

Fiddleheads Natural Food Cooperative Newsletter

spring 2010

Fiddleheads QUARTERLY



Fiddleheads Quarterly is a publication of
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(Thanks, Bob!)*

Dear Readers,

Spring has sprung, and new, local products are showing up in the produce section at Fiddleheads. There are local, fresh greens, including dandelions and fiddleheads, and delicious, prepared salads are back in the store, thanks to our good neighbor, Kamp Dog.

This issue features a fun article about yogurt, complete with recipes and a piece about greens, glorious greens. We hope you enjoy.

As you're out in your garden, planting seeds for summer's harvest, think about planting some seeds at Fiddleheads. Why not make a commitment this spring to donate your change to the coop or give back your discount or even to drop a dollar in the donations bowl (near the cash register) every time you shop. Little donations add up and can help create big changes in your coop.

Cooperatively,
Mary Howard and Laurie Gorham,
Fiddleheads Quarterly coeditors



Laurie Gorham



Mary Howard



News from the Board

AT FEBRUARY'S Board meeting, Fiddleheads had 1,069 member households. Daily sales are averaging over \$2,000, an important mark because this is the amount needed to both cover the monthly bills and make payments on outstanding loans. According to Tony Dumolo, sales representative at United Food Distributors, one of Fiddlehead's main suppliers, sales of UNFI products has increased by 83% from the same time last year.

Advertising

Anyone who owns a business soon learns that advertising is crucial to sales. Although it is member-owned, Fiddleheads is no different than any other business: profits are important. For this reason, the Board of Directors works hard to find the best place for advertising. Board member Sheila Herbert has seen sales increase directly as a result of well-placed advertising and notes, "Surprising to me is that radio advertising has been particularly effective. Most Board members have been told many times that they heard our ad on the radio."

The coop has advertised in *The Day* newspaper and on the radio, but Board members find

the newspaper too expensive. Radio ads seem to give a greater "bang" for the coop's limited "bucks." Board President Dick Virgin, who currently manages all advertising for the coop, has also received positive response from people who have learned about Fiddlehead's from the Internet. The Board is working with a volunteer to put a "tracker" on our Web site so that we can maximize our effectiveness in this area.

Plan B Retail Design

At the Feb 16th meeting, the Board of Directors voted to hire Plan B Design to produce a conceptual design, budget, timeline and narrative for the renovation of the coop's space. The plans will include building repairs and upgrades, equipment, interior design and marketing structures. However, the motion passed only with the stipulation that no existing funds be used to hire the design company. Thanks to the generosity of a number of coop member-owners, Board President Richard Virgin was able to raise the initial payment of \$3000.

Work began immediately after the vote. Company representatives

have already taken measurements of the store and reviewed the information gathered by the committee that initiated this process. From this data, several initial drawings have been completed. According to board member Ellen Anthony, who met with Chuck Bomely of Plan B recently at his office in Tolland, some very attractive features of the preliminary sketches include a vestibule-airlock, a deli-kitchen area near where HABA is now, and a re-orientation of the shelving, placing them at a slight diagonal.

The next step in the process will be a meeting with the Renovation Committee, the Financial Committee and Chuck Bomely to review the preliminary ideas and to discuss the financial possibilities and parameters of our project.

continued on page 7

Fiddleheads

Natural Food Cooperative
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Springing into the season with **GREENS!**

SPRING IS THE SEASON of abundant greens: arugula and Swiss chard, bok choi and romaine, spinach and oak leaf, Lacinato, curly and red Russian kale. Greens are amazingly easy to grow and express fondness for the cool New England spring weather. Bearing colorful names such as Speckled Troutback, Blush Butter and Devil's Tongue, the variety of heirloom lettuces is wide and tasty. Lettuces reveal their diverse origins as well, with the French influence apparent in the name of some, like Rouge Grenobloise, and the Asian bok choi and tat soi. They vary in water content, making them more or less crisp, and flavor — some being remarkably spicy while others are quite bland.

Tender lettuces are delicious as a raw snack or in salad. Fermented vegetables, like carrots or turnips make a great addition to salads as the enzymes created by the fermentation process aid digestion of raw greens. Adding garbanzo beans or grilled chicken satisfies the need for protein. The slightly sturdier greens, like spinach, bok choi, and kale stand up well to a light steam or sauté and continue to be a lively addition to soups. The cooking possibilities are infinite and easy: steamed spinach tossed with caramelized onions and goat cheese or a sprinkling of balsamic vinegar and sliced olives; kale sautéed with olive oil, garlic and pine nuts; bok choi stir-fried with ginger and soy sauce, or added to miso soup with mushrooms and scallions. Because they cooking in less than 10 minutes, greens make an ideal vegetable to prepare for dinner when time is of the essence (and really, when isn't time of the essence?).

With their dense fibers, greens are also nature's assistant in helping us humans do a little internal spring-cleaning. They are high in vitamins and low in calories: one cup of raw spinach has more than half (yes, half!) of the recommended daily dose of Vitamin A and only 7 calories. Kale packs a powerhouse of vitamin C, with 89% of the RDA. The lettuces are slightly lower in nutritional value; a cup of red leaf lettuce has 40% of the RDA of Vitamin A. (www.nutritiondata.com) As a general guideline, the darker the leafy green, the higher the nutritional value. Virtually free of saturated fat and cholesterol and loaded with minerals and vitamins, greens remain a prime choice for optimal nutrition.

And then spring also brings radishes and rhubarbs, asparagus and turnips, oh my! Mark Pailthorpe of Falls Creek Farm in Oneco, CT, shared a delightful surprise — with a little luck and no frost, the first strawberries of the season could be ready by mid-May. So, come, gather your greens at Fiddleheads and enjoy the bounty of the spring season!

P.S. Did you know that everything mentioned in this article could be found at the coop: olives, miso paste and soup packets, scallions, soy sauce, ginger, mushrooms, pine nuts, garlic, olive oil, garbanzo beans, chicken, fermented carrots and glorious greens! — *Kimberly Giunta*

All about Yogurt

IT IS KNOWN as laban in the Arab world, matzoon in Armenia, and leben raib in Egypt.

It is the foundation for the appetizer known as *borani*, in Iran. Russians eat it with black bread, and, in Yugoslavia, it is sold on the streets like ice cream. I once thought of yogurt as the tangy, white sauce you got in Indian or Lebanese restaurants; more recently I've thought of it as something to eat with fruit or granola or to blend into smoothies. But as I researched the origins and uses of yogurt, I was humbled to discover that in many countries, yogurt is as essential to the cuisine as salt and pepper is here. Might that make a curious mind want to know more? It did mine. So, here follows some rambling thoughts on what I've learned about cooking with this amazing food.

I did not realize until I read my cookbook, *Middle Eastern Cooking* by Rose Dosti, that I had been eating a variation of the Iranian salad dish, *borani*, mentioned above. In Dosti's recipe, one medium onion is chopped and sautéed in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of butter. Two pounds of fresh spinach is added and tossed with the onion until wilted. Then two cups of plain yogurt are folded in and the whole mix is seasoned with salt and pepper.

In my version, you steam a whole bunch of broccoli and put it in the fridge. When you want something green but don't feel like cooking or making a salad, you take out some cooked broccoli, cut it up and put it in a bowl. Then you add yogurt and ground flax seed. Mix that all together and crumble in some very mild feta cheese, because the texture just makes you smile. Voila!

If you are a fan of Indian food, you have probably eaten raita, the refreshing yogurt and cucumber sauce served as a condiment with

the main meal. But there are many other variations to try. In *Cooking of India*, there are six raita recipes listed. One combines roasted eggplant with tomato, onion and garam masala in the yogurt. (Garam

masala is an Indian spice mix much like curry but without the heat). Another mixes finely chopped onion and hot chili pepper into the yogurt — with a final touch of chopped

continued on page 8

Recipes

A favorite from Paul Shaffer, from an old issue of a vegetarian magazine.

Tofu Hoisin with Cashews and Vegetables

To keep this a relaxed meal, completely cook rice before you begin stir-frying.

4 T peanut oil
1 pound firm tofu, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes and patted very dry
5 carrots, thinly sliced on the diagonal
3 T water
1/2 pound snow peas, tips & strings removed
3/4 cup (about 4 ounces) roasted cashews
1 tsp. minced fresh ginger
Hot cooked rice

Sauce
1/3 cup hoisin sauce
2 T tamari soy sauce
2 T Chinese rice wine or dry sherry
1 T oriental sesame oil

Serves 4

1. Place all of the ingredients in front of you before you begin stir-frying. Mix the sauce ingredients together in a small cup and keep nearby. Heat 2 tablespoons of the peanut oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add the tofu and stir-fry until evenly golden, about 10 minutes. Remove the tofu to a platter and keep it near the stove; reduce the heat to medium high.
2. Put the carrots in the pan or wok, toss, then pour in the 3 tablespoons water. Immediately cover the pan and cook 3 minutes. Remove the cover. (The water should have evaporated; if not, cook uncovered for a few seconds.) Push the carrots to the sides of the pan to make a well, then pour the remaining 2 tablespoons of the peanut oil into the center of the pan. Let it heat for a few seconds, then toss it onto the carrots.
3. Add the snow peas, cashews, and ginger and stir-fry 2 minutes. Return the tofu to the pan and stir-fry 1 minute more.
4. Give the sauce mixture a quick stir and pour it over the tofu and vegetables. Toss to coat and immediately spoon the vegetables onto a platter or into a serving bowl. Serve over rice.

A Fieldtrip to Fiddleheads



THERE ARE at least six elementary and middle schools located within walking distance of Fiddleheads. One of the missions of Fiddleheads and food cooperatives in general is education. Therefore, when Joanne Huber, a second grade teacher from the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, asked if she could bring two classes to Fiddleheads for a tour, the answer naturally was yes! The tour was held on March 17 with 40 students, two teachers and several parent chaperones. These students were studying nutrition and soil, so the tour was based on these themes. A number of Fiddleheads' regular vendors volunteered to be stations on the tour. They were Joanne from Purity Farm, Laura from Urban Eden (natural soaps), Kathy from the Farmer's Cow, and Mary from

Bread and Cookies. Other stations were bulk foods, produce, and coop operation. At each station, the students had a mini lecture and time for questions and answers. Also included were some hands on activities like smelling naturally scented soaps at Urban Eden and tasting fresh, local milk at the Farmer's Cow. The students were

divided into four groups and each group had a tour guide. The guides were Lisa Cygan, Emily Lerner, Sara Sargent, and John Sargent. All involved seemed to really enjoy the experience and learn many valuable new things as well! For more information on educational tours contact John Sargent at sargjohn@gmail.com — *John Sargent*

Fiddleheads, Customer Friendly

RECENTLY, a fellow Board member and I were discussing an article that explained the role a friendly atmosphere plays in customers' shopping preferences: people want to shop where they are made to feel welcome. Fiddlehead's customers regularly tell me that the friendly atmosphere at our coop makes for a very pleasant shopping experience.

I read this article right after experiencing horrendous treatment at several area businesses. One doesn't have to do much shopping to find that customer service in many places seems either extremely poor or non-existent. It is disheartening to find so many businesses that are run with no regard for customer satisfaction. I made the

decision to no longer frequent the businesses that treated me poorly.

What does this have to do with the coop? Everything. Our working members go out of their way to welcome customers. They are friendly and often chat with our customers. Volunteers can routinely be heard saying, "Did you find everything you were looking for?" "Are you new to shopping here?" or "Enjoy this beautiful weather." Our customers know we take a genuine interest in them.

Customers ask questions and often comment about the store and its growth. Many wish they had learned about the coop earlier. Customers respond

continued on page 8



An interview with Warren Axtell

What do you do at Fiddleheads?

I am a coordinator and cashier at Fiddleheads. I do whatever needs to be done.

Why do you volunteer?

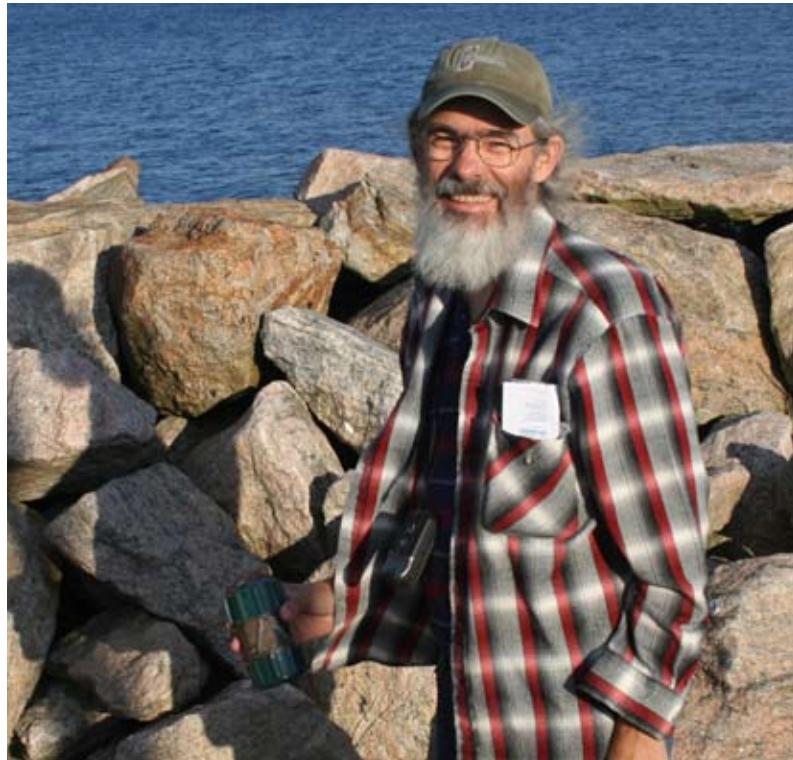
I volunteer at Fiddleheads because I like the member-owned coop concept, and I like to support the availability of local organic and natural foods.

What is your favorite product at the coop?

My favorite items are the Fiddleheads House Blend coffee and bulk products.

What do you do when you are not at Fiddleheads?

I retired as an electrical engineer from government service in 2006. I hiked the Appalachian Trail with my wife for the next seven months. I like hiking. Currently I volunteer at my church and help my wife babysit our grandchildren. A new hobby is geocaching.



Board News

continued from page 3

Beer is Almost Here!

The CT State Liquor Commission has granted Fiddleheads a license to sell beer, and a locked storage area has been built and installed in the rear of the store. The application process was long - and there is yet one more project to be completed before beer can be sold at Fiddleheads: we need to have more coordinators and volunteers in the store in order to have the people power to check id's and to sell beer responsibly. At this time, there are barely enough volunteers available

to keep the store open Monday through Saturday, and frequently there are not enough people to run the register, help customers and keep the shelves stocked. So please, if you or someone you know has an extra four hours or so a week, or every other week, consider being a store volunteer. Once we have the people power in place, there are many local, microbrewery beers we will be able to carry, as well as organic and gluten-free beers. These products also have the potential to increase store sales and bring in new customers.

In a final note on beer, you might wonder, "If beer, why not wine?" Connecticut law allows grocery stores to sell only beer, not alcohol.

Sadly, wine is considered alcohol, so no organic wine for Fiddleheads.

Bulk Bins

Fiddleheads recently received from The Co-op Food Stores of Lebanon, N.H., a generous donation of five bulk cases and 90 bulk bins. These bins are used but in good condition. One new unit generally goes for around \$5,000. The bins will be used to improve and expand the dry bulk section. In addition to the Lebanon coop, enormous thanks are due Ellen Anthony and Paul Shaffer for putting in the 11-hour day it took to retrieve the items, and Bob Bunting for the loan of his truck and trailer. THANK YOU!

Yoghurt

continued from page 5

fresh mint leaves! I can't wait to experiment with that one using fresh produce from our Saturday Farmer's Market this summer!

Yogurt soups are made throughout the Middle East and India. These, like the raitas, can be spiced up in lots of different ways: with mint and onion, toasted cumin and black mustard seeds, or with seasoned soup stock and vegetables. They all use yogurt beaten with an egg as a creamy lowfat thickener. I made mine with strong vegetable stock, celery, raw garlic and red quinoa. It was okay, but I think I'd like it better with potatoes.

There is not enough room here to list all the amazing things I learned about yogurt or the interesting recipes I came across. To learn more, visit www.wholefoods.com for a comprehensive list of this wonder food's alleged benefits (as

well as a yummy-sounding red bean and lime yogurt soup recipe). Or check out www.fluther.com, for an interesting discussion about Activa, the "new" yogurt sold by Dannon, which is heavily advertised as better for you than regular yogurt. Finally, I will put together a small

collection of yogurt recipes and leave it somewhere conspicuous at the coop. If you want to share your favorite yogurt recipes or any other thoughts about yogurt, feel free to e-mail me at lpajeg@gmail.com. — *Laurie Gorham*

Customer Friendly

continued from page 6

positively to our "Request Book," even if they don't use it.

A big difference between most businesses and our coop is that all of the people who work at Fiddleheads are also owners. I think our owners/members are special people who really see the coop as their business, and they want it to do well. They recognize the importance of customer service, and they enjoy getting to know members and non-members who shop here.

It is also rewarding and enjoyable

for our working members to have pleasant exchanges with others who share their interest in wholesome food. There is a genuine sense of gratification one gets from helping others obtain access to good food and good friendship. If you have not volunteered, you are missing out on a wonderful opportunity to provide a needed service and reap the satisfaction and gratification of helping others. E-mail us at volunteerwithfiddleheads@gmail.com. We'll be glad to give you a chance to experience the rewards of being a working member. — *Richard Virgin*