

willy street co•op

READER

A PUBLICATION OF WILLY STREET CO-OP, MADISON, WI
VOLUME 44 • ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2017



IN THIS ISSUE: Run for the Board; Bees; Earth Week;
Food Security Initiatives; and MORE!
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IS APRIL 5TH**

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The Willy Street Co-op *Reader* is the monthly communications link among the Co-op Board, staff and Owners. It provides information about the Co-op's services and business as well as about cooking, nutrition, health, sustainable agriculture and more. Views and opinions expressed in the *Reader* do not necessarily represent those of the Co-op's Directors, staff or Ownership. Willy Street Co-op has not evaluated the claims made by advertisers. Acceptance of advertising does not indicate endorsement of the product or service offered. Articles are presented for information purposes only. Before taking action, you should always consult a professional for advice. Articles may be reprinted with permission from the editor.

SUBMISSIONS

All advertising submissions must be reserved and arranged with the editor by the 10th of the month previous to publication. All advertisement copy must be submitted by the 15th of the month. Submissions should be emailed to l.wermcrantz@willystreet.coop or mailed to Willy Street Co-op's Central Office according to submission requirements.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: EAST: 608-251-6776 WEST: 608-284-7800 NORTH: 608-709-5445

BUSINESS OFFICE: 608-251-0884

FAX: 608-251-3121

SEAFOOD CENTER: EAST: 608-294-0116 WEST: 608-836-1450

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PREORDERS: EAST: es.preorders@willystreet.coop; WEST: ws.preorders@willystreet.coop

WEBSITE: www.willystreet.coop

BOARD EMAIL: board@willystreet.coop

STORE HOURS: 7:30am to 9:30pm, every day

East Juice Bar: 7:30am to 6:00pm; West Juice Bar: M-F: 7:30am-7:00pm

& Sat-Sun: 7:30am-6:00pm.

Deli: 7:30am to 9:00pm

Seafood Center—East and West: Monday—Saturday, 8:00am to 8:00pm; Sunday, 8:00am to 6:00pm.

WILLY STREET CO-OP MISSION STATEMENT

The Williamson Street Grocery Co-op is an economically and environmentally sustainable, cooperatively owned grocery business that serves the needs of its Owners and employees. We are a cornerstone of a vibrant community in south-central Wisconsin that provides fairly priced goods and services while supporting local and organic suppliers.

WILLY STREET CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Holly Fearing, President
Holly Bender, Vice President
Mike Martez Johnson
Miguel Zamora
Dave Pauly
Jess Pernsteiner
Patricia Butler
Bruce Slaughenhoupt

BOARD CONTACT INFO:

board@willystreet.coop
all-board@willystreet.coop (includes the GM, Executive Assistant and Board Administrator)

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 6:30pm UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

April 25th: Regular Board Meeting
June 6th: Regular Board Meeting
July 18th: Regular Board Meeting and Election Special Session
August 15th: Regular Board Meeting

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CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Write Us!

We welcome your comments and give each one attention and serious consideration. Send them to customer.comments@willystreet.coop or fill out a Customer Comment form in the Owner Resources area. Each month a small selection is printed in the Reader. The rest can be found in the commons or in the binder near Customer Service. Thank you!

WATER FILTRATION

Q: I buy water from your water filtration system. I would like to know more about it. Does it contain any fluoride?

A: Thanks for asking about the reverse osmosis water we sell at the Co-op. I checked in with our Maintenance Department and they gave me the following information:

The reverse osmosis (RO) systems that we use at all three store locations are rented through Total Water Treatment Systems, which is a Madison-based distributor and service provider for Culligan water treatment equipment. These systems process water from the municipal water supply through several stages:

- Municipal supply water is run through a water softener to remove calcium and magnesium
- Two stages of carbon pre-filtration to remove large particles from the municipal supply water that make it past the water softening stage
- Filtration through a 5-micron spun polypropylene sediment filter to remove ultra-fine particles such as sand, rust, salt and mineral scale from the municipal supply water
- Filtration through the semi-permeable reverse osmosis membrane to remove up to 99% of total dissolved solids
- Ultraviolet sterilization and another stage of carbon filtration (to remove odors, taste, discoloration and chlorine) prior to being dispensed
- The resulting “product water” is pumped through a constantly moving, closed distribution loop to further ensure that there is no chance for algae or bacterial growth
- A second ultraviolet sterilization happens as the “product water” is being dispensed

The RO systems are subject to monthly service, which includes 5-micron filter changes and coliform bacteria tests. There are also quarterly changes of the carbon pre-filter cartridges as well as annual sterilization of the entire system. The ultraviolet sterilization lamps are also checked monthly and changed as needed.

We have not had full spectrum tests of the product water at any of our stores due to it being very cost prohibitive. Based on info we’ve gathered

over the years, the reverse osmosis process typically removes 87% of fluoride content from the municipal supply water. It is possible that the systems we rent remove more than that due to them being industrial grade systems but there is no way of knowing for sure without a full analysis of the product water.

Please let me know if there is anything else we may do for you! -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

DOUBLE DOLLARS

Q: I was super excited about your double dollars program except my FoodShare Quest card replenishes on the 8th of the month and keeps falling a day or two after Tuesday. I can't really wait another 5-6 days for food (until the next Tuesday) though because by the time the card is replenished I've already been waiting for food for a week or longer because my FoodShare doesn't go far enough each month, in general. I'd really like to take advantage of the double dollars but because it's limited to only the one day per week when it's valid, I keep missing out month after month after month. A program like this only helps if you can actually use it! Thanks for your consideration

A: Thanks for writing. I'm sorry that Tuesdays aren't days that work well for you, and I'm sure that any day (or days) of the week we select for issuing Double Dollars coupons would not be serviceable for all of our customers. While I wish we currently had the means to expand the program or change the days, we do not have that option at this time. The \$40,000 we received for the program through the USDA was designed to last through the end of March, 2017, and in order to make the funds last, we can only offer the program once per week. At this point in time, it looks likely that the funds we have to issue coupons may be outpaced by demand, meaning we will likely run out within the next couple Tuesdays, ahead of schedule. When we designed the pilot and wrote the grant, the day of the week we settled on for issuing coupons was Tuesdays and we have a commitment to carry out the pilot per the design that was approved. We are currently working with our grant partners to devise plans for future funding and that includes determining how much funding we would need to continue the program and what it would take to expand the days of the week that people can be issued Double Dollars coupons (Double Dollars coupons can be redeemed any day of the week, but we can only issue them at this time on Tuesdays).

We're so glad to hear that you are interested in the program. I hope that you will be able to find a way to take advantage of the Double Dollars opportunity either during its pilot phase or sometime in the future, and if you

can't take advantage at the Co-op this year, that you may be able to use the Double Dollars program at participating farmers' markets this summer (vouchers are available different days of the week depending on the market schedules). In the meantime, know that we are keeping track of all the feedback we receive about the program, and this will help us make improvements moving forward, so thanks much! Please let us know if there is anything else we may do for you. -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

BROCCOLI STALKS VS. FLORETS

Q: Tired of paying for broccoli stems and throwing them away? Then don't. They're as nutritious as the florets. Look it up on the web— nutrition of broccoli stems and florets. See BERKELEY-WELLNESS.com: Broccoli Stalks vs. Florets. I have a food processor and shred my stems and florets and mix them into my salads. Or you can slice them finely and cook them in butter or olive oil or coconut oil until tender and flavorful.

A: Thanks for your suggestion! We've found that customers tend to look askance at us when we recommend using broccoli stems, but it's been received better when other customers say so! I hope to get this into the newsletter to share the information. Have a nice week. -Brendon Smith, Director of Communications

READER AD AGREEMENT

Q: I downloaded the pdf of the Reader Ad Agreement and it requires a signature. That implies that I have to mail or hand in the agreement. How does one sign an agreement and then email it. I assume that the ad will appear in the print and online newsletter. Can I pay for the reserved ads up front or do I wait for the monthly billing? When I send in the pdf of the ad I assume it'll be reviewed to see if it's acceptable for publication. Thanks

A: You can mail in your agreement, bring it in to the store or scan or take a picture of it and email it back. Any of those are fine. The ad will appear in print and online. Ads must be submitted camera-ready at the specs listed here: www.willystreet.coop/advertising. Ad reservation deadline is the 10th of each month and camera-ready copy is due the 15th. I will definitely take a look at your ad and let you know if there are any issues with it when you turn it in. Our Finance department sends out monthly billing statements, so you don't have to pay up front (unless you want to; we can arrange that if you prefer).

Thanks for writing and let me know if you have any other questions! You can write to me here. Or call me at 608-237-1230. -Liz Wermerantz, Editor

BUS MONITORS

Q: The bus monitor has been broken for nearly two weeks now and serves only to confuse and confound I, as well as others. I'm sure, would prefer a simple clock to a non-functioning monitor stuck on 19 minutes northbound and 5 minutes southbound.

A: Thank you so much for your feedback! I am so sorry that the bus kiosk was not working correctly. I have taken multiple steps to ensure that it doesn't get frozen again. You are always welcome to notify an employee at Customer Service so that we can remedy any issues that come up at the store as soon as possible.

Other Co-op Owners have requested additional bus kiosk features, such as a weather widget, which we've already committed to providing very soon. When working, the kiosk does show the current time in the upper right corner. Thanks for shopping at Willy Street Co-op! Best Regards, James Phetteplace, Director of IT

PRODUCT SELECTION

Q: please remove conventional and non-organic foods from your willy north location

A: Thank you for the suggestion, I appreciate your commitment to eating organic foods. As a cooperatively owned grocery store, our job is to provide the products that our Owners collectively want us to carry. We hope that all of our Owners enjoy the services that they utilize and can also appreciate that other services are available to meet the requests of their fellow cooperators. Any product that is not certified organic could be considered a conventional item, and we have carried conventional items at all locations for years (even when Willy East was our only location). This flexibility helps us meet the needs, tastes, values, and budgets of our other Owners. Selling non-organic products also allows us to support local and regional suppliers, many of which may be too small to benefit from the cost of organic certification. For those reasons, we have no plans to be a 100% organic store. I hope you will continue to enjoy the organic products we offer. If there are specific organic products that you would like us to carry, please let us know what those products are so that we may see if we can get them on the shelves for you. Sincerely, Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

T-SHIRT DESIGN

Q: Will there be a t-shirt design contest this year? If so, what is the deadline?

A: Thanks for your question! We are not planning to run the contest this year—there tended to be more interest in the contest than in the resulting t-shirts and we often ended the year with hundreds of dollars worth of t-shirts that we couldn't sell. We have been talking

about potential changes we could make to the contest, but it likely wouldn't happen until next year at the earliest. We'll consider this a vote to figure out something and offer it again!

BAG CREDITS

Q: *I am sorry to learn that you will no longer offer bag credits. Although a small credit is received, it is still a nice incentive.*

It is difficult to believe that (1) customers who take the time and make the effort to bring a bag(s)/box when they shop are considered "favored" customers and (2) people cannot find or afford reusable bags. We are not talking designer shopping bags but ANY bag/box in which one can carry items.

Because of your decision, I will no longer CHIP. I consider the money you withhold from the bag credit will act as my CHIP donation.

A: Thanks for the feedback, and I'm glad to hear that you enjoyed the bag credit program all these years. We take all of the feedback we hear from our Owners seriously and we did receive feedback regarding both the reusable bag incentive program as well as the cost of reusable bags that impacted the decision we made to change the program. While the money we save thanks to your reuse of bags will support Double Dollars and help people with lower income stretch their food budgets further, Community Shares of Wisconsin is a separate nonprofit from us and I am sorry to hear that you will no longer support their Community CHIP program in light of our decision. We will keep your feedback in mind when we conduct a review how our customers receive our new program. Please let me know if there is anything else we may do for you. -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

NORTH PRODUCT MIX

Q: *I wanted to write and thank you for the manner in which you have chosen your product mix at Willy North.*

Your willingness to listen to the requests and recommendations of area residents for familiar and affordable food choices demonstrates an open-minded attitude, and shows your true desire to aid those who need you the most.

I am fortunate enough, at this point in my life, to be able to enjoy (and afford) local and organic food products, and believe that they do taste better and provide better nutrition.

However, I have also been on the other side as well, where the available funds needed to be stretched to fill the stomachs present, and what could be viewed as 'the best' choices were not the economically viable ones.

I applaud your selection from another aspect as well, in that I have recently needed to do some grocery shopping for my mother who's dementia will not allow any substitution of favored brands. The selection at Willy North ("Brownberry Ovens

Whole Wheat Bread in the red labeled wrapper," Miracle Whip, and Pam!) allow me to do more shopping in one location, and save a trip to a second store.

Having said this, I have read several letters in the Reader from members taking you to task for not maintaining what they perceive to be a 'purity of vision and mission' at Willy North.

I would suggest to them that if the sight of a variety of products that they deem unworthy of shelf space in 'their' co-op offends their moral code, don't go to Willy North.

Patronize Willy West, or the Mother Ship on Willy street, if the Purity Of Essence of your shopping experience outweighs all other factors.

(Oh, and good luck finding parking places there. Just sayin'.)

A: Thanks for sharing your positive feedback about the product mix and customer service we have provided in opening and growing Willy North. Thank you, also, for sharing your story about the food choices you have had to make over the course of your life, including the heartfelt choices you make for your mother. I'm glad to hear we're meeting your family's needs and making shopping more efficient for you.

Our business started very small, serving the people who came together in one neighborhood over 40 years ago. Throughout the years, it has been transparent discussions, quality products and services, and a willingness to adapt and change that have made more and more people want to shop and belong. Our growth has been carefully managed in part because of our Owners holding us to task, and while that sometimes leads to uncomfortable conversations, airing differences and sometimes exposing short-sightedness of Owners or staff or all of us, I am glad that we can have these kinds of conversations so that we can learn from each other and really find out what we can do to provide the offerings and services most appreciated Co-op-wide.

Your Co-op is committed to being an inclusive grocery store where everyone is welcome at any location, in accordance with the Cooperative Principles, our mission and our ends. The staff understands that individual health is subjective according to nutritional, financial, personal and cultural needs and values. We are committed to continuing to tailor all our locations to need and by collective request because ultimately we are here to provide service.

We appreciate your contribution to the conversation. Please let me know if there is anything else I may do for you! -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

DOUBLE DOLLAR PROGRAM AND BAG CREDIT CHANGE

Q: *Zillion of thanks for the double dollar program and for using the bag incentive for this too. Thank you also for your decision to make*

double dollars available for fruit and veggies. I have volunteered for years at the farmers market and been involved with the double dollar program there. It is great BUT I find it terrible that market dollars can be used for baked goods, which take a substantial amount of market dollars for no healthy nutrition. I know that many people think a choice should not be imposed but I disagree strongly and hope that the Coop will keep the present policy of fruit and veggies. In addition to keeping people healthy, it supports our superb local farmers.

A: Thanks for writing! I'm so glad to hear that you appreciate both our Double Dollars program and our re-purposing of the reusable bag incentive to fund the program at both the Co-op and the farmers' markets. We made the decision to limit the coupons to fruits and vegetables based on the guidelines from the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant that funded the program. Moving forward, our plan is to first attempt to raise enough funds to keep the program going as we had done in the pilot, meaning that at a minimum, we would issue coupons on Tuesdays and they would be eligible for Produce Department purchases any day of the week from late fall to early spring. If we are able to raise more funds, we can then consider ways to expand the program, and in that case, we may look at making the coupons eligible for redemption of other specific items in the store, using the guidance and nutritional expertise of our public and private partners in the program to guide those decisions. We'll keep your feedback in mind, as well as the feedback we hear from other Owners, should we become positioned to consider an expansion of that sort. We appreciate your support! Please let me know if there is anything else we may do for you. -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

PRODUCE ORIGINS

Q: *Thank you for coming to the north side. Please consider purchasing more non-California produce, e.g. Satsumas from Alabama and peaches from Georgia or South Carolina. Thank you.*

A: Thanks for the suggestions. We don't have a whole lot of access to fresh produce from the states you mention. It is often shipped to the east coast markets only. That said, I'll keep my eyes out for any opportunities that come our way. Best, Megan Minnick

CHEESE AND COMMENTS

Q: *Dear Willy, two quick things: 1) could you please handle more organic cheese at Willy North. There are so many organic cheese companies out there and you only handle Organic valley. We don't need so many "fancy" yuppie types of cheese that might taste good but don't have the eth-*

ics behind their products that Willy Co-op members have long held dear. If it's not organic then the environment was sprayed with chemicals to grow the crop to feed the cow. as a side note: Organic Valley does sell 1lb chunks of cheese for a cheaper per pound price (it's at Jenifer St Mkt for around \$7.90 a pound)... this would be welcome at Willy. 2) Some of us ARE members (myself included), but want to share our thoughts anonymously with our Co-op. Not because we have mean comments, but because we are shy. Why do we have to give our member number if it's not relevant to our inquiry?

A: Thanks for writing. I have logged your product request for our Purchasing Department's review and consideration and I've also let them know about the pricing you found on Organic Valley cheese elsewhere. If more organic cheeses are available to us and we think will be popular with our Owners, we'll get them on our shelves and let you know.

Regarding your comments about the ethics around organic cheese production, it's true, certifying organic can be one way to signal a producer's commitments, though it is not the only indicator of practices, quality or ethics. You might find it interesting that we sell hundreds varieties of cheese Co-op-wide, about 80% of it is from Wisconsin, and most of it is not organic. One of the big reasons for this is that we support local farmers and most of the cheese producers we work with are very, very small. Dairy farms that are certified organic require farmers to take cows who fall ill and need certain types of care out of production for an entire year before their milk can be considered organic again. This, and other aspects of organic certification and maintenance may make certifying cost-prohibitive for small producers regardless of their practices. To find out how a small farmer grows their feed, it may be better to ask the producer directly or check out their website than to rely on whether or not they carry a certification.

We ask for your name and Owner number because when you provide us feedback, we want to give you a personalized answer, and it's much easier for us to dialogue if we ask for your information. Your Owner number helps us make sure that we have your correct contact information, which is really helpful if a customer's handwriting is not as easy to read, or if the customer makes a typo when providing their contact information. You are essentially giving us the tools to make sure we know who to contact with a response or with questions. Providing your Owner number also signals to us that you have a stake in our business. It's helpful to us to know that our Owners are trying to communicate with us and that we should keep in mind any Owner benefits that may come into play when we respond. I was unable to find your Owner record with only your first name and the email that you provided.

Please let me know if I may assist you further! -Kirsten Moore, Director of Cooperative Services

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Earth Day; Board Elections; Willy North Improvements; & More



by Anya Firszt, General Manager

April brings a few things to celebrate: April Fool's Day, Earth Day, and William Shakespeare's birthday. It marks the beginning of our fourth fiscal quarter, and continued budget planning!

FISCAL YEAR 2018 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLANNING

Last month, I mentioned we have begun planning for next fiscal year's budget, which also includes budgeting for capital expenditures. These items are not part of the operating budget, but single expenditures that cost over a certain dollar amount; in our case, that is \$2,000. These may include new purchases to improve efficiencies for staff (ex: electric pallet jack) or product selection or offerings (ex: rotisserie oven). Some are simple to execute; remove the old unit, install the new one. And, others may be complicated due to multiple moving parts; from more than one piece of equipment, to walls or counters, and possible down-time that needs to be communicated to staff and customers.

There is a line in the capital budget we reserve for unplanned opportunities, which can also mean unexpected breakdowns. Last month, Willy North had a major breakdown of the refrigeration equipment, and now we are faced with replacing some coolers sooner than anticipated, and sooner than the next fiscal year.

Our annual capital budget has grown over the last several years, which should be no surprise given that we now operate five sites: three stores, a commissary kitchen, and a central office. It seems we are in a continuous state of upgrading, replacing, or rearranging something somewhere.

When a site has needs that step outside the traditionally defined capital expenditures, mainly will cost more than 10% of total Co-op equity, we need to ask Owners for approval. We are looking at a modest remodel for Willy West that may meet this criteria. Should we proceed with this work, you'll be asked to consider this in July's Board election ballot.

EARTH DAY

"The wealth of the nation is its air, water, soil, forests, minerals, rivers, lakes, oceans, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats and biodiversity... that's all there is. That's the whole economy. That's where all the economic activity and jobs come from. These biological systems are the sustaining wealth of the world." -Gaylord Nelson

Earth Day was first observed 47 years ago on April 22nd, 1970, founded by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, who was a leading figure in the fight against environmental degradation and social injustice.

EARTH WEEK CELEBRATION

The week of April 17th-23rd, enjoy 10% off organic bulk products (except coffee)—good time to stock up!

ANNUAL BOARD ELECTIONS

This year there are four seats to that need to be filled: three three-year seats and a one-year seat (due to a Board member resignation). Candidate statements are due June 1st—you still have time! Elections are held the first three weeks of July; candidates are invited to address the membership at the Annual Meeting & Party (AMP) on July 13th, as part of the business meeting. Owners are invited to cast a ballot as well at the AMP. Look for more details in the Board Report

ANNUAL CUSTOMER SURVEY COMING IN MAY

Reminder that this year's survey will be included in the May *Reader* and can be returned via US Mail or deposited at the retailers. The survey can also be completed online via our website.

BAG CREDIT PROGRAM CHANGING

Starting April 3rd... see page 8 for our new program details.

WILLY NORTH IMPROVEMENTS

If you've shopped at Willy North in the last few weeks (maybe for our Flash Sale there?), you probably noticed the improvements to our "Aisle of Value." This is the area where we have pallets of low-priced products, and we've added many more products since the end of February.

Like many grocers, our stores have security challenges at different times and to different degrees, but Willy North has experienced a bit more than we are used to. As a result, we have engaged a security company to help us. The company will be trained in our customer service expectations to ensure all customers continue to have the friendly and helpful experience you've come to expect from your Co-op.

I mentioned we had major refrigeration breakdown at Willy North last month. I want to offer my sincere gratitude to all staff for everything they did to cut our losses, as well as the creative problem-solving used to merchandise, move and store everything cold. Thank you.

In closing, "April gives way to May; flowers will be in bloom because of the water provided to them by the April rains." -Proverb.

BOARD REPORT

Run for the Board



by Jess Pernsteiner, Board Member

Are you an Owner? Do you love the Co-op? Do you care about making a difference in your community? Well, you guessed it; I'm about to suggest that running for the Board might be for you.

There are many reasons why you should run for the Board. Maybe you thought of a few reasons. Maybe it's even been in the back of your mind already. But just in case it's helpful, I've got a few reasons to share.

1. BECAUSE YOU CARE!

As Anya recently stated in her article in the February edition of the *Reader*, "we exist because of our Owners, and our continued success is based on you." As an Owner, you have a right to send your comments to both Willy Street Co-op staff and the Board, and even attend Board Meetings, but maybe you want another way to contribute and connect to your Co-op. Well, run!

2. BECAUSE YOU LOVE THIS COMMUNITY!

If you have a passion for building a stronger community, then you're already making a difference by shopping at the Co-op. The Co-op is one of the most community-focused organizations I've had the privilege to connect with here in Madison. Not only are Owners asked to CHIP® to Community Shares which in turn provides financial support for nearly 70 local nonprofits, but we also "allocates funds to contribute, donate to, or sponsor events and activities throughout the greater Madison and Middleton area communities."

As a Director, you can help ensure the Co-op continues its commitment to the community, and may even have the chance to serve on the Community Reinvestment Committee, which for the past 25 years has ensured that a

total of \$367,000 is reinvested back to provide funds for various organizations within the greater Madison area. And if that's not enough, you have the privilege of representing over 34,500 fellow Madisonians who are current Owners of the Co-op, which provides a chance not only to make a difference, but also to connect with so many people in this community.

3. CHALLENGE YOURSELF!

Maybe you've never run for anything (I hadn't until the Co-op—not even for class president in middle school). Maybe the idea of a Board of Directors and the cooperative structure are intimidating. However, maybe you also bring practical experience that would be relevant and a willingness to share your knowledge and skills. If you're intimidated, it's okay. Run anyway!

4. LEARN SOMETHING! (OR MANY THINGS!)

Serving on the Board has given me a much greater understanding of running a business, of learning and applying policy governance framework. It also provides opportunities to work with individuals from diverse professional backgrounds, to collaborate with Co-op staff and to further expand your leadership skills.

5. BECAUSE NOW IS A GREAT TIME!

I know, in reality, with most things in life, it's rare that something happens at a perfect time. But, this is a pivotal time for the Co-op. With 3 locations, now is the time to get involved and dedicate a small amount of your time to help ensure that Willy Street Co-op remains a "cornerstone of a vibrant community."

If you're interested in running for the Board, an application packet will be available in store and on our website beginning April 1st. Contact Board Administrator Ben Becker (b.becker@willystreet.coop) if you have any questions.



Carlos & Sara Alvarado

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Community Room Class Calendar

Please see class descriptions for fees. Owners enrolled in the Access Discount Program receive a 10% discount. Payment is required at registration; please register by stopping at the Customer Service desk or by calling Willy West at (608) 284-7800 or Willy East at (608) 251-6776. For more information about individual activities and classes, see willystreet.coop/calendar.

Refund Policy: Unless otherwise specified in the description of the event, registration for events that Willy Street Co-op cancels will be refunded in full. Individuals who wish to cancel their registration must contact Customer Service with 72 hours notice to receive a full refund or transfer their registration to another class. No refunds or transfers will be granted for cancellations within 72 hours of an event. In order to cover costs incurred, there are absolutely no exceptions to the Refund Policy.



HEALTHY EATING ON A BUDGET

Location: Willy West Community Room

Wednesday, April 5th, 6:00pm–8:00pm

Your Co-op's Own Instructor: Ben Becker

Ages: 13 and older; adult supervision not required

Fee: Free; registration is required

Feel empowered to prepare fresh, healthy foods, even when limited by the size of your wallet. Through

participation in discussion, food preparation and tasting, participants will explore strategies for procuring nourishing and affordable food, how to recognize healthy, fresh choices, and tasty and versatile preparation methods.

SIX SPICES: KHICHRI, PALAK KADHI AND CACHUMBAR

Location: Willy West Community Room

Thursday, May 4th, 6:00pm–8:30pm

Instructor: Neeta Saluja

Ages: 13 and older; adult supervision required

Fee: \$20 for Owners; \$30 for non-owners

Join Chef Neeta Saluja as she demonstrates how to make Khichri, rice and moong lentils cooked with fresh vegetables and spices; Palak Kadhi, seasoned and sautéed spinach cooked with flavored yogurt sauce; and Cachumbar, salad prepared with coarsely chopped fresh vegetables, fresh lemon juice, fresh green chilies and cilantro.

LEARNING WITH CHEF PAUL: KNIFE SKILLS AND SAFETY

Location: Willy East Community Room

Tuesday, April 18th, 6:00pm–8:00pm

Your Co-op's Own Instructor: Paul Tseng

Ages: 18 and older

Location: Willy West Community Room

Wednesday, May 10th, 6:00pm–8:00pm

Ages: 18 and older

Your Co-op's Own Instructor: Paul Tseng

Fee: \$10 for Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join Chef Paul as he guides participants through hands-on knife skills, including the major cuts, slices and dices. Chef Paul will discuss kitchen knife essentials, including how to sharpen and maintain a knife. Participants should bring their favorite kitchen knife from home to practice with.

INDIVIDUAL NUTRITION CONSULTATIONS

Location: Willy West Community Room

Wednesday, April 19th, 10:30am–2:00pm

Location: Willy East Community Room

Friday, April 28th, 10:30am–2:00pm

An individual nutrition consultation is your opportunity to learn how the correct food choices for your body can enhance your well-being. A one-on-one session with Katy Wallace of Human Nature includes a consultation regarding your health goals, as well as lifestyle and food choice suggestions geared toward addressing health goals and developing sustainable change.

Appointments are confirmed upon payment. Payment is due at the time of scheduling; otherwise, the appointment will be released to other interested parties. Payment is non-refundable and non-transferable unless notice of cancellation or rescheduling is provided seven (7) or more days prior. To register for the next available opening, email info@humannaturellc.com or call 608-301-9961.



COOKING TOGETHER: MEXICAN FLAVORS

Location: Willy East Community Room

Wednesday, April 12th, 5:30pm–6:45pm

Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Ages: 5 and older

Fee: \$10 for Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join Chef Lily Kilfoy in this exciting cooking class for families! In this class, participants will learn Chef

Lily's take on a homemade meal with flavors from Mexico. Recipes will include Sweet Corn and Sweet Potato Quesadillas, Pico de Gallo Salsa, Avocado Crema, Mexican Slaw, Aztec Quinoa Salad, and Caramelized Bananas with Ice Cream. Vegetarian and gluten-free.

COOKING TOGETHER: GREEK FLAVORS

Location: Willy West Community Room

Wednesday, April 19th, 5:30pm–6:45pm

Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Ages: 5 and older

Fee: \$10 for Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join Chef Lily Kilfoy in this exciting cooking class for families! In this class, participants will learn Chef Lily's take on a homemade meal with flavors from Greece. Recipes will include Roasted Red Pepper Hummus with Pita Chips, Individual Spanikopita, Couscous Pilaf, and Roasted Plums with Honey Yogurt. Vegetarian.

COOKING TOGETHER: CREATE YOUR OWN CALZONES

Location: Willy West Community Room

Thursday, May 11th, 5:30pm–6:45pm

Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Ages: 5 and older

Fee: \$10 for Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join Chef Lily Kilfoy in this exciting cooking class for families! Making Italian folded pizzas, known as calzones, is a fun and delicious activity for people of all ages. In this class participants will season sauce, grate cheeses, prepare toppings and roll dough as they each create their own personal calzone. Recipes will also include a seasonal salad and beverage. Vegetarian.



UNDERSTANDING THE 100% GRASS-FED DIFFERENCE

Location: Willy West Community Room

Tuesday, April 4th, 6:00pm–7:00pm

Instructor: Rod Ofte

Ages: 13 and older; adult supervision not required

Fee: Free; registration required

Wisconsin Rancher and Rotational Grazier, Rod Ofte, will explain the human health differences and animal health differences of Wisconsin Meadows 100% Grass-fed Beef. Rod will

also discuss the positive environmental aspects of restoration grazing as a land

LEARN ABOUT AND REGISTER FOR FOODSHARE WITH SECOND HARVEST

Location: Lakeview Library

Thursday, April 6th, 10:00am–2:00pm

Location: Willy West Community Room

Wednesday, April 5th, 9:00am–1:00pm

Location: Willy East Community Room

Tuesday, April 11th, 8:00am–12:00pm

Is money tight? You may be eligible for FoodShare benefits on a QUEST Card! FoodShare is a federal benefit, like social security, that provides extra money for groceries to low-income individuals and families. The benefits comes on an easy-to-use debit-like card that can be used at the Willy Street Co-op, many farmers' markets, and most major grocery stores. The income guidelines are higher than you might think: individuals earning \$11+ per hour and working 40 hours per week may qualify. To find out if you may be eligible, please call 1-877-366-3635 for a confidential screening and to schedule an appointment to apply at Willy Street Co-op. During your appointment, a FoodShare Outreach specialist will assist you with an application, answer questions, and connect you with other great community resources. Walk-ins welcome. Se habla Español.

management tool to improve our water quality and soil health. Wisconsin Meadows is produced by the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative, a producer co-op of nearly 170 sustainable Wisconsin family farms committed to raising healthy, local beef, without pesticides, herbicides, growth hormones or GMO feeds.

MOOD FOODS

Location: Willy West Community Room
Wednesday, April 26th, 6:00pm–7:00pm
 Instructor: Katy Wallace
 Ages: Any; adult supervision required
 Fee: Free; walk-ins welcome

What does food have to do with your mood? What you eat can relieve anxiety, depression and other experiences by supporting biochemical changes and reducing inflammation. Katy Wallace, Traditional Naturopath of Human Nature, will discuss the foods that contribute to moodiness and those that are associated with good moods.

Ages: 5–8 years old; adult supervision not required
 Fee: \$10 for kids of Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join Chef Lily Kilfoy in this hands-on cooking class for kids. Sometimes even the most creative cooks get stuck in a rut when it comes to lunchtime. In this class, participants will whip up some of Lily's favorite fun recipes to shake up the routine. Vegetarian.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN: SPRING ROLLS

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, May 2nd, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Ages: 5–8 years old; adult supervision not required
 Fee: \$10 for kids of Owners; \$20 for non-Owners

Join The Kids Chef Lily Kilfoy in this hands-on cooking class for kids ages 5–8 years old. Spring rolls are a delicacy found throughout Asia and make a refreshing appetizer or a light and fun meal. In this class, participants will snip, cut and grate as they prepare a variety of fillings and create their own spring rolls. Vegan and gluten-free.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN: TOTALLY TACOS

Location: Willy East Community Room
Friday, May 12th, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Ages: 5–8 years old; adult supervision not required
 Fee: \$10 for kids of Owners; \$20 for non-owners

Join The Kids Chef Lily Kilfoy in this hands-on cooking class for kids ages 5–8 years old. Tacos happen to be Lily's favorite food, and there is no better time for them than the month of May. In this class, participants will prepare traditional fillings to make their own tasty tacos. Vegetarian.



CREATE YOUR SMART GARDEN PLAN

Location: Willy East Community Room
Thursday, April 6th, 6:00pm–8:00pm
 Location: Willy West Community Room
Monday, April 10th, 6:00pm–8:00pm
 Instructor: Megan Cain
 Ages: 15 and older; adult supervision required
 Fee: \$25 for Owners; \$35 for non-owners

Make this your best year yet by creating a personalized garden plan for growing fresh, organic food right in your own yard. Learn how to strategically decide what to grow by understanding the important details of each vegetable, when to plant a seed or a seedling, how to choose the best varieties for your garden, and how to create a planting schedule so you know when to start planting this spring.



WILD FOOD/WILD MEDICINE PLANT WALK-ABOUT

Location: Lake View Hill Park, 1202 Northport Drive
Saturday, May 13, 10:00am–12:30pm
 Instructor: Linda Conroy
 Fee: \$20 for Owners; \$30 for non-owners

Ages: 8 and older; adult supervision required

Join herbalist and forager Linda Conroy to explore the wild plants that grow around us. We will learn about

common and uncommon wild plants that can be used for food and medicine. Identification techniques as well as ways to prepare plants for optimal nutrition and healing will be discussed. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. Meet in the parking lot; the walking tour leaves promptly at 10:00am.



SIMPLY BULK: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BULK DEPARTMENT

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, April 11th, 1:30pm–2:30pm
 Location: Willy North Commons
Wednesday, April 12th, 6:00pm–7:00pm
 Location: Willy East Community Room
Thursday, April 13th, 6:00pm–7:00pm
 Your Co-op's Own Instructor: Co-op Services Staff
 Ages: 13 and older; adult supervision not required

Fee: Free; registration is required

This discussion and tour of our Bulk department gives shoppers a chance to learn the layout of the aisle and discover a little bit more about our diverse bulk offerings. This class will prepare Owners to shop more effectively, and they will learn some tips and tricks for saving money in this popular section of the store.

SIMPLY LOCAL: HIGHLIGHTING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

Location: Willy North Commons
Thursday, May 11th, 6:00pm–6:30pm and 7:00pm–7:30pm
 Your Co-op's Own Instructor: Robert Halstead
 Ages: 13 and older; adult supervision not required
 Fee: Free; walk-ins welcome

Supporting the local food system is one of Willy Street Co-op's main missions. Join Co-op Services staff to learn about what local means to us and for a tour through the Co-op that features local businesses and products.



KIDS IN THE KITCHEN: RAINY DAY RECIPES

Location: Willy East Community Room
Tuesday, April 4th, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, April 18th, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Instructor: Lily Kilfoy
 Ages: 5–8 years old; adult supervision not required
 Fee: \$10 for kids of Owners; \$20 for

non-owners

Join The Kids Chef Lily Kilfoy in this hands-on cooking class for kids. April showers bring May flowers, and in this class, participants will prepare multiple recipes that are perfect for a cool rainy day indoors. Vegetarian.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN: LIKEABLE LUNCHES

Location: Willy West Community Room
Friday, April 14th, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Location: Willy East Community Room
Friday, April 28th, 4:30pm–5:30pm
 Instructor: Lily Kilfoy

Food Security Initiatives and Reusable Bag Incentive Program Update



by **Kirsten Moore,**
Director of
Cooperative
Services

Eight years ago, we launched the Access Discount Program, an Owner benefit that offers Owners with low-incomes 10% off of Co-op purchases. Within the last three years, we've begun to consider further means to address food insecurity. We now offer in-store

FoodShare/QUEST education and registration. We opened Willy North in an underserved part of Madison and began accepting WIC there (in addition to FoodShare/QUEST at all locations). We piloted the City's Double Dollars program in the retail setting and are piloting a Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program. This month, we will begin offering a means for our Owners to support Double Dollars at the registers through cash donation or reusing bags. Your support has allowed your Co-op to make a great commitment to reducing food insecurity in Dane County and to remind people of all incomes that they are welcome here. Here are some reminders of your impact, and the great work we are able to do because of you and our public and private partners.

REUSABLE BAG INCENTIVE REVAMP AND DOUBLE DOLLARS FUND STARTS APRIL 3RD

We reported in last month's *Reader*, on signage in stores, and in email to all Owners who have received the reusable bag incentive within the last year that starting April 3rd, the Co-op's bag credits will be invested in our Double Dollars Fund rather than given to our customers. This means that for each reusable cloth or fabric bag you use, the Co-op will contribute 10¢ to the Double Dollars Fund and for each

paper or plastic bag or box you reuse, the Co-op will contribute 5¢ to the Double Dollars Fund. Double Dollars supports shoppers using FoodShare/QUEST. The Double Dollars Fund will help keep Double Dollars distributed at participating farmers' markets and the Co-op.

In addition, thanks to your input, we have also developed a way for you to make cash donations to the Double Dollars Fund. If you are interested, simply select a \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$25 Double Dollars Fund scan card at the checkout lane, and we'll add your donation to your receipt. Cash donations are tax-deductible!

All Co-op savings from reusing bags and customer donations to the Double Dollars Fund will be sent to Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin for administering Double Dollars at participating farmers' markets and the Co-op. We are compiling a list of participating farmers' markets and will offer this resource as soon as we are able. Thank you for asking us to create a program to support shoppers with low income, for reusing bags, and for writing us in support of the Double Dollars pilot program we have offered. You have made a tremendous difference!

DOUBLE DOLLARS PILOT PROGRAM SUCCESS, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Double Dollars Pilot Program at the Co-op ended on March 31st and, at the time of writing, preliminary review of the program demonstrates it was a resounding success, and that there is a tremendous need in this community to help stretch our neighbors' food budgets further.

In early February, we noted that the original 8,000 coupons we had been allocated for distribution to customers were about to run out early. We worked with the City of Madison, Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, and Public

Health Madison & Dane County to redistribute some of the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant so that we could print 2,350 more coupons, enough to last through our advertised distribution dates of October 25th-March 14th. As of the week ending Sunday, March 12th, we had distributed 9,489 coupons (a value of \$47,455) and redeemed 7,394 coupons (a value of \$36,970). 7,394 coupons are 92% of the original 8,000 coupons allocated and 78% of the total number of coupons available for distribution. These coupon redemption rates are considered very high compared to other types of coupons available in the grocery industry, and demonstrate that they are a serious value for our consumers using FoodShare/QUEST. We are excited to see that the community has welcomed this program. Your support provides an opportunity to bring the program back next fall and set our sights on possible expansion of this program at both your Co-op and local farmers markets. Thank you to the City of Madison, Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, and Public Health Madison & Dane County for inviting us to participate in this program, to Wholesome Wave and the USDA for providing financial support, and to the public for helping support local and federal food security programs and initiatives.

FVRX PILOT UPDATE

In February, we announced the launch of a Fruit and Vegetable Prescription (FVRx) Program pilot in partnership with UW Health Northeast Family Medical Center, Second Harvest of Southern Wisconsin Food Bank's HungerCare Coalition, and Public Health Madison & Dane County. With funding from Wholesome Wave's Nutrition Incentive Program Support and Innovations Grant, we created a program designed to help patients at UW Health Northeast Family Medical Center become Owners and also purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables if health care providers determine (using a screening tool developed by the HungerCare Coalition) that food security is a concern for the patient. When patients screen positive for food insecurity, physicians provide those patients with a packet of six months' worth of FVRx vouchers to redeem at the Co-op in addition to providing information about other food resources available. The packet

includes one \$4 voucher to apply to Ownership at the Co-op (and enroll in the Access Discount Program), and 60 \$2 vouchers for our Produce Department (10 for each of six months).

The \$23,120 in grant funds were initially allocated to provide support for approximately 150 patients at UW Health Northeast Family Medical Center. Within the first few weeks of running food security screenings, UW Health had already prescribed almost all 150 FVRx packets, and so the City worked with Public Health Madison and Dane County and Wholesome Wave to make adjustments to the grant allocation so that we could offer FVRx to 185 patients. By the end of February, 167 FVRx prescriptions had been distributed, and at the time of writing, 45 patients had already used their Co-op Owner vouchers to either become Owners or make an equity investment and enroll in the Access Discount Program, and 979 FVRx vouchers had been redeemed. The pilot partners are now monitoring redemption and planning for future funding. We are grateful for this partnership and the words of encouragement we have heard from our customers about this new initiative.

IN-STORE FOODSHARE EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION

For the past 18 months we have had the pleasure of hosting Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin every month at each of our locations. When Second Harvest is at the store, customers are welcome to schedule appointments or drop-in to learn more about FoodShare/QUEST, perhaps to find out if they are eligible to receive FoodShare/QUEST, to find out what the benefits are, or to learn more about the impact FoodShare/QUEST has on our community. Customers may also enroll in the FoodShare/QUEST program at the store during their appointment or drop-in. We are thrilled that this program has lasted a year and a half, and the program has also offered us an opportunity to tell more people about the Access Discount Program, Double Dollars, and accepting WIC at Willy North. In 2016, Second Harvest completed 35 FoodShare applications at the Co-op and received 10 referrals connecting clients to Second Harvest's services. The USDA calculates that every \$5 spent in FoodShare ben-

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efits generates up to \$9 in local economic activity. According to Second Harvest, the 35 applications completed at the Co-op will translate “to more than 20,246 meals to help feed hungry people in our own backyard.” Many thanks to the staff at Second Harvest who have contributed their time to helping our customers learn what programs are available in the community to address food security.

WILLY NORTH UPDATE

Willy North opened only about eight months ago, and our newest Co-op location is already showing signs of success. We planned to open the store with 500 new Owners signing up at North in Fiscal Year 2017, and 1298 have signed up there to-date (the fiscal year ends July 2nd). For the Fiscal Year, sales are currently within 6% of North’s projected sales budget, even having opened the store two weeks later than planned. Upon opening, we made a commitment to our Owners and the community that we would stock the store based on sales trends and customer requests, and to date we have brought in over 2,000 products based on your input and purchases (some of these products have also been brought in at East and West). In order to keep growing North’s ability to serve our Owners and neighbors, we are currently working with community partners to develop means to get even more feedback about what we can do to continue to grow our ability to meet community needs. Thank you for shopping North and providing your input!

MUCH WORK TO DO!

According to Feeding America,

11.6% of residents in Dane County are food insecure, meaning that they do not always have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Sixty-two percent of people in Dane County have income that is lower than the thresholds for eligibility for public nutrition programs such as FoodShare/QUEST. Co-op Principle #1 is that we are open to everyone, a principle that all cooperatives share. It’s our job to ensure that anyone can shop and anyone participate in our cooperative. Thanks to you and the growing community conversation regarding both food security and justice, your Co-op continues to adapt so that we can meet the many nutritional, financial, personal and cultural needs and values you share. As our community’s needs and desires will continue to change over time, just as they have changed over the course of our 40+ years of business, we look forward to continuing to change and develop initiatives to address your needs alongside you.

Every Thursday, we have a sale on one product from our Meat Department.

We like to call it



Check Facebook, Twitter, or the Meat department counter for that week’s sale. Quantities limited and for Willy Street Co-op Owners only.

willy street co-op

PRODUCE NEWS

Organic Produce Deflation



by Megan Minnick, Director of Purchasing

As the local season began to wind down last fall, and one by one those lovely local produce items became unavailable to us, our Produce departments began the annual shift toward sourcing more fresh organic produce from warmer climates such as California and Mexico. This happens every year, depending on when the first hard frost hits and how many storage crops our farmers have managed to squirrel away for winter use.

Everything seemed normal, but then in the fall and early winter of 2016, as organic produce from California and Mexico began to dominate our shelves, we started to notice an odd trend—though we were selling just as many pounds of produce as ever, week after week our sales reports showed that our sales dollars were not meeting our expectations. At the same time, the pricing we were able to offer was better than we’d ever seen—so much better, in fact, that we were bringing in considerably less sales revenue than we usually expect for the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables we were selling. For example, the best price we were

able to offer for organic red bell peppers in the winter of 2015/16 was \$2.99/lb, which seemed like a great price for a product that historically has been in the \$5/lb range or higher. This year, we were able to put those same peppers on sale for as low as \$1.79/lb. Even though we sold the same number of peppers, we experienced a 40% drop in sales dollars for that item.

This is deflation, and it’s a hot topic in the grocery industry these days. Grocers everywhere are seeing their sales flatten and even decline as the extremely competitive nature of the business has forced prices down to record lows. Though I knew this was a trend in the overall market, this was the first time I’d seen evidence of drastic deflation at our Co-op. As I dug deeper into the issue, I was able to understand exactly what was happening, and what it means for everyone along the food chain.

IT TURNS OUT THERE ARE THREE BIG REASONS WHY WE SAW RECORD LOW PRODUCE PRICES THIS WINTER

The first is a simple matter of weather. Nearly all of the organic (and non-organic) heat-loving veggies that are available in the winter (things like tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, and bell peppers) come from Mexico. It turns out that Mexico had a picture-perfect growing season. They experienced a bumper crop and in order to

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sell it all, they had to lower prices.

The second reason is the global organic produce supply, which has struggled to keep up with ever-increasing demand, is finally starting to catch up. Several years ago, many very large conventional produce companies began to notice that the organic trend wasn't going away, and in fact, was continuing to grow at astounding rates. Anticipating continued growth, they started the process of converting conventional cropland to certified organic (a process that takes three years), and planting perennial fruit crops intended for the organic market.

I talked to one friend who works at an organic produce brokerage firm on the West Coast about these issues, and he remembered a trip he took to Argentina three years ago. He was visiting South American organic fruit growing operations and was astounded by the number of baby organic blueberry plants that were being planted. "People there thought those growers were crazy," he remembered. Here we are three years later, and those blueberries are now hitting the market. The result was a greater supply and lower prices than we've ever seen for organic winter blueberries.

The third and perhaps largest factor is that the organic produce supply chain is currently undergoing a seismic shift. This industry has now grown to the point where it is being commoditized just like any other large agricultural product. Giant food retailers such as Costco and Walmart are now the largest sellers of organic produce in the nation. They have developed direct relationships with large produce companies, and they

are demanding extremely low prices. In these relationships, price is the driving force. Quality and the ethics and true sustainability of the produce itself are seldom a factor. This phenomenon is driving down pricing across the board, as every other retailer and distribution house struggles to stay competitive.

So who are the winners and the losers in all this? That question is a bit more complicated than you might think, and the answer not at all black and white.

WINNERS:

- **Consumers:** As we all noticed this winter, the deflationary trend in organic produce is a really great thing for consumers' wallets. Never before have we been able to offer such affordable pricing. Organics are now available at nearly every grocery store, and lower prices along with increased access are opening up the market to people who couldn't afford or even find organic produce in years past.
- **Very Large Farms and Retailers, Multinational Produce Companies:** These players are relatively new to the organic produce world, but they have now nearly taken it over. As the growth of other food categories has mostly stalled out, the organic produce industry has continued to grow. This adds to these companies' bottom lines, and makes their shareholders and owners quite happy.
- **Farm Workers:** The plight of farmworkers was virtually ignored by most consumers until relatively recently. In the past few years, news stories, boycotts, strikes, and

other actions have brought farmworkers into the public consciousness. This has led to an increase in the minimum wage in California, where it is mandated to gradually increase to \$15/hour by 2022; and increased public pressure to raise farmworker wages in Mexico as well as a dramatic increase in certified fair trade produce coming from Mexico.

LOSERS:

- **Medium and Small Farmers:** The price farmers can get for their crops is decreasing at the same time that they are paying more for on-farm labor. The result is that small- and medium-sized organic farms that sell produce into the national and international market are getting squeezed out. To deal with the labor increases, large farms typically turn to more mechanization, or move their operations across the border. Small- and medium-sized farms don't have this option, and even if they did, they are often committed to less mechanized, more sustainable farming methods and to staying in the communities where they live.
- **Distributors:** At the same time that small farmers are feeling squeezed, the distribution houses that typically buy their produce and market it to retailers are seeing a decline in business. Huge retailers have direct relationships with huge growers, and they don't need to use the existing distribution chain.
- **Medium and Small Retailers:** Yep, that's stores like your Co-op. We're seeing a decline in sales dollars, while we're selling the same

amount of produce as in years past. The money that we recoup to pay our staff and other operating expenses is a percentage of the selling price, so when prices go down, we also get less to cover our bills.

Despite this, it still takes the same number of produce stockers, buyers, and receivers to ensure you're getting the high-quality produce you rely on us for, and we're committed to paying those people a good wage. That commitment will not waver, but it definitely becomes a tougher equation in the current climate.

- **Consumers:** Yes, I include consumers as both winners and losers. Price has declined, to be sure, but at the same time, real consumer choice has also declined. As the small- and medium-sized farms get squeezed out and our distribution network is increasingly stressed, we aren't able to gain access to as many products from small- to medium-sized non-local farms as we used to. Increasingly, what's available to us is from the very large companies that now dominate the market.


Luckily, we have really strong relationships with a network of wonderful small Wisconsin farms that keep us stocked through much of the summer. However, if you are one of the majority of our Co-op Owners who wants to buy fresh lettuce, broccoli, or cucumbers during the winter months, there just aren't as many choices as there used to be.

SO, WHAT'S A CO-OP OWNER (OR A CO-OP PURCHASING DIRECTOR) TO DO IN THIS NEW WORLD OF ORGANIC PRODUCE?

We are now on the front lines of a changing produce supply chain, and the choices that we collectively make can make a real difference in how the organic produce industry develops in the years to come.

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers. What I hear from Owners is that you want lower prices, you want to know that the farm workers picking your produce get fair wages, and you want to know that we are supporting small farmers everywhere who use sustainable and ethical growing practices. Produce that perfectly fulfills all three of these requests is getting harder and harder to find.

That said, we are committed to doing our best at the things we're good at: continuing to inform you, our Owners, about complicated issues like this so you can make educated decisions about what you buy; and to offering as many choices as possible in the organic produce aisle and beyond. Making a variety of options available is just the beginning, though; what you purchase drives what we sell at your Co-op, and by purchasing the products that represent the food system you want to see, together we will be able to effect real change.



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Recipes for a Green Spring



by Ansley Knoch, Purchasing Assistant

The first local spring veggies always feel so magical to me. I am especially fond of ramp season; I add them to nearly every meal during their brief appearance in the spring. With every bite, I feel the promise of warmer, sunnier days. I get way too excited about my garden and then

realize that here in Wisconsin I really shouldn't plant anything for at least another month...

That said, there are a number of local green things that usually arrive on our shelves during the month of April. There is no guarantee, though. I've optimistically shared some of my favorite early spring recipes this month using many of the local greens we might see in April, including spinach, ramps, chives, watercress, mizuna, and arugula.

EARLY SPRING PESTO

1-2 garlic cloves
1/4 c. toasted nuts: pine nuts, cashews, or macadamias work well with this recipe
1/2 c. parmesan cheese (optional, though if you leave it out add some sea salt to taste)
1-1 1/2 c. tightly packed mizuna and/or arugula (or spinach if you're looking for a milder pesto)
1-1 1/2 c. tightly packed ramp leaves and/or chives
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/2 c. extra-virgin olive oil (reduce or add more to desired consistency)

Directions: If you're starting with raw nuts, I like to toast just what I need by heating a cast iron pan on the stove over medium heat. Once the pan is hot, I toss the nuts in and shake the pan every 30 seconds or so until they start smelling toasty and delicious and they're starting to brown.

I also like to prep the garlic by putting in a mug with maybe a teaspoon of water and cooking it in the microwave for 10-15 seconds. This mellows the flavor and tones down the spiciness.

Add the toasted nuts and garlic to the food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add in the greens and lemon juice and do the same. At this point, I let the food processor run and drizzle oil in while it's going until it's a little runnier than I want it to end up. Lastly, add the parmesan and mix until well combined.

Scoop into a jar with a lid. Keep in the fridge. Great on pasta, fish,

chicken, sandwiches, and added to sauces or dressings.

SEASONAL BREAKFAST TACOS

2 corn tortillas
2 eggs
4-6 ramps, greens trimmed off (and saved!)
1/4 c. grated cheese or cream cheese (optional)
1/2 avocado, sliced or mashed
Microgreens/sprouts/watercress
Salsa or hot sauce

Directions: Wash and trim the ramp bulbs, then chop finely. Sauté in a little oil or butter over medium heat. When they start to brown a little, add in the egg and cheese. Scramble.

Meanwhile, in the toaster or on the stove, heat up the tortillas until they are hot, but still pliable.

Add the scramble to the tortillas and top with avocado, greens, and salsa. Serve immediately. Makes 2.

GREENS AND GRAINS BOWL

2 c. cooked farro
2 c. watercress (you could substitute arugula or spinach)
3 oz. chevre
1/2 c. toasted almonds, or a mix of seeds/nuts
Fine grain sea salt to taste
1 avocado, sliced

For the dressing:

1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil
Zest of one lemon
Juice of one lemon
1/4 c. of chives, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. fine grain sea salt

Directions: Prepare the dressing by whisking all ingredients together; set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the farro, almonds, and salt together and toss with the dressing. Mix well. Add in the greens and toss again, more gently this time so as not to bruise the greens. Serve topped with chevre and avocado.

What's Cooking?

Check out our recipe racks in the stores and try something new!

willy street co-op

We Love Bees. We Need Bees.



by Mike Burns, Merchandiser

Bees are perhaps the most underrated creatures on the planet. Like most insects and pollinators, bees often go unnoticed despite their enormous contribution to the perpetuation of life. It is said that one out of every three bites of food we take was made possible

because of bees' endless determination to seek out pollen. Yet we don't pay much attention to them until they start to disappear and directly impact the future of our food system. We cannot forget about the well-being of our buzzing friends. We need them now more than ever!

THE BUZZ ABOUT BEES

Some plant species rely on wind and water for pollination, but about 90% of all plant species need the assistance of animals to transfer pollen from one flower to the next. When bees visit a flower to collect nectar for the hive, pollen from the stamen sticks to their bodies, which

are covered with fine hairs. Then, as the bee travels to the next flower, the pollen is deposited on the stigma (or female organ of the plant), and the reproduction of the plant begins. Soon delicious berries, fruits and nuts will provide valuable sustenance for the natural world to enjoy.

There are about 4,000 species of bees native to the United States alone. Bumblebees and honeybees, both of which live in colonies, are perhaps the most well-known bees. Honeybees are not native to the United States but are relied upon heavily for large-scale crop pollination. Approximately 75% of crop production worldwide relies on animal pollination in some form and honeybees are at the top of that list.

Not only do bees directly pollinate the crops we grow to eat, but they also contribute to the sustainability of the fields grazed by the animals we rely on for sustenance in one



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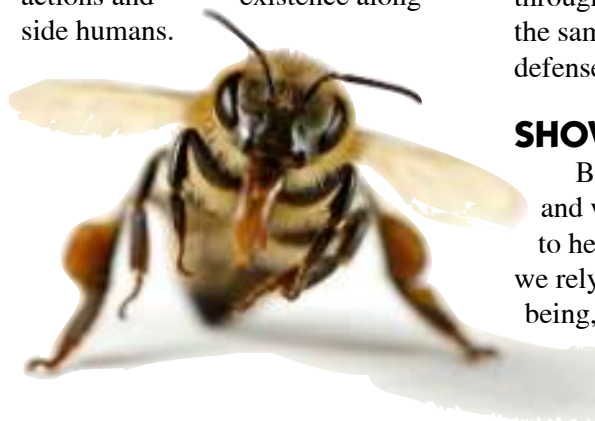
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form or the other. Plants like alfalfa and clover and favorites of grazing animals and are heavily pollinated by bees.

Needless to say, without bees, life would be much different than it currently is now. In 2006, beekeepers began to notice large numbers of dead or abandoned hives. As the loss rates rose, so did the concern and awareness of all the threats facing bees in our modern world. Suddenly, the thought of a future without bees became very real.

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

The most talked about threat devastating world honeybee populations is Colony Collapse Disorder. Colony Collapse Disorder is the name given to the inexplicable disappearance of worker bees that leave behind a queen and plenty of food, leaving the honeybee colony essentially empty. The most-supported theory as to what is causing CCD is that the disorder is a result of disease-related responses. There have been theories based on electromagnetic interference from cell phones to pesticides to climate change impacts, but the answer is not that simple. The threats facing bees are a complex and cumulative list of challenges stemming from their interactions and existence along side humans.



What scientists can agree on is that bees are dying and disappearing at a rate never seen before, and it coincides with our use of ever-greater and stronger pesticides and other conventional agricultural practices.

Bees in general are also losing their natural habitat and food sources to urban development and industrialization. Pollution and the loss of natural spaces have driven bees to our larger industrialized farms, most of which are covered with pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides. These chemicals have been shown time and again to display not only the fatal impact to bees in direct contact, but also developmental disruption and impacts on bee offspring, not to mention the weakening of bee health and ability to combat disease.

Disease is by far the greatest threat posed to bees. Like CCD and other mite-related outbreaks, bees are susceptible to viral, bacterial and parasitic outbreaks just as most plants and animals are. Disease is far more prevalent and threatening in organisms that lack biodiversity. Couple that with the creation of stronger parasites and bacteria from the over-use of pesticides, and the potential for rampant disease spreading quickly through bee populations that share the same genetic makeup and natural defenses increases greatly.

SHOW YOUR LOVE

Bottom line: bees are in trouble, and we need to do whatever we can to help them bounce back. After all, we rely very heavily on their well-being, as does the rest of the planet.

There are many ways we can help show our love for bees (and all pollinators, really). Here is my short list:

1) Buy Bee-friendly Products

Many products offer “bee-friendly” labels or other certifications. While this is a step in the right direction, you must be careful. There is no governing body to authenticate the claims of certifications, so make sure the company or product lives up to its claims. Your safest option is to purchase products from

local and/or small companies that have a long-standing reputation or that you can visit. Another option is purchasing vegan products, since they will be free of any bee products.

2) Buy Organic

Yet another reason to avoid purchasing produce and other foods grown with pesticides and the other nasties.

3) Organic Gardening

Even if you don't keep your own bees, starting and maintaining a garden free of chemicals and full of wonderful flowering plants will offer an oasis for bees and other pollinators in and around your own ecosystem.

4) Foster Bees

Urban beehives have become very popular in certain areas, and with good reason. Not only is keeping your own hive fun and rewarding, but you are supporting the pollination of just about every flowering plant within a two-mile radius. In a developed city, that is much needed.

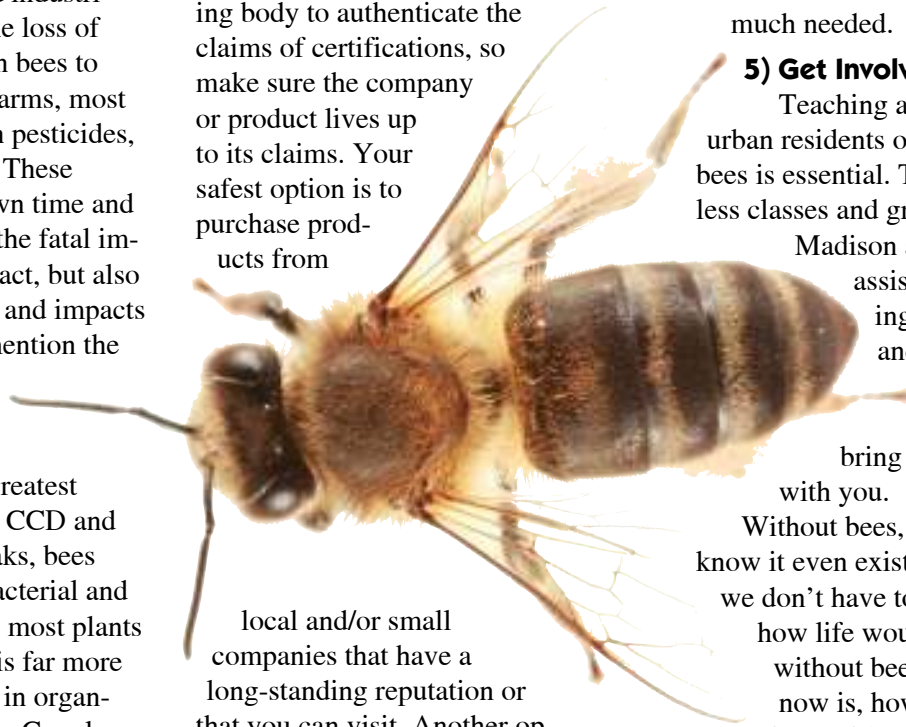
5) Get Involved

Teaching and sharing other urban residents of the wonders of bees is essential. There are countless classes and groups throughout

Madison and beyond that assist people in starting their own hives and becoming amateur beekeepers.

Take a class and bring someone along with you.

Without bees, would life as we know it even exist? Lucky for us, we don't have to worry about how life would have evolved without bees. The question now is, how does life continue without them? The fear of a life without bees is real. Bees are dying all around the globe in enormous numbers, but we have a very good idea as to what is causing these disasters. With the knowledge coming out about how to combat these threats facing bees, we as consumers have to make sure we hold farms and producers accountable to improving their growing or producing practices. Whether you admit it or not, you need bees; and frankly, you should love bees, because you won't be the same without them.



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10% off all Wellness and Bodycare items for Owners the first Wednesday of every month.

THIS MONTH:
APRIL 5TH

coop™ deals

APRIL

Our weekly Owner Rewards specials are listed in an in-store flyer, on our website, or are available by email. We are doing this to be able to be more flexible with our sales and offer better sale pricing. For more information, including how to sign up for the email flyer, see willystreet.coop/Owner-Rewards.

Health & Wellness co-op deals: April 5–18



W. S. Badger
Healing Balm
2 oz • Save \$1.10
\$5.69/tx



evanhealy
Rosehip Treatment Facial Serum
.5 oz • Save \$6
\$22.99/tx



Natracare
Regular Organic Cotton Tampons
20 pc • Save \$1.80
\$3.99/tx



The Honest Company
Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50+
3 oz • Save \$4
\$9.99/tx



Giovanni
Triple Treat Tea Tree Shampoo or Conditioner
8.5 oz • Save \$2.30
\$5.99/tx



Greenerways Organic
Bug Spray
4 oz • Save \$1.80
\$5.99/tx



Dr. Bronners
Castile Soap
All Kinds on Sale!
32 oz • Save \$7
\$9.99/tx



Alba
Original Unscented Emollient Body Lotion
32 oz • Save \$7.50
\$9.99/tx



New Chapter
Bone Strength Take Care
60 tab • Save \$7
\$25.99/tx



Jason
Lavender Satin Shower Body Wash
30 oz • Save \$5
\$9.99/tx



Nordic Naturals
Complete Omega
60 ct • Save \$3
\$15.99/tx



Tom's of Maine
Peppermint Whole Care Toothpaste
4.7 oz • Save \$2.30
\$3.99/tx



Health & Wellness co-op deals: April 19–May 2



MyChelle
Fruit Enzyme Cleanser
4.2 cap • Save \$4
\$12.99/tx



Klean Kanteen
32 oz Insulated Growler
Brushed Stainless, Amber
1 ea • Save \$17
\$37.99/tx



Alacer
Super Orange Emergen-C
30 ct • Save \$2
\$9.99/tx



Natural Vitality
Natural Calm
Raspberry Lemon
8 oz • Save \$7
\$14.99/tx



The Honest Company
Soothing Healing Balm
3 oz • Save \$4
\$8.99/tx



Lakewood
Organic Pure Aloe Juice
32 oz • Save \$3.50
\$5.99



The Seaweed Bath Company
Shampoos
All Kinds on Sale!
12 oz • Save \$4
\$7.99/tx



Preserve
Sandwich Storage Container 2 pc
All Colors on Sale!
2 pc • Save \$2
\$3.99/tx



Garden of Life
Vanilla Raw Proteins & Greens
557g • Save \$4
\$29.99/tx



Hyland's
Leg Cramps PM with Quinine
50 tab • Save \$5.50
\$8.99/tx



Desert Essence
Joboba Oil
2 oz • Save \$2.50
\$5.99/tx



Shikai
Hand and Body Lotion
All Kinds on Sale!
8 oz • Save \$2.30
\$6.99/tx



PURPLE = LOCAL

All Specials Subject to Availability. Sales Quantities Limited.

coop™ deals

co-op deals: April 5-18



Imagine
Organic Broth
Chicken, Vegetable
32 oz • Save \$1
\$2.99



Immaculate Baking Company
Organic Cinnamon Rolls
17.5 oz • Save \$2
\$3.99



Three Twins
Organic Ice Cream
All Kinds on Sale!
16 oz • Save \$1.50
\$3.79



Santa Cruz Organic
Organic Apple Sauce
All Kinds on Sale!
23 oz • Save \$1
\$2.99



R.W. Knudsen
Organic Mango Juice
32 oz • Save \$1.79
\$3.00



Mary's Gone Crackers
Organic Super Seed Crackers
All Kinds on Sale!
5.5 oz • Save \$1.60
\$3.69



Seventh Generation
Dish Liquid
All Kinds on Sale!
25 oz • Save \$1.29
\$2.50/tx



Wallaby
Organic European-Style Sour Cream
16 oz • Save \$1.30
\$3.49



World Waters
Watermelon Water
12 oz • Save 50¢
\$2.99



Wholesome Sweeteners
Organic Brown Sugar
Dark, Light
24 oz • Save \$1.50
\$3.99



Organic Valley
Organic Cut Cheeses
Mozzarella, Provolone, Pepper Jack, Muenster, Feta
8 oz • Save \$1.30-\$2.30
\$4.69



Woodstock Farms
Organic Tri-Color Peppers
10 oz • Save 79¢
\$2.50



Jovial
Organic Brown Rice Pasta
Spaghetti, Penne, Fusilli
12 oz • Save \$1.60
\$2.69



R.W. Knudsen
Juice Box 4-Packs
All Kinds on Sale!
27 oz • Save \$1.30
\$2.49



Eden Organics
Organic Beans
All Kinds on Sale!
15 oz • Save 84¢-\$1.14
\$1.65



Field Day
Bath Tissue
12-pack • Save 50¢
\$6.49/tx



Pacific Natural Foods
Hazelnut Milk
Chocolate, Regular
32 oz • Save \$1.10
\$2.39



Spectrum
Organic Canola Oil
32 oz • Save \$3
\$8.99



Divine
Chocolate Bars
All Kinds on Sale!
3.5 oz • Save \$1
\$2.79/tx



Green Valley Organics
Organic Lactose-Free Cream Cheese Cups
8 oz • Save 80¢
\$2.69



Annie's Homegrown
Organic Really Peely Fruit Tape
Berry, Strawberry
4.5 oz • Save \$2.10
\$3.39



Beanfields
Bean & Rice Chips
6 oz • Save \$1
\$2.49



Angie's
Caramel Kettle Corn
6 oz • Save \$1.10
\$2.39



Blue Diamond
Almond Breeze
All Kinds on Sale!
32 oz • Save \$1.29
\$1.50



The specials on this page are valid April 5-18

All Specials Subject to Availability

APRIL

co-op deals: April 19–May 2



Greeks Gods
Yogurt
24 oz • Save \$1.30-\$1.50
\$2.69



Muir Glen
Organic Canned Tomatoes
All Kinds on Sale!
28 oz • Save 79¢-99¢
\$2.00



R.W. Knudsen
Organic Very Veggie Juice Blend
All Kinds on Sale!
32 oz • Save \$1.30
\$2.69



Nature's Path
Organic Flax Plus Cereals
Flakes, Raisin Bran, Maple Pecan, Red Berry
10.5-14 oz • Save \$1.20-\$2.30
\$2.99



Blue Sky
Organic Soda 6-Packs
Ginger Ale, Cola, Root Beer
6-Pack • Save \$1
\$3.19



Blue Diamond
Nut Thins
All Kinds on Sale!
4.25 oz • Save \$1
\$2.29



Silk
Unsweetened Cashew Milk
64 oz • Save \$1
\$2.79



Wildwood
Organic Sprouted Firm Tofu
14 oz • Save \$1
\$1.79



Cocomels
Coconut Milk Caramel Pouches
All Kinds on Sale!
3.5 oz • Save \$1.30
\$3.49



Annie's Homegrown
Organic Grass-Fed Shells & Aged Cheddar
6 oz • Save \$1.79
\$2.00



Heavenly Organics
Organic Raw Honey
Acacia, Neem, White Honey
12 oz • Save \$1.80
\$5.99



Julie's
Organic Fudge Ice Cream Bars
4 oz • Save \$1.30
\$3.99



King Arthur Flour
All-Purpose Unbleached Flour
80 oz • Save \$1.50
\$4.99



Lundberg
Bulk Organic White Jasmine Rice
Rndm wt • Save 50¢/lb
\$2.49/lb



Once Again
Almond Butter
All Kinds on Sale!
16 oz • Save \$2.80
\$8.69



Seventh Generation
Disinfecting Wipes
35 pc • Save 80¢
\$2.99/tx



Talenti
Gelato or Sorbetto
All Kinds on Sale!
16 oz • Save \$1.80
\$3.99



Organic Valley
Organic Half & Half
Hazelnut, French Vanilla
16 oz • Save 30¢
\$2.69



Kind
Energy Bars
All Kinds on Sale!
1.4 oz • Save 70¢
\$1.29



Pacific Natural Foods
Organic Free Range Chicken Broth
Regular, Low Sodium
32 oz • Save \$1.50
\$2.99



Cascadian Farm
Organic Frozen Fruit
Blueberries, Red Raspberries, Harvest Berries, Sliced Peaches, Blackberries
8-10 oz • Save 99¢
\$3.00



If You Care
Unbleached Parchment Paper
70 ft • Save \$1
\$3.99/tx



Brown Cow
Cream Top Yogurt
All Kinds on Sale!
6 oz • Save 24¢
75¢



C2O
Coconut Water
17.5 oz • Save 79¢
\$1.50





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Bulk up for the Earth!

It takes enormous resources and energy to produce all of those cans, boxes, cartons and labels—almost all of which wind up in our landfills. Even recyclable food packaging takes energy to produce and recycle (and some of it still ends up in landfills). **You're making a significant environmental difference by buying in bulk.** Bulk products are usually less expensive per ounce because you're not paying for that packaging (or advertising).

How to buy in bulk

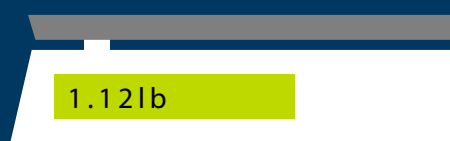
- 1 Fill any clean empty container with as much as you need.



- 2 Write the PLU # labeled on the bin, using provided supplies. (masking tape, twist ties, & markers)



- 3 At checkout, a cashier will make sure you don't get charged for the weight of the container!



Want to learn more about shopping in bulk?
Sign up for a free **Simply Bulk** class!
See more information on page 7.

+ Look for our **Simply Bulk Guide** for bulk cooking times and suggested servings.
Located in the Bulk aisle or at willystreet.coop/bulk-department



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A new dairy-free yogurt line! Made from California almonds. Varieties to choose from are plain, vanilla, strawberry, blueberry, and peach. We also carry their vegan cream cheese. Available at West and East.



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dairy-free. Low sugar and an excellent source of fiber. Available at East, West and North.



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ANGIE'S BOOM CHICKA POP CHEDDAR CHEESE POPCORN

New from Angie's, an orange cheddar cheese popcorn! Great for snackin' and GMO-free. Available at East, West and North.



VITAL PROTEINS BEEF LIVER CAPSULES

Sourced from pasture-raised, grass-fed New Zealand beef, this supplement is a rich source of vitamin A and B12. Available at East, West and North.



BARLEAN'S FIBER BLENDS

A delicious way to add dietary fiber to your smoothies, yogurt, or juice! An organic mix of acacia, coconut and flax seeds. Available at East, West and North.



NORDIC NATURALS OMEGA CURCUMIN

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GREEN PASTURE'S FERMENTED COD LIVER OIL

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COMMON GROUND

by Charity Bingham, Newsletter Writer

Throughout the nation, the arrival of spring brings along an almost obligate sense of connection to the natural world. It's the little things that we remember to appreciate as the seasons change: heavy snowfall turns to misty rain, vegetation blooms once again, hibernators and migrators return and bring their standard din. Spring brings new beginnings and reawakening. Even the weeds struggle to do the seemingly impossible and bloom wherever planted, despite having few resources. Earth Day, April 22nd, provides a poignant opportunity for reflecting on our place in this wildly dynamic world.

Despite our differences, there is at least one undeniable truth we need to face collectively: all humans share common ground. We are all Terrans, inhabitants of the planet Earth. We have all been nurtured and sustained by the same giant mass majestically hurdling through the dark vacuum of infinite space. Since we are all residents of this planet, we all have a personal stake in maintaining the planet's ability to sustain human life. If not for any other reason than to ensure the continuation of our species, we must come together, right now.

The ecosystem in which we live is a minute cog in a ginormous wheel, within an infinitely larger dynamic machine. In the somewhat grand scheme of things, we are human beings, who live in homes, within a community in the city of Madison, in the state of Wisconsin. We're located in the midwestern region of the United States of America, on the continent of North America, within the Western Hemisphere of the planet Earth.

Earth is in the solar system of the Milky Way galaxy in the only known universe. With that scale in mind, it may seem like individual humans are tiny parts of the circle of life in this grand Universe. We are immediately faced with the reality that microbes and microorganisms are much smaller than us, and electrons are even infinitely smaller. Humans possess vast amounts of physical real estate on this planet. For those who envision humanity's place in the animal kingdom as equals among other species, let's be better tenants. For those who envision humanity's place in the world as the rulers of all other animal species, let's be better landlords. Whichever way you think of humanity's place in the world, if you'd like to keep your place and keep this world, then join the fight to protect our shared home on this planet.

Recent discoveries of exoplanets within the "goldilocks zone" in a nearby star system make this Earth Day an excellent opportunity for community reflection on the gravity of our situation. The likelihood of encountering another planetary body with atmospheric conditions even remotely similar enough to Earth's comfortable abode to compare astronomically is astoundingly tiny. This

planet is currently our one chance at continuation as a species. That is, at least until we discover how to travel outside of this solar system at a remotely reasonable speed to these newly discovered exoplanets and discover how to terraform planetary bodies to make them habitable for humans somewhere along the way...this could take a while. Environments like Earth's are rare enough for humans to seek out other habitable planets and to race to discover and claim them. Given that, let's show some appreciation for this humble home of ours and love the one we're with. Let this Earth Day serve as a call to action to make the most of what we have right now, together.

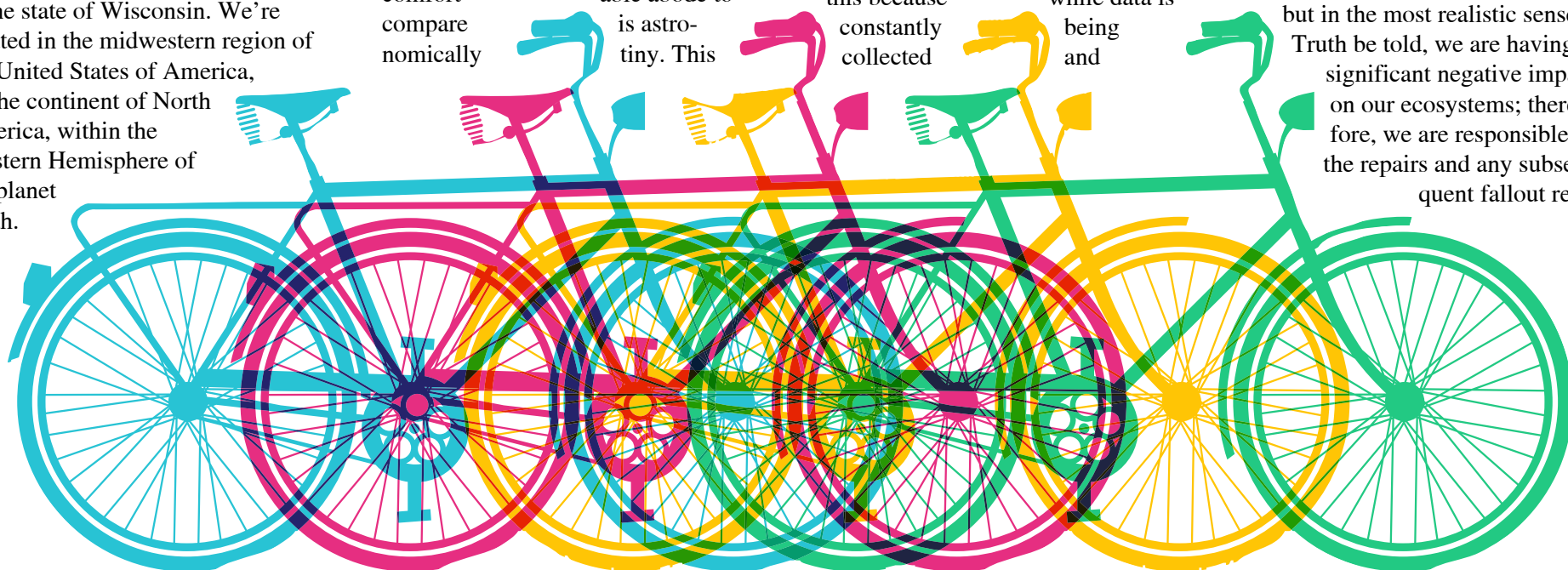
APRIL SHOWERS MAY OR MAY NOT BRING FLOWERS...EARLIER OR LATER THAN EXPECTED...

Global climate change is a planetary-wide issue. If we are looking for a reason to unify and cease our in-group fighting as a species, that reason is currently staring us down. The rate at which the climate is changing on this planet is both rapid and alarming. How do we know this? We know this because while data is constantly being collected and

updated in this dynamic system, the climate is changing at a more statistically significant rapid rate now than it has in trends past. This is reason for our attention, at the very least. We as individuals can improve our environmentalist habits and positively encourage others to do the same. Our cooperative efforts at an environmentalist collective movement can upset the balance of things, for the better.

The idea of "saving the planet" should result in our innate human instinct to survive kicking into overdrive because what we really fear is species-wide extinction, a genuine reality for more species than we have even been able to record. If we destroy the environment, we are shooting ourselves in the foot, not the planet. The concept of "saving the planet" should really be rebranded as "saving yourself." In reality, the planet will be fine without human inhabitants; it will adapt, as all things must and do, until its own inevitable fiery star death. At this rate, it's likely that the human species won't be around to worry about that. We will have simply made the planet uninhabitable for our species and probably quite a few other innocent bystander species. While some believe that this means that life as we know it will cease to exist immediately, others believe nothing is happening at all and all is well. The truth is somewhere in the middle. Honestly, we are changing the world, and I don't mean that in the idealistic sense, but in the most realistic sense.

Truth be told, we are having a significant negative impact on our ecosystems; therefore, we are responsible for the repairs and any subsequent fallout relat-



ing to our actions. The good news is: we can do it. In a world packed with billions of humans, our actions really do add up. What we do, cumulatively as a species will, and currently does, affect the environment and the rest of Earth's inhabitants.

Within this gargantuan machine in which we live, if one cog ceases to function, the machine may perform less efficiently, but if many cogs cease to function, the machine itself may cease to function entirely. Have heart, because while we are having a large impact on the environment, our impact will inevitably continue, but we can strive to make our future impact positive.

THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION

The topic of environmentalism and conservation may seem like niche interests to some. However, anyone who lives in and relies upon an environment for existence should logically be an environmentalist for the sake of self-preservation. The fact that catastrophic environmental change doesn't appear to currently be affecting everyone in every region prevents some from recognizing what that statement means. Preventative care is key to ameliorating both chronic and acute problems, but the key is the care aspect. Earth Day began as a movement to improve quality of life for all of Earth's inhabitants by properly caring for the environment. By proxy, it is a movement to care for all of Earth's inhabitants via clean water, clean air, and use of renewable resources. Environmentalism isn't a choice; it's about the long game for all of us.

Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson said it best while reflecting on Earth Day's importance just a year after the movement began:

"So long as the human species inhabits the Earth, proper management of its resources will be the most fundamental issue we face. Our very survival will depend upon whether or not we are able to preserve, protect and defend our environment. We are not free to decide about whether or not our environment 'matters.' It does matter, apart from any political exigencies. We disregard the needs of our ecosystem at our mortal peril. That was the great lesson of Earth Day. It must never be forgotten."

This should be our aim: never forget why Earth Day was and is needed and to work to make sure that in the future it is not needed. In an ideal world, future Earth Days would be celebrations of our environmental accomplishments. Earth Day would be selected as a celebratory holiday for generations and generations of humans to come to reflect on another pivotal turning point in humanity's history; one in which we make the decision to do better for ourselves and everyone else. Outlined below are some strategies and tips for improving your environmental impact and helping others do the same to change the course of humankind's history and our future.

REUSING, REDUCING, & REPAIRING

The idea of reusing goods rather than disposing of them for the sake of the environment may seem like an obvious solution to some. However, you can safely re-use many products marketed as disposable or one-time-use. Here are simple ways to reuse, reduce, and repair everyday products to help us help ourselves:

- **Reduce food waste:** Food waste and starvation are both on the rise across the globe. This means that we have the resources to feed too many in some places and not enough resources to feed many in other places. This poor allocation of resources can be mitigated by reducing food waste and re-routing food that would be wasted to people who would otherwise go hungry. Start by noting leftovers and trying to implement them into upcoming meals before preparing or buying new food. After that, try adjusting your grocery shopping schedule to shop when it's most efficient; this may mean more frequently than you may be accustomed to, or buying certain products only on the day they are needed. Finally, if you have surplus, share.
- **Reusable water bottles:** Glass, stainless steel, bpa-/bphs-/phthalate-free plastic, food-grade silicone, or aluminum; take your pick from the multitude of materials in which reusable water bottles are now offered. Fewer disposable plastic bottles in the landfills is a simple but noble goal.
- **Reusable shopping bags:** Full-sized backpacks that fold down to the size of a small tablet, capacious canvas bags, and efficient insulated grocery bags are just some of the options available for reusable shopping bags. For a minimalist option, simply reuse the paper or plastic grocery bags that you get from the Co-op on your next shopping trip if you don't already have any. If handled with care when carried, folded and stored, standard paper grocery bags can last more trips before needing to be replaced than you might expect. Keep your bags in the car and save yourself the hassle of more "disposable" bags of which you must later dispose. If you already have a surplus, try using paper grocery bags as fireplace kindling or recycling holders and try plastic bags as small bathroom trash liners.
- **Reusable food containers:** lunch boxes, bento boxes, and lunch sacks are all great options for transporting your food. Paper grocery bags and plastic shopping bags also work well. You can also reuse the containers from common refrigerated grocery products, from yogurt containers for leftover food storage to resealable cereal bags for use with dry bulk pantry products.
- **Reusable hygiene products:** Cloth baby diapers, reusable cloth menstrual pads, rechargeable electric razors, and reusable medical-grade

silicone menstrual cups are all options for reusable hygiene products that are available as environmentally friendly long-term reusable solutions. Check out the co-op's health and wellness department for a fount of knowledge on the variety of options available reusable hygiene products.

- **Reusable energy storage:** Rechargeable batteries are another excellent way to avoid adding caustic materials to the disposal cycle. Try some of these options and find your level of interest in re-use; you may be surprised by what you're able to stop purchasing.
- **Repairing clothing:** Tiny tears in clothing make them disposable now, when just a few years ago, patched and torn clothing was all the rage. Now consider the number of articles of clothing disposed of each year because of cosmetic issues. Learn to sew, knit, crochet, or find a community member who knows how to do one or all and negotiate a mutually beneficial exchange of goods or services. Less consumerism simply means fewer carbon emissions and resources expended in the supply chain.
- **Repairing electronics:** Electronics like laptops, tablets, and cell phones can sometimes be repaired when damaged. Disposing of these types of electronics can be complicated due to manufacturing component disposal regulations. Exchanging or selling the useful parts of these types of electronics can prove to be more lucrative than simply disposing them and taking a loss. Ever dropped your cell phone in water and had to throw it away? Next time, immediately remove the battery and submerge your phone in a bowl of rice. The rice will draw out the moisture and if done in a timely manner, just may save your phone.
- **Repairing appliances:** This may require a specialist, depending on the appliance, and your skill level. Repair can be a good option for appliances that have proven durable but may require regular maintenance. Household and commercial appliance disposal requires special permissions and advanced planning. Keep this in mind if disposal of large appliances is necessary and plan ahead.

RECYCLING: PAPER, CONTAINERS, BOTTLES, JUGS & CARDBOARD, OH MY!

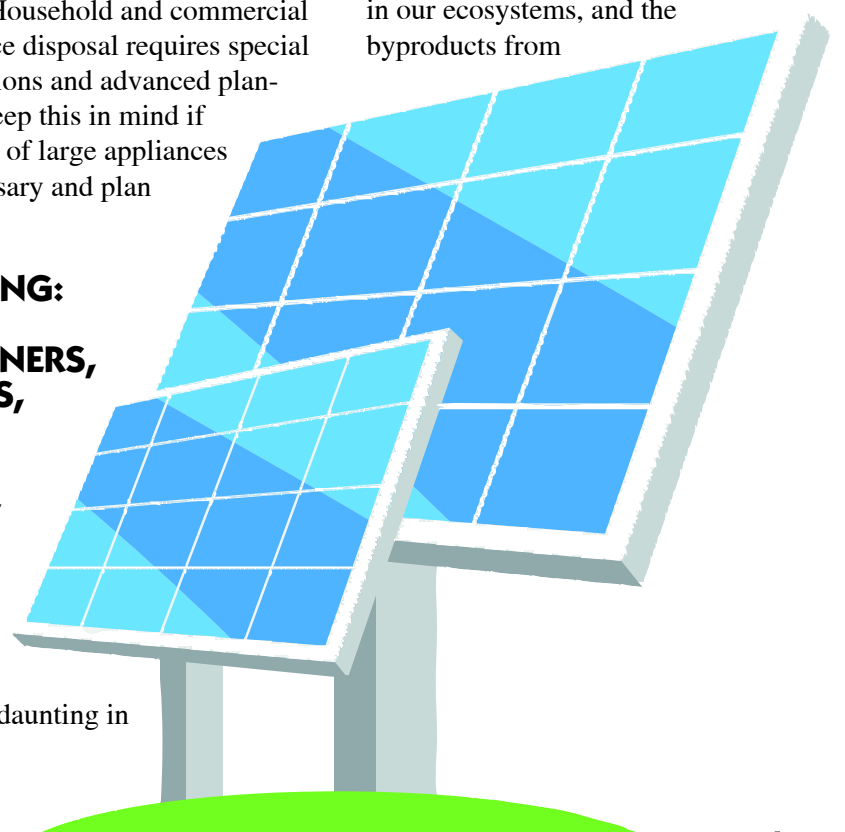
Decoding what can be recycled may seem daunting in

the heat of the moment. You're standing frozen in front of the waste bins with a used napkin, a plastic water bottle, and a used hot bar container in hand, wondering which goes where for disposal. The used napkin and used hot bar container should be put in the trash...after scraping food scraps from the hot bar container into the compost bin. The plastic water bottle should be put in the recycling bin. If your water bottle came from a six-pack, make sure you cut the plastic rings that the bottles come packaged in to hold them together. Water creatures experience a myriad of problems with the abundance of this type of waste that ends up in our oceans, lakes, and waterways, so a little extra care when recycling really can make an impact.

Recycling will get easier with practice, and doing it properly requires a small amount of self-education to perfect this skill. For easy disposal, plastic containers should be labeled with the proper plastic type code, or instructions for proper disposal should be prominently displayed on the container. Bins of two different colors are helpful for making proper separation less complicated. If you notice a heavy flow of certain kinds of disposables in a specific area, put a bin near that spot for the specific disposal type most commonly used there. For example, you can make your recycling bin more accessible in the kitchen, like under a countertop; and put the trash in a less accessible place, like in a broom closet, to ensure recyclables don't get habitually thrown into the trash. Prioritize recycling and optimize accessibility to recycling resources to gradually improve your environmental impact.

COMPOSTING: YARD WASTE & VEGETABLE SCRAPS

Composting is the process of disposing of valuable food scraps, specifically non-meat food scraps and yard vegetation, to allow the process of biodegradation to take place under optimized conditions. The food we eat is edible for other inhabitants in our ecosystems, and the byproducts from



these other species' feast, make for delicious nutrients for local plant life. This metaphorical potluck creates a symbiotic relationship between us, the insects and microbes that ingest our food scraps, and the plants that ultimately flourish due to digestive byproducts from the insects and microbes which provide the soil with vital minerals and nutrients in a cyclical and systemic fashion. Composting is the circle of life zoomed in on one tiny slice of the planet.

We can encourage certain kinds of visitors with our compost waste when it's stored in the yard if non-compostable food scraps are introduced. Compost containers need to meet specific requirements for proper storage and maintenance to ensure safety from predators and efficiently composted soil. Requirements for both indoor and outdoor use vary widely based on your average compost output, smell factor, community and local ordinance requirements, and accessibility. Outdoor compost bins can be made from material as simple and inexpensive as shipping pallets, scrap wood or chicken wire, depending on your needs. Be sure to research composting bin options, your local ordinances; and consider checking with neighbors on their systems, if they have one. Kitchen compost containers should ideally be sealable, and yard containers should be breathable and easily turned, but not accessible to scavengers. This is one reason meat and bones are not compostable; they make for tasty treats for unwanted carnivorous and omnivorous visitors, such as raccoons and other stealthy trash and compost surfers. Outdoor compost piles can be a fast food walk-thru for these hungry scavengers; so leaving choice meat and bones outside, ripe for the picking, isn't ideal. Meat and bones also delay the composting process, as they take longer to break down and disrupt the decomposition process.

Egg shells, on the other hand, provide a good source of calcium to your soil and plants and are a valuable addition to your compost pile, whenever available. Compost piles should be turned regularly, as in the bottom portion and top portion should

be rotated, so that all portions get equal exposure to each position and are therefore processed equally. If you're really interested in your local ecosystem and getting top-notch compost, you can add a colony of red earthworms to the mix and watch them refine your soil like well-trained factory workers. Composting pays off not only for the flora and fauna, but for gardens and yards also. Once the soil is completely processed, it should be a deep, dark, rich shade of earthy brown and your soil-dwelling partners have completed their duties. Your soil should now contain the vital nutrients and minerals that are part of what makes composting worth the effort for all parties involved. Composting can be mutually beneficial for the entire eco-system, if done correctly.

DONATING: GOODS, MONEY, OR TIME

Spring cleaning means a lot of paring down. Most of us are fortunate enough to have basic resources for survival readily available, but there are many of us who don't. We can cooperate and right the balance of justice and equality in the world by donating our unneeded clothing, home goods, pantry foods, and other resources to community members who don't have access to those resources. Willy North, West, and East all have food pantry donation areas near Customer Service all year round where you can donate to local community members easily before or after you shop. Look for the big clothing donation bins in the parking lots of many major business areas, including Willy North's Sherman Ave. shopping center parking lot, and donate your new or gently used clothing to your local community members. There are tons of opportunities to donate most anything, so before you dispose of your unneeded resources, consider giving.

There are always opportunities to donate monetarily to organizations that support environmental, humanitarian and conservation organizations. Be sure to research any organizations to which you donate; how much is a typical dona-

tion, how much of the organization's budget goes to the actual cause advertised, and consider getting involved to get a realistic impression of what you are supporting. All three of the Willy Street Co-op locations accept on-the-spot monetary donations at the checkout lanes for the Wisconsin Shares CHIP program. The default amount is 1% of your purchase total, but any custom amount that you would prefer to donate can be easily added to your total at the end of your shopping transaction. You can find out more about the CHIP program at any of the Co-op locations' Customer Service desks.

Donating your time is one of the most fruitful ways to give back to your community. Volunteering allows insight into the inner workings of the organization you support and an opportunity to connect directly with the members of your community. Select opportunities that contribute to your community. From picking up trash near the waterways and walking areas; to volunteering your time at botanical gardens, community gardens, and animal shelters; there are limitless opportunities to get involved in positive environmental change. With a variety of charitable causes and organizations with special interests, there's something for everyone. The key is to do something, anything, whatever strikes your interest in the realm of the environment and conservation efforts.

LANDFILLS: THE LAST RESORT

Landfills are the seemingly final goodbye we say to our waste products. However, landfills and their effects are far more long-term than many of us realize. From islands of trash in the oceans, to trash strewn all over our public spaces, our trash is really putting a damper on things. It's up to us to reduce it. After recycling, reusing, repairing and donating all that we can, the trash should serve as the absolute last resort for our waste. In some extreme cases, people have managed to conscientiously reduce their trash waste to negligible amounts each year. While not everyone is prepared for such measures required for that level of commitment, being mindful of what we are disposing of can help keep our landfill deposits lower.

We can also connect community members with much-needed resources that would otherwise be sent to the heaps of trash collecting silently. Landfills are akin to keeping all your trash piled in the yard, buried deep in a hole that's been dug as deep as possible but has been full for a very long time. Eventually, there will be spillover, and it will need to be dealt with. We need to deal with our spillover and minimize our output at the same time to deal with the repercussions of literally filling our land with trash. Both issues can be addressed on an individual level with more attention to our impact on the world around us, "invisible" landfills included. Think before you trash.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Go green gadget. If you're a homeowner, one of the best investments you can make for your home and the environment is converting to green energy.

- **Set your home thermostat manually:** Set your home's temperature to a level where you are comfortable, but keep in mind that many thermostats may be set to highly inefficient default settings. Setting your thermostat to cool-but-not-cold in the summer, and warm-but-not-hot in the winter is a great way to gauge your needs and help you decide whether a throw blanket is in order or fewer layers are required to reach your optimal body temperature. Learn about your heating and cooling system to work efficiently to optimize your comfort level or consider a new fully customizable smart-home thermostat system. Your options are boundless.
- **Solar panels:** Many cities offer tax incentives for homeowners who invest in solar panels for home energy use. Check your local ordinances to see how sustainable practices are incentivized for homeowners in your area; and if they aren't, contact your local alderperson to express your interest in these types of incentivized sustainable options. Some highly efficient home solar panel systems can output a surplus of energy and earn credits from the local energy company if plugged into the grid in a locale that offers this valuable incentive.
- **Sustainable energy co-operatives:** Another option for green energy is to join a sustainable energy co-operative; empowering you, your community, and the environment. Look for local organizations that offer beneficial services and education to members.

Water conservation: With water shortages and lack of access to clean water on the rise, every little drop counts. Here're some ways to conserve this precious resource:
- **Rain barrels:** A simple sustainable option that can be implemented in most homes is a rain barrel. Rain barrel systems are large barrels, usually set up as a catchment system for a home's gutter overflow system, which catch the rain and reserve it for use in the garden and other non-potable purposes. Why waste water when you can use nature's recycled water on your gardens?
- **Rain garden:** These specialized gardens designed to allow typical rain runoff to gather in depressed garden areas allow the rainwater to be reabsorbed into the soil instead.
- **Composting, incinerating, low-flow, and dual flush toilets:** If you have the resources and you're in it for the long haul, specialized toilets are an option for more efficient use of water or no water use. The dual-flush and low-flow systems may use a dual handle which separates flow rates based on whether you

require a big flush or a little flush or they can maintain an overall lower water level in your toilet, for more efficient water usage. Composting toilets do exactly as you may suspect. They compost human waste. They can be as simple as a bucket with a lid and sawdust or a unit that contains the waste like an in-bathroom compost bin until it's emptied. Incinerating toilets incinerate waste into a combusted ash by-product.

- **On demand water heater:** Instead of the huge tanks that are commonly used for water heaters in the U.S., travel abroad and you'll find that many other countries use much smaller on-demand water heaters. They are usually petite enough to be kept in-unit and heat just enough water for one use with the push of a button and a wait of around 15 minutes. This solution is both impressive and efficient.

GET TO KNOW THE LOCALS

Native flora and fauna contribute immensely to our ecosystems and play an important role in regulating the flow of resources in the community. We can protect and encourage local plants and wildlife by making our environment more habitable for these oft-forgotten neighbors.

- **Plant natives:** If you have access to a garden or green space, consider the number of native plant species that might grow well in your growing zone and optimize based on your desired usage. You can plant culinary herbs that also repel pests for you, milkweed for the monarch butterfly, and native wildflowers and heirloom vegetables for the local bee hive and other ground-dwellers. Those are just some options, which many growing zones in Wisconsin can accommodate. Check your local garden center or the USDA's website for details on how you can optimize ecosystem efficiency and get more bang for your buck in the garden.
- **Encourage native animal and insect species:** Bird migration can be quite the wondersome experience if you live near a local migratory bird population. Some species have a more difficult time than others and may require assistance from us. Look for local bird migratory patterns and find an organization that supports volunteers in your area to help with the migration process. Or just share the roads with our winged neighbors to help our ecosystem thrive. For your viewing pleasure, you can also plant a butterfly garden to attract more environmentally beneficial creatures to your area. Milkweed is high on the list of beneficial plant species that attract winged flyers like the Monarch, and are critically needed along their migratory journeys. If you're interested in the monarch, visit the USDA Forest Service website (www.fs.fed.us) for more details than you

can imagine and a chance to help researchers by reporting your local monarch sightings.

- **Eat & shop locally:** The less distance our goods must travel, the fewer carbon emissions for which we are responsible. Simple.

THE LITTLE THINGS:

Simple, but sustainable strategies:

- **Walk, bike, carpool, or use public transportation:** The fewer vehicles on the road, the better. The fewer vehicles on the road with just the driver inside, even better. Cars, trucks and vans are huge honking machines that require huge honking amounts of energy and resources to operate. That means, just like with any other machine, input requires output. Minimizing this output by any means necessary is a top priority for us all.
- **Turn off the lights:** A simple change we can all make is diligently turning off the lights when they're not in use. By the way, if you're still using any type of lighting other than LED in your home, it's time to make the switch. You'll be saving yourself money, energy and time by replacing them. Disposal of other older lighting systems requires specific handling due to the release of mercury into the environment when they're shattered. That's something we want to minimize. Be sure to consult your local waste management department for details.
- **Unplug:** Unplug electronics when you leave for a long trip, and remember to turn off any automatic settings that require energy use. Minimizing our usage in general is a powerful tool in the environmentalist's toolkit.
- **Clean up:** On your next walk around your neighborhood, bring a glove or a long sharp stick, and a plastic bag. See how much litter you can collect around your neighborhood on a typical walk around the block; you may be astounded.
- **Plant a tree:** This one really is that simple.
- **Eat humanely:** Do your research before investing your hard-earned cash in any product or brand. Fair trade, vegan, free-range, farmer-owned, or rBGH-free, whatever your dietary needs or consumerist code of ethics, working to meet those needs in the most humane way possible is an attainable and worthy goal for all.
- **Low tech & no tech:** Turn off your devices and get outdoors. Explore your community or get to know your neighbors. Learn about your local flora and fauna. Whatever you do, do plan time to get outside and into the wild to gain a better appreciation of why we should all want to keep this planet up and running.

IN CONCLUSION: EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS

Finally, we can look forward to the fact that there are so many simple changes we can implement

to positively affect the balance of things. However, we all need to do our part to work cooperatively as a species toward a common goal... survival. We should ultimately feel hopeful, because fixing this problem is a biological imperative. In other words, while the problems that we

face are a direct threat to the human species, we have proven to be highly adaptive. We can handle this, we just have to decide to do it, and then do it together. I'll do my best, and all that I ask of you, fellow Earthling, is that you do your best. The Earth will do the rest.

WHAT DO YOUR CHIP GIFTS ACCOMPLISH?

They build a local movement for social and environmental justice.

Your gifts support Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) and its 65 member nonprofits.



Shared service on the Community Shares of Wisconsin Board of Directors provides space for local nonprofit leaders to connect and collaborate. Three of CSW's directors were recently honored by **Brava Magazine as 2017 Women to Watch:** Erika Jones from **FairShare CSA Coalition**, Wenona Wolf from the **Wisconsin Council on Children and Families**, and Erin Thornley Parisi with **Dane County Rape Crisis Center**. Through mutual support and engagement, CSW's Board leads local efforts to build a just and sustainable community for all.



Photo: Madison Audubon Society

Madison Audubon Society partnered with Lincoln Elementary, to provide dual-language immersion education about the environment. Thanks to a shared interest in birds, students that were ordinarily very quiet opened up, asked questions, and got engaged. And the students even taught Audubon Society educators new bird-related words in several different languages.

Last year **Chrysalis** helped 47 clients with mental illness find jobs through partnerships with local businesses. Chrysalis believes that, with the right support, every person with a serious mental illness is capable of finding meaningful employment.



Photo: Chrysalis, Inc

CHIP gifts are 1% of your bill,
or 10 cents on a \$10 purchase.

Thank you!



The Community CHIP® program is part of Community Shares of Wisconsin—your gift can be tax deductible.

Learn more at www.communityshares.com

RECIPES AND DRINK RECOMMENDATIONS

Take 10% off recommended beverages... Just show your Willy Street Co-op Owner card at Star Liquor!

Chickpea, Spinach, and Chorizo Frittata

Adapted from www.food52.com.

Chickpeas and chorizo make this a hearty, substantial and savory frittata, and it's ideal when you want dinner on the table fast.

- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 6 oz. Mexican chorizo, removed from casing if needed, diced
- 1 c. canned chickpeas, drained
- 1 roasted red pepper, diced
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 2 c. baby spinach
- 6 eggs, beaten
- salt

Directions: Turn on the broiler to high, and set the oven rack 5-6 inches below the heating element.

Warm the olive oil in an oven-safe frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté until tender and fragrant. Add the chorizo, chickpeas and roasted red pepper, then stir in the smoked paprika. Cook about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until the chorizo is browned. Stir in the spinach, and cook just a minute, until wilted. Use a spoon to spread all the ingredients evenly in the pan, then pour in the eggs. Set the pan under the broiler and cook a few minutes, checking frequently, until the eggs are set. Sprinkle lightly with salt, then slice and serve. (You can also serve this at room temperature, if you'd like.) Serves 6.

Star Recommends: Woodenhead Zinfandel: Medium dark ruby, viscous. Aromatics a little shy right now. Earth, incense, dark fruits and spice, veiled. The 2014 Zinfandels seem to be lighter in weight, although this is full flavored with berry, spice and the typical black pepper for this wine. Briar notes linger on the long finish.

Spinach and Artichoke Grilled Cheese

Adapted from www.joythebaker.com.

This is amazingly close to spinach and artichoke dip in sandwich form. Three different cheeses, fresh spinach and really good bread make this a grilled cheese you'll want to make again.

- 1/2 c. drained, coarsely chopped artichoke hearts (canned)
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 c. baby spinach
- 1/2 c. shredded mozzarella
- 2 Tbs. grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan
- 1 Tbs. sour cream
- 1/2 tsp. hot sauce (plus more to taste)
- pinch salt
- 4 slices bread
- 2 Tbs. cream cheese
- 1 Tbs. butter

Directions: Spread the artichoke hearts on a clean kitchen towel or paper towel and press out as much liquid as you can. Set aside.

In a small skillet over medium-low heat, warm the olive oil. Stir in the garlic, and sauté for 30 seconds. Add the spinach and sauté just until wilted. Transfer the spinach to a large bowl. Add the mozzarella, Pecorino or Parmesan, artichoke hearts, sour cream, hot sauce and salt to the bowl and stir to combine.

Spread the cream cheese onto each slice of bread. Divide the spinach and cheese mixture between two slices of bread. Spread into an even layer, then top with the other two slices of bread.

Melt the butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Grill the sandwiches, flipping once, until each side is golden brown and the filling is melted. Enjoy hot. Makes 2 sandwiches.

Star Recommends: Ca' Momi Pinot Noir: Wild berries, caramel and forest floor flavors follow its alluring nose of blueberry compote, strawberries and smoky white pepper.



Spinach-Mushroom Soup with Middle Eastern Spices

Adapted from www.cooking.nytimes.com

Thanks to a few different kinds of mushrooms and lots of warm spices, this rich and wholesome soup is full of deep flavor.

- 6 Tbs. olive oil, divided
- 1 1/4 lbs. mushrooms (use a mixture of them, like crimini, oyster, chanterelles, and shiitake), divided
- 1/2 lb. shallots, minced, divided
- 1 Tbs. tomato paste
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 3/4 tsp. cinnamon
- pinch ground allspice
- 2 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 2 c. baby spinach
- lime juice, to taste

Directions: Heat half of the olive oil in a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Stir in half of the mushrooms and half of the shallots. Sauté for 10-12 minutes, until the mushrooms are golden brown and most of the water has evaporated. Transfer the mushroom-shallot mixture to a bowl and cook the remaining mushrooms and shallots the same way with the remaining olive oil.

Return all the mushrooms and shallots to the pot over medium-high heat. Add the tomato paste, thyme, cumin, coriander, cinnamon and allspice, and stir to combine. Cook just until fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Add 5 cups of water and the salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and lower heat to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Stir in the baby spinach and cook just until wilted, 1-2 minutes.

Use an immersion blender or food processor to coarsely puree the soup. If it seems to thick, thin with a little water. Stir in the lime juice, and taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Serves 6.

Star Recommends: Dominio de Punctum 99 Rosas Chardonnay/Viognier: Beautifully balanced fruitful and fresh wine with elegant citric aroma with white flower notes. Organically grown Chardonnay and Viognier grapes.

Pineapple Coconut Muffins

Adapted from www.honestfare.com.

Oats and coconut stand in for wheat and dairy in these fruity, moist, and tropical muffins. Perfect for breakfast or as a snack.

- 1 1/4 c. rolled oats
- 1/2 c. plain yogurt
- 1/2 c. coconut milk (full-fat, stirred before measuring)
- 1 1/2 c. oat flour (see note)
- 1/3 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. coconut flakes
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/3 fresh pineapple, medium, roughly chopped (see note)
- 1/3 c. coconut oil
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1/2 banana, mashed

Directions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Line 12 muffin cups. In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, yogurt and coconut milk. Let stand for 10 minutes.

In a separate bowl, mix together the oat flour, brown sugar, coconut flakes, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

please drink responsibly.

Place the chopped pineapple in the bowl of a food processor and pulse to roughly puree. Measure out 1 cup, and place in a bowl with the banana, egg, and the coconut oil. Mix well. Add this pineapple-banana-egg mixture to the bowl of rolled oats, yogurt, and coconut milk, and mix well to incorporate. Fold the oat flour, coconut flake mixture into the bowl and combine.

Fill the lined muffin cups about 2/3 high. Bake 16-20 minutes, until golden brown and a toothpick inserted into one comes out clean.

Notes: For the oat flour, place 2 cups of rolled oats in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until it's the consistency of cornmeal.

To prepare a pineapple, slice off the top and bottom of the pineapple with a sharp knife. Stand the pineapple upright and slice off the skin. Use a paring knife to remove any remaining eyes. Slice the fruit away from the core, and discard the core. Makes 12 muffins.

Star Recommends: Astrolabe Pinot Gris: Pure, focused wine with a delicacy of structure, finishing crisp and dry. Stonefruit and pear flavors dominate, followed by some light citrus

Baked Beans with Pineapple and Bacon

Pineapple adds a sweet, fruity flavor to these very easy baked beans.

2 1/4 c. dried navy or Great Northern beans, soaked overnight in plenty of water

1/4 c. dark brown sugar

1/4 c. molasses

2 1/2 tsp. dry mustard

1 tsp. salt

15 oz. crushed tomatoes

1 cup crushed pineapple, from about 1/3 medium fresh pineapple (see note)

1 bunch green onions, trimmed, sliced

8 slices thick smoked bacon

Directions: Preheat oven to 325°F. Place the soaked beans and soaking liquid in a large Dutch oven or other oven-safe pot. Add the brown sugar, molasses, dry mustard, salt, tomatoes, pineapple, and half the sliced green onions. Stir to combine. Arrange the bacon in a layer on top of the beans. Cover, and bake about 5 hours, until the beans are tender, but not falling apart. Remove the lid during the last 30 minutes to crisp the bacon.

Served topped with the remaining green onions.

Note: To prepare a pineapple, slice off the top and bottom of the pineapple with a sharp knife. Stand the pineapple upright and slice off the skin. Use a paring knife to remove any remaining eyes. Slice the fruit away from the core, and discard the core. To crush, pulse the fruit in a food processor. Makes 10 servings.

Star Recommends: Capcanes Mas Collet: Medium deep red with flecks of violet; ripe cherry flavors; blueberries; smooth well integrated oaky, toasty aromas; medium-bodied; fruit-driven; fine ripe sweetness; good acidity; perfectly balanced; round ripe tannins; long ripe-fruit finish

Sweet and Sour Stuffed Yellow Peppers

Adapted from www.naturallyella.com.

Bright yellow peppers are stuffed with a wonderfully seasoned brown rice and vegetable mixture. If you'd prefer, you can substitute the rice for your favorite grain.

1 c. brown rice

2 c. water

4 tsp. cornstarch

1/2 c. vegetable broth

4 tsp. toasted sesame oil

1 c. diced pineapple

4 cloves garlic

1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

1/2 c. red wine vinegar

1/2 c. ketchup

2 Tbs. agave

1 Tbs. olive oil

3 c. shredded red cabbage

1 c. diced onion

1 c. diced green pepper

4 medium yellow peppers

Directions: Combine the rice and water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, stir, and reduce heat to low. Cook, undisturbed, for 30-40 minutes, until the water is absorbed. Remove from heat. Transfer to a large bowl.

In a small bowl, stir together the cornstarch and vegetable broth. Set aside.

In a small saucepan, heat the sesame oil over medium heat. Stir in the pineapple and garlic and cook 1-2 minutes, until the garlic is fragrant. Stir

in the crushed red pepper, red wine vinegar, ketchup, and agave, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, then stir in the cornstarch-broth mixture. Cook, stirring, until the sauce begins to thicken. Remove from heat, and pour over the cooked rice.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the red cabbage, onion, green pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender. Add the vegetables to the bowl of rice and sauce, and stir to combine.

Slice around the stems of the yellow peppers, and remove the insides. Place the hollowed-out peppers on a rimmed baking sheet. Spoon the rice-vegetable filling into each pepper to fill, then bake for 30-40 minutes, until the peppers are tender. Enjoy hot. Serves 4.

Star Recommends: Domaine du Bagnol Cassis Blanc: A blend of Marsanne, Clairette and Ugni Blanc, this dry, juicy wine tastes like white fruit and ocean spray, and it's the perfect match for these peppers.

Bistro Beet Burgers

Adapted from *Isa Chandra Moskowitz's Isa Does It*.

I like to double this recipe and keep them in the freezer. Just cook them first, and place on a baking sheet before sticking them in the freezer. When frozen, transfer to a freezer-safe bag. Voilà - convenient, homemade, delicious veggie burgers!

1 1/4 c. cooked and cooled brown rice

1 c. cooked lentils, brown or green, drained

1 c. shredded beets

1/2 c. breadcrumbs

3 Tbs. minced onion

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 Tbs. tahini (or peanut butter or almond butter)

1 tsp. dried thyme

1/2 tsp. ground fennel

1 tsp. dry mustard

1/2 tsp. salt

black pepper

olive oil

6 burger buns

Directions: Combine the brown rice, lentils, and beets in the bowl of a food processor with a metal blade. Pulse 15-20 times until incorporated but still has lots of texture. Turn the mixture into a large bowl. Add the breadcrumbs, onion, garlic, tahini, thyme, fennel, mustard, salt, and black pepper. Mix very well with a wooden spoon, or clean hands. Transfer the bowl to the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Shape the mixture into patties, using about 1/3 cup for each one.

Heat a skillet (cast iron, preferably) over medium-high heat. When hot, add some olive oil and turn the pan to coat it in oil. Cook the burgers about 12 minutes total, flipping once or twice, until the burgers are heated through and the edges are charred.

Serve hot on buns, with your favorite toppings. Makes 6 burgers.

Star Recommends; Bernard Baudry Chinon Les Granges: Bernard Baudry and his son Matthieu produce five cuvées of Chinon Rouge, the youngest and freshest of which is Les Granges. All their grapes are hand-harvested at optimum ripeness with clean, unfettered vinification (in cement and wood tanks), the key to their varietal correctness. Bright, zesty, meaty, honest.

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The group meets on the upper level of Unity Church of Madison, 601 Tompkins Drive, Madison 53716. <http://www.unity-ofmadison.org>

Drop ins are welcome.
For more information, contact Madelon at 608-385-6069 or MadelonW3@gmail.com.

Peppercorn Steak Salad with Roasted Carrots and Gold Beets

Adapted from www.simplyfreshdinners.com.

This fresh dinner salad is made with sweet, roasted carrots and beets, and spicy, peppery steak atop a bed of tender greens.

1 small onion, sliced into medium chunks
3 medium beets, trimmed and peeled, very thinly sliced
1/2 lb. carrots, trimmed, peeled, sliced
2 Tbs. olive oil
2 Tbs. maple syrup
salt
pepper
4 steaks, about 1/2 lb. each (ribeye, or filet mignon, or beef tenderloin)
3 Tbs. black peppercorns, lightly crushed with mortar and pestle
3 Tbs. butter
8 c. arugula or baby spinach
1/4 c. crumbled goat cheese
1 c. walnuts, lightly toasted
2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar

Directions: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine the onion, beets, and carrots in a large mixing bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and maple syrup, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss to coat, then transfer to a rimmed baking sheet and spread in an even layer. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Sprinkle both sides of the steaks with salt. Sprinkle the crushed peppercorns over both sides of the steaks, pressing them to stick. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the steaks, turning once. For medium, it will be 10-15 minutes, or until an instant-read thermometer reads 155°F. When they are cooked to your desired doneness, transfer to a cutting board and tent with aluminum foil. Let stand for 5 minutes, then slice into thin slices against the grain.

Divide the arugula or spinach between 4 plates. Arrange the sliced steak over the greens, then top with the roasted vegetables, crumbled goat cheese, and walnuts. Finish each salad with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. Serves 4.

Star Recommends: Dusted Valley Boomtown Merlot: In 2003, Wisconsin natives Chad Johnson and Corey Braunel left the comforts of their corporate jobs to move to Walla Walla and fulfill their dream of crafting world-class wine. Combining Washington State grapes with their rough and tumble know-how and a sizeable piece of their souls, the family created Dusted Valley and Boomtown. Good story, better wine.

Golden Beets, Beet Greens, and Pine Nuts

Adapted from www.bonappetit.com.

This pasta dish with caramelized onions and lots of garlic is a lovely way to use beets and beet greens. Use gold beets, or you'll end up with pink pasta!

4 Tbs. olive oil, divided
2 large onions, quartered lengthwise, sliced crosswise
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 bunches small golden beets (about 2 inches in diameter), greens washed and sliced into ribbons, beets peeled and sliced into wedges
12 oz. farfalle
salt
black pepper
1/3 c. grated Parmesan cheese
1/3 c. pine nuts, toasted

Directions: Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté the onions about 10 minutes, until they begin to turn golden and tender. Reduce heat to medium-low, and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for 30 more minutes, until the onions are very tender and browned. Stir in the garlic, and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the beet greens to the pan, drizzle with the last 2 tablespoons of olive oil, then cover and cook another 5 minutes, until the greens are tender.

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil, and cook the beets in it about 10 minutes, until easily pierced with a paring knife. Use a slotted spoon to remove beets and place them in a bowl.

Return the water to a boil, and cook the pasta according to package directions, until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta water, and drain. Return the pasta to the saucepan, and transfer the onions-and-greens mixture into the pot of pasta. Stir in some of the pasta cooking liquid, 1/4 cup at a time, until the mixture is somewhat creamy. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, and season with salt and pepper. Serve pasta hot, topped with the toasted pine nuts. Makes 4 servings.

Star Recommends: Farnese Fantini Montepulciano d' Abruzzo: The wine tastes soft, fruity and easy to drink. At first blush it seems somewhat simple, but after a few sips of this extremely tasty wine, you quickly come to appreciate its charms. Maraschino cherries, plums and a touch of spice stand out in this nicely balanced, medium-bodied wine. It ends dry with good length.

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Staff Picks



ERICA

Gardein Seven Grain Crispy Tenders

These are a great substitute for any new vegetarian/vegan! They don't have the "questionable" flavor some meat substitutes come with. I personally enjoy them in a tortilla with some spinach and vegan Caesar dressing!



KJERSTIN

The Seaweed Bath Co. Body Cream

Smells heavenly (especially the lavender) and though it is luxuriously thick, it isn't greasy — basically instant bliss for hands and feet. Actually, I love all Seaweed Bath Co. products.



SARA

Cedar Complexion Brush by Baudelaire

I'm a fan of dry brushing, and I use this little brush for my face. The bristles are just stiff enough to feel like they're working, yet not so rough that it feels like your face is getting shredded. Also, it's the perfect size to use as a microphone while you're singing along to your favorite song while you're getting ready for the day. Bonus!



AMANDA

Blue Hill by Hand Eclectic Earth Earrings

They make great gifts for your friends and family. Each package tells you what they have recycled to make each earring. They differ from pair to pair. Treat yourself to something beautiful. You deserve it!



Donkey Authentic Tortilla Chips

I am a huge fan of nachos, and these hold up to all the toppings. They are also good on their own or with salsa.



Pine River Port Wine Cold Pack Cheese Food

It is a great snack! Put it on crackers or dip a pretzel rod in it! (Available at East and West.)



ANNA

Frontier Chamomile Tea

The chamomile flowers look so beautiful in my cup of tea. They are fragrant and delicious and the tea is so relaxing.



DAKOTA

Rishi Hibiscus Berry Tea

Rishi's Hibiscus Berry Tea is delicious and refreshing. The tropical flavor of this tea can be very uplifting during the winter, and it's equally as good iced. Plus, it's organic and packaged in Milwaukee, WI, so you can't go wrong!



GIANOFER

Vitamin C Fruit Candies

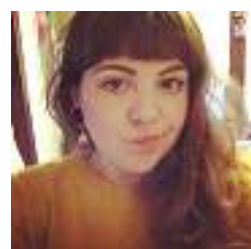
If you've given up candy and want to break that vow without feeling like a SUCKER...these yummy treats will satisfy your sweet tooth and give you a dose of Vitamin C. If some smart aleck asks "hey...you eating candy?" You can say..."BACK OFF TURKEY! I'm getting my daily dose of VITAMIN C YO!!"



ANNA

Klarbrunn, Lemon

I love an ice-cold lemon Klarbrunn before work!



ACACIA

Shoyeido Kyoto Autumn Leaves incense

Smells of sandalwood and cinnamon! Lovely fall-like smell, smoky and fragrant. Fall is my favorite season, so I love burning this all year round to remind me.



JEREMY

Willy Street Co-op Thai Turkey & Chicken Sausage

This is my favorite sausage the Meat department makes.

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ABIGAIL ANNE

Juniper Ridge Douglas Fir Spring Tips Tea

Sustainably wild-harvested in the Pacific Northwest, a cup of this tea will make you feel like you are sitting in a cabin in the woods looking out of the window to a snowy mountain



landscape. Super-cozy for the fall and winter season. Also medicinally helpful due to its naturally high vitamin C content. I like to brew two bags extra-long for a fuller flavor. Don't forget to put on a warm knitted sweater while enjoying.



KYLE

NessAlla Kombucha— Lemongrass Ginger

At first I was reluctant to try kombucha, imagining the flavor would be weird. But I gave it a chance and sampled a bit of the Lemongrass Ginger, and I was pleasantly surprised to find



I love it. It has a crisp, clean, flavor that makes me feel a little healthier when I drink it.



ANNA

GimMe Organic Seaweed Snacks

I really love these. All of the flavors are great but I'm partial to the Sesame. They are super-light and flavorful. I can eat a package of these in like four minutes, which is probably a little aggressive; but shoot, they are just too good. I can't stop.



Montchevre Fresh Truffle Log

Seriously, this cheese is so good. It's got a great flavor and who doesn't love a creamy goat cheese? It's good on crackers or with veggies, but my favorite is to pop that bad boy in a pan and cover it with homemade marinara sauce and bake it till the cheese is melting. That dish paired with a nice bread is awesome on a cold winter night.



Willy Street Co-op Pizza Dough

I really love our pizza dough. It can be a bit tricky to roll out, but man, the final result is completely worth it. It's super tasty and rises perfectly. Highly recommend!



JOSH

Just Coffee Bike Fuel

I've tried every coffee made by anyone ever. Just Coffee is consistently the best I've ever had. I drink it at home and work, exclusively. Bike Fuel is my go-to blend. It is a nice medium roast with the slightest hint of chocolate. Good for any time of day; or in my case, all day long. We are



lucky to have this company in our backyard. Quality!



KIRSTEN

Gail Ambrosius Chocolate-Covered Pretzels

Fancy enough to feel like you're eating something special, but casual enough to just snack. Goes great with a coffee porter or stout.



BRIAN

Paqui Nacho Cheese Especial Chips

These Paqui Nacho Cheese chips are extremely addictive, and they're certainly a great alternative to conventional nacho cheese chips. Gluten-free and non-GMO; I devour the entire bag



and have to force myself to not open another. Great product!



BROOKE

Alter Eco Dark Salted Burnt Caramel Organic Chocolate

This chocolate bar is ridiculously delicious, and it has the most subtle-but-rich buttery flavor. I also love this bar because it is actually considered dark chocolate, but it has the creaminess of a milk chocolate bar!



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CATERING



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JUNIPER

Annie Chun's Organic Shiitake & Vegetable Potstickers

I love making my own egg rolls at home; this is the perfect dumpling to serve alongside them!! Shiitake adds an earthy well-balanced umami flavor. They prep well and get perfectly golden brown and steamed. :) My favorite store-bought vegetable dumpling!



GABE

Ski Queen® Gjetost Cheese

Ski Queen® Gjetost cheese has a very creamy, almost peanut butter texture for a cheese. The cheese is so delectable with a mildly sweet taste and goes great with Breton crackers and a Cabernet Sauvignon for a snack with friends.



PATRICK

Tamaleria el Poblano Tamales

These tamales are amazing and so are the people who make them. Thank you, Waldo and Reyna!

Willy Street Co-op Horseradish Roast Beef Sandwich

Caramelized onions and Roth Horseradish Havarti. So good.

Willy Street Co-op Creamy Blueberry Pie

Amazing fruit pie, perfect for spring. Local blueberries from Bayfield with a touch of sour cream.



LUCY

KP Simply Fresh Living Lettuce

If you're the type of person who, like me, usually eats a salad with toppings as a way to trick yourself into eating lettuce, you need to try THIS lettuce. This lettuce makes me want to EAT LETTUCE! It's so fresh because it's still got its roots. So light and fluffy!



STEPHANIE

Ovega-3 Plant-based Omega-3

It is important that you get a good source of Omega-3 for heart and mental health. If you are vegan or vegetarian like me, finding a good source takes some trial and error. I immediately felt a difference in my cognitive function after taking Ovega-3, so I was hooked and have been taking them ever since. I recommend this product to anyone, not just for those who are vegan or vegetarian because algae is a safe way to get your "DHA & EPA without the worry of ocean-borne pollutants and toxins..."



T.N. Dickinson's Witch Hazel Daily Cleansing Pads

Great for cleaning my SUPER-sensitive face!



STEVE

Bleu Mont Dairy Big Sky Grana

Grana as a type of cheese is related to Parmesan. The curds are cut very small to the size of grains of rice—hence Grana. This is a local product made by Willi Lehner of Bleu Mont Dairy. We are one of two stores in Madison to have this cheese for a short time. The flavor in this cheese is like no other grating cheese. Honestly, Wisconsin should put up a statue to this man. Try it while we have it in stock.



DEAN

Biokleen All Purpose Cleaner

This cleaner is amazing! It cuts grease very well. It also works very well on stuck-on, baked-on messes! It has very little scent, too!



Willy Street Co-op Smoky Black Bean with Sweet Potato Salad

This is my favorite salad we sell. With each bite, you get an explosion of flavors in your mouth! Sweet, savory, cool and spicy, all at the same time!

willy street co-op Bag Credit Program Changing



As of April 3rd, the Co-op's bag credits will be invested in our Double Dollars Fund rather than given to customers:

- For each reusable cloth or fabric bag, the Co-op will donate 10 cents
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The Double Dollars Fund will help keep Double Dollars distributed at farmers markets and the Co-op. We are compiling a list of participating farmers markets and will offer this resource as soon as we are able.

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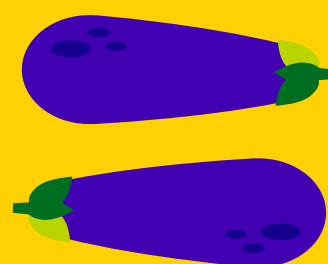
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