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Dates to Remember

February:

26 Mount Pleasant Food
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Fill out the Customer Feedback
Survey online thru April!

March:

3 Owner Appreciation Day
11 Board Meeting
18 Cooking Basics Workshop
25 Special Orders Due

April:

4 Owner Appreciation Day
8 Board Meeting
15 Party Time! Gluten-Free &
Fun! Cooking Workshop

The Importance of Knowing Our Food in the wake of the Salmonella Typhimurim Outbreak

As I prepare meals for my two daughters I wonder, "How did we get here?"

Back at Thanksgiving, in a conversation regarding our food system, my father, a notorious debater said "We learned before the industrial revolution that the family farm just doesn't work." I think my parent's proverbial apple tree is planted on a hill. A high hill, and when the little apple-me fell off, I rolled away. Far away -like to a completely different bioregion!

I have been replaying the conversation in my head for two months now and it brings up a question I would like to explore; If we do not take the localization of our food and economy very seriously how will we unlearn our dependence on imported foods and goods and be capable of teaching our children to be self-sufficient and know their food?

I strongly believe that the family farm is one of the key saviors to pulling us out of our current economic situation. If our peanut, spinach and strawberry processing is done up the road or across the county, and all goods are kept local, we clearly wouldn't have 529 persons from 43 states infected by tainted product. (www.cdc.gov)

Below is an excerpt from the National Cooperatives Grocers website:

Regional/Local Food Systems Can Help Improve Food Safety Issues

The peanut/Salmonella situation... raises issues about the vulnerability we face as a result of a hugely centralized food system where a relatively small player, like Peanut Corporation of America, can have such a large impact nationwide on so many products. We advocate for more local and regionalized products for many reasons such as helping to strengthen local and regional economies and reducing environmental impact. Another key reason includes food safety. Regional and local products tend to be easier to trace back to the origins due to more limited distribution making it easier to address food safety issues more quickly.

Hindsight is 20/20, right? So, now what?

I grew up eating Taco Bell and Oreos. I didn't grow a single vegetable until turning 25. My daughters on the other hand, have never been to a fast food restaurant for a meal, and are now learning, with me, the intricacies of growing kale, carrots and fennel in our front yard. We can stop the cycle and I think *we must!*

GreenTree has been advocating local and regional products for a long time now. We will participate again this year in the Eat Local Challenge, we will continue to supply from as many Michigan growers and producers as possible and for the first time ever will collaborate with community members to form the **Mount Pleasant Food Project** through our Outreach department. This is an opportunity to *really* know our food! By creating a community garden, learning how to sustain our own food production needs and provide our children the experience of growing and eating fresh food, we may transform our agricultural system! Wow, I mean, WOW!!

Erin Swystun

Mother of Klara and Izabel, Co-op Owner, Marketing and Member Services Manager



You can log on to greentree.coop to join the list serve for the **Mount Pleasant Food Project**

GreenTree Staff



MANAGEMENT/
BUYING TEAM

Sarah Christensen

General Manager/
Bulk Buyer

Mary Rozga

Grocery Buyer/
Merchandising Manager

Angie Pohlman

Storekeeper Team Leader/
Wellness Buyer

Erin Swystun

Marketing/
Member Services Manager

Liz Busch

Produce Buyer

STOREKEEPERS:

Bobby Bates

Laura Coffee

Jessica Gibbons

Matt Himmelpach

Josh Johnson

Ana Lacy

Mari Potter

Grace Rollins



The Co-op Scoop

Sarah Christenen,
Co-op Owner GreenTree General Manager



I feel as though I've been on television, on the latest episode of "Extreme Co-op Makeover". Things around here have been changing, and quickly. And change is difficult and confusing and time consuming and all altogether WONDERFUL. We've made some big leaps in the last few months at GreenTree. We've changed our ownership structure to try and control expenses and build capital for future GreenTree endeavors. And as I write we are on the cusp of a major store reset. By the time you get this newsletter GreenTree will have some fresh paint, a new sign, a new produce cooler, a new freezer, new shelving, and a new bulk liquid display. We hope that you enjoy these changes and as always we welcome your feedback.

So what is else is on the burner for 2009? Well we certainly don't have any other major ownership changes in the works. Although we do plan to reflect on the transition we've made over the last 18 months. This year we'll focus on improved communication and participation with and from our owners. We were pretty surprised that after a year and a half of communication regarding the possible change in membership that some people still had no idea what was happening. What we're taking from that feedback is that we need to diversify our communication. This year we will send the quarterly newsletter electronically for those with internet (we'll still send paper copies to those without internet). In between we'll also be sending other news through email to keep you up to speed on upcoming events, sales, and store happenings. As a throwback to my high school yearbook days I decided to show the 2009 plans in What's Hot -What's Not list-here goes....

What's IN	What's Out
New Produce Cooler	Old Produce Cooler
Cooking Workshops on the 3rd Wednesday of the month	
Owner Appreciation Day-1 st Saturday of The Month	Owner Appreciation Day-1 st Thursday of the Month
Newsletter via email	Newsletter via snail mail (unless that's your preference)
Weekly E-News Updates	
Annual Meeting @ Chip-A-Waters Park	
Farm Tour (August)	Street Festival
Eat Local Challenge	
Farmer's Market (Saturdays)	

Less paper, more talk!

Now you can find us on both myspace and facebook. Send the Board of Directors a message, post a recipe, suggest/request favorite products, connect with other GreenTree owners and sign onto our email list!

From The GreenTree Board of Directors

*Owner/Members
have the opportunity to
participate in
GreenTree decision-
making by serving on
the Board of Directors.
Submit your letter of
intent to
board @greentree.coop*

As spring approaches, we are planning our Annual Owner/Member Meeting. This year, the Owner/Member meeting will take place later than in years past. In 2008, we changed the bylaws to permit it to take place later in the year, so we could accommodate nicer weather and maybe celebrate membership outside.

The Owner/Member meeting is when we elect owners to serve on the Board of Directors. As in years past, we have three seats up for election. And, we could use people to step forward and run for the seats.

We're currently in the process of refining the rules by which the board operates, and improving our performance in our role as a body that develops the vision toward which GreenTree is hoping to move.

We took a critical step in doing this last year by authoring a mission statement, the star we wish to sail GreenTree to. What remains is to figure out the near- and mid-term paths to getting there. This is something that will be an ongoing process, subject to regular review and evaluation. Towards that goal, the board is developing its annual calendar and agenda, tools we hope will guide our actions over the next year.

Running for the board is simple. Send a letter of intent to board@greentree.coop. The letter should include some information about yourself and why you think you'd be an asset to the board. The letters will be posted, and then two weeks before the Annual Membership Meeting, voting will start (this is also the final deadline to declare yourself a candidate).

If you look at the board and think, "Yeah, that doesn't really seem like it's for me" ... well, that's certainly understandable. I feel the same way about soy cheese. Do not, however, think for a second that this immediately closes off all avenues for you to contribute. If nothing else, you're definitely invited to come to the board's monthly meetings at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at Max & Emily's.



Eric Baerran,
Co-op Owner, Board Chair



Please let us know what you think...

Log on to greentree.coop and take the

Customer Feedback Survey

We are committed to strengthening your co-op. This is your chance to share ideas, communicate concerns and direct requests to the management team and the GreenTree Board of Directors.

Believe it or Not...

It is already time to think spring here in the GreenTree produce department. Our local farmers are bravely shaking off the gloom of winter and beginning to plan for the food that will nourish our bodies 4-8 months from now. As I write this newsletter we are planning for the local farmers meeting to take place mid-February. We expect great things this year. We have some of the best quality and variety of produce to be found in Mt. Pleasant because we are lucky to have farmers growing for GreenTree that are truly dedicated to the ideals of nurturing us humans and all of the Earth.



This year we will be able to do their hard work more justice by bringing the fruits of their labor to you in GreenTree's brand new produce cooler! We have not only more space and aesthetic appeal in this new cooler but a better home for the produce before you take it back to yours.

Have you seen the new reset? If you haven't, hurry in to see a more developed produce department right up in the front of the store. The entire reset of the store has been so great for all of us. Personally I think the produce section being upfront truly represents what GreenTree is all about. GreenTree is about taking care of ourselves and the earth through better food choices and what better way to do that than organic and local produce!

Before we start getting all that great local produce we will have something else new in the produce department. Look for produce items to start being a part of Owner Advantage Sales. I will be working with our distributor to find out which favorite items will be of good quality and price all month and then offering them at further discount to members! Look for the specials in the Owner Advantage flyers. Also, every Wednesday and Saturday we will have special featured Extreme Specials. I always pass down the sales the vendor gives to me but these will be even deeper discounts when a really good deal catches me by surprise. Making your dollar go farther!

We are continuing to try new recipes on the recipe board, thanks for the positive feedback! Look for recipes that match up with our Wednesday and Saturday Extreme Specials. The recipes have been changing at least twice a week with some favorites reappearing. If you are ever looking for a recipe for a specific item, please let me know!

Remember during these bleak weeks that we are more than halfway through the coldest parts of winter. Let's all try to think forward with the farmers towards spring. If you don't have any plants in your house to remind you of things that grow, try growing an avocado plant. Take an avocado pit and gingerly put four toothpicks slightly into the skin around the mid-section and suspend in a glass of water. The dimpled parts should be in and out of the water. Place in a moderately sunny location and change the water every 4-5 days. When they sprout, a few avocados in a pot of soil will make a nice tropical house-plant.

Have fun and stay warm. Soup recipes are on the Green Recipe Board!

Liz Busch
Co-op Owner, Produce Buyer

Yes! Michigan!

Did you know...

- ◆ Michigan's unique micro-climates allow farmers to produce over 125 different food and fiber products.
- ◆ Agriculture is Michigan's second largest industry and contributes \$37 billion annually to the states economy.
- ◆ Greenhouse and nursery products (flowers and shrubbery) generate 14% of Michigan's total agricultural revenues. Michigan is the nation's second largest grower of Christmas trees.
- ◆ Corn for grain produces about 11% of the state's agricultural revenue. Other Michigan field crops are soybeans, sugar beets, wheat, and hay.



Is This GreenTree?



It started out as a small idea really. It all began when we invited a merchandising correspondent from the National Co-operative Grocers Association to give us some general input on our selection, layout, organization, etc. Collectively, we decided that GreenTree was due for a 'basic' store reset. Little did I know... Ah, November Mary, there's so much I wish I could tell you now. So much I wish I could have prepared you for. We're a pretty idealistic group around here, and the moment we heard 'reset', the ideas began to fly. New bread freezer! New produce cooler! New paint! Let's move everything! The infamous reset became the platform to accomplish everything that we've wanted for the store. More room for produce! More space for grocery! New shelving! New sign!

As far as product selection, the name of the game was to incorporate as many options for people as possible. We've brought in everything from some of the more common natural food items found in grocery stores such as Kashi frozen pizzas and Michael Seasons potato chips to some items for hard-core locavores such as Farm Boy Flapjacks baking mixes and tortilla chips from North Branch, turkey sausage and brats from Carson City, and Michigan-made ice cream from Country Dairy in Hudsonville.

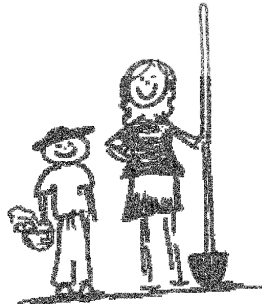
I'm proud to say that, though the reset is a work in progress, all of our goals are materializing, and I am so proud of the state GreenTree is in right now. Everyone on our staff has worked exceptionally hard and provided input and understanding as well as hours of labor. Does shelving still haunt my dreams? Sure, but I think that's relatively normal, and I think it has been worth the outcome. We are always trying to make the experience at GreenTree better and more comfortable for our owners and shoppers and we appreciate all of your feedback and understanding during this hectic time of change!



Mary Rozga
Co-op Owner, Merchandising Manager and Grocery Buyer

Mount Pleasant Food Project!

On February 4, community members met at the library to discuss the state of our food system, the opportunities we have in educating our youth and to brainstorm about beginning a community gardening initiative. We met, we brainstormed, we laughed and we figured out that with cooperation we can start a Mount Pleasant Food Project



Please join us on the 26th of February in the Veteran's Memorial Library's Community Room if you are interested in participating in this cool new project to create an outline for this season's growth. You can find out what's sprouting by checking out the February 4th meeting minutes, viewing the slide presentation and sign up for the emailing list on the GreenTree website: www.greentree.coop

Excerpted from *Slow Foods, Slow Schools; Transforming Education through a School Lunch Program.*
By Alice Waters:

"I believe public education must help restore the daily ritual of the table in all our childrens' lives. Public education has the required democratic reach. And it desperately needs a curriculum that offers alternatives to the fast-food messages that saturate our contemporary culture. These messages tell us that food is cheap and abundant. That abundance is permanent; that resources are infinite; that it's okay to waste; that standardization is more important than quality; and that speed is a virtue above all others."



Put this in your Crock and cook it.

By Angela Pohlman

With the lack of local, affordable produce during these last months of winter, I find myself turning again and again to my crock pot for dinner. Beans are a staple of my diet. Using dried beans and grains is a proven cost effective, satisfying, nourishing, and versatile addition to any meal. With all the soaking and hours on the stove top, beans used to be a pain to cook; but I have found that a crock pot makes it easy.

One cookbook that I have found to be a significant help when entering the work of crock pottery is "Fresh from the Vegetarian Slow Cooker" by Robin Robertson. There are about 200 recipes that make delicious use of beans and grains with lots of variety. Not just bean and soup recipes; she has casseroles, cheesecakes, dips, potpies, breads and beverages. She includes tips for how to convert standard recipes into slow cooking recipes, a whole chapter on beans, and lots of information on how to make your crock pot adventures successful. I have had this cookbook for several years, and tried many of the recipes and never been disappointed. The meals have been satisfying and flavorful, I haven't gotten bored yet!

Her chapter on beans has helped me tremendously. Dried beans are a lot cheaper than their canned counterparts. They expand when soaked and cooked, at least 2 or 3 times! The amount of dried beans it takes to equal the amount in an average can of beans is about ¾ of a cup (depending on the size of the bean). The cost of that amount of dried great northern beans right now at the store is \$0.65 vs. \$1.69 - \$1.89 for the can. That adds up!

Here's my procedure for making beans: Before I go to bed, I pour them into a large container (I use my crock pot, unplugged of course) and rinse and sort them. I then fill it up with fresh water, at least 1-2 inches above the beans, and let them soak over night. The next morning, I dump out the water and give them another rinse. Fill it with fresh water to cover plus an inch or two. I put in a piece of Kombu seaweed to aid digestibility. Plug in the cooker, and cook the beans on high for 8-12 hours, depending on the type of bean. Lentils and split peas do not need to be soaked and only take about 6 hours. You can refrigerate the cooked beans for up to a week in a tightly sealed container, or freeze them!

One of the misconceptions I had about slow cookers is that you just put all the food in the pot and walk away! While this is mostly true, there is some prep work involved. Chopping vegetables, of course; and you may need to have some cooked beans or grains ready, or add ingredients during the last hour of cooking. Often, you may have to sauté some veggies in a pan before you add them to the cooker. Once you come to terms with this, it is very painless. To ensure a delicious dinner waiting for me when I get home from work, you'll find me sautéing onions and celery in my robe before leaving some mornings.

This book isn't just for vegetarians and vegans; anyone who wants to include more veggies and beans in their life will benefit from this book. Are you getting five servings of fruits and veggies a day? Turns out it's not just five a day anymore, your veggie needs change with your age and activity level. For more information about nutrition from the USDA, check out their website:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/>.

Using a crock pot can require some planning, which can be challenging. Planning meals is a great way to ensure you and your family are getting adequate nutrition, not to mention a timely, delicious dinner. As any organized person knows, planning can make life easier. The rest of us ought to take a leaf out of their book and at least plan dinner.

Garlicky Roasted Veggies: *A recipe for foodies and everyone else who eats...*

Meal time in my home is usually pretty fun, a little crazy, messy-good and almost always an adventure! Our most-used ingredient? GARLIC!!! I actually gifted my favorite valentine one of the heart-shaped bulbs tied around a bottle of Ray's hot sauce!! Now, I recognize not everyone gets so excited about garlic, but as my roommate would say, we practically drink it at our house! Garlic is one of those wonderful foods that's best shared, the more you offer to friends, the more you can 'safely' eat yourself! As we've been going through the last of our Diversity Farm root vegetables that we stocked up on last fall, we've paired the garlic with onions and potatoes sliced, diced, crushed and roasted! Below is one of our current favorite recipes. Its very easy, allergen friendly and of course, versatile! I hope you enjoy. Cheers, Erin.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4):

- ◆ 3 medium sweet potatoes, cubed or chunked
- ◆ 1 onion, thickly sliced
- ◆ 1 head of garlic, crushed or smashed (more if you dare ;)
- ◆ Sea salt & herbs to taste: try 1 teaspoon each of 3-5 of whatever you have in the cabinet. Don't forget the cayenne, just a sprinkle can warm you up!
- ◆ 1/3 cup oil of choice. (I prefer olive or coconut.)



Preheat oven to 400 degrees, put oil in baking dish with garlic, salt and herbs, stir until evenly distributed. Add vegetables (whole cloves count here if you really want garlicky goodness!!!) Stir to coat the veggies with oil. Bake for 20 minutes before gently folding over, bake another 20 minutes, folding veggies over only after they are browning and getting crisp, they can be fragile so the less attention you give them, the better and less mushy they will be. Yum! Roasted veggies!

Building Community Through Food

Angie's Pick:

Hungarian Goulash with Tempeh

This vegetarian version of Hungarian goulash is made with tempeh, fermented soy beans that have been compressed into a cake. Serve over wide noodles. Serves 4. From "Fresh from the Vegetarian Slow Cooker"

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 pound tempeh, cut into ½ inch thick slices
1 small yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced into half moons
2 cups sauerkraut, drained and rinsed (1 container of Leelanau Cultured Veggies will do)
One 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, drained
1 tablespoon sweet Hungarian paprika (I prefer hot)
¼ cup dry white wine
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
2 Tablespoons tomato paste
1 ½ cups vegetable stock
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup sour cream or tofu sour cream or unsweetened yogurt

Process:

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the tempeh and brown all over, about 10 minutes. Set aside.

Without cleaning the skillet, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add the onion, cover, and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.

Transfer the onions and all the ingredients except the sour cream to a 4-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on Low for 6 hours.

Just before serving, pour ½ cup of the simmer liquid into a small bowl and whisk in the sour cream. Stir this mixture back into the goulash, taste to adjust the seasonings, and serve at once.

Angie's Notes: If you want to make this soy free, you can use white beans instead of tempeh, just skip the browning step. No dairy or soy? Try full fat coconut milk with 1 teaspoon of lemon juice instead of the sour cream. Use meat instead? Just replace the tempeh with your choice, but increase cooking time to ensure it is cooked thoroughly. No wine? Just use more stock.

Hungry?

Let's Cook, Let's Eat!

Cooking Workshop Schedule

in collaboration with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, 7th Generation Program and Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center

.....
Wednesday, March 18, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
Cooking Basics

.....
Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
Party-Time! Gluten-Free & Fun

.....
Wednesday, May 20, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
The Vegan Picnic

.....
We will be taking
June, July & August off

.....
Wednesday, September 16, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
Canning & Planning for Winter

.....
Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
Gluten-Free Harvest Party

.....
Wednesday, November, 2009, 6-8 p.m.
**Have Allergen-Free Holidays,
Vegan Style!**

*Classes are free and will be held at the
7th Generation Program's
New Kitchen at*

*7957 East Remus Rd.
in Mt. Pleasant.*

Space is limited.

*Please call GreenTree to
register: 989-772-3221*





214 N. FRANKLIN AVE.
MT PLEASANT, MI 48858

WWW.GREENTREE.COOP

Locally Grown

Community Owned

How does the store look to you? Finding everything ok?

Like the new colors? How about the sign? Have you checked out the new items in bulk... and how about the size of that produce cooler? Are those working lights shining down on the veggies?

WOW!

If you haven't been into the store recently, its worth checking out and we would love to know what you think!

**Help us help you by filling out the
Customer Feedback Survey on the GreenTree website at
www.greentree.coop**

GOT COMPOST?

We do, and we need to find a home for it!

**Please contact Erin, the volunteer coordinator if you are an Owner/
Member available to collect the store's compost. This weekly duty could
use a couple of hands on the job, so don't be shy, come on by!**