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THE COMPOST

Vol. 45, Number 1 Spring 2023

STORE HOURS

8:00 am - 8:00 pm
Every Day

In Honor of Earth Day Alice Rubin

The Earth – our home. What an amazing place. As I watch the thermometer rise from -8 to 43 in just a few hours, I marvel at the flexibility and fortitude of nature. All of the plants and animals surviving in all kinds of extremes. And all of us, who despite ourselves also manage to survive the extremes we have had a hand in creating.

We need to take good care of the Earth, our home. We all take care of our individual homes. We repair, paint, protect, maybe even clean our homes. We also need to protect our 'bigger' home – the Earth.

Each of us does this to varying degrees in our life - going solar, recycling, managing invasive plants on our land. The Co-op too, does quite a bit of protecting the Earth in our day to day, although it is time consuming!

All of the food on our shelves is shipped to our Co-op. It arrives to us in its final form which means each ingredient has already been shipped multiple times – from the grower or producer to the manufacturer, the packager, the wholesaler and finally to us, the retailer. Unless that product is lucky enough to have been locally grown! All of this shipping involves fuel of course. It also involves packaging and not just the bottle or box or bag you see on the shelf. Groceries arrive at the Co-op on a pallet that is wrapped in what is commonly known as shrink wrap – think giant rolls of Saran Wrap. Each individual case is packaged - sometimes in cardboard, sometimes a cardboard flat with plastic over the top. And I haven't even started in on refrigeration and all of the resources we use to keep food fresh. What I am trying to say is that the grocery business consumes a lot of resources and generates a lot of waste!

In our daily operations our Co-op workers do all that we can to minimize our negative impact on the Earth. In the produce department anything not sellable but still edible is donated to the Covenant Soup Kitchen. Working members pick it up at the Co-op and deliver it to the Soup Kitchen weekly. We also donate any expired grocery or dairy items. Produce that is too far gone for the Soup Kitchen is picked up by a local farm for composting and some gets picked up to feed small flocks of chickens.

Our members are also part of this effort. Refilling your containers in the Bulk department is a great way to reduce packaging. The goal of reducing packaging sometimes comes at a cost - for the Co-op to staff and stock and

continued on page 8

CONTENTS

In Honor of Earthday.....	1
Good News.....	2
Food Review.....	3
Board Doings.....	3
Raw Vegan Recipes.....	4
Wellness Review.....	5

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Good News for the Environment!

Connecticut has expanded its 5¢ bottle deposit redemption program to include a greater variety of bottles. The Co-op is now required to charge a bottle deposit on all bottles made of glass, metal, and plastic that contain:

- 150ml/5oz to 3 liters/101oz carbonated beverage—
- 150ml/5oz to 2.5liters/85oz non-carbonated beverage—

This list includes energy drinks, teas, juices, kombucha, plant waters, sport drinks, and soda.

The state is working with manufacturers to get all these added products labeled correctly with ‘CT 5¢’ but in the meantime we are still required to charge the deposit and take back the bottles as of January 1st, 2023.

Since all the new products that now fall under the bottle deposit program lack this labeling it might be more confusing for all of us – shoppers, as well as Co-op staff - about which to return and which to accept back.

We have all the affected products linked with the deposit in our Point of Sale system, so it will show up on your receipt. We’ve placed signs around store notifying shoppers of the change, and printed a list of all the products in case you might need to refer to it.

And in 2024, the deposit will go up to 10 cents! 🥕

Winky's Food Review Winky Gordon

In this review: Fix and Fogg’s Everything Butter, \$8.99 / 10 oz. jar; Ukraine Alp Blossom Cheese, \$26.99 /lb.; Just Ice Tea’s Honey Green Tea, \$2.79 / 16 fl. oz. jar

Hello Co-ops— I am trying something different this episode. I’m going to review only factors of taste, and of packaging! I started going down the rabbit hole of exploring the “about” of the producers of one of these foods and eventually stopped. I found myself feeling tired and cynical. For today, there are only so many perky origin stories, proclamations of being a super food, or saving the world through production and packaging, that I can tolerate. At some point it all just sounds like noise. So I’m sticking with the facts, ma’am, just the facts (my opinion, actually) about taste and how I judge the proverbial book by the cover.

The star of this review is the Everything Butter by Fix & Fogg, which Corey led me to. Seeds: hemp, pepita, chia, sesame, sunflower, flax. Nuts: almonds, peanuts - which are really a legume, we know, but we’re calling nuts in this instance. It was only a matter of time before some bright food entrepreneur would take the leap and mash ‘em all together. Also in there is sesame oil and New Zealand salt - not ordinary salt. I’m guessing the nuts and seeds are raw as the label doesn’t specify otherwise.

Before I get to the taste, which is a definite “yes,” I’ll tell you about the packaging. The glass jar is just fine as

continued on page 6

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Board Doings Linda Brock

I’M SO EXCITED!!!!...because after more than 4 years of work by your Board and Management we’re ready for members to vote for our reincorporation as a true cooperative in the State of Connecticut. As our web site says, “Let’s get REAL!”

We changed State law (collaborating with other co-ops and with credit unions); developed improved bylaws; consulted over the course of a year with a legal specialist in cooperative law; arranged for online voting for maximum member participation; and it all comes together this month after our 43rd Birthday Party. What could be better timing to move ahead with our Co-op’s rebirth!? Take a look at the Reincorporation page of our website and watch your email for the details, and...get online (or to the store) and VOTE!

And speaking of voting...now is the time to consider making a run for it. For the Co-op Board, that is! Two seats are up for election, & with our goal of maintaining a strong board, we want to give members a choice of candidates. We’re especially looking for someone with a strong financial background, who might consider the Treasurer office in a year or two. Or get a sense of what board work is like by becoming Board Scribe, handling minutes for Board meetings (earns a working member discount). Interested? Contact board-chair@willimanticfood.coop

In other news, over the past quarter the Board has evaluated the General Manager’s compliance with policies:

- B.3 Financial Conditions & Activities (Q3);
- B.2 Financial Planning; and
- B.4 Asset Protection.

The Board evaluated its own performance on:

- D.7 Board Committee Principles;
- D.8 Governance Investment; and
- C.1 Unity of Control.

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

With all that, we’ve still found time to work on our other priorities: the hiring process for the next General Manager is right on track (thanks, General Manager Search Committee!) and we’re continuing to consider changes to our “Ends” policy and build our understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice issues as they relate to the Co-op.

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! **Upcoming Board Meetings**, 7-9 pm: March 2 (Access Community Action Agency); April 6 and May 4 (Webb Hall (rear entrance) on the ECSU campus. Members welcome! 🥕

2 The Compost

The Compost 3

Raw Vegan Recipes: An Introduction *Derri Owen*

In 1969 after hearing about vegetarianism for a few years, I became the first vegetarian in my dorm at UConn. I made the choice because of love for animals, knowing I didn't want any to be slaughtered on my account. I knew so little about the logistics that I just put a pile of raw, soaked soybeans on my dinner plate instead of meat. Later I was fortunate to be able to take a course in vegetarian nutrition. We used Francis Moore Lappé's Diet for a Small Planet as our textbook. There were only a few commercial vegetarian products around in those days, and little support.

After graduating from college and reading everything I could on vegetarianism, I ended up subscribing to the North American Vegan Society's magazine. It was inspirational, loaded with ethical and practical wisdoms, including the use of the word "ahimsa," which the society defined as "non-hurting." I knew that's the way I wanted to eat – non-hurting – so I became a vegan. The same magazine introduced raw food veganism as a great way to get lots of nutrition, so I became a raw food vegan.

My boyfriend and I had lots of fun trying to nourish ourselves on raw produce throughout New England's seasons. We discovered avocados, new to our food store, and would talk our grocer into selling them to us for 25 cents each because they were a little soft! We attended some raw food conferences with great international speakers. It was a happy, wonderful time amongst the enthusiastic new raw-vegan groups!

Years later, I was blessed with three children and still had a raw vegan home. Challenged to provide the children with fun food for holidays and festive school occasions, I began inventing party recipes for them. The early ones were decorated with little figurines and paper parasols.

Now the children are all grown up and I am still a raw vegan, continuing to produce special meals for holidays, potlucks, and guests. Some recipes are well liked by more conventionally eating friends. And I've made some good raw vegan friends along the way!

On an ordinary day, I eat lots of bananas and other fruits, greens, tomatoes and other veggies, very simply served. On special occasions, out come the recipes.

Here is a favorite, suitable for delicious springtime eating. It's quick to make, allowing for lots of time to be outdoors in the big world.

Look for more raw vegan recipes in upcoming issues of The Compost. 🌱



Pink Nori Roll-Ups

*Serves two as a very rich main course,
or four as a side dish.*

Ingredients:

2 cups pecans

and have on hand:

3 tomatoes

1 package dried wakame

1 package untoasted nori

Special Equipment:

blender

Blend two cups raw pecans with enough tomato to make a pâté consistency (not too runny!).

Spoon onto untoasted nori pieces (¼ of a sheet is a good size for a bite).

Top to taste with dried wakame bits. Roll up and enjoy.

While the pecan-tomato pâté can be stored in the refrigerator for a day, once seaweed is added, the roll-ups need to be eaten right away.



Helen's Wellness Review *Helen Scanlon*

Hello dear Co-opers! By the time this issue of *The Compost* goes to print, things should be warming up with the promise of spring. Right now, as I type, there is a wind chill/severe cold warning, and the wind sounds like a freight train ripping through the woods surrounding my home. It's a tad frightful—so you could say I am looking forward to spring!

Lucky me, I get to review three new perfect-for-spring Wellness products for you!



First up is Treefort Naturals Cucumber Rose Cooling Face and Body Mist. Ah, so nice. It smells like a summer garden and actually cools the skin. Think ahead to summer with those heat waves and keep this in the fridge and spritz whenever you want! Hey, that's a pretty great idea...take notes, people. But I digress—check this out from the official description from treefortnaturals.com:

A refreshing blend of hydrating floral waters, aloe Vera and Cucumber hydrosol.

Great for face, body and hair.

And look at these all-natural, earth-friendly ingredients: Distilled Water, Rosewater, Witch Hazel, Aloe Juice, Radish Root Ferment Filtrate, Cucumber Hydrosol, Neroli Hydrosol.

Those of you who have read my reviews know that I am a fragrance collector, and this product does double duty as a fragrant body mist. Treefort Naturals Cucumber Rose Cooling Face and Body Mist is not all perfume-y and overpowering—it is delightfully light and green (can something smell green? The answer is yes!)

Next we have Hi-Bar Lavender and Jasmine Deodorant—yes, the shampoo bar company! Another great springtime product that does double duty—and it features ZERO plastic packaging. THIS STUFF SMELLS GREAT! All-natural and plant-based, too—nothing toxic to put on your pits. Well done, Hi-Bar! And it lasts all day (even after

I went running I still smelled like a meadow full of wild-flowers. You think I am joking? I'm not!)

From hellohibar.com:

So you want to look, smell, and feel your best, AND you want a nice, plastic-free world to live in? Sounds reasonable to us.

It turns out that all-natural, 24-hour protection doesn't have to come in plastic containers. We've taken the high-end ingredients you'd find in an upscale deodorant and put it in an innovative cardboard applicator. Ta-da! Every day is a great smelling day. And no need for the plastic junk.

Save the planet, and smell great doing it. Well, sign me up!

Last and most certainly not least, we have Davids Peppermint Toothpaste featuring this awesomeness (from davids-usa.com): natural whitening / antiplaque / fresh breath high perfor-

mance safe + clean ingredients, EWG Verified fluoride free, sls free, recyclable metal tube, 98% usa origin ingredients, premium natural peppermint oil flavoring proudly made in usa

Did you know that over consumption of fluoride can weaken tooth enamel and even pose a cancer risk? Check out the American Cancer Society for more information at cancer.org.

Davids Toothpaste is proudly fluoride free!

If you are committed to using products that feature clean, non-toxic ingredients, add Davids Toothpaste to your oral health routine. I found that it tasted really fresh and minty, and it did a great job of gently cleaning my teeth.

Give it a try!

Until next time, remember that self-care is not a luxury—it is a necessity! Every day!

In wellness,

Helen 🌱



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Food Review *continued from page 3*

is its shape and size. The label, however, is an unfortunate mustardy yellow, too similar and not flattering to the nut butter, also in the yellowy-brown-orange palette. If I were choosing food solely based on attraction to color, this one would not make it. Fix & Fogg did not ask me, but I recommend they revisit the packaging.

Truly more important, this food is rich and nutritious and exciting to the senses. There's a lot going on here: first you get creamy, smooth, then the chia seed pop and end with a hint of salt. It's a gustatory adventure. I've eaten the stuff straight on toast or crackers, with jam on top, on an apple and I bet it would be a fine complement to chocolate. I'd be curious to hear about how kids respond to the Everything Butter. They might think it's cool, or they might find the multi-texture factor a little weird.

The Ukraine Alp Blossom wins prizes in both the packaging and taste departments, although the packaging is really part of the cheese itself. This semi-hard, buttery cheese is made with cow's milk, salt, rennet – standard ingredients- but then is finished with herbs and flowers pressed into it like a feathery coat. The botanical bits are shredded cornflower, marigold, lavender, parsley, and savory. It's also dressed with garlic, sea salt, onion, oregano and paprika. The herbs and flowers are arranged such that they portray the colors of the Ukrainian flag, yellow and blue. The cheese is not bland and, in addition to the herbs and flowers, it has a hint of sharp. I especially like the outside edges where the plants make up at least half the taste



experience. Although more expensive than my usual choices, this delightful cheese would be a lovely contribution for a special occasion or as a gift.

Two more things about this cheese, beyond taste and packaging. 1) it's exported from Germany by Kaesuche, "a German cheese affineur and broker." From the Academy of Cheese: "An Affineur is a term for someone who practices the art of affinage, which is the process of caring for, ripening and aging cheese." A nickel for you if you ever heard that word before. 2) One dollar for every pound of cheese sold is donated to World Central Kitchen, the NGO founded by Chef Jose Andre to provide free, nutritious meals in places affected by adverse events such as natural disaster and war.

I have been feeling a little pouty about the elimination of Honest Tea from our product line, even though the former is a subsidiary of Coca-Cola. It's been one of my faves for a relatively inexpensive grab and go liquid refreshing something, either caffeinated or not. Its replacement – Just Ice Tea, made by Eat the Change- is good but different and I am slow to adjust to change. Low and behold, it turns out the Just Ice Tea is actually the evolution of Honest Tea, now discontinued altogether, developed by its original creators and wrested out of the hands of Giant Industry. (Even though I said I wouldn't, I went down this rabbit hole a bit. It's an interesting story if you care to track it. It speaks to the way profit determines product and to both the implications and opportunities of this kind of interruption).

continued on page 8



*Fix & Fogg's Everything Butter
(see Winky's Food Review, beginning on page 3)*

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Food Review *continued from page 6*

No, it is not the same as Honest Tea and yes, it is more than acceptable. The sweetness of the agave and honey has a different effect than just honey – more robust maybe. While I did not compare the amount of sugars in each, I note that this one has 19 grams which is quite a lot. The quality of the green tea itself is smooth, no bitterness as can happen. It's made with organic green tea, agave syrup and honey – all organic and fair trade certified – as well as mysterious “natural flavor,” organic citric acid and ascorbic acid. It's more expensive than its predecessor but yes, I will be buying and I bet it will quickly grow on me. In addition to the Honey Green Tea, we carry several flavors of Just Ice Tea.

Its label: sweet, innocent, simple. White background with an orange honey comb stamped with black letters. Lots of empty space drawing me in. Funny what a label can convey. Thinking now about the disappearance of Honest Tea and the appearance of Just Ice Tea, I see the label as a nod to the former but spare, with less visual clutter. Sort of like a quiet resurrection of something that has gone missing.

Having tromped through and gotten philosophical about three products through the lenses of (mostly) just taste and appearance, it's time for me to wrap it up. From HH Dalai Lama: “Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” And, as always, I encourage this towards both ourselves and one another. See you at our store. 🌱

In Honor of... *continued from page 1*

clean costs us more in the Bulk department than it does to do the same in the Grocery department. I think that it is money well spent!

There are many other things that we do at the Co-op, lots of small things that add up to make a difference. We don't buy garbage bags – we reuse plastic bags the bulk goods are shipped in. Any useful items that we receive as packaging – bubble wrap, 5 gallon buckets, Styrofoam boxes, are set out front for anyone who can use it to take. We offer a 5 cent credit whenever you refill your own bag or container, and 25 cents for bringing in your own mug for your coffee or tea. We collect the twist ties and tags that are on our produce and send those back to Tag Back for recycling. We collect certain packaging (Late July snacks, Macro Bars, Acure and Tom's of Maine) to send back to Teracycle, who turns it into various useful items.

We are always looking for ways to first – refuse, second – reduce, third – reuse – lastly - recycle. If recycling even actually happens these days.

There are many factors that go into the everyday choices that we each make. I am sometimes immobilized by indecision in the grocery aisle. I pick up the thing I want/need. I think about the plastic packaging. I put it back on the shelf. I look for something else that will meet my needs, without the packaging. Can I compromise? Go without? All I want to do is make dinner! It feels like it shouldn't be so hard. But sometimes it is.

It is up to each of us to change how we live our lives so

that our home – the Earth – will be here – hopefully in one piece – for the generations to come.

I don't have a perfect solution or a magic answer. I trust that we all – including your Food Co-op - are doing the best that we can to take care of the Earth. 🌱

