



# HAMPDEN PARK CO-OP NEWS

## DECEMBER 2009/JANUARY 2010

Volume 20 Issue 6

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### Co-op Hours:

Monday–Friday 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
 Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
 Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

### Holiday hours:

December 24 – close at 3 p.m.  
 December 25 – closed  
 December 31 – close at 6 p.m.  
 January 1 – closed

### Board Meetings:

The Hampden Park Co-op Board of Directors meets monthly. See its bulletin board in the entryway for meeting dates and locations.

### Newsletter Deadline:

The deadline for the February/March issue is January 4. If you wish to write an article for the newsletter, contact Naomi Jackson at [naomijx@juno.com](mailto:naomijx@juno.com), or leave a note in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the entryway.

### HPC Web site:

[www.hampdenparkcoop.com](http://www.hampdenparkcoop.com)

**Hampden Park Co-op Mission:** The corporation exists to serve its member stockholders and the surrounding community, promoting wholesome, healthful and ecologically sound food consumption, and permitting member involvement both in the procurement of that product and the operation of the corporation.

## Focus Groups: Making Your Voices Heard

—by Melissa Williams

The building purchase and expansion have successfully completed their initial phase, and the board wants to ensure that they're hearing the voices of the membership on matters related to the future of the co-op. The membership committee took up this challenge and decided to set up focus groups comprised of shareholders. These groups have been small — no more than 15 — and have met for about 60–90 minutes. Our first two groups met on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and were comprised of some of our most frequent shoppers. We asked five questions:

1. What do you like about the expansion (spatially, in terms of offerings, maneuverability, etc.)?
2. What would you like to see that is NOT part of the expansion yet?
3. For continued fiscal health of the co-op, what are your thoughts on a change in the share price for membership?
4. What would you think about a change in the discount structure for volunteers to ensure the fiscal health of the co-op?
5. Do you have any thoughts on providing incentives for non-volunteering members to encourage them to shop more regularly?

Twenty-two people participated in the first two groups. We were very careful not to guide the conversation. Perception is almost as important as fact in a community organization, and so we simply listened to what volunteers had to say. We found three common sets of feedback:

1. Community is what membership values most about the co-op. People like that they know shoppers and employees when they come in, and that others know them. People have a sense of ownership with the co-op. Conversely, some were concerned that people who are not members might be intimidated by shopping at the co-op. How do new people deal with writing down produce prices, for example? Does bulk shopping confuse them? Is it uncomfortable to feel as if everyone knows everyone but you? The membership wants to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible.
2. In discussions about the fiscal health of the co-op now that we're landlords with a large building to improve, we heard that, with caveats, people are comfortable with increasing the share price. The next lowest co-op share price in the Twin Cities is \$80. Ours is \$30. Many focus group participants said, "I would be happy to do this if needed, but I'm concerned about other members." They asked if payment plans could be available or if we could find other ways to make an increase manageable for students and those with fixed incomes.
3. Dropping the discount a few percentage points was acceptable for some, not for others. The discount has made the co-op a good deal for people and/or made the co-op affordable. The volunteering aspect is what distinguishes us from all the other co-ops in the Twin Cities. Participants stated, "We are the last real co-op."

(continued on page 3)

## Membership News

—by Naomi Jackson, Membership Coordinator

### John Rogers

Many of you knew John Rogers, longtime HPC member and board member. He passed away in September in Paris, where he was taking part in a cooking school and photographing his beloved city. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

### Annual Meeting

The November 15 Annual Meeting was well attended, with 89 people present. We enjoyed music by Light of the Moon, delicious food, and a chance to greet old friends and welcome our new general manager, Matt Hass.

In addition to hearing committee reports, we discussed issues affecting our future as a co-op. For information about these issues, refer to the "Moving Forward" article in the October/November newsletter and the "Focus Groups" article on page 1 of this issue.

We also elected two new board members, A.K. Vincent and Huong Nguyen. Current board member Marcia Hanson was elected to another term. Our sincere thanks to outgoing board members Gregg Richardson and Sarah Matala for their excellent work during our store expansion and building purchase.

## Welcome, New Members

Andrew Lars Hermanson  
Kim DeLanghe, Allison Stewart,  
and Anna Crabtree  
Lara Hill and Tracy Cielto  
Hayley Steptoe and Elisabeth Brown  
Sophie Smith and Catherine Willman  
Chris and Sara Cowen  
Gary and Mary Nelsestuen  
Sowa Unora  
Anne and Frederic Newcombe  
Dawn Vassar  
Suzanne Schiltz  
Lisa and Bruce Martens  
Alyssa Perry  
Stephanie Digby  
Phil and Joy Thompson  
Sarah Stone  
Carl Ostlund  
Rachel Walberg and Elise Neidermeier  
Mary Hernandez

### Membership statistics

As of November 1, 2009, Hampden Park Co-op had 2882 member households, including:

1186 non-volunteering households  
330 volunteering households  
260 senior households  
1106 inactive households

Approximately 230 households have joined each of the past three years. Between 2002 and 2006, an average of 165 households joined each year.

An average of 22 households sell their share back each year.

So far this year a record 152 people have gone through orientation, and many more are eagerly awaiting their turn.

### Co-op mailings

The co-op sends out 3–4 mailings each year: patronage letters, Mayfest and Annual Meeting notices, and this year, an additional quarterly discount coupon. We don't mail out newsletters.

If you don't receive mailings, we may not have your current address. Leave it in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the entryway, or email [naomi@hampdenparkcoop.com](mailto:naomi@hampdenparkcoop.com).

## Membership Information

Membership in Hampden Park Co-op involves a one-time purchase of one share of stock per household. The cost of a share is \$30. Stockholders can be eligible for dividends at the end of each fiscal year. You may sell back your stock share if you move away.

### Volunteer Discounts

One or two non-senior adults in a household may earn:

15% discount for 3 hours/month  
21% discount for 6 hours/month  
28% discount for 12 hours/month

### Seniors

All seniors receive a 15% discount on the first Wednesday of the month. Senior members always receive a 15% discount. Your membership includes you and your spouse or significant other. If you are 65+ and would like a senior card, talk to any coordinator. Senior volunteers start with a 15% base, plus time worked.

### Food Shelf Contributions

Any shopper, member or non-member, receives a 28% discount on food shelf items. When you get to the checkout counter, let the cashier know that you have food shelf purchases. Donations go to the Keystone food shelves, located in the Midway neighborhood.

### Non-discountable Items

Certain items in the store are non-discountable. These include milk (quart and larger), eggs, non-organic frozen orange juice, baby food, brewed coffee, HPC hot soups, gift certificates, and some sale items. There is no discount on these items because the mark-up on them is intentionally low.



**Hampden  
Park  
Co-op**

Dan Murphy  
Annemarie Peterson  
Charlotte Osborn and Mark Hughes  
Donna and Paul Carlson  
Natalie Lovejoy  
Peg Houck  
Jason and Jenessa Van Schooneveld  
Jim Schmitt  
Thomas Hanson  
Steven Hobert, John Dehaven,  
Adam Loesse, Dan Robison,  
Joe Berlin, and Matt Schiebe  
Jud and Kat Reaney  
Daniel Dale, Merliee Common,  
and LaRon Rogers  
Alyson Johnson and Holly Jo Sandbo  
Bill Karns and Beth Gohdes  
Deena and James Wassenberg  
Julia Axelrod  
Katie Herman and Ruthann Ryberg

## News & Events

### Are you a senior?

If you are a member of Hampden Park Co-op, and are 65 or older, you qualify for a 15% senior discount. If you would like a senior discount card, fill out the New Card Request on page 12 and put it in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the co-op entryway.

### Help your neighbor— donate to Midway Food Shelf

All Hampden Park Co-op shoppers can donate to the Midway Food Shelf, operated by Keystone Community Services. It's easy. Whether or not you are a member, you may purchase items at the co-op at a 28% discount and donate them to the food shelf. Leave your donations with the cashier, and volunteer Deb Ahlborg will deliver them to the food shelf. If you have questions, talk with any floor manager.

### Looking for former Hampden Park Co-op board members

Do you have a forgotten file or box full of documents from your board days? We'd sure like to have it! We're trying to assemble a complete set of documents pertaining to the HPC board. Contact Membership Coordinator Naomi Jackson at [naomi@hampdenparkcoop.com](mailto:naomi@hampdenparkcoop.com).



#### Ad rates:

\$15 per issue for a camera-ready, 2½" by 3½" ad. Ads may be either horizontal or vertical, and may be delivered either electronically or as hard copy. Contact the editor.

### (Focus Group Response continued from page 1)

There were also five common statements about which the board wanted to provide some points of clarification:

1. Participants wanted the store to be better organized. People can't find some things without help, and they worry that this reduces patronage. This is a major goal for Matt Hass, our new general manager. We're looking at aisle labels and a store map (both of which were suggested in focus groups). We also want to clearly mark who is staff and who is a volunteer.
2. There were concerns about the consistency of merchandise availability. Products are sometimes there one week and not the next. Moving to computerizing the systems to a larger degree will help us be better able to react to ordering needs, but this issue is still under discussion and will continue to be a focus.
3. Participants had ideas about how to deal with the shares, but not all of them are legal according to Minnesota state law and/or the co-op's bylaws. All members have to buy in at the same share price. A sliding fee scale is not possible. People cannot purchase multiple shares.
4. To bring in non-volunteering shareholders (pink card holders), the groups suggested periodic discounts. We are already doing this, believe it or not! Currently it's a quarterly 10% discount on one shopping trip. There are discussions amongst management to change how that's done; maybe increase frequency? We aren't sure yet, but it's nice to know management and membership are on the same page.
5. Participants were concerned about lack of information regarding all the changes. These are people who are in the store frequently, and yet they don't always know what's happening. This is a legitimate concern, so let us list the ways the board is trying to convey information or improve the communication process. We are trying to include updates in the newsletter (hence this article); we are working on being more up-to-date with posting monthly board meeting minutes in the entryway; we invite you to attend board meetings if you are a member; we invite non-board members to become members of committees; and we encourage you to check out the Web site at [www.hampdenparkcoop.com](http://www.hampdenparkcoop.com) for meeting minutes, information on upcoming events, and things like the soup line. Finally, please provide the co-op with your e-mail address, as we'd like to add this to the membership information we currently collect and eventually begin sending out key updates and newsflashes once we have a critical mass of e-mails.

Finally, here is some information that group participants had asked for. If we were to change the share price to \$60, \$53,280 would be brought in on a one-time basis, assuming all members paid the additional \$30. Assuming we continue to average 230 new members per year, an additional \$6,900 would then come in annually. If discounts were to drop three percent, volunteers would end up paying \$60 more per year if they spent \$2000/year at the co-op. (This number would be slightly higher for some and slightly lower for others. Check the report we send to you annually regarding how much you spent at the co-op; you should have numbers from 2008.) Making this adjustment would save \$25,397.90 for the co-op every year. In other words, if volunteering members are able and willing to pay \$5 more per month for their purchases, the co-op would be able to bring in a substantial amount of annual income beyond what we already are doing.

It is important to understand that neither of these options is a done deal. They are ideas, and they're a great example of why it's so important that we hear from you. Think about ways to improve the co-op, financially, organizationally, and otherwise, and then share them with us! At the Annual Meeting, focus groups were scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. If you are reading this in early December, check the volunteer bulletin board to see if there is still space in either of these groups. Otherwise, watch for additional groups scheduled in 2010. You can also bring in written statements to share with the board or e-mail your comments to [board@hampdenparkcoop.com](mailto:board@hampdenparkcoop.com). Once again, thank you for making your co-op the democratic and community-focused place that we are!

# Contemplating Chile Peppers

—by Caroline Daykin

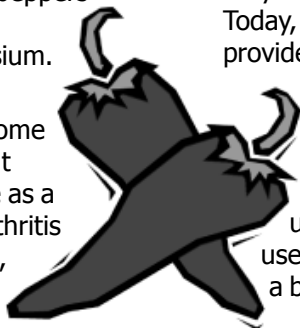
In today's globalized culinary world, it's rare for restaurant-goers to reflect on the plants that enliven their Mexican, Thai, or Ethiopian food. Many of the world's cuisines owe their flavor to Native Americans who domesticated the genus *Capsicum*, commonly known as chile peppers, over 6000 years ago.

While chile peppers' spiciness repels most animals, birds are not sensitive to capsaicin, the chemical that endows capsicums with their "heat." Consequently, birds are responsible for the spread of chile peppers throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean. As capsicums were integrated into various cuisines, cooks discovered that they could make use of this plant in both its fresh and dried incarnations.

Columbus brought capsicums from the Caribbean back to Europe, where people had previously been obliged to content themselves with the more mild black pepper. West Africans and Asians were also easily convinced of the superiority of chile peppers over native spices when Portuguese explorers introduced capsicums to these regions. Increased spiciness wasn't the only advantage capsicums had over black pepper. While black pepper dulls the taste of all food, chile peppers only influence the perception of sour and bitter tastes.

In addition to their lively flavor, capsicums possess an impressive nutritional profile. Fresh green chiles contain twice the amount of vitamin C as citrus fruits. While the vitamin C content undergoes a precipitous drop as the chile pod turns red and dries, this process causes the pepper's vitamin A content to increase. Other nutrients found in chile peppers are iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium.

Chile peppers also have medicinal properties. Some research has shown that capsicums are effective as a topical treatment for arthritis pain, cluster headaches, and shingles.



## Motivations for Consuming Spicy Food Abound

The idiosyncratic nature of human culture, including culinary traditions, often leads to speculation as to why certain practices are adopted. Various theories have been proposed to explain the widespread use of capsicums.

One of these hypotheses centers around the physical effects chile peppers have on the body. It may be that the body interprets the burning sensation capsicums create as pain, and the brain releases endorphins to combat this feeling of discomfort.

Other theories involve the sociological aspects of consuming chile peppers. Because the European bourgeoisie were consumers of chile peppers between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, it has been surmised that chile peppers were the SUV of early modern Europe; having the means to afford capsicums was indicative of a person's status. Before the arrival of chile peppers, black pepper was seen as a status symbol. The fact that black pepper was actually more expensive than chile peppers casts some doubt over this theory.

Another sociological explanation is familiarity. People adhere to tradition in choosing to eat spicy food.

A third sociological theory focuses on gender identity. Could it be that men eat spicy food because they feel the need to prove their toughness through their ability to withstand the consumption of jalapeño peppers?

The health properties of chile peppers have been invoked to explain their popularity. Central and South American healers have traditionally prescribed capsicums for various illnesses, and they were believed to be aphrodisiacs. Today, it is estimated that chile peppers provide a third of the Vitamin A in the rural Mexican diet.

A final theory proposes perhaps the most obvious explanation for chile pepper use. In many of the cultures that use capsicums, the diet is based on a bland staple food. For example,

Peruvian and Bolivian diets rely on the potato, myriad Asian diets revolve around rice, and West African diets employ millet and yams. These cultures were motivated to incorporate chile peppers into their diets because they provided flavor to lackluster foods.

## Consumption Tips

Regardless of the allure of chile peppers, dread of the painful repercussions of their consumption may hinder capsicum experimentation. It is important to note that because capsaicin, the ingredient in chile peppers that causes their trademark burning sensation, is not water soluble. Therefore, drinking water with a spicy meal provides only temporary relief by decreasing mouth temperature.

However, capsaicin is alcohol soluble. To combat chile pepper-induced pain it is advisable to gargle with alcohol, spitting it out when finished. Milk and yogurt are also effective for relieving burning because they contain casein, a substance that breaks the bond capsaicin has formed with pain receptors in the mouth.

## Chile Peppers at the Co-op

In addition to the chile peppers available in the produce department, the co-op offers numerous other opportunities to sample chiles. Mexicans have traditionally flavored their hot chocolate with spices, and cocoa containing capsicums has begun to surface in American stores. One such product is Dagoba *xocolatl*, flavored with cinnamon and cayenne pepper. Interestingly, the hot chocolate provides a short burst of spiciness that doesn't linger. Perhaps this is because it is prepared with milk, and the casein prevents the cayenne pepper from causing a lasting burning sensation.

The co-op has a wide selection of salsas that incorporate chile peppers. A particularly enjoyable one is Mrs. Renfro's Mango Habanero salsa. The sweetness of the mango provides a pleasant counterpart to the habanero heat. Although it is labeled "medium hot," this salsa is quite spicy.

(continued on page 5)

**(Chile continued from page 4)**

Another winning option is Valley View Farm's Chipotle Colby Cheese. Because many chile pepper products refer to a specific variety of pepper, it is easy to assume that chipotle is simply another variety of capsicum. However, this term refers to any smoked chile (although chipotles are generally made from jalapeño peppers). The chipotle cheese proves to be a first-rate addition to enchiladas, including the following vegetarian recipe.

**Pinto Bean & Cheese Enchiladas with Salsa**

1 15-ounce can refried beans  
1 large tomato, chopped  
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 12-ounce jar salsa  
8 6- or 7-inch corn tortillas  
½ cup chipotle cheese

Optional garnishes:  
diced avocado, sour cream

Preheat oven to broil.

In glass bowl, combine beans, tomato, ¼ cup of the cilantro, cumin, and ½ cup of the salsa. Mix well. Cover bowl with waxed paper. Cook in microwave on high until heated through, about two minutes.

Spoon ¼ cup of the salsa over bottom of a 13 x 9 inch baking pan. Spoon 1/3 cup of bean mixture down the center of each tortilla. Roll up and place seam side down in baking pan. Spread remaining cup of salsa evenly over tortillas. Broil 5–6 inches from heat until heated through, 5–6 minutes.

Sprinkle cheese and remaining 2 tablespoons cilantro over enchiladas. Broil 30 seconds, or until the cheese is melted. Garnish with avocado and sour cream.

**Source:**

*Chef MD's Big Book of Culinary Medicine*

*[Caroline Daykin enjoys using the word "ungood" and taking personality quizzes online to make sure she is still the same person.]*

**Voluntary Simplicity**

—by Chris Dart

Last spring six members of Hampden Park Co-op participated in a self-study course on Voluntary Simplicity. The course uses a workbook of the same name published by the Northwest Earth Institute (<http://nwei.org>) that includes numerous essays from luminaries, philosophers, and scholars examining the choice of intentionally simplifying one's life.

None of us was inexperienced in simple living. Perhaps our mutual membership at HPC already self-selected us as interested in the elegance of a life unburdened with excess. Nonetheless, we all came out of the exercise with new insights and a renewed commitment to reducing the unnecessary clutter of our lives: clutter of things, clutter of activities and obligations, clutter of excessive work and paucity of leisure. The capstone of the experience was a rejuvenated awareness of how simplicity works hand-in-hand with social and environmental justice.

Before this course, my conceptions of simplicity were mainly focused on "creature comforts," but voluntary simplicity encompasses so much more. Materialism is certainly a core focus, but so is the Quixotic attempt to "save time" through the acquisition of "time-saving" devices and activities. We examined how, despite microwave ovens, fast food, Internet shopping, and cell phones, we seem to have less time for genuine conscious engagement in the world. (In fact, how much of this time we have so energetically "saved" is spent watching mindless TV shows and Web entertainment instead of playing a game with friends, taking a walk, reading, writing, or other engaging and creative activities?)

I dare say that the course did not end up providing any of us with grand, life-changing insights into voluntarily choosing a simplified life. However, like so much of life, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and experience provides unpredictable insight that words alone fail to describe. By pulling the threads of the several different topics together into a coherent whole, we were able to discover new and unexpected ways of seeing the familiar.

Notably, simplifying one's life involves changes that are both straightforward and confounding. Within a society that celebrates busy-ness and the accumulation of things, living simply must be a collective enterprise. Rare is the person who does not need emotional, practical, and intellectual support to hold fast to such counter-cultural values. Knowing that my choices and views are shared and supported by others at the co-op is a source of reassurance and comfort when the temptation to re-clutter and re-busy myself arises.

*[Chris Dart lives with four other adults in an intentional community he helped found in 1997. When he isn't working on computers, he enjoys playing classical guitar, gardening, woodworking, and baking bread.]*



**Note:** A new Voluntary Simplicity group will be starting in January. Contact Michael McKenna at 651-775-2112 or <[hampdenparkcourses@hotmail.com](mailto:hampdenparkcourses@hotmail.com)>.

**Sources for Contemplating Chile Peppers**

Andrews, Jean, *The Peppers Cookbook*, University of North Texas Press, 2005.

DeWitt, Dave, and Paul W. Bosland, *The Complete Chile Pepper Book*, Timber Press, 2009.

Joe, Coyote, *On the Chile Trail*, Gibbs Smith, 2005.

Wright, Clifford A., *Some Like it Hot*, The Harvard Common Press, 2005.

## Sweet Potatoes

—by Marcella Jerome

Sweet potatoes contain protein, fiber, vitamins A & C, folic acid, magnesium, and potassium. North Carolina's Department of Agriculture advises us to select firm, well-shaped potatoes with smooth skins. Three medium potatoes equal one pound. One pound equals 1¼ cups pureed.

Store them in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. Refrigeration can cause sweet potatoes to become bitter. To prevent darkening, use a stainless steel knife and place freshly-cut sweet potatoes into cold water immediately.

The orange and yellow varieties can be eaten raw (grated into a salad); made into pie, bread, pudding, juiced drinks, or fermented into an alcoholic beverage. Sweet potatoes go well with acorn squash, apples, dried apricots, maple syrup, orange juice, butter, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, salt, sherry, pork, and duck. Mix baked sweet potato puree with any of these ingredients.

The versatile sweet potato can be boiled, broiled, baked, roasted, fried, stewed, and mashed. In most recipes that I find, however, they are baked at some point in their preparation.

Baking in a slow oven increases the sugar content of sweet potatoes. My microwave oven instruction book calls for pricking each 5- to 7-ounce sweet potato several times with a fork, arranging them one inch apart on paper towels, cooking on high until tender, and letting them stand 3 to 5 minutes. I get good results baking them this way.

My experience with America's Test Kitchen has been successful. I have not yet tried the mashed sweet potato recipe, but it looks much like my recipe for mashed white potatoes.



### Mashed Sweet Potatoes

(serves 4)

2 pounds (4 or 5) sweet potatoes  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter,  
cut into 4 pieces  
2 tablespoons heavy cream  
½ teaspoon salt

Peel sweet potatoes, quarter lengthwise, and cut crosswise into 1¼" slices. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Cook covered over low heat, stirring occasionally until potatoes fall apart when poked with a fork (35–45 minutes). Remove from heat and drain. Add the remaining ingredients and mash in saucepan or food mill. Stir in a pinch of ground black pepper. Transfer into a warm serving bowl and serve.

*Variation:* Puree all the sweet potatoes and add your favorite international complementary flavors.

### Sweet Potato Casserole

(serves 4–6)

2 pounds (3 or 4 large) sweet potatoes  
*Puree*  
½ stick butter (my taste uses ¼ stick)  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 egg yolks  
¾ cup half & half

#### Streusel

5 tablespoons butter  
¼ cup flour  
¼ cup packed dark brown sugar  
½ cup pecans

Bake washed sweet potatoes at 325° for 1½ hours or until soft. (You may bake them up to two days ahead.) Cut each in half, scoop out flesh, and puree one half the flesh, along with the butter, vanilla, lemon juice, egg yolks, and half & half.

Cut the other half of the flesh into large chunks and fold into the puree. Add salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to buttered 8" x 8" casserole dish, cover with streusel.

Bake at 325° until topping is browned and filling is slightly puffy around the edges, 40–45 minutes. Cool at least 10 minutes before serving.



### Baked Casserole Dinner for One

(My favorite winter meal)

1 2-ounce pork chop  
1 small sweet potato, well scrubbed  
1 medium apple, washed and cored  
Brown the pork chop in 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat, about 4 minutes on each side. Place all ingredients in well-greased uncovered casserole. Bake at 325° for one hour or until sweet potato is soft.

### Sweet Potato and Bean Soup

(serves 4)

1 medium sweet potato  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 medium onion  
1 14½-ounce can of diced tomatoes with roasted garlic  
1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans  
2½ cups chicken broth  
¼ teaspoon ground cumin  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
salt to taste

Peel and cut sweet potato into ½" dice. Heat oil in fry pan over medium heat, and saute diced sweet potatoes and onion until onion is transparent. Transfer to large saucepan. Add chicken broth and tomatoes. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer until sweet potato is tender.

*Optional:* Stir in 1 tablespoon fresh minced basil near the end of cooking cycle and garnish each bowl with parmesan cheese.

### Vegetable Tempura

Buy a box of tempura mix, located in the Asian section at the co-op. Peel and slice sweet potatoes and follow the directions on the box.

(continued on page 7)

## (Sweet Potatoes continued from page 6)

### **Dry-Curry Sweet Potatoes** (serves 4)

1½ pounds (4 medium) sweet potatoes  
2 tablespoons curry powder  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
salt to taste

Preheat oven to 400°. Peel and slice sweet potatoes. Place on a medium-sized baking sheet. Sprinkle with curry powder and salt, and drizzle with oil. Bake 45 minutes, turning slices to brown evenly and prevent sticking.

### **Resources:**

- "Ag's Cool Sweet Potatoes," North Carolina Department of Agriculture, <[www.agr.state.nc.us/agschool/commodities/sweetkid](http://www.agr.state.nc.us/agschool/commodities/sweetkid)> .
- Bennet, Bev, *30-Minute Meals for Dummies*, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2003.
- Cox, Jeff, *Organic Food Shopper's Guide*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2008.
- Gold, Rozanne, *Recipes 1-2-3*, Penguin Books, 1996.
- Joachim, David, and Andrew Schloss, *The Science of Good Food*, Robert Rose, Inc., 2008.

Vienna

## **Vegan Desserts**

—by David Gronbeck

Even more than main dishes, vegan desserts present a challenge. Fresh fruit is fine, but is not a birthday cake.

Nearly twenty years ago I had to come up with a birthday cake suitable for a newly vegan daughter. Since birthdays were a big deal in our family there was substantial pressure to come up with a cake. I consulted Rose Berenbaum's *The Cake Bible*, and there was a mayonnaise cake, a relic from World War II when eggs were in short supply. "But there are eggs in mayonnaise. I can't eat it." "Then I will make it with eggless mayonnaise." And it worked. Here is the recipe.

### **Vegan Mayonnaise Cake**

1 cup boiling water  
1/3 cup of cocoa  
Mix water and cocoa until cocoa is dissolved.

*Add:*  
¾ cup of eggless mayonnaise  
2 cups of sifted flour  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
½ teaspoon salt

Cover bottom of 9" springform pan with waxed paper, then oil and flour bottom and sides. Place batter in pan and bake at 350° for 20–30 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool and dust with confectioner's sugar.

The birthday girl loved the cake and asks for it to this day.

And now for some ice cream or sorbet to go with the cake. You will need "simple syrup."

### **Simple Syrup**

1 cup water  
1 cup sugar

Bring to a boil, stirring once in a while to make sure all the sugar is dissolved. Let cool. Simple syrup will keep on the shelf so make a good sized batch.

### **Fruit Sorbet**

Mix equal parts fruit pulp and simple syrup. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions.

### **Coconut Ice Cream**

1 14-ounce can coconut milk  
equal amount simple syrup  
½ cup coconut chips  
½ teaspoon vanilla

Freeze in ice cream maker according to directions.

*Variation:* For Chocolate Ice Cream, add three tablespoons of cocoa powder to the simple syrup and dissolve. It's best to reheat the syrup and then cool it again. Mint flavoring works well with this one.

No ice cream freezer? Think about getting one. They are often available on Craigslist at modest cost. The ones that come with a bowl that is cooled in the freezer before using are easier to use than the old fashioned kind with ice and salt, but the old style is not unreasonably difficult to work with. It will soon pay for itself, compared to purchased sorbet and non-dairy ice cream. But then I like power tools; it's a guy thing.

[David Gronbeck is retired now, but still likes to cook even for one.]



Holly House

## Head to the Kitchen: It's Time for Meditation

—by Jill Cadwell

It's another busy day chock full of... everything! The alarm clock rings too early, the kids need to be brought places, the job will require full attention and energy for the eight-hour workday. It's exactly the kind of day that should come with a built-in getaway. And it can—if you think of your kitchen as your meditation room. Making dinner (instead of *having* to make dinner) or baking a batch of cookies after the kids have gone to bed can be your re-centering time, your fulfilling “om” in an otherwise hectic day.

I like to think of meditation as the act of mental deliberation, of focusing on one thing in full awareness rather than multi-tasking or thinking about many things at once. This is precisely how my friend Cullen meditates as she cooks. She says cooking is the one time she can really clear her mind of all else and simply focus on her craft. With many years of experience and a large garden on her hobby farm, no doubt my friend and her family regularly enjoy the benefits of her meditative cooking. Cooking requires one to be cognitively and physically engaged enough to pay close attention and work with one's body, but neither in such a way that they are draining. On the contrary, the experience is rejuvenating.

My friend Larry (a devout ELCA Lutheran) says he prays when he cooks, a type of meditative thought for the well-being of those he loves. His actions of cutting onions or throwing red pepper slices into the stir fry are accompanied by images of his passionate daughters, his active and beautiful wife, or his shrewd sons. While he asks that they be protected by God's love, he puts love into action with his careful and kind cooking. The food is prepared with love and when the family gathers for dinner, one can feel the extra ingredient.

For me, cooking is always a meditation of gratitude, when I recall memories of women who've taught me to cook. I am alone in the light of the crackling yellow fluorescent bulb, but my Great-grandma Nellie, Grandma Cadwell, mom, and sister join me in memory.

I think of Nellie, whom I never knew, but whom Grandma C. always describes as “a saint.” As I stir up thick cookie dough, I know my ample upper arms are from her, a buxom farm woman, and I hope a bit of my good-natured spirit is from her, too.

As I combine dark Karo syrup with powdered sugar to make candy, I am transported back to my childhood in Grandma C.'s kitchen where she taught me to make tootsie rolls, salted nut rolls, chocolate chip cereal cookies, and finger Jello. We would read recipes out of church cookbooks or off hand-printed index cards, perched on the wooden recipe holder Grandpa made.

And I am never without the technical skills my mom taught me, for she was once a Home Economics teacher and always a great cook. “You measure shortening in water through water displacement. It gives you a more accurate measurement than scooping it out of a dry measuring cup,” she'd say, or “Don't tap the flour into the measuring cup more than once, or you'll make it too dense, and it'll weigh down your cookies.”

Sometimes I come across her handwritten notes in my recipes: “yeast is very touchy, so be sure to use wrist-temperature water.” Or I find that one of mom's recipes has been altered by my sister, Amy, also an excellent cook. I know that any sugar reductions or applesauce alternatives are my sister's doing; she likes to make things healthier.

At other times, cooking provides the time and space when I can be alone and part of something greater at the same time. I close the kitchen door, preheat the oven, and make pies or cookies to my heart's content. In between fetching the flour or beating the eggs, spooning cookies onto the sheet or washing the mixing bowl, I'm not concerned about things outside the kitchen.

But in the spaces between, I find myself wondering, *Did great-grandma*

*Nellie ever resent her domestic role or did she always love being in the kitchen? Did mom ever bake to blow off steam from an argument like I do?*

I start to imagine women from other cultures cooking up some *baingan bartha*, pork egg rolls, or tamales. So many women all over the world have had this exact satisfying feeling of cooking, I realize. These thoughts connect me to a long history of women in the kitchen. I feel as if I know *us*, like I understand other women, even if I've never met them. I feel a shared affinity with *my kind*. Sometimes we cook because we love it; sometimes we cook because we must; sometimes we cook because our loved one has a hankerin' for brownies at midnight; but often we cook to be at one with ourselves and to re-center.

In my kitchen, as in billions of others, cooking is about so much more than food. It's about memories and thinking of others, about focus on the craft and quieting of all else, about well-wishing and enjoyment, about gratitude for the earth that provided the food, the body that can create the meals, and people who taught us how to do so. As I work with my hands and remember with my heart, cooking becomes a kind of prayer and meditation, a feeling of gratitude and an offering of love.

So after your next hectic or stressful day, remember: the kitchen is inviting you to your next meditation. Whether you go there to be quiet and focus, to feel connected to others who share your experience, or to give thanks and pray for others, don't go just to cook. Go to enjoy the Zen-like state that awaits.

[Jill Cadwell is interested in how personal feelings often derive from universal experiences; this essay illustrates some connections between the two.]



## Money-Saving Uses for Essential Oils

—by Linda Morey

Why buy specialty cleaners for glass and countertops when you can make your own, cheaper? Why spend big bucks on overpowering name-brand perfumes when you can make your own environmentally-friendly fragrances for a fraction of the cost? Ditto for expensive deodorants and toxic critter repellants.

I've simplified my life by doing away with dozens of specialty cleaners, air fresheners, and personal products that clutter my cupboards. Using recycled spray bottles and thrifty ingredients from our co-op, I save money and time.

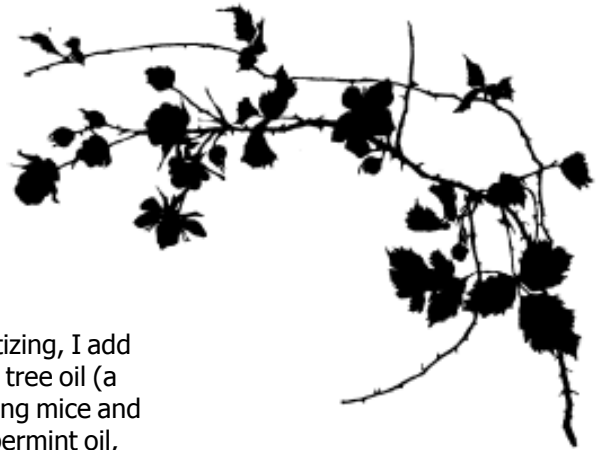
For a great glass cleaner and all-purpose hard-surface cleaner, I fill a recycled one-quart plastic spray bottle three-quarters full of clean water, then add 3 or 4 drops of liquid dish soap, roughly a half cup of white vinegar (look in the bulk section near the olive oils and peanut butters), and a few drops of essential oil (look in front near the cash registers). Remember to finish wiping glass surfaces with old newspaper. It makes the glass sparkle without leaving marks or smudges — for real!



Dish soap and white vinegar help cut grease and grime, while essential oil lends a "clean" aroma. I like lavender for its gentle calming effect. For sanitizing, I add rubbing alcohol and tea tree oil (a disinfectant). For repelling mice and creepy bugs, I use peppermint oil, sometimes just dotting it on the countertop or shelf.

If I'm feeling a wee bit congested, I incorporate eucalyptus oil in my homemade spray air freshener, because it wakes up my senses and opens up my airways. For homemade air freshener, fill a one-quart container three-quarters full of clean water, add several drops of fragrant oil, and top off with rubbing alcohol (ethyl alcohol). The alcohol serves two purposes: sanitizing the air and preserving the oil fragrance.

For a nice, but not overpowering, body cologne I mix equal parts of pure water and witch hazel with a few drops of essential oil, sometimes mixing fragrances according to my mood. Lemongrass is subtle, lavender is calming, mint stimulating, citrus refreshing, and so on. Witch hazel is soothing to the skin, and refreshing.



Mixed with a few drops of essential oil, if desired, witch hazel also makes a gentle deodorant.

For my room fragrance diffuser (those skinny wooden sticks standing upright in that little open-mouthed bottle), I add water, alcohol and generous drops of essential oil for subtle, inexpensive aroma.

Unlike some of those blatantly-advertised cleaning products, my homemade versions contain safe, simple ingredients, all of which I know how to pronounce. Plus I don't waste time shopping for bathtub cleaner, window cleaner, eyeglass cleaner, floor cleaner, doorknob cleaner, and such. Try it, you'll like it!

*[Linda Morey volunteers at HPC and recently completed a group discussion course in Voluntary Simplicity. Linda is leading a simpler, more satisfying (and thrifty!) life as a result.]*

## Say "Cheese"!

—by Anne Holzman



Hampden Park Co-op's cheese manager, Linda Andersen, is looking forward to a special kind of holiday cheer this year.

"The thing about this year that's going to be nice is, we have more room to display cheese," Andersen said. By the end of October, she had put in orders for some holiday favorites and was ready to entice customers to try something new.

"The crowd here, they like some fancy stuff, but mainly cheddar," she said. She likes to encourage adventure, but she tries to keep the regulars happy too. "I'm also listening to what people want," she said.

One common request is goat cheese, for people who can't digest cow's milk. The expanded space has offered her the opportunity to "give them more variety."

She said goat cheeses from nearby Mt. Sterling Co-op sell well. She keeps mozzarella and cheddar in stock, and tries other varieties to see if they'll catch on.

"We're trying to sample a little bit more" since the expansion, she said.

An imported honey-goat cheese is selling well. Customers report that they serve it as a dessert, Andersen said, or for breakfast with fruit. (I helped myself to a taste of it on a recent afternoon and was surprised by its mild flavor — although I willingly down cracker after cracker of far gamier cheeses.)

Andersen likes to support local industry, especially the smaller producers, a preference that guides the balance of shelf space.

There are some advantages to working with the larger distributors, she said. The co-op uses small quantities, and a distributor of many brands can mix them for a weekly or monthly order, and offer deals. The bulk cheeses come from one large distributor and the imports from another.

Then again, the Twin Cities area is home to lots of cheese-makers. Andersen said she particularly enjoys working with Cow Caviar, out of Chippewa Falls, because a representative of the

company brings the cheese in himself.

"My goal in the next year is to get in touch with some farmers and set up" more of those relationships, she said.

Southern Minnesota has a blue-cheese tradition, and Andersen said she likes the St. Pete's brand from Faribault.

And while the French name makes it seem like an import, the soft cheese called Les Frères is made by Crave Brothers, in Waterloo, Wisconsin. "It's sort of like a brie," Andersen said. "It's good quality."

With the holidays arriving, Andersen hopes co-op customers will expand their horizons, not only serving cheese at winter gatherings but making a gift of it or picking it up for a last-minute potluck contribution.

She suggested a "locally made" theme for a cheese plate, including a selection of Les Frères and Cow Caviar, with Mt. Sterling's mild goat cheddar. "People could actually try goat cheese without even knowing," she said with a chuckle.

She said gift baskets with an Italian theme are popular, featuring pasta, parmesan, and a bottle of sauce.

Andersen mentioned fondue as a cheese habit that's a little off the beaten path. I have some fondue memories from childhood, one of which had to do with kissing somebody if you dropped a piece of bread off your fork while dipping. We've revived the fondue tradition with our young children.

It takes some careful planning for safety, but it's an interesting way of practicing fine-motor skills, teaching kids to use real tools, and, oh yeah, enjoying a family meal. It really is a hoot watching the kids chase the bread around in the pan, and they get distracted enough to try vegetables they'd normally pass over.

We also indulge in chocolate fondue now and then, dipping fruit. The main requirement, besides compatibility of flavors, is that the dipped item hold together well on the end of a fork.

We use gruyère and emmenthaler from Hampden Park Co-op in the following

recipe, sometimes substituting an ounce or two of Swiss cheese for one or the other if the quantities don't quite work out. The recipe, adapted from the booklet that came with our Cuisinart electric fondue pot, has become a favorite even for our generally cheese-averse firstborn. It does include a fair amount of alcohol (you'll have to get the Kirschwasser as well as the wine at a liquor store), much of which seems to evaporate.

### **Classic Cheese Fondue**

Makes 6-8 servings

1 pound gruyère cheese, grated  
 ¾ pound emmenthaler cheese, grated  
 6 teaspoons cornstarch  
 1½ teaspoons dry mustard  
 1 clove garlic, peeled, cut in half  
 2¼ cups dry white wine  
     (not chardonnay)  
 2½ tablespoons Kirschwasser

Place the grated cheeses in a large bowl and toss to combine. Add the cornstarch and dry mustard and toss to coat the grated cheese completely. Set aside.

Rub the bottom and lower half of the inside of the fondue pot with the cut sides of the garlic cloves. Add the wine to the fondue pot. Turn the temperature to medium-high heat and bring the wine to a strong simmer (bubbling, but not boiling strongly). While stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or nonstick whisk, gradually whisk in the grated cheeses, sprinkling in one handful at a time; don't add any more cheese until each handful is completely melted and smooth. The mixture will slowly thicken. When all the cheese has been added, stir in the Kirschwasser and serve. Reduce the temperature to medium-low heat. The fondue should just simmer; it should never boil.

This fondue is traditionally served with cubes of crusty bread. For a change you may also serve blanched to crisp-tender vegetables or cooked but firm new potatoes.

[*Anne Holzman is a cheese-loving freelance writer and editor.*]

# Building Trust is the Wave of the Future

—by Judith Sims

Did you know that Cedar Summit Farms has yet to turn a profit? That Whole Foods refused to buy produce from Minnesota and Wisconsin producers following the destructive floods of 2007? (Okay, so they followed it up with some kind of conciliatory gesture.) That hunger in the suburbs is now double that of hunger in the cities?

These are the kinds of details that make "Mapping the Minnesota Food Industry" memorable. It's a study that offers a window on how Minnesota's food industry works (and doesn't work).

The study was commissioned by Blue Cross Blue Shield's Center for Prevention, one of whose goals is to increase healthy eating, and executed by Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center, a non-profit that provides services such as economic analysis, business development and tools for community self-determination.

## Analyzing Minnesota's food industry

The meat of the study concerns — well, meat, actually, in the form of a number of profiles of local producers and processors of livestock, but also of produce, milk, and other products. These profiles of "wise practitioners" give a face to Meter's economic

analysis of Minnesota's food industry, which includes some sobering information on the effect of that industry on our population's health.

For example, Meter claims that "food-related medical conditions have become a leading cause of death" and cites an estimate of \$1.3 billion to treat obesity-related diseases in Minnesota as support. This is part of the basis for a critique of commodity economics, whose size and power shape which foods are most affordable and available to consumers.

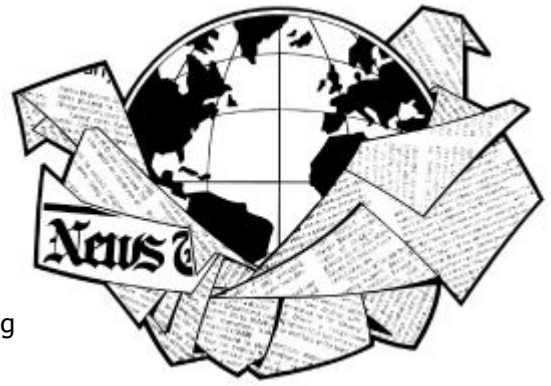
Big producers and retail outlets cannot support selling high quality products, for example, because their only *raison d'être* is to lower price margins. Retailers with enormous buying power can demand and get prices that squeeze producers.

In contrast, a business like Coastal Seafoods, one of four prototypes profiled at length in the study, can buy fish from a single seller in Florida who doesn't always have fish, but the quality is excellent when he does.

Coastal Seafoods has fostered a number of relationships that have flexibility, resiliency, and trust as part of the business relationship, and therefore they can offer a greater variety of fish as well as better quality than their commodity-based competitors.

## In co-ops we trust

Perhaps the most notable point that "Mapping Minnesota's Food Industry" makes is that trust is a central feature of emerging business models. As we all know, since we experience it here at Hampden Park Co-op, co-ops are not just a business. They have educated consumers and been educated by them; they have encouraged the humane treatment of livestock, and created markets for herbal and other alternative health remedies. They created the organic food movement. They introduced the use of natural ingredients in a variety of other consumer goods.



These accomplishments were founded on trust-based relationships among producers, suppliers, and consumers. Many businesses were born. Technology for selling items in bulk was developed.

Mainstream food stores adopted these technologies and capitalized on another co-op achievement — selling produce. A department that was formerly a loss leader started to show profits once co-ops, through their customers' demand, made fresh fruits and vegetables look more desirable.

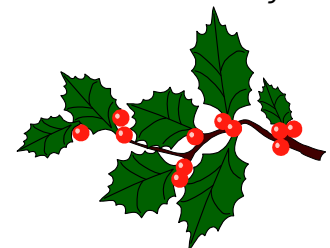
And if that's not enough, Meter says, co-ops show that small stores that allow for bike- and pedestrian-friendly access can survive in a big-box era.

## What forms the future?

Who knows what survival will entail in the future? Author Meter lists energy prices and availability, prices for crops, financial markets, and climate change as factors to contend with in the future.

To see Meter's recommendations, you can search under "Mapping Minnesota's Food Industry" or enter <http://www.crcworks.org/mnfood.pdf>. And be sure to check out the study's appendixes — there are useful lists such as those of crops grown locally by month and suppliers to co-ops, as well as ten or more additional short interviews with locals.

[Judith Sims is an erstwhile journalist.]



# Greetings from the Aisles of HPC

—by Matt Hass, General Manager

The co-op has certainly had a monumental year. We have completed a store expansion and successfully bought our building! Thanks to all of the members and employees who have supported us through these huge transitions.

In the coming months we will be working to enhance your co-op "experience." We continue to adjust the layout of the store to best fit the needs of our shoppers. As we move along, we will be labeling aisles, creating a store map, and making it easier to identify our volunteers and staff. Look soon for a member comment/request area in the front of the store, where you can give us your comments, questions, and product requests. We will post responses and gain a better understanding of how to keep improving our store.

One of the new challenges for us this fall was transitioning to quarterly reporting of our financial data. Management spent a lot of time bringing the co-op up to date so that we better understand where we stand financially day-to-day. We have also made product categories more specific, enabling us to better track our sales. These changes will allow our organization to be more nimble; we can now more easily plan and react to the challenges we face.



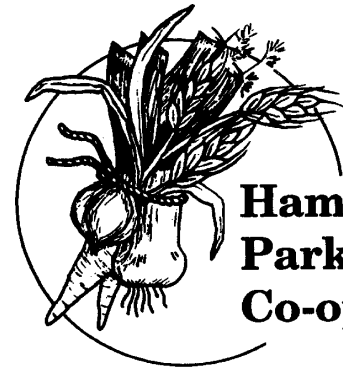
One of these challenges is the new responsibility of owning our building and investing money in it for improvements and maintenance of the rentable space. There is currently an open discussion going on about how to ensure the fiscal health of the co-op as we move forward. Consider signing-up for a focus group (two before the holidays, more afterward) where you can join the discussion and let your voice be heard. We are also eager for written comments, either handed to a floor manager or emailed to: [board@hampdenparkcoop.com](mailto:board@hampdenparkcoop.com).

As we look to the future, our goal is to continue to be a small, community-based, sustainable, and member involved co-op. We hope you have an excellent holiday season!

### Financial Update

Our first quarter net income (July–September) was \$7,177.47. Sales in July and August were strong enough to make up for the effect of the closure of Raymond Avenue in September and October, when our net income was -\$29,550 and -\$20,872 respectively.

Many members have asked us if the road closure was affecting sales and we have to definitely say "YES." On a brighter note, sales have been very strong since Raymond Avenue re-opened and we expect to have strong sales for the holidays. Thank you to everyone who made the long trip to the co-op in September and October.



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## Name and Address Correction/New Card Request

Have you moved recently? Did you change your name? Did the number of adults in your household change? Did you recently turn 65, qualifying you for a senior discount? Please let us know so we can keep our records up to date. You may also use this form if you need a new membership card. Place the completed form in the membership coordinator's envelope in the entryway.

Member Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Discount Level \_\_\_\_\_

Number of cards needed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_