

CO-OP Digest

July/August 2010

North Country Food Cooperative

For the community. By the community.

The Coop!!! by Adrian Carr



I'm calling this Co-Op appreciation month. And in the spirit of the Co-Op, I'd like to talk local. The co-op provides a great opportunity and marketplace for local producers- it's one of the wonderful and very beneficial roles the Co-op plays! What's more it's a win-win situation for all: We the consumers can enjoy local specialty products, which help the local producers in our community, which in-turn encourages the Co-op to sell more and carry more. Isn't that great?

So I was very happy to recommend my friend Craig Bilow and his new Potato Chip company Sustain Adirondack to the Co-Op. Craig is making amazing potato chips with local ingredients from the North Country. So he's the epitome of local and he's now selling his Chips in the Co-op. There's several flavors in the chips. So far I've tried the BBQ and Salt and Pepper. When the chips first came out, me and 'the tasters' at the Co-op felt there was too much salt, so I told Craig and he was already on it! The salt levels are much more balanced now. That's another beautiful thing about local products: you can have an input and make a difference.

So whether it's strawberries from Rolf's,

the Local Cheeses from Clover Mead, the greens from Fledging Crow, the mountains of veggies from Kim & Gharan of Quarry Gardens, the Milk from Evan's Farmhouse Dairy, or the delicious Bakery products from Conroy's, buying local is a wonderful thing to do. And you can do this at the Co-op! The benefits continue because these are all really high quality products, which are healthy for you. Also, you're helping the environment by minimizing greenhouse gases because it's only local transport, not flown in from half way around the world. And finally you're helping the community by encouraging local business!

I would like to recognize the Co-op for being a very special entity in Plattsburgh- if it wasn't for the foresight and efforts of the founders and board members, there would be no food market in Downtown Plattsburgh. That is a sad thought. I spend a lot of time in Montreal and for all the wonderful things Montreal may offer, there's no Co-op!

Good prices, access to local producers and quality products are something the co-op has made a benchmark.....isn't that worth at least a month of appreciation?

One more local thing I would like to mention - although many of you might well know - I must commend the Thai restaurant, Sawatdee at 15 Bridge Street. My wife, who spent much time in Thailand gives this restaurant 5 stars. It's family run and has some of the best home cooked Thai food I've ever tasted. Please show support by enjoying a dinner at this wonderful establishment! And no I'm not getting any free dinners for writing about it, I just commend this family for starting a business and putting out such a high quality product. My personal favorite is the Spicy Basil Duck!

Thanks for reading and don't forget to show your appreciation to the Co-Op this month!

Portland Street Food: A Foodie/Localvore Dream Come True

by Melissa Hart



Having recently returned from a two-week vacation that was split between Fairbanks, Alaska and Portland, Ore., what sticks out in my mind the most are the delectable eats I enjoyed in Portland.

With a rainy, yet mild, climate capable of growing food and flowers year-round, it is easy to eat local in the Beaver State. Front-yard gardens are abundant throughout many of the neighborhoods I walked and drove through and a large community garden is situated a block from where we were staying. The city boasts one of the best and longest running farmers markets in the country: The aptly named Saturday Market (which also holds Sunday hours). And to top it all off, the state produces plentiful amounts of beer and wine (featuring homegrown hops and grapes). What could be better than that?

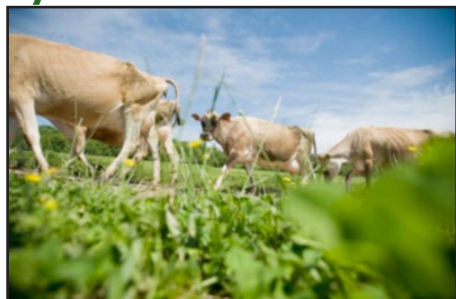
Cheap eats everywhere you turn. Portland is named the City of Roses, but should seriously rethink its title. City of Delicious Street Food would be more appropriate. According to an article I read online in the

Oregonian, as of February, there were 450 food carts in the city limits and almost 30 in the process of getting started. That number is a big spike from a few years ago, which the author attributed to the affordable licensing fees (\$350) and low rent (averages \$500). All you need is an idea and a converted camper/trailer/stalls/bike rig and you're in business. With all the difficulty and expenses in starting a restaurant, it's refreshing to have so many low-risk options, with many of the entrepreneurs young and eager to have their own business. Part of the fun is seeing the vendors clustered in parking lots, many catering to the lunch crowd downtown, with others scattered around the city. The carts are often colorful and eclectic, reflecting the exuberant creativity of this youthful city. Some are open late night, such as Whiffies Fried Pies, which we feasted on at 1 a.m. our first evening in town. For \$3.50, my brother, partner and I dined on homemade hot pockets, available in sweet and savory flavors. We opted for the Mounds bar, which was stuffed with chocolate and coconut and then deep-fried into internal melty goodness.

Which brings me to the food, glorious food. Taco trucks, Thai shacks, hot dog stands, you name it, they've got it. Travelers on a budget will revel in the choices. A few days after the pies, four of us ventured downtown to hit up the lunchtime carts. The beauty lies in each person dining on something different: Vegan egg-salad sandwich and Thai noodles for my brother and his wife; an Indian food sampler for me; and my husband noshed on pork, sauerkraut and dumplings from Tabor, a Czech eatery. All together, we ate our way around the world in one afternoon. And the portions were plentiful. At a mere \$6, which included naan, my vegetarian sampler provided enough leftovers for the next day's lunch.

Interested in learning more? Or just want a taste of what's out there? Portland's street eats have been featured in the New York Times' Frugal Traveler column (just Google "Portland Food Carts" and it pops up). A useful guide can be found at www.foodcartsporeland.com.

Letter from the Sylvesters' Farm:



We would not be farmers if we didn't start by talking about the weather. What a "get your attention" spring this has been. Snow lingering on the fields until April 17th, then better than 24 inches of snow between two late spring snowstorms, not to mention finding a solid inch of ice in the beef cows'

water tub the morning of May 10th. Not to worry though, with a spring like this we just have to remember two great sayings: "Snow is a poor man's fertilizer" (because the snow is heavy and drags nitrogen from the air into the ground) and "A cold wet May brings a barn full of hay."

We are the Sylvesters: Peter, Anne, Nathan, Matthew and Olivia. We are organic dairy famers from Ellenburg Center, New York. We have been farming organically since 2005. We are certified through NOFA-NY and have been Organic Valley Cooperative members since 2007. Our main farm entity is dairy cattle. We currently have 104 in the herd, from newborn calves to milking cows. We also have 4 goats and 9 mature heritage breed turkeys, which belong to Matthew. Nathan has a team of ponies, Vanilla and Cinnamon, and 24 sheep. Olivia has 45 chickens and a pony, Abby. The family has one horse, Misty, 3 pigs and 3 lowline beef cows. We are a bit like Old MacDonald's farm.

Our dairy herd consists of Jerseys, Holsteins, Linebacks, Normandes, and a cross of the breeds. We have been intensive graziers since 1995. We like seeing our cattle outside grazing. On a hot summer day, we enjoy seeing our cows laying under the trees, completely relaxed. We have water in every pasture so the cows don't have far to go to get fresh water. While the progressive farm magazines may say a freestall barn, huge fans, and rubber mats are what makes cows comfortable, we believe shade trees, fresh grass and fresh water are the god given comforts for a dairy cow in Ellenburg Center during good weather. The rest of the year when no grass grows our cows are fed 6 pounds of fresh ground corn, and all the dry hay and baleage they can eat. If the summer does not provide good quality forage we sometimes give the cows one pound of soybean meal each day to make up for the lower protein in the forage.

We didn't change our farming practices to be organic. We had read books and magazines about the effect of the chemicals. This information led us to really think about our family's health and our animals' health. This info also helped us to decide to join Organic Valley. This cooperative offers its members so much support. Support that spans more than just problems. For instance, they have people that help with planning energy projects that a farmer may want to do, and when we had a high PI (one of the three counts used to check for clean milk) about two months before our first milk pickup by Organic Valley, we called the Farmer Hotline at Organic Valley and talked to the milk quality person, Kevin. He was such a help. Besides working for Organic Valley, he was an organic farmer who had had the same problems. Organic Valley treated us like members before the first drop of milk even got to them. Organic Valley also has two veterinarians on staff that we can call for help when a cow's health has us puzzled on what it might be and which treatment might work the best. Dr. Guy and Dr. Paul are great. We believe that Organic Valley represents organic principles that consumers can trust.

Well, the frogs have started singing their nightly songs and our eyes are growing heavier, so we need to draw to a close for another day. Hope this has given you all a little look into the next carton of Organic Valley milk, butter or any of the many other tasty Organic Valley products that you purchase. Organic Valley is your local farmer owned cooperative.

Report from the Annual Member Meeting

by Cathryn Clark



The Co-op's Annual Meeting and Potluck on May 2 this year was well attended and an amazing array of delicious and healthful food was enjoyed by all! The Co-op's Core Workers were thanked and appreciated by Carol and the Co-op staff and the Board of Directors. Both Elizabeth Boolukos, board President, and Carol Czaja, Co-op manager, gave overviews and perspectives on the past year and looking ahead. During the meeting, an amendment to the by-laws to change the number of directors on the Board from 7 to 9 was approved by the general membership and Eric Rucker was nominated and voted in as the Co-op's eighth Director. We expect to have a ninth director approved at the July 14th meeting.

The Co-op Board of Directors is working to fulfill and expand the mission of the Co-op, and is looking for your views. In this issue of the Co-op Digest is a link [CLICK HERE] to an online survey which we hope will help to identify those areas that have significance to the Co-op community, and other aspects of the Co-op experience as well. Please take a few minutes to go to our survey site and share what you think, there are only 10 mostly multiple choice questions with space for comments on your choices. There will be printed copies of the survey for anyone who doesn't have access to a computer, but please help us to save paper and use the online survey if you can.

Things may seem so out of control in the world in so many ways and yet, in the sphere of our lives that we are able to have influence, allowing your personal choices to have meaning can provide a sense of connectedness – to self, to others, to your community. Your participation in the survey will, we hope, help us to learn how members and shoppers view the Co-op and how to better serve our community. Thank you!



Everybody



The Board



Staff - Travis, Kim, Oliver





