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ISSUE #355

OCTOBER 2009

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Squashing Hunger in Our Neighborhoods

by Lorrie Graham

Last summer I noticed a box of produce in the Co-op, just past the stack of shopping baskets as you enter the store. At the time I didn't give it much thought, or if I did, probably assumed it was someone's groceries. This summer, there it was again, a box filled with zucchini and other fresh vegetables, but this time I noticed a sign that said "Squash Hunger." So I did what comes naturally in 2009, I "Googled" *Squash Hunger Albany NY*. The Squash Hunger Program, I learned, which is part of Capital District Community Gardens, collects fresh produce and takes it to local food pantries, homeless shelters and soup kitchens for distribution to those in need. This program runs, essen-

tially, for the growing season—mid-June through the end of October.

Honest Weight supports the local community in myriad ways, one of which is by making space avail-

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NEWS at a glance



by Nancy Ellegate

The HWFC Board of Directors met on Tuesday, September 1.

Donation

It was noted that if we want to make a donation to the 501(c)3 (non-profit) organization the Co-op is currently setting up, we will need to do so by the end of the

continued on page 3

Behind the Co-op

Board of Directors

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 Vice-President: Greg Pedrick
 Treasurer: Kyle Lawrence
 Secretary: Lorrie Graham

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Communication	Kyle Lawrence
Facilities	Jim Monsonis
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Finance	Kyle Lawrence
	518-522-1201
Governance Review Council	Bruce Huttner
bhuttner@dsvallaw.com	518-458-8922
Membership	Lenore Gensburg, Karen Roth
Personnel	Lorrie Graham
Collective Management Team representative	
Cindee Lolik	cindee@honestweight.coop

Governance Review Council

Stu Horn, chair stuhorn@gmail.com

Collective Management Team

(518-482-3312 + extension)

Operations and administrative coordinator: Cindee Lolik	(x116)
Member coordinator: Nate Horwitz	(x104)
Outreach coordinator: Jessica Allen Hayek	(x120)
Education coordinator: Karisa Centanni	(x113)
Marketing/merchandising coordinator: Jennifer Grainer	(x106)
Finance manager: Alfred Bouchard	(x107)
IT coordinator: Lexa Juhre	(x101)
Front end manager: Katie Centanni	(x109)
Grocery managers: Nancy Reich	(x119)
Produce manager: Nick Bauer	(x102)
Bulk manager: Bob Linn	(x130)
Cheese manager: Gustav Ericson	(x118)
Wellness manager: Kathleen Boehning	(x122)
Food service manager: Nicole Bailey	(x108)

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Prices for camera-ready ads are: \$25 for our smallest 1-column size; \$50 for ¼-page; \$90 for ½-page; \$130 for a full page — with several other sizes and prices in between.

One free ad is provided with ads prepaid for a year. Ready-to-print artwork must be submitted by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

For more information about Coop Scoop advertising, contact Nate Horwitz at nate@honestweight.coop, or (518) 482-3312 ext.104.



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The **Honest Weight Food Co-op (HWFC)** is an organization owned and operated by its members. Its main purposes are to supply high quality natural foods at low cost to both members and non-members, and to bring people together through cooperative action.

Active HWFC members work three hours per month and receive a discount off ticketed prices. Please see the Customer Service Desk for more information about becoming a member.

Honest Weight is currently located at 484 Central Avenue in Albany, New York, a half-block west of Partridge Street.

How to contact the Co-op... Postal mail – Honest Weight Food Co-op, 484 Central Ave., Albany NY 12206 • Phone – 518-482-2667 (482-COOP) • Email – coop@honestweight.coop
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year. Board and staff members will look into the specifics.

Membership

Plans are being made for the annual Member Dinner in November, and work on the membership manual is continuing.

Store News

The new point-of-sale system has been installed and is still being tweaked. Staff are working to improve climate control in the Wellness and Bulk departments. A new cash register will be installed shortly and a new security camera has been ordered.

There will be tabling in the store throughout September to present the loan and building blocks programs for the new store and to discuss Co-op membership with interested shoppers.

Meeting with Committee

A Board member reported on his meeting with the Nutrition and Education committee. Right now,

the committee is charged with finishing the Food and Product Manual and is also contributing some *Scoop* articles. The committee brought up several concerns at the meeting and there will be follow up as needed. Board member Karen Roth has agreed to become the Board liaison to the committee.

Finance

The Finance committee reported that sales and cash flow are good.

Meeting Plans

A Board retreat was planned for mid-September, and plans for the October Membership Meeting were discussed.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings are available at the Co-op. Minutes of the most recent meeting are posted on the bulletin board. They are also available on the Co-op's website, as password protected files.

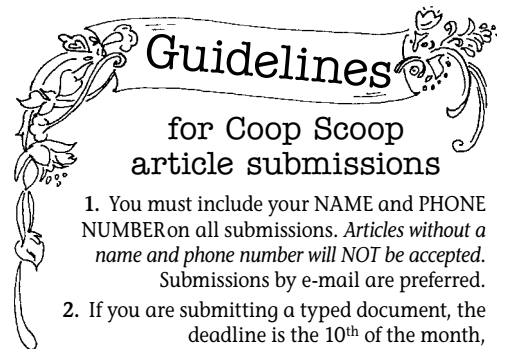
See instructions on the website (www.honestweight.coop)

on obtaining a password. (Go to "About," then to "Board of Directors" and then to "Board Meetings.")

Upcoming Board Meetings

Currently, Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:45 pm in the Co-op's Community Room. However, dates change on occasion so anyone planning to attend a meeting should confirm date, time, and location.

Note: News at a Glance is a summary of the meetings of the HWFC Board of Directors.



Guidelines for Coop Scoop article submissions

1. You must include your NAME and PHONE NUMBER on all submissions. *Articles without a name and phone number will NOT be accepted.* Submissions by e-mail are preferred.
2. If you are submitting a typed document, the deadline is the 10th of the month, at store closing time.
3. Handwritten copy is NOT accepted without prior approval.
- 4. If you are submitting on computer disk, the deadline is the 10th of the month at store closing time. We can accept Windows/DOS diskettes, or Mac disks if they are HD 1.4MB format. (Note that older Macs cannot produce this format.) HARD COPY MUST BE SUBMITTED with your disk! Please call the Editor for further details about how to type and save your text.
5. Please e-mail your article to *both* fordtrupin@verizon.net and trupinjet@gmail.com. All articles are printed at the discretion of the Editor and Editorial Board. It is a policy of the *Coop Scoop* only to print articles that have been signed. Work credit for articles is only available if pre-approved by the *Scoop* Editor.

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able for a Squash Hunger collection box. This program makes it easier for individuals to donate to their local food pantry because it eliminates the need to make a special trip during the pantry's hours of operation.

I know that the Focus Food Pantry on State Street in downtown Albany only takes donations for a few hours during the middle of the day. With Squash Hunger, the volunteers pick-up the donated fruits and vegetables from 11 collection points located in Albany, Delmar, Guilderland, Latham, Schenectady, West Sand Lake, Rensselaer and Troy. Then the volunteers take the food to pantry locations in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Troy West Sand Lake, Altamont and Cohoes the same day or the next morning.

By the way, the Co-op collection box fills so quickly that it needs to be picked up three times a week, compared to once a week at other locations!

Many of the collection sites are CSA (community supported agriculture) pick-up locations, where the CSA members may donate some of their weekly share or others in the area may make contributions. If you check out the website, www.cdcg.org/SquashHunger.html, or call the Capital District Community Gardens office, 518-274-8685, you can get a complete listing of drop off locations.

Since its inception in 2004, over 50,000 pounds of produce have been donated by the community to the Squash Hunger Program, allowing those who depend upon food pantries to eat fresh fruits and vegetables during the growing season. While talking to Audrey, who coordinates the Squash Hunger program, she told me that food pantries have only non-perishable food-stuffs to give out to their clients. While canned and boxed foods are better than having nothing to eat, the staff and clients of the pantries gladly welcome fresh foods that are in season.

Audrey said that in late summer/early fall there are plenty of zucchini being donated (please, no baseball bat size squash), and others years they have gotten lots of tomatoes. However, don't forget the other things we can all grow or donate: cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, kale, onions, garlic, herbs and fresh beans. All are greatly appreciated.

Want to help? The Capital District Community Gardens can always use more hands for collection and distribution, gardeners who are willing to put in an extra row or two earmarked for Squash Hunger or whose gardens produce more than they can use, and those who purchase extra produce to donate.

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“...The most important allies for small farmer tea are food co-ops, natural food stores, and churches. The support of these groups will be vital in building the market and educating consumers, and in helping make small farmer Fair Trade tea a success.” – *Equal Exchange*



We’ve had our choice of various fairly traded coffees for years now, and more recently, a range of chocolates have become available. But Fair Trade tea is still a new commodity, and the issues associated with it are somewhat different from coffee.

Historically a plantation crop, much of the tea now sold as Fair Trade still comes from large plantations, rather than farmer-run cooperatives. According to Equal Exchange, a worker-owned Fair Trade cooperative, less than 5% of Fair Trade Certified tea is actually grown by small farmers. I’ve described some of the questions involved for the tea market when Fair Trade certification is extended to huge tea plantations in “Weighing the Fair Trade Scales,” (*Coop Scoop*, May 2009).

Fair Trade is about ensuring fair prices for farmers, and good environmental and worker labor conditions. But it is also about forging relationships and creating a context in which farmers can succeed, educate their children, and contribute to the improvement of their communities. This is why programs like *Well Earth*—Frontier Natural Products Co-op’s effort to develop partnerships with small farmers worldwide—

are so essential (see “New Frontiers for Buying Well and Being Well,” *Coop Scoop* July/August 2009).

In their article, “The Fair Trade Future,” Laura Reynolds and Douglas Murray of the Center for Fair and Alternative Trade Studies argue that “Fair Trade can be an effective strategy for supporting disadvantaged workers, but to go beyond other labor initiatives it must promote worker ownership so that trade can be used as a vehicle for empowerment” (www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/innovations/data/000031).

Empowerment is the key word here. The people who grow our coffee, tea, chocolate and bananas are some of the world’s most poorly paid. They have the least access to education, basic services, and political power.

For example, the small scale rooibos farmers of the Wupperthal and Heiveld cooperatives are the descendants of the native South Africans who were expelled from their land by white-owned plantations during the colonial period. They are now subsistence farmers, whose livelihoods are threatened by the increasing effects of climate change. For those farmers, and

others like them in India, such as the Sahyadri Farmers Consortium and the Sanjuktas Vikas Cooperative, and the Sri Lankan Small Organic Farmers Association, the opportunities provided by organizing and partnering with other cooperatives have been extremely hard won.

Equal Exchange has also worked hard at cultivating these partnerships, and brings us the fruits of this labor in their line of small farmer teas. They do business with all the small farmer cooperatives mentioned above, to provide a line of teas that are "100% small farmer leaf." This has been a ten year process, as they worked, at first, simply to identify small farmer teas that met their quality standards, were grown organically, and met Fair Trade requirements.

Then came the process of increasing the actual percentages of the small farmer tea leaf in each line. As of 2008, Equal Exchange was able to offer their line of large leaf teas in biodegradable pyramid bags in five varieties, all sourced entirely from small farmers (<http://smallfarmersbigchange.coop>).

People often cite the cost of Fair Trade products as a barrier to purchase. But considering the work that

has gone into getting these teas onto store shelves, and the immensely positive impact their sales have for the farmers, it is a relatively small price to pay. And in doing so, we can play an important role. As Equal Exchange's mission statement asserts:

"Activist consumers function as movement ambassadors, thinking, questioning, and challenging the status quo. They teach new economic models.... To strengthen communities and reduce poverty they support grassroots development by extending opportunities to small business owners and small scale producers worldwide."

(www.equalexchange.coop)

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What I Choose to Buy at the Co-op

A series of monthly articles by members of our Nutrition & Education committee

...and Why

Nutritional Supplements for Children

by Andy Lee

Nutritional supplements, including “vitamins, minerals, herbs or other botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes, organ tissues, glandulars, and metabolites”¹ are an unregulated member of the drug family. Deciding whether to give them to your children is a significant decision, as children are vulnerable to overdose, and many are unable to make informed choices.

Although rare, hypervitaminosis can cause harm. The dangers of overdose are selective (but not exclusive) to the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, as well as the minerals iron, chromium, zinc and selenium. Anything is toxic in high enough levels, but these nutrients are stored in the body, their build up can more quickly cause toxicity. Although the risk of a child dying because of a vitamin or mineral overdose is tiny, the chances of a negative reaction or interaction are quite a bit more common.²

Nutritional supplements are medically recommended for children with eating disorders, metabolic diseases affecting food absorption, at risk from environmental factors, or for whom a physician has recommended specific supplements.

According to the *WebMD* reference on malnutrition, “Fewer than 1% of all children in the United States have chronic malnutrition. Incidence of malnutrition is less than 10%, even in the highest risk group (children in shelters for the homeless).” The first step, then, is deciding whether your child(ren) require supplementation.

A healthy, well-fed child’s body does not require supplementation. In the U.S., poor eating and incomplete diet are reasons physicians recommend a multivitamin/mineral (MVM), reconciling diet and biological requirements.³ Supplements also play a role in critical recovery, such as from viruses.

Many pediatricians today recommend an A-D-E vitamin for patients as young as 4-8 weeks old,⁴ stating that vitamin D is not sufficiently present in breast milk to provide for the needs of exclusively breast fed infants.

But full-term breast-fed infants rarely have rickets, signifying that the low doses of Vitamin D in breast milk may be sufficient for infants.⁵ Oils, herbs, water soluble vitamins, and the supplementation of amino acids and non-metal minerals are all best decided upon with the input of a medical professional.

Finding balance between supplements, prescription medications and diet is tricky. Consulting a professional is the best route. Supplements can contain unreliable ingredients, and processing is not controlled or monitored.⁶ Additionally, claims may be made as to their efficacy that are unsubstantiated.⁷

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Staples in Bulk

by Lisa Vines

Although there are plenty of delightfully exotic items available in the Bulk section of the Co-op (organic dark chocolate almonds, organic tamari almonds, raspberry yogurt pretzels, organic conadria figs...), everyday mundane staples are also available there. Baking powder, baking soda, and corn starch, for example, can be found in the bulk bins. Powdered dried buttermilk as well as dried egg whites are there, also. Some staples exist in a number of varieties. There are two kinds of vanilla extract. Various vinegars are in the refrigerated section; there are several forms of salt.

The following lists are intended to inspire Co-op shoppers to explore some of the staple possibilities. Remember to bring containers from home and have them weighed at the service desk; one advantage to shopping in Bulk is the reduction of excess packaging. Another advantage is the freedom to buy as much or as little as desired. And don't forget to take note of the PLU.

Just some of the variations:

- **Rice:** organic white rice Basmati, wild rice, long grain rice
- **Oats:** organic and conventional rolled oats in a variety of thicknesses; organic oat bran; organic steel cut oats
- **Beans and peas:** pinto, dried fava, organic black eyed peas, black turtle, yellow split peas
- **Pasta:** organic whole wheat spinach spaghetti, organic whole wheat rotini
- **Sweeteners, solid and liquid:** organic fair trade sugar, agave syrup, maple syrup in two grades, maple sugar, date sugar, xylitol, molasses, sucanat
- **Oils:** canola, olive, sunflower
- **Flour, wheat as well as gluten-free:** organic white flour, rice flour, organic quinoa flour, organic sweet brown rice flour, King Arthur flour, gluten-free baking flour...

And, if you didn't bring enough bags or containers from home for all the useful staples you find.... Bags (paper and plastic) and jars are for sale, also.

In the spirit of looking at basics, I've included a few recipes for some basic items. (Recipes from J. S. Collester,

Old Fashioned Muffin Recipes [Nashville, Ind.: Bear Wallow Books, 1993]).

A number of *Coop Scoop* articles delve into greater detail about these staples. See:

O'Brien, Jennifer E. "Beans," *Coop Scoop* (April 2006).

Seitz, Kurt. "Agave Nectar," *Coop Scoop* (March 2009).

Vines, Lisa. "Beans, Seeds, and Nuts," *Coop Scoop* (February 2008).

– "Sweeteners in Bulk," *Coop Scoop* (May 2007).

– "Oatmeal...", *Coop Scoop* (January 2007).

– "Organic Sprouted Wheat Flour," *Coop Scoop* (July 2009).

– "Wheat Flours," *Coop Scoop* (April 2007).

– "Wild Rice," *Coop Scoop* (November 2006).

Wiedermann, Kristi. "A Closer Look at Sugars," *Coop Scoop* (April 2004).



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Buttermilk Muffins

(all but the last two items are available in Bulk)

- 4 cups flour
- ¼ cup cornmeal
- 1 TBS salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 TBS sugar (sucanat)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3 cups buttermilk

Combine the first four ingredients in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Stir the wet into the dry ingredients until moistened and lumpy. Spoon into greased muffin cups two-thirds full. Bake in 400° oven, 20–25 minutes.

Whole Wheat Biscuits

(all but the last three items are available in Bulk)

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 TBS baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp sugar
- ⅓ cup butter, cold
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup milk

Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Cut butter into mixture with two knives or pastry blender till coarse and crumbly. (Or just pop it into a food processor and give it a few jolts.) Combine beaten egg and milk and stir into dry mixture. Drop by spoonful onto greased baking sheet. Bake at 450°, 12–15 minutes.



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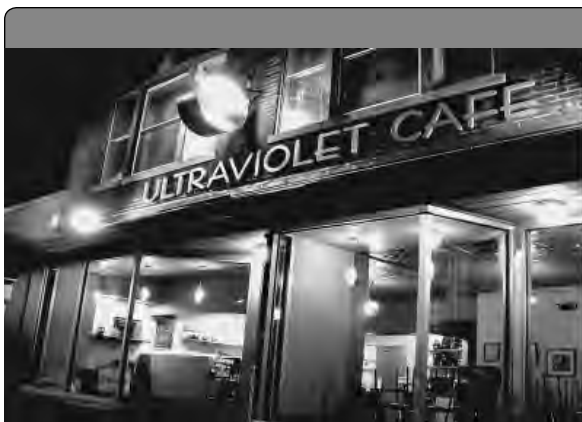
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Whitney Farms

Whitney Farms in Avon, about 20 minutes south of Rochester, is a small family farm that provides pork products to Honest Weight.

Judy and Dave Whitney ran a conventional dairy on their 365-acre farm before converting to organic methods for producing beef and pork. They received their organic certification from NOFA in August of 2006, and now their products are sold at farmers' markets, Syracuse Real Foods, and Abundance Co-op and Palermo's Meat Market in Rochester, as well as at Honest Weight.

Cheng Hua-Lee, the official meat purchaser for Honest Weight since July, explained that we purchase pork from such a distance because Whitney Farms is able to supply us with their high quality, organic products consistently throughout the year in sufficient quantities. She pointed out that raising organic beef is easier for farmers because beef can grow to market size on grass, while pigs require grain, which adds a significant amount of labor to the farmer's workload.

The pigs at Whitney Farms eat organically grown corn and soy while roaming freely in pas-

tures. Dave grows organic corn, oats, and wheat, and the pigs receive homegrown grain in their feed for about nine months of the year, supplemented by purchased organic grain for the remainder of the time.

When there is snow on the ground, they are housed in large yards inside a converted dairy barn with access to the outside all the time, as required for organic certification. In winter they are fed outside, and seem to be comfortable going out to eat and move around in the cold. The only time the pigs are ever confined is when they are very young and when a sow is waiting to farrow, or give birth.

The life span of a pig being grown for market is about seven months. They spend eight to ten weeks with their mother, after which they go to live as a group in a pen with outside access.

When they reach 100 lbs., they are big enough to be out in the pasture until they reach their full size of about 260 lbs. Dave transports about a dozen animals every month 2½ hours to a certified organic butcher, Leona Meat Plant in Troy, Pa.

They are kept overnight in a pen in the same group to make sure that they are not stressed at butchering time. To comply with organic regulations, only organic animals can be processed and in the smoke house together at the same time.

At the butcher, pork is turned into chops, steaks, roasts and spare ribs. Some of it is processed using only organic ingredients into hot and mild Italian sausage, smoked and unsmoked kielbasa and andouille sausage, breakfast sausage, hot dogs, and smoked bacon.

Dave explained that the hams and ham steaks are about 80% cooked by the smoking process and need to be cooked some more before serving. After butchering and smoking, the meat is frozen and Dave picks it up, takes it home, and distributes it to his customers.

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Honest Weight buys about 200 lbs. of pork from the Whitneys every month, which amounts to about \$1,000 worth of meat, with some fluctuation.

In order to better advise you, I tried out some of their ham steaks, which are steak-sized cuts from a smoked ham. It was delicious, and my family did not leave any leftovers for sandwiches. Dave recommended the hot dogs, which he said are exceptional, but unfortunately they were absent from the freezer when I went to look for them.

If you eat pork, Whitney Farms provides you with a more healthful, humane, and environmentally friendly option. For more information on Whitney Farms, check out their website at www.whitneyfarmsny.com.

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Don't Throw That Out!

Few things are quite as painful to the busy yet ecological and budget-minded as having to toss out food that came into the house full of tantalizing promise and yet somehow didn't get finished before it lost its perfection.

But in more cases than you might realize, that food may still be useable. Here's a quick run down of sneaky tricks to breathe a second life into that stuff at the back of shelf or the bottom of the crisper drawer.

- **Fermented cider.** The bottle is puffed out at the sides and you just know when you open the lid that you'll hear that telltale little hiss. Though hard cider has its devotees, making a batch worth drinking takes more controlled circumstances than the back of your fridge. But all is not lost. Substitute fermented cider for the water in a bread recipe (works great in bread machines) and watch the extra rise you get (especially great in usually dense whole-grain loaves). Substitute it for some of the cooking liquid for grains for a subtle sweet flavor, or use it in place of the dash

of cider vinegar at the end of soups.

- **Sour milk.** There many recipes out there that tell you to purposefully sour your milk before adding it, which should be a tip-off that sour milk can be a baker's friend. Biscuits, pancakes, and even homemade cottage cheese can be made using recently soured milk, as long as it isn't rancid, moldy, or solidified. Check out this *Cooks.com* page for a long list of recipes (www.cooks.com/rec/story/121).

- **Stale baked goods.** Stale bread crusts or heels can be tossed into a sealed container in the freezer until you have enough to puree for bread crumbs or use for bread pudding. Stale tortilla chips can be toasted in the oven to regain their crispiness and used for casserole toppings (crushed), croutons, or the Portugese/Tex-Mex dish migas, which is basically scrambled eggs with day-old bread, tortilla, or tortilla chips mixed in (www.recipezaar.com/Migas-109514). Stale cereal (or just the crumbs at the bottom of the bag, stale or not) can be used for breading.

On the sweet end, if you ever end up with stale cake (is that possible?) it can be made into a crumble topping for ice cream, or used as the based of a trifle. It may be counter-intuitive, but toasting a piece of slightly stale

banana or zucchini bread or a fruit muffin and spreading with butter revives it quite nicely.

- **Overripe bananas.** Puree with silken tofu, vanilla, and a little sweetener to taste for a banana cream treat, or with juice and/or milk/soy milk for a smoothie. You can also freeze them whole (they'll turn black on the outside, but this is OK) until you have enough to make banana bread (or a batch of banana cream big enough for a pie).

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- **Rock 'o brown sugar.** If your brown sugar has gotten to the chiseling stage, put it in a tightly sealed container with a crust of bread. In a few days the bread will be stale and your sugar as good as new.
- **Wilted veggies.** Vegetables that are wilted but not moldy might not be attractive or quite as nutritious as they once were, but they are still food. Deal with less than exciting texture with pureed soups, or spice up past-prime flavors with curries. Having a few "toss everything in the fridge in here" standard recipes can also help you clear out a motley assortment or produce just pre-wilt. Every culture has a few

of these dishes, whether it's a burrito/quesadilla filling, a rice casserole, or a quiche/tortilla (add stray bits of cheese and meat and well as mixed veggies).

- **Special cases.** Love Food Hate Waste has collected an entire list of what they call "rescue recipes" (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes/list?group=1) that work well with food past its prime, and you can search it by the food you've got in mind. (Lemons? Microwave lemon curd. Salsa? A lazy flavoring for a spicy rice casserole.) It's a United Kingdom site, but each recipe can be viewed in "imperial units" for us metric-system challenged cooks.

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This is a great opportunity for members of the Co-op community to use their creativity and help make this year's Membership Dinner a success. Please send descriptions and photographs of items you would like to donate to *deena.salzman@gmail.com*.

Please bear in mind that the Co-op is *not* a not-for-profit business; donations to the auction are not tax deductible.



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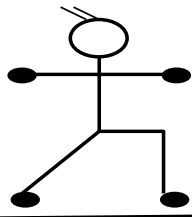
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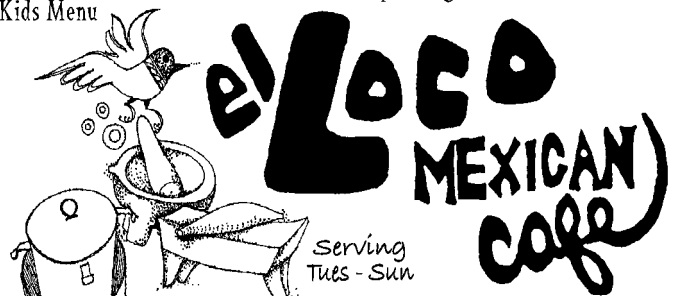
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According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency more than 25% of the food Americans prepare ends up in the garbage. That is 27 million pounds of food scraps just wasted each year. A huge portion of it goes down the drain, through garbage disposal systems built into kitchen sinks. An average family uses about 700 gallons of water per year to flush food waste through their disposals.

Besides the incredible waste of our precious water resource, when you use a garbage disposal you are increasing your water bill and your electric bill. Food going into the water stream also puts a huge demand on already overburdened municipal sewage systems. This leads to increase maintenance and repairs and eventually to higher taxes. When sewer systems overflow (and they do at the rate of 40,000 times per year), they release raw sewage that contain high levels of nitrogen, chemical contaminants, and microbial pathogens into local waterways endangering all of us and our environments.

Any home plumbing systems can easily be overburdened with waste from garbage disposals. This leads to messy and sometimes expensive repairs. Homes with their own septic system that use a garbage disposal are stuck with emptying their septic systems twice as often and have many more failures and repairs of their systems. The Environmental Protection Agency notes that at least 10% of these systems back up their waste into the ground or even into homes. Failing septic systems are the third most common cause of ground water contamination.

Another thing to think about is the energy and raw materials it takes to manufacture a disposal and then, when it breaks down, we have another piece of useless junk sitting for hundreds of years in our overflowing land-

Down the Drain

by Paul Tick

fills and poisoning the earth.

Dumping food into the garbage can is not a useful alternative given that it just ends up in the landfill. The proper method of disposal is composting. Composting your non-animal-based food waste not only reduces the amount of material headed for the sewer or the landfill but also provides excellent fertilizer for your garden or flowerbeds. Composting is easier than you think and there are numerous articles and guides to help you get started if you have not already done so. As for your garbage disposer; you can simply not use it anymore or remove it if you have the most basic electric and plumbing skills (or find a friend to do it for you).

And, speaking of stuff going down the drain, what are you doing with your leftover prescription meds? According to the Sierra Club, you should dispose of unused medications in your trash can rather than flushing them down the toilet or sink. Sewage-treatment plants can't remove all chemicals. When pharmaceuticals go in they eventually find their

way into our waterways and cause extensive damage to marine life. Male fish are found to be becoming female because of drug contaminants in waterways and researchers even found characteristics of both sexes in some individual fish.

Always keep in mind that there is plenty for each of us to do to make our life more sustainable. While doing your share, it is at least just as important to join with others to demand corporate responsibility so join your national and local environmental organizations and get active now.

References

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pomegranate power

Pomegranate, sometimes referred to as “the jewel of winter,” has been highly prized from ancient times by Middle Easterners, Romans, Chinese and Spaniards. Warriors chewed the seeds before battle believing it would make them invincible. Pomegranates were also placed in burial chambers. In Jewish customs, pomegranate is believed to contain 613 seeds to symbolize the 613 commandments in the Torah. Pomegranate was introduced to the New World when the conquistadors brought them to California.

One of the earliest cultivated fruit, pomegranate became a symbol of fertility and health. Roughly the size of an apple, the leathery skin is packed with seeds that are each encapsulated in a ruby juice sac, the appearance of which resembles tiny jewels. Although flavorful, pomegranate is challenging to eat; the taste of the refreshing, sweet juice may not be worth all the accompanying hard seeds which must be discarded.

So why has pomegranate gained popularity in the modern world? The juice is loaded with antioxidants. It has three times the antioxidants as green tea and red wine, which means it can be highly effective in fighting free radicals. In addition, it is a source of vitamin C, potassium, niacin, folic acid, iron and fiber. Studies have shown that pomegranate juice combats hardening of the arteries, heart disease and strokes. Further studies reveal that blood flow to the heart is increased by drinking pomegranate juice every day.

Other findings show that pomegranate may:

- Help to lower bad cholesterol.

- Help to lower blood pressure.
- Help to fight breast cancer.
- Prevent the return of prostate cancer.
- Alleviate osteoarthritis.
- Reduce the risk of illness, such as arterial wall, cartilage and joint damage.



Painting by Ilse Kleyn

- Be of help with pregnancy and menopause.
- Help support the body's natural defenses against Alzheimer's disease.
- Calm diarrhea.
- Reduce the signs of skin aging.

The Co-op carries a number of products containing pure pomegranate or in combination with other herbs. They are:

Solaray Pomegranate Capsules
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Nature's Plus Extended Release Pomegranate Tablets

Yogi Tea, Green Tea Pomegranate

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Nature's Gate Velvet Moisturizer Liquid Soap and Body Wash—2 products combining pomegranate and sunflower

Obsessively Pure Exfoliating Scrub, Cleansing Wash and Hydrating Lotion—3 products combining pomegranate and fig

As with grapefruit, pomegranate can interfere with certain medications, so caution is advised.