

## Produce News

by Jeri Person,  
Produce Manager

February, hmmm?  
Middle of winter,  
cabin fever and citrus  
season, what's next?  
Grape and mango  
season, berries, stone  
fruit, then melons,  
apples and pears and  
back to citrus, thus  
the cycle of fruit in  
the North. Hmmm,  
what's missing?  
Bananas!

Ever wonder why  
you never have to  
wait all year to enjoy  
the first banana of  
the season?

Well let's find out  
why.

A banana tree is not  
really a tree at all,  
it's actually the larg-  
est flowering herb  
in the world. It takes  
nine months before  
the plant is ready to  
produce a flower and  
another three months  
to go from flower to  
fruit. After har-  
vesting one stock of  
bananas, the plant is  
chopped down and a  
new shoot sprouts in  
it place,

*Continued on page 4*

## Do you say Potato or Potatoe?

The first class of 2011 at Cook County Whole Foods Co-op highlighted the under utilized potato. The class enjoyed several dishes and took home recipes as well as information about potato origins and varieties.

At the end of the evening the class voted on their favorite potato dish they sampled and the verdict was unanimous, Baked Hedgehog Potatoes received the highest praise.

Besides spending the evening talking and eating potatoes, class participants also had suggestions for future classes.

The February through April 2011 class schedule is on the back page of this newsletter. Sign up for a class (or two!) and learn something new.

### **Baked Hedgehog Potatoes adapted from Heidi Swanson's Super Natural Cooking**

8 smallish potatoes  
6 large cloves garlic, sliced into razor-thin rounds  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon sambal oelek or other hot sauce  
Sea salt

### **Yogurt Dipping Sauce**

1 cup plain yogurt  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro  
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint or parsley  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt  
Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Wash and dry potatoes. Cut potatoes into very thin cross-wise slices, but only cut 80% of the way through; the potatoes need to stay intact. Toss the garlic, olive oil, hot sauce and a couple pinches of salt in a small bowl. Tuck the garlic slices deep into the potato crevices and rub the out-sides of the potato with any leftover olive oil mixture. Sprinkle the pota-toes with salt and place them on a baking sheet or tuck into a baking dish. Cover with foil and bake for 25 minutes, then uncover and bake for another 20 minutes, or until fork tender.

While the potatoes are baking, make the dipping sauce. Combine all sauce ingredients in a small bowl and stir well. Serve the potatoes with the dip-ping sauce on the side or drizzled on top.





*A Member Owned  
Community Grocery*

**20 E. First St., P.O. Box 813  
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**Ann Kerber**  
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*Ownership & Outreach  
Blueberry Jam Editor  
Bookkeeper*

**Open 7 days a week!**

**Winter Hours**  
*9 am - 7 pm  
Monday—Saturday  
10 am - 6 pm Sunday*

## **General Manager's Report**

### **Co-op Happenings** by Jennifer Stoltz

The Co-op was hopping over the holidays. Sales were strong and the shopping mood was festive with fun food, samples and gifts galore. As mid winter arrives, things slow down so we have time to do store projects and plan for our future. I'm sure shoppers have noticed changes in the store and more may be on the way.

We have moved our coffee and cocoa to the upper level by the teas, and our older bulk bins have been replaced with new bins that have the scoops on the outside. You will no longer have to reach in and pull a scoop out of the flour or oats. This move will make our bulk section in line with health codes, products should be easier to see and we're working to make a bit more room in our tight bulk aisles. We may also move some shelving around in an effort to make wider aisles in our tiny store. These moves are only temporary solutions to resolve our small store space issues. As we look toward the future, expansion seems to be on our horizon.

Some initial planning has already begun. Many shoppers participated in our Customer Address and Transaction (CAT) Survey during late January. This survey is the first part of a process of a market study. We will perform the same survey in June and a consultant will visit our store this summer to complete the analysis.

We're also reviewing our product policy as we look toward expansion. A lot of owners may not be aware that the Cook County Whole Foods Co-op has a product policy. We strive to

offer natural and organically grown foods. Our current goal is to serve owners by providing them with food and related items that they want. However, it is recognized that owners expect that any food that they purchase in the Co-op will be free from certain ingredients generally recognized as detrimental for human and environmental health.

The Cook County Whole Foods Co-op currently gives preference to foods without artificial ingredients, high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils. We also offer numerous bulk items to reduce packaging. The Board of Directors hopes to expand and clarify our product policy. We need to get input from owners to find out what you want to see in our store. Expanding will allow us to offer more products. Do you want us to offer conventional groceries as well as our current natural and organic selection, or should we stick with products that follow certain standards such as non-GMO products, organic and local produce and hormone and antibiotic free dairy and meat?

Please let me know what you want to see in a new and improved larger Co-op. I'm not looking for specific items, just general classifications and ordering guidelines.

My door is always open or you can e-mail ideas to Jennifer@cookcounty.coop. I look forward to hearing what owners want to find in their store as we move forward to make room for more new products and more shoppers.



*A Member Owned  
Community Grocery  
Working to Create a Healthy  
and Sustainable Society*

## ***Board of Directors***

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### ***Let Us Hear From You!***

Do you have questions, comments or suggestions for the Co-op Board of Directors? Give us a call, e-mail, leave a note or come to a board meeting. Board meetings are the third Monday of each month and owners are always welcome.

Notify Board President Rick Schubert in advance if you would like to be added to the agenda.

## **Board Report - RETREAT -- A Personal Perspective**

by Ralph Latham, Board of Directors

One definition of “retreat” given by Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, and by far the most succinct, is “reconsider.” When the CCWFC board holds a “retreat” with our consultant, we do reconsider the board’s role as policy-makers. Not that we don’t reconsider our responsibilities at board meetings and during committee work and all. We do.

So, if we’re reconsidering all that stuff regularly, why do we need an additional full-day once a year, or more often if special needs arise, to do that reconsidering yet again? And what benefits do we gain from a retreat, anyway?

My answer to “Why?” is simple: We need to renew our energy, adjust our focus, get inspired again and relearn what working together means. The experience and training brought to our local Co-op by consultant expertise helps us serve the Co-op and our fellow owners.

The question about how we benefit may take some more elaboration. CDS consultants include both generalists and specialists; all of them have a wealth of experience as board members or staff members from many different cooperatives. They have been specifically trained as consultants and they work in many communities. They see our behaviors and problems and situations and opportunities through a different lens than we ourselves can possibly possess. So we gain perspective and balance from our work with them. We are reassured. They bring us perspectives, information,

a measure of objectivity, professionalism and the benefit of their experience working with other boards. They season our judgment and deepen our understanding.

Our current designated consultant has guided us through the arduous labor of revising our entire Board Policy Manual. That year-long re-visioning (seeing again) of policy governance provided us with a firmer sense of mission, mutuality and direction.

Consultants have been valuable in many additional ways as well. The leadership of General Manager Search Consultant Carolee Colter during our 2010 General Manager search committee task was crucial to our success. She furnished advice, guided us in constructing our time line and budget and in organizing the process. She furnished us a tried-and-true set of interview questions which enabled us to be efficient and consistent in dealing with the applicants. She evaluated our work as we proceeded. She warned us about search committee pitfalls and prevented a good many possible errors. Her work with us shortened our general manager search—a huge saving in several important ways.

More recently, as we began considering prospects and needs for expansion in CCWFC’s future, we hired Bill Gessner, expansion consultant and author of The Expansion Toolbox. During his three-day site visit he worked with General Manager Jennifer Stoltz, the staff, and the board; and, his work with us continues.

**Board Report** continued on page 4

## **Welcome New Owners!**

Mark Abrahamson and Steve Byers; Julie, Rodey, Aaron and Nate Carlson; Bill Clayton; John Farrell; Susan and Ari Fuad; Erika Haglund; George and Mary Harrelson; Lance Johnson; Madonna and James King; Thomas Miller; Mike Siesennop and Jill Erickson; Daniel Stermac-Stein; Abby Tofte and Sam Hedstrom; Shawna Willis; Carol Winter and Kirk Dornfeld; David and Laura Witte and Theresa Zierath.

## **Co-op Donations:**

The Co-op's Patronage Rebate checks were distributed this past fall. Owners could cash their checks or return the checks to the Co-op to support one of three local projects. A total of \$1,827 was given to the Local Producers Fund, the local Food Shelf and to pay down the Co-op's long term debt. Thanks Owners!

## **Board Report** continued from page 3

We're better equipped to make the decisions to come because of his careful analysis of many factors that have to be addressed—and reconsidered—as we move forward addressing the Co-op's growth.

Could a local cooperative board of directors get along without consultants? Maybe. But by applying sensibly and flexibly what they have taught us, we have become far more effective in the service of our Co-op than we could have hoped to have been without them.

## **Bananas** continued from page 1

and the plant restarts the cycle to produce the next year's bananas. It takes a lot of coordination to have bananas producing every month of the year to be a profitable grower.

Bananas are the premier fruit of choice in the United States (in most stores they make up 1% of total sales), but out of the 80 million tons produced around the world only 15% are exported to the U.S., Europe and Japan; the rest are eaten locally. The top two producers, India and Brazil, export very little of their harvest. While the banana is a favorite U.S. food, our annual consumption nationally is only about 26 pounds per person. In some sub-Saharan populations, where the banana is a staple, 550 pounds per person are consumed each year.

Bananas rank 4th in the world's most economical food crops after rice, wheat and corn. Unfortunately, most of the bananas grown commercially are all one variety—the Cavendish. Because of the way bananas reproduce themselves, there is no genetic diversity with this \$4 billion-a-year export commodity. Because of this fact, the Cavendish may be on the brink of catastrophe. Hopefully, lessons have been learned from banana crop diseases in the last 75 years and the practice of biodiversity will help lessen the impact of any future banana disasters. Fortunately, there is another banana budding on the horizon. The Yangambi KM5 has larger bunches with many fingers, is tolerant of many pests and is easy to cross with other varieties. Although the skin is quite thin and not well suited for shipping and handling, it has a sweet and creamy flesh. Perhaps this will be the next generations' banana.

One way that we can help the banana industry is to purchase organic Fair Trade grown bananas. They are healthier for you and for our earth. Organic Fair Trade bananas are grown without pesticides, help growers and their families receive a fair price for their commodity and in some communities, a portion of the profits go to fund teachers, purchase school items, construct schools and provide care to elders and retired growers. All this has been possible because of you, the consumers, purchasing Fair Trade grown bananas.

## **Full Equity Shares!**

Thanks to these owners who paid their full equity shares since the last edition of Blueberry Jam.

Gregory Anderson and William Tuthill; Doreen Brown; Julie, Rodney, Aaron and Nate Carlson; Mary Dragich and John Pastor; Mary Fellows and Beverly Balos; Dan and Barbara Jean Johnson; Madonna and James King; Dianne and Stan Pelto; Laura Popkes; Jean Skinner and Carol Winter and Kirk Dornfeld.

## Grocery News

by Michael Garry, Grocery Manager

This fall we brought Larry Schultz's organic Chicken and Turkey to the Co-op. Larry farms down in Owatonna and has been a stalwart supporter of organics and Co-ops. His products come to us via another cooperator, Co-op Partners Warehouse.

Larry is a farmer, crop producer, chicken grower, turkey grower, egg packer, delivery person, salesman, demo person, public relations, equipment repair person and the guy that shovels the barns out in the end. Larry says that he has been farming organically even before organic was a "value added" product.

He thinks that everyone should be able to afford organic food. Although it may cost more to be certified organic, he is committed to keeping his prices as low as he can in order to make it affordable to shoppers. Larry says he doesn't believe you need to be rich in order to purchase and enjoy organic food.

He has also received the highest score from The Cornucopia Institute. They state that those who receive this rating have done the following: "They raise their hens in mobile housing on well-managed and ample pasture or in fixed housing with intensively managed rotated pasture. They sell eggs locally or regionally under their farm's brand name, mostly through farmer's markets, food cooperatives and/or independently owned natural and grocery stores and sometimes through larger chains like Whole Foods."

Larry Schultz's products are really good quality and tasty too.

## New Products at the Co-op:

Kalona (formerly Culural Revolution brand) Super Natural Organic Whole Chocolate Milk in quarts.

Spirit Creek Farm green grown lacto-fermented Ginger Carrots.

Renew Life First Cleanse and Cleanse Smart.

Mt. Vikos spreads: Kalamata Olive, Red Pepper & Feta, Baba Ganoush, Roasted Eggplant and Artichoke.

Napa Valley Naturals Marsala Cooking Wine, Sherry Cooking Wine, Champagne Reserve Vinegar and Balsamic Fig Vinegar.

## The Cook County Whole Foods Co-op Local Food Producers Fund

Cook County Whole Foods Co-op started the Local Food Producers Fund in 2008 to encourage local food production in Cook County and make local foods more available for sale at the Co-op. The Co-op encourages donations from members for the project each fall and then provides additional matching funds through the Co-op donation fund.

Through the 2010 Local Food Producers Fund we were able to give a \$500 scholarship to Adam Dettman to purchase a used hoop structure, tools, seeds and to offset some of the costs of attending the 2011 MOSES conference (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service).

Adam grew produce on Good Harbor Hill in 2010 and will be planting there again in 2011. Although Adam applied for the Fund, he said that in 2010 his garden had the support of many people in the community. More specifically, Betsy Bowen and David Grinstead provided the acreage; Marco Good and his horses Jack and Julie tilled and dragged the garden with a spring-tooth harrow; Taishaw Pemberton has been invaluable with her work and support including her signage for the produce he sold at the Cook County Farmers Market in 2010.

In 2010, Adam grew potatoes, onions, peppers, tomatoes, head lettuce, salad mix, herbs, cucumbers and garlic. This year he plans to concentrate on root vegetables, winter squash and herbs while experimenting with cover crops.

Congratulations Adam! We look forward to eating your produce this summer.

## Upcoming Classes

### Chocolate & Spice-all things nice

Wednesday, February 9th at 7 p.m.

Get the lowdown on all your favorite chocolates and explore the spice trade route with Kate Bailey, Co-op Deli Manager.

### Sicilian Cooking

Wednesday, March 2nd at 7 p.m.

Tammy Cefalu learned to cook at her Sicilian father's side. Tammy will make a true Sicilian pasta meal for attendees.

### Tofu 101

Wednesday, March 23rd at 7 p.m.

Nick Vavrichek and Kent Jones will talk (and cook!) tofu. They will use the recipes from their popular Co-op class held several years ago.

### Tofu Pad Thai

Wednesday, April 20th at 7 p.m.

Learn to make this popular Thai street food with Yafa Napadensky. She will make this stir-fried tofu and rice noodle dish using ingredients available at the Co-op.

**Pre-register for classes at the Co-op or call 387-2503. Classes are free to Cook County Whole Foods Co-op Owners and \$5 for other attendees.**



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#### Savings:

##### 5% on the 5th

of each month, Owners receive 5% off most items.

##### Wellness Wednesday

3rd Wednesdays, all health and body care items are 10% off.

##### Owner Bimonthly Coupons:

Take \$5 off a purchase of \$50. Seniors get an additional coupon.

##### Monthly Specials:

See what's on sale at:

[www.cookcounty.coop](http://www.cookcounty.coop)

#### Holiday Hours

The Co-op will be closed on Easter Sunday, April 24th.

#### Deli Blog!

The Deli now has its own Blog! Find out what's new in the Deli. Look for recipes and more from Kate Bailey our talented Deli Diva. Find her at [www.coopdeli.blogspot.com](http://www.coopdeli.blogspot.com)

#### Catering Menu

Need some food for an event? The Deli now has a menu of great possibilities. Contact Kate at 387-2503 or check out our website for more information!

## Welcome Andrew to the Co-op

The most recent addition to the Co-op staff is Andrew Ashcroft, one of our Grocery Stockers. This is Andrew's first job at a Co-op, but he's been a food co-op member almost everywhere he's lived. Andrew likes the broad range of people who come to the Co-op. He sees the Co-op as a social center in the county and says our customers feel a lot of ownership in the Co-op.

Andrew's favorite product at the Co-op? Tamari Almonds! His wife Jennye works downtown and enjoys the ease of buying deli items. She also likes the salt and pepper chips. His daughter Esme loves the Liberté lemon yogurt and always wants to use the store's "little kid" shopping carts.