



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.

Hampden Park Co-op News

December 2006/January 2007

Volume 17 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.

The co-op will close at 3 p.m. on December 24 and 6 p.m. on December 31. It will be closed Monday, December 25, 2006, and Monday, January 1, 2007.

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, or leave a note in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the entryway.

HPC Web site:

<http://www.hampdenparkcoop.com/>

New Year's Celebrations – Not Just Champagne & Football

—by Emma Onawa, HPC Member

New Year's celebrations in the US are marked by parties (including the accompanying drunkenness and revelry), champagne, Times Square, the Macy's and Rose Bowl parades, and football. They are a sort of antidote to the hype of Christmas. But how do other cultures celebrate the New Year? And, perhaps more importantly, what do they eat?

Celebration of the New Year is very old, and occurs in some form in every culture of the world. The ancient Romans celebrated the eve of the New Year at the winter Solstice or Saturnalia, which took place over a seven-day period to honor the god Saturn. All social customs and rules were suspended, businesses and government offices were closed, wars were interrupted or postponed, and slaves exchanged places with their masters. This temporary suspension of the social order was typical of ancient New Year's Eve rites, to celebrate the turning of the year. The practice was accompanied by masquerading and exchange of dress between men and women, drinking, gambling, gluttony, and other forms of self-indulgence.

The Romans originally celebrated New Year's Day in March, with a festival to honor the god Mars. With the adoption of the Julian calendar, January 1 became the first day of the year; and the first month was named to honor the God Janus, the God of beginnings and endings, represented by two faces, one looking back and one looking forward.

In Western Europe, until the late 16th century, the dates of New Year's celebrations varied by country. The most commonly observed dates were December 25 or March 25 (the Incarnation of Jesus). In Eastern Europe and the Orthodox Church, the year began on September 1.

Pope Gregory XIII's 1582 decree adopted the Gregorian calendar, with January 1 as the first day of the year. Not all countries adopted the Gregorian calendar, however, and the date of the New Year continued to vary. Great Britain and the new US colonies, for example, did not adopt the January 1 date until 1752.

Today the Gregorian calendar has been adopted throughout most of the world. Nonetheless, many cultures still celebrate the New Year at other times, based upon the season and agriculture or calendars other than the Gregorian calendar.

Common to all New Year's celebrations is the belief in releasing of the old, heralding of the new, and hopes for good fortune in the new year. Nearly all customs relate to this belief.



(cont. on p. 4)

Membership News

—by Naomi Jackson, Membership Coordinator

Yep, it's that time again. Time for volunteers to trade in their 2006 wallet and Rolodex cards for brand new ones. New cards will be available at the cash register from mid-December until late January. This is what you need to do:

- u Take your new wallet card from the file box by the Rolodex file.
- u Check for errors. If something is wrong, fill out a "New Card Request" form, available at the check-out counter, and put it in the membership coordinator envelope on the entryway bulletin board under the calendars.
- u Fill out a new Rolodex card, found at the back of the Rolodex file.
- u Have a coordinator transfer your credit to the new Rolodex card.
- u Put your old Rolodex card in the back of the Rolodex file.
- u Throw away your old wallet card.

If you do not plan to continue volunteering in 2007, or if you have not been volunteering and would like to start again, fill out a "New Card Request" form, add a note indicating your intentions, and put it in the membership coordinator envelope in the entryway.

Thanks for another good year of working together!

Our Local Food Shelf Needs You!

Our food shelf volunteer, Deb Ahlborg, brings us the news that this year the need for donated food is up, while the amount of donations is down. Midway Food Shelf, which serves our part of St. Paul, is one of the most heavily used in the metro area, serving over 1000 families each month. With a slow-down in donations, it is harder for the folks at the food shelf to meet the needs of these families.

Team up with Hampden Park Co-op to help meet this need! Here's how: While you are shopping, pick up a few items for the food shelf. When you reach the checkout counter, tell the cashier that you have items for the food shelf, and identify each as you present it. You receive a 28% discount on any items you donate, and Deb takes care of delivering your donations to the food shelf.

Donations should be non-perishable and pre-packaged. Non-food items such as shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper, and dish soap are also welcome.



Welcome, New Members

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 hrs./month
- 21% discount for 6 hrs./month
- 28% discount for 12 hrs./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 working members 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.

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.



Elderberry Almond Tart

Short crust pastry

2½ cups flour
 pinch of salt
 1 stick butter, softened
 1 egg, slightly beaten
 Cold water, about 3 tablespoons

Filling

2/3 cup elderberry syrup
 1 cup ground almonds

Glaze

1 egg yolk



Heat oven to 350°. Grease a 9" round flan dish. Mix flour, salt, and butter with a pastry cutter until there are no large lumps. Mix in the egg. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the mixture is the consistency of pie crust. Divide in half and roll out or pat one half into the pan. Prick all over with a fork.

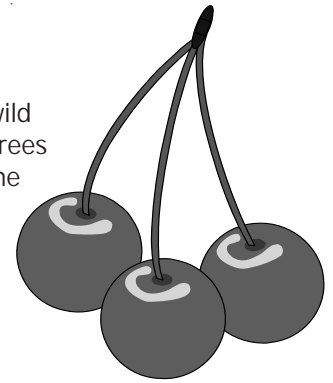
Cover base of the pastry with the ground almonds. Pour elderberry syrup over it. Roll out remaining pastry and cover the tart. Seal the edges and brush top with egg yolk. Bake for 45 minutes, until browned.

Serve in wedges, topped with vanilla yogurt or cream, and drizzle with elderberry syrup.

Brambleberry Farm

—by Meredith Sommers, HPC Member

Jim Fruth of Pequot Lakes has been foraging for wild edibles for 35 years. He began by tapping maple trees in the spring, boiling down the liquid until it became syrup. Today he and his spouse, Esther, have a business that depends upon his foraging for ingredients and Esther's cooking these ingredients to make jams, jellies, and syrups. Their motto is "Making life sweeter one piece of toast at a time."



Brambleberry Farm began selling its wild products in nearby farmers' markets in 1999. Now, in addition to daily markets, it has a store with a kitchen along highway 371, south of Pequot Lakes; and its delicious products are sold wholesale and online.

Jim knows what he is looking for as he searches the woodlands and roadsides for fruits that include chokeberries, huckleberries, raspberries, black cherries, and juneberries. A trained horticulturist, Jim finds voluptuous wild plants, "tames them, and makes them more useable." This means that in addition to foraging, Jim grows hundreds of plants on 1.25 acres of land. These are plants that he has developed by cross-pollination, saving and sowing the seeds of the ones with the best flavor and capacity.



After Jim and his crew of youthful 4H members return from a day of picking, he and Esther spend the evening sorting and cleaning the fruits, removing sticks and leaves and little bugs who have found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. The following morning, Esther pulls out the pots and begins to cook up the fruits. She experiments with combinations, adding jalapeño peppers from her garden to the raspberries or strawberries. One of the most popular jams, made of red and black raspberries, bears the name of their tiny farm, Brambleberry Jam.

Respect for all living beings is the underlying value of Brambleberry Farm. Esther says, "We seek to find ways to honor plants and animals, while getting what we need. We never take too much; we don't want to disturb their life cycle." When foraging, the pickers gently bend branches toward the ground, then gather the fruit into ice cream pails fastened to their belts. If they find fruits on private land, they ask the owner for permission to pick and offer jars of jam in exchange. Some property owners call the Fruths when they have wild fruits ready for the picking. It is a cooperative enterprise.

The Fruths try to live a simple and green life, but their business venture is testing the boundaries. As Esther describes their philosophy, she pulls out a jar of salsa she made the day before and gives me a sample. "I'm from San Diego," she says. "I was raised on Mexican food, and I need it."

The salsa gives my mouth an exhilarating sting. "Ah, this is just right!" I comment. She then shows me the 60 jars of salsa she made that morning, using tomatoes, peppers, and herbs she has grown on their acreage.

Hampden Park Co-op is currently offering Brambleberry Farm jams and syrups. My favorite is Elderberry syrup. It is delicious on top of ice cream and pancakes, especially pancakes made with pureed pumpkin or applesauce and cinnamon. In the sidebar you will find an elegant and easy dessert using elderberry syrup. The recipe is adapted from a *Self-Sufficiency in Style* recipe.

For more information about Brambleberry Farm, go to their Web site: <www.bberrryfarm.com>.

(New Year's Celebrations cont. from p. 1)

The New Year Around the World

In Ethiopia, Enqutash or "Gift of Jewels" is celebrated on September 11–12. This is the end of the rainy season and is the flower season. Ethiopians wash away the old in the nearest lake, river, or stream. Children carry armfuls of flowers to neighbors in exchange for money and sweets.

The gift of a rose, the symbol of patriotism, is reserved for a special person.



Israel, and Jews throughout the rest of the world, follow a lunar calendar and observe Rosh Hashanah, or "Head of the Year," in September or October with sweet foods for a "sweet year." It begins with 10 days of repentance and ends with Yom Kippur, a day of atonement and fasting.

Vietnam celebrates Tet, between January 19 and February 20. Everyone turns a year older, and candy and flowers are exchanged as gifts. The Vietnamese also hang red banners with new year's wishes on them.

The **Iranians** celebrate Nouruz, or New Day, on the first day of spring by planting pots of lentils or wheat, which sprout to symbolize new life and good fortune. They are later dumped into a nearby body of water. This latter ritual symbolizes the release of bad luck and ensures good luck for the new year.

India celebrates the "Festival of Lights," Diwali or Deepavali, in October or November. People place rows of tiny lamps, or divas, in and around their homes, to invite Lakshmi, the goddess of luck and prosperity, into their homes.

The **Chinese** arguably have the most fun at the New Year. They celebrate for two weeks (starting mid-January to mid-February) with offerings to the gods, especially the Kitchen God, fortune telling, lucky phrases and New Year's prints, firecrackers, flowers, parades, the Nian monster, feasting, and a Lantern Festival.

Gift giving on New Year's Day is popular in many **European** countries, as it was with the ancient Romans, who believed that spending money on gifts would attract good fortune in the New Year. New Year's resolutions are based on a Christian, particularly Puritan, custom designed towards self improvement and renewal. Noisemaking was believed to ward off evil spirits and remove evil influences. It is practiced in many countries around the world.

In Britain, a "first footer" is the first guest who sets foot in one's house after the New Year begins. A dark-haired man brings good luck, but he must be carrying a piece of coal for warmth, a black bun for plenty of food, and a bottle of spirits for prosperity. Babies, of course, represent renewal and rebirth.

Many **indigenous cultures** celebrate a new year tied to natural cycles. For example, in South America, indigenous groups celebrate at the winter solstice, which occurs in June in that hemisphere.

A Taste of the New Year

Despite the different ways we celebrate the new year, food and feasting are a common element in most celebrations. In the sidebar and on page 11, you will find some easy recipes to help you put a new taste in this year's celebration.

Sources:

Erlbach, Arlene, *Happy New Year, Everywhere*, Millbrook Press, Brookfield, Connecticut, 2000.

Thompson, Sue Ellen, ed., *Holiday Symbols 1998*, Omnigraphics, Inc., Detroit, Michigan, 1998.

Webb, Lois Sinaiko, *Holidays of the World Cookbook for Students*, Oryx Press, Phoenix, Arizona, 1995.

Savia, or Sweet Noodle Dessert

(This Indian dish is sent to friends during Diwali, garnished with edible gold or silver leaf.)

4 tablespoons ghee or butter
 ½ cup seedless raisins
 ½ cup coarsely chopped pistachio nuts or almonds
 ¾ cup sweetened shredded coconut
 ½ pound vermicelli noodles, broken into 1–2 inch lengths, cooked and drained
 edible gold or silver leaf (optional— available in Middle East food stores)
 1 cup plain yogurt, for serving (optional)

Heat ghee or butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add raisins, nuts, and ½ cup coconut, and cook for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add noodles; mix in and heat thoroughly, about 3 minutes. Pile mixture on a serving platter and sprinkle with remaining coconut. Spread leaf over the mixture, if desired. A dollop of yogurt can be added to individual servings, if desired. Makes 4–6 servings.

Toshi Koshi Soba, or Buckwheat Noodles in Broth

(In this traditional Japanese dish, extra long noodles are used for long life on New Year's. Toshi Koshi means "cross over year;" it is eaten on New Year's Eve.)

4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
 1/3 cup shoyu (Japanese soy sauce)
 ½ teaspoon sugar
 ½ cup finely diced chicken or tofu
 1 pound extra long soba noodles, cooked, drained, and kept warm
 ¼ cup finely sliced green onions

Pour broth into a medium saucepan and add other ingredients except for onions and noodles. Stir and bring to a boil over high heat for a minute; remove from heat. Divide noodles among six soup bowls and ladle broth into the bowls. Garnish with green onions.

(cont. on p. 11)

What Does the Federal Farm Bill Have to Do With Me?

—by Lois Braun, HPC Member

About 45% of all land in this country is used for agriculture, more than for any other single activity. Thus agricultural policy is everybody's business, not just that of farmers. Farm policy affects you even though you live in a city, and even though you might not have any family left on the farm. It affects you because, not only do you eat food, but you drink water, breathe air, and pay taxes. It affects you if you like to fish, canoe, or swim in natural bodies of water.

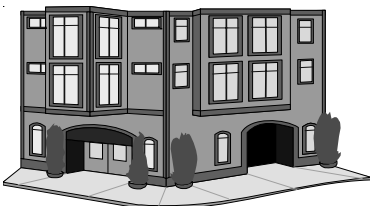
As a human being, you deserve safe nourishing food, clean air, and clean water. The farm bill should deliver these, but it doesn't; and thus it is wasting taxpayers' money—YOUR money. In the farm bill we are not getting what we pay for. Discussions are starting now about the next farm bill, which will come out in 2007. It is time for city people to get involved.

Origins of the Farm Program

The original idea of the farm program was good. It started at a time when the majority of our nation's population were farmers, and a majority of farmers were poor due in part to wildly fluctuating crop prices. So price support systems were enacted that made up the difference to farmers when prices of "commodity crops" (corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, cotton) fell below a baseline.

Why It Hasn't Worked

Sadly, the program has not prevented the loss of farmers, who are now only about 1% of our population. What happened is that, with a guaranteed profit from farming, farmland became an attractive investment. The price of farmland was bid up so high that farmers that didn't participate in the commodity program were unable to compete and went out of business.



Remaining farmers gobbled up the land and farms grew bigger, relying ever more on larger, more destructive farm equipment and more agrochemicals.

The only people who really benefited were equipment and input sellers, commodity buyers, and large landowners, including absentee landowners. Many of those who receive subsidy payments, which may exceed \$250,000, are not even farmers.

Another result is that farmers have gradually abandoned diverse crop rotations that protect soil and water and guard against pests, and have started growing only the crops that are subsidized. Pastures and hayfields, which are the most sustainable of agricultural systems, were plowed up and converted to corn and soybeans, which don't hold the soil as well. Because payments are calculated in part on number of "base acres" used to grow commodity crops, farmers are reluctant to grow other crops, even when the natural features of the land call for it.

My partner's brother, who farms in Iowa, wanted to buy a field from a neighbor. It had been continuously cropped to corn and thus was badly eroded, but it would have been good for pasture. But because it was part of the neighbor's corn base, he was unwilling to sell it for less than corn land prices.

Subsidies and Pollution

Commodity payments are not tied to compliance with any conservation standards, but are instead based on yield, so farmers are forced to make soil and water conservation secondary. Thus agriculture is now the biggest source of water pollution, including nitrogen and phosphorus, pesticides, manure, and sediments. Forty percent of Minnesota's lakes now flunk federal water quality standards (*Star Tribune*, 9/18/06).

Go down to the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers in



the spring when water levels are high: the Minnesota River, which drains Minnesota's richest farmland, flows muddy brown whereas the Mississippi, which flows mostly through forest land and pastures, is much cleaner.

Downstream in Lake Pepin, phosphorus and sediment are accumulating at ten times the rate at which natural processes can clear them out. Further downstream, where the Mississippi enters the Gulf of Mexico, there's a dead zone where shellfish can't live due to nitrogen discharge from Midwestern farms. In Des Moines, Iowa, a new \$4 million water treatment facility is barely able to get nitrate levels below the 10 parts per million threshold for safe drinking water.

Although there are conservation programs in the current farm bill that are meant to address these problems, they are fragmented and underfunded, turning away three out of four applicants (*Star Tribune* 9/25/06). They have little chance against the commodity program, which receives seven times as much funding.

How Farm Policy Hurts Us

Another problem with the farm program is that it is contrary to the laws of supply and demand. It distorts the markets, leading to overproduction of supported commodities. Dumping of these commodities on the world market keeps prices low and undercuts the ability of Third World farmers to get a fair price for their crops.

The low prices of these commodities leads to their over-use in our food system, such as cheap corn syrup, contributing to the American obesity epidemic, as Heidi Goar explained in her article about corn in the last issue

(cont. on p. 6)

(*Federal Farm Bill* cont. from p. 5)

of this of the newsletter. However, the subsidies do not significantly lower the price of nutritious food at the consumer level because most of the retail cost of food is due to the price of processing, packaging, advertising, and distributing. For example, the price of the wheat in a loaf of bread is only about 2 cents. The foods that we need to be eating more of for balanced nutrition, fruits and vegetables, are not subsidized, and therefore are too expensive for many consumers.

One bright spot in the current farm program is the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, which allows people using food stamps and WIC vouchers to purchase fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. Both low income people and farmers benefit, as does our health care system on down the road, as nutrition-related maladies are prevented. We must demand that the next farm bill continue and expand this program, and tie other feeding programs to better nutrition.

What Needs to Change?

So what is the alternative if we want to support family farmers and to ensure a stable food supply? The Conservation Security Program (CSP), which was part of the last farm bill, makes payments to farmers based on conservation practices they implement on their farms.

For example, a dollar value would be assigned for each acre of land in conservation tillage, each 100 feet of terrace, or each acre on which they practice nutrient management planning or conservation tillage. The CSP acknowledges that the cost of farming in an environmentally sustainable way has so far been a burden borne by conscientious farmers by themselves, whereas the benefits accrue to society at large. It would only be fair for society to help defray that cost.

The rewards of good conservation practices are mostly non-economic, but we need to change that. By contrast, productivity does not need

to be publicly rewarded because the marketplace already rewards it in proportion to demand.

Unfortunately, so far the CSP has been funded only as a pilot program in a limited number of counties, and the payments are not high enough to make it worthwhile for many farmers. For example, the Miller family in southeastern Minnesota converted 386 acres to alfalfa and pasture (*StarTribune*, 9/25/06). They got \$6,000 from the CSP for it, but if they had left it in corn and soybeans they would have received \$10,000. Only the most conscientious and financially well-off farmers would think of making that trade-off.

As long as the commodity program offers farmers a more lucrative deal, the CSP has no chance of bringing about the needed change. Because of the commodity program, farmers who know the right thing to do and want to do it feel they cannot afford to. The commodity program must be completely eliminated and replaced by green payments such as the CSP.

Your Voice Matters

The farm bill is up for reauthorization in 2007. Farm organizations are already discussing what changes should be made. Unfortunately, many have a vested interest in the commodity program. Others simply cannot conceive of an alternative and are suspicious of change.

Reform will not come if policy makers continue to listen only to farmers in setting national agricultural policy. Even the sustainable agriculture organizations, such as Minnesota-based Land Stewardship Project, are afraid to demand an end to the commodity program for fear of alienating allies in the agricultural community. So they need new allies, such as urban people.

Urbanites have a romantic image of agriculture and think that the current farm program supports that, which it does not. Instead, it subsidizes an environmentally unsustainable system of agriculture, with little to show for it other than eroded soil and polluted waterways. Many urban

people are environmentalists who would be happy to pay for a farm program that protects our nation's soil, water, and wildlife through a program such as the CSP. It is time for these people to speak up and demand better agricultural policy in Washington!

Resources:

- u The *Star Tribune* had an excellent series on the connection between farm policy and water quality: <<http://www.startribune.com/10089/v-print/story/553126.html>> (also 679640, 679641, 680429, 685580, 687993, and 690489).
- u *Modernizing America's Food and Farm Policy*, report of the agriculture task force of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, can be found at <http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/media_press_room_detail.php?press_release_id=38>.
- u The USDA document on options for the next farm bill discusses four options for farm supports: <<http://www.usda.gov/documents/FarmBill07consensvsum.pdf>>.
- u The President's Council of Economic Advisors, Economic Report of the President, 2006, Chapter 8, Agriculture. They take a strong stand on changing how farmers are supported. See <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/ch8-erp06.pdf>>.
- u "Oxfam Campaigner: Fairness for Farmers" discusses the impact of US farm subsidies on Third World farmers, especially small cotton farmers in Africa. See <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/campaigner_3_sum03.pdf>.
- u The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's farm bill action sheets include one on conservation: <<http://www.msawg.org/key-farmland.html>>.
- u The Environmental Defense Action Fund has an action alert on the farm bill: <<http://environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagID=103&campaign=118>>.

General Manager's 2006 Report

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>
Department Income	1,678,399	1,595,619	1,500,240	1,509,478
Cost of Sales	1,092,056	1,058,675	1,013,677	999,109
Member Discounts	122,433	120,466	113,643	109,850
Gross Profit	464,184	416,832	373,336	410,174
Operating Expenses	456,404	407,290	403,154	384,061
Operating Ordinary Income	7,780	9,543	-29,819	26,113
Net Income	9,878	-13,241	-22,788	7,834
Co-op Net Worth	435,407	394,209	398,525	429,341
Inventory (Wholesale)	119,531	101,829	94,503	90,601
Credit Card Fees	17,046			

Our fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.

Department Income—the total rung through the register.

Cost of Sales—the amount HPC paid for merchandise.

Member Discounts—discount given to working members.

Operating Expenses—includes payroll, utilities, supplies, credit card fees.

Operating Ordinary Income—amount left after paying operating costs.

Net Income—amount left after paying our expenses and adjusting our other income.



Store improvements this last fiscal year included a different cooler for the packaged nuts, eggs, etc., and new nut bins. We also did some revamping in the tea department. As mentioned at last year's annual meeting, we will be going ahead with installing a replacement walk-in cooler and freezer in the back room, sometime in the winter. This will be our major improvement for this new fiscal year. We are using gains made this past year towards the purchase. We will not need a loan.

We continue to be one of the few co-ops that has volunteers. Thank

you for your interest, your participation, and your enthusiasm. I believe that the sense of community that is experienced by us all is good for the over-all community. We continue to maintain the co-op principles and this is a reason to be proud.

Our sales were up at a manageable level. We also have new expenses. We are paying "assessments" to the IOOF [Independent Order of Odd Fellows] in lieu of an actual rent increase. These costs include street/alley charges, water use, snow plowing, taxes, etc. We estimate this

to average \$1000+/month. You perhaps noticed the credit card charges above. Considering these new expenses, we did very well last year.

I want to thank all of you who helped to make this a good year—volunteers, employees, shoppers, and our Board of Directors. The board this past year included Jay Dregni, Karen Gill-Gerbig, Kjersti Hanneman, Marcia Hanson, Naomi Karstad, Gregg Richardson, John Rogers, Lisa Scribner, and Sophie Teyssier.

—Respectfully submitted by Helen DuFault, November 18, 2006

Park Midway ad

Blue Sky ad

2006 Annual Meeting Committee Reports

Board Development

The Board Development Committee, most often over delicious mugs of coffee and tea at the local Dunn Bros coffee, discussed how to best develop our board of directors. In addition to rather mundane tasks, such as policy monitoring, our committee:

- u Planned a board social so that we could all get to know one another,
- u Created and implemented a self-evaluation process for board members,
- u Worked to recruit qualified candidates to run for the board, and
- u Prepared for the annual board elections.

In the coming month, we will plan and conduct an orientation for new board members.

—Kjersti Hanneman, Chair

Long Range Planning

The Long Range Planning Committee organized a strategic planning retreat in February of this year, facilitated by Bill Gessner of Cooperative Development Services. The main outcome of the retreat was a set of Five Strategic Directions, intended to shape the work of the board and the committees for the rest of the year, as well as providing a framework for goals for coming years. The Five Strategic Directions adopted by the board were:

- 1) Create sustainable growth in real income (sales and profit) without compromising the integrity of our mission.
- 2) Build and support a viable and resilient organization.
- 3) Create a space that optimizes our potential for growth.
- 4) Build relationships with other co-ops and like-minded organizations.
- 5) Play an integral role and be a leader in our changing community.

—Gregg Richardson, Chair

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee started the year by addressing the Hampden Park Co-op Strategic Directions, as they applied to the work of the Membership Committee. This led us to talk about our volunteer program and whether it could be changed/streamlined/tweaked to work more efficiently and involve more volunteers in a more effective manner. Our committee also ran a survey during Mayfest, inviting input from all shoppers, whether or not they are members. Following up on the survey, we have been discussing how to offer the social and educational events that people have expressed an interest in. We've also been trying to increase the board's "voice" in the newsletter.

—Naomi Jackson, Chair

Personnel Committee

Fortunately, no noteworthy events have occurred this last year with which the Personnel Committee has been involved. We continue to work within our policy guidelines to assist management in their efforts to maintain and oversee our exceptionally loyal and talented staff.

—Karen Gill-Gerbig, Chair

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee works with HPC management, planning and overseeing HPC monies—how they are spent, saved, and invested. Within the last year, we are, again, conservatively planning yearly budgets two fiscal years out, instead of just one. Periodically, as the first year is then reviewed, finance and management can determine effectiveness of that first year's projections, adjust any for the second year, and then develop a subsequent budget to maintain the two-year budgeting cycle for the coming fiscal year.

Additional Finance Committee Information:

Each year, after the co-op has received its Balance and Profit and

Loss sheets from our CPA, and prior to the Annual Meeting, the Finance Committee meets to determine if any part of a net income will be returned to members, commensurate with a percentage of their overall purchases, in the form of a dividend.

To paraphrase, our bylaws call for the following: of any net income, the Board of Directors (through recommendation of the Finance Committee) may allow a portion of the net income to be distributed to the membership, based on the following: 80% of the net income must be re-invested in the form of Class B stock, while 20% of the next income may be divided among members, in a percentage commensurate with their overall expenditures within that income year. That respective dividend would be issued in the form of a check to the member, if that dividend equals or exceeds \$3.00. Any dividend of \$2.99 or less is returned to Class B stock.

This year, the co-op has a net income of \$9,878.22. This could be distributed as noted above to stock and dividend checks, but as the Finance Committee is aware that money is needed to replace the walk-ins (cooler and freezer), they recommended to the board that the money be used in partial payment for those needs in the next calendar year. The board has agreed and voted to not issue a dividend, but instead use the funds as a re-investment for the co-op as a whole.

—Karen Gill-Gerbig, Chair

(cont. on p. 9)



(Committee Reports cont. from p. 8)

Physical Plant Annual Report

The Physical Plant Committee this year consisted of John Rogers, Sophie Teyssier, Naomi Karstad, and Helen DuFault.

We continue to deal with issues that face a business operating in an old building. We are at capacity regarding our space. Helen, Kathy, Marcia, and the rest of the staff continue to do amazing things with the space we have.

As in years past, there have been issues with coolers and compressors, but thankfully, nothing major. A security camera was installed after a break-in last year, and there have been no incidents since then.

Bill Kidd built the patio and raised flower bed area at the front of the parking lot.

A new picnic table designed and built by Susan Warner and George Hansen was installed in the flower bed area and it is a pleasant and popular place to sit and enjoy a deli sandwich or a cup of soup. Reminder: This picnic table is exclusively for humans! Please do not tie any animal to the table at any time.

We continue to be a visible, familiar, and friendly place to shop in the neighborhood.

—Naomi Karstad, Chair

Chestnuts Roasting....

Our co-op often carries chestnuts over the holiday season, but what does one do with them? Here are a couple of recipes to try:

Brussels Sprouts and Chestnuts in a Maple Glaze

3 cups small white onions, peeled
3 cups small Brussels sprouts, trimmed
3 cups boiled and peeled chestnuts*
½ cup maple syrup
2 tablespoons tarragon vinegar
½ teaspoon ground pepper

With a small knife, cut an "X" into the root ends of the onions and Brussels sprouts. In a large pot of boiling water, blanch onions for 3–4 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and place in a medium bowl. Put the Brussels sprouts in the water. Blanch for 3–4 minutes. Pour into a colander and rinse with cold water. Set aside.

In a 3–quart saucepan over medium-high heat, warm the maple syrup for 4 minutes. Add the vinegar and the onions. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 20–30 minutes, or until the liquid has almost evaporated.

(The recipe may be prepared up to this point one day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Rewarm the onions before proceeding.)

Add the chestnuts and brussels sprouts. Stir gently to combine. Cook for about 5 minutes, or until the Brussels sprouts are thoroughly heated but still green. Season with the pepper, and serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 12.

*To prepare chestnuts: place in boiling water for 15–25 minutes, then drain. Shells and skins are easier to remove after boiling.

Roasted Chestnuts

(from *Joy of Cooking*)

Preheat oven to 425°. Prick the shells of the chestnuts with a fork before putting them in the oven for 15–20 minutes—or they may explode. More hazardous, but more fun, is to roast the chestnuts in a pan..., on a cold winter's evening, on the coals of an open hearth. A childhood game was for each of us to cheer on our own chestnut to pop first.

BUY THE CHANGE!

Check out the Co-op's online
Community Board and Forum:

- u Visit the co-op Web site:
<<http://www.hampdenparkcoop.com/>>
- u Click on the "Community Board" link.
- u Post goods or services for sale .
- u FREE items can be posted FREE.
- u 70% of the posting fees come back to the co-op!
- u Share your thoughts in the discussion forum.
- u Search co-op listings, or the entire

Buy the Change network.

Have You Tried...? The HPC Aisles Revealed

—by Katharine Holden, HPC Member

Hampden Park Co-op is packed with products you may not have tried before. Here's the screech on a few of them:

Dagoba Unsweetened Hot Chocolate

Hot chocolate mixes are usually more sugar than chocolate. Lots more sugar. Dagoba is different. You make it just like any other hot chocolate mix but you add your own sweetener, should you need it. Instead of a huge infusion of high fructose corn syrup or other nasties, you are free to add just a touch of sugar or alternative sweeteners such as stevia or agave nectar. Or enjoy the chocolate flavor on its own. Dagoba is gluten-free, non-alkalized, and Fair Trade. It comes in eight-ounce canisters.

Cashew Carrot Ginger Soup

Pacific Natural Foods, out of Oregon, produces a great line of soups made of natural or organic ingredients. Normally I avoid carrot soup—it's so often bland with an undertone of peel that cooks vainly try to cover up with a lot of pepper—but I make an exception for Cashew Carrot Ginger soup. The coconut milk base and the spiciness of the ginger balance the carrots beautifully. Enjoy it hot or chilled. I've added leftover chicken to it to make a heartier meal. Gluten-free.

Frontier Tahitian Vanilla Extract

On their cooking show, *Two Fat Ladies*, Jennifer Paterson and Clarissa Dickson-Wright frequently warned against the horrors of using "vanilla flavoring" instead of vanilla extract. The reason? So-called vanilla flavoring doesn't have any real vanilla in it. It's basically corn products and food coloring. Vanilla flavoring is sold in bottles right next to the real stuff, and it's cheaper than the real stuff. So consumers are fooled and enticed into buying it. If you truly want to add corn syrup and food coloring to your baked goods, then go ahead and buy vanilla flavoring. If you want to add vanilla to your baked goods, buy vanilla extract only. It is made, as it should be, from vanilla beans. Frontier Natural Foods Co-op, out of Iowa, makes a full line of high-quality extracts, both conventional and organic, including vanilla, orange, butterscotch, and anise.

Books

HPC offers several shelves of natural health and cookbooks, mostly better-quality paperbacks. Because they're in an out-of-the-way corner next to the jewelry and single-serving candies, you may not have noticed the books. They're worth a look. Many of them are from smaller presses and so won't be stocked at Big Box Books. Randomly selected titles include *Take Care of Yourself: The Complete Illustrated Guide to Self-Care*, *The Africa News Cookbook: African Cooking for Western Kitchens*, *The Bold Vegetarian*, *The Secret to Tender Pie: America's Grandmothers Share Their Favorite Recipes*, *The Tofu Tollbooth*, *How Sweet It Is...Without the Sugar*, *The Llaza Moon Tibetan Cookbook*, *Become a Vegetarian in 5 Easy Steps*, *Gaia's Kitchen: Vegetarian Recipes for Family and Community*, *The 500 Best Garden Plants*, and, my favorite title of the week, *Honest Pretzels*.

R. W. Knudsen's Organic Prune Juice

In an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the gnome Guinan introduces Worf, the Klingon, to straight prune juice. Worf declares that it's a drink worthy of a warrior. R. W. Knudsen Family bottles an excellent organic prune juice, suitable for all you warriors out there. Unlike commercial brand prune juice, Knudsen's has no added sweeteners. There's no need; prunes pack plenty of carbohydrates all by themselves. Prune juice can be added to baked goods, chili, barbecue sauce, home brews, and cocktails. It's a good sweetener for flax meal recipes. Or try Knudsen's Organic prune juice chilled or over ice. If the very idea of prune juice makes you think of the American obsession with "regularity," perhaps a cocktail might be more your style (see recipe in sidebar).



Prune Juice Cocktails

Old Yeller

1 ounce Jameson's Irish whiskey
1 ounce prune juice
2 olives

Blend in a blender until smooth. Serve in a cocktail glass. Garnish with a slice of lemon.

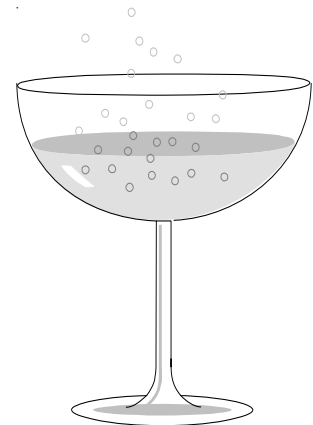
Brown Dog

Mix 1 : 1 unsweetened cranberry juice and unsweetened prune juice. Add jigger of Bombay Sapphire gin. Mix. Serve on the rocks with an orange slice garnish.

Pruney Nog

1 banana, peeled
½ cup chilled prune juice
½ cup plain or vanilla yogurt
3 ice cubes

Blend all ingredients except ice cubes until smooth. Add ice cubes and blend again until ice is chopped.



[Katharine Holden admits to being the one who caused the Red Lentil Disaster in the bulk beans aisle in October. You see, she had put the bag under the spout and all was going well. Then she spotted this attractive man and was trying to see if he was wearing a wedding band or anything decorated with a rainbow, and...lentils everywhere.]

**Ad rates: \$15 per
issue for camera-
ready, 2½ by 3½ ad.**



(New Year's Recipes cont. from p. 4)

Hogmanay, or Black Buns
(Scottish New Year's Buns)

1 cup flour
 ½ teaspoon baking powder
 ½ cup dark brown sugar
 1 teaspoon ground cloves
 1 teaspoon ground ginger
 2 cups seedless raisins, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes and drained
 ½ cup dried cranberries or currants, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes and drained
 2 apples, peeled and finely chopped
 ½ cup coarsely chopped almonds
 2 eggs
 ½ cup milk
 1 teaspoon almond extract
 2 9-inch pie crusts, with tops
 Egg glaze (1 egg and 1 tablespoon water, mixed)

Preheat oven to 350°. In medium mixing bowl, combine ingredients until well blended. Poke the bottom of the pie crust several times with a fork. Fill with mixture and cover with top crust, folding the edges together and tucking them inside the inside edge of the pie pan. Brush top with egg glaze and poke several holes in the top with a knife. Bake for 2 hours or until golden brown. Allow to sit overnight at room temperature. Makes 8–10 servings.

Note: Hogmanay will keep for two weeks in the refrigerator.

Book Review

The Way We Eat: Why our Food Choices Matter by Peter Singer and Jim Mason

—by Katie Dahl, HPC Member

What does it mean to eat ethically? If you are reading this newsletter, the chances are great that you've considered this question. Peter Singer and Jim Mason's 2006 book, *The Way We Eat*, addresses ethical eating from farm to grocery store to dinner plate.

The book is divided into three sections, each tracking the food choices made by a different US family. As Singer and Mason describe, family number one follows the most common American diet. They shop at big box stores that promise low-cost food and eat some type of meat or fish at most meals. Ultimately, the factors of affordability and convenience shape their food choices.

Family number two is categorized as the "conscientious omnivores." They are careful to buy food from companies or farms that uphold certain standards in their production or farming practices. This family relies on terms like organic, fair trade certified, free range, or grass fed to inform their food choices.

And finally, family number three is a vegan household, opposing human consumption of any animal-based products. They live by the conviction that all animal farming practices lead to the undeserved suffering of animals.

Woven throughout the stories of these three families is a picture of the current US farming situation. Singer and Mason are primarily critical of factory farming*, graphically describing their visits to farms where animals are over-crowded and abused. They explain the practices of beak clipping on chicken farms (said to be necessary to keep chickens from attacking each other in close quarters) and hormone injection on dairy farms (said to increase a cow's milk production). Singer and Mason closely examine the cost that factory farming has on the animals, on the environment, and on consumers.

The Way We Eat touches on the topic of worker rights as well, emphasizing the importance of fair trade and labor protection. The authors commend the 2005 Coalition of Immokalee Workers' boycott of Taco Bell that resulted in higher pay for tomato pickers. Such advocacy is necessary to ethical eating.

By and large, however, this book concentrates on the humane treatment of animals as inseparable from the ethics of our food choices. This theme isn't surprising, since Peter Singer also authored *Animal Liberation*, the 1975 touchstone within the animal rights movement. Singer and Mason never claim that a vegan lifestyle is the only viable option, but they do uplift vegan-ism as a highly ethical eating choice.

Aside from a small typo that describes Bill Niman, founder of Niman Ranch sustainable livestock cooperative, as a graduate of the University of "Minneapolis" (caught by my Minnesota eye!), this book is a highly provocative reminder that our food choices do matter. As the extensive footnotes and resource lists indicate, your reading on this topic won't end with this book, but it's a great place to start.

***Factory farming:** "A term used to describe a set of often controversial practices in large-scale, intensive agriculture, usually referring to the industrialized production of livestock, poultry, and fish...[and] geared toward making use of economies of scale to produce the highest output at the lowest cost" (<www.en.wikipedia.org>).

