

Community Co-op Community News

FOOD CO-OP

A monthly publication with your good health in mind

February 2006



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Elevation facing Cordata Parkway (design possibility)



Elevation facing Westerly Road
(design possibility)



Architect Jim Williams presents a slide presentation of Cordata Store plans to Co-op members at the January Dining with the Directors forum.

Second Store Design Unveiled

Holly O'Neil, Member Involvement Facilitator

Can you envision a community space with a kitchen and a view of Mount Baker, a “vegetated roof” with garden beds, and benches around the store for folks to sit down?

Above are some of the exciting features unveiled in the first architectural draft of our second store. The basic concept is to build a store similar in size to our current store, with a focus on being as environmentally conscious as possible. To design the building, we interviewed a number of architects and selected Jim Williams. Then we held several member forums and staff forums to get input on what features were desired. Jim did an excellent job of weaving our ambitious mass of dreams into a coherent form, and on January 11, he unveiled the first draft at the Member Forum. Here is what he showed us.

Community Space

The store will have two floors—the first floor will be the grocery store and deli, and the second floor will have staff offices and the community space for meetings and classes. The second floor will span about 20 percent of the first floor, and we can make it bigger in the future when we have more money. The community space will be accessible by stairs and by an elevator. There will be big windows facing east, and tables for extra deli seating.

Deli

The Deli will be similar to what we currently have, but the kitchen will be significantly larger with enough room for a bakery and salad prep area that will supply both stores. This will allow us to slightly expand the meat

department in the existing store, which is currently too small. The seating area for the deli extends from the main building (about 25 ft. by 25 ft.) with one wall that can be rolled up when the weather is warm. Next to the eating area is a sizeable outdoor patio with more seating.

Roof Gardens

Many members had requested garden beds for educational programs, and the deli staff wanted to grow fresh herbs for the deli. The problem, of course, is trying to grow edible things so close to traffic. So the architect suggested a clever solution: garden beds on the roof! Members will be able to go onto the roof on pathways, from the community space. The rest of the roof will be vegetated—an innovative green building technique in which low-growing, drought-tolerant plants are planted as a cover on the roof, which holds the rainwater, provides insulation to the building, and extends the life of the roof.

Transportation

Near the main entrance of the building, there will be a covered area to hold about 20 bikes. The green line Whatcom Transit bus will stop right in front of the store and, of course, there will be parking. The current design is for about 90 parking stalls, with many native shrubs and trees. The water from the parking lot will go into catch basins and be shunted into an

Porcelain Tile Detail—
Cordata Store
(design possibility)



Column Detail—
Forest Street Store

underground vault. The vault will treat the water with state-of-the-art filters before releasing it into the Bellingham storm sewer system. In one corner of the parking lot we are planning to have a small, credit/debit card station supplying biodiesel!

Kids' Area

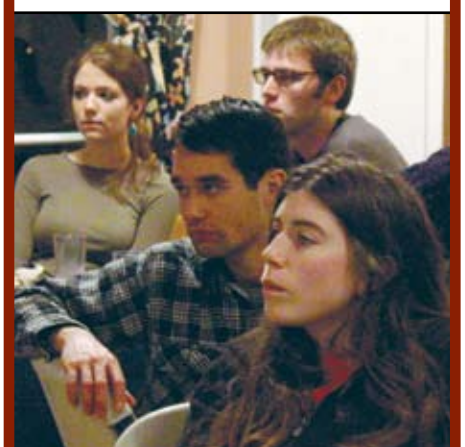
Of course we will have a great little kids' area—just like we have in our current store. The plan now is for the kids' area to be near the front of the store adjacent to the service desk. Next to one of the bathrooms will be a comfy nursing room for moms to cuddle up with their babies in privacy.

Layout and Style

As you can see in the drawing, the general exterior style of the building will have a similar feel to our current store. Some key differences on the interior are that the produce department will be the first thing you'll see when you enter the store and the aisles will be a bit wider. There will also be benches throughout the store for folks to rest and chat for a moment. Creating a feeling of welcome, warmth, and community is one of the primary goals of the layout and style.

Cordata Store Feedback

At the member forum, initial response to the design was positive. The biggest question raised was whether or not there would be adequate deli seating. The total seating (upstairs and downstairs) is currently designed to be about the same as we have now at the Forest Street location, but some members wondered if that would be enough. Another issue raised was the proximity of the outdoor seating area to the parking. We identified possible solutions such as enclosing the area with a fence, putting it on the other side of the building, or buffering it with another layer of shrubs. The draft plans and notes from the Member Forum are located at the member kiosk—so if you have any feedback, please chime in. It is so exciting to see this dream actually start to take shape!



Photos by Ginger Oppenheimer

Co-op Community News

is published monthly
by the
Community Food Co-op
1220 N. Forest St.
Bellingham WA 98225
360-734-8158

Co-op Community News is published as a service for members. Letters from members are welcome (*See guidelines below*). The deadline for submissions of letters is 8 pm on the 5th of the month preceding publication.

Editor:

Diana Campbell

Design/Production:

Joanne Plucy

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Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Letters must include your name, address, and a daytime phone number. Please respect a maximum of 150 words. Due to space considerations, we regret that we may not be able to publish all letters.

Please send your letters to:

Newsletter Editor
Co-op Community News
1220 N. Forest
Bellingham, WA 98225
dianac@communityfood.coop



New Member Tour

New to the Co-op?

We offer new member tours tailored to your individual needs and interests! To set up your tour, contact RuthAnne Muller at the service desk, call 734-8158 or email ruthanne@communityfood.coop.

January 11, 2006

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

Jean Rogers, Board Administrator

The Board discussed the process for establishing the Co-op's product criteria. While we do have a criteria worksheet, the Co-op has relied primarily on the expertise and values of the grocery and store managers. It was agreed that a more institutionalized criteria would be valuable as the Co-op expands, in order to keep our product selection criteria strong and representative of our stated values.

In response to a member's concern, the Board agreed to send a letter to the Wolfgang Puck Company expressing concern over the company's foie gras products. The member informed the Board that these products have been linked to practices of animal cruelty. The Board asked the company to describe its practices and informed it that we would consider taking the products off the shelves if there is reason to believe animal cruelty is involved in Wolfgang Puck's production of foie gras.

The Board then considered possible themes for the Co-op's upcoming annual meeting, scheduled for March 25. The group agreed to consider two possible topics, the true cost of food, or sustainability

indicators in our bioregion, depending on the availability of a good speaker.

The Board also revisited the proposed patronage dividend system to be sure that the group was consistent in its description of patronage and how it works. Part of the goal for the patronage dividend is to adopt a system that creates more of a connection to the membership. The dividend would be based on the same assets we have now, redefined to offer a more tangible return on members' investment, and largely paid for by tax savings.

The meeting concluded with an executive session to discuss matters related to the second store project.

Complete minutes for this, and all Board meetings, and a complete copy of the governing policies are available at the service desk. You can also find complete minutes of the Board meetings posted on the Co-op's website at www.communityfood.coop.

The first 10 minutes of every Board meeting are reserved for member input. Our next meeting will be held on February 8 at 7 pm in the Co-op Connection Building. Hope to see you there!

Co-op Supports Matthew Chase Memorial Fund

The Co-op offers shoppers the opportunity to donate to a memorial fund for the family of Matthew Chase, 31, who died while snowboarding at the Mt. Baker Ski Area on Monday, January 9.

Chase's family established the memorial fund at Whatcom Educational Credit Union (WECU) for his young family—his wife Stephanie and two sons. Stephanie Chase has worked in the Community Food Co-op's accounting department for six years. Donations to the fund will go to her and their two children, Broedy, age three, and Ryder, age 18 months.

Shoppers may donate to the memorial fund at any register at the Community Food Co-op.

If you wish to donate directly through WECU, you may make a deposit at any of their branches or in a night drop. WECU will also accept cash advances on a VISA card, or WECU account holders may transfer directly from their own account into the memorial fund. Those who donate should refer to the Matthew Chase Memorial Fund.

Thank you for joining us in helping Stephanie and her sons through this difficult time.



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Chase

Co-op Board Elections—Your Vote Counts!

One of the distinctions between the Co-op and any other grocery store is that we are a member-owned business. This means that you, the members, vote to decide who you want to oversee the success of the Co-op and our mission, vision, and values. A foundation of our co-op is the principle of democratic member control, and like all democratic processes, your participation is what ensures its success.

This is a year of exciting growth for the Co-op. Members have participated in forums on our second-store project, voted on our bylaws and a patronage dividend system, and now will select three directors who will help to "steer the ship" during a

three-year Board term. Once again we are fortunate to have well-qualified candidates for you to choose from.

The election begins at the Co-op Annual Meeting and Party on March 25 and runs through April 10 (look for the voting box and materials at the service desk). You can also mail in the ballot that will be in your March newsletter. We look forward to counting your vote this year!



LOCAL LOCAL Discounts

Local Business Partners

Hey Co-op members—take advantage of the great discounts offered by our Local Business Partners and support local businesses. So far more than 20 businesses have signed up

to give Co-op members a special offer or discount on their services or products. Check this growing list on our website at www.communityfood.coop/membership/.

The Co-op Board of Directors

Meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 8, at 7 pm
Co-op Connection Building
1200 N. Forest St.

Members are welcome to attend. If there is something you want to discuss at the meeting, contact Jim Ashby, General Manager (734-8158) or Phil Buri, President (671-3129) by the first Monday of the month so your item can be included on the agenda.

General Manager:

Jim Ashby 734-8158

Board of Directors:

President	Philip Buri	671-3129
Vice-President	Derek Long	592-2614
Treasurer	Karen Thomas	650-1397
Secretary	Judy Willis	647-2497
	Negash Alem	738-9015
	Brent Harrison	398-7509
	JoAnn McNerthney	671-0493
	Brooks Dimmick	758-7610
	Steven Harper	650-9065

Store hours:

Open 7 days a week
8 am to 9 pm

Swan Café Deli hours
8 am to 8 pm

Visit us on the Web at
www.communityfood.coop

Our Vision

A just and livable world with cooperatively owned enterprise as a cornerstone of a sustainable economy.

Our Mission

A consumer-owned grocery store serving our community with quality products and honest information.

Our Values

We are committed to maintaining the economic viability of the Co-op in order to:

Promote cooperative ownership by fostering member involvement and responding to member needs.

Build community by respecting diversity and cultivating connections within the Co-op and Whatcom County.

Encourage informed choices by educating ourselves and our community around issues of food, healthy lifestyles, the environment, and human rights.

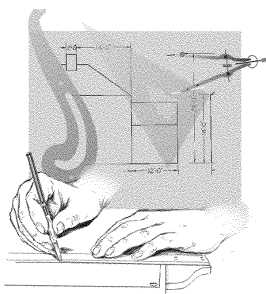
Model ethical business and employment practices by acting with honesty, integrity, and respect in the workplace and marketplace.

Promote a sustainable economy by supporting organic and sustainable food production and other environmentally and socially responsible businesses locally, regionally, and nationally.

The Nutritionist Is In

Wednesday, February 15
3–5 pm
in the Co-op

Bring your questions on nutrition and health to the Co-op's nutritionist, Judith Willis, MPH RD CD. She'll be available at a table near the front of the store. She's ready for your questions about nutrition, healthy eating, and diet.



2nd Store Update

Holly O'Neil, Member Involvement Facilitator

We have a wetland on the second store property! Okay, so it's really just a low grassy spot where water collects about one to two inches deep during heavy rains, but it is on our new property. We just had the site assessed by Common Ground Environmental Consulting (located here in Bellingham) and they developed a first-rate mitigation plan for us. Wetland mitigation is required by law if construction impacts a wetland. Mitigation is used to replace the ecological functions that are lost as a result of the construction. I am generally dubious about human attempts to replace the functions of a natural system, but in this case, sadly, the natural system was sacked long ago. The total area, about 4,200 square feet along the western border of the property, was cleared of native vegetation decades ago and the habitat value is basically nonexistent.

Our wetland is typed as a depression and is not part of an aquifer recharge zone, nor does it connect to the groundwater, but catches water temporarily above a layer of clay soil and drains it down to a pipe under the road. So, the mitigation plan is to reduce the width of the depression, increase the length of it, constrict the outflow, and then plant the entire area with native species (see sidebar).

The design for re-vegetation is both for the depression and for the dry "uplands" around it. Habitat for birds and small mammals will be created, water filtration and storage will be enhanced, and the area will make a nice buffer between the store and the property next door where a park is located. Our revitalized wetland will also have a walkway and interpretive signs for educational purposes. We're learning a lot as we move through the process of preparing this property. For more complete information, see the Co-op website at www.communityfood.coop.

2nd Store Project Timeline

2001-2002

Conduct Member Survey
Gather Member Input (ongoing)
Conduct Market Research
Develop Board Policies

2003

Establish Project Team
Hire Architect
Identify Potential Sites

2004-2005

Select Site

Fall 2005-Spring 2006

Design Store

Develop Building Design

Locate Green Materials
Approval of Plans by Board
Develop Construction Documents
Obtain Permits

Summer 2006

Begin Construction
Purchase Equipment

Summer-Fall 2007

Begin Equipment Installation
Complete Construction
Hire Staff
Stock Merchandise
Open Store



Photo by Analiese Burns

The wetland on the Co-op's new site is a small, low grassy area located immediately in front of the stand of trees facing Cordata Parkway.

Wetland Plants

Local biologist, landscape designer, and LEED-accredited professional Analiese Burns of Common Ground Environmental has provided us a preliminary list of plants that will be incorporated into our wetland mitigation plan. The following list, by plant type and common name, will form the basic "backbone" of the plan. The final plan may include other plants.

Trees	Pacific crabapple Black hawthorn
Shrubs	Red-flowering currant Douglas maple Red elderberry Snowberry Nootka rose Red-osier dogwood Tall Oregon grape
Herbs/ Emergents	Sword fern Slough sedge

WA Schools Go Organic for Lunches

How bad the school lunches are is something of a joke to many adults who don't exactly have fond memories of school lunches from childhood. But now schools in Olympia, Washington, are determined to change that. They're going organic.

Parents are driving much of the push for healthier food in schools. At the elementary school level, cafeterias are serving organic options. One grade school in Olympia, Lincoln Elementary, actually managed to cut its cost by two cents per meal. Eliminating the dessert option more than compensated for the extra cost of organic ingredients. The school even offers an organic salad bar.

At higher grade levels, most of the change takes place when vending machines are stocked. Instead of traditional options like soda, candy, and potato chips, the vending machines are now stocked with healthier options. Gary Hirshberg,

CEO of Stonyfield Farm, got the idea to make the changes when his son reported eating junk food at school. Today, Stonyfield Farm stocks schools with refrigerated vending machines that sell healthy treats such as Newman's Own Pretzels, Stretch Island Organic Fruit Leather, Silk Soy Milk, and Stonyfield Farm Fruit Smoothies.

Some skeptics might question whether or not kids will eat the healthier options. It turns out that the answer is yes. Even in inner-city neighborhoods where students don't fit the profile of the typical organic consumer, kids are eating it up. Other school districts that have implemented similar offerings are found in Rhode Island, California, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. The more that parents demand change, the more likely it will be that children



all over the country can finally have access to a healthier lunch at school.

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Quote of The Month

"A growing body of research shows that pesticides and other contaminants are more prevalent in the foods we eat, in our bodies, and in the environment than we thought. And studies show that by eating organic foods, you can reduce your exposure to the potential health risks associated with those chemicals."

From the Organic Consumers Association and an article by Consumer Reports titled "When it Pays to Buy Organic," February 2006. See their website at www.consumerreports.org/cro/food/organic-products-206/overview.htm.



Volunteer Thanks

Our heartfelt thanks to these very helpful folks

Brianna Boehland
Julie Clinton
Mamie Galston
Erika Jett
Craig Kerr
Jeff Maudsley
Megan McGregor
Diana Moss
Ellen Murphy
Chantel Murray
Joan Packer
Rich Prouty
Erin Schadt
Sharon Souders
Campbell Thibo
Anthony Vergillo
Carol Waugh
ZinaQilaa



Clean and Sanitary SaniCart Wipes

Many of our customers asked for it—and we got it: a dispensing station and a supply of SaniCart Wipes. Stop by the front door on your way into the store and pick up a wipe for your grocery cart handles. They're a great way to reduce germs and cut down on spreading colds and flu between fellow shoppers. Good Health!

Cashiers Learning New Numbers

The Co-op cashiers will be learning all new produce price look ups (PLU) during the month of February. This may mean that moving through the checkout lines might take a bit longer until everyone adjusts to the new numbers.

We are switching to universal produce PLUs (the ones printed on the little stickers you see on avocados and such), which will benefit everyone in the long run. Our staff will be able to cashier at stores across the country (all conventional grocery stores and many co-ops use universal PLUs), and when we hire new, experienced cashiers they should already know the



Photo by Jeanne Flacy

numbers and training will cost less.

We want members and shoppers to know that we will learn them as fast as we can, but it will take some time, so bear with us!

Community Shopping Day Maple Alley Inn

Kevin Murphy, CCN Staff

It's 11:25 on a Wednesday morning—five minutes until lunchtime at the Maple Alley Inn. Spirits are high. The kitchen crew is relaxed and joking, transferring salads, refried beans, and broccoli into serving bowls, while the chicken enchilada casseroles cool on the counter—it's so calm, you'd never guess they're preparing lunch for a hundred. Out in the dining area, guests are congregating and I take the opportunity to chat with a few of them. It seems to be unanimous—the Maple Alley Inn is the place to eat in Bellingham!

Maple Alley Inn provides nutritious, balanced home-cooked meals in a safe, respectful atmosphere for individuals who are low-income, mentally ill, or homeless. A program of the Opportunity Council, it operates out of the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship at 1708 I Street serving about a hundred people every Wednesday and Thursday. Besides the food, the Maple Alley Inn also offers outreach and referral services on behalf of other social service agencies and organizations, as well as offering vouchers for free showers at the YMCA.

For funding, Maple Alley Inn relies on a combination of grants and donations from various public and private sources. For the last several years, Maple Alley Inn has held its own fundraiser event, Dine Out for Maple Alley Inn, which has been a huge success. Held in early May, about 25 local restaurants donate a percentage of their day's business to Maple Alley Inn. The

bargain space rental rate offered by the Unitarian Fellowship, and the fact that much of the food served is donated, help the dollars go farther.

As for Maple Alley Inn's top rating among its patrons, the number one reason is the food. While other places in town serve free meals to approximately the same population, no one else, according to the people to whom I spoke, can come close to the quality, the variety, or the nutritional value offered by Maple Alley.

Much of the credit for this belongs to Lillian Palermo, who as coordinator of Maple Alley Inn for the last 15 years, is responsible for planning menus, assembling ingredients, scheduling volunteers, managing client outreach, and referring guests to other social service organizations. "Maple Alley Inn is special to

me because it gives me the opportunity to help people in need in a specific, concrete way. I love variety and creativity," says Lillian, "and Maple Alley Inn provides me with both." Robin Dickson, who is Lillian's assistant, and who has a part-time position coordinating the actual meal preparation, is the only other paid staff person.

Lillian praises the generosity of Bellingham businesses that donate food to Maple Alley Inn. A lot of the food, especially produce, comes from the Co-op—Lillian shows up at 7 am every Monday to collect fruit and vegetables. She also picks up day-old deli sandwiches from the Swan Café

Maple Alley Inn provides nutritious, balanced, home-cooked meals for low-income, mentally ill, or homeless...



Volunteers prepare large quantities of inviting, nutritious food for hundreds.



You can support Maple Alley Inn by shopping on their Community Shopping Day, Saturday, February 18. Two percent of the day's sales will be donated to this local organization.



Photos by Kevin Murphy

At Maple Alley Inn volunteers serve hungry guests.

and other items not quite fresh enough to sell, but plenty good enough to eat. Other businesses that regularly supply the Maple Alley Inn are Joe's Garden, Arrowac Fisheries, Hempler's B&B Meats, and Avenue Bread. Emanuel Lutheran Church in Everson supplies the Inn with seasonal veggies from its garden, and Maple Alley Inn is also a regular beneficiary of the Small Potatoes Gleaning Project. "During the growing season, when we get so much fresh produce," says Lillian, "we work together much like I imagine farm families and their neighbors combining efforts during harvest."

With such abundance, Maple Alley Inn is a far cry from the stereotypical Depression-era soup kitchen dispensing watery broth and stale bread. Lillian says Maple Alley Inn always tries to serve three dishes that are either salad or vegetable. The chicken enchilada casserole that was the main course on the day I visited was typical in that they always feature one hearty main entrée—other possibilities include salmon, quiche, a stew or some other casserole. Generally, they offer a vegetarian option as well.

The quality of the food isn't the only thing Maple Alley Inn has going for it. Quite a few guests commented on the congenial ambiance. And certainly a major reason for that is the dedication and consistency of the Maple Alley staff and volunteers. Unlike the many non-profits that are plagued by volunteer turnover and burnout, Maple Alley Inn has a remarkably stable team.

Lillian, who has been on the job since 1991, says there are several volunteers who have been working there longer than she has and almost everyone's been on the job for several years (Maple Alley Inn began in 1987). Week after week, year after year, the same 20 volunteers do the work, and if any of them go out of town for a week or two, Lillian knows whom to call to fill in. The workers know each other and they know the guests. They take pride in what they're doing.

As the guests file past the food, enthusing about the day's offerings, it's apparent that their appreciation is also part of what makes Maple Alley Inn such a success. "Everything here is seasoned with two ingredients," says one guest, with a wink, "love and sesame seeds!" To be honest, I didn't see that many sesame seeds, but the other ingredient was hard to miss.

Maple Alley Inn is a far cry from the stereotypical Depression-era soup kitchen...

Community Shopping Days

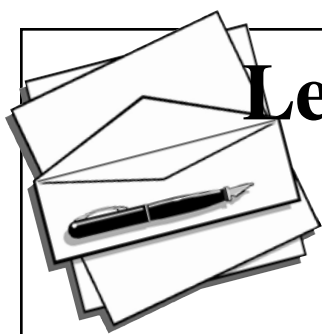
What is a CSD?

Each year the Co-op invites local organizations to apply for a Co-op Community Shopping Day (CSD). Organizations are selected for their service to our community in the following areas: Food, Environmentally Sound Agriculture, Peace, Human Rights, or Environmental Issues. One additional organization is selected with a focus on Education of Youth. The Co-op's Member Affairs Committee (MAC) reviews and recommends 12 organizations and the Board of Directors gives final approval. For more information contact Jean at 734-8158.

2006 Community Shopping Day Schedule

JANUARY 21	Community to Community Development
FEBRUARY 18	Opportunity Council—Maple Alley Inn
MARCH 18	Explorations High School
APRIL 15	North Cascades Institute
MAY 20	Veterans for Peace
JUNE 17	Camp Kirby
JULY 15	River Farm
AUGUST 19	Old Town Christian Ministries
SEPTEMBER 16	Bike to Work and School Day
OCTOBER 21	NSEA
NOVEMBER 18	Bellingham Food Bank
DECEMBER 16	Mother Baby Center





Letters to the Editor

I read with interest your piece on the 2nd Store Update. I live just off Cordata and Horton Road and am thrilled that it will be possible for me to walk, bike, and bus to the new store. I can't wait for it to open. This area is the fastest growing in Bellingham. There are thousands that will be able to do the same thing.

The new co-op will save miles and gas for everyone living from Meridian north. It is not convenient or safe to bike or bus to the current from my area, Cordata, but it will be to the new store.

The new co-op is right next to Whatcom Community College. Hopefully students will learn and develop better eating habits as a result of having a whole food choice close by instead of [fast food].

Thank you for selecting this site for the new store. Please open ASAP!

Shirley Jacobson

I am responding to the Co-op newsletter article by Holly O'Neil about a member who wondered why we are opening a store in the Cordata area. Along with that it is a growing area, can we remember that members live out there also. Not all of us live in Bellingham proper and, therefore, would make it a longer trip. I happen to live on Lummi Island, as do quite a few members, and the new store will be considerably closer considering fuel, car emissions, etc. I think that member might consider someone beyond themselves and their neighborhood.

I thank you for the plans of a new store and look forward to it as I shop at the Co-op for 90 to 95 percent of my household shopping.

Melissa Weston

While I was pleased to see that you published my letter regarding patronage dividends in your last issue, I was less pleased with your response.

My questions:

- What tracking will be done by patronage dividend cards?
- What assurances do we have that our actual purchases will not be tracked?
- Who will have access to this information?
- Will this data be shared with any other group?

Your entire answer: "If you want to receive a patronage dividend, the Co-op must track your purchases, but the only pertinent information is the dollar total at the end of the year." This does not address my questions, only dodges the issue.

Given the intrusiveness of government and industry into our lives, I think members deserve a more direct response. A solid answer to these questions will reassure us that you have our concerns in mind.

Sincerely,
David M. Laws

The Co-op's response to David Law's letter on tracking of purchases associated with patronage dividend cards (both in the January 2006 issue) seems to me to miss the point.

The response was that "the only pertinent information is the dollar total at the end of the year." I would agree, but the response did not say that no non-pertinent information would be collected—which is what I hope would be the case. If you collect non-pertinent information, then people could acquire that information against my wishes.

The Co-op needs to tell all members what information will be included in the tracking and why. I, for one, do not believe it is impossible to avoid collecting non-pertinent information and would hope you are planning to collect only the dollar totals.

Sincerely,
Chris Suczek

Co-op Replies on Member Transaction Histories

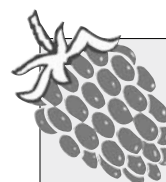
Thanks for inquiring about this topic. The Co-op's current point-of-sale (POS) system contains members' transaction histories, however, the Co-op has a privacy policy that states: "The Community Food Co-op protects the confidentiality of all member information. No information about individual members will be made available to any outside party." In addition, the Co-op does not examine your purchases or use the data in any way (i.e., for advertising, direct marketing, or purchasing decisions). The member side of our current system keeps a running total of purchases. No item-level data is recorded in that database.

Neither of the above policies will change in any way if the patronage dividend system goes into effect, although I would modify the internal policy to state, "the Co-op will not use the line-item data (your transaction history) in any way." The new POS system, which will be installed this summer, is definitely capable of tracking item-level data in a searchable database. We are currently awaiting information about whether we'll have the option to turn this function off or will have to purge it periodically.

If you are interested in receiving a patronage dividend, you will need to use your scannable member card—the policies above will continue to protect your purchasing information as they currently do. If you would prefer, you can choose to have a non-scannable member card, which does not allow for an individual's transaction history. Choosing a non-scannable card means you choose to forfeit a patronage dividend.

Please rest assured that we have absolutely no interest in keeping item-level information about our members. Apart from providing our mailing service with names and addresses for newsletter and other mailings, we strictly adhere to our privacy policy.

Ginger Oppenheimer
Membership/Marketing Manager



Volunteer Opportunities

Annual Meeting and Party

The Co-op's Annual Meeting and Party will take place on Saturday, March 25. This is a fun and festive volunteer opportunity! Folks will be needed to help with setting up, decorating, working at the door, in the kids' space, with the Board elections, cleaning up, and other activities. Look for the sign-up sheet at the service desk.

Community Volunteers

The Co-op gives volunteer coupons to members who volunteer with the Bellingham Food Bank, the Small Potatoes Gleaning Project, the Whatcom Land Trust, and the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.

Join the MAC

The Member Affairs Committee (MAC) meets the last Wednesday of every month from 5–7 pm to consider questions raised by our members and to work on board and community-based activities.

Receive a \$5 coupon each time you volunteer. For more information, call Jean at 734-8158.

Composted Manure for Your Garden

Attention gardeners: You can obtain well-composted horse manure through a local Whatcom

County non-profit—Animals as Natural Therapy, an organization that facilitates animals teaching individuals the essential life skills of respect, communication, and trust. Kids raise money for day camps and lessons by bagging the manure, which is available for \$5 per 12-gallon bag, \$25 per truckload (self-load and haul), or \$40 per truckload delivered within 10 miles of the farm located at 721 Van Wyck Road in Bellingham.

For more information, call 360-671-3509 or see their website at www.animalsasnaturaltherapy.org.



Ask the Nutritionist

Judy Willis, Nutritional Consultant

Q: How many days is my turkey good after I have cooked it?

A: Before we consider the appropriate length of time to keep leftovers, we should review appropriate preparation methods for this item. Even though some cooks (like my mother) tell you that they have been defrosting turkey on the counter for years, no foods should be left at room temperature to defrost. The outside of any item quickly reaches room temperature while the inside remains cold. It is this outer area that may contain bacteria from touching and processing that will easily multiply before the rest of the meat thaws. It is also important to remember that when cooking a turkey, the stuffing should be cooked separately because the stuffing is a perishable food that is particularly dense, and the turkey would be overcooked before the stuffing reached the appropriate temperature. Remember when you

remove any meat from the oven, the temperature will continue to rise five to 10 degrees over the next few minutes—this is called carryover cooking. Be careful not to overcook any meat products as this makes them less palatable.

A whole turkey should be cooked to an internal temperature of 180 degrees F., along with separate parts like thighs, wings, and drumsticks. A boneless turkey roast should be cooked to 170 degrees F. Stuffing should be cooked to 165 degrees F. Duck or goose to 180 degrees F.

As long as you have defrosted, cooked, and stored a turkey appropriately, you can enjoy some of your meal items for a few days. Turkey, after the initial cooking, keeps up to 3–4 days. Stuffing should only be held for 1–2 days. Cooked fresh vegetables can be held for 3–4 days. Rice can be held for



Photo by Joanne Plucy

one week. Cooked seafood should be held for only two days. Most importantly, when reheating be sure that all leftovers are heated to at least 165 degrees F.

Keys to food safety

- Wash hands often—this may eliminate nearly half the cases of food-borne illness.
- Keep raw meats and ready-to-eat foods separately: Store raw foods below prepared foods in your refrigerator and use separate cutting boards for raw meat products.
- Cook to proper temperatures to destroy bacteria.
- Refrigerate promptly below 40 degrees. Leftovers should not stay unrefrigerated for more than two hours and in hot weather (80 degrees F. or above), no more than one hour.
- When in doubt, throw it out!

Sehome Neighborhood Association Meeting

**Tuesday, February 21
7 pm
(Potluck at 6 pm)**

**WECU Education Center
511 E. Holly St.**

The Community Food Co-op is in the Sehome Neighborhood and encourages your participation if you live here, too!

Healthy Connections

Cooking, health, and well-being classes offered by the Food Co-op

All classes (unless noted) are held in the Co-op Connection building on the south side of the parking lot on Forest Street. **Registration requires payment in full.** Stop by the Co-op service desk in person, or call 734-8158 (credit card payment only). For any other information, contact Kevin at 734-8158 or email kevinm@communityfood.coop.



FEBRUARY

Gluten-Free Meal Planning
with Judy Willis, RD, CD
Wednesday, February 1, 7-9 pm
Free Event—Registration Requested

If you or someone in your family is among the nearly one percent of the population suffering from Celiac Disease (also known as Gluten Intolerance), this class is for you! Come explore gluten-free menu planning—we'll talk about how to meet your nutritional needs on a gluten-free diet, how to read labels relative to gluten-free eating, and how to incorporate alternative grains into your meal plan. Co-op nutritionist Judy Willis has designed this class to help you create gluten-free meals to meet the needs of your family in a nutritional, tasty, and fun way.



Winter Greens
with Jean McFadden Layton, ND
Thursday, February 2, 6:30-9 pm
\$16 members, \$19 non-members
The bounty of the winter garden is reflected in the year-round abundance of leafy greens in the Co-op. Eager to partake of this abundance but not sure how? Dr. Jean McFadden Layton, naturopathic physician and former professional chef, has some ideas. Maple Mustard Green Sauté, Vegan Red Chard Rollups, Cauliflower and Mustard Greens with Peanut, and Pasta with Kale Sauce are all warming recipes for this cold season that enhance the verdant energy of these green powerhouses.

Health and Healing Through Homeopathy
with Monique Arsenault, RC,
Monday, February 6, 6:30-9 pm
Free Event—Registration Requested
Homeopathy is a system of medicine investigating the relationship between the mind and the body. How the two are related is different in each person and this is the fascination behind homeopathy. In this class we will discuss the meaning of such concepts as health, well-being, and disease, while comparing and contrasting homeopathy with other prevailing medical models including the traditional Western approach, the Chinese medical model, naturopathy, and yoga. We will talk about the history of homeopathy, how remedies are made, and why they are free of side effects.

Cook Your Chicken
with Pacific Café's Robert Fong
Tuesday, February 7, 6:30-9 pm
\$29 members, \$33 non-members
For wine option, add \$7
Roast Chicken Stuffed with Wild Rice and Cranberries, Boneless Steamed Mushroom Chicken, and Chicken Noodle Soup. For those so inclined, we'll have wine to complement the poultry at the rate of 6 ounces for \$7.

Dynamic Energy Meets Dynamic Diet
with Scott Paglia, LAc
Thursday, February 9, 6:30-9 pm
\$20 members, \$24 non-members
Winter is here, bringing with it the usual players—rain, wind, more rain, and hopefully some snow. Rather than wait around for the opportunistic virus to tear into you, why not boost your immunity by creating meals that work in harmony with nature. Tonight we focus on dishes featuring the often misunderstood chili pepper. Chili provides great depth of flavor as well as provides a very useful warming quality to our foods. Meals will take us south of the border with stuffed ancho chilies, and even further south with a fantastically easy to make chicken dish from Ethiopia.

A Crash Course in Healthy Eating
with Tom Malterre and Ali Segersten of Whole Life Nutrition
Friday, February 10, 5:30-9 pm
\$25 members, \$29 non-members
The evidence that a healthy diet can improve your quality of life is overwhelming! Living longer, staying trim, and being pain-free and disease-free are all associated with eating well. Join the Chef and Nutritionist team of Whole Life Nutrition as they walk you through the entire process of shopping for, cooking, and eating a delicious and nutritious meal. You'll be shown where key ingredients are located on the store shelves, see the preparation of those ingredients, and then sample their delightful flavors in one of Chef Ali's memorable dishes. The evening's menu will be developed with input from class members.



Mammals in Bird Communities
with David Drummond
Monday, February 13, 7-9 pm
\$10 members, \$12 non-members
Northwest birds and mammals have co-evolved in their shared communities over time. This elegantly balanced energy matrix of floral and faunal life forms is an intriguing study. We will examine niche overlap, interactions and the interplay of humanity within our related habitats. Learn haunts, habits and handprints of our local mammals in this image-illustrated program. Bring your critter stories to share!



A Chocolate Tasting
with Pacific Café's Robert Fong
Wednesday, February 15, 6:30-9 pm
\$29 members, \$33 non-members
For wine option, add \$7
A post Valentine's Day treat! Taste an array of fine chocolates from premier San Francisco chocolatier Richard Donnelly, the Pacific Café and a

surprise new boutique chocolatier. A special feature of the class will be the making of a fine dark chocolate ganache. A 6-ounce portion of wine to go with the chocolate is available for \$7.



Curries and Coconuts
with Mary Ellen Carter
Thursday, February 16, 6:30-8:30 pm
\$20 members, \$24 non-members
For wine option, add \$6
Enjoy the aromatic blends that make up the quintessential tastes of Thai food. Learn to blend your own red and yellow curry pastes using fresh spices such as lemongrass, galangal, coriander and chilies. Add coconut milk and create marinades and soups suited to your unique taste. We will make a red curry marinade for a chicken satay, and a vegetarian yellow curry with pineapple served with jasmine rice. A six-ounce sample of wine selected to complement the food is available for \$6.

African Cooking
with Assefa Kebede of Nyala African Cuisine
Monday, February 20, 6:30-9 pm
\$20 members, \$24 non-members
The chef and owner of Vancouver's award-winning Nyala African Cuisine demonstrates the preparation of Couscous Marrakech, a spicy one-pot meal from Morocco made with lamb, vegetables, couscous (semolina wheat), and raisins. He will also make Yeshimbira Asa (Ethiopian-style garbanzo flour cakes). Be sure to bring an appetite!



Hold on to Your Heart—Cooking for Heart Health
with Tom Malterre and Ali Segersten of Whole Life Nutrition
Tuesday, February 21, 6:30-9 pm
\$20 members, \$24 non-members
Scientific studies have proven over and over again that diet and lifestyle changes can reverse cardiovascular damage, and that eating certain foods can help you hold on to your heart. Certified Nutritionist Tom Malterre will discuss the history of diet and cardiovascular disease ending with the latest recommendations. Personal Chef Ali Segersten will demonstrate the preparation of some fabulous heart protective foods. On the menu: Vegetarian Chipotle Chili, Arugula Salad with Lime Vinaigrette, Sticky Brown Rice, and Heart Healthy Chocolate Brownies.

MARCH

The Absolute Kick Butt Cancer Book
with Sharon Crozier
Thursday, February 23, 7-9 pm
Free Event—Registration Requested
Not content just to address the medical aspects of her cancer, four-time survivor Sharon Crozier sought out others who had survived the often-devastating disease. The Absolute Kick Butt Cancer Book is the product of that process. In it, Sharon writes of the tools many of those people used to stake a claim on their own lives. "When survivors look closely at why they survived and others didn't, amazing things are discovered. So amazing, they have to be shared."

Nutrition and Women's Health
with Judy Willis, RD, CD
Monday, March 6, 7-9 pm
Free Event—Registration Requested
From isoflavins and soy protein to menopause and breast cancer to calcium and osteoporosis. Many products and issues are being aimed at women in particular, often leaving us wondering if we are making the right food choices. Don't be misled by the abundance of information on eating healthy. Come explore some issues specific to women's nutrition with Co-op nutritionist Judy Willis.



Cooking with Chinese Herbs
with Pacific Café's Robert Fong
Tuesday, March 7, 6:30-9 pm
\$27 members, \$31 non-members
For wine option, add \$7
Time-honored Chinese soups offer robust health and longevity. Learn about lotus root, ginkgo nuts, lily buds, fai san and matrimony vine berries. Make clear super-healthy yet tasty brews such as Double-Steamed Beef Broth with Ginseng and Chicken Soup with Wood Ear Fungi.



Flower Essences for a Vital Life!
with Diana Pepper
Thursday, March 9, 7-9 pm
\$10 members, \$12 non-members
Headaches? Fatigue? Tension? Stress? Frequent Illness? Come to a dynamic discussion on how to use flower essences to correct energy imbalances that feed physical, psychological and emotional imbalances in your body. We will also explore methods of intuitively choosing the right essences for each situation.

Wine Notes

Wines for Lovers

Vic Hubbard, Co-op Wine Manager

There is nothing like a glass of cold rosé on a hot summer day and the cold days of February don't usually bring to mind sitting on the deck drinking rosé. However, with Valentine's Day and its red-colored themes, and the incredible close-out deals on 2004 rosés from our distributors making way for the soon to arrive new vintage, it is time to think rosé!

And, besides, what could be more romantic than a fine wine from Southern France—home of rosés as good as any in the world. Drink these wines as aperitifs, as done in France, or they are made to order for salmon or spicy Asian style foods.



The rocky landscape of Les Baux belies the cache of wine stored in the cool depths beneath the hilltop village carved in limestone (above). Vic Hubbard's wife Diane is barely visible (left, center of photo) standing in the entrance to one of Les Baux's massive cellars.

Photos by Vic Hubbard



Chateau de Flaugergues, Rosé du Languedoc 2004, France. \$6.99

Don't let the low price fool you—this wine is a classic dry rosé from France's Languedoc region. Estate-grown grenache, cinsault, and mourvedre (all red varieties) are blended together, macerated, and left to ferment on the skins for 12 hours before being drawn off into stainless steel tanks to finish fermenting. The color of red wine comes from the skins. To make rosé, only limited skin contact is allowed, preserving its pale pink to red color. This wine has deep translucent pink color. Flavors like pomegranate and guava with accompanying tartness round out this sublime rosé.



Mas de Gourgonnier, Les Baux de Provence Rosé 2004, organically grown, France. \$16.95

The wildflowers, herbs, and dust of the arid, rocky region of Provence in Southeastern France seem to be alive in the aromas of this 100 percent organically grown rosé. It comes from Les Baux; the famous medieval hilltop village carved out of the limestone that predominates in this area. The sun and romance of the south of France is wrapped up in this beautifully colored traditional



Ironstone Vineyards Obsession, Symphony, California 2004. \$6.49

The name alone makes this wine a ringer for Valentine's Day. It is a youthful, vibrant, slightly sweet, slightly fizzy white wine made from the symphony grape (a Muscat-white-Grenache cross). Its light sweetness and floral aromas make it an easy-to-like alternative to rosé, suitable for neophytes and seasoned wine drinkers alike. Try this wine with spicy foods and rich cheeses or Caesar salad, and it makes a great cooking wine.



Sonoma Valley Portworks, Deco Port with Chocolate Essence, California \$17.95, 500 ml.

Chocolate and port are classic Valentine's gifts. They are combined in this sweetly decadent wine made from young California ports blended with aged Australian ports along with a portion of bittersweet dark chocolate. It comes in a romantic package, too; a tall, slender bottle with a painted face on the label emphasizing red lips. For romance, try this wickedly rich after-dinner wine with tiramisu or crème brûlée, coffee, and candlelight.

Indulge with Fair Trade Chocolate

Cat Moleski, Weaver Street Market

Holidays, special events, Valentine's or anytime—our minds turn to the pleasure of chocolate. While it might be a simple delight, it is not a simple product. Chocolate, like coffee and petroleum, makes our lives better and like coffee and petroleum it has an economic, social, and political past, present, and future. The first people known to have made chocolate were the ancient cultures of Mexico and Central America. Shortly after the arrival of the Spanish, chocolate became a commodity for export around the world. Like any valuable commodity there are political and social forces that have bent and shaped chocolate production to the world market's need. Indigenous producers have been shoved aside for large plantation farmers, upsetting the delicate balance of the ecosystem in which chocolate was created.

Today, however, we have forward-looking people and companies like Equal Exchange and Global Exchange who use Fair Trade practices to help small family farmers. Fair Trade practices strive to pay better-than-market prices directly to farmers and producers. More money can restore health and vigor to their economy and help protect the rain forest that shelters so much more than just cacao trees.

The work that these companies

do and the market share they achieve create pressure and opportunity for other companies to follow suit. One such company is the Dagoba Organic Chocolate Company. Dagoba is committed to preserving the rain forest where cacao grows and in creating direct partnerships with the indigenous farmers and where possible, retaining heirloom cacao plants. (Who knew there were heirloom cacao plants? I'm glad someone does). They look for high quality cacao that is grown sustainably, organically, and under shade. They are family-owned and brew their chocolate in small batches. All of their chocolate is certified organic, and much of it is also certified Fair Trade.

When selecting chocolate, consider buying Fair Trade and indulge your chocolate passion guilt free!

Cat Moleski writes feature articles for the newsletter/website for the Weaver Street Market Co-op, with two locations in North Carolina.



Fair Trade Chocolate Products at the Co-op

Equal Exchange is a leader in the Fair Trade business world, providing us with Fair Trade coffee, baking cocoa, hot chocolate mix, and chocolate bars. Other Fair Trade chocolate bars include Green & Black, Divine, Rapunzel, and Dagoba organic.

Watch for Fair Trade specials in the store during the month of February.



Pots de Crème au Chocolat

This impressive chocolate custard is a sweet, enticing, and fun treat for you and your sweetie. And, it's so easy to make, you'll have plenty of time to celebrate with your Valentine. This recipe is an all-time favorite from our Swan Café & Deli bakery team. Bon appetit! Serves 10.

- 3 c. heavy cream
- 12 oz. bittersweet chocolate
- 9 egg yolks
- 1-1/4 c. whipped cream
- 1 c. toasted chopped hazelnuts

Put cream and chocolate in a saucepan, melt over low heat, and then bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and carefully whisk in the egg yolks one at a time.

Divide evenly into small dessert cups and chill for at least one hour. Spoon whipped cream on top and sprinkle with nuts.

Photos by Joanne Plucy

New Grocery Items for February

Kim & Scott’s Bavarian Soft Pretzels—Frozen Entrée section

Featuring fresh cheeses, hardy spices, and un-bleached flour, these gourmet soft pretzels are made from a traditional European recipe that creates a rustic handmade pretzel with the doughy softness of fresh baked bread. Choose from regular Bavarian or sourdough Parmesan. Simply heat and eat.

Columbia Gorge Organic Orange Juice—Dairy Cooler

Columbia Gorge now offers their OJ in a half-gallon-sized container. A special process in which each orange is individually squeezed creates a superior tasting orange juice. Columbia Gorge never uses frozen fruit or concentrate in this juicy masterpiece.

Wallaby Organic Nonfat Yogurt—Dairy Cooler

For health conscious consumers who want the highest quality ingredients and a delicious creamy taste. Made

in small batches in the traditional Australian style, its smooth texture and mild taste are the result of a slow, gentle culturing process. By using higher percentages of organic fruit than other yogurt makers, Wallaby doesn’t have to mask tartness with excess sugar, so the fruit taste simply stands out.

Lifestream Organic Whole Grain and Flax Pasta—Aisle 2B

These whole-grain and flax pastas combine the healthy ingredient of flax meal

with the tender texture and whole grain benefits of durum wheat. These pastas cook quickly without the heavy sticky texture or gritty taste often found in other whole-wheat pasta brands. Choose from four different shapes.

Rapunzel Organic Baking Chocolate—Aisle 2A

For those of you who love Rapunzel chocolate, there is now a way to get your fix when you bake. Rapunzel uses only 100 percent certified

organic ingredients that are grown and purchased through the Hand in Hand fair trade program, which ensures that farmers in developing countries are paid based on a fair pricing structure independent from the world market.

Waleed’s Pita Chips—Aisle 5A

Exotic yet utilitarian, Waleed’s pita chips are cholesterol- and dairy-free, making a perfect guilt-free snack. Their robust flavor and crunchy texture make them great with hummus or other dips. Waleed’s Pita Chips come in plain, garlic, lemon herb, and cilantro jalapeno flavors.

Goit House Wildflower Granola—Bulk Aisle

Goit House makes small batch granolas right here in Bellingham. Those of you who have tried other Goit House products will surely want to sample this new flavor containing the freshest organic oats, Nooksack River wildflower honey, ground flax seed, and organic flaked coconut. It’s truly local and truly delicious.



Food for Thought: Before You Pull out Your Wallet

Consumers are faced with a lot of choices and criteria for those choices when making purchases. Issues like cost and easy availability are often high on the list. But as consumers become more educated and aware of economic sustainability, they consider other more complicated aspects such as the source of the product, its effect on the environment, on the economy, and its sustainability.

Here’s a list of questions posed by the Organic Consumers Association that you might consider when making purchase decisions.

- Who profits from this sale?
- Are you buying this product from a national chain or buying locally from an independent business, co-op, or family farm?
- Where was this item grown or made?
- How far did it travel?
- Were farmers’ or workers’ rights protected?
- Did the producer receive a living wage?
- Is it certified organic or Fair Trade?
- Is the company who makes or sells this item socially responsible?
- Is this product genuinely ecological and healthy?
- What would be an organic, local, Fair Trade, or Fair Made alternative?

From the Organic Consumers Association website at www.organicconsumers.org.

Farm Fund Sows Seeds for New Projects

Jean Rogers, CCN Staff

The Co-op Farm Fund is five years old now, and if the latest meeting is any indication, it’s in a growth spurt that bodes well for the future. Farmers and community members filled the room with their expertise and passion for growing healthy food for Whatcom County residents. Experience in education, organic farming, farmers markets, grant writing, food issues, and anti-hunger activism were represented in a group that gets more active every year—an exciting event to witness as the Farm Fund prepares for a new cycle of project development.

For the past three years the Farm Fund has dedicated its resources to the Food To Bank On (FTBO) project, which pairs new farmers with mentor farmers and pays them to supply produce to area food banks. FTBO has received strong support from the Co-op membership and the Co-op Board has responded by increasing their 2006 funding commitment to the program. Co-op suppliers have provided matching funds and Co-op members continue to donate at the registers, making a tangible statement about their commitment to a healthy, local foodshed.

Several new farmers are joining FTBO this year for a total of 10 participating farms. Steve Powers of Big Sky Garden is working to expand the program’s organic farming classes, which debuted last year. Not surprisingly, farmers favored hands-on education including farm tours, work parties, and workshops that incorporate projects such as greenhouses, irrigation systems, and sand-point wells. Sustainable Connections, who administers FTBO in partnership with the Co-op, has received a grant from the Bullitt Foundation—a positive new development that will help increase purchases for

the food banks and strengthen market support for new farmers. FTBO farmers are also creating their own networking systems, starting with a bulk buying order for basic farm supplies.

Our first group of FTBO graduates is off to a great start. One serves on the board of the Farmers Market, another has begun a successful CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, a third is on the farm map and among the u-pick farms listed by the Herald, and Alex Rhoades, co-founder of RedTail Farm, is coordinating FTBO’s cooperative buying project.

Returning farmers also had positive experiences to report. First year farmer Brigget Le Clair commented, “FTBO was great. I want to grow twice as much next year,” and

Craig LaVallee observed, “I grew much more having a motivation.” Brian Campbell and Crystine Goldberg of Uprising Farm celebrated the birth of their son Rowan, who “was out at two weeks transplanting parsley with his mama.” Hilary Stember of RedTail Farm found that her highlight was “to get to know all the people involved in the Saturday market—how it’s growing and how much the community is responding to their efforts,” and Gretchen Norman of the Holistic Homestead said, “Last season was quite the success for beginning a small sustainable farm. As the year progressed I found many outlets for marketing my vegetables. I am so very excited to provide homegrown food for the health of our local community.”



Photo by Joanne Plucy

With FTBO going strong, the Farm Fund Committee is turning its attention to the future. Discussion has centered on the creation of a revolving loan fund for farmers, a distribution center, and a subsidized CSA share project that would provide access to healthy food for low-income families and pay farmers at the same time. Building the market continues to be a priority for small, organic farms and a priority of the Farm Fund. These ideas and more will be at the forefront of upcoming meetings as the Farm Fund works to identify the best possible focus for its mission of strengthening local, sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County.

Farm Fund donations are welcomed at all Co-op registers. Tax-deductible donations can be made by visiting www.sustainableconnections.org and clicking Donate or by mailing a check payable to Sustainable Connections Farm Fund to Sustainable Connections, 199 N. Commercial St. Suite 350, Bellingham WA 98225. For information contact Jean at 734-8158.

With FTBO going strong, the Farm Fund Committee is turning its attention to the future.

Fair Trade Greenwashing

Rodney North, Equal Exchange Worker-owner

Something odd, and possibly very disturbing, happened recently in the United Kingdom that should interest everyone who believes that Fair Trade can help create a more just, morally grounded global economy. Nestlé—the world’s largest food conglomerate and most boycotted company—recently introduced to the U.K. market its first ever Fair Trade Certified™ product, an instant coffee called “Partners Blend™.” But so what? Large U.S. corporations have already jumped (or been pushed) onto the Fair Trade bandwagon. What’s the problem? Don’t we want corporations to move in this direction? Good point. We do. But what we’re learning from the Nestlé example is that even a tiny bit of Fair Trade can go a long way to polishing even the worst corporate image, and all at the expense of real reform.

For example, a recent survey in the U.K., where Fair Trade enjoys a much higher public profile, showed that as many as 75 percent of otherwise knowledgeable shoppers who support Fair Trade were, in fact, mistaken and thought that the Fair Trade Certified™ seal meant the company had been evaluated and judged to be free of ethical concerns. We see the same pattern in the U.S. The truth is the Fair Trade certification system examines only the individual products bearing the seal, and not companies. In the case of Nestlé it is estimated that, in fact, their Partners Blend™ represents less than one-tenth of one percent of Nestlé’s

annual coffee imports, leaving the other 99.9 percent purchased the same old way. Likewise, Nestlé’s vast global trade in cocoa, sugar, dairy products, and dozens of other commodities remains unchanged. So, given the “Fair Trade glow” that Partners Blend™ might bring to the Nestlé brand (in the U.K. at least), this small product launch could be a very inexpensive way to overhaul their tarnished reputation while leaving their business operations untouched.

What does this have to do with U.S. consumers? Plenty. The same rules that allow Nestlé to put on a Fair Trade figleaf in the U.K. market, apply in the U.S. as well. And that’s why we at Equal Exchange are choosing to speak out, because we see this as the latest in a long line of actions by the world’s largest food businesses to make small gestures that look good in isolation, but ultimately forestall real change for impoverished small farmers, and instead offer marketing, PR, and token efforts in its place. In the same month as Nestlé’s product launch two of the world’s other largest coffee buyers also introduced Fair Trade Certified™ coffees, one in the U.S., and both as part of overall coffee product lines that are only three percent Fair Trade Certified™ or less.

Certainly marketplace opportunism is not limited to the grocery store shelves. Examples are all around us. Just check out two non-profits who help spotlight environmental

greenwashing, and firms who exploit breast cancer for marketing purposes: www.thegreenlife.org/greenwasherofthemonth.html and www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org. Conversely, Co-op America’s Green Pages at www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages/ can help you find companies who have a more authentic commitment to responsible conduct.

It could be argued that a corporation has to begin somewhere, and that these small product introductions at least represent a beginning. True enough. But there are signs to see if a corporation is sincere. Looking at just the realm of Fair Trade coffee—where we know something—here are some suggestions on how large companies can make a convincing start:

- Convert an existing product to Fair Trade status, one that already has an established customer base.
 - Offer consumers a variety of Fair Trade choices (regular, decaf, flavored, whole bean, or ground, etc.)
 - Utilize Fair Trade ingredients (such as cocoa, tea, sugar) in the corporation’s other products.
 - Most importantly, convert a significant portion of coffee imports (we recommend at least five percent) to demonstrate good faith, and steadily increase that percent over time.
- We also recommend that the exclusive Fair Trade certifier in the U.S.,



TransFair USA, do its part on this front, by raising the bar so as to preclude tokenism. Requiring a minimum conversion of at least five percent before

allowing use of the Fair Trade seal would be the best first step. What’s at risk here? That thanks to corporate marketing machines merely token use of Fair Trade certification can lead well-intended consumers to mistakenly associate some whole brands with Fair Trade. This false image of reform can then prematurely undermine the public pressure for real change.

At the inception of the Fair Trade movement 20 years ago, it was intended to be an alternative approach to international trade that addressed the endemic poverty, economic vulnerability, and isolation of the millions of small-scale farmers who grow most of the world’s tropical agricultural commodities, and as such challenge the status quo. It was not designed as a marketing device.

For more information about the U.K. survey, see www.babymilkaction.org/action/fairtradeqs05analysis.html. You can read the original Equal Exchange press release regarding Nestlé at: www.equalexchange.com/press-releases. Rodney North, Equal Exchange worker-owner can be reached at rodney@equalexchange.coop.



U.S. Farmers Still Using Pesticide

Fresh, ripe strawberries are surely one of nature’s best treats. Unfortunately, strawberries are on the list of top 10 foods to buy organic because pesticide levels in the fruit are so high when grown conventionally.

The U.S. signed an international treaty in which they agreed to phase out use of methyl bromide for all but the most critical uses by 2006. However, more of the chemical was used in 2005 than two years ago. Farmers use methyl bromide as a fumigant to prevent weeds, pests, and plant diseases. It is used most commonly on strawberries, peppers, tomatoes, and Christmas trees.

The use of methyl bromide continues because the treaty allows for exemptions to prevent market disruption. The U.S. is using this particular exemption liberally to avoid compliance with the treaty. Conventional U.S. farmers claim

that acceptable alternatives do not yet exist, and claim that organic farming is also not an option.

But there’s a reason that the international community decided that use of this chemical should be phased out—it’s dangerous to human health. When farm workers inhale enough of the chemical, it can cause convulsions, comas, neuromuscular, and cognitive problems. It can even be fatal. Less is known about the chemical’s effects on consumers, but it makes sense that going organic is—as always—the safer option.

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Pearl Django
The West Coast Gypsy Jazz Sensations
Saturday, February 11, 7:30 pm
Firehouse Performing Arts Center, Fairhaven
\$15 advance, \$20 at the door

Celebrating more than 11 years in existence, Pearl Django’s music reaches out to a wide variety of audiences. The band’s fervent followers include Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli fans, guitar enthusiasts, lovers of string music, world music fans drawn to French and Gypsy accents, plus jazz buffs, and aficionados of the new swing music.

This event is the first of Jazz Project’s four-part Firehouse Jazz Series showcasing jazz artists. Sponsored by the Community Food Co-op, tickets are available online at www.jazzproject.org, at Village Books, and at the Co-op.

2006 Bellingham Human Rights Film Festival

February 9–18, 7 pm

Pickford Cinema

and Fairhaven College Auditorium, WWU

and DreamSpace, 1318 Bay St.

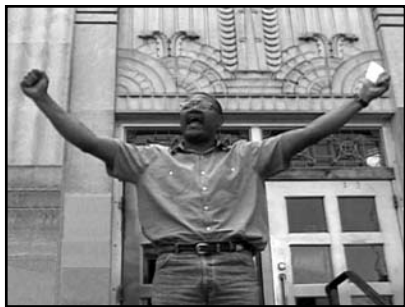
Free admission to all events



Opening night, Thursday, February 9, will feature a screening of the powerful documentary *After Innocence* at the Pickford Cinema. This film shines a probing light on important issues facing exonerated convicts and the U.S. criminal justice system. *After Innocence* shows that the human toll of wrongful imprisonment can last far longer than the sentences served.

This exceptionally powerful and unforgettable film kicks off a rich festival line-up presented nightly through February 17 at Fairhaven College Auditorium. The festival closes on Saturday, February 18, with a repeat showing of selected films at the Pickford Dreamspace.

The goal of the film festival is to educate and support individual and community efforts to create a more just world. Each film is followed



by a discussion of relevant issues lead by invited speakers. These films address human rights issues relevant to our local, national, and global communities. Among the topics examined

in this year's documentaries are U.S. prisons, racism and poverty, AIDS, U.S. militarism in Iraq and Haiti, aid to the developing world, Israel/Palestine, and immigration issues.

This is the sixth year for the Human Rights festival, which is wholly organized by volunteers and supported by numerous community and university sponsors. *Schedules for the films and speakers will be available at www.whrtf.org/filmfest and at the Community Food Co-op, Whatcom Peace & Justice Center, Village Books, the Pickford Cinema, and at WWU. For more information, call 734-5176.*

Photo courtesy of Human Rights Film Festival



Photo by Joanne Plucy

Coming Soon

2006 Co-op Annual Meeting & Party and Board Election Kickoff

Saturday, March 25, 5:30–10:30 pm

Bellingham Ferry Terminal

Free to Co-op Members

The Co-op has had a great year and we would like to invite all Co-op members to celebrate it with us. Prepare to enjoy hearty appetizers served up by local caterers and treat yourself to some of the Swan Café's signature baked goods. Following dessert, local ensemble Yambique will have you dancing to some of the best Afro-Cuban and jazz rhythms around.

The annual meeting always offers a chance for members to come together, celebrate, and share our visions for the Co-op and our community. We will hear from this year's Board candidates and the Board and management will report on "the state of the Co-op." Watch for more details in the March newsletter and in the store.

Washington Native Plant Society, Koma Kulshan Chapter Prairie Restoration in Pacific Northwest National Parks February 15, 7 pm, Fairhaven Park Pavilion

Much of the extensive prairie that existed in this area when Europeans arrived has either disappeared under towns or been invaded by forest. We treasure the remnants for their beautiful native flowers and unique plants, now threatened by aggressive non-native plants that were introduced with livestock grazing.

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve and San Juan Island National Historic Park have recently initiated prairie restoration programs. Dr. Regina Rochefort, Science Advisor with the National Park Service, will talk about the projects in each park, the restoration methods she is developing, and volunteer opportunities. The chapter is growing some of the native fescue grasses to be planted at Ebey's Landing. Information 360-714-8629.

**March 11, 8 am —
Ebey's Landing Grass Planting
Work Party and Field Trip
Fairhaven Park-and-Ride on the
Fairhaven side**

We will plant the grasses we grew in the greenhouse at this prairie restoration site. Bring gloves and lunch, kneepads optional. Leigh Smith, parks resource manager, will give an overview of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. There should be time for a hike in the afternoon.

**March 15, 7 pm —
Wildflowers of Southern Mississippi
Fairhaven Park Pavilion**

Wayne Weber, a member of the chapter from Delta, B.C., spent four years on the Mississippi Gulf Coast completing a PhD study on bird ecology. He is also an enthusiastic botanist and flower photographer. His presentation will feature pitcher plants, orchids, and other unique plants of the Gulf Coast region, including the offshore islands. Hurricane Katrina recently devastated this area and Weber will also discuss the effects of hurricanes on coastal geomorphology and vegetation. Information 360-714-8629.

Italian Slow Food Community Drives Ronald McDonald Out of Town

The Southern Italian town of Altamura, Apulia is "breaking the chains" by supporting local businesses. Five years ago, McDonald's revealed plans to open a fast food restaurant in the town. Area citizens, supported by Italy's Slow Food movement, campaigned against the development by establishing their own group—Friends of Cardoncello—named after an Italian mushroom. Despite community opposition, McDonald's built a fast food store in town, but struggled over the next few years, as townspeople shunned the "golden arches" and supported local baker Luigi Digesù and other community restaurants.

Last month, McDonald's closed its doors and left town. "There was no marketing strategy, no advertising promotion, no discounts," *Il Giornale*, an area resident commented. "It was just that people decided

the baker's products were better. David has beaten Goliath."

For more information, see www.organicconsumers.org/btc/slow-food010906.cfm. For information on Slow Food, see www.slowfood.com/ and www.slowfoodusa.org/.



Philip Damon taught writing and literature at the University of Hawaii for 34 years, and his own work has been published widely. Among the mystic, artistic and holistic traditions, he has followed many practices. His column, "Dancing on the Brink" appears monthly in *Organic Press*.

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Saturdays from February 25th to April 8th
10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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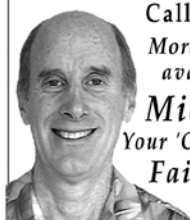
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Our Amazing Cheese Island

Diana Campbell, CCN Staff

Are you a cheese fan? If so, you've probably checked out our cheese island near the deli counter. If you've missed this delectable aromatic part of the store—what are you waiting for? You'll be amazed at the array of cheeses you'll find there. In fact, I'll wager that you'll find things there you've never seen or tasted before.

What sets us apart from other grocers is the huge selection of artisan cheeses we have available. Our cheese manager Donna Nygren likes to have items to please everyone—from serious cheese lovers to those just looking for an inexpensive cheddar. She especially likes to get products from artisan and small-production cheese producers who exhibit care in their cheese making. Donna also supports local cheese makers—including some that you may not find in other local grocers—such as Samish Bay, Appel Farms, and Pleasant Valley, and a variety of raw milk cheeses from Greenbank Farms.

Donna loves to arrange the cheeses in an attractive, inviting way, sometimes organizing them by country—all the Italian cheese in one area, all the Spanish together, the many French cheeses in a group, and she often has a wide array of blue and feta cheese in one section of the island. Because she likes to have something for everyone, she makes sure to stock everything from reduced fat to full-flavored cheeses in a range of prices. She has one of the largest selections of goat cheeses from fresh to aged—even goat butter. The generous selection of specialty meat

includes smoked salmon, prosciutto, a very popular nitrate-free salami-chub, chicken liver and duck liver pates, and a black peppercorn mousse.

A significant aspect to cheese buying revolves around the issue of recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), which is banned in Europe, but not in the U.S. Donna goes out of her way to ensure that the cheeses we carry do not contain rBGH (see sidebar on rBGH for more information).

Donna has discovered that Europeans typically display a greater commitment to the art of cheese making and, at smaller farms, treat their animals well. Many old European cheeses, produced for centuries, use a method of processing that is protected by European law (Appellation d'Origine Controlee) and cannot be changed. Cheese makers who are entitled to use this A.O.C. designation must comply with such things as the breed of animal,

the area where the cheese is made, the cheese-making process, the ingredients, and the physical size and shape of the cheese. She noted that in the U.S., when large corporations have bought out small cheese processors, occasionally ingredients will change or the method of processing might be altered.

Another unique part of buying cheese at the Co-op is Donna's expertise and experience. She has worked with cheese for more than 21 years. She confesses to growing up on Velvetta and began her cheese career cutting and wrapping exotic cheeses at an upscale gourmet market where shoppers (and Donna herself) were often hesitant to try new varieties. After six years, she moved on to working with more basic cheeses at a commercial grocer where she honed her skills at merchandising. She joined the Co-op in 1994—first in the deli and café, and then as cheese merchandiser.

Over the last year, sales in our cheese department have grown substantially. This growth has allowed

If you've missed this delectable aromatic part of the store—what are you waiting for?



What is rBGH?

Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) is a genetically engineered copy of a naturally occurring hormone. Most cows produce the natural bovine growth hormone after giving birth, which influences the cow to produce milk. When rBGH is injected into cows, their milk production increases by as much as 10–15 percent.

Using recombinant DNA technology, the natural hormone was genetically recreated and approved for use on dairy cows by the Food and Drug Administration in late 1993 and has been in use since 1994. However, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and the EU have banned the use of rBGH. While rBGH is banned in many countries and has been boycotted by 95 percent of U.S. dairy farmers, the FDA, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Agriculture continue to license the drug without pre-market safety tests.

Both the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Consumer's Union, publisher of Consumer Reports magazine, have warned of the potential hazards to human health caused by consuming products derived from rBGH-treated cows.

It has been well documented that the use of rBGH also causes suffering to millions of animals: rBGH forces them to produce a lot more milk—but it also makes them sick. Even the FDA admits that cows injected with rBGH are more likely to suffer from increased udder infections (mastitis), severe reproductive problems, digestive disorders, foot and leg ailments, and persistent sores and lacerations.

Good reasons for the Co-op to make every effort to exclude cheese products that are produced with the use of rBGH.



Co-op Cheese Wiz Donna Nygren stocks cheese island with a potpourri of domestic and imported cheeses.

Photos by Joanne Plucy

Donna the chance to focus exclusively on cheese—seeking out nicer, more interesting cheese offerings, taking advantage of suppliers who have developed extensive programs for imported cheeses. She even has a cheese assistant in Liz Elton—a familiar face at our deli counter—who now helps out part-time on the cheese island. Donna's favorite part of her job is tasting the cheeses and arranging the displays in our cheese island—adding her special touch to show off new and interesting cheeses. If you happen by the cheese

island when Donna's nearby, you'll find her willing and eager to answer questions and to share the vast amount of knowledge she has about cheese.

Stop by the cheese island to check out your old favorites or take a risk and try something new—you'll definitely have a taste treat.

For more information, see these resources: www.cheese.com, billed as "everything you want to know about cheese," and www.ilovecheese.com, sponsored by the American Dairy Association.

Should Your Cheese be Moldy?

Absolutely, yes. Mold is a natural part of cheese. It is the visible part of the controlled spoilage defining cheese. Cheese is a fermented food, just like wine. You don't see the mold associated with that \$50 bottle of wine, but it was there. With cheese you can see and eat the mold. Often it tastes good and adds to the cheese.

All cheeses are essentially a living, evolving product. The cultures, bacteria, and molds that make them cheese also exist after production. Certain bacteria, when exposed to oxygen, continue to produce a bloom with visible mold. This does not mean the cheese is bad, but on some cheeses the mold may contribute an undesirable flavor. Trim it away and taste to see if the flavor is still pleasant.

The fluffy white fleurie rind of a brie or camembert helps transform a firm and non-descript cheese into a tasty, gooey cheese from the outside in by the mold, *Penicillium candidum*. Where would blue cheese like Roquefort, Gorgonzola, or Stilton be without mold creating veins and caverns on the inside and would we like them without it?

Hard cheeses are ripened on the inside from bacteria already on the cheese—mold growth is encouraged on the rind to produce a semi-permeable barrier so gasses and moisture escape but air can't get in. When confronted with mold on your



cheese, ask yourself, "Is the mold intrinsic to the cheese and does it taste good?" A great piece of aged goat cheese may be covered with all sorts of blue and white molds. Don't be squeamish about the mold, it won't hurt you. It's a good sign that your cheese is still alive, meaning it will taste much better, like fresh-cut vegetables from the garden. Sometimes gray and brown molds don't taste that great—cut them off or simply eat around them.

Eating the mold is often determined by the type of rind. Brie-style, bloomy rinds, and the delicate rind on many goat cheeses add to the overall flavor. The washed rind cheeses will also add but could be too strong for some. Some natural rinds may be too firm or dry to eat; those will be pretty obvious. Go ahead, taste it, and then continue according to your own preference.

Information compiled by Karen Collins and Francois Kerautret, courtesy of cheese supplier Peterson Cheese of Auburn WA.