

# tpss

Co-operative Effort News

Food for People, not for Profit Since 1981

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2003



## Put Your Money Where Your House Is

*This is the first in a series of articles to raise awareness in the community about the status of our local businesses. This article gives an overview of the struggle between local businesses and chain stores nationwide, as well as the ways in which communities are supporting their local businesses in the face of this onslaught. It also looks at some of the benefits that locally owned businesses provide to their communities.*

By Chrissy Wiginton

For years, locally owned businesses in the main streets of urban, suburban, and rural settings have been closing down because they cannot compete with the huge chain stores that move into their area and siphon away customers. Our local community is suffering the same plight. If our unique community cultures are to survive into the new century, citizens must take action and support their local businesses.

Chain stores often offer lower prices than local businesses, as well as the convenience of one-stop shopping. However, these benefits come at a great cost. While gaining convenience and a little pocket change, communities across the nation are losing their own local businesses, economic stability, and quality of life. This is due largely to the fact that there is little chance that local businesses and chain stores can coexist. According to a study done by The New Rules Project, instead of chain stores creating new retail spending, they simply shift spending from one part of town to another. In other words, people have a finite amount of money to spend; every dollar spent in chain stores is a dollar taken away from the local business community.

The New Rules Project also reports that, since 1990, 11,000 independent pharmacies have closed their doors. The market share of independent bookstores has fallen from 58% of book sales in 1972 to a mere 17% today. Local hardware stores are on the decline while two companies control 30% of the market. Blockbuster rents one in three videos nationwide, and five firms control one third of the grocery market, up from 19% five years ago.

### Local Activists Take Action

Takoma Park is also at risk from havoc wrought by encroaching chain stores. Many long-time Takoma Park businesses are losing money due to competition from chain stores that are cropping up in neighboring areas. Bob Atwood, General Manager of the TPSS Co-op, estimates that in the past two years the Co-op has lost around \$700,000 in sales to Whole Foods in Silver Spring.

To address this concern, a number of community residents recently formed the Old Takoma Business Association (OTBA). OTBA's mission is to ensure that Takoma remains a viable business community. While the OTBA is still in the formative stages, it has already received a matching fund of \$25,000 from the city for the next three years. Membership is open, and they have a general meeting once a month. (For more information about the Old Takoma Business Association go to [www.takomaonline.com](http://www.takomaonline.com))

Similar initiatives are taking place in hundreds of communities all over the country. "Put your money where your house is!" is a logo found proudly displayed by 143

local business members and hundreds of community supporters of the Boulder Independent Business Alliance (BIBA), which was created to address the growing concern for the survival of independent, local businesses in the present chain store economy. The August 8, 2002 issue of *American FreePress* touts Boulder, Colorado as leading the nation in an effort to unify locally-owned businesses and fight back against the multinational chain stores.

The success of BIBA has inspired the formation a national group, the American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA), to help other communities interested in similar ventures. AMIBA maintains a customized computed database with dozens of templates for marketing material, and offers consultation with AMIBA staff to learn how to successfully run an Independent Business Alliance. For more information about AMIBA, e-mail [info@AMIBA.net](mailto:info@AMIBA.net).

### Why Patronize Locally Owned Businesses?

Local businesses foster strong communities. Small interactions with members of your community create a sense of common identity, public trust, and respect. These interactions often center around local businesses. Locally owned businesses also reflect local culture and give neighborhoods their distinct flavor, which are a source of community pride.

They also contribute to the civic and cultural life of the community. Local business owners often take leadership roles in community affairs, by chairing organizations, hosting cultural events, organizing festivals,

and supporting other local community projects. The U.S. Small Business Association reports that small businesses give more time and money to charitable organizations than their larger competitors.

Local businesses keep money circulating in the community. They support other local businesses, hire local service providers, and advertise in local newspapers, for example. Locally owned businesses also contribute to the tax base. In contrast, large chains do not spend all or even most of their money in local communities, funnel service needs back to their headquarters, and advertise nationally.

Local businesses are rooted and invested in the community. They are committed to the community's well being and long term stability because they live in the places where they do business. Large chain stores tend to be fair-weather friends. Locally owned businesses are not as mobile as larger corporations, and therefore are more likely to stick out economic slumps. This tendency provides a stable economic foundation and keeps property values high.

### What You Can Do

There are many things that you can do to support the continued presence of locally owned businesses in your community. For example, you can:

**Spend** your money at locally owned businesses.

**Provide** feedback to local businesses about how they can better serve you.

**Act** as an advocate for Takoma Park. Take it upon yourself to introduce one or two people a month to the joys of the Takoma shopping experience.

**Educate** yourself about the issue and get involved! This is a national epidemic, so there is lots of information out there. Some good web sites are [www.newrules.org](http://www.newrules.org), and [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org). There are many books out about this subject. One that was frequently referenced was *The Death and Life of American Cities* by Jane Jacobs. You can also order *How Walmart is Destroying America (And the World)* by Bill Quinn by calling First Amendment Books in Washington DC at 1-888-699-6397.

In the current business climate, it is more important than ever that we realize the extent to which our shopping practices influence our community and support the local businesses in Takoma Park. If we take our locally-owned businesses and Main Street for granted, we risk going the way of many communities before us: trading convenience and pocket change for the unique character of our community and our quality of life. ●

*Future articles in this series will feature interviews with local business owners.*

### Inside:

2 GM's Financial Report

3 Board Report

4 GM's Comment Corner

5 Book Review: Local Flavors

6 Recycling Tips

7 Healthy Cats

8 Health Corner

Takoma Park • Silver Spring Co-op  
...a supermarket you can own  
201 Ethan Allen Avenue  
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
8309 Grabb Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20911

PRST STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Silver Spring, MD  
Permit No. 4218

# General Manager's Year End Report

By Bob Atwood, General Manager

Change is good, and we've had plenty of it at the Takoma Park store this year. On December 31, 2002, the Deli closed and the following day, the store renovation commenced. I am sure you have noticed the changes (and many of you have taken the time to write encouraging comments to us about it)! The Bulk section has been moved to the vacated Deli area, along with a new cooler and coffee rack. The Health and Beauty Care section has expanded into the vacated bulk area. Additional changes include new shelving, three new freezer doors, a new cheese case, and an expanded "grab & go" section which contains items that the Deli used to make in the store. The walls have also been painted (look for a new mural over the produce case). The last area to be completed will be the front end, which will be completed some time this summer. If the sales are any indication (they've gone up), our members and customers like the changes we've made.

It was gratifying to see the relatively high member turnout for the vote on the mission statement—approximately 36% of the members voted. The current mission was overwhelmingly supported, with 71% of the votes in favor. Look for another survey to come out in the next few months.

Our financial contributions to the community have been well received. This year, both stores contributed more than \$4,000 to 57 local organizations (see the accompanying sidebar for a partial list of recipients). The round-up program allowed the Co-op to give approximately \$1,000 to 10 local organizations. The bag refund initiative netted \$300 for 8 organizations. The money jars collected around \$300 for nine separate organizations. The Keep Love Alive program gave over \$500 to five organizations. Thank you to all of you for your continued support of these important programs.

This coming year we will be having 12 Member Appreciation days (see the list of dates elsewhere in this issue). Once a month member will receive 5% off their in store purchases. Be sure to mark your calendars!

In January we rejoined the Cooperative Grocers Association Northeast (CGANE), which has more than 24 member stores. This alliance will consolidate our purchasing power with our wholesaler, thereby keeping our prices competitive. Also, we are looking to improve store performance through the development of best practices. A lot of joint projects are planned for the coming year that will help TPSS remain a competitive and viable business and an active participant in the local community.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Co-op. This coming year, we will continue to make changes and introduce new products in order to continue meeting the needs of our members and customers. As always, I will be guided by your suggestions and comments, so please feel free to call me at the store (301-891-2667), e-mail me (bobatwood@tpss.coop), or fill out a comment card the next time you come in. ●

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

Last year, the TPSS Co-op contributed more than \$4,000 to the following organizations:

- Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten and Nursery
- Alternative Gift Fair
- Amethyst & Indigo, Inc./Sistah Fest
- Anacostia Watershed Society
- Brother Daryl Steward (Mugabi)/Bessie Jones
- Capital Hill Day School
- The Center for a New American Dream
- Center for Health
- Charity Works, Roman Holiday
- Children's Wish Foundation
- Christian Baptist Church, Inc.
- Columbia Union College
- Community Harvest
- Compassion Over Killing
- Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC)
- The First Church
- Friends of the Takoma Park Library
- Grassroots Peace Conference
- Guatemala Human Rights Commission USA
- Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County
- Internal Revenue Service, Institute for Conservation Leadership
- Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington DC
- Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR)
- Metro D.C. Dance Awards
- Montgomery County CFFA
- Mt. Tabor High School Baseball
- Multiple Sclerosis Association of America
- New Hampshire Estates/Oak View Parent Teacher Association
- North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) Institute
- PEER
- Peace & Justice Rally
- Plan Takoma
- Rachel Carson Council, Inc.
- Rev. George Taylor/An Interfaith • Seder for Peace and Justice
- Rock Creek Elementary School
- Rock Creek Forest Elementary School
- Rosemary Hills Primary School
- Sacred Space
- School for Friends/Church of the Pilgrims
- The Shepherd's Table, Inc.
- Shiatsu Massage Therapy
- Silver Spring Nursery School
- Special Olympics Maryland
- St. Anne's Infant and Maternity Home
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
- Stella Maris Hospice
- TPDF
- Takoma Park Elementary School (multiple programs)
- Takoma Park Family Resource Center
- Takoma Park Independence Day
- Takoma Park Presbyterian Church
- Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.
- Takoma Youth Baseball, Inc.
- VFW Post 350
- Visions in Feminism
- Washington Waldorf School



TPSS Co-operative Effort News is published bimonthly by the Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op

• 201 Ethan Allen Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
301-891-2667(COOP)

• 8309 Grubb Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
240-247-2667(COOP)

Editor

Paul Lagasse

Graphic Design

Nicolas Basalgète

barniko@erols.com

Contributors:

Robin Anderson

Bob Atwood

Sam D'Amico

Susan Emerson

Adam Frank

Larry Haller

Mary Jo Lazun

Judith Sylvane

Michael Tabor

Chrissy Wiginton

Board of Representatives

Adam Frank, president

Joseph Klockner, vice-president

Larry Haller, treasurer

Rae Murphy, secretary

Ryan Neher

Rima Shaffer

Adam Witt

General Manager

Bob Atwood

## Financial Report for the Third Quarter, 2003 (January through March 2003)

By Larry Haller, Treasurer

The TPSS co-op had a net income of \$840 in the third quarter of the co-op's 2003 fiscal year. The co-op operates on a fiscal year that begins in July and ends in June, so January, February, and March are our third quarter. For the year so far we are operating at about a break-even level, with a total net income of about \$4,700 on total sales of about \$1,550,000. In the third quarter the co-op's Silver Spring location ran at a net profit of about \$2,960, while the Takoma Park location had a net loss of about \$2,120. Our budget for the third quarter projected an overall net profit of about \$27,600, with a net income of about \$42,000 at our Takoma Park location and a net loss of \$14,400 at our Silver Spring location.

Net sales for the co-op for the second quarter were \$1,550,000. Sales at Takoma Park were \$1,190,000, a bit below budgeted sales of \$1,226,000. Sales at Silver Spring were \$361,000, about \$38,000 over budget. Overall, the co-op operated on a gross margin (the difference between selling price and cost of goods sold) of 30.3%. Our budget called for a margin of 34.3%. Our lower-than-

expected margin was due to lower margins at both stores.

The co-op's overall expenses (personnel, rent and related expenses, administrative, marketing, and some small miscellaneous expenses) totaled \$461,000, including \$351,500 at Takoma Park and \$109,500 at Silver Spring. This was 29.7% of sales, a bit better than our budgeted amount of 31.2%.

We are in the process of selecting a new auditor for the co-op, and we plan to have the year-end audit of the co-op's financial records finished by the end of September. At this time, the finance committee plans to meet September 22 at 6:00 at the Takoma Junction store to discuss the results of the year-end financial report. Please attend if you are interested, but be sure to check the bulletin board at either store to make sure the meeting time or location has not changed.

I hope this snapshot of the co-op's finances is helpful. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions to improve this column, please send them to me at larryatpss@yahoo.com. I may answer your questions in a future edition of the newsletter.

TPSS Co-op, Inc., is a not-for-profit cooperative natural food store. Submissions to the newsletter and letters-to-the-editor are welcome. Please provide your name and contact information, and note that submissions may be copied/edited or reduced for space purposes. Classified ads (up to 50 words) are free for TPSS owners and \$10 for non-owners. Hand deliver or email all copy (electronic format preferred) and ads to Paul Lagasse at the Takoma Park store or to [editor@tpss.coop](mailto:editor@tpss.coop).

*The content of this newsletter represents the views of individual writers and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of TPSS Co-op, Inc.*

### Next Issue:

Publication date: October 3  
Submission deadline: September 8

## FEATURED FACES



GINA MORELL

You can usually find Gina tending the produce section in the Takoma Park store as if it were her own garden, which in a sense it is. Gina is the store's Produce Manager, which means that she gets to decide what fresh fruit and vegetables will be featured in the store every day. She orders produce from distributors and local farmers and supplies as well as answers customers' questions and handles special orders. She supervises a staff of four employees who help her keep the produce section looking great. Gina supplies local caterers and tries to support local businesses whenever possible. She also regularly compares prices with other stores and tries to beat their prices. "I want to make my prices low enough for everyone to shop here," she says. Gina's been with the Co-op for just under a year and a half, and she really likes the atmosphere and the sense of family and community. She's been in food service for nine years, most of it on the prep side (she was Savory's head cook before coming to the Co-op) when she decided to check out the supply side of the business. She enjoys the feeling that comes from telling people she works at the Co-op. "I want people to know that we are trying our best," she tells them. "We're all trying to work together, with each other and with our customers."



DAVID ROMIREZ

David joined the staff of the Silver Spring store four months ago, and he's a popular member of the store's Produce team. Known for his good-natured enthusiasm, David is willing to take on any task that comes his way. He enjoys working at the Co-op because he gets to meet members and customers and because of the pleasant work atmosphere. "It's so cool because all of the people here are friendly," he says. He enjoys doing cashier duty when the staff is short-handed, because he gets to learn about a different side of the store's operations. David came to the U.S. from his native Colombia a year and a half ago. Before he came to work for the Co-op, he studied English at Montgomery College. Right away he immersed himself in the new language and culture. "I came to this country to succeed and achieve my goals," he says. "Whatever comes, I'll do it!" He just bought a car and can't wait to go traveling and seeing the country. His enthusiasm applies to life as well as work, and the opportunities that are available to people here amazes him. David invites everyone to the Silver Spring Co-op. "Come in and have fun. Life is beautiful!"



MICHAEL KLAVANS

If you blink you might miss Michael, who is constantly on the move as the Bulk Buyer/assistant grocery manager/maintenance person at the Takoma Park store, and assistant grocery manager and maintenance person at the Silver Spring store.

Michael has lived in the area most of his life, and in Takoma Park for 30 years. Recurring themes in his life are business, photography, and rock music. He started in the grocery business at the age of 7 working in his father's store in DC. He would get up at 3 in the morning to buy fresh meats and produce at the District's outdoor markets and to haul

cases of cans "that weighed the same, if not more, than I did—at least it felt that way!" Michael grew up working in the businesses that his father owned, and it taught him a lot about being a good businessman.

His interest in photography dates back to a school trip when he was 10, and he's been a photographer ever since. He's even been a photographer at the Smithsonian Institution. In college, he became a manager of a folk music act and, when rock music became popular, he became an independent record promoter and started a record label with a friend. In the 1960s and 70s, he photographed most of the touring rock bands that played DC for local newspapers.

After several other careers—managing The Craft Studio in Takoma Park, running a carryout, and doing medical photography—Michael visited the Takoma Park store shortly after it moved to Ethan Allen Avenue. He immediately offered to put his business experience to work for the Co-op, and has been there ever since. Michael likes to make sure that the bulk bins stay full while he's there. "The customers should feel like they are the first customer in the door," he says, "even if it's five minutes before closing." He's also helping organize this year's Labor Day extravaganza at the Takoma Park store. Michael promises "music, food, and fun" for everyone!

## Board Report for July 2003

By Adam Frank, President

And so another (fiscal) year has ended, and we have some time to look back at what has been accomplished. Probably the largest undertaking of the Board and membership was to decide whether to make the long-standing view of the Co-op as vegetarian binding on the Board, Staff and membership. The membership voted that this restriction should not be binding, and that the staff of each store should decide whether to limit the product selection to only vegetarian items. While the Grubb Road store is currently carrying meat products, no decision had been made in this regard about the Takoma Park store as of yet. General Manager Bob Atwood is guiding the process and, as always, he will take in to account all views before making a final decision.

The Board has also worked hard on fully implementing policy governance. Policy governance is a form of Board governance. Rather than running the store, which it is ill equipped to do, the Board leaves the running of the store to its employee, the General Manager. The Board guides the General Manager through policies. These policies can be as broad or specific as the board feels is necessary to ensure that the General Manager does not veer from the mission and vision of the Co-op.

The policies implemented by the board fall into several categories. First there are goals set out by the Board for the General Manager to meet. These goals regard membership, finances, and the general well being of the Co-op. An example of this would be that the General Manager would increase the number of members by 10%, or increase member participation in the Co-op, etc.

A second category of policies is called limitations. Limitations limit the ability of the General Manager to use any method to meet the goals set out by the Board. For instance, a goal may be to increase our bottom line by a certain percentage, but the limitations would prohibit the General Manager from reaching this goal by making the Co-op unsafe for staff, of discriminating based upon certain grounds, or by not training the staff in the responsibilities of their positions.

The third set of policies is aimed at defining how the Board will govern. It sets out that the Board will use policy governance, a job description for board members, how Board meetings will be run, and how the Board will monitor its policies.

The last section is called Board-General Manager linkages. This section sets out the relationship of the GM and the Board, what powers have been delegated to the GM, and how often the General Manager will be monitored on the policies listed in the manual.

At every meeting we go through the policies we have implemented and the General Manager's updates on his implementation of the policies. We review to see if we need to change or add any policies, and we use these policies to judge the performance of the General Manager.

I hope this gives you, the members, some idea of what we have been working very diligently to implement. Much of what happens at our Board meetings is review of both the policies and the reports from the GM regarding our policies, and decisions about the need to implement additional policies or to change current policies.

I recently had the good fortune to go to the CCMA conference this year. There were Board and staff members from Co-ops across the country in attendance. I would have to say that the vast majority of Co-ops are either using policy governance or are in the process of implementing policy governance. If you would like more information on policy governance, please email me at [tpssboard@yahoo.com](mailto:tpssboard@yahoo.com).

We should also let you know that the Board elections are coming up. We need people who would like to be a part of the Board, and help the Co-op, to come forward and run.

Any member in good standing is eligible to run. Usually you will be volunteering about 8-10 hours a month (sometimes more, sometimes, less) on board related activities, and there is a required board training in January (the date will be in the packets). All Board members receive a 20% discount for volunteering.

Self-nominating packets will be out at both stores within two or three weeks. Please look for them and think about running. Contact Secretary Rae Murphy ([RaeofTPSS@aol.com](mailto:RaeofTPSS@aol.com)) to have one emailed to you, or to ask questions about the process. There will be a chance to see and meet all the nominees at the October Board meeting. The exact timeline will be posted in the store very soon.

Thanks to everyone for their support of the Co-op. ●

## MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAYS

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAYS:

2003

September 7

October 22

December 26

2004

January 24

February 15

March 22

April 21

May 20

June 25

Mark your calendar with these important dates! To thank you for your support of the TPSS Co-op, one day a month is set aside as **MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAY**.

Shop at the Co-op and receive a 5% discount on your purchases! Just our way of saying thanks!

(Discount does not apply to special orders)



## Comment Corner

By Bob Atwood, General Manager

Welcome once again to the *Comment*

*Corner*. This regular column is intended to address some of the comments, questions, and suggestions received in the customer comment boxes. As always, if you need further response feel free to contact a staff member at the Takoma Park store at 301-891-2667 (COOP) or at the Silver Spring store at 240-247-2667 (COOP) or e-mail me directly at bobatwood@tpss.coop. If you want a direct response to your concern, please remember to put your contact information on your comment card.

We love to hear from our members and customers, and we always get a lot of comments in the customer comment boxes in both stores. Comment cards are sorted and distributed to the appropriate managers on a regular basis for their response. Then the cards, with the managers' responses, are filed in the customer comment logs. These are available for review in the front of both stores. I encourage you to take a moment and read some of the questions and comments sent in by fellow members and customers. So if you don't see your concerns addressed here, please be sure to check out the comment logs.

—“Dump Boca! Or at least provide an alternative. Support non-GMO food!”

—“We need to find an alternative to Boca, they use GMO soy!”

We've received a number of comments about this recently, and frankly we are stumped. The information we have is that Boca Foods Company does not use GMO soy in their products. We would appreciate it if someone could direct us to an authoritative source of information (more than one would be even better!) that establishes the use of GMO soy by Boca. With that information, we will be able to select a more suitable product. And if anybody has any particular favorite alternatives, please let us

know that too, and we'll look into it. We're always happy to hear suggestions for new and better products, especially if something we carry does not meet your needs.

—“Awhile back I asked why there are no ingredient labels on some of the bulk food bags (e.g. trail mix). The response was ‘the manufacturer doesn't tell us the ingredients.’ This is unacceptable. Many people have food allergies or have other reasons for avoiding particular ingredients. Please do not stock products from manufacturers that do not provide complete lists of ingredients. Thanks.”

Our bulk food distributor uses natural ingredients in their products, and they have to follow strict Federal government guidelines for labeling the contents. However, the guidelines don't require them to warn of potential allergic reactions. And unfortunately, we just don't have the time or the resources to do that kind of research for every product we carry. We label the products with as much information as we can find out about them, and we're happy to try and answer your questions about particular products. But if you're not sure about the ingredients of a product, the safest option is not to buy it.

—“It'd be nice if cashiers could help bag. I often come in with my toddler and get no help bagging even when my babe is squirming and there's no one else in line. Would be really helpful. Thanx!”

—“Why don't the cashiers bag groceries here? (If you want customers to bag their own groceries, why not eliminate the cashiers jobs lower food costs, and let folks ring themselves up as well.)”

Volunteer baggers staff the checkout counters during peak shopping hours. Cashiers and other staff try to pitch in when they're not busy helping other customers and when there are lines at the registers. Cashiers are often busy carrying groceries to customers' cars and sometimes even to their nearby homes. We use volunteers to bag groceries because our volume is not high enough to allow us to employ baggers — it

is just not cost-effective right now. We'd love to be able to pay them for their hard work! Likewise, the store's volume is not high enough to make a self-checkout system pay for itself. If you need help bagging your groceries, and you see a member of the staff nearby who is free, please feel free to ask him or her to help you out.

—“Could you put a sign that's easy to see that says ‘No Exit’ as you leave the parking lot to Ethan Allen, please? Today for the 3rd time, I tried to enter there as someone tried to exit. With cars behind me it was a problem. The sign that is there faces the street, not the parking lot. So I don't think cars that leave that way see the sign. Thanks for looking into it for me.”

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. Traffic flow at the Takoma Park store is always a challenge, and we are open to ideas and suggestions for ways to improve it. We certainly can look into putting an appropriate sign by the Ethan Allen Avenue entrance. To avoid congestion, you can also use the large lot on the other side of the Co-op. The entrance/exit there is wider and usually less likely to back up.

—“Please bring back 8 oz. soup containers! Thanks.”

The demand for the 8 oz. containers was so low that it was recently decided to stop ordering them. Other containers, such as the 16 oz. size, have been more popular and we are able to continue carrying these. We will be happy to bring the smaller containers back if there is a demand for them in the future. In the meantime, please feel free to talk to the department manager to see if there is another way that we can meet your needs.

—“I'm glad to see some departments making the effort to respond to customer comments again. For months now it's felt to me as if comments disappeared into a black hole. Please make this a requirement for all departments.”

Thanks for appreciating our efforts to keep on top of the comments. As you can

imagine, we get dozens of new comments every week with questions, complaints and compliments, and product suggestions. Department managers do their best to consider each one and respond as promptly as they can. I'm sure you can appreciate how busy they are. I promise you that they are not disappearing into black holes, though! If you have a question or concern that has not been addressed, please feel free to contact the department manager or me directly. We would be happy to do what we can to address it. You can reach us by phone and by e-mail, or better yet please ask for us in person when you next visit the store. We like to meet our members and customers.

—“Getting a free massage from Steph Karpinski was AWESOME — Thank you thank you thank you!”

Steph's massages at the Takoma Park store are very popular, and we're happy to hear that they are beneficial to you. Her schedule varies, but you can usually find the latest one posted on the bulletin board at the front of the store. As of press time (late July) Steph was out of town, so we don't have her latest schedule up there. As soon as she gets back, though, we'll post her latest schedule. We'll try to include it in future issues of the Cooperative Effort News too.

—“The store looks much better now — keep up the good work! (I never knew there was a skylight in the middle — the natural light really makes a difference!)”

Alas, a skylight is only as good as the sky that lights it; now that the sunny days are finally beginning to outnumber the gray days, the skylight can really start to make a difference once again. Thanks for letting us know that you appreciate the work we have been putting into the store lately. We are always working to make the store better, and we hope you will continue to bear with us as the changes continue. Positive feedback helps us know that we doing a good job for our members and customers. There are a lot of good things happening at TPSS, and we're not ashamed to admit that we like getting a pat on the back once in a while! ●

## Green Dry Cleaners: Good for You, Good for the Environment

By Mary Jo Lazun

During the summer months in the DC area, “Code Red” is the all too familiar signal that our air quality is extremely poor. On these days we take the Ride-On buses for free, mow our lawns late in the day, and try to fuel our cars early.

And avoid going to the dry cleaner?

For most of us, our selection of a dry cleaner is not on the list of choices we make

to help the environment. But it should be. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), over three million gallons of perchlorethylene, a petroleum-based solvent widely used in traditional dry cleaning, is released into the environment yearly—most of it directly into the air. The EPA notes that most direct releases of perchlorethylene (or perc for short) into the environment are through the air.

Once in the air, perc breaks down into other chemicals over several weeks and falls to the earth as a liquid. Because it does not bind well to soil, perc seeps into groundwater and can be absorbed by plants and animals exposed to contaminated soil and water. Though perc is heavily regulated by the EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), “drycleaners are one of the largest group of chemical users that come into direct contact with the public,” according to a June 2001 fact sheet issued by the EPA's Garment and Textile Care Program.

Although most dry cleaners use less than 140 gallons of perc a year, there are an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 dry cleaning facilities nationwide. Therefore, the cumulative environmental impact from these facilities is significant.

### The Lowdown on Perchlorethylene

So why do we use perc to clean our clothes? When introduced perc was a major advance for the dry cleaning industry. Previous solvents were extremely dangerous because of their flammability. Perc is a very effective cleaning solvent and it is not flammable. It can be used to remove stains and dirt from all common types of fabrics.

However, perc is a potential human carcinogen. OSHA notes that symptoms associated with exposure include depression of the central nervous system, damage to the liver and kidneys impaired memory confusion, dizziness, headache, drowsiness, and irritation of eyes, noses, and throats. Repeated dermal exposure may result in dermatitis.

In response to these concerns, local area governments are taking action. The board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the air pollution control agency for much of Southern California, ruled this past December that dry cleaners in its area must stop using perchlorethylene by 2020. New York and other governments are considering similar actions.

### Silicon-Based Alternatives are Now Available

During the past decade several alternatives to perc have been investigated. One of these, a silicon-based solvent, is marketed under the name of GreenEarth® Cleaning. This environmentally friendly method of cleaning is growing quickly across the world. Unlike perc, silicon-based solvents leave no odor. They are gentle to fabrics and are also lint- and static-free. The GreenEarth® process is also hypoallergenic.

The International Fabricare Institute completed a study this fall comparing the



# Local Flavors: Cooking and Eating From America's Farmers' Markets,

by Deborah Madison

Broadway Books, 2002  
\$39.95, hardcover; 408 pages

Review by Paul Lagasse

Full is nearly here, and the fruit and vegetables of the season—favorites such as watermelon and corn—are everywhere to be found. For the freshest produce this side of the Co-op, nothing beats a farmers' market, and there are several to choose from in the Maryland/DC/Virginia area. Deborah Madison's *Local Flavors: Cooking and Eating From America's Farmers' Markets* makes the bountiful harvests of America's farmers' markets come alive for readers of all kinds—newbies and veterans alike.

The bounty of the farmers' market is not just fresh foods, Madison contends. The bounty is also found in the personalities of the vendors and buyers, the character and charm of the local community, and the friendships and bonds that form between people. "Many people still think that the farmers' market is where you go for cheap food, and sometimes there are bargains to be found," Madison writes. "But we would do better to think of the farmers' market as the place where we can find food that is impeccably fresh and delicious, truly local and therefore truly seasonal, quite likely raised by sound, sustainable methods and by someone who might become your friend."

Madison's lively and entertaining book captures this rich harvest with narrative, pictures, and recipes. The book is divided into 15 chapters grouped by botanical family (including "Greens Wild and Domestic," "Herbs and alliums," and "Eggs and Cheese at the Market") and by regional season (including "A Cool-Weather Miscellany" and "The Vegetable Fruits of Summer"). Each chapter begins with a brief narrative about the topic drawn from interviews with farmers and vendors at farmers' markets. These narratives weave together the theme of markets as community affairs, and she skillfully evokes the sights, sounds, and personalities of the market. Then come the recipes, pages and pages of them, many illustrated with photographs. Occasional sidebar features spotlight the particular specialties (and peculiarities) of individual farmers' markets.

Madison, author of *The Greens Cookbook*, *The Savory Way*, *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*, and *This Can't Be Tofu!*, is a passionate advocate for the value of farmers' markets as anchors of community identity. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and has been active in her local farmers' market for a dozen years. Her passion for farmers' markets is infectious, and this book will make you not only hungry for the food they sell there but also for the friendships and connections that they offer. ●

## RECIPE

### Chard and Cilantro Soup With Noodle Nests

- The Noodle Nests:
  - 2 eggs, separated
  - 3 oz. (1 3/4 cups) fine egg noodles such as fideos or capellini, uncooked
  - 1/2 cup grated Monterey jack cheese
  - 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
  - sea salt
  - peanut oil for frying
- 1. Beat the egg whites until they hold firm peaks, then stir in the yolks, noodles, cheese, and cilantro. Season with a few pinches of salt, then really work the mixture with your hands or a wooden spoon so that it's more or less homogenous. It will look impossibly dry and stiff.
- 2. Heat enough oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat to float the noodles, at least 1/2 inch. When it's hot, drop the batter into the oil, dividing it into 4 or 6 portions by eye. Fry until golden, about 1 minute, then turn and fry the second side, another minute. Set aside on paper towels. These can be made hours ahead of time.
- The Soup:
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil
  - 2 bunches of scallions, including an inch or two of the greens, finely chopped
  - 1 celery rib, diced
  - 1 cup finely chopped cilantro stems and leaves, packed
  - leaves from 1 bunch chard, green or Rainbow (Bright Lights), about 6 cups, packed
  - sea salt and freshly ground pepper
  - 6 cups vegetable stock, chicken stock, or water
  - cilantro sprigs for garnish
- 1. Warm the oil in a soup pot. Add the scallions and celery and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. After a few minutes, add the cilantro and 1/2 cup water so that the vegetables stew rather than fry. Add the chard leaves, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt, then cover and cook until the chard has wilted down. Add the stock or water.
- 2. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and add the noodle nests to the pot. Simmer until the chard is tender, about 10 minutes. Taste for salt and season with pepper. Ladle the soup into soup plates, include a noodle nest in each bowl, and serve garnished with a sprig of cilantro.

—from *Local Flavors* by Deborah Madison

## WE ARE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PEOPLE! FOUR TO BE EXACT!

ARE YOU CONCERNED FOR THE FUTURE OF TPSS COOP?

THE BoR INVITES YOU TO RUN IN THE 2003 BoR ELECTION:

### WHO SERVES?

Members in good standing.

### WHAT DO BOARD MEMBERS DO?

Develop vision and policies for the stores and monitor how they are carried out.

### WHEN DOES THE BOARD MEET?

The 3rd Sunday of the month at 6 PM

### IS THERE COMPENSATION?

A board member volunteers an average of 8-10 hours a month and receives a 20% discount on purchases.

## INTERESTED????????????????:

Self-Nomination Packets will be available Sunday July 27, 2003 by 12 PM at the front desk of each store or contact Sec. Rae Murphy (RaeofTPSS@aol.com) to have one emailed to you.

Completed Nominating Statements and Packets are due Sunday August 24, 2003 9 PM.

Nominating Statements will be posted by Sunday September 22, 2003

Voting Ballots will be available by Sunday September 28, 2003.

Voting ends on Sunday October 26, 2003 by 6 PM

Ballots will be collected, counted and results announced at the Membership Meeting on the same day beginning at 6:30 PM



1993-0809. Highlands Beach, NJ. 18-2 of 2.

I don't think of the past.  
The only thing that matters is  
the everlasting present.

W. Somerset Maugham (1874 - 1965), *The Moon and Sixpence*

## The Three R's — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

By Susan Emerson, Co-op Recycling Committee

### “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”

It is a catchy phrase that is almost as common as the triangular recycling symbol. Still, few people give full consideration to what it really means. There's a reason why “reduce” comes before “reuse,” which in turn comes before “recycle.” Buying products with reduced, or better yet, no packaging at all, is the best way to protect the environment from environmental damage caused by solid waste. Environmental damage caused by solid waste includes the impacts of incinerators, landfills, and recycling. Reusing is superior to recycling in

terms of environmental protection because it does not require the energy-consuming, and sometimes toxic, processes that recycling demands.

Recycling has saved countless old growth timber stands, has prevented the need for vast amounts of landfill space, and has kept tons of incinerator toxics from entering the air we breathe. However, it is still not an environmentally benign process. In fact, some recycling centers, such as the Oronogo-Duenweg (Jasper Co.) scrap metal recycling center in Missouri, have been declared Superfund Sites by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Clearly the best solution is to reuse items such as grocery bags and food containers whenever possible.

On the topic of reusing, TPSS sells bulk items ranging from peanut butter to dried beans and fruit that can be purchased in reusable containers that are available at the Co-op and can also be brought from home. The Co-op also sells milk and water in reusable bottles that can be returned to the Co-op for exchange or for the refund of a deposit. For customers who bring their own grocery bags, TPSS's Silver Spring store issues a bag credit of five cents per bag, and the Takoma Park store distributes one poker chip per bag representing five cents to donate to the charity of the customer's choice. Collection jars for various charities are located in the front of the store, and we can see that the collective donations of Co-op shoppers add up quickly. ●



### OLD COMPUTERS CAN BE RECYCLED!

Millions of discarded PCs and various computer components are clogging landfills. The good news is that the Montgomery County Transfer Station accepts county residents' computers for recycling. With that in mind, the TPSS Recycling Committee wants to arrange a collection of used computers to take to the transfer station. Contact Steve if you're interested at: (301) 588-2541 or [tpssrecycling@yahoo.com](mailto:tpssrecycling@yahoo.com).

## Farm Report

By Michael Tabor

I don't know anyone who enters farming because they think it's an easy life. In my case, even after 32 years, the challenges never end. And that's what makes it so interesting.

As all of you probably know, after years of drought, this spring was marked by huge amounts of rain and no sun. It was never dry enough to plow, disc and harrow. Luckily I had purchased some new tillage machinery during the winter and that gave me the ability to prepare some soil — nevertheless, planting was 2–4 weeks late. And you'll see that reflected in less local and higher priced produce in the co-op and at farmers markets.

This season I'm testing out an experiment in making “compost tea”. On Licking

Creek Bend Farm, located about 2 hours from the co-op, one of our biggest problems is fungus-related diseases. As a sustainable grower, I don't use traditional chemical fungicides. So, I'm subject to early and late “blight” on my tomatoes (and other night shade-related vegetables) as well as many soil-transmitted diseases.

So, when I read about the concept of brewing up a “tea” rich in healthy and diverse microorganisms, which would be sprayed on vegetable leaves, I was very interested. Our “tea maker” is like a 25-gallon mini Jacuzzi for liquid compost. After adding a “brew” of worm compost castings, bat and bird guano, kelp, molasses and nutrients, the mix is stirred and aerated and after 24 hours it's ready to be applied. The expectation is that after the mix is sprayed, the plants become a host and breeding ground for all these beneficial bacteria and

the plant becomes healthier and more resistant to diseases. We'll see. I'm very hopeful!

By the way, if any of you are interested in sustainable agriculture and want to spend some time on our farm, let me know. We cannot take anyone who smokes (smokers transmit a potentially lethal disease to our plants!). You should be in more than decent physical shape. A week is enough time to see if it's something you'd like to spend more time doing at a later date. Healthy food, good company, and enough work to test your body and soul will make for an interesting week. Fax me at 301 587-7535 if you are interested and when you are available.

One more thing. Since I've been offered this space, I thought I'd use it to promote some health vegetables that customers generally don't buy. In this article, I'll pitch *Swiss Chard*. Chard has been cultivated and eaten going back to so-called pre-historic

times (and probably preceded the beet itself). It is simply a beet where the energy has gone into developing a stalk and leaf, rather than root. The Greeks, Romans and French all used it and there are some outrageously interesting recipes using bacon grease, cheese, etc. The French cook the stalks like asparagus and the leaves like spinach. On our farm, we serve it as a salad green. It's tasty, rich in vitamins and minerals and fibrous and filling — more so than lettuce, which is basically composed of water and not particularly nutritious. Give it a try! ●

*Michael Tabor writes a regular column in the Takoma and Silver Spring Voice and writes about local politics. He started farming in 1972. He brings food to the co-op as well as the Saturday Adams-Morgan and Tuesday evening Brookland Farmers markets.*

## Hear, Ye! Hear, Ye! Upcoming Events at the Co-op

### Membership Appreciation Days

To show how grateful we are for the loyal support of our members, both the Takoma Park and Silver Spring stores will be offering members a 5% discount on everything in the store (except special orders) all day August 18 and September 23 from opening to closing. It's our way of saying “thank you!”

### Labor Day Extravaganza at the Takoma Park Co-op

Say farewell to summer with music, food, and fun! The Co-op invites you to a party on Labor Day starting around 11 in the large parking lot next to the Takoma Park store. A variety of fresh and prepared foods will be available for sale, and you can jam to the music of Jay's Regrets and The Reekers. Admission is free, so come on out and give summer a sendoff.

### Personal Growth Seminars at the Silver Spring Co-op

The Co-op is excited to offer a series of four seminars by holistic health practitioner Mayuri Sobti of the Washington Institute of Natural Medicine. The seminars will take place from 2:00 to 3:00 pm on the third Sunday of each month from August to November. Each seminar is \$15 per person. The dates and topics are:

#### • August 16: Foods for Health

Covers important information on the healing power of foods and the importance of a balanced diet for optimum health and healing. Students will learn how to plan simple menus that promote the health of the entire family by learning how to select nutrient-packed foods over empty-calorie foods.

#### • September 20: Aromatherapy for Vibrant Health & Beauty

Provides an excellent introduction to the healing world of essential oils that are extracted from plants and herbs, which promote health and beauty. The hour will be packed with practical information on the oils, including: where to buy them; how to use them on the body and around the house; how to treat common ailments like headaches digestive problems, aches and pains, insect bites, stress, and fatigue; and how to maintain a healthy immune system using the oils.

#### • October 18: Herbology for Health & Vitality

Provides a basic introduction to the safe use of herbs for health and healing. This will be a great opportunity to learn about commonly used herbs such as Echinacea, Ginseng, Valerian, Kava Kava, Slippery Elm, and more. These herbs can provide excellent first aid for many common ailments. In addition, specific cardio tonics and liver cleaners will be discussed.

#### • November 15: Homeopathy, a Safe Choice

A basic introduction to homeopathy and ways to use it safely and effectively to treat common ailments. Students will learn how to identify symptoms and write out a simple case in order to identify an effective homeopathic remedy. The most common single and combination remedies will be discussed, and tips for creating a first-aid homeopathy kit will be shared.

• For more information about the seminars, or to register, contact the Co-op at 240-247-2667 (COOP) or pick up a registration form at the store.

### TPSS at the Takoma Park Folk Festival

This year's day-long Folk Festival, featuring music and dance, children's activities, a crafts show and sale, community tables, and lots of food, will take place on Sunday, September 7 at the Takoma Park Middle School, 7611 Piney Branch Road, near Route 410. As always, event is free. And just as always, the Co-op will have a booth at the Festival. Please be sure to drop by and say hello to our friendly staff!

### Author Lecture at the Silver Spring Co-op

On September 27, join Sandy Fallon, lecturer, cook, and co-author of the controversial book [ital]Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats[/ital], Second Edition (Washington, DC: New Trends Publishing, Inc., 2001) for a lively lecture on the “Dirty Secrets of the Food Processing Industry.” Copies of the book are available at the store. The time of the lecture is TBD at press time. Call the Co-op at 240-247-2667 (COOP) for more information.

# Millions and Millions of Cats

By Judith Sylvane

Cats now are our most popular household pets. They're wonderful companions, particularly for those of us who live in apartments. I've lived with many cats, and my current companion is Mimsy, a 19-year-old black-&-white shorthair. Like her two predecessors, Maggie and Cheena, Mimsy once was terrorized by another cat, and now needs to be an only feline.

Cats are popular in part because they are relatively easy pets. They're mostly smaller, quieter, and maybe even less expensive than dogs. They don't have to be walked in all weathers. They take care of their own grooming. They live comfortably in small apartments. They're fairly independent—unless of course you're reading the paper or working on the computer; then they have very sneaky ways of getting in front of your eyes. They respond very positively to a loving environment. Sometimes, however, problems appear. Here are some basic things I've learned from my experiences, from listening to other peoples' experiences, and from reading.

## Litter Box Myths and Misses

Cats normally have preferences for where and on what they like to eliminate. When these preferences are a rug or a chair, however, we don't consider them "normal." The first thing to do is visit the vet. Diabetes, urinary tract infections, feline urinary syndrome (FUS), and other changes in a cat's health can lead to a variety of litter box problems such as random wetting.

Random wetting is not a "revenge" act. Both *The New Natural Cat: A Complete Guide for Finicky Owners* and the Cat Care Society (Lakewood, CO) assert that it's a myth that cats urinate in inappropriate places to express anger with their humans. Stress caused by other cats is more likely to be the problem: in her former home the local cat bully used to ambush Mimsy near the litter box, so she took to using a pillow.

In *The New Natural Cat* (for sale and on the reference shelf at the Takoma store), the author reminds us to stick closely to nature. Cats are fastidious. Cat urine is concentrated and smelly, and in the wild cats don't call attention to themselves by eliminating close to home. It's not a good idea, therefore, to

put litter boxes near food or favorite sleeping places. Put the cat's toilet near your toilet. It's out of the way and convenient to clean. Cleaning should be done often—cats don't like standing on old, wet litter.

Urinating outside the box could be accidental. Is the box too small? When Mimsy began urinating half inside and half outside her box, I got one with higher sides (over 6 inches), and the problem stopped. (Like humans, older cats are less flexible.) Scent marking by spraying, however, is different. Spraying indicates territory and often is triggered by other cats. Are there conflicts in a multi-cat household? Try an herbal anti-anxiety remedy such as Natural Pet Medicine's Stress Control (from the Co-op) or Homepet's Anxiety drops (from For Cat's Sake in Silver Spring). Are neighborhood cats hanging around the door? Discourage their presence with offensive-to-a-cat odors such as citrus sprays (good for indoor discouragement, too).

## Starting from Scratch

Damage to furniture from scratching is the second most common complaint after litter box lapses, says Pam Shoff, owner of For Cat's Sake, Kensington. Cats scratch to condition and groom their claws, to mark their territory visibly and with scent from glands in the paws, and to stretch and exercise. Damage can be controlled, however.

First, keep their claws trimmed. Monthly trimming removes the outer shell and sharp tips. Use cat nail scissors and clip only the clear, hooked portion of the claw.

Get a sturdy scratching post covered with sisal rope and carpet. Lure the cat to the post with a dangling toy. As he reaches for the toy he will scratch the post and leave his scent. It's that scent that will entice him to return to the post. Other cats love those catnip-scented cardboard posts and boxes.

Make that sofa or chair less desirable by masking the paw scents with a citrus deodorizer or No-Scratch, which contains natural deterrents. Cover the surface with unpleasant materials like double-stick tape or aluminum foil.

## Meat, Meat, and More Meat

Members of the cat family (Felidae), imposing predators with lethal teeth and razor claws, evolved as true carnivores. Processed, refined, overcooked commercial

cat food is not their natural diet. Raw, freshly killed prey is. If you want to try a raw meat diet, read that section in *The New Natural Cat*. It's full of sensible advice.

Among the commercial foods, canned is better than dry or semi-moist; it has more animal-derived ingredients and more moisture. And the most expensive, the better, because these foods are more like to have higher quality meats in them. Feed a variety of brands. Feeding only one brand means the cats are getting only one manufacturer's set of ingredients. Read the ingredients carefully. If a top ingredient is corn or other vegetable, move on. If the first ingredient is some kind of "by-product," *The New Natural Cat* says that this can include (and be allowed by the federal government) "moldy, rancid or spoiled processed meats" and things too disgusting to list. On the other hand, the first four ingredients in PetGuard (carried by the Co-op and Fresh Fields) Beef and Barley Dinner are beef, beef broth, beef liver, barley ... not a by-product to be found.

## Treats and Toys

What could be a better treat than catnip? Most cats love it. Just don't give it to them too often or leave it out all the time, because they can become immune to its effect. Look at the way it's packaged before you buy it. It should be well sealed. Then treat

catnip like any other herb: after opening it, store it in a tightly covered glass jar to retain its effectiveness. Some vendors at the Sunday morning Takoma Park Farmers Market carry fresh catnip.

Listing the toys available for cats would take a whole article to itself. Hundreds of different ones are available in local markets and pet stores. You can also make your own with tin-foil balls, wax paper, paper bags, or tops from milk or bottled water. But choose a cat's toy as carefully as you would choose a child's toy; for example, sewn toys are preferable to glued ones. Keep the toys at least the size of a ping-pong ball—which also make great playthings. ●

## References

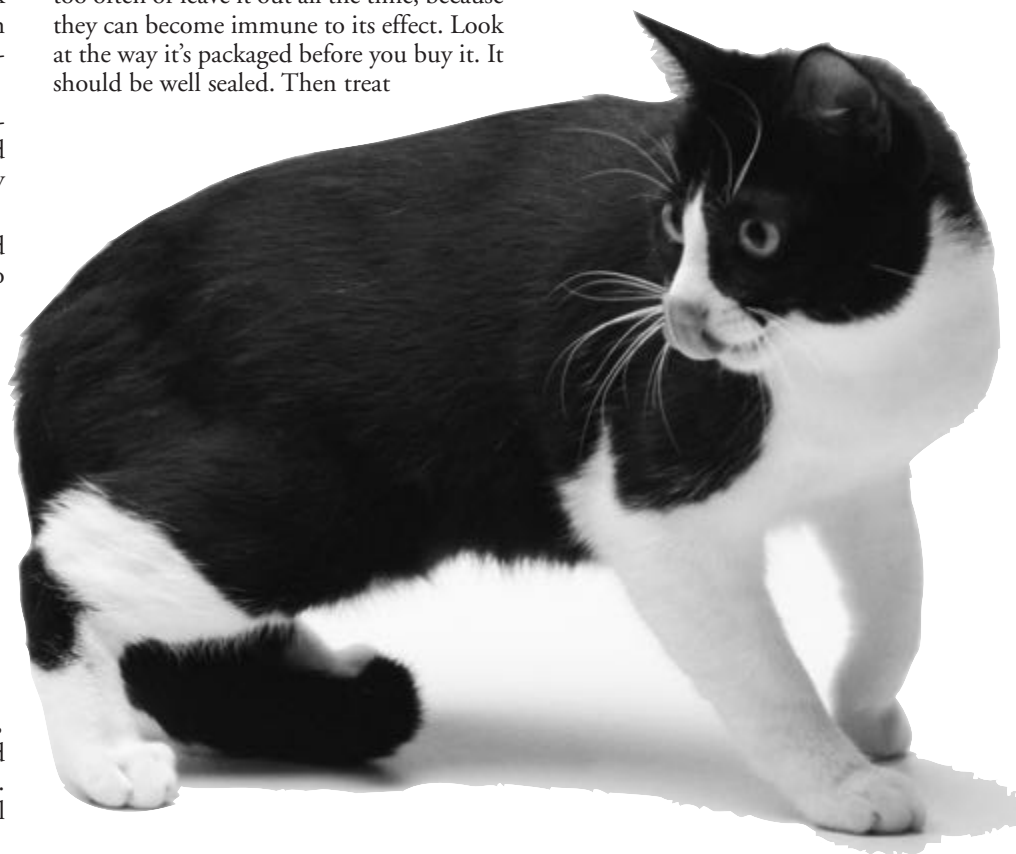
For Cat's Sake, Kensington, Maryland (301-933-KITY [5489])

*Millions of Cats* (1928). Wanda Gag

The Cat Care Society, Lakewood, Colorado. www.catcare.com

*The New Natural Cat: A Complete Guide for Finicky Owners* (1990). A. Frazier & N. Eckroate

(Next issue—Woof, woof.)



## Green Dry Cleaner, continued from page 4



cleaning process must not only prove itself independently but must show that it compares favorably to existing cleaning systems. In terms of stain removal, the GreenEarth® process is comparable to perc, particularly for removing water-soluble stains, though it is not quite as effective at removing ball-point ink and shoe polish stains.

The GreenEarth® silicon-based process

is chemically inert. This means that it does not interact chemically with clothes at all. Rather, it carries detergent to the clothes and rinses away suspended dirt and oils trapped by the detergent. It is gentler on clothes than perc. Colors remain bright and intact since there is no chemical reaction with the solution. It is also odorless and hypoallergenic.

## Green Dry Cleaner is the Area's First

Kessler's Dry Cleaners on 16th Street in Silver Spring, Maryland, recently became the first—and so far the only—dry cleaner in the area to switch from perc to the GreenEarth® process. The response by customers has been enthusiastic. Kenny Black, the owner of Kessler's, says the reaction to the new process has been "unbelievable." Customers come from as far away as Howard and Baltimore Counties to take advantage of it.

From a business perspective, one advantage for using GreenEarth® is that the process is very similar to the methods used by perc. Though new cleaning machinery is required, the staff continues to work as they did before but without the dangers of exposure to perc. Black notes that his employees are delighted with the new product.

Black said his decision to move to GreenEarth® cleaning was a "proactive decision." He has no desire to compete with Dryclean Depot or other discount cleaners. His goal is to provide the highest quality dry cleaning that is friendly to the environment, good for his staff, and gentle to clothes.

Kessler's is also a perennial favorite of *Washington Consumers Checkbook* and *Washingtonian Magazine*. Kessler's has been in business for over 40 years. The staff is pleasant and attentive. They examine every item to be sure it can be dry-cleaned. If you for-

get to pick up your cleaning, they will call and remind you. The same courtesy is extended if an item is not going to be available as promised.

I recently tried Kessler's for the first time. I took a dirty trenchcoat and a well-used comforter. The results were excellent. Both items were spotless and they both felt very soft. As promised, there was no odor.

Since moving to the GreenEarth® process, the prices at Kessler's have not changed. The comforter cost \$20 and the trench coat cost \$9. Dresses and suits start at \$7.95 and pants and shirts run \$3.95. For the quality of the service and the excellent results, the price is fair. Not only that, but sending my dry cleaning to Kessler's makes me feel like I am doing something about those Code Red days. ●

# What Does Being Healthy Mean to YOU? Part I

By Robin Anderson, Holistic Health Practitioner

Hello! I would like to hear from our readers on how they define and practice living a healthy life. I know what this means for me, but I would like to hear what it means for you!

When I think about what it means to be healthy, many, many thoughts and practices come to mind. In this article, I will outline some of the ones that I find the most helpful, though they are in no particular order because they are all equally important and are intimately intertwined in the quest for a healthy balanced state.

Before I discuss the practices that I use, I would like to ponder a question: is there a “catch-all” definition for being healthy? Is there one perfect statement that would capture the essence of arriving at the place of perfect balance in ones life and affairs? Ah! Perhaps *that* is the definition of being healthy: “Arriving at the place of perfect balance and peace in mind, body and spirit.”

Actually, I do not believe that one can expect to arrive at a place of perfect overall balance and remain there, indefinitely. Everything in life, *everything*, changes form over a period of time. We humans do not even keep the exact same hair strands, bodily fluids, skin or cells in one day! We also are blessed with the gift of maturing and growing older. Life challenges can also assist us in our maturing process.

So how do we remain in perfect balance as we grow and face life challenges? Perhaps the definition of health presented above is unrealistic and, possibly, incorrect. I am sure this issue can stir a lively debate that may never have a conclusion because the debaters themselves are in a constant state of change and growth and therefore their perspectives on this issue will change!

Notwithstanding the lack of a catch-all definition for being healthy, I would like to share my pearls for being healthy and for practicing a healthy lifestyle. I try to practice these in my life on a daily basis. They are:

**Pearl 1:** Acknowledge and apply the fact that you are what you eat.

**Pearl 2:** Get one hour of physical activity every day that produces sweat.

**Pearl 3:** Drink at least 2 liters of fresh water every day.

**Pearl 4:** Meditate for one hour every day.

**Pearl 5:** Obtain *more* than enough rest.

**Pearl 6:** Detox the body every season.

**Pearl 7:** Acknowledge your responsibility in hurtful situations. Own you stuff!

**Pearl 8:** Closely examine dilapidating emotions, thoughts and feeling that you are holding on to. Become a spiritual warrior in order to obtain the courage to let them go.

**Pearl 9:** Develop a relationship with your Higher Power.

**Pearl 10:** Become in alignment with your gifts and purposes for being on earth. Express these gifts in all areas of your life.

**Pearl 11:** Establish supportive, loving, nurturing relationships. Let all negative relationships go.

**Pearl 12:** Set up healthy boundaries with everyone in your life.

**Pearl 13:** Live [ital]life[/ital] large and loud.

I will elaborate on the first two pearls stated above. Subsequent articles will continue to describe the rest of my personal pearls for obtaining optimum health as well as share some of yours!

## Pearl 1: Acknowledge and apply the fact that you are what you eat.

The proper foods vary with each individual. I have met people that are allergic to corn, wheat, dairy, seafood—you name it. The important point here is that they *discovered* what they were allergic to. I highly recommend visiting a doctor who can test for common food allergies. The obvious effect of being allergic to a particular food is to become ill after eating it. But being allergic to a certain food can cause other adverse effects on the body that may not be readily associated with the foods consumed. Foods that you should not eat can cause asthma, flu-like symptoms, ear infections, coughing, itchy watery eyes, bloating, constipation, and sudden changes in mood or behavior.

Our bodies are constantly talking to us with every ache, pain, heartburn, upset stomach or dizziness that we experience. Our bodies also tell us when we are eating foods for our highest good when we experience a sensation of being “healed” and have a good bowel movement 2 to 3 hours after eating. These are what we call life-giving, energizing foods. We will not feel lethargic or weighed down, nor shall our moods become elevated (e.g., from consuming caffeine or processed sugars), low (e.g., from alcohol consumption) or aggressive (e.g., from eating too much red meat). Instead, in general we will experience a sense of clarity and well being when consuming the right foods over an extended period of time.

The nutritional needs of our bodies change as we grow older. For example, foods that once energized us when we were younger can cause heartburn as we get older. Many people also become lactose intolerant as they become older. Therefore, it is necessary to periodically “check in” with yourself to determine whether a particular food that was once your “friend” may now be your “enemy.”

In her book, *Healthy Healing*, Dr. Linda Page outlines the best anti-aging foods we should all be eating at any age. They are:

**Fresh fruits and vegetables.** Fresh produce gives us the most vitamins, minerals, fiber and enzymes.

**Sea greens.** They contain all the necessary elements of life and transmit the energies of the ocean to us as proteins, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, trace minerals, chlorophyll, enzymes and fiber.

**Whole grains, nuts, seeds and beans for protein, fiber minerals and essential fatty acids.** They are living nutrients that can go directly to our cells.

**Cultured foods for friendly digestive flora.** Yogurt tops the list, but kefir and kefir cheese, miso, tamari, tofu, tempeh, even a glass of wine at the evening meal also promote better nutrient assimilation.

**Fish and fresh seafood.** Two to three times a week enhance thyroid and metabolic balance.

**Plenty of pure water every day.** Keeps our bodies hydrated.

**Keep your system alkaline.** Use green drinks, green foods, miso and grains like rice.

**Healthy, unsaturated fats and oils.** Two to 3 tablespoons a day are enough to keep your body at its best.

**Poultry, other meats, butter, eggs, and dairy in moderation.** Avoid fried foods, excess caffeine, red meats, highly seasoned foods, refined and chemically processed foods altogether.

One good method for determining the effect on your body of the foods that you eat is to keep a food journal. For 10 days, write down everything that you ate, the time you ate, how it made you feel, and how often you urinated and made bowel movements. You should also write down any food cravings that you had. A food journal typically looks like this:

Food Journal					
DAY 1	Foods Eaten	Time Food was Eaten	Emotions Experienced	Urine and Bowel Movements	Cravings
Breakfast:					
Snacks:					
Lunch:					
Snack:					
Dinner:					
Snack:					

By keeping a food journal, you can begin identifying patterns of unhealthy eating habits. And by comparing the aforementioned anti-aging healthful eating guidelines to our food journals, we can begin to incorporate the proper whole foods into our diet for optimum health.

## Pearl 2: Get one hour of physical activity every day that produces sweat.

Long before I became a holistic health practitioner, long before I intellectually understood the benefits of physical activity, I loved the feeling of moving my body. I can remember being a little girl and playing a game of “rolling in the grass, down the hill” with my friends. I remember playing hide and go seek in the mid-day heat of summer, totally

unaware of the sweat accumulation on my body.

Thinking back on these wonderful childhood memories brings a smile to my face. There was nothing like a game of kick ball or a game of chase. The fact is as a kid, I loved to run, jump, swing my arms wildly, spin around, dance and twist my body in all sorts of positions (what we adults now call yoga!). What I was experiencing was a connection of my body and spirit to nature. The smell and feel between my toes of fresh cut grass, the touch of the toughness and rippled bark of old oak trees that seemed to reach the bright blue sky, the feel of a summer rain upon my face, the taste of snowflakes, the numbness of my toes and fingers when throwing snowballs, the feel of the sun on my face, arms, legs and back all made me feel connected to our home, Earth. It warmed my heart and soothed my soul but at five years old, I just felt loved.

To this day, I still experience these same sensations with outdoor activities. I love to take long walks with my dog. I return home clearer, calmer, and ready for the day ahead. I get my best thinking done on long slow jogs, or else I simply let my mind relax of all thoughts as I enter a meditative state. When I am on my bike, I feel compelled to sing. And sing I do. When I am swimming (Oh, how I love to swim!), I allow myself to move with the water's own natural rhythm and flow. Moments like this I like to pretend I am a fish, free to move about anywhere in the big sea. I don't care if my backstroke or forward crawl is not perfect because in that moment I am free! Truly free! Physical activity is a drug. It is an aphrodisiac, our very own personal mood enhancer due to the release of endorphins in our brains. After my body experiences sustained movement over an extended period of time, I say to myself, “Okay, I can make it another day.”

Physical activity that produces sweat is essential for healing, removing toxins, and preventing most of all diseases known to man. Before I started practicing any of my pearls for optimum health, I was physically active. I know without a shadow of a doubt, that this physical activity kept me from obtaining high blood pressure, becoming obese, suffering from depression, and giving up on life. All of these diseases are common in my family and even considered hereditary by those who seek an excuse for not making healthy lifestyle changes.

In a nutshell, regular physical activity saved my life. Many times in my work life I wanted to just quit—not call in sick, but just quit! I would then go for a run, and my courage and self-esteem would increase and my perspective would change, thus preventing me from suffering a financial disaster by quitting my job without any suitable employment prospects. Many times in my personal life I wanted to become a member of another family, and make a whole new set of friends. I would then go for a long swim or a bike ride and return home with a smile on my face after I had left home in tears.

Regular physical activity produces the ability to “know when to hold them and know when to fold them.” I have never stayed in any relationship too long that was damaging to my health. And I owe this to the self-esteem-building capacity of physical activity. It is my personal friend, my buddy, one that I can depend and rely upon and that has never, ever let me down.

So I say to those that are not physically active (and 75% of us are not), get up, get out and get moving, my friends! Start slowly and build up to an hour each day of a sweating routine—any physical activity of your choice. If you currently are physically active, then *right on!*

Subsequent issues of the Health Corner will focus on more of my personal pearls for optimum health that I have studied and continue to practice in my life. As stated at the beginning of this article, I also would love to read your own personal practices and coveted pearls for being and living a healthy life. With your permission, we would love to print them in subsequent issues of the Health Corner as well. Please feel free to send them to me at: [nest\\_4\\_robin@yahoo.com](mailto:nest_4_robin@yahoo.com).

**Namaste!!!**