Manager's Corner
by Glen Begnas

She comes in the dark of night... She comes in the dark of night, before many of us have even thought of getting out of bed to face the new day. Even before she gets out of her car to enter the building, with the sun nowhere in sight, she has already put in an hour or two at home working on her computer keeping track of you. No, she is not a member of the NSA or Homeland Security. She is our own super woman, Madelyn Morris, and after more than 30 years, Madelyn is retiring from her full-time position as Weavers Way Membership Coordinator. Working side by side with her sister, Barbara Green, the two have managed our records, answered your questions, oriented new members, handled complaints, and have been an important part of the glue that keeps this place together through good times and bad.

In order to stay out of everyone’s way and to get her job completed, Madelyn and Barbara have been coming to the Co-op at five or six in the morning to pull your card, enter data into the system, update your records, place stars and slips of paper onto the cards to remind you to pay your dues and update your information, and to count membership dues for deposit. She has been doing this since the late seventies. The two people who have been on the Co-op payroll the longest actually work off-site (our produce buyer, Paul Labess, has been with us a few months longer than Madelyn).

Madelyn has known when you have been “bad” and have not completed your work schedule or paid your annual dues. She knows when you need to be changed from one cycle to another. She shows compassion when you explain that you have just had triplets, your house has been flooded, you started a new job that requires you to travel two hours each way every day, and your partner is also working in another state and there just is no way you can get your hours completed on time. You explain how much you love to shop at the Co-op and you cannot live without this life line to Mt Airy.

She rarely has missed a new vote at a semi-annual meeting, like the upcoming meeting on April 29. The issues addressed by the individual groups, and later reported on, included: 1) whether the annual equity contribution of $30 per household and lifetime cap of $400 should be changed, or perhaps be flexible, according to the Co-op’s needs; 2) whether members should be allowed to work in lieu of the contribution; 3) whether members should be allowed to work in lieu of the contribution.

Thought Provoking Forum on Membership Requirements
by Aron Goldschneider

A wide range of opinions on changing membership requirements was expressed at a well-attended Member Forum at Summit Church on Tuesday evening, January 17. Board President Bob Noble brought the meeting to order, introduced the issues to be discussed, and set out the agenda, which included break-out/small group discussion, re-assembly to report, and general discussion. The purpose of the forum was to introduce issues, air thoughts from members in response, and open up a dialogue on what changes might be beneficial to the membership rules, or if change is desirable at all. Actual changes to the rules can only be effected through a member vote at a semi-annual meeting, like the

What You Think
Members respond to Co-op survey
by Jackie Winterbottom

In January 2005, a committee was formed to survey the members of Weavers Way Co-op. The objective of the survey was to determine the following: 1) whether priorities/Co-op performing; 2) Members’ views on the Co-op’s community values; 3) Member thoughts for new Co-op strategic direction; 4) Membership demographics, who are we, what do we look like.

Bob Noble, President of the Weavers Way Board, said the Board needs to determine the interests of the members in order to plan for the future. To get as accurate a picture as possible, the committee decided to randomly select approximately 500 members (out of a total of 3,000) and request that they answer 40 questions either via email or paper. 355 members (72%) completed the survey.

The survey committee members, Glenn Bergman, Sukey Blanc, Robin Catt, continued on page 10.

Come & hear Gar Alperovitz at the Spring Membership Meeting, 7:00 Sat., April 29 or visit the book signing at The Big Blue Marble, 6:45 p.m. details on page 28.

Weavers Way Introduces “Eco-buy!”
by Ameet Ravital

Many Weavers Way shoppers would like to shop responsibly, using our purchasing power to buy healthy food from companies with responsible environmental practices, who don’t use wasteful packaging, and who are relatively nearby, decreasing our environmental footprints. But we want our shopping trips to be quick, not morphing into research missions, requiring magnifying glasses to glean the information required to make wise choices. Voila, Weavers Way has deployed a team of volunteers to streamline this process by researching our inventory and generating product “scores,” making it quick and easy for those so inclined to be better eco-shoppers.

Weavers Way Spring General Membership Meeting
Summit Church, Greene & Westnew Streets
Saturday, April 29, 2006 • 7 p.m.

Agenda
- Approval of Minutes from previous meeting
- Keynote Address: Gar Alperovitz
- President’s Report
- Song: 50 Ways to Love Your Co-op
- General Manager’s Report
- Member Survey Presentation
- Questions & Answers
- Announce Election Results

Health Impact: Products that are organic, unprocessed, and contain no refined sugar or hydrogenated oils.

Packaging: Minimal and easily recyclable.

continued on page 7

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continued on page 7
by Jonathan McGoran

Editor's Note

I’m not just going to get a part time job; some thinking, and I’ve got a plan. Sure, the financial crisis a few years back didn’t help. “What we meant was, you’ll be lucky if you have a name for it:”

I mentioned that her departure had meaning about my own retire- ment, everybody laughed and laughed. “That’s a long, long way,” they said.

“Actually,” I replied, “I’m not as young as I look.”

That made them laugh even more. “No wonder you look as they all say.”

“What we meant, you’ll be lucky if you can afford to retire before you’ve been dead five years. And even then you’ll need a part time job.”

Unfortunately, they were right. The fi- nancial crisis a few years back didn’t help. Just like all those people at Enron, I lost half my retirement savings because it was all invested in the company I worked for. (The fact that those savings fit well under the Co-op’s $400 investment cap didn’t help, either.)

But I’ve done some budgeting and some thinking, and I’ve got a plan. Sure, I’ll need a little extra income when I re- tire, but I’ve found a niche. When I retire, I’m not just going to get a part time job; I’m going to start my own business. I even have a name for it: Jon’s Flying Pig Removal Service.

Good Name

Glen Bergman likes to tell this story about Co-op member and volunteer lawyer David Kraut. At the end of the Co- op’s first full-scale, outside audit in 2004, the auditor had flown down with some concerns to discuss any concerns that she had about what the audit had found.

First, she assured Glen that every- thing looked good, but then she said was wondering about one expense she was sure we’d incurred, but which didn’t show up in the books. At this point, as Glen tells it, he had to suppress a smile, because he knew what she was wondering about. “For a company like this one,” she said, “that has had legal issues with the District Attorney’s office and a former staff mem- ber, I would have expected to see substan- tial legal fees. I believe that the fees may not have been booked correctly for the past year.”

Now Glenn could barely hold back his laughter, as he explained to her that our legal representative, David Kraut, donates his work as a way to fulfill his work com- mitment to the Co-op. Although she under- stood that as a co-op, we have volun- teers who work hours, she had never heard of an individual donating so much of his time and effort to an organization. She was mightily impressed, and said that effort like that is probably why the Co-op was able to make such a strong comeback, in such a short time, from the financial crisis of 2003.

In fact, David has been doing all of the Co-op’s legal work since 1984. As Glenn puts it, David is an important “silent member” who has helped to push us in the right direction without taking any special recognition.”

But I’ve done some budgeting and some thinking, and I’ve got a plan. Sure, I’ll need a little extra income when I retire, but I’ve found a niche. When I retire, I’m not just going to get a part time job; I’m going to start my own business. I even have a name for it: Jon’s Flying Pig Removal Service.

The Shuttle is published by Weavers Way Co- op and is mailed to all members. Deadline for the next issue is: April 1, 2006

Statement of Policy

Articles should be under 100 words and really typed, on disk or e-mails to jonmc@weaversway.org. Be sure to include your name, phone number, and membership number. Drop them off by the deadline to the Shuttle mailbox on the second floor of the Co-op. The purpose of the Shuttle is to provide members with information as well as education about co-ops, health food practices, and other matters of interest to members as con- sumers and citizens of the community.

Articles express only the views of the writ- ers and not those of the Co-op or the Board of Directors, unless identified as such. Articles, let- ters, comments, criticisms, and suggestions are welcome and should be directed to the editor. Special permission is required that the editor have the right to edit all articles.

Ad rates are available upon request, in the advertising mailbox on the second floor, or at www.clubww.coop. All ads must be camera ready and submitted with payment. Products or services advertised in this paper should not in any way be endorsed by Weavers Way Co-op.

The Shuttle is printed on 100% recycled paper

Earth Day Fair at the Wissahickon Charter School

by Roxen Baly

Set aside: Sunday, April 23 from 1-5 p.m. to attend the Second Annual Earth Day Fair at the Wissahickon Charter School, 7400 Wissahickon Ave. The day’s activities will highlight the 3 R’s: Re- duce, Reuse, and Recycle. Admission is free; parking is limited. Weavers Way, Wissahickon Charter School, Mount Airy Grouping Network (MAGNet) and Philly Freecycle.RG and Please Take Materials Exchange are co-sponsoring this event which will include entertainment, information booths, food, and recycling opportunities including a Free-for-All. At the Free-for- All, donated items will be given and taken without any money changing hands.

Look for further details posted at Weavers Way closer to the date. For more information, contact Liz Biagioli, at Wissahickon Charter School or at 215.379.2112 or visit www.montagreen.org. For directions to the school, visit www.wissahickoncharter.org.

Board Business

by Rob Noste, Board President

December 2005

Announcements: Attorney-mem- ber David Kraut has OK’d General Manager Glenn Bergman’s proposal regarding his Valley Green Bank conflict of interest disclosure. • On April 7 and 8 there will be a regional meeting for general man- agers, board members, store managers and members in Vermont. • The Finance Committee will review compliance with the Co-op’s financial controls in June. This will be in addition to our year-end review. • The Co-op will include a line item in the Co-op’s financial statements for the next year. • A Co-op members’ meeting will be held in April in conjunction with the Co-op’s celebration of its 20th anniversary.

Ends Discussion; The Board contin- ued its ends discussion. We tentatively agreed to use “Weavers Way Cooperative” as our current policy and procedures. The Board discussed, and tentatively agreed to use “Weavers Way Cooperative” as our current policy and procedures.

General Membership Meeting Review: Board members shared regrets that some of the Co-op’s good news was not presented at the November meeting as a result of time given to discussion of and voting on member initiatives and by- laws. It was suggested that the Board could do a better job of educating and preparing members with regard to bylaw amending policies.

Spring General Membership Meeting: The Board approved 7 p.m. April 29, 2006, as the time and date of Spring General Membership Meeting with Gar Alperovitz as the fea- tured speaker. Gar is a political econ- omist involved in studying and promoting community-based political-economic de- velopment through grass roots demo- cratic structures. He gave the keynote address at the national food co-op con- ference last June.

Member Forum: The Board ex- panded the scope of the upcoming I/1706 Member Forum to include a discussion of non-co-op membership requirements. Article-3 Director Joe Sullivan presented the Shuttle article he wrote to inform members about the forum. Advertising for the forum will be included in the pa- per by independent advertisers.

Shopping Policy: Glenn and Op- erations Manager Rick Spalek presented information about several recent inci- dents of shoplifting. The Board discussed their and management’s roles in address- ing the problem. Management must take reasonable measures to prevent shoplift- ing involving staff members and/or the handling of suspected shoppers. The Board must address matters of member sus- pension and expulsion as per the bylaws.
Chris Hill

1) Weavers Way is the heart of the community. As a board member on the front line in the region in making a local, sustainable food system a reality.

2) Actively involved in co-ops in Maine, New York City, and served on the board of the Duluth Street Improvement Association. Served recently on the Organic Committee of the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture. Currently on the board of Amigos de Chocota, a new nonprofit devoted to improving the lives of residents of Chocota, Guatemala.

3) For the past four years, I’ve worked closely with farmers and farming organizations to promote and support sustainable farming through www.newfarm.org, a national web site serving farmers and food activists. I bring to the board a deep knowledge of farming and rural economies, and a passionate concern.

Stuart Katz

1) WW is important to me because it helps create community.

2) For two years I have been a member at-large of the Weavers Way Board. Prior to that, I worked on the Accountability Committee.

3) I have served in many capacities at the Jewish Children’s Folkshul, as well as on the board of directors of several organizations. I work as the Health Services Administrator at a City of Philadelphia Health Center.

Jim Peightel

I have lived three blocks from Carpenters Green and have been a member of Weavers Way for more than 15 years. Weavers Way Co-op symbolically represents the West Mt. Airy community I know and love. It values the sense of community, progressive ideals, and health and environmental consciousness shared by many in our neighborhood.

My co-op volunteer activities now include my last two years on the Weavers Way board of directors as a member at-large. Also a number of years ago in grad school at U.T. Austin I lived in a student run co-op residence, got interested and informed about the co-op movement, and served for six months on the board of directors.

Josh Giblin

First and foremost, Weavers Way is a source of sustenance, both culinary and monetary; it is where I spend a good chunk of my time during the week. However, it is also a great social atmosphere, both on and off duty, where I can interact with my neighbors and like-minded community members.

For a few years, I was heavily involved with a summer camp in Florida designed specifically for children with chronic illness. I have also volunteered for a number of WXPN events, service projects at Springside School and a couple of tree plantings.

As a young staff person and Co-op member, I have the opportunity to see the Co-op through fresh eyes, without some of the burden of prior experiences. I am articulate, approachable, and have a genuine desire to make a positive impact on my living and working environment.

I think in general, the biggest challenge to the Co-op is how to grow without losing sight of its core values. Major issues include spatial and technological growth to serve increasing membership numbers and needs.

My wife Liz and I moved to German-town in 2004. I am pursuing a solo career in public relations/communications. My wife works for an NPO in public relations/communications.

Louis Dobkin

1) Weavers Way is my day job. I have been Financial Manager for three years, where I would serve as staff representative. After some challenging times, we are a much stronger organization, thanks to the hard work of many. I want to continue to contribute to the growth of Weavers Way.

2) I am currently on one board, The Walker Center, a Mental Health/Mental Retardation residential program where my aunt is a resident. I have also served on the boards of Friends of Farmworkers, a community legal services program, and the Grass Roots Alliance for a Solar Pennsylvania. In both positions, I lent financial expertise in a regulated not-for-profit environment.

3) In addition to working for and volunteering with nonprofit organizations, I have worked in accounting in the for-profit sector, including in retail environments.

Nancy Weinman

I have been a member of Weaver’s Way since 1974 and have been involved in cooperative enterprises for as long as I can remember. From the time I was 16, I was a member of Beachcomber’s cooperative swim club and, as a parent, enrolled my sons in the cooperative nursery school at Summit Church. There is nothing more enriching, in my view, than being an active participant in a community that works together to put shared values into action, especially where those values include a respect for diversity and a commitment to protecting our environment and lending a helping hand to those in need.

I am an attorney with more than 30 years experience in representing businesses and non-profit organizations. As a partner in Schneider, Harrison, Segal & Lewis, LLP (a full-service law firm), I currently focus on representing healthcare providers (including physicians, hospitals, and non-profit service organizations) who look to me for advice on operational and governance issues and for regulatory guidance. In the early 1970s, I was a staff attorney for Community Legal Services and, in that capacity, worked with a number of community start-up organizations when I learned of the Co-op’s financial crisis several years ago, I immediately asked what I could do to help the Co-op survive and was encouraged to become a candidate for the Accountability Committee. After being selected to serve on

Candidates for the Weavers Way Board of Directors were asked to answer the following questions: 1) Why is WW Co-op important to you? 2) What volunteer experiences have you had with other cooperatives or organizations? 3) What experiences and skills or unique perspectives do you bring to the Co-op board? 4) What do you think are some important challenges for the Co-op in the short and long term? 5) Any other personal information you would like to share i.e. family, hobbies, work experience, special talents, etc.

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BALKET


Boons open at 6:00 p.m. Voting ends 7:00 p.m.

BOARD POSITIONS

AT-LARGE (2-year term; vote for 5)

1) Stu Katz

2) Jim Peightel

3) Nancy Weinman

4) Chris Hill

5) Rick Sauer

no other nominations were received

STAFF DIRECTOR (vote for 2)

1) Lou Dobkin (2-year term)

2) Josh Giblin (2-year term)

no other nominations were received

To vote: Place ballots in the box provided at the store by 6 p.m. Saturday April 29, 2006; vote at the Membership Meeting by 7 p.m.; vote by mail. Ballots will be accepted by mail if received by Saturday April 29, 2006. Mail to: Weavers Way Co-op, 559 Carpenter Lane, Philadelphia PA 19119, attn: Leadership Committee.

One vote per household. (latest date counted). Please be sure to provide your membership information or your vote will be void. You may fold your ballot for confidential vote and support local businesses and the environment. I live right around the corner from the Co-op and am also appreciative of how the Co-op has served as an anchor to attract other small businesses to the neighborhood.

(continued on page 9)
Welcome Spring by Preserving Your Park

by Rebecca Yamin

When the world is muddy and luscious, we will be back in the woods. Led by the Environment Committee, Weavers Way adopted the portion of the Wissahickon Woods in the vicinity of the Toleration Statue three years ago. Since then, a spirited group of Co-op members and friends have coaxed the area back to health.

Under the direction of David Bower, Fairmount Park’s volunteer coordinator for the Wissahickon, we removed invasive species — Japanese Knotweed, Devil’s Walking Stick, grape vine and bittercress, to name a few — and last fall we planted the indigenous things that were supposed to be there.

In all, we put in 65 individual plants including oak trees, spice bush, white pine, hickory, black haw viburnum, persimmon, tulip trees, and umbrella magnolias.

On Sunday, March 26, we will return to our grove to check on its progress and continue the work. Please join us — all are welcome. We will meet at the base of Hortter Street where it intersects Park Lane Drive at 9 a.m. on March 26 and work until noon.

If you need more information, call Rebecca at 215-248-1880.
Member Who Designed Co-op Logo Now Launches Line of T-shirts

Barbara Lee Sherf

When Weavers Way member Caren Goldstein was approached to help design the Co-op’s new logo, she figured she would take the project on in part to fill her work requirements. Little did she know that after several brainstorming sessions and numerous conceptual drawings, she would actually meet work requirements for the next three years.

“It’s always a process,” Goldstein explained while sitting in a High Point coffee shop, sharing some of her graphics work on her Macintosh G4 laptop. “I’m happy I could use my skills to help the Co-op. I’m hopeful they’ll use it for as long as it works for them.”

The design is the simple apple logo you see on the front of the Shuttle. However, the initial concept didn’t begin with an apple. “I like the apple. It speaks of the fresh produce and organic nature of the Co-op. It’s simple, yet makes a statement. That’s what you want in a good logo.”

A Mt. Airy resident for seven years, Goldstein fell into graphic arts while pursuing an acting career in New York City. While working days at a small company she was approached “because of her creative flair” to do a brochure. “I had no idea what I was doing. But they liked the final product and then more and more work kept coming in.” Goldstein has had her design business for seven years and works with a host of non-profits, educational institutions and theatrical companies in and around Philadelphia. She and Barbara Overhouser, another Co-op member, recently launched a new business of children’s and women’s T-shirts under the company name Piper + Olive. (http://www.piperandolive.com.)

Overhouser’s two young boys have given input into the children’s line. “Nine-year-old Jesse and six-year-old Matthew have been our own private focus group. They have great concepts and really brainstorm with us on things that work for kids,” Overhouser said proudly. “I feel very fortunate to be doing something creative with flexible hours.”

Their goal is to get sales on the Internet and eventually into boutiques around the country, where they are working with an upcoming show in New York City. They would also like to see the products in Weavers Way one day. You can reach Caren or Barbara by e-mail at caren@g.comcast.net or overhouser@comcast.net.

You can visit Barbara Sherf at http://www.communicationsinspir.com.

Farmer Committee Looks Toward Spring

by Gina Kamm and Jonathan McGoran

This is an edited version of a meeting from the January meeting of the Farmer Committee.


A review of the Annual Report on the 2005 growing season addresses the issue of compost. Chris Hill and Marilyn Khan will organize a delivery of compost from the city’s supply of leaves and mulch. Municipal biosolids will not be used.

Plans were discussed for the 2006 growing season. Co-op Produce Buyer Jean MacKenzie came to discuss logistics and a produce wish list. Tomatoes & Cherry Tomatoes. Discussion focused on using flats to protect the tomatoes in shipping and varieties to plant.

Eggplants. Standard eggplants are easy to come by, and Jean suggested unusual varieties, and unusual eggplants. Hot peppers. Several varieties of hot peppers will be grown by Howard Field at the Monastery Gardens site.

Watermelon Radish. Apparently, we can grow enough watermelon radishes! Other interesting varieties of radish will be considered, such as the black Nero Tondo radish, or bunching Easter radish.

Cucumbers. Jean suggested that we stop growing cucumbers, as it is easy for her to source these elsewhere.

Summer squash. Green and yellow Patty Pan squash were a big hit at the Co-op last year. Jean suggested baby zucchini and baby yellow squash, maybe a shishkebab production with small vegetables ready to be put on a grilling skewer.

Beans. Rather than standard green beans, interesting varieties like purple beans (either pole or bush beans), edamame, or even Red Noodle beans were considered.

Snap peas. These failed last year, because they did not get watered enough, but we could try again.

Peppers. Small sweet peppers (red and yellow) would be great, because the Co-op does not have a large selection of peppers.

However, standard green peppers can be better sourced from other farms. Okra. We can’t grow enough of it. Usually we harvest something like 1.5 lbs of okra at a time, which sells within two hours of delivery. Jean does not have another source of organic okra, so this is a real contribution to the selection at the Co-op.

Horseradish. We would only need horseradish for one week a year, to harvest for Passover, but it’s hardy and an early crop, and could be a good addition for the schoolchildren. We would need to be careful in planting it, as it can really take over.

Leafy greens. Jean steered us away from growing leafy greens, as these just don’t seem to hold up well.

Herbs. So many people in Mt. Airy already grow their own fresh herbs, there does not seem to be a large market for growing herbs such as basil, parsley, thyme, and rosemary. However, it may make sense to grow basil for the prepared foods efforts at the Co-op.

Beets. Jean already has a source for multi-color beets, but she would welcome them if we chose to grow them. Jean is not interested in purchasing beets green for the Co-op, but suggested that we could market them to local restaurants. Carrots. Unusual carrots, such as rainbow carrots, or purple carrots, could be a fun addition to the produce selection, although previous efforts with root crops have not been successful.

Garlic scapes. Garlic scapes are wonderful to have and sell. The garlic bulbs are not interested in purchasing beets green for the Co-op, but suggested that we could market them to local restaurants.

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added to the agenda of several upcoming Board meetings to help prepare for the election of the new president and vice president at the May board meeting. • Membership Count: 3,018 households. • CBLD Survey: The 2006 Cooperative Board Leadership Development Survey was distributed and completed by board members present. • Ends Discussion: The Board approved the following Ends Policies as replacements to our existing ends: E1. The diversity of our community is reflected in our membership, staff, and all aspects of our cooperative. E2. Members own, operate, govern, contribute to, and participate in a democratically controlled enterprise. E3. Products and services provide high quality, are fairly priced, and meet our members’ needs. E4. The local economy, community groups, and institutions are strengthened. E5. Members of our co-op and the wider community are informed about cooperative principles and values, consumer issues, and environmental concerns. E6. Our operations balance economic, social and environmental responsibilities.”

Proposed Board Budget Request: The Board approved a $15,850 budget request for board-related activities for the Fiscal Year beginning 7/1/06. 

Shoplifting: The Board affirmed its support for Management’s handling of recent shoplifting incidents, establishing written procedures and guidelines, uniform and non-discriminatory enforcement, further staff training, consultation with knowledgeable professionals, and reporting all shoplifting incidents to the board. Susan, Dorothy, and Bob will work on drafting a formal written Board policy on shoplifting.

Grievance Committee Chair Selection: The Board discussed its role in grievance committee chair selection and the process for selecting the chair. The board will need to absorb the opinions expressed at the forum along with the recently completed member survey (see separate article on page one). A committee may be formed to continue investigating the issues raised, and another forum may be held when more information is available and the issue is more clearly defined.

OPEN HOUSE
Wed., April 5 9:30–11:30 am

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Warm, welcoming community. Historic, wooded campus. Thirty-five year-old Mexican exchange program; Spanish for all grade levels. Art, music, drama, sports. Conflict resolution program.

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PHOTOS BY JOHN BARONE

THE SHUTTLE MARCH/APRIL 2006

AT THE MEMBER FORUM ON JANUARY 17, MEMBERS BROKE INTO SMALL GROUPS TO DISCUSS AND RE-EXAMINE WEAVERS WAY’S MEMBER INVESTMENTS, WORK REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER CO-OP MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS.

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**Weavers Way Financial Report**

by Lou Dobkin

As of this writing, an evaluation of the second quarter, ending December 31, has not been completed and reviewed by the Finance Committee. Quarterly results are four times a year (thus the name) and the Shuttle comes out six times a year. So, twice a year we get to just chat. For those of us who look forward to reading long columns of numbers — I feel your pain. I can say, without giving away too many surprises, that sales are more than 6% greater than last year and less than 1% under budget.

We had a dividend rebate based on purchases by members during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005. We started giving them out at the register on December 28. By December 31, $7,080 of the $16,000 had been cashed in, and as of January 31, a total of $12,352 had been cashed. The more that is paid out at the registers, the less we have to spend on checks and postage. Good work, members.

For co-ops, a dividend rebate is an interesting device that makes a cooperative a tax-favored entity. Namely, we can return that portion of the earnings that are in a tax bracket that does not suit us, we just agree with the member at the end of the year and before we file the tax return. So, if we find ourselves in a tax bracket that does not suit us, we just give that portion of the earnings that would put us in the higher bracket back to the members, after we have found out what our tax liability would otherwise have been. It is also a financing tool, whereby we can retain income in the member accounts — where we can still use it — but it is deductible from taxable income. In practice, this income — and the tax on it — is not paid out in cash until the member leaves. If there is no profit in the year in which the member leaves, we do not pay tax on that income at all. Assuming an average membership duration of eight years, the Co-op would have the tax deferred of those eight years. This is the stuff of which tax accountants dream.

We have also decided to do some different things with cash. As was disclosed in our financial statements for fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, we had funds in banks in excess of FIDC coverage. We have a “sweep account” that actually sweeps excess funds overnight into a governmental instrument that earns interest for us. That makes our risk rather small. But we have decided to make that risk even smaller by moving some of those funds to Valley Green Bank, a local bank. We are also buying some certificates of deposit to get a better interest rate. We also have a reserve fund, now at Calvert in a Social Investment Money Market, that we are moving to a certificate of deposit at the National Co-op Bank to get a better interest rate and to renew a relationship with an institution that has given us financing in the past.

The purposes of these moves are to increase interest income, decrease risk and establish relationships with institutions that may help us with any future financing needs.

See you next time. I’ll bring the numbers.

**Let’s Plant Some Trees!**

by Dave Tukey

The Right Tree in the Right Place. That’s the well-known advice for urban street trees. In the November-December 2005 issue of the Shuttle we gave some guidelines for the Right Place, such as a tree pit located between the curb and the sidewalk at least 3-feet by 3-feet in size, and a commitment by the owner to care for the young tree (including 10 gallons of water per week for the first year, rain or shine).

The Right Tree concerns a multitude of environmental issues. Good varieties for street trees are those that will not grow too tall (to avoid overhead wires) or too wide (to interfere with pedestrians or vehicles), and also be suitable for an urban environment. Soil conditions, amount of sunlight, resistance to various tree diseases and tolerance for salt are important factors.

Here are some good varieties to consider for street trees in our area. These particular varieties were selected for the annual bare-root planting to be held in mid-March.

For locations under wires: Tatarian Maple (tree form), Canada Red Chokecherry, ‘Autumn Brilliance’ Serviceberry and Cockspur Hawthorn.


If you’d like to be actively involved in caring for city street trees, whether Co-op trees or those near your homes, a great introduction is the Tree Tenders training sessions offered through the Philadelphia Green program. For those interested, the next Philadelphia Green Tree Tender training series will be held Wednesdays, May 10, 17 and 24, from 5:45 p.m.-8:45 p.m. Since 1993, this program has trained more than 1,500 volunteers in 100 Philadelphia neighborhoods and is now expanding to nearby counties in Pennsylvania. The series is free of charge, but you must register; it’s not uncommon for the program to be booked to capacity. For more information on the Tree Tenders program, contact Mindy Maslin, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, at (215) 988-8844 or mmaslin@phhp.org.

And if you want some early spring season hands-on experience with bare-root planting, nearly two dozen street trees will be planted the weekend of March 18-19 in locations across West Mt Airy, stretching from Germantown Ave. to Wissahickon Ave. Look for postings in the Co-op for updated information on how to volunteer to help plant these street trees.

For more information on the Co-op’s Tree Tender efforts and/or the March 2006 bare root planting efforts, contact Dave Tukey at (215) 844-2807 or trainbod2@yahoo.com.

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(continued from page 1)

Eco-Buy

(continued from page 6)

able packaging (glass, metal, or card-
board).

Distance: Locally grown or packaged. (If this is not discernible from the label’s information, it is scored “low.”)

Social and Environmental Impact: Again, organic ingredients (for their safety for agricultural workers, as well as for the land), fair-trade and/or co-operatively run businesses.

These four scores are combined for an overall “Green Score.” In evaluating products, the audit attempts to assess the impact of transporting them from their point of origin as well as their end-of-life impact on our planet. We may also identify products we think are missing and re-search purchasing options.

For non-food items (especially on the second floor), a high green score is based on the same packaging, distance, and social impact criteria as above, as well as three additional ones:

Resource use: Products that actually reduce household resource consumption (such as a low-flow showerhead).

Durability: Long-lasting over many uses.

End of life: Reusable, recyclable and/or biodegradable.

In many categories, the results are not obvious. Take a box of Envirokidz’ Organic Gorilla Munch. It rates a high score on social and environmental impact (they donate a percentage of sales towards wildlife conservation), a medium score on health impact (despite the organic label, the second ingredient is evaporated cane juice, or sugar), a medium score on packaging (like most cereal, its inner lining is neither recyclable nor reusable), and a low score on distance, since it comes from across the country (more fossil fuel for transporting it to the Co-op). So, is it a good product or not? Gorilla Munch’s green score comes in at 65 (out of 100), well above Kashi Medley’s (50) but not quite as green as Arrowhead Mills’ Seven Grain Cereal (75), which tops the list. Comparing green scores should be as easy as comparing prices. Of course, the score doesn’t tell you if your kid will eat the higher scoring product... But at least you’ll know your options.

In reality, no product comes close to getting full marks on all criteria. We envision an ongoing process of evaluation, with a goal of expanding our products at the highest possible end of the green criteria used in scoring products and placing more pressure on suppliers everywhere to offer sustainable and socially-just products.

The audit team is happy to have additional volunteers. You can contact me at aravital@gmail.com if you want to join our ranks. It’s an educational and interesting way to meet your WW work requirement.

Eco-Buy Audit, once completed, will be used in several ways. First, we will identify the green leaders in each category. These eco-winners will be labeled with our newly designed “Eco-Buy” logo, making them easy to spot throughout the store. Second, the audit also identifies products that could be readily sold in bulk (thereby eliminating a great deal of packaging), and this list will help develop an expanded bulk foods section. Finally, having green scores makes it possible to make strategic decisions to eliminate certain items (that are notoriously low-scoring) and to press our suppliers to offer items that are higher scoring.

Down the road, we hope to export our home-grown Weavers Way ranking system to cooperatives throughout the country, giving rise to higher visibility of all of the green criteria used in scoring products and making them easy to spot throughout the store. Second, the audit also identifies items that are higher scoring.

The performance evaluation of the General Manager is postponed until April. A committee was established to assist the Board: Bob (chair), Sylvia Carter, and At-large Director Jim Peightel.
Co-op Farm

(continued from page 7)

they were very flavorful and delicious. The Co-op had nice signs about the garlic scopes explaining how to use them.

Fiddlehead ferns. People like them, and they are hard to come by. They will be looked into.

Brussel sprouts. Like the cluster tomatoes, we could sell brussels right on the stalk. There is a demand for organic brussels at the Co-op, and Glenn is an enthusiastic brussel-sprout supporter. This would be a great fall crop that would help extend the season.

Winter squash. The Co-op is having trouble finding winter squash this year. However, this may change for next year, and winter squash take a lot of space.

Gourds. There is a market for decorative gourds and colorful mini-corn at the Co-op. This could be a good activity for schoolchildren, as well as harvesting mini-corns and tying them up in attractive bundles. This would be the Farm’s first venture into decorative and value-added products.

Potatoes. The Farm has always avoided potatoes altogether so as to elude the dreaded potato beetle, but we might re-open the discussion.

Miscellaneous crops. Celery root is not too much trouble to source. Turnips can be used for Thanksgiving dinners. Jean wouldn’t mind having local shallots, which are delicious and can be expensive to procure. However, shallots need to overwinter, so we will not be able to plant these until next year. Leeks are already in plentiful supply from a local farmer. The Co-op does not typically carry organic parsnips. Although they are a steady seller, parsnips should not be a huge growing priority.

Marketing. Efforts to help Jean prepare for new or unusual vegetables were discussed, like help with finding recipes and serving suggestions on-line.

Other business. There is enough room at the farm to grow what we did in the 2005 growing season... Emi reminded us not to get too creative with new crops, as it is important to have a good crop rotation... With a large diagram taped to the door, we planned the 2006 farm layout... We decided to harvest the chunkies on Sat., Jan. 28 (rain/snow date will be Sunday February 5).

Rick Bauer
(continued from page 3)

I have worked in the non-profit sector for nearly 20 years, with a focus in housing and community development. I am a member of Weavers Way Co-op, the Mt. Airy/Chestnut Hill Babysitting Co-op, and previously served on the Non-Profit Board of the Childspace Day Care Center Cooperative, which my two daughters attended. I currently serve on a number of non-profit boards and committees.

Through my work experience, including as Executive Director of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations for the past seven years, I bring knowledge of organizational development and management, fundraising and financial management, policy development, and community-based real estate development. I have developed a broad range of relationships with stakeholders in the public, private and non-profit sectors, and have the ability to see issues from a variety of viewpoints. I have good facilitation and negotiation skills, a commitment to process, and experience in working with groups with diverse perspectives to reach agreement/develop consensus around issues.

From my perspective, key issues facing the Co-op are building on recent improvements, further diversifying the Co-op membership, and effectively managing growth/expansion.

Introducing Co-op Ride Share
by Meenal Raval

Walk to Weavers Way, then get a ride home for you and your groceries

A few of us have discovered that we love walking in our neighborhood, especially to the Co-op, but the return trip home, laden with groceries, has us resorting to driving about, even in lovely, walkable Mt. Airy. We’re therefore introducing a unique, one-way ride share system – just to get you and your groceries home.

The member that wants a ride would write her name, time and destination on the yellow signup sheet by the checkout line. For example: Betsy 11:45 to W. Mt Airy & Cliveden. She could continue to shop, then wait outside by the bottled water, at the Co-op Ride Share sign (to be erected).

The member that can offer a ride would scan the yellow signup sheet while at the checkout line to see if she can offer someone a ride. If there is someone going in the same general direction, the cashier could announce the ride offer on the intercom.

Benefits of the Co-op Ride Share are:

1. Increased purchasing – People who walk to and from the store only buy what they can carry or wheel home. This should increase our sales.

2. Reduced parking congestion – We all know how tight the parking is around our favorite co-op. This should reduce the demand for parking spaces around the store benefiting all.

3. Decreased global warming by using less fuel – While the passenger made one less car trip, the driver used the car to haul one more person, both jointly making a smaller ecological footprint.

4. Building a more generous, cooperative community – We suspect that both ride requesting and ride providing will become socially accepted, like using canvas bags. In time, members would just look around for someone they know and ask for a ride, before posting on the bulletin board.

5. Promotes healthy lifestyle by facilitating walking.

6. Promotes diversity by supporting carless Weavers Way members.

7. Expands Weavers Way services with no significant cost to the Co-op or the members – another reason to shop at Weavers Way.

If you have questions, ideas or comments, please contact:

Betsy Teutsch
bpteutsch@comcast.net
www.mtairygreening.net

Meenal Raval
meenal@mtairygreening.net
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Survey (Continued from page 1)

The first section of the survey covered Reasons for Shopping at Weavers Way and asked respondents to indicate how important the criteria were and then how Weavers Way was performing. The survey article in the next Shuttle will compare shopping at Weavers Way to other stores. Some of the results may surprise you.

Banding Together
to Save Rubber
by Ben Teutsch
If you, like my household, receive your mail double rubber banded every day (adding up to 600+ rubber bands a year) and only have use for a few of them, I’ve discovered you can return them to your local Post Office.

I’ve been saving the rubber bands for a few years. When I took about a dozen bundles to the Mount Airy post office, they were very pleased to accept them. They told me this was maybe the second time in 20 years someone had done this.

Reusing is even better than recycling, which involves degrading the resource and remanufacturing it, which consumes energy. Reusing takes no energy at all, except your energy in collecting and dropping off the rubber bands.

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**Gap Analysis:**

Specific Type of Products and Shopping Decisions
Importance versus Weavers Way Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Products</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Meat, Poultry</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy (Milk, Yogurt)</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Products</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic Products</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Ratings (1-5: 1=Low 5=High)

- The Co-op performance clearly exceeds expectations for many product categories rated as less important in their shopping decisions by members.
Friends of the Wissahickon Launch Valley Green Restoration Project

by Donna Lartate

Valley Green Inn isn’t always as pristine as this early postcard suggests. Back in the summer and fall of 2004, after the second of two horrific thunderstorms, Valley Green was sitting in a river of mud. Runoff from surrounding neighborhoods rushed downhill into the Wissahickon Creek, carrying tons of dirt, rocks, and other debris and causing the creek’s tributaries to overflow. The rubble clogged the opening to an underground pipe that carries water downhill to the creek from a stream above Valley Green Inn, causing the stream to overflow and muddy water to flow to the area below.

By the end of the summer of 2005, the Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW), Fairmount Park staff, and other volunteers restored the footpath leading down to the Valley Green building.

For further information or to make a donation, visit www.fow.org.

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The Simplicity Dividend

TV Guide to the Perplexed

by Ron Tocci

The premise of The Simplicity Dividend is Time = Money = Stuff. Therefore, if you want more stuff, you must spend more of your time working to pay for it. Perhaps you want more time? Cut back on how much stuff you fund, and you may liberate some of your working hours. Many discover that, paradoxically, simpler living improves quality of life. How do these principles apply to an individual or household’s choices among entertainment options? I have concluded that, at least in my case, more is less. The options for entertainment have multiplied so exponentially during my adult life that I have been left behind. Overwhelmed by the choices, I rarely opt to watch TV or movies at all. I recently attended a get-together at a friend’s house where a bunch of us, all middle-aged women, were scheduled to watch a movie on DVD. As a mother of two teenagers, the member of the group who hosted possessed a big screen TV, ideal for group watching. When we arrived, she was tearing her hair out. She had tested out the system before our arrival and discovered her normal system operation didn’t work; all her alternative attempts had failed, too. She finally had taken the FOUR remotes (TV, cable, DVD player and universal) and hurried them to the floor in frustration and disgust. Between the five of us, we did manage to watch the DVD, but I learned something important. I AM NOT ALONE! When my daughter was out of the country, I devoted myself to taping Gilmore Girls for her each week. Watching this show is our delightful mother-daughter ritual. (When my son visits, our daughter ritual. (When my daughter visits, our father-son ritual is watching The Daily Show.) After week I would follow the steps to coordinate the VCR’s timer with the cable system to add another episode to the cassette. One week it might tape perfectly; another it would just be audio with no video, and some weeks, nothing at all because I had left out a step. The VCR manual didn’t mention cable hook-ups; the cable manual didn’t mention VCR’s. Unfortunately, I don’t yet have a system that allows me to just talk to the TV and say “tape The John Doe Show on Tuesday night at 8 on Channel 99,” though artificial intelligence experts assure us it’s in the works. Basically, I gave up and asked a teenager to tape them for me at her house.

I was not always capable of programming a VCR, the classic description of a techno-illiterate. When my children were little, we had the advent of cable and computers, I enthusiastically taped a host of NPR shows for late afternoon airings. I fondly recall Square One, 321 Contact, and Reading Rainbow. I just didn’t advance to the next level: the kids grew and watched TV without me, VCRs added computerized programming, and cable came to our household, courtesy of my husband who likes background movies and TV shows while he does his academic work. We’ve added a DVD player/recorder for our son, but the last time the kids went to rent a video, only DVDs were available. Recently we’ve upgraded to cable’s Digital on Demand. The cable representative proudly showed us the 1000’s of offerings at our fingertips. We can watch any feature in the participating cable channels anytime we choose; we are not limited to real-time broadcasting schedules. The hitch is mastering the controls. You can’t just tell Digital what you want, either. You have to scroll through endless offerings and highlight your choice. (There is a search feature online, but not on the television. The hardcopy cable TV Guide has been discontinued.) My eyes glazed over, and I have yet to use it.

On the rare occasion when I consider watching a TV program or movie, other than during a national crisis, I have two barriers to overcome. The first is that I can’t process all the information required to decide what to watch, since the grid in the newspaper is only a small fraction of what’s available and I can’t even make

(continued on page 19)
Exotics Invading, Natural Environment Losing

by Francis Lawn, Director of Land Restoration at The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education in Philadelphia

Invasive plants are increasingly contributing to the degradation and decline in the health and economic value of our local environment. If we do not manage the current populations and monitor new plants for potential invasiveness, our ecosystem will become a monoculture of few plants, and we run the risk of permanently destroying the diversity of our forests, meadows, and wetlands.

For many centuries, plants from other countries have been brought to the United States. Such plants have been used for ornamental, medicinal, or culinary reasons. Most of these exotic plants are fairly harmless and stay put where they are planted; it is the ones who don’t, who outgrow their natural boundaries that pose the greatest risk.

Over the last few decades, plants such as Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard and Japanese Stiltgrass have become an ever-more-alarming sight in many forests in our region. Where native ephemerals and perennials once grew, they are now being replaced by these tenacious plants, reproducing at a high rate, and preventing any native plant from competing. Invasive plants have no natural predators to keep them in check. Few animals, insects, or pathogens will touch them; therefore, they can spread very quickly.

The unfortunate aspect of this invasion is the decline in biodiversity in our forests. In fact most of these plants prevent the regeneration of native plant species, therefore putting our forests in stasis. There is even speculation that some of our forests are reverting from a healthy multi-layered system — with large canopy and understory trees, and a shrub and herbaceous layer — into a tangled single-layered infestation of vines.

Researchers at Cornell University estimate that invasive species are costing Americans approximately $137 billion every year (Pimentel et al. 2000). Land disturbance tends to be the largest vehicle for this disruption. As a healthy forest becomes fragment-ed by development, the infestation becomes inevitable. Forests cannot deal with disturbance as in the past. Instead of evolving in a distinct successional process, they are invaded by exotics early on, preventing this natural process from occurring.

If we are to gain a foothold in the struggle against these invasive plants, there must be better guidelines set in place, such as a weed management plan. Improved procedures must be established to strictly monitor plants coming into this country for potential invasiveness. In addition, the leaders in the horticultural industry should take responsible action by inadvertently perpetuating the situation by inadvertently nurturing non-native invasive plants for landscape, rights-of-way, erosion control, and habitat improvement. Unknowingly, they allow invasive plants to escape into surrounding natural areas. Individuals can do their part in preventing the spread of invasive plants by planting native species indigenous to their area, helping to preserve local biodiversity, which is essential for maintaining our quality of life. There are organizations, like The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education that teach volunteers how to identify potential invasions and how to manage them.

Despite the knowledge that invasive plants exist, many park systems in this area don’t have the manpower or funds to manage their land properly, therefore more funding is needed for highly trained specialists who can manage invasive plants, restore degraded ecosystems, and conduct additional research to learn more about the potential hazards of these plants.

There is also a need to educate the public on these important issues. Many people don’t realize their impact on the environment around them. In fact, many perpetuate the situation by inadvertently using nonnative invasive plants for landscaping, rights-of-way, erosion control, and habitat improvement. Unknowingly, they allow invasive plants to escape into surrounding natural areas. Individuals can do their part in preventing the spread of invasive plants by planting native species indigenous to their area, helping to preserve local biodiversity, which is essential for maintaining our quality of life. There are organizations, like The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education that teach volunteers how to identify potential invasions and how to manage them.

Our forests and other ecosystems are at risk of failing if nothing is done to prevent and manage invasive plants. Public involvement and education are some critical tools needed to help protect our forests. The more involved we are, the better chance we have at winning this battle.

As a local environmental expert, The Schuylkill Center is currently taking a more sustainable approach to managing invasive exotic plants by fostering methods that encourage healthier plant communities that naturally resist invasion. To read more about these efforts visit www.schulkillcenter.org and click on “Land Restoration.”

Don’t miss your opportunity to purchase native plants for your garden at The Schuylkill Center’s annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 29, and Sunday, April 30. Experts will be on hand to answer questions. For more information regarding invasive plants, contact the Restoration Department at 215-482-7300. To learn more about invasive exotic plants visit the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council at www.ma-eppc.org. To learn more about biodiversity visit Pennsylvanias Biodiversity Partnership at www.pabiodiversity.org.

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www.schuylkillcenter.org and click on “Land Restoration.”

www.pabiodiversity.org.

Don’t miss your opportunity to purchase native plants for your garden at The Schuylkill Center’s annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 29, and Sunday, April 30. Experts will be on hand to answer questions. For more information regarding invasive plants, contact the Restoration Department at 215-482-7300. To learn more about invasive exotic plants visit the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council at www.ma-eppc.org. To learn more about biodiversity visit Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership at www.pabiodiversity.org.
This April, “Art Quilts at the Sedgwick” ...on Rittenhouse Square?

by Betty Ann Fellner

Heard around Mt. Airy Town: “So what’s happening with the Quilt Show?” “No quilts this year?” “What’s the date of this year’s Quilt Show? I don’t want to miss it.”

I could go on and on. Not to worry. Art Quilts at the Sedgwick [AQatS] will return to the Philadelphia scene April 8-May 21, 2006. But because the Sedgwick Cultural Center is undergoing re-organization, AQatS will be held this year at the Philadelphia Art Alliance on Rittenhouse Square.

When it began in 1999 as a 10-day invitational show at the Sedgwick, AQatS recognized that it had the heady task of explaining the very words “art quilt” and showing quilts on the wall to many visitors who knew only the functional bed quilt. To the organizers’ surprise, the success of this brief exhibition surpassed all expectations. To the organizers’ surprise, the success of this brief exhibition surpassed all expectations. In fact, AQatS attracted so much attention from both the public and the press that it expanded annually and became a month-long, juried exhibition in its third year. Fulfilling its mission to provide a consistent venue for the exhibition of the art quilt and the education of the public about this important and ever-evolving art form, each year the AQatS committee has also produced a CD-Rom that catalogues each featured quilt as well as comments by each artist and each juror. Producing the show became such a formidable task that AQatS became a biennial show in 2004.

Art Quilts at the Sedgwick is still planned and administered by an independent committee of multi-talented quilt artists, with the support of other fiber artists and art aficionados who share their commitment to promoting the art quilt. Once again, active Co-op member Deborah Schwartzman, in the good tradition of the co-operator, serves as Co-Director of AQatS.

“We’ve always appreciated the support of many Mt. Airy neighbors, and I hope to see many old friends at this year’s show on Rittenhouse Square,” Debbie said. Not shy to boast, she continued, “I think you’ll find that this is among the strongest shows we’ve ever presented.”

“Of the hundreds of submissions from artists from every region of the country and from abroad as well, the jurors have selected 44 quilts that demonstrate the glorious variety of the medium today. You just have to see it.”

AQatS will host an Artists Reception on Friday, April 7, 5:30-8:30 p.m. The galleries will be open Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Guided tours will be offered on Thursdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. In addition, AQatS will present a special event on Saturday, April 8, at the Stotesbury Mansion, 1923 Walnut St. in Philadelphia, only a few blocks from the Philadelphia Art Alliance. Juror Rebecca A.T. Stevens will present a slidelecture “The Quilt Idea” at 12:30 p.m. At 11 a.m. before the lecture, a brunch will also be available. The cost of the brunch/lecture combination is $20; the lecture is $8. For reservations, call 215-840-8778. Art Quilts at the Sedgwick on the Square is proud to continue the tradition it began four years ago to highlight not only its own exhibition of fine art quilts but also to promote the many other regional venues that now feature the fiber arts as part of “April is Fiber in Philly.”

For further information about the exhibition, the CD-Rom catalog, the April 8 lecture and brunch and other venues participating in “April is Fiber in Philly,” visit www.phillyfiber.blogspot.com and www.aqats.com.
Farmland Trust Saves Lancaster Farmland

by Amy Friedman

For several years my son and I have been preserving the rich farmlands of Lancaster County by bike rides and going on picnics. Perhaps you’d like to join us.

Two new partnerships highlight the advances the Trust is making. There is the above-mentioned plan with the Strasburg Steam Railway, which will ensure that the trains continue to run past farmland and not strip malls and parking lots. The other is with Turkey Hill Dairy, which will feature the Trust’s logo on its new line of All Natural ice creams, and donate a portion of profits to saving farmland. Preserving some of the region’s most beautiful countryside can now be done in vanilla, chocolate, coffee, mint, and Neapolitan.

The Trust sponsors lectures, occasional farm visits, fundraising events, and also holds an annual dinner to honor farmers and activists for their services to agriculture. Supporters can join in the Pedal to Preserve bike ride (which will be on June 3 this year, with roughly 15-, 20-, and 50-mile distances departing from the Garden Spot High School in New Holland) and the autumn picnic. To find out more about Trust events or how Easements work, visit savelancasterfarms.org.
Spring Garden Thoughts
by Mark Goodman
Let's start the garden season with some "Garden Myths and Garden Realities."

Myth #1: Azaleas are shade-loving evergreens. Reality: Most azaleas need some sun to thrive, preferably morning sun (less hot than afternoon sun). Also, in a cold winter, many azaleas will lose some or most of their leaves because they are semi-evergreens. This means they will keep their leaves only if the winter stays relatively mild. Other semi-evergreens are leatherleaf viburnums, glossy abelias, and nandinas.

Myth #2: After the first year, you don’t need to water shrubs, trees, perennial flowers, or ground covers that much. Reality: All plants need water in hot, dry weather, whether it’s the plant’s first year or fortieth. The droughts that have plagued our area since the late 1980s have taken their toll on beech and oak trees, rhododendrons and azaleas (and other shallow-rooted shrubs), and ground covers, particularly pachysandra. Even local stands of decades-old rhododendrons have been decimated during these droughts. Water these plants twice a week during hot and dry spells.

Myth #3: Powdery mildew on your plant looks bad, it rarely kills the plant. To control, use mono-sodium gluconate or fortieth. The droughts that have plagued our area since the late 1980s have taken their toll on beech and oak trees, rhododendrons and azaleas (and other shallow-rooted shrubs), and ground covers, particularly pachysandra. Even local stands of decades-old rhododendrons have been decimated during these droughts. Water these plants twice a week during hot and dry spells.

Myth #4: Roto-tilling is good for your garden. Reality: It depends on the condition of your soil. If you have a bed with out tree roots underneath or without thickly rooted weeds, go ahead if you want. However, roto-tilling too close to trees can damage the machine. Furthermore, tilling where you have, say, goutweed or thistle is not recommended because you will chop the weed roots into smaller pieces generating more weeds over a larger area. Think of The Sorcerer’s Apprentice.

Myth #5: Home vegetable gardens are too much trouble. Reality: If you’ve never planted, watered, weeded, nurtured, and harvested your own fruits or vegetables, you’re missing a basic human experience. Especially if you have children, this is a great activity, even if it’s a tomato plant in a pot. Then you don’t have far to go to explain miracles to your kids.

While we’re in a mythical, reflective mood, let’s wrestle with our loss of touch with the earth. The Greek myth, Antaeus was a strong giant who was invincible as long as he was touching the earth. He was defeated when Hercules lifted him, and he lost contact with the earth. Are we Antaeus? Is our out-of-touchness with the earth a defeat and our downfall? You have the rest of the spring to ponder this one.

Plants to consider for this year: thornless blackberries (variety “Arapahoe”), astilbe or butterfly flower (not bush), an orange flowering perennial that lasts all summer; physostegia (or false dragon head), a late summer/early fall spiky perennial that flowers pink or white. Spring Garden Reading: Gardens of Philadelphia: Gardens and Arboreums of the City and Delaware Valley, by John G. Hope, photography by Blair Seitz. This is a visual treat of 20 local sites of horticultural interest, including Germantown’s Wyck garden and Chestnut Hill’s Morris Arboretum. A great way to use this book is to enjoy the exquisite photography and then visit some of the nearby gardens and arboreums.

Politics & Pizza & Neighborhood Networks are showing the movie Howard Zinn: You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train
Monday March 13, 7:30 pm
Chestnut Hill Library
Admission Free, Donations Welcome.
Beth McConnell of Neighborhood Networks will lead a discussion after the movie.

Stalking the Wild Gentian
by Mark Goodman
Who hasn’t had the fantasy of using a map to find hidden treasure? This fantasy came true for me last fall. However, the bounty was not silver, gold, or jewels. It was wild gentians.

About 12 years ago, one of my landscape customers mentioned to me that she was going with a friend to an unnamed location to look at wild gentians. I knew the friend because I had previously done some landscaping for her in Northwest Philadelphia. The two women wanted to keep the wildflowers’ whereabouts secret because they feared that people would dig up the plants and take them home, disrupting the natural habitat.

Fast forward to last April, when the woman from Northwest Philadelphia called for some garden work. I mentioned the gentians and asked if she would entrust me with their location. She said that she would have to check with her friend, who now lives out of state. A few days later, I got the O.K. The nature lover wrote directions to the gentian field, and I put the folded paper inside my Audubon Guide to North American Wildflowers book for safe keeping until the fall bloom season.

In the first week of October, my wife Shelley, son Alex, and hound dog Blue took off with the map and the field guide. The directions were very clear, and in less than two hours, we arrived on a hillside where the lady said it was wild gentians.

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Certified Naturally Grown: An Alternative to “Organic”

by Sandra Faber, Environment Committee

In the July-August 2005 issue of the Shuttle, some of us were shocked to learn that companies like Heinz own 20% of Hain who, in turn, owns Celestial Seasonings, Westoyo, Arrowhead Mills, and other brands. Kraft, who owns Marlboro, Virginia Slims, and Benson & Hedges, also owns BocaBurgers, Balance Bars, and Back to Nature Cereal. There are many others. Hence, “organic” has taken on a whole new meaning.

The reason that many agribusinesses now own most of our familiar organic food products is that many small farmers couldn’t label their food “organic” after October 21, 2002, unless they were USDA certified. Cornell University did a survey in 2002 in the Hudson region in New York. They found that 80% of the farmers were not becoming USDA certified. One reason was that the certification cost $1000 or $2000 initially, as well as many hours of paperwork, inspector fees, etc., which could drive their costs up to $10,000. Most small farmers can’t afford this.

There are over 100 USDA accrediting agencies who compete for business. They compete by making it easier for companies to qualify by helping them to learn how not to get caught when they are audited. Many USDA certified farms may have questionable practices. For example, they may use sprays like copper sulfate, which is an organically approved fungicide. One “organic” farmer used enough to kill a sheep four times if he ate the produce that had been sprayed. USDA doesn’t require soil tests. These agribusinesses often don’t diversify, which is better for the soil, making it less diverse. Some “organic” companies are known to “top off” on the way to market. This means they begin with organic produce but add much non-organic in order to increase their profit.

Smaller farmers have gotten together to create their own standards. The label they use is “Certified Naturally Grown,” a group founded by Ron Khosla who farms in New Paltz, N.Y. (www.flyingbeet.com) At present there are over 400 farmers who belong to this nonprofit certification organization. Unlike the large organic companies, these farms don’t use bone meal and blood as fertilizers, which are byproducts of factory farms. They also sell as directly and locally as possible, unlike the larger companies who ship over long distances. Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) requires no fees but runs on small donations for costs. CNG Farms are inspected once a year. The results are posted online. (www.naturallygrown.org) These small farmers incept for one another. In fact, each farm has to agree to do one inspection of another farm. They also encourage the farmers to support one another by giving suggestions. In contrast, USDA forbids inspectors giving suggestions.

As Congress continues to gut the definition of “organic,” we have Certified Naturally Grown food as an alternative. (Taken from an interview with Ron Khosla in Satya, Dec 05-Jan 06 issue. www.satya-rag.com) Other companies say don’t tamper with the organic standards. Amalgamated Foods joins Dannon Yogurt, who acquired Stonyfield Farms, and Unilever, who purchased Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream, Benson & Hedges and the H.J. Heinz company. Together, these corporations own hundreds of companies with New Age names. Amalgamated has adopted an unusual strategy, announcing the purchase of the Kaiseki Origami Company of Kyoto Japan.

Wild Gentians (continued from page 16)

I realized that many more stalks had already lost their blossoms. Next year, we’ll go a week earlier to see a fuller display. I had seen fields of wildflowers before, most notably purple loosestrife (Lythrum) and cardinal flowers (Lobelia) in upstate New York near my sister’s house. But to stand and kneel among these graceful beauties was a special experience. I felt as if we had actually found treasure.

Overall, it was a nice family outdoors day. I felt honored that we were given access to one of nature’s wonders.

The Organic Bandwagon

by Don Silver

With aging baby boomers fueling double-digit growth of companies like Whole Foods Markets, there’s a scramble taking place among consumer foods companies to jump on the natural foods bandwagon. Shuttle investigative reporter Dirk Dannell has identified several strategies multinationals conglomerates are using.

Some companies would like to see the organic label relaxed and expanded which would have the benefit of making organic products more affordable. This could be achieved using a multi-level strategy similar to the one used by the Department of Homeland Security.

“Organic food is virtuous,” said Morty Gordon, a consumer products lobbyist. “We’d like the FDA to assign colors to foods based on organic purity. Forest green for soy burgers, all the way down to maybe sandowalk, for products like Pine Soil, which incidentally contains at least one natural ingredient.”

Other companies say don’t tamper with the organic standards. Amalgamated Foods joins Dannon Yogurt, who acquired Stonyfield Farms, and Unilever, who purchased Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream, Benson & Hedges and the H.J. Heinz company. Together, these corporations own hundreds of companies with New Age names. Amalgamated has adopted an unusual strategy, announcing the purchase of the Kaiseki Origami Company of Kyoto Japan.

“We’re extremely excited about this,” Robert Ellsworth, VP of Communications, told the Shuttle. “Wait till you see some of the changes in packaging we’re coming up with for products we sell through food co-ops, health food stores and the Whole Foods chain.”

Mr. Ellsworth held up an odd-shaped box, folded over many times. “Take a look at this box, will ya? Cool, huh?” Indeed, the crème filled cupcakes had a new brightly colored logo and bore the stamp: 100% Origamic.”

Montana Wellspring, of the consumer watchdog agency, Real Food, called the label nothing but a marketing ploy. “What does a consumer product have to do with the Japanese art of folding paper? People are going to see the label Origamic and think it’s about food.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said, defending the merger. “We’d much rather see this than Americans having more colors to worry about. Besides, it’s about free-market economics, freedom of speech and the love of one’s country, and we believe the Supreme Court will support that.”

Justice Scalia and Vice President Chenevey were rumored to be filming a public service announcement in support of Amalgamated, whose subsidiary, Food for Justice, has the food concession for the Supreme Court.

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Your Morning Cup of Coffee, Part I

(Margie Felton & Norman Weiss’s trip to Chiapas)

by Margie Felton

My regular morning cup of coffee will never again be just a bleary eyed wake-me-up cup. After spending a week in Chiapas, Mexico, with Norman Weiss and other co-operators from around the country learning the politics, culture, economics and growing process of coffee, that cup is now much more than a quick fix. Coffee now brings to mind a one-hour hike straight up the side of a mountain to pick the coffee “cherries,” the smiling faces of the children in the farming community and the tears of the farmers telling us about their friends and family killed in the fight to regain their land. The process of getting coffee to Weavers Way and your homes is very complex, and the history and lives of the small coffee farmers are long and difficult.

On Sunday January 8, after three plane rides and an hour and a half van ride, we arrived in the beautiful city of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. We had a delicious dinner at an organic vegetarian restaurant, then settled into our hotel.

On Monday morning, after a good night’s sleep, we met for breakfast. Our group was part of a tour hosted by Equal Exchange Coffee Company. The group consisted of eight employees from co-ops around the country (including Norman and me) and two members of Equal Exchange staff. After our meal, we traveled by foot through the stone streets of San Cristobal to our first meeting at CIEPAC (Center for Economic and Political Research and Community Action). Our speaker, Miguel Picadix, explained the political and economic situation in Chiapas, the role of the Zapatistas, and how international policies such as NAFTA and Plan Pueblo Panama affect the small farmers of Chiapas.

In the afternoon, we attended a meeting at the Fray Bartolome de las Cases Human Rights Center. We learned more about the lives of the indigenous people, about how they have “disappeared,” been displaced, intimidated and killed in the struggle for land, a voice, and basic human rights. The center has a wall of pictures and names of people that are missing or have been killed.

On Tuesday morning, we learned about Fair Trade and Equal Exchange Coffee Company. Fair Trade involves more than a fair price. It’s a guaranteed minimal price, a long-term relationship with the coffee co-ops, pre-harvest credit to the farmers, and an agreement to work only with democratically organized co-ops. Equal Exchange is a worker-owned co-op; the coffee farmers are members of co-ops; the mill where the co-ops bring their coffee for processing is a co-op; and of course Weavers Way is a co-op. It’s all about co-ops.

Our group was now ready to see coffee production and the co-ops first hand. We piled into the van and headed to the highlands. Our first stop was the Zapatista resource center. We stopped, got out, stretched our legs and handed our passports to a woman wearing a black mask who disappeared for 20 minutes. She returned with permission for us to enter the center. The center contains a health clinic, school, store, and other administration buildings. We ate lunch there and continued on our way to the city of Simojovel. Home of the coffee co-op CIRSA. When we arrived at CIRSA (Communities Indigenous of the Simojovel de Allende Region of Chiapas) the members were in the middle of their monthly meeting. They stopped and clapped for our arrival and welcomed us and shook our hands. We returned when their meeting was over for more formal introductions and dinner at a nearby restaurant. Connections were made through sharing a meal and teaching each other words in Spanish, English and their indigenous language, Tzotzil.

Wednesday morning we enjoyed a wonderful breakfast of organic vegetables, eggs, black beans, and tortillas. We were joined by Father Manuel Paladino, who shared with us his work of helping to organize the indigenous people, especially this co-op. He was jailed for 50 days for doing this. He said, “Us sitting here drinking coffee together without borders is an amazing beginning to a new world”. He thanked the producers for letting him walk their path with them and for giving him the opportunity to know us.

The board of CIRSA told of their history and the importance of the co-op in their lives. They told us the pride people have being able to produce on their own land in their own homes. An elder woman gave us a tour of the school—Showed us the bee hives, a joined the learning process in the ritual of the coffee. The people regaining their land from a German land owner who treated them like slaves. The board of CIRSA told of their history and the importance of the co-op in their life. They told us the pride people have being able to produce on their own land in their own way.

We then departed for what I felt was the most important part of our trip; our stay in the coffee farming community. We stood in the back of an open truck with four-foot sides for our two hour ride to the community. The road was unpaved and rough but the scenery was beautiful. We traveled into the mountains, past villages and rivers, picking up and dropping off other travelers on our way. Around one corner a few young boys hung onto the back of the truck. The truck stopped. We had arrived.

We jumped off the back of the truck and saw the entire village staring at us and we started back. Live music started to play and we all shook hands. Hundreds of children gathered around, smiling and giggling. We were ushered onto the outdoor stage with the musicians. The CIRSA members traveling with us introduced themselves. We introduced ourselves and many villagers introduced themselves. It was very emotional and overwhelming and many of us were crying. We were ushered into a community building for dinner and then into the church. The village tried to squeeze into the small church. Incense was burning and we were each given a candle. Prayers were spoken and music played. We were instructed to dance and then the village elder told the story of the people regaining their land from a German land owner who treated them like slaves and paid them very little. An elder woman asked for us to please help them and don’t let the Mexican government make them slaves again. There were more tears. After the church service, everyone went outside for a night of music and dancing. A steer was sacrificed in our honor. Eventually, we were shown where we will sleep. We were brought to the cement floor and given blankets and a room that was also used to store bags of coffee. We tried to get some sleep on the cement floor with music playing all night long.

The next day we hiked up the mountain to the coffee plants. It was hard to breathe because the path was steep and the altitude was high. Larger trees shade the coffee plants. We were taught how to pick the coffee “cherries.” We split into two groups and had a contest to see which group could pick the most. We learned how the heavy coffee bags were carried and we headed back down the mountain. Dinner that evening was the sacrificed steer followed by a two-hour sermon in the indigenous language and more music and dancing.

Friday morning after a breakfast of more steer — which was actually very good — it was time to leave. We said goodbye and got into the truck for our journey back to Simojovel. Our van and driver met us at CIRSA to bring us back to San Cristobal. When we reached the Zapatista center our van stalled. We sat quietly as the driver flooded the engine trying to restart it. Fortunately, with Norman’s help, the van started. The driver had to get out of the van frequently to restart it, so Norman had to drive the rest of the way back. Forty-five minutes later we arrived safely in San Cristobal. Norman saved the day.

Saturday, we left San Cristobal and headed to FIECH, the secondary co-op, where the coffee is “milled”. On our way we were side-swiped by a mini van. No one was hurt and after money and insurance numbers were exchanged, we continued. At FIECH, we (continued on page 19)
Morning Cup of Coffee (continued from page 18)

learned about the devastation caused by Hurricane Stan. Many coffee growers in the coastal regions lost everything and people were left without food or water or homes. We saw the coffee milling and sorting process and took part in a coffee cupping (tasting).

After lunch at the co-op, we were treated to a boat ride in a beautiful canyon. We then headed into Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of Chiapas. We checked into our hotel and then went to a café owned by FIECH. It was a very nice café and we all had capuccinos, expressos, etc… FIECH is roasting their own brand of coffee called Biojava. They are trying to get Mexicans to enjoy good quality coffee. The café is successful and is expanding. We ate dinner at a taqueria then returned to the hotel for our last night.

Sunday, January 15, we arrived at the airport at 6:30 a.m. Everyone flew to Mexico City together, where we had a few hours to wait. It was our last real time together. Norman and I continued on to Mexico City together, where we had a few hours to wait. It was our last real time together, Norman and I continued on to Philadelphia.

Now, we are back at Weavers Way, and being part of this co-op has new importance for me. Norman and I continue to learn more about Chiapas and coffee through books, the internet, and conversations with others who have had similar experiences. We both hope to return to Chiapas with family and friends and share what we have learned.

We hope this is just the start of our travels to experiences. We both hope to return to Chiapas with family and friends and share what we have learned.

For those seeking a simpler life, TV is dispensable if you have a computer for weather and news. Certainly one can get by without a fancy television or enhanced reception. With a little planning, it’s possible to download, rent, or check out media content for a quite modest outlay, with the added advantage that you can enjoy commercial TV productions with subtitles. Certainly you are not consigned to being a couch potato surfing channels for something to watch. Continually updating your gizmos and for-pay services provide more options than a human could possibly utilize, all at a relatively high cost. Is it worth your money? Does the passive nature of watching a screen discourage you from more satisfying active pursuits, or do you TiVo exercise shows to get you moving? Does solo TV watching isolate you from beneficial social contact, or does your computer enable you to invite friends over to watch football together? There are no correct answers to these questions, since tastes and preferences differ enormously. But it’s certain worth evaluating, and cutting back on your media consumption if you are not really deriving pleasure and benefit from your outlays. Nowadays, a person is more a media manager than an passive TV watcher. See any good shows lately?
I'll Pay You Tuesday for a Veggie Burger Today

by Peter Samuel

My children remind me that it is not every household where the Dad is found leafing through stacks of cook books searching for the perfect veggie burger recipe, or coming home with a bag of items labeled Vegelicious, Veggie Patch or Sunshine Burger. And truthfully I could not explain to them how or why I was on such a quest. I didn’t know myself. What I sensed, though, was that there has been a revolution in the country, and no one is talking about it.

Around the time I stopped taking pleasure in having hamburger juice drip down my chin I noticed that the words “veggie burger” were being thrown around in casual conversations. Did this happen after McDonald’s hit the one trillion burger mark, and folks decided it was time to give those cows a break and keep their chins clean?

The true origins of the hamburger have not been recorded officially. Its birth is claimed by people in Connecticut, Wisconsin and Ohio. It seems to have been launched anywhere between the 1880s and 1900s. Some say it actually started in Hamburg, Germany, but no one is really sure. Most people though are convinced it was in Wisconsin and Ohio. It seems to have been around in casual conversations. Did this happen after McDonald’s hit the one trillion burger mark, and folks decided it was time to give those cows a break and keep their chins clean?

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In Praise of Old Bags
by Jessica Roland

It started when I went to D.C. to visit a friend last spring. I saw a bag at a store called Go Mama Go that I loved. But I held off. When I was still coveting it a year later, that store was one of my first stops when I returned to D.C. Go Mama Go carries imported housewares and accessories, many made from recycled materials. My bag was made from fruit juice pouches that had been cleaned and sewn together. Picture Capri Sun bags, but with images of guavas and mangoes. The bags were from the Philippines. They carried a tag from the company Mo’ Betta World that explained that they were made by low-income women to support their families and keep their community “clean and green.” It turned out that my D.C. friend also coveted a bag. Hers was made from seat belts. My friend is an environmental lobbyist, and she said that the seat belt bags were a ubiquitous Capital Hill accessory. My interest was piqued, and I started looking into bags made from recycled materials.

First, I contacted Mo Betta World. Monique Gordon stumbled upon the bags and became the U.S. distributor after helping the woman design more intricate bags that she thought would sell well here. The juice pouches are collected by the women, washed, and sewn into quilt-like bags. They range in price from $7 for a change purse to $40 for a large tote. The Harvey’s Seatbelt Bag’s web-site tells the story of the first bag, made for Harvey’s wife to match their new car. The bags are made in U.S. factories so as not to exploit sweatshop-like conditions overseas, and to employ Americans. I think they actually have a picture of a waving U.S. flag on the web-site. However, it turns out that the bags are made from all new materials. They are also pricey, ranging from $70 to $165. Already residing in my home was a Frietag bag, my husband’s birthday present from a few years ago. These Danish bags are made from recycled truck tarps and seat belts. The bags are visually dynamic, with the colors and graphics varying widely. Even the web-site is fun. The company was formed by two eco-minded brothers in 1993. The bags are virtually indestructible, but a warning, the vinyl smell is pretty strong for the first few months. They range in price from $40–$182, plus shipping of course.

An internet search yielded some other good options. Bags by Vy and Elle are made from vinyl billboards salvaged from landfill. Another duo, these two women are professional designers who make a variety of products with eco-conscious materials. I have seen the bags at museum stores. They, like Frietag, offer unique designs because of the nature of the materials. They range from $20 to $115. The web-site Hip and Zen carries a variety of bags made from recycled materials. One of the companies they represent is called Conserve. This is an NGO in Delhi. Their mission is to combat the huge problems of litter and environmental waste problems in their city. They pay local women to collect plastic bags and then use a machine they have designed to press them into thick, durable sheets. They then turn these over to the coop-
Low Impact Vacation in the Caribbean
by Kim Empson

Looking for a quiet peaceful vacation with no television, and virtually nothing to do but walk, swim, sit and eat? If its simplicity you’re after — but without sleeping on the ground — then I have just the lodging you’ve been looking for. Do you loathe shopping, other tourists, and generally dislike waiting or lining up for anything? Do you worry about treading lightly on the planet and don’t even like purchasing airline tickets, just thinking of all that fuel used for frivolous pursuits? If you’ve answered yes to the previous questions, ask yourself, but do I truly need to get out of Philadelphia and relax somewhere slightly exotic? Yes to that one and you’re not alone. Even though there are a number of water related sports, etc., available, the main attraction on St. John is tranquility. My husband and I considered it heaven.

Eco-tourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and sustain the wellbeing of local people. On St. John, there is a four-location eco-resort that happens to be Arthur Fromer’s favorite hotel in the world. The Discovery Channel calls it the world’s best alternative energy lodge. They are: Maho Bay Camps, Estate Concordia (where we stayed), Harmony Studios, and Concordia Eco-tents. The president/owner says they are all based on the same idea: creature comforts for all creatures.

Here you’ll find green travelers happily supporting the principles of environmental sensitivity and responsible consumption. Concordia borders the U.S. Virgin Islands National Park (though you won’t find it on the National Parks Map) and is nestled in the lush vegetation on the hillside looking over the ocean, complete with harmless indoor lizards and hummingbirds at your balcony; oh, and go ahead and throw your edible leftovers right over the side of your deck to be nibbled on by hundreds of noisy hermit crabs. You’ll soon be able to identify that scratching sound all over the island. You can rent snorkel equipment, recycle all those empty rum bottles, borrow a book on the history of slavery on the island, or use the free item exchange shelf where you can take or donate items such as food, clothing, books, etc. (you’ll love that part). Go to www.maho.org for a complete description of the place. The staff is very friendly and can tell you all about the local restaurants. Hiking, snorkeling, and breathing were by far our favorite activities. I highly recommend the latter as the snorkeling and swimming were perfect, as was the temperature of the water. You can find a self-guided snorkeling trail on one of the world’s top 10 beaches. A direct flight from Philadelphia will take you to St. Thomas, where you will board a ferry for a half hour ride over to St. John. You’ll dock at the most bustling part of the island where there are some shops and restaurants. Please have a smoothie (they’re unbeatable) and pick up maps and trail guides at the National Park visitors’ center. Then, in your rental car, (watch out; you’re driving on the left) immediately head out for the undeveloped end of the island. Driving tip: Don’t take your car off road unless you want to look and feel like Indiana Jones looking for the Temple of Doom. Hiking trails here will not disappoint. All of them seem to reward you with either a breathtaking vista, remote bay, or dramatic drop into the sea. You’ll find a book in your room, which is indispensable for hiking.

One trail in particular caught my eye because of the foreigners who depend on it. It leads from the ocean to a main road in Coral Bay where Chinese citizens walk at night after being dropped from a boat. They are on route to Puerto Rico where they apply for political asylum. Along this trail, you will find all sorts of interesting stuff that they drop along the way. Unlike Hansel and Gretel — they’re not marking the trail for a return hike. I found clothes, shoes, books, toothpaste, and other items. If you’re really a non-shopper you could take back one of these items as your low impact souvenir. (I did.)

And as for the local people, I can’t say, since I was busy eating and walking. I spoke with almost no one there except a couple of waiters, a gas station attendant and the guy at the mini market. The cabby had the most beautifully lilting accent I have ever heard, and the sun-drenched fellow at the bar seemed to be a walking endorsement for the local rum. They were all remarkably pleasant, but then wouldn’t you be, if you lived on St. John?
Sugar: A National Obsession

by Sara Lomax-Reese

Easter is fast approaching. Visions of chocolate bunnies, marshmallow chicks and jellybeans are dancing in my head. Like most Americans, my sugar obsession started early. When I was just a baby, I sucked on a sweet, tangy concoction of maple syrup and brown rice syrup. My cook your own food (many times excess sugar is added in restaurants or take-out joints). Thus Easter is an opportunity for the family to make some homemade low sugar or sugar free treats. (A great book with innovative recipes is: Get the Sugar Out by Ann Louise Gittleman.) For more information about sugar addiction and tips for kicking the habit, email Sara Lomax-Reese at slr@healthquestmag.com.

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Feral Cats: A Continuing Saga

by Brenda Volesz

This story has three endings—one happy and one sad and one that simply continues.

Fourteen months ago, three kittens, about seven weeks old, appeared in my backyard. They hid inside my shed. They roamed my cul-de-sac street, searching for food, with their mom who was a tiny wisp of a cat, probably very young herself. I set the hav-a-heart traps (traps that do not harm animals) and caught two kittens the first night. It was three weeks later before I caught the third kitten. It was heartbreaking to see the kitten struggling inside with mom frantic on the outside unable to help. She waited when I walked inside with her offspring and cried outside my house for hours. I continued unsuccessfully to set the trap for the mother for the next three months. I’d see her occasionally and at the trap attempting to pull the cat up and through the bars. She was hungry, but too smart to go inside.

Meanwhile inside, her kittens were terrified little bundles of fur that hissed and spit and cowered when I approached. In order to socialize wild kittens, they must have forced interaction as often as possible. I had to wear long leather gloves to catch them and hold them as they tried to scratch their way out of my grip. In working with wild cats, one can’t expect appreciation for caring. I was nothing but a giant predator who had plucked them from their mother and forced them into a cage.

To make matters worse, they had just about every parasite possible, including ringworm, which required them to be bathed twice a week for six weeks. This task required two people. The shampoo had to remain on for 20 minutes, after which their skinny little bodies had to be dried with a blow dryer. This exercise left me — and those brave enough to help — soaked wet, sometimes bloody, and always emotionally exhausted. Ten of the kittens were easy (that’s a relative term) to handle. They would go limp when held firmly by the nape of the neck, but the gray and white one, fought continuously and managed to spin her body and flip while we struggled to keep soap out of her eyes and keep her under the heat lamp while the shampoo was soaking into their skin. It was like trying to shampoo a fish.

While the kittens got healthier, I not only got attached, I got ringworm, as did my “shampoo” friends, Laura and Don, and my oldest cat, Magellan. Laura was becoming smitten with the two black and white ones, later named Butler and Zoe, and I decided to keep the ‘fish’, and called her Lydi. The ringworm my sanity and was not as hideous as every medical book described, and Lydia became a friendly, loving cat full of trouble who continues to make me laugh each day. As weeks turned into months, I put the trap away thinking that mom had moved on or been killed by a car or a predator.

Fastforward. One year later, I experienced deja vu. Three more kittens appeared in my back yard along with the same mom from last year. Out came the traps. I was lucky to catch all three kittens in one night. As much as I dreaded repeating the experience from last year, winter was approaching and I couldn’t just ignore these kittens. Once again, mom was watched sadly and darted about frantically as I carted away her crying offspring. These kittens were older than the previous litter and harder to handle. Laura and Don’s and Zoe’s adoptive mom came over and was bitten by the largest black one on the first handling attempt. As the kitten broke free, and Laura’s thumb was wound up, I gathered up my sanity and the kitten dove under a dresser, taking everything in its path.

My cat began spraying indoors, and once again the house was cordoned off. After a few weeks, the kittens showed promise of adoption. Through a friend, I was lucky enough to find Nancy, an angel who had previously owned feral and did not want to split up this litter. She took all three kittens. I opened champagne.

Now I was determined to catch mom, no matter how long it took. Having seen her kittens fall prey to this metal box, I knew that catching her would not be quick or easy. I used all types of bait, including chicken necks, which made gag as I cooked them (I am a vegetarian). I began putting food inside the trap but rigged it so that it would not spring when the pedal was touched in an attempt to gain mom’s trust and lure her slowly inside.

I could only set and monitor the trap in the evenings and on weekends. It needed to be checked every 30 minutes and closed during the night because of the cold temperatures. Because the space is so tight inside a trap, and because the animal continued on page 24)
Feral Cats

(continued from page 23)

is so confined, it can become hypothermic or develop pneumonia from remaining stationary. In cold temperatures, an animal should not be in a trap longer than 30 minutes. It is also inhumane to allow an animal to thrash about inside a cage. Immediately upon trapping, the cage must be covered and brought inside. If you cannot keep the animal inside until surgery, it should be taken to the vet inside the trap for overnight boarding. These arrangements should be made in advance with a vet since not all vets are willing to work with ferals. And, because an animal should fast at least 12 hours before surgery, it is best to catch them a day in advance.

Rather than catching mom, who was still hanging around the neighborhood, I caught a huge gray tom. I had him neutered, got him rabies shots and a microchip. Immediately told her the news. Laura came over and cried, “Why don’t you bury her with yours,” she asked. I began to shake and cry as I put her body inside my car. My hands were covered with her blood. I was finally touching this sweet elusive cat that had brought me two litters of kittens and who had been part of my life for the last 14 months. “Why don’t you bury her with her favorite toy,” the lady suggested. She offered her condolences as she drove off. I brought mom to my house, phoned Butler and Zoe’s mom, Laura, and hysterically told her the news. Laura came over and we buried this nameless stray in my yard. We wrapped her little body in new flannel receiving blankets and included one of her daughter Lyvia’s favorite toys. Laura reassured me that it was not a coincidence that I had found mom cat on the road and put her to rest in the backyard spot where I had first seen her over a year ago.

I continue to trap neighborhood strays in my backyard in the trap that sits on mom cat’s grave. I am astounded by the number of strays that appear in search of food. There are too few barn placements for these homeless and unaltered cats. What I’ve come to realize is that regular feeding of strays without making an attempt to stop their breeding contributes to the overpopulation of homeless animals. Trapping and altering takes a lot of time, planning and resources. If you don’t want to trap them yourself, you can support organizations that offer low cost certificates such as (locally) The Spayed Club, Spay & Save, KAT (Kitten Adoption Team or (nationally) Friends of Animals, to name a few.

What I’ve learned from my brief experience of trapping ferals is:

• Have a plan before you catch the cat (or any animal). Are you sure the cat is a stray and not a pet. You can recognize the behavior differences between a domestic and a feral. Strays also look thin and taut and act nervous. A domestic often cries when trapped while a feral will either thrust about or become quiet as it is paralysed with fear.

Know that feral cats are escape artists and can be dangerous. Don’t try to transfer a feral from the trap into a cage for transport to the vet. Find a vet that will deal with ferals. Are they designated spay days? Discuss the costs of altering. Know where you will house the cat while it is recovering from surgery. You CANNOT release a cat the same day as it has had surgery. A female needs at least five days of confinement to recover. Unless you plan to pay for boarding, be prepared to have a secure place in your home. Cats can escape from spaces much smaller than you realize. Do not underestimate a feral’s capability to escape. Even if you find a barn placement, you CANNOT simply take the cat there and drop it off. It must remain in a cage for at least four weeks while it acclimates to the new sounds and smells of a changed environment. The barn manager must be willing to feed the cat and change its litter box for at least a month. This requires a commitment and can be scary.

A cat cannot stay in a cage in an unequipped barn during the winter during the acclimation period. It is best not to trap in the winter.

If you get a low-cost spay/neuter certificate, you are restricted to work with their associated vets. Check the list and know which days are devoted to feral spaying. Explore these options before you are ready to have an animal taken to the vet.

No cat caught in a trap should be released unless it has checked to ensure that it has been altered. Female cats will have scars on their bellies that a vet will recognize.

Working with feral cats is basically a thankless job and it can be heartbreaking. But if you can prevent just one cat from breeding, you have helped wildlife and the environment and prevented suffering. Remember this staggering statistic from the Humane Society of Baltimore County: Two uncontrolled breeding cats plus all their kittens and all their kittens’ kittens, having two litters per year with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter and a ten-year breeding life, can equal over 80 million cats in just ten years.
Produce Price Comparison

by Jean MacKenzie

Weavers Way has won the Best of the Northwest Award for Produce, which I think is quite wonderful. I know you have choices in this area when you're looking for produce, so I don't take it as a given that you would buy here first.

Over this past week, I've been told that an investigator has been following and observing me and my children to determine whether we really live in Springfield Township (We do. I'll show you the lease. I'm getting ready to go home and eat and sleep there right now.). This makes me really happy that I sell produce for a living instead of spying on people, but it did make me think that maybe Weavers should hire this guy. Oh sure, you say you're loyal to Weavers, but didn't you see your car in the Genuardi's parking lot last week? And what about that trip to Whole Foods?

If you had made those trips during the week of January 17, here's what you would have found in the produce sections.

Every time I do these comparisons, I am impressed by our pricing. The bigger stores can always underprice us on a few things, but our basket of produce stands up pretty well even against other stores' "special" prices.

Keep telling me what you want, and I'll keep trying to improve the diversity, dependability, and overall quality of our produce department.
I have gone through your 28-page newspaper two times and read many, if not all, of the articles. It is impressive and it carried me back to the beginning of the Shuttle. It was Maggie Heineman’s idea and I believe she did the writing on the first few copies. I did the typing, which meant “cutting” stencils... and I did the mimeographing also, and that was the messy part. In retrospect, I believe I did some editing also as I did have a background of education and writing in the field of journalism. One of my brothers was the chief European correspondent for the old New York Herald Tribune and later the Los Angeles Times. This was all during and following the years of W.W. II. He lived in Europe for about 40 years.

My parents wrote and distributed a journalistic newsletter for a national Christian group interested in healing among other things. The four children in our family all took journalism at Abington High School and did well in writing. The journalism teacher in those days was a strange and gaudy maiden lady of some years and eccentricities including a horrendous wig of red curly hair, because of which she was always calling for the windows to be shut whenever a breeze became noticeable.

We all wrote articles for the local papers such as the Jenkintown Chronicle and the Glenside News. The point of this rambling is to get back to my being impressed and grateful for what you have accomplished in your years of being Managing Editor. You and the paper have grown in stature along with the rest of our enterprise. For that I am deeply grateful and nostalgically impressed. You have “done us proud” my friend. I thank you on behalf of those of us who have been engaged here since 197? and have deeply grateful and nostalgically impressed. You “have done us proud” my friend. I thank you on behalf of those of us who have been engaged here since 197 and have deep emotional and parental and protective feelings and reactions to much of what transpires at and through Weavers Way.

Again, Thank you, enjoy your accomplishments, take pride in your work and have lots of good years and good words to enjoy.

Respectfully yours,
Dorothy Gay

Weavers Way recently held a Member Forum (1/17/06), at which the issues of the Co-op’s work requirement and investment requirement were discussed. Among the ideas examined that evening were reducing, or eliminating, the six-hour work requirement, and the question of allowing non-members to shop, but charging them a surcharge (10%? 20%?) on their purchases.

We were all aware of some of the problems that exist. We want them to be reduced and we want them to be handled in a way that does not make our store unmanageable. Among the issues discussed were:

- Improving the system of verifying each shopper’s membership and “good standing” can use improvement, and it is hoped that the capabilities of our new cash register system will allow us to make those improvements.
- We want to reduce the crowding problem by dropping the six-hour work requirement. The people affected will already have joined by the time the next Shuttle is issued. The four children in our family all took journalism at Abington High School and did well in writing. The journalism teacher in those days was a strange and gaudy maiden lady of some years and eccentricities including a horrendous wig of red curly hair, because of which she was always calling for the windows to be shut whenever a breeze became noticeable.

As we entertain these types of changes at Weavers Way, I think it’s important to keep in mind one basic fact of physical reality; that we operate in a very small building (two rowhouses, converted), and that the store is often rather crowded, especially on weeknights and at times even enjoyable, to shop or work in.

We've all experienced the crowded shopping conditions of Weavers Way; it’s difficult to find counter space, to navigate through the store, to bring children in and keep track of them. And then there’s the checkout line, which is often long. As a staff person working on the first floor, the term “contact sport” comes readily to mind. And all the people involved here are, for the most part, Co-op members who have made the decision to join Weavers Way, attended an orientation meeting, gotten “trained” about how to shop at the Co-op (very few carts, narrow walkways, shopping bins on counters), and are willing to put in the six hours per year work requirement.

While we’re operating at our present location, I cannot imagine that dropping the work requirement would be a sound idea, simply because of the crowding problem that it would create if membership were to suddenly increase. I’d be against allowing non-member shopping for the same reason.

It is true that our present system of verifying each shopper’s membership and “good standing” can use improvement, and it is hoped that the capabilities of our new cash register system will allow us to make those improvements.

If we move to, or establish a second location in a much larger building, then let’s talk about opening up “the floodgates.” In our present location, we need our membership requirements, including some sort of work requirement, to keep the store manageable, and at times even enjoyable, to shop or work in.

Sincerely,
Chris Switky (Weavers Way staff, 1991 – present.)

Thanks for all your hard work in producing the Shuttle. I am always happy to get and read it. I’m writing in regards to an article, which appeared in the January/February issue of the Shuttle. “The New Medicare Coverage,” by Solomon Levy Ph.D., CFP®

Dr. Levy begins paragraph four by stating that the premium is $37.00 per month. The facts is that of the 52 plans to choose from, (not counting the Medicare advantage plans), the monthly premiums range from $10.14 to $68.61. He is correct in saying that the assistance in paying those premiums is available to those who qualify.

In paragraph six, Dr. Levy suggests that those who do not spend much on medical care will create if membership were to suddenly increase. I’d be against allowing non-member shopping for the same reason.

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Do you find it difficult to express your anger directly?

Or do you express only your anger?

Would you like to learn how to assert yourself and express your needs and wants?

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Manager (continued from page 26)

...contracts with each pharmaceutical company, and the plans are different, we will get to that they do better with different plans, by different companies (each company offered the one that is best for them, based on their own medications. Couples will likely find the program was not considerate of their needs. Those who are financially limited, and most citizens (and therefore, most Medicare recipients) don’t have computer know-how, this...ing an informed choice without use of a computer and the internet. Because most senior significant help from someone else, either through a clinic or senior center volunteer, or...

The table which Dr. Levy included is misleading, if not downright erroneous. Per-haps AARP experts are challenged to understand this complex program, too? Firstly, it implies that everyone will have to pay a deductible of $250. Actually, only about half of the plans require that a deductible be met. Of those, most are $250, although they vary with one being only $50. The co-pays, again, vary significantly, depending upon the plan and the actual drug.

Finally, the note at the bottom of the table is wrong also. The total spending figures, in the left side column, include monthly premiums.

I have to admit, I do agree with Dr. Levy’s commentary at the end of the article. From what I have heard, most of those who made a decision about the new program got significant help from someone else, either through a clinic or senior center volunteer, or from friends or family. The program itself was designed such that I can’t imagine making an informed choice without use of a computer and the internet. Because most senior citizens (and therefore, most Medicare recipients) don’t have computer know-how, this was not considered of their needs. Those who are financially limited, and most in need of finding an economical plan, are probably the least likely to be computer savvy. Unfortunately,

The plans vary widely, so it is essential that those who are choosing a plan find the one that is best for them, based on their own medications. Couples will likely find that they do better with different plans, by different companies (each company offered two or three plans). And next year, when each insurance company has negotiated new contracts with each pharmaceutical company, and the plans are different, we will get to...
Greetings and thanks for writing. As usual, suggestions and responses may have been edited for clarity, brevity, and/or comedy. If you’ve called the Co-op in February you may have noticed that an actual person answered. After about 12 years, our auto-attendant/voice mail system has relocated, preferring life in a landfill instead of taking messages from old-call selpers trying to sell LSD the latest homeopathic remedy for licking cancer. In researching new phone systems, I found one company, Inter-Tel, no longer uses the term “telephone” or “phone.” They use the term “endpoint.” I think they are trying to make the point that with modern systems, which include Voice Over Internet Protocol telephone, or “VoIP” it is likely that a call may be answered by any one of a number of devices; a digital phone, an IP phone, a computer, a PDA, a wireless gadget, etc. I don’t think they have thought this through though. First of all, since typically at least one of the people involved in a call has actually initiated the call, won’t it be confusing to initiate a call from an “endpoint”? Second of all, imagine life in the Mafia, when a boss wants to tell a hit-man who just arrived at the social club that his mother just called and asked for her son “phone” home and the boss says “endpoint your mom.” Maybe we should pick a different phone system.

s: “Our family loved the chocolate chip cookie raw dough found around T giving Any chance of stocking it regularly? Or by special order? Also the non-organic bagged spinach has been dreadfully tough and tasteless any other complaints? Thought I should note it.”

r: (Bonnie) Thanks. Glad you loved the cookie dough. We do stock this regular ularly in the winter months. Kudos to the lovely Maureen Gregory, who whips it up in a flash. (Jean) This is the first complaint I’ve heard about the spinach but I’ll be alert to more. And please see me to get a refund or free bag of spinach — I really want produce cus tomers to be happy with our produce.

s: “Missing Patak’s chutneys and relish.”

r: (Margie) We all miss them. Our dis tributor stopped carrying them and I can’t find another source. Sorry.

s: “For those of us wheat-adverse folks, spelt flour is a wonderful baking alterna tive. Arrowhead Mills makes one the same size as the other specialty flours that the Co-op already carries.”

r: (Chris) We’ll look into adding this flour to our line. Meanwhile, you can special order it if you wish. Minimum is three two-pound bags; price is around $3.49 each.

s: Please restock organic peppermint tea by Celestial Seasonings or a reasonable replacement. Thank you.”

r: (Chris) Celestial Seasonings stopped producing their organic tea. We are look ing at replacements. Meanwhile, you can special order Choice brand, minimum of three boxes (16 bags/box), for $2.99 each.

s: “1) Regular loose onions. Lots of us buy just one or two pounds. 2) Possible to get better quality bananas? Finding even green ones not ready to eat a challenge.”

r: (Jean) 1) I’ll put a sign on the onions — go ahead and rip open a bag and weigh them up at $.59/pound. Maybe we can make everyone happy — grab a bag, or weigh your own. 2) Hmmm. This is the first complaint I’ve ever had about our ba nanas. I opened up several, in varying stages of ripeness, from different boxes, and I cannot find bad ones. Next time you’re in, please show me what you mean.

s: “RE Breadshop” Blueberries and Cream granola: the number of blueberries in the mix is just “not enough” — please add a goodly, visible amount to the mix. Thanks.”

r: (Norman) At any given time, there is a limited number of dried blueberries in the world, and portioning them out using an equitable system has been an issue since the first Constitutional Convention. Issues include how many to apportion to each constituency. Should breakfast cereal get more than desserts? Why? Should cereal with mixed fruit get more than those with just blueberries? Should children’s cereal get more? How to decide? Should there be a lottery? How much to save each year for the Federal Strategic Blueberry Re serve? You see how this is not simple. Until this is settled, the number of blueberries in granola is established at the manufacturer. The different batches of granola are as signed blindfolded ducks. The ducks get 30 seconds to scoop mouthfuls of dried blue berries from the blueberry supply conveyer, then drop them in the granola conveyer. Ducks have incentive to do their job well (without crushing the blueberries), they are rewarded with stale pieces of white bread. This is the most fair system devised so far, and Weavers Staff are unwilling to modify such a carefully thought out system.

s: “Is there a specific reason we only carry the 70% lactose free milk? It seems like my lactose intolerant stomach, this isn’t good for it.”

r: (Chris & Jon) At the moment, none of our distributors carry the 100% lactose free milk. We are continuing to search for a source…. In the meantime, you could just drink the 70% with no lactose.

s: “What happened to 16 oz. of regular sour cream? Nondairy/knowt is not worth it and the small regular size is too small. With Hanukkah & latke eating just days away, what’s a girl to do? Please don’t send “(continued on page 26).