

August 2008

A good month for food
in Plattsburgh

The Co-Op Digest



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Op

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Welcome to the North Country Food Cooperative's monthly journal of Ideas. The Co-Op Digest is written by staff and members of the Food Co-Op. Contributions from all members are welcome, please send your articles and ideas to the editor, adamdef@hotmail.com

Jeremiah to Co-Op: "Au Revoir"



It's true, the time has come for me to say my farewell to the Co-op, but only farewell in a restricted sense. While I will henceforth cease to be the shelf-stocking "incredible bulk" and the "brute of fruit," I will always consider the co-op my home. Although I am passing on my Co-op Digest coordinating and editing duties to the very capable hands of Adam

DeFayette of "DeFayette Days," I still plan on contributing to the Digest as a Boston correspondent of sorts, where I will pass on any relevant experiences and lessons learned in my studies of community development and the cooperative movement to the fine folks of Plattsburgh. Thanks to all the readers of the Digest for their support and encouragement and to all the coop shoppers who made the store much more than another place to make and spend money. Thanks to the folks on the board, Jeff and his corrugated creations, Marie and her compassion and good eats, Carol and her infinite patience and wisdom, Patwa and his eclectic zen-tofu insurrectionism, T-rav, his tunes and random feats of strength, Kim and our cathartic summer excursions, and of course, the man upstairs (no, not the One who always winds up on sentimental lists like this), Gharan, the muffin man. Thank you all for the wonderful experiences!

Farewell, *Jeremiah*

"To Card or not to Card" – that is the Question *by Carol*

Did you know that the Co-op pays almost \$900 per month in credit card processing fees? Each time a credit card is swiped, the store is charged a percentage fee for the transaction. These fees really add up over the year, amounting to almost \$11,000! That's a new produce cooler, or about 1/3 the cost of a new roof – in other words, money that could be spent on store improvements to benefit all shoppers.

In this day and age, it is difficult to require cash or check only, as so many people use both debit and credit cards. Besides, there are some customers who may not wish to carry much cash and only use cards – travelers and Canadian

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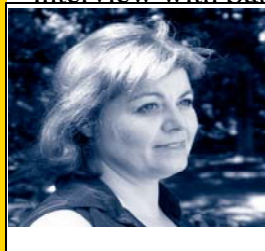
...continued from page 1, “To Card or not to Card”

shoppers for instance. So, what to do about high processing fees by \$200 per month accompanying high processing fees has prompted some discussion and ideas. Most importantly, if you are a Co-op member, you could greatly help by paying with one the following:

1. Consider using cash. Cash is immediately deposited and converted into working capital for the store. nccoop@westelcom.com.
2. Use personal checks if you are a Co-op member and show your membership card. Check processing fees are lower than credit cards, due to a higher level of risk (bounced checks) transferred to us rather than VISA or MasterCard.
3. Use your credit or debit card for larger purchases, such as during a holiday season, when carrying a large sum of cash may not be as safe as checks or cards. American Express charges the highest processing fees of all the major cards, so if possible, avoid using this one.
4. Buy a gift certificate -this may be used for any purchase in the store, and does not need to be used all at once. A \$100 gift certificate could be paid for and drawn down over a longer period, saving several checking or card fees.

Remember, these are only suggestions for reducing our collective expenses! As a community- owned store, we don’t want to be strict about requiring cash-only transactions. The challenge is to provide a variety of convenient payment methods (so we can say “yes” to every sale), while balancing the need to keep costs down in order to remain a viable independent store. And along with that is creating awareness of the hidden cost of accepting credit cards. Even

Raw Foods Revisited, Learn how and what the RAW Lifestyle is all about: An interview with Sabina Nicholson, contributed and edited by E. Marie Barber



Dear Co-Op Friends and Neighbors, I recently talked to my dear friend Sabina Nicholson of the Southern Adirondacks, and found she has embarked on an avenue of health and a way of adjusting her diet and food lifestyle that just makes sense. *Continued on next page...* aware of our own

... “Raw Foods Revisited” continued...an interview

As we become more aware of our own path to health and take ownership of our bodies we all need to make choices. I wanted to share this information with you all. This journal has touched on raw foods, eating green, sprouting and other similar topics, so it is of continuing interest to us to educate our selves with the resources available right here in our own back yard.

What is a Raw Food Diet? Uncooked Fruits, Vegetables, Nuts, Seeds and Sprouted Grains make up a vegan, organic, Raw Food Diet. These foods are consumed whole or chopped, blended, shredded, diced and juiced to make delicious, gourmet raw food meals. You *can* create easy fast simple raw food meals - that taste delicious.

I asked Sabina how she became a teacher and chef for “Living on Live Foods” and an instructor of Alissa Cohen’s certification programs

Sabina: “I found raw foods quite by accident, you see I was trying every miracle pill, every diet, every thing ...but to no avail! Well I stumbled across the raw food concept and tried it, like I did every plan. The results far exceeded my expectations, not only did I lose weight (lots!) but I experienced so many other perks.

Marie: Sabina, what else did you find as an advantage to this food change??

Sabina: I was actually happy, cheerful as the days went past; humming while doing chores, found it easier to be around people, comfortable in crowds.

Marie: It sounds like the opposite of most diets; I have experienced friends becoming snappish and easily fatigued on other diets they have tried. They complained of sluggishness and irritability and often felt frustrated by their efforts. Can you share any other benefits with our readers?

Marie: It sounds like the opposite of most diets, I have experienced friends becoming snappish and easily fatigued on other diets they have tried. They complained of sluggishness and irritability and often felt frustrated by their efforts. Can you share any other benefits with our readers?

Sabina: Maybe one of the best...I ceased being constipated, a life long problem, also my blood pressure came down, daily headaches lessened and debilitating migraines were greatly reduced. The longer I have eaten this way, the better I feel. I have so much more energy as compared to the overwhelming former desire to be a couch potato.

Marie: Sabina, I have been so encouraged to see your vibrancy return. You have been prodding me to look into this program for a little while now, as soon as you knew I recently found out that I have BRAC II gene deviation. You stood by me and my family through the loss of my sister from breast cancer and continue to encourage me to be aware of my own great potential for female cancers. Along with pro active screening, my doctor’s recommend lowering cholesterol, weight reduction, exercise and everything that goes along with that. Will this food life style help me shed my unwanted pounds and can it be a program I can continue with for long term benefits??

Sabina: I have been witness to many people who have reclaimed there life...energy revives, skin problems lesson, and yes; great weight loss. This is where Alissa Cohen has helped me out. With her instruction, I found easy and delicious ways to incorporate the raw foods into my life style. I find this way of eating satisfying, simple, and very yummy and I don’t feel deprived. My offer stands...let me teach you!!

Marie: Thank you so much, Sabina, I will be looking into your class schedules and signing up soon. With all the local organic produce available at the North Country Co-Op, I have an unlimited resource to change my eating habits, and improve my overall health.

Sabina is in the process of publishing a recipe book “Raw Delights” which should go to print this fall.

It is a fact: “Garbage in equals Garbage out”, so our choices of how we recreate & interact with others, through food or friendship affect our health... What we feed our bodies is as important as what we feed our minds. By *choosing* great friends who stick close and support us, positive attitudes, and healthy foods, we improve the quality of the greatest of gifts: LIFE.

For more information and frequently asked questions about raw foods visit Sabina’s web site:

<http://www.adirondackrawfoodconnection.com/index.html> or her teaching website: <http://www.rawteacher.com/sabinanicholson/>

For information on BRAC II Genetic testing or if you have concerns about cancer risk in your family please check out http://www.facingourrisk.org/about_us/contact_force.html

Plastic Bags: An incredibly serious situation, by Toni

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The Co-Op Digest

big summer cabbage heads from Blackstone Farms, or swanning honey, become the Adirondack Honey guy. A plastic bag riding on a strong gust heading towards the lake flies into my face. It is a striking awakening to my Saturday morning daze. The world seems bleaker, and I imagine where the plastic bag will land. And then, led to my cynical thoughts about plastic bags I grimace. All in the five seconds of my grimace, I have this profound insight: The insidious plastic bag creature has no good use, no romantic ending, and no justifiable purpose. And in that moment, I vow to never use a plastic bag ever again.

The plastic bag is societal vomit (and whatever worse awful things you can think of). It is an icon of convenience culture, and by some estimates the single most ubiquitous consumer item on Earth, numbering in the trillions. They're made from petroleum or natural gas with all the attendant environmental impacts of harvesting fossil fuels. One recent study, from the Toxics and Packaging Clearinghouse, found that the inks and colorants used on some bags contain lead, a notorious toxin. An article from Salon.com sites, that every year, Americans throw away some 100 billion plastic bags after they've been used to transport a bottle of ibuprophen home from the drugstore or a quart of orange juice from the grocery store. It's equivalent to dumping nearly 12 million barrels of oil.

PlasticBagRecycling.org sites that only 1 percent of plastic bags are recycled worldwide -- about 2 percent in the U.S. -- and the rest, when discarded, can last for centuries. Think about the plastic netting at the US Oval. The netting was put down as a stabilizer in the sod ground cover, and years later the erosion exposed plastic gets stuck in team players cleats. Plastic does not go away. The bags are especially insidious. They can spend eternity in landfills, but that's not always the case. The aerodynamic lightweight vessels that they are act like balloons when filled with air and can easily blow away from the well-intentioned trash can, quickly becoming the litter we despise along our Lake Champlain vistas.

Some are striking back. Following the lead of countries like Ireland, Bangladesh, South Africa, Thailand and Taiwan, some U.S. cities are calling an end to what they see as an the use of plastic bags in large grocery stores and pharmacies, permitting only paper bags with at least 40 percent recycled content or otherwise compostable bags (although better – this is still not a solution to the wasteful modern consumerist need to use something once before discarding it). Other communities across the country, including Santa Monica, Calif., New Haven, Conn., Annapolis, Md., and Portland, Ore., were considering in 2007 and hopefully now have taken legislative action against the bags. In Ireland, a now 22-cent tax on plastic bags has slashed their use by more than 90 percent since 2002 (Salon.com "Plastic Bags Are Killing Us"). In flood-prone Bangladesh, where plastic bags choked drainage systems, the bags have been banned since 2002. And on the food co-operative level, co-ops across the country are recognizing their ability to make change in cooperative unity by banning the insidious bags as well.

In early July, the Brooklyn based Park Slope Food Coop banned plastic bags. Judging from reports in the Park Slope newsletter, the Line Waiters' Gazette, the convenience of the bags was so addicting, even the most discerning shopper couldn't say no. Like a drug taken away from a recovering addict, everyone is relieved by the change.

At the North Country Food Co-op (NCFC), we have a progressive system that keeps plastic bags in continued use before finding their way to the dumpster (or your garden bed). Co-op shoppers bring bags received from other stores to the NCFC for recycled use. This is certainly a hopeful trend. However, a quick glance at the second-hand plastic bags brought in by co-op shoppers reveals an unsettling truth. The bags are appropriately labeled by the nasty corporations that once spewn them upon the world. Bags emblazoned with logos, from Walmart, Hannaford, and the Gap (to name a few), indicate that our co-op shoppers and members let go of their recycling ethics when on a moral vacation at Plattsburgh's big box store behemoths. Just because we recycle bags doesn't solve the problem of using them in the first place.

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An interesting alternative is to make your own cloth bag or buy one from the Co-op and

continued from previous page... An interesting alternative is to make your own cloth bag or buy one from the Co-op and sport the NFCF's logo on the new forest green canvas totes now available for sale. Even better, rather than buying something new, try to reuse cloth sacs that you might already have. Old pillow cases make excellent bags. Cut slits near the top opening for the added comfort of handles. The possibilities to make a simple bag from old recycled cloth are endless. Be creative. And if you absolutely must go to the The Gap, please consider bringing your new jeans home in a recycled homemade cloth bag made from the frayed jeans you are replacing.

TOFU Rebellion: Shake your Soul *by Patwa*



Pedro (Peter) is my fifteen year old son, who is now two inches taller than I, and is on his way to becoming a giant example of a great person. He wants to join the football team, so he has begun working out. But I have explained to him that muscle is good, conditioning is great, but agility and flexibility will be major pluses. So he is learning yoga, and thanks to Cathryn Clark and her “Shake Your Soul” experience he is learning to move, as am I.

Incorporating aspects of dance, yoga, tai chi, and the hokey-pokey, the hour long session is a great workout, yet never seems difficult nor high impact. No knowledge of anything is needed, just the willingness and ability to let yourself go and flow. Fun, fun, fun! As I said, my teenage child comes and finds it also an amazing experience. So come ye, and shake your soul. I even came up with the next movement class called “Groove your rainbow!”.

Garden Tricks and Tips *by Kim*

Slugs Love Beer! Put a yogurt container filled with beer around your seedlings and the slugs will be lured away.



Beautiful Tomatoes!! An old rusty nail placed at the roots of your tomatoes will help them grow big and strong.

Aphids. Aphids. Aphids. To get rid of these little pests, just boil a couple of cloves of garlic in a gallon of water, let it sit over night, mix in a few drops of dish soap, and put it in a spray bottle. Spray it liberally on all your seedlings to get rid of the little guys.

Are the deer loving your lettuce?? A mixture of minced garlic, egg, and dog hair will do the trick. Spread this around the perimeter of your garden to create an all natural deer fence.

*Hot Cayenne Pepper Style. Just sprinkle a little cayenne pepper around your seedlings to keep ants away. It is a good idea to find the ant hills and treat them also.

* Give your garden space to stretch out it's legs and breathe. Refrain from planting your plants too close together. I know it's hard, but don't plant them close. Two well spaced tomatoes will produce more than four planted close together.

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