

Co-operative Voices

LEVERETT
VILLAGE

CO-OP



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STORE OPERATIONS

John Calhoun—General Manager
leverettcoopgm@gmail.com

Catherine Decker—Buyer
leverettvillagecoopbuyer@gmail.com

CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Sam Black—Board President
sblack@vasci.umass.edu

Danielle Barshak—Vice President
daniellebarshak@verizon.net

Martin Pittman—Treasurer
martinpittman@earthlink.net

Kari Ridge—Clerk
karinotes7@gmail.com

Board Members

Jean Bergstrom
blueskyberg1@gmail.com

Lise Coppinger
liscoppinger@gmail.com

Lori Lynn Hoffer
lorilynn@waterlilydesign.com

MaryJo Johnson
maryjojohnson1@mac.com

Jono Neiger
jono@regenerativedesigngroup.com

LEVERETT VILLAGE CO-OP

180 Rattlesnake Gutter Rd
Leverett, MA 01054

www.leverettcoop.com
413-367-9794



Rattlesnake Gutter Market SECOND SATURDAYS

By Kari Ridge

As if on cue, overcast skies cleared just as vendors arrived to set up their wares. The inaugural market on June 12 brought the community together for crafts, arts, activities, an upcycle flea market, gardening help and joyful camaraderie.

“There was such a good feeling and energy in the air – very happy and upbeat, but also relaxed,” said Peggy Reber, a Shutesbury resident and long-time Co-op member, who visited the Market with her husband, Dennis Shapson. *“It was a real celebration of the Co-op’s revival and ascent from the ashes!”*

LVC General Manager John Calhoun said many market attendees came inside the store to shop, resulting in the Co-op’s busiest day in many years. *“I was thrilled to see our very first market be such a success, I really enjoyed seeing neighbors and friends connect. We had great vendors, lively music and smiling faces of all ages.”*

continued on page 7



FROM THE GM: A Perspective on Local Foods

By John Calhoun



I moved to Western Massachusetts from New Orleans 5 months ago. There are many ways I am becoming acclimated to my new home.

There are many ways that a place affects how we think and feel. There are many conscious and uncon-

scious ways I am affected by the new environment I am in. There is a certain way that a warm, humid New Orleans summer night feels on my skin which is so different than the experience of taking a breath of cold winter air in Massachusetts. Instead of the soulful sounds of brass band music in the streets, I now hear the beautiful chorus of bird songs in the spring. One of the ways I'm learning to become more in tune with my new home is by eating local foods.

As much as I am a supporter of the local foods movement for the ecological benefits, today I am taking time to ponder how food can connect one to place. In New Orleans we were too far South to produce apples, but in late fall/early winter citrus would come into season: oranges, grapefruit, satsumas, kumquats. In February, strawberries would become available until about Mother's Day. By June we would have blueberries, and then a little later we had sweet, delicious watermelons.

Now I am living in the land of apple cider and maple syrup! I am just beginning the journey of connecting to a new place through food. At first glance, an egg is an egg; but an egg from a pasture-raised chicken in Montague, MA is going to have its own unique flavor. Those chickens are eating worms and insects that live in the soil along the Connecticut River Valley. At the same time that I miss shrimp poboyos and gumbo, I am also delighted by how good the asparagus is around here!

As the seasons change, I look forward to new discoveries and the deeper connection to place that comes from eating local foods.

Infrastructure News from LISE COPPINGER

By Ellen Edge

It is always a pleasure checking in with Lise Coppinger, board member and infrastructure guru, about the Co-op's physical plant. As a contractor herself, Lise has an encyclopedic knowledge about all things related to building construction, and she has an equally deep knowledge about sustainability and how to access resources in the service of a sustainable and healthy Co-op. Whenever she shares the latest achievements, some of us can't help but be impressed.

So what has Lise accomplished lately? Read on...

- The Co-op has an all new, fully electric heating and air conditioning system as of April 1, 2021. Eversource, in cooperation with Mass Save, granted the Co-op \$38,500 towards the \$55,000 Installation of 7 Mitsubishi Ductless Heat Pumps (mini-splits) or heat and air-conditioning. Eversource also gave the Co-op a \$16,500 no-interest loan for the project that will be paid off in 5 years. Along with the Earth-friendly aspects of no longer relying on oil and propane, the Co-op is projected to save almost \$3,000 a year in heating and cooling costs!
- Energia, a worker owned co-operative based in Holyoke, MA, also completed the air sealing and insulation in the attic, as well as venting the two new bathroom fans to the outside of the building. Lise Coppinger and Moe Gregoire did the nasty job of replacing the two bathroom fans with Panasonic Whisper Quiet models that are energy efficient, are built to run continuously, and are really quiet!
- *"We are receiving quotes for an Energy Recovery Ventilator, the final equipment to finish the energy efficient overhaul of the building,"* Lise said. *"This will supply a constant flow of filtered fresh air into the building, while venting stale air out of the building."*
- As you may have heard, the Co-op is planning to create a patio space, where beer and wine can be enjoyed outside. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Thanks to Lise for her efforts to make the Co-op a healthy, safe and sustainable space!

LVC MEMBERSHIP

CO-OP'S, COMMUNITY, BELONGING & SUPPORT

By Ellen Edge

As stated on the Leverett Co-op's website, "Membership in the Leverett Village Co-op gives a sense of belonging to and supporting a wonderful community hub."

Regardless of how we perceive this economic and political moment, some of our neighbors are struggling. For many, their incomes may not be keeping pace with the cost of living, and costs are rising all around us.

To be responsive to this reality, Board members have discussed options for membership structures and agreed to offer "limited income memberships." Acknowledging that it is not within a lot of people's financial reach to become members, the Board and General Manager considered the third co-op principle, which is that members contribute equitably, not equally. For this reason, the Co-op now offers Limited Income Memberships.

1. REGULAR FULL SHARE MEMBERSHIP

is 17 shares @ \$10 a share = \$170. Member pays \$170 and is entitled to all perks of membership which include member discounts with certain Coop business partners, in-store discounts, patronage dividends when available, and voting rights at member meetings (1 member, 1 vote, regardless of number of shares owned).

2. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

(formerly called "Active" membership) is 6 shares @ \$10 a share = \$60.

- a) An annual membership entitles one to all discounts and perks of Full Share membership.
- b) It can also be considered as partial payment toward a Full Share membership if it is renewed within a year of purchase. Renewing the yearly membership involves paying \$60 for the year. The 6 stocks purchased will be added to one's previous year's purchase.
- c) If the membership is not renewed after one year, the member is moved to Inactive status, and is no longer eligible for member discounts or for voting rights until the balance owed in stocks is paid.
- d) Member is moved to Full Share status after purchasing 17 shares.

3. LIMITED INCOME MEMBERSHIPS

Limited income eligible person (receiving EBT, Medicaid, SSI or equivalency) pays \$30 and then becomes a member as long as they need it.

In addition, the LVC is working with the North Leverett Baptist Church to provide Co-op gift cards through the church's Food Pantry to further help people in our community who are living with food insecurity.

The Co-op is here for all of us!

SPRING CLEAN-UP at the Co-op



The Board of Directors and many of their spouses along with some hearty volunteers had a productive spring clean up day. Did you know that we have a permaculture forest garden behind the Co-op?

We weeded, raked, pruned, mulched and got the outdoor spaces ready for summer events. Join us for the next one... coming soon.

Board Member Profile: DANIELLE BARSHAK

Goat Lady/Lawyer; Cooperative Values and Sustainability

By Ann Ferguson

Danielle's youngest goat is Schmitty, named after the vet who helped deliver him. At the time I interviewed her, he was a week old after a difficult birth which led his mother Daisy to reject him. Danielle had to take over as his mom, bottle feeding him every four hours and keeping him in her bedroom at night. "He even learned to pee in the shower," Danielle said. Now that he is older, he is back outside but still being bottle-fed.



Besides being the Cave Hill goat lady, Danielle brings lawyerly skills to her role as Vice-President of the Leverett Co-op Board of Directors, as well as to the Leverett Community Preservation Committee and the town Zoning Board of Appeals. When her mother-in-law throws up her hands about the goat project and asks, "for this you went to law school?", at least Danielle can point to these other town jobs where skills learned there are relevant! She is also doing important work on the Co-op Board of Directors these days, learning the model of "policy governance" through a Board subcommittee training to develop policies with the General Manager to clarify the responsibilities of all involved in member-owner cooperative management.

Danielle grew up in Brookline and went to public schools there. Her Dad was a lawyer. So she persuaded her parents, who only allowed her to watch "educational" TV programs, that the Perry Mason TV show was educational (remember that 1950s TV court series?). With an early fascination for literature as a child, she found it natural to major in English literature when she got to Amherst College in the late 1970s. She was drawn toward law when she spent her junior year at the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor Maine and took a course in Constitutional Law.

Law school at Northeastern University was a good match for Danielle, who had already discovered her interest in cooperatives back in Amherst working as a volunteer member at the old Yellow Sun food co-op. While she was at Northeastern, the law school alternated course work with working internships at law co-ops, and students who worked at better-paying "co-ops" contributed money to help their fellow students at lesser-paying co-ops to earn a livable wage.

After law school, Danielle worked at the Hampshire/ Franklin District Attorney's office. Motherhood created an obstacle to full time work in that office, so her next endeavor involved work for the Franklin County Reinventing Justice project. This project set up public hearings for residents to discuss their views about the legal system, and then instituted various initiatives based upon the comments and concerns of the public. Danielle said a highlight of her law career was her work with Attorney John Stobierski, litigating and resolving more than 100 clergy abuse cases arising from the Springfield Catholic Diocese. She said she found the work to be intense but deeply satisfying, particularly as the process empowered the survivors through their demands that the Diocese accept responsibility.



LIVING COOPERATIVELY

Regarding her work with the Leverett Co-op Board, Danielle relates that, like most of the Board, her experience as a member has completely changed from when she first joined the Co-op back in the 1990s. When she was working full time she only occasionally shopped at the Co-op, since her job took her in other directions. But she became a member of the Board in 2019 under difficult circumstances when the Co-op was floundering financially. She, like others on the Board, experienced the divisions as to what should be done, but recommitted herself to serve on the Board in 2020-21 in the more unified “turn around” period of the store’s recovery. During this time, when many on the Board, like herself, have been volunteer cashiers in the store, she says she has developed a much deeper understanding of how much collective effort goes into the running of the store, and how important it is for the community it serves.

“Each product carried in the store has been thought out and chosen to serve people’s needs or desires,” she said. And she said she feels that the store’s renaissance through re-connecting with small local producers is the best way to develop a more sustainable, cooperative way of life.

“Cooperative food distribution is sustainable in the way that I hope my little goat enterprise is,” she said. *“Raising goats, learning to make cheese, and even learning to butcher my own goat allows me to avoid supporting large scale and inhumane commercial meat producers. I have been helped by so many people—incidentally, all co-op members—in this endeavor, from emergency loans of goat colostrum*

and nipples, (thank you Kitzel!) to assistance in the humane dispatching of the incorrigible Wicky-Wacky, (thank you Mark!) to the moral support and sawing skills during butchering, (thank you Steve!). My little farm truly benefits from the cooperative ethos. The only way we can make lasting social change (at least in the food system) is in such small scale, mutual aid projects.”

Danielle added that she is thrilled to have been able to coordinate with Not Bread Alone, a local Amherst soup kitchen project, to recycle their food compost to feed her goats so that even food leftovers do not go to waste. Which is only right after all, for Danielle is the chair of the Co-op Board’s Sustainability Committee!

ADVERTISING MANAGER NEEDED

Our little newsletter has been quite successful, and we envision it blossoming. To continue providing color-printed issues, we need an advertisement section to promote local businesses AND help pay for printing – expanding our publication in size and scope.

WE NEED YOU: to call/contact local businesses and inquire about ads for this newsletter. Are you a go-getter who wants to support a great cause by reaching out to community businesses?

Please email Kari at karinotes7@gmail.com if you are interested in this role.

SUGGESTED AD SIZES

Half page ad: **\$100 per issue**
(7.25”w x 4.75”h)
3 issues for \$260

Quarter page ad: **\$50 per issue**
(3.5”w x 4.75”h)
3 issues for \$130

Biz Card Ad: **\$25 per issue**
(3.5”w x 2”h)
3 issues for \$65

We can help with design. Email Lori Lynn at lorilynn@waterlilydesign.com if you are ready to place an ad in the next publication.

Leverett Village Co-op THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

By Ellen Edge

It is hard to believe, but the Co-op continues to rebound from its earlier financial challenges. After a near-death in 2019, the Co-op now finds itself to be in a financially sound position, said Martin Pittman, the Treasurer of the Co-op Board of Directors.

According to a recent General Manager's financial report, sales for the month of March were \$57,591, which is approximately \$1,500 above what was projected. Similarly, sales for April also exceeded expectations by approximately \$2,000. Projections were based on four-year averages from 2016/2016 to 2018/2019. So, basically, the Co-op is achieving about 102.5% of that four-year average, and once all numbers are in from March and April, we can probably place that percentage at 104%.

In lay-person speak, the Co-op is selling more, and thus making more in sales, than we had on average from 2016-2019. The goal for the Co-op is to ultimately achieve 108% of the four-year average, and so while we are not quite there, the trendline for sales indicates that we are headed in that direction.

Why such optimism? More people are shopping at the Co-op! Perhaps it is because we continue to increase the selection of products in the store. Customers who visit the Co-op these days can't ignore the expanded and varied offerings. It's exciting to see so many interesting and appealing products on the shelves!

Have you seen our **supplements and body care offerings**? They have expanded, and sales for those products have also grown by over 1%. Our produce department is now achieving 9% of store sales, an increase of 3-4% above January's. We now have a comprehensive offering of **fresh produce** from many local vendors and suppliers, including the Sunderland Farms Collaborative, Red Fire Farm, Marty's, and Myer's. Stop in and see the new produce cooler – it is a thing of beauty and is filled with local produce.

Our new buyer Catherine Decker has been busy! Our **Bulk Department** is slowly growing, and we have expanded our bread offerings to include loaves from Rise Above Bakery. Vegetable starts and a selection of CBD products have been popular this spring.

Our **Beer and Wine** sales have kept pace with overall sales. Stay tuned for a small one door beer fridge, for beer and singles and chilled rose wine!

In the **Deli/Café** wraps are now offered in our grab-and-go deli selection. The turkey, chicken and tofu wraps have been so popular that more choices are being offered for customers who cannot wait for custom-ordered sandwiches.

Finally, there is a lot of excitement regarding the second Saturday "Rattlesnake Gutter Market" which will offer artisans an opportunity to sell their wares every month at the Co-op. The popularity of the first market on June 12 showed that the events are stimulating sales and contributing to our positive financial trajectory.

In this crazy world, let us be grateful for some good news—and what better news could there be, than that our beloved little Co-op is healthy and thriving!



Rattlesnake Gutter Market

SECOND SATURDAYS

continued

SECOND SATURDAYS MARKET DRAWS CROWDS AND CONNECTS COMMUNITY



Ina Peebles was among about 20 vendors who participated in the event. With sunlight dappling onto her table through the Co-op property's leafy canopy, Ina's handmade soaps, body butters and lip balms were popular items as shoppers streamed through the market with reusable shopping bags in hand. *"I was very pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic shoppers who stopped by my table to check out my products,"* said Ina. *"I am looking forward to next month's event!"*

Other artists included John Varner, Nancy Emond, Kristi Colbert, Lauren Shea, Sage and Georgia Young, and Susan Mulholland, who was selling her cheerful silkscreened clothing in sizes from newborn to adults. The market featured fine art prints and cards, pottery, weavings, wood crafts, collage paintings, jewelry and other textile arts.

The family-friendly event brought smiles to children's faces as they played on the newly painted merry-go-round and swings and were entertained by a friendly clown. Ben Goldberg's booth, which offered tool sharpening, worm castings and worm castings tea for gardens, was popular among all ages. Ben also had display bins of soil and live worms that delighted the younger generation. *"It was a great event, great music, happy reunions,"* Ben said. *"The whole thing was a huge boost for the Co-op!"*

Local nonprofits are another feature of the market. Elizabeth O'Brien had a table with information about VILLAGE NEIGHBORS, which offers support for

people ages 60 and over in Leverett, Shutesbury, Wendell and New Salem. Elizabeth said her group gained both new volunteers and members at the June market. YOUTHLINE, a nonprofit that raises money to help schoolchildren in Malawi, Africa pay for education, was at the market selling hand-carved wooden bowls and brightly colored fabrics from Africa.

Music for the inaugural event was provided by SAWZAPHONIC, which captivated audiences with unusual melodies and the unique sounds of an instrumental saw. DJ Brian Boyles also kept things lively by spinning actual vinyl records of old-school New Orleans R&B.

Other features of the June event were massage therapy and tarot card readings. LVC Board Member Lise Coppinger organized the Co-Upcycle booth, which featured a large assortment of items such as housewares, toys and antiques, with money from sales going directly to the Co-op.

These markets are a fundraiser for our Co-op and all booth rental fees benefit the LVC. Organizers Jean Bergstrom, Lori Lynn Hoffer, Sarah Robertson, Kari Ridge and GM John Calhoun are happy that so many people came out to shop, connect and support the vendors and Co-op at our first event!

"Part of our Co-op's mission is to provide a place for the community to gather and I was so happy to see the market be a successful way to achieve that mission," GM John said. *"Co-ops are so much more than just grocery stores, and this market was the perfect example of that."*

RATTLESNAKE GUTTER MARKETS are held on the SECOND SATURDAYS of each month through September. Rain dates are always the next day, Sunday. The lineup of vendors will change slightly each month, so there's always something new to see (and purchase!).

For more information, please see our Facebook page, website: www.leverettcoop.com, or email the planning committee at rattlesnakeguttermarket@gmail.com.

NEXT MARKET JULY 10!

Vendor Profile: JASPER HILL FARM

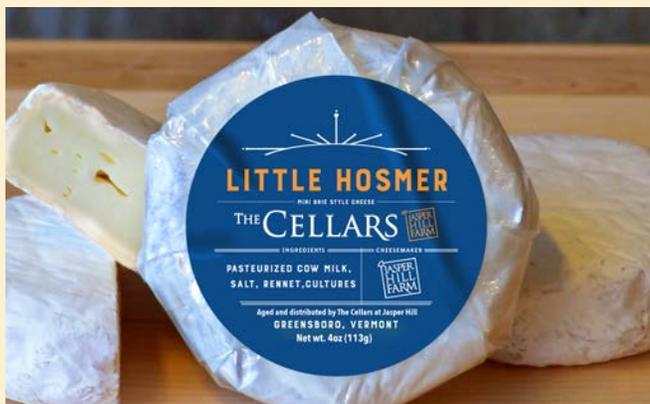
By Janice Stone

Jasper Hill is a working dairy farm with an on-site creamery in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. It has been in operation since 2003 and presently includes a 22,000 square foot underground facility known as “The Cellars,” where they ripen cheese made by Jasper Hill Creameries as well as cheese made by several other producers. Each cheese in their collection is made from a single herd of cows. Fresh wheels are introduced to one of seven specially calibrated vaults, where they receive customized care until perfect ripeness.

Jasper Hill’s mission is to be a “Standard Bearer of Quality and Innovation in the Artisan Cheese Industry.” They also strive to be an active participant in the conservation of Vermont’s Working Landscape through the production of high-quality products that reflect a regional Taste of Place.

Jasper Hill has won numerous recognitions for their cheeses, including awards for the two that are available at our Co-op, Cave Aged Cheddar and Little Hosmer (their mini version of a new world-style brie). Come try these special cheeses, located in the dairy refrigerator.

www.jasperhillfarm.com.



GOOD-BYE LIAM!

We send a fond farewell to Liam our King of Pies, who ran our pizza nights, flipping the dough calmly through obstacles great and small (broken ovens, missing supplies etc). We will miss him and wish him the very best in his next endeavor!

THANK YOU SHOPPERS, MEMBERS, SUPPORTERS!

The Co-op is working it’s way towards fiscal security, and we are so grateful for your support. Keep on coming in to shop, eat and visit. We look forward to resuming cafe seating and also an outdoor patio before too long, so we can join together in community once again!

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Writing/Editing:

Kari Ridge, Ann Ferguson & Ellen Edge

Layout:

Lori Lynn Hoffer

To publish an article or a letter, contact Ellen Edge at eedge@leverett.net Keep it friendly & civil and try to keep submissions under 200 words. Thanks!

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