Co-op Election Results Announced

by Torey Ligon

Don’t miss the Co-op’s Annual Membership Celebration on March 8th. It is sure to be a fun afternoon with great food and live music. If you’ve already booked your plane ticket for a once-in-a-lifetime vacation, or your family’s been planning a reunion that night for the past two years, we’ll miss your presence at the event, and we want you to know the results of the election anyway.

We are very pleased to announce that this year … drum-roll please … Natanya Siegel and Paula Wilk were elected to serve on the Co-op’s Board of Directors. In landslide victories, both Siegel and Wilk were voted into three-year terms as members of the Board. Natanya was already serving as an appointed Board member and Paula is new to the Co-op’s governing body. Both Siegel and Wilk have shown exceptional dedication to this cooperative and the membership should benefit from their service.

At the Annual Meeting, we will also have the pleasure of announcing the winners of this year’s Cooperative Community Fund grants. For those unfamiliar with this program, the Co-op contributes to an endowed investment fund, the interest from which benefits five non-profits in Tucson each year. Food Conspiracy’s Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) is one of 21 local Cooperative Community Funds in the country, all of which are managed by the Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation. Every year, Food Conspiracy invests five thousand dollars in our CCF. This investment, paired with donations made by our members and shoppers, has been helping our fund grow steadily since we started it in 2001.

2ND ANNUAL SOLAR ROCK FESTIVAL
Sat. March 29th 12-5 p.m. Himmel Park
(see pg. 2 for details)

Mark your calendars… The Food Conspiracy Co-op’s Annual Meeting Celebration Saturday, March 8th • 2:30-6:30 p.m. • St. Mark’s Church • 3809 E 3rd St.
Free for Co-op Members………………….. More details on pg. 2 ……………………Childcare and kid entertainment provided!

Performances by:
The Brambleberries
Free Organic Dinner from The Avenue Deli

Food Conspiracy Co-op
412 N. Fourth Ave. • Tucson, AZ 85705
Greetings Cooperators!

It is the season for outdoor events and festivals; the days when Tucsonans emerge from their shells to take advantage of several months of glorious spring weather. With this year's Peace Fair behind us, and "event season" officially in gear, I'd like to turn your attention to two upcoming events this month that are near and dear to my heart as a Co-op member.

The first, of course, is our Annual Meeting Celebration. Please join your fellow co-ops for a fun afternoon filled with music and great food. The celebration will take place on March 8th, from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., in the courtyard of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church at 3809 E. Third St. (as it was last year). Co-op owner Bradford Trojan will be performing with his band, The Brambleberries, and the Avenue Deli will be providing a delicious organic feast. During the event we will be presenting checks to the recipients of this year's Cooperative Community Fund grants and we'll get an update on Co-op affairs from our illustrious Board of Directors. So, come on out for a fun, laid back afternoon; as always kids are welcome.

At the end of the month, the Food Conspiracy Co-op is immensely proud to bring you the 2nd annual Solar Rock Festival. This 100% solar powered concert at Himmel Park (1000 N. Tucson Blvd.) is sure to be a rockin' good time. With an outstanding lineup of local music including this year's AZ Daily Star Battle of the Bands finalists, Arthur Migliazza, Bruce Phillips, and Spirit Familia, there's sure to be something for everyone's musical palette. Interspersed between music sets, we have the privilege of bringing you some of Tucson's most notable leaders in the climate change movement. The day will include Jonathan Overpeck, the director of the UA Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, local water expert (and Co-op member) Brad Lancaster, Mayor Bob Walkup, Arizona Representative Steve Farley, and more. There will also be lots of activities including a free "stuff" exchange organized by freecycle.org.

Throughout the day you'll have the opportunity to learn about local green organizations and businesses that are working to make this city a greener, more sustainable place to live. There will be a special focus on organizations that are working to provide alternative energy solutions and alternative transportation opportunities. So, please join us on March 29th from 12 to 5 p.m. as we join together to say: "Step It Up Congress! Cat Carbon 80% by 2050." Stay up to date on the most current speaker and music lineup by visiting www.solar-rock.blogspot.com. And if you're interested in volunteering during the event to help make the day run more smoothly, please give me a call at the Co-op (624-4821).

Happy spring, and I hope to see you at one of these great events.
Diabetes: Prevention & Care – the Naturopathic Way

Diabetes is an extremely common ailment in the United States. Approximately 14 million people suffer from the disease and 90% of this population has type II diabetes (insulin-dependent diabetes). Fortunately, type II diabetes is extremely treatable with nutrition, supplementation, botanicals and exercise. In treating type II diabetes, the goal is to maintain the hormone insulin (that controls glucose) and maintain balanced blood sugars.

Diet should be the foundation of any treatment plan for type II diabetes. Fiber, especially water-soluble, can have a strong effect on blood glucose. It decreases the rapid absorption of carbohydrates, which helps to prevent a rapid rise in blood glucose. It increases the cells sensitivity to insulin, decreasing total blood sugars. Fiber improves the uptake of glucose by many different cells and results in decreased sustained blood sugar. Good sources of fiber are legumes, oat bran, apples, pears, and vegetables. Essentially the goal is to have a diet that is high in fiber and complex carbohydrates versus simple carbohydrates. Good quality protein should also be considered, especially proteins that are not too high in fat. But, not all fats are created equal; it is the essential fatty acids that have been shown to increase insulin’s action.

Supplements are also another area to examine in formulating the diabetic treatment plan:

- Magnesium works to improve glucose transport into cells (300-800 mg/day)
- Chromium has been shown to lower blood glucose levels (200-1000 mcg/day)
- Vanadium improves insulin function (75-100 mg/day short term and 0.5-2.0 mg/day long term)
- Biotin improves glucose metabolism (5-10 mg/day)
- Vitamin E increases insulin function (400-1200 IU/day)
- Zinc stabilizes insulin (15-30 mg/day)
- Vitamin C improves insulin function (500-1500 mg/day)
- Nicotinamide and Nicotinamide helps with glucose function and decreases cholesterol (600-1000 mcg/day)
- Vitamins B6 (100 mg/day) and B12 (1000-3000 mcg/day) help to prevent nerve diseases that are secondary to diabetes.
- Potassium increases function (1.5-3.0 g/day)
- Vitamin D increases function (15-20 mcg/day)
- Potassium increases function (1.5-3.0 g/day)
- Magnesium helps to control blood sugar and metabolism (30 mg/day)

Botanical medicine can also be used in treating diabetes:

- Momordica charantia (Bitter Melon) has been shown to be effective in type II diabetes by controlling blood sugar.

Vitamin D3, folic acid, and vitamin C may also help in preventing diabetic eye disease.

Ginkgo biloba has also been shown helpful in preventing diabetic nerve pain and peripheral vascular disease.

Ginseng helps to reduce fasting blood sugar.

Exercise is another crucial aspect of any diabetic treatment plan. Regular activity is essential for any individual with diabetes to begin in order to control the disease. Diabetics need to find out what they enjoy and start slowly as they build confidence and strength. Exercise will enhance insulin sensitivity, improve glucose tolerance, decrease cholesterol levels, improve HDL, and result in loss of excess pounds.

Through these simple steps that are the foundation of naturopathic medicine, diabetes can be prevented and treated. These steps can help individuals to avoid future health complication from their disease and allow them to enjoy an increased quality of life.

Heather Moroso is a naturopathic physician with a private practice in Tucson. She offers comprehensive naturopathic care and specializes in homeopathy and acupuncture. Contact her with questions or to make an appointment at 204-2250 or dmoroso@hotmail.com. Ask the Doc articles are for general information purposes only. Please consult a health care professional for individual conditions.

From the Organic Consumers Association

Food Safety Update

Children Fed Non-Organic Food Have Pesticides in their Urine

A new peer-reviewed study found levels of nerve-gas like pesticides in the bodies of children who eat conventional foods. Researchers found that if a child switched to an organic diet, the pesticide disappeared from the child’s urine within 36 hours. Organophosphates were designed during WWII specifically to kill humans and later evolved into commonly used pesticides for food crops. The study has not yet linked the pesticide levels to specific foods, but other studies have shown peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, nectarines, strawberries and cherries are among those that most frequently have detectable levels of pesticides.

Unlabeled Allergens in Food Threaten Children’s Health

AllergyKids.com is working with the Organic Consumers Association to close a loophole in US food labeling regulations that is allowing common foods to contain dangerous new allergens without labeling. Specifically, the US Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act fails to highlight and require labels for the new commonplace foreign or “novel” gene-spliced proteins and allergens in soy, corn, canola and other food products. According to Daniel Sheehan, an FDA scientist, American children are part of “a large, uncontrolled and basically unmonitored human infant experiment.” Contact your Congress-members to require labels on gene-spliced foreign proteins and allergens in food products, which are contributing to the epidemic of food allergies, autism, ADHD and asthma in our children.

FDA Continues Criminalization of Natural Sweetener

The FDA is threatening the Hain Celestial Group for using the natural sweetener stevia in its tea products. According to the FDA, stevia has not been approved as a food and therefore the Celestial products cannot be labeled as a “tea.” Stevia, a natural sweetener derived from South America, is widely used as a natural zero calorie sweetener in countries around the world, including Brazil, Canada, China and Japan. But the FDA, under pressure from corporate providers of synthetic sweeteners like aspartame, has been stalling on approving stevia for over a decade.

Hain Celestial Group responded to the FDA threats and said the company would remove the term “iced tea mix” from all labels of the products in question and highlight the labels “herbal supplement.”

Ask the Doc

by Heather Moroso, N.M.D., co-op owner

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Organic Consumers Association • www.organicconsumers.org
As a Co-op shopper, you’re no doubt familiar with bulk product bins. For many customers, the bulk section is part of what’s so attractive about the store—offering a help-yourself, take-just-how-much-you-need-of-whatever-you-need atmosphere. In addition to ambience, though, those bulk buying opportunities offer big advantages to you as a customer as well as to the environment. Here’s what benefits:

**Your Budget**
Buying in bulk is economical. In the bigger scheme of things, your co-op is founded in part on the advantages of bulk-buying principles; it combines member resources to buy in bulk together, from distributors, to offer access to the best food at the best prices. In fact, many food co-ops started as bulk buying clubs, with members of the club buying in bulk together and divvying up their purchases. Your storefront enables you to share in the same kind of bulk buying with even greater advantages—like great selection and no-minimum purchases.

When you shop the bulk section, you can purchase the amount of product you need, rather than predetermined amounts. Most products (herbs and spices especially) are much less expensive per ounce than their prepackaged versions; after all, you’re not paying for all that packaging and advertising! And there’s no need to pay for what you won’t use. Instead, you can choose—from a wide selection of products—exactly what you need, whether it’s just enough cumin to try that new hummus recipe or enough oats to make a jumbo batch of granola, without any waste.

**The Environment**
Speaking of waste, it takes enormous resources and energy to produce all of those cans and boxes and 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, especially when you reuse your own containers and bags.

Make the Co-op your food shopping mainstay and club buying in bulk to ensure that you receive the freshest product possible and by rotating stock the bulk product you buy is fresh, too, by purchasing the Co-op can special-order it for you. Ask a staff person for assistance in cleaning it up.

When filling your containers, the scoops provided. You’ll want to take your time and not make unnecessary messes, but if you spill something, don’t panic. Ask a staff person for assistance in cleaning it up.

The Co-op takes steps to make sure that the bulk product you buy is fresh, too, by purchasing the freshest product possible and by rotating stock to ensure that you receive the freshest product. All of this adds to the fun of buying in bulk, too, which is not to be underestimated! When you purchase a product in bulk, you have first-hand experience with its aroma, its color, texture and its appearance. No need to shake a box or trust the picture on a can to envision what’s inside!

**Tips for Buying in Bulk**
Before heading out to the Co-op, you might want to organize your cupboards a bit—to make room for your bulk products. Collect some nice, airtight glass jars (safer than plastics for food storage), if you like, and some labels so you can keep track of what’s what once you put it in your kitchen or pantry. Grab your empty containers and sacks, along with a list of how much you need of which ingredients. (Don’t wait to shop until you have containers; though, the Co-op can supply them for you to get started.)

Once you’re in the bulk aisle, look to see what items you usually purchase in packages or cans that you can now purchase in bulk. But also explore a bit, maybe trying one or two new items each visit! Here are just some of the kinds of products you’ll most likely find in the bulk aisle: beans, cereals, flours, grains, herbs and spices, nut butters (you can even grind your own), oils, pastas, sweeteners, teas and coffees (Fair Trade), pet food, and household and toiletry items like laundry detergent and soaps. Plus you can find many unique products like our organic curry cashews, and our new agave syrup sweetened Hunza Goji Granola.

Remember to weigh your containers before filling them (ask at the cash register), so that you don’t get charged for the weight of the containers when the products are weighed for checkout. Note this weight, as well as the item number and the price of the item, on the container, a sticker or a piece of paper.

If you have special nutritional or cooking needs—because you’re a vegan or are allergic to peanuts, wheat or dairy, or are interested in experimenting with a new ethnic cuisine, for example—you’re likely to find just what you need in the bulk aisle.

Most importantly, don’t be intimidated by the bulk foods section. It really is as fun and as shopper-friendly as it looks. For your own benefit and that of the planet, make a habit of bulk buying!
Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine to Feature Ayurvedic Physicians from India

The Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine, on April 5 and 6 in Tempe, welcomes Ayurvedic physicians (vaidyas) Dharmendra Dube and Sumita Prajapati, who are presenting three lectures on Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of health and healing. Dr. Sumita speaks on Ayurveda for women and balancing the physiology, while Dr. Dube discusses the use of herbs in the kitchen for treating a variety of complaints including migraine headaches. The vaidyas practice in India and are dedicated to preserving the traditional uses of healing herbs in the villages there, before that knowledge is lost as the populace embraces modern pharmaceutical drugs.

Amanda McQuade Crawford recently returned from New Zealand where she was senior clinic tutor at Canterbury College. She is speaking on herbal alternatives to glucophage in the treatment of Type II diabetes, and interactions between herbs and drugs used to treat hypertension and high cholesterol. Paul Bergner, founder and director of the North American Institute of Medical Herbalism, makes use of his clinical experience to discuss the commonly seen adverse effects of herbs.

On Saturday night, these four teachers will combine forces in the panel discussion “Ayurvedic, Traditional Chinese and Western Approaches to Rejuvenation and Longevity.” The panel begins with an overview of rejuvenating herbal therapies from each tradition and then opens to questions from the audience. The panelists have an average of 20 years experience in the field, and it promises to be a lively and entertaining evening.

Other speakers include David Crow, LAc, author of In Search of the Medicine Buddha; Deborah Frances and Cascade Anderson Geller, both experienced herbal practitioners from Oregon; Michael Moore, the herbalist from Bisbee; Toni Hodgson, ND, who specializes in natural medicine for women; and Kenneth Proefrock, ND, from Sun City, AZ.

In addition to the regular lectures, the conference offers a variety of outdoor activities including a field study of medicinal herbs at Boyce Thompson Arboretum, herb walks at the Desert Botanical Garden and a demonstration of the preparation of desert foods as medicine with Martha Burgess.

For more information on the conference visit www.botanicalmedicine.org or call (800) 252-0688.

Election Results

In January, we asked our members to vote for the five organizations they most wanted to support with our CCF interest. This year, 11 worthy organizations took the time to apply for this grant, so it was tough to choose. So tough, in fact, that there was a tie for the fifth grant. In response to this fifth place tie, we’ve decided to issue 6 grants this year. We are pleased to announce that the 2008 recipients of the Food Conspiracy’s CCF grants are:

- The Community Food Security Center of the Community Food Bank
- Native Seeds/SEARCH
- Desert Harvesters
- City High School’s Habitat Restoration City Works Classes
- Sonoran Permaculture Guild
- Watershed Management Group

Each of these organizations will receive a check for $200 at our March 8th annual meeting.

Donating to the Cooperative Community Fund is a great way to stretch your donating dollars and make a long-term difference. Any money you donate through the Food Conspiracy’s CCF gets invested alongside monies from 21 other co-ops around the country. Each year, the interest generated from the Food Conspiracy Co-op’s portion of that investment comes right back to us in Tucson to be distributed to local non-profits. Your donation continues to accrue interest and all of that interest will eventually come back to Tucson non-profits working in the areas of food security, cooperative development, community building and environmental sustainability. And the best thing about the CCF fund is that you get to choose who the money goes to. The recipients of the CCF awards are chosen exclusively through a membership vote.

We hope someday to be able to give several thousand dollars to each of our CCF winners each year. In order to do this, we’ll need our member-owners to begin contributing more to this fund. At Willy Street Co-op in Madison, Wisconsin, member-owners contributed over $50,000 to their CCF in one year. Imagine the good we can do in the community as our CCF begins to grow and deliver substantial sums in interest each year. With the help of our generous community of members, we know we can make a difference in this town.

Receive the Divine Mother’s Blessings

Thursday, April 10
7 p.m.
Spiritual Discourse & Darshan
Four Points Sheraton
1900 E. Speedway (Campbell)

Saturday, April 12
Silent Meditation Retreat
Four Points Sheraton
8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

“Come one foot towards me and I will come a thousand feet toward you.”

Sri Karunamayi

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Hunger: an unnatural history

In the last two centuries, fasting has also been a subject of interest to members of the scientific and medical communities. Two of Russell’s most interesting chapters recount scientific studies from the 1940s. One was undertaken in Warsaw, Poland, where food rations for a Jew were set at 1,184 calories a day, although actual intake might be supplemented with 200 calories of soup from Jewish relief organizations and, depending on one’s finances, food purchased on the black market. Forbidden by the German occupiers to treat Ayans or use the title of doctor, a group of Jewish physicians secretly availed themselves of the opportunity to study the data immediately before them: starving patients and corpses.

The second study, the Minnesota experiment, involved American conscientious objectors, who, during World War II, volunteered to lose 24 pounds of body weight in a controlled study. A primary goal of the research project was to learn the most efficient way to help a starving population regain health. The effects on the participants were surprisingly small, with 24 percent of body weight being regained after the end of the starvation period, half of the phase by a man assigned to the group receiving an enhanced remedy. The essays fall far short. As Russell wryly observes, we would have to be prepared to live very differently to end world hunger.

Russell also examines involuntary fasting, the mass hunger suffered during famines and in many parts of the world today. Most encouraging are the humanitarian work of Concern Worldwide and a partnering organization, Valida International, whose founder is committed to improving the quality and accountability of relief work. Yet, to address effectively the widespread food and nutrient shortages, these efforts fall far short. Russell elegantly functional writing and personal honesty save the book from being polemical.

Reading Hunger is like finding yourself arbitrarily matched with a dance partner so skilled that you forget your usual awkwardness and lose your self-consciousness. With your partner, you glide and whirl, inseparable from the music; you realize that the music is generated by you, that you are the music. You are the dance. With your partner, you must face the truth even if you do not know what to do next.
Energy Vampires Surround Us: 
Cut them off and save!

Energy Vampires are those electronic devices that we leave in the standby mode. In order to be ready to operate at all times, the electronic device, gadget or appliance maintains a slow, reduced draw of electricity. This is where the reference to vampire is rooted: it still sucks energy when turned “off.” Even though the device’s draw is reduced, you are still paying for energy you aren’t using. The bills can add up, particularly now with the rising cost of energy.

This undesired loss of electricity also is known as phantom energy and some of the biggest culprits are electronics chargers, I-pods, cell phones and digital chargers have a steady current of energy flowing at all times—even when they say they are fully charged. Additionally, your television and DVD player, computers, auto-coffee maker and cordless phones all suck energy when there is no demand. Computers can draw 7 watts (w) and microwaves can draw 1.2 w while in standby mode. The reason for standby is convenience, but now this convenience is coming at a cost. This equates to .7224 kWh of energy per day.

Consider this scenario: A young, four-person family with two cell phone chargers (1.2 w), two computers plugged in (7 w each), a microwave (1.2 w), a stereo (2.5w), a DVD player (3 w), and two televisions (3.5 w each); has a total phantom energy load of 30.1 watts. This equates to .7224 kWh of energy per day or 264 kWh per year. In dollars this adds up to approximately $60 annually at average current rates. And just remember this estimate is on the shy side: often there are more phantom energy points than just the ones mentioned here.

Even though this is a relatively small portion of your total energy bill (approximately 5% of your total home energy consumption), the environmental and financial savings can accumulate especially if everyone takes action. For the entire United States, this could add up to 65 billion kWh/year, which equals $5.8 billion in savings as well as eliminating 87 billion pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. That’s some powerful change.

So now that you understand why it is important and resourceful to eliminate the phantom energy demands in your house, how do you do it?

Here are five simple solutions:

• Unplug it! Some devices, like computers can be unplugged when you are finished using them. However, some devices you can’t unplug, like an auto-coffee maker that is programmed. In that case consider getting a French press that requires no power. Computers can draw 7 watts (w) and microwaves can draw 1.2 w while in standby mode.

• Get a power strip! Try plugging a group of electronics into a common source: a power strip. It is easier to use one switch to shut off a whole group of electronics, and this reduces the phantom energy consumption. You will see a noticeable decline in your energy bills. For example, you can plug your television, DVD player, stereo and record player into one power strip, which makes it easy to shut everything off before leaving the house and at bedtime.

• Better yet, get a Smart Power strip! The Smart Power strip is revolutionary in its design in that it knows when power is not needed and turns itself off. Here is how it works: There are three outlet types on the Smart Power Strip; the Control, Constant Hot and Switched. The Control outlet is where you plug in your computer or TV. The Constant Hot outlets are always on, and here is the fascinating part: the Switched outlets are tied to the Control outlet. When the electronic device that is plugged into the Control is off… the Switched outlets are automatically turned off…saving electricity.

• Check the label! Choose Energy Star certified appliances, because they use the least amount of energy in standby mode.

• Keep it simple! Avoid buying products that have lots of bells and whistles, because they often come at an electric cost. Be realistic and ask yourself if you really need that amenity.

In addition to saving money and reducing your fossil fuel consumption, consider buying renewable energy certificates to offset all your resource consumption (www.green-e.org/gogreene.shtml).

*This calculation was figured as follows: 30.1 watts = .0301 kW; .0301 kW x 24 hours = .7224 kWh/ day.

Sources:

Maura Yates lives in Boulder, Colorado, and has been working in the sustainability field for the past five years. She co-founded a green home renovations and handy-work company in Boulder and is working with a local conservation non-profit as their community organizer.

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SAT., MAR. 1
Television & Electronic Recycling
Outreach Event Park & Ride Parking Lot, Ina Rd., 1 block west of Oracle Rd. Did you get a new television over the holiday season? Do you have an outdated television, computer, or other electronics? Don’t know what to do with it? Don’t throw it in the landfill. It still has value! Create jobs; save the landfill space; reduce the components. Tucson Clean & Beautiful, in cooperation with American Retrockers and the Pima County / City of Tucson Household Hazardous Waste Program, is sponsoring an e-waste outreach collection. Bring your electronics: TV’s, DVD players, VCRs, computers, telephones, MP3 players, and most other consumer electronics. Note: No refrigerators, stoves, microwaves, toasters, or other appliances. For more info, please call Rebecca Quintino at 791-5000, or e-mail rcb@tucsonaz.gov.

SUN., MAR. 2
Food Conspiracy Annual Membership Meeting
2:30 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Mark’s Church, 3809 E. Third St. Enjoy an organic dinner prepared by The Avenue Deli, music from The Brambleberries, lots of raffle prizes including a new commuter bike and the announcement of the Board election results and Cooperative Community Fund grant recipients. Free to Food Conspiracy Co-op members; inactive members may attend with a $15 equity payment at the door.

SUN., MAR. 9
Organic Garden Festival
10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Mark’s Church community gardens, 3809 E. 3rd St. Come celebrate with the Tucson Organic Gardeners. The festival will feature plants and bake sales, food and beverage sales, music, games for children, and relevant demonstrations. This free event is a favorite every year for many organic gardeners in the region. For more info, phone 670-9158 or visit http://tucsonorganicgardeners.org/nonprofits/TOG.

TUE., MAR. 11
Sustainable Tucson General Meeting
7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Joel D. Valdez Main Downtown, downstairs meeting room. Open to the public. For more info, visit www.sustainabletucson.org.

TUE., MAR. 18
Tucson Organic Gardeners
7:30 p.m. at St. Mark’s Church, Knox Room, 3809 E. 3rd St. Greg Corman of Gardening Insights will present on “Sensory Gardens” — how to design and plant a wonderful garden to be experienced by all the senses. Doors open at 7 to visit the displays and mini-market, speak with gardening experts and enjoy refreshments. For more info, phone 670-9158 or visit http://tucsonorganicgardeners.org/nonprofits/TOG.

SAT., APR. 26
Tucson Solar Potluck
10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Catalina State Park, 11570 N. Oracle Rd. Citizens for Solar presents the 26th annual Festival of the Sun: Tucson Solar Potluck and Renewable Energy Exhibition. Admission to the event and park is free. Experience the flavors of solar-cooked food and enjoy solar-powered music, family activities, solar appliances and exhibitions (ovens, fountains, coolers, lights, water heating, electrical systems) and solar arts. Bring your own eating utensils (plate/bowl and VCRs), please. To host Tucson Solar Potluck a waste-free event. Bring a canned food for the sponsored canned food drive and listen to talks on solar, renewable and waste-free living. Make sure you wear comfy shoes, a brimmed hat and sunscreen. The festival will be held come sun, rain or wind! For information about the event go to citizensforsolar.com or contact Jeremy at 940-2565 or jms@solarheatmypool.com.

ON GOING

MIND/BODY/SPRIT

Rhythm Dance Jam, Raw Food, and Meditation
Saturday mornings at Tree of Life. Elmerental Rhythms Dance Exploration, a class on conscious free movement of the body and the inner energies to a variety of beats and music, 7:45 to 9:15 a.m., $8. Raw Living Vegan Brunch, 100% organic, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, $24. Or Rhythms Dance Class and Live Food Brunch Package: $29. Call for information about staying Friday night. More questions: www.treeoflife.nu / 520-394-2520.

Kids Yoga Garden

Laughter Yoga
6390 E. Tanque Verde Road, Title Security Agency of Arizona, lower level from center atrium, 5:30 to 6:20 p.m. every Thursday. Laughter Yoga involves deep breathing, simple stretches, childlike play, lots of laughter and deep relaxation. Anyone can do it, even from a wheelchair. Laughter is the Best Medicine! $10 requested, more if it makes you smile, less if it hurts! Call Gita at 777-7544 for info.

Yoga and Breath
Unique practice of Sudarshan Kriya profoundly raises the quality of life, studies April 4. CE credits for health professionals. Information: (800) 252-0688 or www.botanicalmedicine.org.

FREE COMMUNITY MASSAGE CLASSES
First Sunday of each month from 1 to 5 p.m. Students receive and learn to give a basic full-body Swedish massage. Pre-registration is required; interested participants can call Michelle at 623-2160 or the front desk at the Cortiva Institute Desert Institute of the Healing Arts at 882-0899. The class will be located at 140 E. 4th St. at 6th Ave.

Creating Positive Change: the Power of the Heart
Whether you aspire to change your life or to change the world, this meditation class provides valuable tools. Enhance vitality and restore the optimism needed to accomplish your ideals, inspire others and avert “burnout.” Tuesdays, 5:45-7:15 p.m. Beginner’s review session, 5:30.
Near Campbell and Speedway, Adjacent parking. Newcomers welcome! 4 classes for $48 or $15/class. Contact Bonnie about scholarships for non-profit employees/volunteers and students, or for further info and address. 730-5889, bonnie@applied-mediation.org.

Buddhist Meditation
Meditation in the Chan / Zen tradition (shikantaza) of the great Chinese master the Ven. Hsu Yun. Weekly services, small group meditation, chanting and a Dharma talk every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Meditation instruction is available ahead of the 9:30 service; please call to arrange. We celebrate all Buddhist holidays, do house blessings, weddings, visit the sick and have a prison ministry. Minh Dang Quang Buddhist Temple at 140 E. Navajo Rd., between Prince and Ft. Lowell, east of Oracle Rd. Call 907-6245 or see www.hsuyun.net for more information.

Tucson Community Meditation Center
Mindfulness meditation 6:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays. Loving Kindness meditation 6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays. And group meditation sessions 8:30; 9, and 9:30 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays. 1231 E. Edison, between Speedway and Grant near Mountain. Supported by donations. Info at 869-6511 or tuccommmedia tion.org.

Dharma Kids’ Club
Three Jewels Buddhist Community Center, 314 E. 6th St. Fun and informal Buddhist dharma group for kids ages 6-12. 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays. Free. 207-9889

Dances of Universal Peace
The Dances of Universal Peace are simple, meditative and uplifting group dances. They represent and integrate many of the world’s spiritual traditions, and help to create peace and unity within and without. Third Saturday of every month, 7 to 9 p.m. at Yoga Oasis, 2631 N. Campbell Ave. For more info contact: Jania at 797-0278, yamalika@yahoo.com. $5 to $10 donations accepted.

Science of Spirituality
Learn Jyoti Meditation (Meditation on the Inner Light). This is a free and non-sectarian meditation group. Every 2nd and 4th Sunday at 11:30 a.m. Bookman’s Used Book Store located at 6230 E. Speedway (Speedway and Wilmo). Call 625-8312 or visit www.sos.org.

Three Jewels Buddhist Community Center
314 E. 6th St. Free yoga, Buddhist classes and practice, zazen, music events, and more. Share a cuppyg good karma and community at the Crazy Yogi Cafe Mon-Fri 2-5:30. Check calendar online at www.jyotijewel.com.

Mantra Meditation
Join the world famous Sunday Feast and Festival. Enjoy an evening of chanting, singing, dancing and an enlightening discussion on Bhakti Yoga. Afterwards, feast on a sumptuous plate of Govinda’s sanctified food for a $5 donation. Every Sunday starting at 5:30 p.m., 711 E. Blackidge. For more info contact Rama Bhakti at 623-5397 or e-mail ramab hakti@netzero.com.

Zen Meditation Group
Zen Desert Sangha, affiliated with Robert Arken’s Diamond Sangha, offers meditation six days a week: Monday and Thursday starting at 8:30 a.m., and Saturday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. at 5220 N. Martin (Cannell/Ft. Lowell area). We will also offer one day and weekend retreats. For more info call 319-6260, visit www.zensersangha.org or email zds@darkotan.com.

Inspirational Healing Yoga
An awesome yoga class that beginners find especially helpful. Every Saturday, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Inspirational Healing, 4929 E. 29th St. First class Free/$5 each additional class. 584-0343.

Natural Childbirth Classes
Whole Birth Midwifery offers natural childbirth classes, a series of six classes starting bi-monthly. Classes focus on the natural process of birth in the home setting. The class is taught through lecture, video, slides, art, and class participation. Class Fee: $150. Whole Birth Midwifery, 3265 N. Stone Ave. For more information call Lisa at 275-0790.

Desert Ashram
Founded in 1975 by Prabhupati Swami Amaar Jyoti, Desert Ashram is a sanctuary of beauty and peace for all spiritual seekers. Daily 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.—Aarati (Sanskrit chanting and puja/worship); Thursdays and Sundays 7:30 p.m.—Satsang of Prabhupati (spiritual discourse) with chanting and meditation. There is no charge for these programs. Personal Retreats and Karma Yoga—by individual arrangement. 3403 West Sweetwater Drive, Ph: 743-0384.

Hatha Yoga
Experience a greater sense of peace and renewed energy through the practice of yoga. Ongoing multi-level Hatha yoga class in the 4th Ave. neighborhood. $7. Wednesdays 12 to 1:15 at ZU/VI Dance, 738 North 5th Ave. (Historic Y). Call Ilana at 629-0237 for more information.

Yoga West
Gentle yoga Mondays 5:30-6:45 p.m., Vigorous yoga Wednesdays 5:30-6:45 p.m. Located at 3295 W. Speedway Blvd. Call Kathleen at 404-5587 or visit www.KathleenKordich.com for more information.

Tucson Yoga
Tucson Yoga, South 4th Ave & 12th St, (one block south of Broadway), holds 20 classes/week, beginner to advanced, for just $6 each or $45/month. For a class schedule and more information, call 877-TUC-YOGA or visit www.tucsonyoga.com.

Contemporary Dance
Experience the joy of dance! All levels of classes for adults and teens at the Dance-Loft, 620 E. 19th St., Ste. 150 (at Euclid). Classes include modern, hip hop, ballet, bellydance and Pilates. Children’s classes now too! For more info visit: www.thedance loft.com or call 250-4664.

Indigo Yoga For Kids
Indigo Yoga is designed for children age 4 to 13 years young. Explore fun techniques and experiences that will assist children in being centered, connected to source, and grounded. Saturdays from 2-3 p.m. at The Providence Institute, 1126 North Jones Blvd. Cost is $5. Call 323-0203.

Institute for Shamic Arts
The Institute fosters connection with art and nature through the imagination. A variety of classes, circles and workshops in body movement, art, drumming, spirituality and healing are offered, as well as weekend nature walks. The Institute for Shamican Arts is housed in the WomanKraft Castle, 388 S. Stone Ave. Call 954-2004 or see www.shamanworld.com for more information.

ARTS/COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENT
Older Lesbian (50+) Support Group
Meets 2nd and 4th Sundays, 2 to 4 p.m. Call Jo-Ann (219-2670) or Shawn (742-0559). The Castle is at 8111 E. Broadway. Call 883-0377. The Northwest Crones meet the 1st Monday of each month at Nanini Library. Contact Ingrid at 742-0559, The Southwest Crones meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Contact Pat at 298-5161, The Green Valley Crones meet the 4th Monday at 3:00 p.m. Contact Jean at 648-1225. Contact the point people for monthly schedules of activities.

Womankaft
Art classes and gallery showings, claiming, validating and empowering women artists and other under-represented groups. Gallery hours are Tues., Wed., Fri., and Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m., February to May and July to December. A variety of arts and crafts classes are offered each month. The WomanKraft Castle is at 388 S. Stone Ave. Call 629-9976 for more info.

Compost Demonstration
The Tucson Organic Gardeners maintain a compost demonstration site at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Way. A Master Composter is available to answer questions every Sat., excepting holidays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. On display are a dozen forms of working compost bins. For more info call 670-9158.

Make sure your organization’s event is listed here! Mail, fax, or drop off by March 5 to Food Conspiracy Newsletter, 412 N. 4th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705; Fax: 520-792-2703; or e-mail to outreach@foodconspira cy.org.

NEXT ISSUE
Specializing in: insomnia and stress relief women’s health depression and anxiety
Located on 7th St, around the corner from the co-op.
Kelly Woods L.Ac.
M.A.O.M.
520.275.4986
www.awakenbliss.com

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Environmental Working Group’s

Shopper’s Guide to Pesticides in Produce

**DIRTY DOZEN**
**BUY THESE ORGANIC**

- Peaches
- Apples
- Sweet Bell Peppers
- Celery
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Lettuce
- Grapes (Imported)
- Pears
- Spinach
- Potatoes

**CLEANEST 12**
**LOWEST IN PESTICIDES**

- Onions
- Avocado
- Sweet Corn (Frozen)
- Pineapples
- Mango
- Sweet Peas (Frozen)
- Asparagus
- Kiwi
- Bananas
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Eggplant

**WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT PESTICIDES?**
There is growing consensus in the scientific community that small doses of pesticides and other chemicals can adversely affect people, especially during vulnerable periods of fetal development and childhood when exposures can have long lasting effects. Because the toxic effects of pesticides are worrisome, not well understood, or in some cases completely unstudied, shoppers are wise to minimize exposure to pesticides whenever possible.

**WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?**
An EWG simulation of thousands of consumers eating high and low pesticide diets shows that people can lower their pesticide exposure by almost 90 percent by avoiding the top twelve most contaminated fruits and vegetables and eating the least contaminated instead. Eating the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables will expose a person to about 14 pesticides per day, on average. Eating the 12 least contaminated will expose a person to less than 2 pesticides per day. Less dramatic comparisons will produce less dramatic reductions, but without doubt using the Guide provides people with a way to make choices that lower pesticide exposure in the diet.

**WILL WASHING ANDPEELING HELP?**
Nearly all of the data used to create these lists already considers how people typically wash and prepare produce (for example, apples are washed before testing, bananas are peeled). While washing and rinsing fresh produce may reduce levels of some pesticides, it does not eliminate them. Peeling also reduces exposures, but valuable nutrients often go down the drain with the peel. The best option is to eat a varied diet, wash all produce, and choose organic when possible to reduce exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.

**HOW WAS THIS GUIDE DEVELOPED?**
The produce ranking was developed by analysts at the not-for-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) based on the results of nearly 51,000 tests for pesticides on produce collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration between 2000 and 2005. A detailed description of the criteria used in developing the rankings as well as a full list of fresh fruits and vegetables that have been tested is available at www.foodenews.org.


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**Advertise in Community News!**
The Food Conspiracy Community News is mailed monthly to almost two-thousand Co-op members and is stocked all month for the shoppers who visit the store. Reach our health conscious and community minded readership with a display ad in the newsletter.

For rates and information, contact Torrey at the store, or email outreach@foodconspiracy.org.

**Food Safety Update**

“Sweet Misery—A Poisoned World”

If you’re still eating foods containing the artificial sweetener aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal, diet drinks, etc.), you need to watch this documentary. Aspartame was approved for widespread use in the US in July of 1983. Within six months, brain tumor rates climbed 10%, diabetes went up 30% and brain lymphoma tumors skyrocketed 60%. Learn how this toxic chemical was scandalously approved by the FDA and is now one of the most widespread food additives in the US.

**Splenda Goes to Court**

A federal court has rejected a request for summary judgment in a lawsuit launched by the Sugar Association against Splenda. The plaintiff alleges Splenda, a Johnson & Johnson company, is falsely advertising to consumers with its marketing slogan “Made from sugar so it tastes like sugar.” Splenda is the synthetic compound sucralose, discovered in 1976 by scientists in Britain seeking a new pesticide formulation. The artificial sweetener is made by replacing hydroxyl groups in the sugar molecule with chlorine. There are no long-term studies of the side effects of Splenda in humans. The manufacturer’s own short-term studies showed that sucralose caused shrunk thymus glands and enlarged livers and kidneys in rodents. But in this case, the FDA decided that because these studies weren’t based on human test animals, they weren’t conclusive. As a result, Splenda is now one of the most ubiquitous ingredients in low calorie processed foods.

**Mysterious Brain Disease Surfaces at Hormel Slaughterhouse**

A new mysterious disease has revealed itself from the belly of one of the nation’s largest factory farm slaughterhouses. A dozen employees working to extract brains from pigs on the slaughter line at a Hormel facility in Austin, MN, have contracted a neurological disease scientists say they’ve never seen before. Investigators hypothesize the disease may not be contagious via ingestion of the animal tissue but rather the workers may have contracted it as they breathed in small particles of brain that were airborne via a high-pressure air hose extraction process. The disease, tentatively called “progressive inflammatory neuropathy,” has caused workers to complain of burning sensations, numbness, and difficulty walking.

**Who in the World Loves Fast Food the Most?**
The polling body Synovate and the BBC have released results of a survey analyzing how people around the world view fast food, dieting and exercise. One of the questions of the survey was “I like the taste of fast food too much to give it up.” 44 percent of Americans agreed with the statement while only 19 percent of the French agreed. For the first time, the UK gained the dubious honor of being the fast food capital of the world with 45 percent of people saying they couldn’t give up the greasy grub. When it comes to weight loss, over half of surveyed American, French and British people said they cut down on food to shed pounds, while Malaysia had the highest percentage of people connecting weight loss to herbs and supplements. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are among the top users of low-fat products and meal replacements, but also gym memberships and home exercise equipment.

**The Top Agricultural Breakthroughs of 2007**
Although the biotech industry and our indented corporate mass media would have us believe that recent scientific advances in food and farming are derived from genetic engineering and chemicals, according to UK-based GM Watch, the real breakthroughs in farming in 2007 came from organic and sustainable agriculture. In 2007 a deluge of new scientific studies from a wide variety of institutions indicate that in comparison to genetically modified (GM) crops, organic agriculture can better feed the world, reduce global warming, provide greater nutrition, and boost the economy. Digesting new research on the topic, the United Nations announced that organic agriculture is the best way to feed the world and help stabilize the climate. A wide range of new, non-GM crops over the last year are bringing hope to farmers around the world. Some of these include:

- A wheat variety that can withstand high salinity in soil, thereby opening up vast tracks of land previously considered “dead.”
- Non-GM corn and rice varieties that can tolerate droughts.
- Indian farmers find traditional cotton varieties to be much more stress-resistant than GM cotton.
- Iron fortified non-GM maize strain reduces anemia rates in children.
- Discovery of non-GM variety of allergen-free peanut.

This month’s article clarifies the difference between an essence and an essential oil. Essential oils are made by extracting physical substances from plants. Essences on the other hand, are vibrational or energetic remedies. Flower essences are usually made by placing a few flowers in a bowl of spring or other pure water in sunshine. The water becomes imprinted with the energy of the flower. That mother essence is diluted into the stock bottles that are sold, which can be further diluted to make dosage bottles. The water simply carries the vibration of the flower; nothing physical is transmitted.

And in the case of rock water, one of Dr. Bach’s original remedies, the essence is not of a flower, but of spring water itself. Rock water essence helps us flow and become more spontaneous and flexible.

I’ve found it helpful with issues of transitioning from a very rigid diet undertaken for healing, to becoming more flexible in order to flow with life when eating in other people’s homes, in restaurants, or while traveling or attending retreats or conferences. Rock water also helps in healing eating disorders, in developing a healthy relationship with food, rather than trying to adhere to an eating plan that is overly strict.

Rock water may help us as we move out into the larger world in a different way; when we expand to have a larger store, we’ll be interacting with a broader segment of the population. How do we respond to their needs, while maintaining our core values? I think they’ll find us more approachable when they experience us as flexible in living our ideals, rather than being dogmatic or hard-edged in some way.

Flowing with situations requires us to feel, and to honor our own feelings and those of others. Rock water essence helps in learning to work with feelings. If a person takes a rock essence and does not feel its effect, rock water may be indicated since it can help people experience the flow of their feelings.

Information in these articles is for general educational purposes. Please consult a practitioner for individual essence recommendations.

To learn more about rock water essence, see:
Dr. Edward Bach Centre (England) www.bachcentre.com

The Slow Food Movement is a back-to-the-land movement that occurs in our lifestyles, our communities, and the earth—if we changed our relationship with food, if we focused on food as physical and spiritual nourishment! If we savored every bite, eating would no longer be simple refueling. If we considered cooking an art and a source of fulfillment, it would cease to be drudgery. When others cooked for us—or when we picked up quality food at our local co-op—we would be truly grateful. And as we paid attention to how our food is produced and actively supporting the responsible enjoyment of it.

Important issues to the Movement include:
• Environmental sustainability. The Slow Food Movement underlines the risks of agribusiness, factory farms, genetic engineering, monoculture, and pesticides—risks like depletion of the soil, pollution of the air and water, and the loss of family farms and rural communities. Slow Food supports the small family farmer as well as small-scale gardening. (Many chapters have programs that teach children gardening.)
• Good food. Industrial food production does not yield the most nutritious, delicious, or life-enhancing foods. The Slow Food Movement celebrates artisan foods (like beautifully crafted breads and farmstead cheeses) the culinary arts (how to cook, not quickly, but skillfully), and seasonal celebrations of local foods and traditions (like an autumn harvest festival or a community potluck).

Whether you’re eager to commit to more time in the kitchen or are more likely to switch restaurants in order to enjoy slow food, there are plenty of opportunities to become part of the movement:
• Buy local food. Food cooperatives have long supported local food producers. Farmer’s markets are another excellent source. Get to know your local farmers and support their endeavors.
• Support restaurants that purchase local food and that celebrate local traditions.
• Pay more for quality food, if necessary. Sometimes it costs more to produce food that isn’t commercialized. Be willing to invest in the cause.
• Host a community potluck or dinner in celebration of good foods.
• Support your local food cooperative, where you’ll find healthful choices as well as opportunities to explore food issues.
• Grow some of your own food—whether in a container on your back steps or on your acreage.
• Teach your children—and/or neighborhood children—to garden.

Rock Water
Illustrations copyright of Margaret Foster and printed courtesy of the Bach Centre.

You may also like to see the general instructions about choosing essences and taking doses found in “Flower essences to help with decision-making,” Community News, Sept. 2006, p. 4. Archived online at www.foodconspiracy.coop/events/newsletters.

Deborah Mayaan (881-2534) is a flower essence and energy work practitioner who sees clients in person in Tucson and also works by telephone. www.deborahmayaan.com

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Bike Movie Fest

Bike Fest 2008 kicks off with an afternoon of films at the Fox Theater, downtown, Sunday, March 30, from Noon to 5 p.m. Ride down to the historic Fox Theatre and enjoy the Bike Movie Fest. Admission fee is waived if you park your bike in the secured area.

Noon to 2 p.m.: 
Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure (PG) 2 to 3 p.m.: 
Return of the Scorcher (not rated) 3 to 5 p.m.: 
Triplets of Belleville (PG-13)

Pee-Wee’s and Triplets will be preceded by 15 minutes of short bike films. Following Return of the Scorcher will be a short called Revisiting the Return of the Scorcher.

For more information contact: Tom Thivener, City of Tucson Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, at 837-6691 or tom.thivener@tucsonaz.gov.

“Make in only ten minutes!”
“Eat on the go!”
“Get out of the kitchen fast!”

These are the kinds of promises designed to sell food—fast food. What kind of a transformation would occur—in our lifestyles, our communities, and the earth—if we changed our relationship with food, if we focused on food as physical and spiritual nourishment? If we savored every bite, eating would no longer be simple refueling. If we considered cooking an art and a source of fulfillment, it would cease to be drudgery. When others cooked for us—or when we picked up quality food at our local co-op—we would be truly grateful. And as we paid attention to how our food is produced and actively supporting the responsible enjoyment of it.

Food members.
“If we are looking for one single action which will enable the poor to overcome their poverty, I would focus on credit.”

— Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank

Microcredit in Latin America

by Anna Lambert, Co-op Owner

Organizations have largely eliminated loan sharks and have provided a practical service in countries where governments make little effort to alleviate poverty. In the decade between 1996 and 2006, Acción moved from distributing 276,000 loans to 2,375,000. The average loan rose from $581 to $829; most are repaid in full. However, interest rates are generally higher in Latin American than they are in Asia. Even a loan from Acción can carry a rate as high as 20% over the course of a year. This is far less than a microloan from a private institution, but for someone making a few dollars a day, it is still a lot to pay back.

Microcredit is exactly that: small, but its existence has had macro effects, not all positive. It alleviates poverty for a few, while two out of every five Latin Americans continue to live in poverty. The original social-action groups took over the functions that governments should provide: ensuring that their citizens would have basic necessities. Because services were provided, governments were not pressured to assume this responsibility. While governments could have worked in tandem with aid organizations, identifying and filling gaps in service such as health care, in reality this has not been the trend. Instead, in countries with military rule, government resources were diverted to the diminishing of human rights as they accepted aid for the same population they were quelling.

The social model of microcredit relies on building solidarity among a group of borrowers, and provides a greater opportunity for savings. For entrepreneurs who have moved up to living on a few dollars a day, illness or unexpected events can quickly drain what they have gained. Being part of a group that could cover other, continued loans could effectively carry one member of the group through a short down-turn. However, the increasing reliance in Latin America on the for-profit model can easily lead to serial loans, where the individual recipient is still trapped in an endless cycle of debt. Three decades of micro lending in Latin America have had mixed results. Many have benefited from small loans, establishing businesses that have enabled families to lead more comfortable lives. Continued lack of government investment in the welfare of citizens has tempered the idealistic notion that microcredit would entirely alleviate poverty. One would hope that watchdog groups will continue to pressure governments and community-based actions for infrastructure change; thus far, change has been slow.

As the microcredit movement has evolved, this social angel has been paralleled by a profit-driven model for issuing microcredit. According to the Canada-based Microcredit Summit Campaign, 4.4 million people in Latin America have secured small loans through microcredit organizations and 10.3 million families would still qualify for, and benefit from, small loans. Increasingly, Latin America is moving towards the for-profit model, especially in better-developed markets, like Bolivia and Peru.

The for-profit institutions tend to focus on urban areas. Loans are made to individuals without the cultivation of solidarity groups or circles, and it is a “high-touch” business, in that loan officers are regularly in touch with their clients. Microcredit is a big business in Latin America, with an estimated 493 groups supplying credit.

As they have for thirty years, no matter the political or social conditions, Grameen and its offshoots have worked in tandem with aid organizations, providing a greater opportunity for savings. For entrepreneurs who have moved up to living on a few dollars a day, illness or unexpected events can quickly drain what they have gained. Being part of a group that could cover other, continued loans could effectively carry one member of the group through a short down-turn. However, the increasing reliance on the for-profit model can easily lead to serial loans, where the individual recipient is still trapped in an endless cycle of debt.

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Groups Blast FDA Approval of Food from Cloned Animals

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently released a report concluding that food from cloned animals is as safe as that from normal animals. The report gives the green light to the marketing of meat and milk from cloned cattle, pigs, and goats. The FDA report met with a swift and harsh response from consumer, farm, organic, and animal rights groups. Meanwhile, the US Department of Agriculture asked for a voluntary moratorium on sales of food from clones until consumers are more accepting of such products.

“Appallingly irresponsible”

A wide range of groups including Farm Sanctuary, the American Anti-Vivisection Society, Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, and organic food companies blasted the FDA’s decision. Farm Sanctuary spokeswoman Natalie Bowman called the decision “appallingly irresponsible.” The FDA’s bullheaded action disregards the will of the public and the Senate—and opens a literal Pandora’s Box,” said Andrew Kimbrell, executive director of the Center for Food Safety, which is considering legal action to block sales of food from clones. Kimbrell refers to a provision in the 2007 Senate Farm Bill that would delay FDA endorsement of the use of food from cloned animals. The amendment, advanced by Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) and co-sponsored by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), calls for a rigorous and careful review of the human health and economic impacts of bringing cloned food into America’s food supply. The senate overwhelmingly passed the bill by a vote of 79 to 14.

“Creepy”

Major meat producers Smithfield Foods and Tyson Foods both said they had no plans to produce meat from cloned animals. Spokespersons for food retail giants Kroger and Safeway also said they wouldn’t sell food from cloned animals. Surveys show American consumers oppose cloning of animals for food. A 2006 survey by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology found that 61% of Americans who claim to have heard about cloning are uncomfortable with it. For example, Patricia Schwarzenegger of the Anti-Vivisection Society, Consumers Union, Consumers Federation of America, and organic food companies blasted the FDA’s decision. Farm Sanctuary’s Kimball, executive director of the Center for Food Safety, which is considering legal action to block sales of food from clones.

“As safe as food we eat every day”

The FDA’s 968-page “final risk assessment” finds “no evidence of hidden risks” in foods derived from clones, although it does acknowledge that “moral, religious, and ethical concerns … have been raised” by cloning of animals. “Meat and milk from cattle, swine and goat clones are as safe as food we eat every day,” said Dr. Stephen Sundlof, FDA food-safety chief. The FDA says that no special labels will be required for food from cloned animals, which consumers also oppose. A 2007 California bill which would have required such labels was vetoed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

“Look for organic label”

Organic Valley, the nation’s largest cooperative of organic family farmers, strongly opposes the FDA decision. CEO George Siemon said, “Organic Valley and its meat brand, Organic Prairie, will never allow the use of cloned animals on our farms and in our products. And, we assume the USDA will never change its organic standards to allow for cloned animals.” The Organic Trade Association (OTA) declared that cloning as a production method is prohibited under the National Organic Program. "Creepy" by Wayne Pacelle, chief executive of the Humane Society of the United States, expressed concerns about the health of cloned animals. "Despite the fact that cloned animals suffer high mortality rates and those who survive are often plagued with birth defects and diseases, the FDA did not give adequate consideration to the welfare of these animals or their surrogate mothers in its deliberations," he said.

EU: cloning animals “not ethically justified”

The European Union also weighed in on the issue. Similar to its US counterpart, the European Food Safety Agency released a report saying that meat and milk from cloned animals pose no special health risk. However, the report also said that cloned animals are more prone to disease than conventionally bred animals. Meanwhile, the European Commission’s Office on Ethics said that it does not see “convincing arguments to justify the production of food from clones and their offspring. Considering the current level of suffering and health problems of surrogate dams and animal clones, the EGE has doubts as to whether cloning animals for food supply is ethically justified.”

SURVEY SAYS:

Already in the Food Supply

Kansas cattle producer says that offspring of cloned animals have already entered the food supply. Donald Coover, a cattleman and veterinarian, says that he has sold semen from prize-winning clones to many US meat producers in the past few years, and that others may be doing the same. “This is a fairy tale that this technology is not being used and is not already in the food chain,” said Coover. “Anyone who tells you otherwise either doesn’t know what they’re talking about, or they’re not being honest.”

Cloned animals are prohibitively expensive for general consumption and are more likely to be used as genetic stock for breeding. Cloned cattle currently cost $15,000 to $20,000 per copy. US Department of Agriculture officials say that a voluntary market moratorium has been removed from offspring of clones but not from clones themselves. “I have sold offspring of cloned animals into feedlots, and they are in the food chain,” Coover told the Star-Tribune on Wednesday. "As safe as food we eat every day" by Wayne Pacelle, chief executive of the Humane Society of the United States, expressed concerns about the health of cloned animals. "Despite the fact that cloned animals suffer high mortality rates and those who survive are often plagued with birth defects and diseases, the FDA did not give adequate consideration to the welfare of these animals or their surrogate mothers in its deliberations," he said.

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Cornucopia used the meeting as an opportunity to deliver more than 1,500 individual proxy letters opposing the new requirement, adding to thousands of other e-mails and contacts the USDA has received. For the better part of an hour, Cornucopia discussed the concerns of consumers and the mounting negative impact the almond pasteurization rule has on family farmers and organic farmers.

Cornucopia then offered a compromise proposal for the USDA to consider. The farm policy group suggested a plan permitting the sale of untreated American-grown almonds with a warning label, which would allow for continued freedom of choice in the marketplace and would allow marketers the option of continuing to sell raw almonds. Cornucopia also requested that the USDA consider a second solution—a pasteurization exemption for organic almond growers (since the organic sector has not been implicated in any of the past contamination problems associated with almonds and organic regulations have certain food safety protocols built-in).

The response from USDA staff was encouraging ("constructive" in the words of one official). Half of all public comments being received by the Secretary of Agriculture, according to these USDA officials, have been on the almond issue! They are clearly hearing the public’s voice, but they need to respond as well.

A number of family-scale almond farmers and organic farmers—who rely upon the sale of their nuts to domestic markets—are being severely harmed by the almond rule. Costs of almond pasteurization, either with the toxic fumigant propylene oxide or steam heat, were underestimated by the USDA. And a number of retail outlets have switched, due to consumer demand, to foreign-grown raw almonds that can still be sold in the US without being pasteurized. One American family farmer growing almonds has reported to Cornucopia that he has incurred losses totaling $400,000 from the new rule.

As part of the compromise proposal to the USDA, Cornucopia offered to wait until early 2008 before initiating any legal action seeking to suspend or overturn the pasteurization rule. If the plan falls through at USDA, watch for news on the legal front.

Meanwhile, Cornucopia is seeking to keep the issue front and center at USDA. As proxy letters from the public continue to come in to the organization, they are being hand delivered to the USDA. If you haven’t already, please make your voice heard! An action alert with downloadable proxy letter and directions about where to send it are available at: www.cornucopia.org/almond/ConnerLetter2.html.
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Reminder to all Co-op members...
...who joined the co-op before October 1, 2006. A minimum of $15 is due to begin paying off the $60 equity increase. If you have not already made a payment toward this equity increase, you will be prompted at the register to pay $15 the next time you shop.

There are probably as many reasons why a food co-op goes out of business as there are reasons why other food co-ops survive. Continued customer support is often a prime reason why some food co-ops succeed where others don’t, but in our case our affiliation with other food co-ops over the years through our membership in the National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA) has been very important to our well being. Through our membership in NCGA and its 109 food co-op members (130 stores in all) in 32 states, we have had access to resources that would be unavailable if we were to go it alone. Our staff and our board have been able to learn and grow because of opportunities made available through NCGA. Neither of the above mentioned co-ops were NCGA members.

A description of NCGA activities is on www.ncga.coop:

“NCGA operates as a business services cooperative while providing trade association functions for its members. There are two overlapping areas of work: business services and member workgroups.

Business Services functions are charged with providing a return on members’ investment in the services they provide. These services are focused on purchasing efforts in both core product and non-core product categories, as well as promotions purchased through the Cooperative Advantage Program (CAP). Business services also offers marketing and communications support and services for prepared foods departments.

“Member Workgroups are charged with finding ways to bring about continuous improvement for their member co-ops, to provide tangible peer support for co-op general managers, and to support the development of food co-operators. Member workgroups are organized within three corridors—Eastern, Central, and Western—and may also operate using chapters based on the desires of those members.”

NCGA not only helps food co-ops remain in business or even thrive but they are also involved in developing new start up food co-ops. This bodes well for our Co-op and others across the nation because it reinvigorates the food co-op movement.

I’m hopeful that the void left by the closings of two Arizona food co-ops will generate interest in starting other new food co-ops in this state and in other areas formerly serviced by TCW. In Arizona, the food co-op spawning process is occurring right now in nearby Sierra Vista, which could have their own storefront operation serving their community. Other communities can take matters into their own hands by organizing. For information about starting a food co-op go to www.cgin.coop, click on “Public Resources” and then “How to start a food co-op.”

And thanks for your continued support of Food Conspiracy Co-op.
POEM

a stunning light.
by de Vie, Co-op owner

There is a mysterious center
An electrified core
It lives underground
It lives out in the open

No one goes there, it is fire
It is the ocean
It is drowning and rebirth
It is electric sudden death

If pressed, it will be called a thief
If given enough time, it
Will become a person
Or at least, a stunning light

When I dig
Close enough to the bone
And really ask and look
I forget everything
And the mind
Drops off the cliff
Into the surf

Where there are no seasons,
And the heat is freezing,
The separation is criminal,
The murderous passing of time,
Sleep, sunrise, looking, quenched.

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vm: (520) 495-2005
myspace.com/yourdeVie

CO-OP Basic Buys

In Bulk

Local Bulk Honey
PLU: 865

Eddies Organic Vegetable Pasta

Organic Peanut Butter
‘Grind Your Own’
PLU: 780

As of Sept. 1, 2007, Basic Buys are
a Co-op member benefit only
(cannot be combined with other discounts)

**Produce and bulk prices will vary throughout
the month but will be 10% above our costs.**

Shelton’s
Free Range Ground Turkey

$1.99
Reg. $3.59
1 lb.

Ryvita Rye Crisp Bread

$1.89
Reg. $3.49
7 oz.

One With Nature
Assorted Soaps

$1.99
Reg. $3.69

5# Bag Russet Potatoes**

$1.65
Reg. $2.99
12 oz.