

# Newsletter

Newsletter

Open 7 Days A Week, 8 am—7 pm  
One Washington Street  
Middlebury, VT  
(802) 388-7276

December  
2008

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



## Cashew Cardamom Balls

*Cashew Cardamom Balls have an oriental ambience. Sophisticated, sweet, and sinfully rich-tasting, they qualify easily as gourmet fare; but they are so easy to make that you can turn them out for lunch box treats.*

- 1 cup lightly toasted cashew pieces
- Cardamom seeds from 2 to 4 pods
- 1 cup finely chopped dates
- Finely grated peel of one orange
- 1/2 cup dried coconut, toasted and powdered in a blender

Chop cashews rather fine ( the blender chops them *too* fine). Remove cardamom from pods and grind with a mortar and pestle or between two spoons. Combine cashews and cardamom in a bowl with dates and orange peel. Knead mixture with fingertips until uniform, then roll into 1-inch balls and coat them with coconut. Makes about 18.

**Source:** *Laurel's Kitchen*, by Laurel Robertson, 1976

*How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon.  
December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time  
has flown. How did it get so late so soon?*

Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

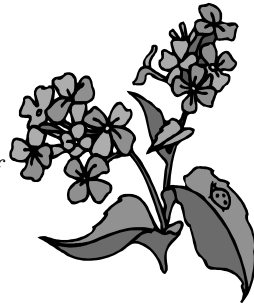
## **MNFC Newsletter**

A Monthly Publication of the  
Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative

Editor - Reiner Winkler

Printed at *The Little Pressroom*, Middlebury, Vermont.

*The purpose of the MNFC Newsletter is to provide a means of communication between the Co-op and its general membership. Its aim is to provide a forum, which promotes an awareness of social, health, political, economic, technological, and environmental issues as they relate to food and other products sold by the Co-op. In addition, the Newsletter provides a medium to introduce the Co-op and its products and services to the general public. The format is intended for educational debate and discussion. Your letters of opinion and article submissions are welcome and encouraged. The views expressed in the MNFC Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs on the Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative as a whole.*



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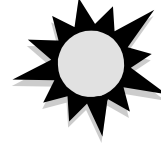
### **Middlebury Co-op Ends:**

*MNFC member owners, customers,  
and the community benefit from:*

- ◆ **Healthy Foods**
- ◆ **Vibrant Local Economy**
- ◆ **Environmentally Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Practices**
- ◆ **Cooperative Democratic Ownership**

## Sunshine Food

*Dear Mr. President-Elect,  
It may surprise you to learn that among the issues that  
will occupy much of your time in the coming years is  
one you barely mentioned during the campaign: food.*



This is how Michael Pollan starts out his essay *Farmer in Chief*, published in a recent New York Times Magazine (10/12/08). Mr. Pollan explains that three major issues that Barack Obama based his campaign on — energy and environment, health care, and national security — are all related to our system of food production.

Our current system uses more fossil fuel than any other sector of the economy (19%) and contributes more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere than anything else we do (37%). We require 10 calories of fossil fuel to produce a single calorie of modern supermarket food (in 1940, 2.3 calories produced 1 calorie of food). In Pollan's words, "we are eating oil and spewing greenhouse gases." In order to deal with the problems of climate change and America's oil addiction, we must develop a process based on making food energy "from sunshine", Pollan urges.

In 1960, 5% of the national income was spent on health care and 16% on food. Today, Americans spend less than 10% on food but 16% of our income goes to health care. Health care costs are high, in part because of our poor diet. Four of the top 10 killers are chronic diseases linked to diet: heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Pollan believes that "you cannot reform the health care system, much less expand coverage, without confronting the public health catastrophe that is the modern American diet."

A third issue concerns the safety of food. Recent food scandals in China demonstrate how little control we have over imported foods. Then there is the threat of deliberately contaminated food!

Our industrial food and agriculture policies are designed to maximize production at all costs, on cheap energy. They have proven destructive and no longer workable. Pollan expresses hope that the crises in food and energy can become catalysts for real reform of the food system. Americans are paying more attention to food today than they have in decades, worrying not only about its price but about its safety, healthfulness, and provenance.

"We need to wean the American food system off its heavy 20th century diet of fossil fuel and put it back on a diet of contemporary sunshine," says Pollan in the introduction to his article, then continues to explain in detail how we got here and how we can rebuild America's food culture. Much attention is spent on the need of supporting *local* food production... something we wholeheartedly support at Middlebury Co-op!

*Reiner*

## PRODUCER OF THE MONTH



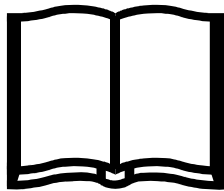
### Vermont Butter & Cheese Company

by Allison Hooper

Room and board. That's all Allison Hooper was looking for when, as an American college student in France in the late 1970s, she began writing letters to organic farmers, asking if they could use a little help. Never mind that she had no farm experience. She'd work hard and learn quickly — that was her offer. A family in Brittany answered her letter, inviting her to join them on their farm and at their table. Allison was soon enjoying not only the satisfaction of working the land, but a full-fledged education in the European tradition of artisanal cheesemaking.

On a path through the gentle French countryside, Allison had found her calling. That path was about to cross with another. Bob Reese was in a bind. As marketing director of the *Vermont Department of Agriculture* in the early 1980s, he was organizing a special state dinner. The details were coming together, save one. The French chef needed goat cheese — scarce in Vermont at the time. Bob knew just the person to call, a state dairy lab technician who had spent some time in France: Allison Hooper. She could make *chèvre*, couldn't she? Indeed she could. And indeed she did. Allison's *chèvre* was the buzz of the banquet. By the time the tables were cleared, she and Bob were planning a cheesemaking partnership.

Launched in 1984, the *Vermont Butter & Cheese Company* still follows the path Bob and Allison took years ago — crafting artisanal dairy products in the European style through a vital link with local farms. Based in the town of Websterville, the company supports a network of more than 20 family farms, providing milk meeting the highest standards of purity. While *Vermont Butter & Cheese* has earned worldwide recognition, the company is proudest of its contribution to the health of local agriculture. After all, as Allison learned on a family farm in France, quality originates at the source — with the people who work the land and the pride they take in the yield.



### Andrea Chesman

Local Author

I write cookbooks. I also edit them, index them, and Americanize foreign cookbooks. I am forever grateful that I have found work that I enjoy.

## PRODUCER OF THE MONTH

My most recent book is *The New Vegetarian Grill*, which is an updated and expanded version of an earlier book about vegetarian grilling. I've also written about cooking with the seasons (*Serving Up the Harvest*, *The Classic Zucchini Cookbook*), roasting vegetables (*The Roasted Vegetable*), healthy eating (*366 Delicious Ways to Cook Rice, Beans and Grains*), and preserving (*Summer in a Jar, Pickles and Relishes*). Then there is also *Mom's Best Desserts*, *Mom's Best One-Dish Suppers*, and *Mom's Best Crowd-Pleasers*. Right now I am working on a book on winter vegetables, so you can often find me in the Produce section, eyeing the rutabagas and fingering the turnips.

These days I am also having a lot of fun writing for *Edible Green Mountains*, which is available free (and found in a stand behind the flowers as you walk out the door). This fall I wrote about cider doughnuts and last summer I wrote about poutine. My work has appeared in *Cooking Light*, *Vegetarian Times*, *Organic Gardening*, *Fine Cooking*, *Food & Wine*, *The New York Times*, *Natural Health*, and several other magazines and newspapers. I was a contributing editor for *Vermont Life* for twelve years.

I live in an old farmhouse in Ripton, where the poet Robert Frost boarded. I am married to Richard Ruane, a terrific musician and recipe tester. Our kids Rory and Sam are also great cooks and recipe testers.



## Vermont Soap Organics

Vermont Soap Organics was founded in 1992 to make yummy *organic stuff that foams* to replace *yucky* petrochemical based foaming agents. We developed the first USDA Certified Organic shower gel, nontoxic cleaning concentrate (*Liquid Sunshine*), spray cleaner, yoga mat wash, fruit and vegetable cleaner, pet shampoo, horse shampoo and foaming hand soap. We manufacture organic bar soaps, liquid soaps, GEL soaps, spray soaps, specialty cleaners and lubricants. We also import long shelf life shea butter from West Africa, which we sell to other companies and for use in our own products. We also buy wooden soap dishes from local producers, and carry a fairly traded incense. With 27 employees at our Middlebury factory we see a very bright future in organic cleaning and body care products! Visit our web site and check out the new videos at [www.vermontsoap.com](http://www.vermontsoap.com).



PRODUCER OF THE MONTH

**Honey Gardens  
Apiaries  
by Todd Hardie**



I started to keep bees with my brother Tom on the top field of our parents' farm; we were drawn to the bees' benevolence. Everything the bees do is a blessing to our community, truly raw honey, propolis, pollen, bee venom therapy, and beeswax.

If you draw a line from the United States north into Canada, the further north you go, the more honey the bees generally make each season. Our first honey house was as far north as one could go within the United States, in Morses Line, Vermont, north of the US Customs office and hugging the Quebec border. The flowers from the dairy farming community on both sides of the international line supported our bees as they gathered nectar, pollen, and propolis. The two Richard Brothers had kept bees here for years, and we continued that tradition, working with a peak of around 180 colonies of bees in Franklin Country, Vermont.

This is a bi-lingual community the language would gracefully move in out of French and English throughout the day. There is a pure innocence here. I remember going to a baseball game in Montreal with one of the neighbor's children, who remarked that the buildings in Montreal were taller than the Vermont silos.

The farms are a sacred space, and are passed down from generation to generation in families that carry their traditions forward in time. We began with a two-seater outhouse, a mortgage of \$ 130 per month and a huge sacred poplar tree in the front yard that gave propolis to the bees.

About 40% of what you eat depends on pollination by insects, much of this by honey bees. With the decline in bees, gardeners and farmers have been noticing fewer crops. Honey bees are the *canaries of the coal mine*. They have helped us be more aware of changes in our environment. We are grateful to be sharing the traditions of beekeeping and plant medicine with the Addison Country community. Our honey house on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh is open Monday – Saturday. Behind the honey house is an elderberry plantation, where we are honored to share their offspring with our community each season with cultivars that were nurtured over the years by Lewis Hill, in Greensboro. As an ally in our work, the elderberry has allowed us to continue working with the bees and plant medicine; in a very traditional Vermont recipe we mix

organic elderberry with truly raw Apitherapy honey to make a syrup which strengthens the immune system.

Our Meadmaster Jake Feldman produces fine honey wines at the meadery near Lake Champlain in Shelburne, making a *sparkling Melissa*, *organic blueberry*, *organic black currant*, and a *dessert wine* about to be released.

Thank you for your support!

**Honey Gardens will offer samples of honey wine and mead, truly raw honey, and plant medicine at the Co-op on Friday December 19th, from 2 – 6**



## Beautiful Hand Woven Baskets From Ghana

We are now selling hand woven baskets from *The Blessing Basket Project*, a non profit organization helping to change the face of global poverty.

“*Blessing Basket* is significantly changing the lives of impoverished people in five countries around the world,” says Theresa Wilson, founder and executive director.

The Project is focused on building a model of sustainable employment to help the more than four billion people worldwide who live on less than \$2 a day. “We are weaving hope into the world, one basket at a time,” says Wilson. *Blessing Basket* pays its weavers substantially more than their national minimum wage for every basket they weave. “Directly employing weavers and paying wages higher than any other importer in the world enables poor families to regain self-reliance. We provide a *hand up* for our weavers and their families to obtain proper nutrition, healthcare and education,” says Wilson.

A surprising by-product of *The Blessing Basket Project* has been the creation of entrepreneurs. In Africa, for example, one weaver escaped a life filled with violence, purchased a cow and started her own restaurant with the money she earned from weaving just a few baskets. She is now financially stable, and has even hired someone to help her raise her four young boys. “Creating entrepreneurs who create jobs in the third world – that is our picture of success!” says Wilson.

After just two years of operation, *Blessing Basket* employs nearly 3,000 weavers in five countries. The organization sponsors infrastructure projects, including the building of schools and other public structures, which benefit entire communities of impoverished people.

# Cooperative Beginnings

by Kristin Bolton

The Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, with our 2500-strong membership, is one of over 300 food co-ops in the country. But as you know, the cooperative business model is used successfully in many other businesses. Even in the larger Addison County community, we have cooperative banks (e.g., credit union), insurance, preschools, and farms participating in regional and national cooperatives. Elsewhere in the U.S. you'll find cooperative power companies, restaurants, housing and industries, to name a few. Around the world over 700 million people belong to cooperatives, which are built on the same seven powerful co-operative principles:

- voluntary and open membership;
- democratic member control;
- member economic participation;
- autonomy and independence;
- education, training and information;
- cooperation among cooperatives;
- concern for the community.




These cooperatives find their humble beginnings with the Rochedale Pioneers, a group of mill workers in northern England in the 1840's who suffered terrible working and living conditions in their factory town. Charles Dickens, upon visiting this area in 1843, was so horrified by the poverty he saw that he lectured to mill owners about their duty to change these conditions. (When he got home he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, which was published six weeks later.) At the factory store, for example, plaster was routinely mixed into the flour, presumably to maximize the mill owners' profits. Yet, this was the only place that mill workers could buy food; they had no way to get healthy food. They had no voting rights anywhere. In the face of poverty and injustice, the mill workers gathered together and came up with a revolutionary idea: they would open their own store, which would provide them with better food at affordable prices; it would also give some of them jobs.

While they saved for two years, these mill workers met and came up with their principles and rules of operation for the *Rochedale Equitable Pioneers Society*. Many of them had been *Chartists*, a grassroots political party advocating for people's rights that ultimately failed. So it's not surprising that the founding principles of the store focused on equality, democracy, independence, and member economic participation — as well as how to provide themselves and their community with better food. This

business model has proven to be a boon to communities in providing quality, affordable goods and services to members as well as a good place to work.

Twenty-eight mill workers invested two weeks' worth of wages and opened the first cooperative on December 21, 1844 — almost exactly one year after the publication of *A Christmas Carol*. On the longest night of the year, they lit candles against the darkness in the windows of their new store. On the shelves were six sacks of flour, one sack of oatmeal, along with some sugar, butter and candles. While this hardly seems revolutionary to us now, with all the goodies that beckon us from the MNFC shelves, the light of the *Rochedale Pioneers* still shines in every cooperative today. Let us not forget their gift, shaped by 164 years of the co-operative movement into the co-operative principles that help make the MNFC such a vibrant center of our community today.





Kristin Bolton is a member of the MNFC Board of Directors



## Middlebury Winter Market

Twenty food and craft vendors welcomed scores of buyers to the first of **ten Winter Markets** to be held at the Town Hall Theater, in Middlebury, on Saturday mornings. The main theater space was full of the bounty of the season, apples in baskets, tomatoes in boxes, fresh eggs stacked beside dried flower bouquets, cheeses sliced and ready for sampling. Grocery shoppers at the *Winter Market* came away with cuts of pork and lamb. The choices of meats extended to Cornish hens, rabbit, and chicken. Vegetables are available in amazing abundance. Addison County growers extend their season into the frost prone days of fall and are bringing squash, carrots, beets, lettuce, cabbage and cauliflower to market for buyers eager to purchase locally grown food. Market vendors provided warm cups of coffee and cider, donuts and cookies for visitors to the market wanting to stay and talk to their neighbors. Whirlygigs, watercolors, quilts, and cards are also part of the market array.

The Middlebury *Winter Market* is sponsored by the Addison County Local-  
upcoming are **December 6th and 13th, January 24th, February 28th, March 28th and April 25th**. The out-season will begin in May 2009.





## Tell us what you think

**I thought we were going to get scanable member cards. Is that going to happen? I think it would make checking out more efficient for the Co-op and the members.**

Thanks for your comment. You're right, we have been waiting to do the new member system with our new *Catapult* register system... but after talking to other co-ops using them, we realized there are some serious bugs to work out, especially at the conversion. So we decided to wait for the new *Catapult* update that came out recently. We may still decide to wait until after the holidays to make the conversion. *Glenn*

**Hey, when portioning out bulk items — cheese, dried fruit etc. — please think about making a variety of amounts. So many times all of the bags are within 25 cents of each other. Or all of the blocks of cheese (say Mozzarella) are between \$4.25 and \$4.60. The idea of re-portioning bulk is to not have all half pound packages. Yes... I know you can re-divide items; but at 6:50 pm it's a little late to do that and finish one's shopping. Please consider the needs of single or limited budgets shoppers.** We will make an effort to provide a variety of sizes. However, it may not always work out to meet your needs. Even if you are in a rush, don't hesitate to ask a staff member to adjust the amounts. It will take only a minute. *Reiner*

**Red Door Bread — more wheat bread! They never bring enough but there's always a surplus of white.**

We have called *Red Door* asking for more whole wheat bread. *Jeff*

**You probably have a good scheme now; but if not... if the cow cheese was separated from the goat/sheep it would be much easier for cow allergy folk to find some good stuff.**

At present our cheeses are organized by place of origin. Several shelves are dedicated to Vermont cheeses, other sections feature Spanish, French, Italian, and other international selections. I will see if goat and sheep milk cheeses can be made to be recognized more easily. By the way... please note that we have moved our Waxed Cheeses (*Grafton Village* and *Shelburne Farms*) from the Cheese Case to the Dairy Cooler (left door upper shelves). *Reiner*

**Can you carry Oat O's Cereal in Bulk... something like Cheerios?**

Many years ago, we used carry Whole Wheat O's in Bulk. Unfortunately, they were discontinued by the manufacturer. If we find source and distributor for O's, we will offer them in Bulk. So far... no luck. *Reiner*

**What's the incentive of buying in Bulk when prices are higher than as packaged items?**

This is a challenge for us! A number of *Bionaturae* pasta items are cheaper packaged from the Grocery retail aisle than in Bulk. This is how the pasta is marketed by the company. In order to offer better Bulk prices we have decided to lower some of our pasta prices. (You see, your note was effective!) During the month of November, *Once Again* Almond Butter was offered on sale for \$7.99/lb in Bulk and \$6.99/lb packaged in glass. I have made inquiries about the reason of this price difference and was told they made a mistake. We have lowered our Almond Butter price to \$6.99/lb for you. Fortunately, this kind of pricing is the exception. In general, Bulk prices are lower than those of their packaged equivalents. Thank you for your comment! *Reiner*

**I never want the newsletter printed on that [November blue] color again!**

Neither do I. We had hoped for *light* blue but got a blue that was too dark. Sorry! *Reiner*

**I love your demos! I love trying new things.**

It's so good to hear that someone is enjoying our demos! Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, customers will be able to sample even more delicious creations from local producers, vendors and our own Co-op staff (local cheese, imported salami, and a chocolate fountain, just to name a few!). Check out our monthly demo calendar on the demo table in front of the Produce kitchen for a complete schedule of demo events. *Karin*

**Candy That Grows on Trees!**

Dates are some of the oldest tree crops cultivated by man [and women who did probably most of the work!]. More that 5,000 years ago this valuable food plant helped sustain desert peoples and nomadic wanderers of the Middle East and North Africa. Dates were considered a delicacy and served to royalty. Dates were introduced in California in the 18th century by Spanish missionaries. Dates are sometimes referred to as the *candy that grows on trees*.

Dates contain no sodium and no cholesterol. They are a good source of dietary fiber and are low in calories!

Dates are delicious when eaten fresh or added to muffins, cookies, and salads. Dip them in chocolate or roll them in coconut for a classic dessert. Use them for hors d'oeuvres by spreading them with cream cheese or peanut butter.



**Medjool Dates  
will be on sale  
in December  
for 5.49/lb !**



## Shelburne Farms

During a recent field trip to *Shelburne Farms*, we (6 staff and 1 guest) were treated to a fascinating cheesemaking tour and a delicious afternoon snack of 6-month, 1-year, and 2-year old cheddars. We also learned a lot about the Farms' philosophy:

*Shelburne Farms* strives to provide learning opportunities for young and old that support their educational mission to cultivate a conservation ethic. Through sustainable land use practices they seek to improve the health of the soil and the economic and ecological vitality of their community.

At *Shelburne Farms*, the purebred herd of Brown Swiss cows graze the beautiful pastures from spring to fall. Their milk – absolutely fresh and untreated and rbST/rBGH free – is used to make the cheese. The only other cheese ingredients are starter culture, rennet and salt.

The caretakers at *Shelburne Farms* are working to increase their own understanding of the environmental impact of their operations. They try to be mindful of how each step in their cheese making process is connected to the earth and the natural systems that support us all.

During our tour of the farms, we watched the arduous process of cheddaring, while cheesemaker Jamie pointed out the Farms' guidelines:

- ◆ *Maintaining a pasture based dairy with rotational grazing and spring and fall seasonal calving.*
- ◆ *Growing our own hay and silage without using herbicides or pesticides.*
- ◆ *Treating our livestock humanely.*
- ◆ *Limiting the use of antibiotics to the treatment of injuries or disease.*
- ◆ *Recycling manure and other organic materials by composting or other natural treatment.*
- ◆ *Minimizing use of non-renewable energy sources.*
- ◆ *Minimizing use of potentially toxic substances.*
- ◆ *Finding sources of purchased grain, feed supplements and other supplies that support sustainable land use practices.*
- ◆ *Seeking to understand connections between soil, livestock and human health.*
- ◆ *Promoting direct contact between the farm and consumers.*
- ◆ *Producing a farmhouse cheddar cheese that is a great tasting nutritious natural food product.*



Inspiring!



# Get Healthy



Presentation at Ilsley Library  
Saturday, December 13  
9:00 am

Curtis Gross, DC, will speak about health, the steady rise of sickness and disease, and ways to increase our level of healthfulness.

Admission: Bring a non-perishable item to benefit the Addison County Food Shelf.

Healthy snacks will be provided!



## Annual Empty Bowl Dinner

Our 17th *Empty Bowl Dinner* last month was a great success! We raised \$ 1,925.00 to benefit the local food shelves. *Thank You, Thank You, Thank You* to the many people who supported this wonderful event! Thank you especially to our local potters, foremost **Kathy Clarke** of *Frog Hollow Craft Center*, for donating the beautiful bowls!

A special feature this year was the showing of a short video *Every Child, Every Day*, published by the *Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger*.


Our sponsors this year include: *United Methodist Church, Red Hen Bakery, Middlebury Bagel & Delicatessen, Happy Valley Orchard, Golden Russet Farm, Digger's Mirth, Little Press Room, Middlebury Inn, Whipple Hollow Farm, Gourmet Greens, Champlain Orchards, Nola's Secret Garden, Eve McConnell, Otter Creek Bakery, Lewis Creek Farm, and Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op*. Thank you!

Furthermore, we would like to thank our soup and dessert makers, salad preparers, and the great crew of volunteers. You helped make this Saturday evening in November a special and memorable event!




THE STAFF AND BOARD  
OF THE MIDDLEBURY  
NATURAL FOODS  
CO-OP

WISH EVERYONE  
HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS!


If you would like to order a *Stonewood Farms All Natural Vermont Turkey* for your holiday celebration, please pre-order by **December 18, 3 pm.** Pick-up date is **December 23 - 24.**



**Board of Directors Meetings**

Co-op members are welcome to attend Board of Directors Meetings, scheduled for one Wednesday of each month (for specific times please check our web site or the store Board bulletin board). Time is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for members to express concerns or suggestions.

The next Board Meeting will be held **Wednesday, December 10 at 6:30 p.m.** in the Co-op Meeting Room on the second floor above the Old Store at 1 Washington Street. Upcoming Board Meetings are scheduled for January 28, February 25, March 25, April 15, May 20, and June 24. For more information, call Ashar Nelson, Board President, at 388-9278.

