



Great Basin Community Food Co-op Community Newsletter

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www.greatbasinfood.coop

Love Your Farmer Dinner

In order to demonstrate our appreciation to our local growers, the GBCFC is holding a farmers-only "Love Your Farmer" dinner on February 14. We are inviting 30 of our local growers and will cook them a delicious meal while providing the opportunity to relax and network. The aim of this event is to show community support and gratitude for one of this nation's most difficult occupations. As part of the dinner, we are putting together gift bags for each of the attendees.

That is where our membership comes in - we are looking for small gift items and tokens of appreciation to put in the gift bags. This could be a set of knitted gloves or a hat, a gift certificate, artwork, flowers, recipe books, etc. Anything that inspires your thankfulness for Northern Nevada growers! The deadline for these donations is February 10. Additionally, we are looking for a cooking crew to help on the day of the event. We will be led by a local chef, and will spend 2-3 hours chopping, stirring and creating! If you cannot help the day of, you can donate a dessert item for the farmers to enjoy after dinner! Please email meghan@greatbasinfood.coop about donations or the cooking crew.



Milestones for 2009

Many noteworthy events have taken place in the GBCFC this past year.

Move to 542 ½ Plumas Street: We thank all those who took part in the massive effort! The sum of time to plan and execute the move, the improvements and fixtures that were donated, and the volunteer hours during the move are estimated to be worth more than \$20,000.

A special thanks to Kimberly Phipps-Nichol at Blue Water Studios for her generous donation of time and love. She shouldered much of the renovation and design plans, found many of the fixture donations, ensured that the building was energy efficient, applied for the necessary permits, and more.

We now have two fully functioning cash registers for our members' check-out ease.

Two successful seedling sales: The second spring seedling sale was such a success, with several local farmers and vendors (and nearly \$5,000 in sales for farmers and the Co-op), that we decided to hold a second event in the fall. In addition to fall seedlings, this was a collaboration event with Transition Reno, called the Local Food and Fun Fest. It brought many sustainability-oriented groups together, such as Urban Roots Garden Classrooms, Transition Reno, and many local growers.

Net support to local farmers, artisans and vendors: This year, the Co-op hit a record high for the total payouts we made to local growers, food businesses and artisans. The total was \$55,104. This is nearly three times last year's. Thanks to everyone who supports these individuals via the Co-op!

Creation of more local jobs: Because of the outstanding patronage from our community, the Co-op now has 4 employees. Thank YOU!

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Why We ♥ the Co-op

You may have noticed the feedback box at the store. These are some customers' answers:

- "It proves that people can work together for change." –Jane
- "My son is gluten-intolerant and you have everything I need for him." – Kim
- "Bulk spices! Great prices and saving on packaging! Bulk everything!"
– Veronica
- "It's all about the garden—the fruits and vegetables taste so good." – Cynthia
- "I always meet and visit with cool folks and get fun community info." – Robin from Blind Dog Coffee



What are we without our stories?

In late fall, the GBCFC held a submission contest for articles related to our food community. Congratulations to our winner and this quarter's guest contributor, **Taylor Donovan**.

Some of us tell tales that build us up in strong and noble thought while others use stories to separate their sense of peace from whatever their life is composed of. It's a powerful filter to unpack and see how you are choosing to live within your story or paint yourself outside of someone else's story. For me, the file of my stories resides within the living culture of my day to day life. Since I have made food and efficient living a priority I've been able to meet incredible people and indulge in high-quality well-prepared foods. These fortunes run the gamut from a friend that creates her own ginger sauerkraut to a beekeeper that provides unpasteurized honey to the pastured eggs from happy chickens all the way to the windfall of fruits that fall unclaimed in Reno's myriad neighborhoods. Each of these links my story to the stories that have been told since we've been recording time.

I've always been drawn to the fringes of daily life for the ranges of character and unpredictable occurrences they provide. When I first saw homegrown carrots I thought some-

thing went terribly wrong. I came to find out, as it so often happens, that homegrown products are rife with character as well as stories like the man that gave me this carrot. I've learned to trust these idiosyncrasies as their imperfections speak of their authenticity. Imperfections are an endearing form of vulnerability in a culture that tends to embrace eternal youth and symmetry as the benchmark for beauty.

While I partake in uplifting real-time stories I'm also aware of the cultural misgivings as offered through several recent documentaries on Peak oil, America's obesity epidemic, and several films chronicling our food standards as a nation. What I see in many of these films is the power to confuse and confound people by making them feel unimportant and disconnected. By returning to a righteous social infrastructure by sharing real goods and supporting local growers many of the trouble spots highlighted in these documentaries become null and void. It's pretty simple really. I walk or bike to the co-op and along the way I say hello to my neighbors and appreciate all things growing. No oil, some exercise, benevolent social equity, and a trip to one of my favorite living stores in Reno: The Great Basin Food Co-op.

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DOUBLE in Co-op membership: At present, the GBCFC has approximately 3,000 members, roughly twice as many at this time last year.

Food Stamps: We now accept food stamps & EBT cards, forging a connection between low-income and local food.

Increased delivery volume: We receive two deliveries a week from UNFI, one a month from Azure, several a week from our 39+ misc. distributors, and almost daily deliveries from over 40 local producers of produce, herbs, eggs, honey, artisan breads, meat, candles, soap, and more! We supply to 4-6 local restaurants on a weekly basis with bulk goods *at cost*. These include Bibo Coffee, EcoReno, Dish Café, Pneumatic Diner, Walden's Coffeehouse / The Hub, 4th Street Bistro, and the late VOD Café. Thank you for the patronage! Our order increase in the last year has resulted in a 6% Purchase Discount. Because of this, we were able to lower our frozen, chill and grocery sections by almost 10%.

Health Discount Plan: We have been able to offer a medical discount program to our Workers' Collective.



URGC is a Reno-based non-profit striving to grow healthy minds, bodies, and communities through place-based gardening and seed-to-table education. Founded on the idea that food is a powerful tool for academic and nutrition instruction when fully integrated into the classroom, Urban Roots hopes to promote physical, social, and intellectual development in Washoe County Schools, & provides in-school garden and kitchen classrooms, opportunities for teacher involvement, summer programs, hosts community and school garden events, and more. Want to Learn more about weaving gardening into your curriculum? <http://urgc.org/>

What's All the Beef about in Nevada?

A look at current issues in Northern Nevada,
by Amber Sallaberry

Beef accounts for more than 70% of all agricultural production in Nevada. However, very little of that meat comes from small local farmers or independent producers. Most conventional cows are raised in larger "feeding" lots where they are fed a heavily corn-based diet. They are routinely administered antibiotics as well as hormones in order to make them grow faster, fatter, and produce more milk.

The good news is that many consumers are becoming aware of either the social, environmental, or health effects of eating conventionally raised meat and are seeking out other options. One of the best alternatives is animals raised by your local farmer. Grass-fed & pastured, antibiotic-free, humanely-raised sheep, cattle, pigs, chickens, and turkeys are all being raised in Northern Nevada!

If that's the case, why isn't the co-op currently carrying any meat from our local farmers? Well, there aren't many certified abattoirs in Northern Nevada. At the last Nevada Department of Agriculture's Organic Council meeting, I met several local farmers who are currently raising meat or poultry yet have no place to butcher and package their animals for retail consumption. According to Marcia Litsinger, president of the NDOA Organics Council, the USDA is not mandated to come in and certify the butchered meat unless there are 20,000 + animals being slaughtered at a time.

This means for the time being if you wish to purchase high-quality farm-fresh meat or poultry that you need to do so directly from your local farmer. Basically, you buy the animal from the farmer while it is still alive and when it

is butchering time, you either travel to the farm to assist in the process or your friendly farmer does it for you as a "favor."

If we all had the time and space in our lives to get to know at least a few of our local growers and producers, this issue might not seem like such a big deal, especially, for those of you who wish to feed yourselves and your families sustainable, healthy meat products. However, the co-op is working to provide solutions for your ethical and healthful "(m)eating" issues: we have recently started to carry LOCALLY-RAISED, grass-fed & pastured, antibiotic-free, sheep and cattle in our Frozen section.

Hulsman Ranch is located 86 miles away in Lassen County, CA, and has been in Hannah Hulsman's family since 1862. Her pastures are water sustainable with no irrigation systems or wells. Her sheep and cattle graze on indigenous grasses such as alfalfa, clover, and sedges. Hulsman Ranch is not certified organic (as it is a very expensive process for smaller farmers) yet it was still given an A+ by our Local Food 'quality control team' here at the co-op. We were able to visit the farm, ask questions, take pictures, and gather information. One of the WC members who is typically a vegetarian even ate a bit of beef because she was able to get to 'meet her meat' and witness the conditions of the farmer and her animals.

The Co-op is in the process of compiling a list of producers who are selling animal shares to community members. We are also looking for committed members who wish to join the Local Food sub-committee to explore some ideas and/or solutions for our current Northern Nevada meat dilemmas. See the box on the right for more information.



Northern Nevada Herd Share Association Membership Opportunity

Clifford and Debra Shirk, of Sod-Buster Farm in the Palomino Valley, are looking to start a cow share association. Because Nevada laws prohibit the sale of raw milk, they are creating a share association, in which investors own a percentage of the herd and equipment. In return, the share holder shall receive a percentage of the product (milk, cream, meat and fertilizer).

The initial investment is \$200 plus \$34 per share. A monthly maintenance fee and boarding fee of \$34 will be charged.

Please contact Debra Shirk for more information at 775-475-0214 or at sod-busterfarm@gbis.com

Local Food Sub-Committee

Members wanted! E-mail us at info@greatbasinfood.coop or just show up to the meeting on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 5:30pm at the new co-op office located at 26 Cheney St. Reno, NV 89501 (inside of Bootleg Courier).

Recipes & Co-op News

Applesauce: Quick and Easy!

by Alice Bowers

What to do with all the apples you gleaned from the neighborhood? Make a basic applesauce.

- Several lbs. apples
- 1 can apple juice concentrate
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 cup Maple syrup

Use several pounds of locally grown apples (the amount you use will depend on your tastes) and chop apples into small pieces.

Use an 8-quart pot, add 1/2 can of frozen apple juice concentrate or equivalent in apple juice. Add 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. of cinnamon and 1/4 to 1/2 cup of pure maple syrup.

Cook on low until soft, adding some additional water or juice if needed. Mash with potato masher to desired consistency.

Using the proper home canning methods this applesauce may be pre-



served for later use. Or serve warm, chilled or topped with whipped cream for dessert. It makes a great topping for French toast or pancakes. Smaller quantities can be made by cutting the recipe in half.

We'd love to print other recipes featuring local produce. If you have a seasonal recipe to share, drop it off at the Co-op.

Flavors of Fall Salad

by Nancy Hudson
(Serves 4)

- 1 Fuyu persimmon, thinly sliced
- 1/2 pomegranate, seeds removed
- 4 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
- baby greens

Dressing

- 2 parts fine quality extra virgin olive oil
- 1 part rice wine vinegar
- Freshly squeezed lemon juice, to taste
- Sea salt
- Pepper

Evenly distribute the persimmon slices on four salad plates. Place greens in salad bowl and toss thoroughly in the dressing. Top the persimmons with the greens and finish with the remaining ingredients.

Hint: to easily remove pomegranate seeds, cut fruit in half and firmly hit the peel side with a wooden spoon over a small bowl.

Grand Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers!

A brief year-end tally of our volunteer hours donated to the co-op will demonstrate how devoted, generous, and bighearted our food community is!

- Since we moved to our new site at 542 1/2 Plumas (as of April 2009), over 1620 volunteer hours have accrued in-store!
- Members of our Board of Directors and Committees donated a conservative estimate of 1434 hours in 2009.
- We had our first annual member-worker BBQ celebration. The food and company were great.
- *Member-worker Discounts:* Since July, the co-op has provided \$3580.15 in discounts to volunteers!

Why Buy in Bulk?

Written by James Girnus

Buying in bulk saves you money. Often, the packaging for individually packaged food products costs more than the food... and that simply doesn't make sense! Buying in bulk also reduces energy-intensive packaging and landfill waste.

We recently switched our bulk olive oil to Napa Valley Naturals, an independent Northern California company that produces rich 100% organic cold-pressed olive oil... which in turn enabled us to lower our price from \$8.85/lb. to 6.99/lb.! If you eat cereal, you are probably well aware of the outrageous increase in the price of boxed cereal over the last few years.



We have found your solution! We now carry 95% organic Breadshop multigrain cereal flakes for \$3.79/lb. Let us know if there is anything you think we should add to our bulk selection!

Please remember to save your old bags and containers and re-use them in the bulk section!