food futures.

Happily for us we can find many kick-butt plant-based protein choices at our fabulous Willimantic Food Co-op. Among the choices in our prepared foods cooler is the Curried Tofu Salad made right here in Willimantic, at Not Only Juice on Main Street. I have to write about this curried tofu salad quick, before it’s gone. It’s creamy, chunky, and has a bit of crunch. The taste: rich, full, tiny kick from the curry, satisfying. This is not the tofu I bit into many years ago, thinking it was cheese, and spat it out. This is dressed up, grown up tofu that will serve well in a sandwich or salad or – as I have been eating it – just straight. I wish I had made it myself. It’s made with organic tofu, Veganaise, organic curry and turmeric, mustard seeds, salt and pepper. If you have been afraid of or disappointed by tofu in the past I encourage you to give this a try. The Coop sells several other prepared foods made by NOJ. You can also walk right over to 790 Main Street and have breakfast, lunch or a dessert.

Betcha never heard of a pili nut; me neither before this. I have been seriously disappointed by other non-dairy yogurts and so was reluctant to give this one a try but what the heck I did. This is so much better than the others. From Encyclopedia Britannica: “pili nut, (*Canarium ovatum*), tropical tree of the family Burseraceae, cultivated for its edible seeds known as pili nuts. The plant is native to the Philippines, where the pili nut has traditionally been a major source of fat and protein in the diet.” It is reported to have miraculous nutritional value: the lowest carb nut in nature; highest in magnesium + Vitamin E of all nuts;

continued on page 7

Board Doings *Linda Brock*

We keep on keepin’ on... This month the Board took a day to check in on the accomplishments of the past year and plan for our future during its annual “retreat.” A year ago, we identified 3 high-priority issues for our attention: Co-op Reincorporation, General Manager Succession, and Board Perpetuation. We have worked via several committees (with participation by members as well) to achieve quite a lot. We drafted bylaws for the new Cooperative and are holding member meetings through the next 4 months, while completing legal paperwork and setting up the member Reincorporation vote later this winter. We described the skills and strengths we will need in a future General Manager and developed criteria to evaluate candidates. And we expanded our board recruitment and education strategies, gaining candidates for the 2022 election.

None of these initiatives is “done”; work will continue through 2023. But we will also begin new ones of long-term importance to the Co-op. The first is strengthening our “Ends” policy – the statement of the Co-op’s aspirational goals – to support clearer targets and ways of evaluating our success.

But most critically, we are beginning the growth process to address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice – “DEI+J” – for all constituents. We hope you will join us in what we expect will be a multi-year journey, exploring what those concepts mean for our cooperative and what actions the Co-op can and should take.

Meanwhile, over the past three months the Board has evaluated the General Manager’s compliance with policies:

- B.8 Membership;
- B.9 Board Logistical Support; and
- B.5 Communication and Counsel to the Board.

The Board evaluated its own performance on:

- D.3 Agenda Planning;
- D.4 Board Meetings; and
- D.6 Officers’ Role.

(See the Co-op web page, About the Co-op > Our Board for the Policy Governance Manual.)

And lastly, it’s time to think about running for a seat on the Board! Information sessions will begin soon for those who might like to join in guiding these exciting endeavors, with nominations to be finalized by early spring.

Comments or questions? Use the “Contact Us” link on the web page or leave your name and contact info at the Store; we’ll be in touch!

Board Meetings are now held in Webb Hall on Eastern Rd on the ECSU campus (rear entrance), first Thursday of the month 7:00-9:00pm (check web site to confirm location & agenda). Members welcome! 🌱

TERRACYCLE – A NEW RECYCLING OPPORTUNITY *Alice Rubin & Nancy McMerriman*

TerraCycle? What's that?

I kept seeing it on the Late July Chip bag but I didn't know what it was or what it meant. Finally I got around to looking at their website to see what it was all about and this is what I read.

TerraCycle isn't your typical recycler. We develop ways to collect and recycle trash that is not generally accepted by traditional municipal recycling services, including cigarette butts, toys, mascara wands, and much more.

What makes something municipally recyclable depends on whether your local recycling company can make a profit recycling it. If the cost of collecting and processing the waste is lower than the value of the resulting raw material, it will likely be locally recyclable. If the cost is higher, then it likely won't be. The good news is that most trash can be technically recycled—practical recyclability all comes down to the underlying business model.

TerraCycle can recycle the hard-to-recycle because we work with brands, retailers, and other stakeholders

who fund the recycling process. Our free recycling programs are sponsored by concerned stakeholders so you can recycle for free. It's a way for them to take voluntary responsibility over this important externality. We hope to see similar responsibility taken when it comes to other environmental externalities, like deforestation, climate change, biological diversity etc.

Your Co-op has signed up for Terra Cycle free recycling programs for Late July Snacks, Go Macro Bars, Acure body care and Tom's of Maine. We have collection boxes in the front of the store, near the Exit door. What you bring in to get recycled does not have to be spotless, don't spend hours and gallons of water scraping out that empty toothpaste tube! But it cannot contain any liquid – nothing that could leak at any point in its journey. So keep these empty products out of your garbage and bring them into the Co-op, we'll send them on their way to be responsibly recycled.

We will expand this program as new brands step up and take responsibility for the packaging they use. 🌱



Downtown Country Fair

We were so sad to cancel the fair this year. I think that it was the first time ever. We've already put in our reservation for Jillson Square on Saturday September 30, 2023.

See you there!



REINCORPORATION LET'S GET REAL!

We want to be a REAL CO-OP
We need to REINCORPORATE!

WHAT IS REINCORPORATION?

When the Willimantic Food Co-op was formed in 1980, the Connecticut cooperative statute was antiquated, making incorporating as a non-stock corporation a better option. That is what we have been for the past 42 years. We worked to change the law so that we could become an actual cooperative. The new State statute better supports how a consumer co-op works. Now we must change the legal standing of our corporation with the state, hence, "reincorporation."

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- **A cooperative is legally different from other forms of business.** A consumer cooperative is not the same as a for-profit business. Reincorporating under this new statute legally recognizes us for what we really are.
- **Reincorporation allows us more options.** For example, if we reincorporate under the new law we will have more options in how we manage our assets (member equity and income) according to cooperative principles & values.
- **Becoming a true cooperative encourages the formation of more cooperative businesses in our state.** If we reincorporate, we set an example to other businesses that the for-profit corporate model is not the only option, that consumer cooperatives exist and can thrive in our state, and that they serve and benefit members and communities.

MEMBER INFO SESSIONS

IN-PERSON (no registration needed)

Sat Dec 10, 10am–11am
at First Congregational Church 199 Valley St, Willimantic

ON ZOOM

Sun Nov 6, 3pm–4pm - REGISTER HERE: <https://tinyurl.com/2z8nxdaw>

Wed Jan 11, 7pm–8pm - REGISTER HERE: <https://tinyurl.com/vbs9pvsa>

How do we DO IT?

Willimantic
Food Co-op, Inc.
A CT Nonstock
Corporation
Chapter 602 Nonstock
Corporations

WHERE WE ARE NOW

NEXT STEPS:

Our board drafts and gets legal opinion on new bylaws that align with the cooperative statute, while reflecting our existing values and practices. These would become our new cooperative's bylaws.

Members and staff learn about the changes and give input through a series of live and virtual information sessions.

Our board makes any needed updates to the proposed bylaws based on member input.

Our board files new articles of incorporation with the State, creating a new co-op that has no members or assets until:

Members vote to merge our existing corporation "with and into" the new cooperative entity, making our member-owned business a true Connecticut Cooperative!

WHERE WE WILL BE

Willimantic
Food Co-op
A CT
Cooperative
Chapter 595
Cooperative
Associations

WILLIMANTIC
FOOD CO-OP
a community market

Helen's Wellness Review *Helen Scanlon*

Greetings, dear Co-ops! For this issue of *The Compost*, I reviewed two ABSOLUTELY sumptuous products from the *evanhealy* skincare line.

I have reviewed *evanhealy* products before and found them to be gentle, yet highly effective. The company is dedicated to using the power of organic plants to clean and moisturize skin—there is not a weird-sounding chemical to be found in any of their products. Everything in the *evanhealy* line is sourced from small farms in the U.S. and Europe—with a special focus on women's cooperatives and the farming villages of Africa. As the company states on their website, *evanhealy.com*: We source our ingredients from remarkable human beings who share our values.

Vegan, paraben-free, non-GMO = Good stuff!

First up—*evanhealy Whipped Shea Butter Lip Balm*. Oh, right—another lip balm. Stop yawning! This is not your ordinary lip balm. Not even close. Not even in the same galaxy.

What? Have you not yet discovered the magic of shea butter? The most emollient moisturizer on the planet? No? Then I urge you, as in *RIGHT NOW*, to get on the shea butter train. And whipped shea butter? In a lip balm? This stuff would have made my grandmother lightly touch her clavicle with her perfectly manicured fingers and utter, “Oh no, sweetheart—are you still using your old lip balm? Use this, and stop that silliness.” (Allow me to digress: My grandmother was a highly discerning woman who never allowed a substandard product to touch her skin so trust me on this one).

Evanhealy Whipped Shea Butter Lip Balm needs to be in your skincare kit, especially with the colder months coming up. This is not a debate, it needs to be there! My grandmother would insist.

Next up is the most amazing body oil you will ever use: *evanhealy Sweet Blossom Body Oil*.

You may recall that I am fragrance collector and this body oil has earned a place in my permanent collection. It is just that remarkable. Subtle, yet bright. Assertive, yet

airy. Earthy, yet clean. Not overpowering—and get this—it almost twinkles. Can a fragrance do that? Yes, it can—just treat yourself to this body oil and you will exclaim, “Dang! That Helen was right!”

It doesn't just smell like sweet oranges and autumn leaves (you can thank neroli flower oil, frankincense, and ylang ylang for that), it moisturizes skin with a gentle whisper of sunflower seed oil, sesame seed oil, jojoba, and apricot seed oil. Now that's a real skincare A-Team! And *evanhealy Sweet Blossom Body Oil* is not sticky or greasy. As in, at all.

Helpful hint for hands cracked open by dry, cold air: mix this with your favorite hand lotion for an extra punch of emollient power to last the whole day—and that fragrance!

The exceptional quality of *evanhealy* is apparent, as is *evanhealy's* holistic approach to skincare. Our skin is always hard at work to protect us. Honor and respect your skin, please. Be gentle with it—don't scrub it raw or dry it out with harsh cleansers—use a product that works with your skin in that cooperative spirit we all know and love. *Evanhealy* is all about that—so please explore beyond the two products I reviewed here.

Until next time—take a moment to breathe deeply and be grateful—and give your skin the good stuff. 🌿



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Food Review *continued from page 3*

a complete protein, and contains all 8 essential amino acids; contains antioxidants which are known to fight inflammation. And so on.

All kinds of happy exclamations about the Lavva Mango Pili Nut Yogurt! I will admit to being wary of this yogurt given its unappetizing puce color. Braving that, once I tasted the yogurt, I began making all kinds of good-food groans. This is some rich, smooth yogurt that really truly tastes like mango (the third ingredient). No weird after tastes or unpleasant texture sensations in my mouth, just satisfying, creamy goodness. Coconut water and coconut cream are first and second ingredients with coconut powder further down the line. The coconut is a good back up, not overwhelming the bright taste of the mango. Other ingredients are: plantains, pili butter, cassava root starch, lime juice, Himalayan salt. This is not a low fat food – a whopping 7g (35% RDA) of saturated fat, and only a modest amount of protein – 2g. It is the kind of decadent delicious that should be part of everyone's dietary repertoire, in my not very well informed not so humble opinion. Highly recommended.

There's not much to say about the company or its story. The product was developed by someone following a keto diet as part of her cancer recovery. The company is based in South Carolina and was recently sold to Next In Natural, a new "venture business," directed by a business whiz credited with making Chobani a market success.



Lavva is distributed out of Brooklyn NY. We carry a strawberry Lavva yogurt as well.


And, finally, the chocolate beverage dream come true: Valrhona French Cocoa Powder. Voila. This is decadence in powder form, far superior to other cocoa powders on the market. On a recent shopping trip, I found the Co-op was out of this cocoa powder and so

I bought another one. Just not the same. A big meh. (This word, I learned, comes from The Simpsons TV show, born in the 1990s. It is not the same as feh, a Yiddish word that essentially means "gross.") The substitute cocoa powder was perfectly fine, not gross, but certainly not as impressive as the Valrhona. I'm a dark chocolate girl; this is the powder equivalent. But this is not quite a fact as "natural" vs. Dutch processed is actually the truer dark chocolate with its slightly bitter bite.

I like to make my hot chocolate with oat milk, which is sweet enough that there is no need to add sugar. It takes a little patience and focus to heat the oat milk to the perfect temperature but when it all comes together – the rich cocoa powder, the warm, sweet milk- it really is like heaven. This cocoa powder is robust and a good representative of the "yang" foods category. It satisfies a specific craving for the heartiness that is also in coffee and black tea. I'm not sure how else to describe it. It's not wimpy. It's not bitter. It's just darn good. It's probably more of an adult cocoa powder, but kids with sophisticated taste might like it just the same.

Valrhona cocoa beans are sourced from several countries as well as grown on their own plantations in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. The company began in 1922 and remains headquartered in France. In addition to producing cocoa powder and chocolate products, Valrhona also operates L'Ecole Valrhona, providing classes on all things sweet for both the amateur and professional baker. You can take their classes online, in person in Brooklyn, NY, or you can go to France. Valrhona is a certified B Corp business: "B CORP certification distinguishes companies that are certified to meet rigorous standards of performance, accountability, and transparency in both social and environmental concerns. Specifically, it is the certification recognizing companies which not only seek to be the best in the world but seek to be the best for the world." Do your part to make the world a better place: eat chocolate, in all its forms.

And that is the end of this edition of my Food Review. Thank you for reading. Thank you for shopping at the Co-op. As always – do your best to be kind to one another and to yourself. See you at our store. 🌱



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HOLIDAY TABLES

The Co-op will have space available every Saturday and Sunday from November 26th – December 18th for local artisans to sell their homemade goods. Set up starts at 10:30 am and selling ends at 7 pm.

Please email Alice at alice.rubin@willimanticfood.coop if you would like to reserve a space or have any questions.



Our Holiday Gift to You!

5% off

for all Member-Owners

Every Member-Owner who has paid their \$120 equity in full or is up to date on their payments will receive 5% off all of their purchases made between Saturday, November 26th (Small Business Saturday) and December 31st

Many thanks and much appreciation to all of our Member-Owners!

