

The Voice of the Keweenaw Co-op Market & Deli

# Circumspice

HANCOCK, MICHIGAN

SPRING 2008

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## kir-`kum-spi-ke

The name Circumspice, Latin for look around, was inspired by Michigan's state motto—*Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice*. Which means, "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look around." The motto originally appeared on the Great Seal in 1835 designed by Lewis Cass.

## Local Spotlight

*Faye Carr interviews Polish Fire Hot Sauce originator Ray Weglarz*

Polish Fire (PF) will be a featured product in April so Faye Carr decided to interview the man behind the hot sauce—Ray Weglarz. Ray works as a hospice nurse and program manager at Keweenaw Home Nursing and Hospice in Calumet. In his spare time when he's not cooking, canoeing, or fishing, Ray likes to mix up a batch of his special recipe hot sauce right here in the Co-op kitchen. Faye Carr is the Communications Coordinator and newsletter editor at the Co-op.



**Faye:** What inspired you to make a hot sauce?

**Ray:** I love to eat and I love to cook. My mom Virginia was a great cook. Watching her cook gave me the courage to follow my instincts and experiment with foods and flavors. I like my food with a lot of flavor. I was introduced to "Clancy's Fancy Hot Sauce" when I was in school in Ann Arbor, and loved it. At some point I was inspired to try my own hand at making a hot sauce.

**Faye:** How do you use Polish Fire?

**Ray:** I use it with lots of stuff both at the table and in meal preparation. I frequently use PF on tofu, rice, potatoes, venison, any kind of Mexican dish, sautéed veggies, and falafel burgers. I love making fresh dips and

saucers with PF, being careful to add a little more or a little less depending on the tastes of the crowd. You don't have to be Polish to use it.

**Faye:** Do people find it too hot?

**Ray:** I have had many people tell me they don't like hot sauce in general but like PF. I find that a lot of folks are set in their ways about what they eat and will hardly ever try something new. One bad experience with something "hot" will do it for some people. I've noticed young people are much more open minded and willing to experiment with new things, and they seem to like things spicier than older folks. Although, one older woman wrote me a letter admitting she puts it "on almost everything but my ice cream." I love getting comments about PF.

(...continued on page 8)



*Circumspice*

1035 Ethel Avenue  
Hancock, MI • 49930  
(906) 482-2030  
www.keweenaw.coop

#### STORE HOURS

Mon-Sat 10am-8pm  
Sunday 10am-5pm

The Circumspice newsletter is published four times a year for the member-owners and customers of Keweenaw Co-op. The newsletter is published to provide information about the Keweenaw Co-op, the cooperative movement, food, nutrition, and community issues. Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Co-op management, board, or member-owners. Submissions must be received one month prior to publication. The next deadline is June 2nd. Refer submissions and questions to faye@keweenaw.coop.

Editor: Faye Carr

The Circumspice newsletter is printed on post consumer recycled paper. This paper is recyclable.

The Circumspice newsletter is also available on our web-site www.keweenaw.coop.

## featured products

Staff selections from their department. Try a few out!



### Grocery — Kay Lang

#### Ray's Polish Fire Hot Sauce

Made right here at the Co-op with 10 separate ingredients, half liquids and half dried spices. Ray chooses the highest quality organic ingredients he can find, no skimping on quality for Polish Fire. Look for Polish Fire at a special price in April!



### Wine & Cheese — Anitra Bennett

#### Buehler Vineyards Zinfandel and Spanish Idiazábal

A Zin rich, full-bodied, mildly dry, and dark cranberry in color, hinting of dark berries and tingling the tongue reminiscent of black pepper. Complement it with the Idiazábal sheep milk cheese, subtly-smoked, pungent, nutty, and pleasantly animalistic.



### Home & Garden — Karen Rumisek

#### Organic Gardening Supplies

Watch again this Spring for organic fertilizers, soil amendments and pest-and disease-control products. All products are listed by the Organic Materials Review Institute™ as complying with federal organic standards. See pg. 9 for bulk ordering information.



### Bulk Foods — Greg Green

#### Wild Rice Stick Snack

New in the Bulk Food department is a wild rice snack by Golden Flavor®. This super crispy food became instantly popular and is a great way to eat wild rice. Buy a small amount to try, that's the beauty of bulk! Some members say it's addictive.



### Produce — Liz Archer-Hess

#### Oké Fair Trade & Organic Bananas

Oké bananas are organically grown and Fair Trade Certified™. Oké farmers own a third of their company and earn a Fair Trade premium that they invest in protecting their environment and providing health care and education in their community.



### Deli — Daniel Krueger

#### Deli Made Soups

Each batch is created by hand without a recipe by our imaginative deli cooks. They're seasonally appropriate, nourishing, and lower in salt and fat than the standard fare. We feature 3 expressions of hot love daily. Vaughn Plichta loves the tomato basil.

## From the Board

by Roger Woods — President



As I reflected on the recent General Membership Meeting (GMM), I thought about the concept of communication. One of the major tasks the Board has been addressing this past year is defining our Ends. The Board has been soliciting input from the member-owners through member-linkage activities at GMMs, in-store surveys, and articles in past issues of the Circumspice. This communication has resulted in some great insights into member's feelings about the Co-op.

What I don't think we have done is given the members unstructured opportunities to present ideas, questions, and concerns. The open discussion at the recent GMM gave those in attendance a chance to bring forward what was on their minds and it resulted in excellent feedback. To encourage this type of communication we have decided to add a monthly open discussion at the beginning of each board meeting agenda. This provides an opportunity for members and customers to address the Board on any topic they feel needs to be considered for the Co-op.

While we have strived to get

input from the membership, it was evident to me from the comments at the GMM that we haven't clearly communicated what projects and topics the Board has been working on. At the GMM we discussed our work on the adoption of Policy Governance® and our work on updating the Bylaws. Having a regular spot in this newsletter provides a venue for communications as well. We are working on other ways to communicate the issues we are tackling as a board.

The Board has started some small group meetings to address concerns and ideas that we have heard about through our survey process. We plan on setting up similar small group discussions to address our Bylaws and other topics. Vice-President, Diane Miller, is currently organizing a forum concerning local food and sustainability. Check the bulletin board by the Bulk Food department and future issues of the Circumspice for meeting times and topics. We hope to hear from you! ::

## cooperative governance

The Co-op Board of Directors is elected by the General Membership. The Board meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month in the Community Room at the Co-op. The current month's agenda is posted on the member-owner bulletin board at the store one week before each meeting. The board operates using the Policy Governance® model (www.carvergovernance.com). Member-owners and customers are welcome to attend. Send board related questions to Roger Woods (roger@homerproductivity.com or ph 487-7712).

## board of directors

**Cindy Drake**  
Director  
Term ending 2011

**Nicole Helton**  
nicole.helton@yahoo.com  
Director  
Term ending 2011

**Robyn Johnson**  
robyn@brockit.com  
Director  
Term ending 2010

**Cory McDonald**  
cpmc dona@mtu.edu  
Treasurer  
Term ending 2010

**Diane Miller**  
dimiller@mtu.edu  
Vice President  
Term ending 2009

**Sigrid Resh**  
scresh@mtu.edu  
Director  
Term ending 2010

**Rhiannon Schmidt**  
rhiannon.schmidt@gmail.com  
Director  
Term ending 2011

**Katie Searl**  
kms earl@yahoo.com  
Secretary  
Term ending 2010

**Roger Woods**  
roger@homerproductivity.com  
President  
Term ending 2009

## co-op events

Classes, workshops, and demonstrations are open to everyone. Unless indicated otherwise, all events take place in the Community Room on the second floor of the Co-op. If you need assistance with the stairs please contact Faye Carr at the Co-op (906-482-2030). Sign up at the Co-op.

**Organic Gardening Class**  
**Saturday, April 26**  
 10:15 am to 12:15 pm  
 Members: \$10  
 Non-members: \$12  
 Instructor: Kathy Halvorsen

*A basic class on gardening organically and enhancing backyard biodiversity. Learn how to harvest from your garden every month, what heirloom varieties are, and how to save their seed and why they deserve protection. The class includes a tour of Kathy's garden just down the block. (time permitting).*

**Cooking with Soy**  
**Saturday, May 24**  
 10:15 am to 12:15 pm  
 Members: \$12  
 Non-members: \$14  
 Instructor: Noah Aschauer

*Learn to prepare meals with this versatile yet often overlooked and misunderstood ingredient. Flavors will pop in your kitchen in a range of meals. Sample breakfast, lunch, and dinner dishes made from soy products. You'll leave this class with a new understanding of cooking with soy products. Class includes recipes and a carton of Bountiful Bean™ Tofu.*

## Mexican Buffet Family Fiesta

by Faye Carr — Staff Member

The Keweenaw Co-op sponsored the annual Mexican Buffet Family Fiesta to benefit Dial Help, Inc. again this year. The event was held at the Barkell Elementary School in Hancock on Saturday, February 23. The cooking team included Ken Steiner, Anitra Bennett, Daniel Krueger, Ron Waara and Craig Dyni. The festivities were lively and included massages, face painting, live music, and piñatas for the children, but the highlight of the event was the food. Everyone loved the variety of all the handmade Mexican creations. The collaboration of volunteers from the community was greatly appreciated; they made the long day and hard work all seem worth it! A huge thanks for the donated design and printing of the posters from the Print Shop in Houghton. The community really came together for this event!

Dial Help is a non-profit organization that provides confidential



**Ken Steiner and Anitra Bennett prepping jalapeños for the salsa. Photo by Bill Fink.**

walk-in and telephone crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Dial Help has been rooted in the Upper Peninsula since 1971, in 2007 they responded to 30,160 requests for assistance in the U.P. ::

## "Pasties just like Mom makes"



**Last month's Co-op cooking class with a tray of vegetarian pasties. Everyone had a good time rolling pastry dough and stuffing their pasties to take home to impress family and friends. Watch the bulletin board in the Co-op and here in the newsletter for upcoming classes. Join the fun. Take a class!**

## From the GM

by Curt Webb — General Manager

What a great General Membership Meeting (GMM) we just had! According to a few long-time members' February 2008's GMM was among the best we've had. Aside from great food and wonderful company, we renewed an age-old form of participation. One we hope to continue on a regular basis. I'll get to that soon...

One of the primary goals of the Board and myself is to inform our decision-making, and ultimately the direction of our Co-op, based on input from our membership. Our work of late has been to find effective tools for gathering and disseminating this information, as Roger talks about in his piece. I'm going to focus on one aspect.

So, back to the GMM...just what happened that sparked this excitement? Well, in our call for agenda items for the 2008 GMM, we received a request for 15 minutes of open discussion, a forum as it were. And what a positive, enlightening 15-turned-30 minutes that turned out to be.

The ideas flowed, bounced around, evolved... from relocation to renovation to satellite stores, from healthy bodies to a healthy planet, from discounts to patronage rebates, from local to sustainable, from volunteering to donating, from composting to recycling, and from GMMs to board meetings to periodic forums.

That last idea is precisely what the board has been discussing: A

regular forum. A discussion group, rooted in Co-op actions, but encompassing (as it should, given the roots) our place, our world, our impact, our abilities to affect change for the better.

We hope to harness our critical mass and enthusiasm from within the Co-op where appropriate, and branching out where necessary. The Board is approaching this as a tool for finding the common vision for our long-term plans. I see it as a great resource for informing operational issues as well. For more details, contact Diane Miller at [dimiller@mtu.edu](mailto:dimiller@mtu.edu). ::

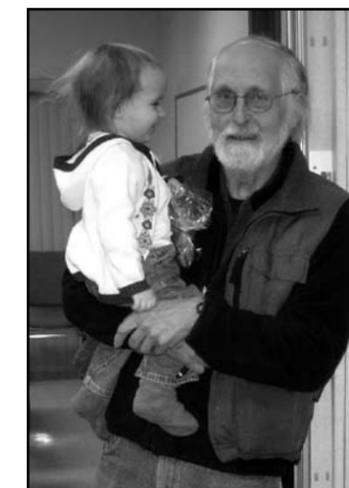


## Welcome New Board Members



*The Co-op member-owners elected three new board members at this year's General Membership Meeting (GMM). Featured from left to right: Cindy Drake, Rhiannon Schmidt (& Millie), and Nicole Helton. They will serve a three year term ending in 2011.*

## Sharing a moment before the GMM...



**Myrica Rajdl member since 2006  
 Vern Simula member since 1992**

## Practical Wellness

### Vitamin D: The Sunshine Vitamin

by Dr. Mischa Doman & Kemmy L. Taylor-Doman, D.C.

Emerging research indicates that vitamin D is more important to our health than previously thought, leading to an increasing number of scientists to challenge whether the fear of sun exposure has made us cover up too much. Vitamin D is one of the body's many control systems. It acts like an "emergency brake" that helps stop cells from misbehaving, as immune cells do when they cause such autoimmune diseases as multiple sclerosis and as breast and prostate cells do when they turn cancerous. This protection declines as vitamin D levels drop.

It has become evident lately that vitamin D deficiency appears to be quite common. A recent British study found that 87 percent of volunteers had low blood levels of the vitamin in winter and spring, and 61 percent had low levels in the summer and fall according to Linda B. White, M.D. One may ask, why the seasonal variation? In response to ultraviolet B (UVB) rays in sunlight, our skin transforms a derivative of cholesterol normally found in the skin into vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol). The liver, kidneys and other tissues further activate this molecule. The major biologic function of vitamin D is to maintain normal blood levels of calcium and phosphorus. Vitamin D promotes bone mineralization along with a number of other hormones, vitamins and minerals. It also aids in the absorp-

tion of calcium, helping to maintain strong bones and also helping to form bones.

According to well-known Boston University endocrinologist Dr. Micheal F. Holick global location and skin color affect the amount of vitamin D a person's skin manufactures. Melanin pigment protects the skin from the damage of UV rays but also lowers the skin's production of vitamin D. In the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Holick quantifies this effect: Fair skinned people who sunburn easily and rarely tan need just 2 to 10 percent as much sun exposure to produce a unit of vitamin D as do people with the darkest skin. UV intensity falls as one moves from the equator toward Earth's poles. Holick has found that from the latitude of San Francisco northward-or from Buenos Aires southward-for 3 to 6 months a year, no amount of exposure will generate substantial vitamin D in even the palest skin.

Important facts you want to know about vitamin D:

- The single best way for a person to get vitamin D is through sunlight exposure.
- Since natural sunlight cannot penetrate glass, you will not be generating vitamin D in your body sitting in your car or in front of a window.
- It is recommended that a person

strives for 800-1000iu of vitamin D per day.

- It is impossible to generate too much vitamin D from sunlight exposure because your body is intelligent and will self-regulate generating only what is necessary.
- Vitamin D3 is the preferable form of a vitamin D supplement. Vitamin D2 is only 20-40% as effective as vitamin D3 in maintaining serum concentrations of the vitamin. Nearly all of the prescription-based supplements use vitamin D2.
- For those living in northern climates, it is recommended to supplement vitamin D into their diets either through vitamin D supplements or high quality cod liver oil.. Vitamin D3 supplements are inexpensive and can be found at your Keweenaw Co-op.
- One would have to drink ten tall glasses of milk per day to reach the daily requirements for vitamin D. Even then you still may not achieve proper levels



of serum vitamin D because most milks, cereals and juices are fortified with vitamin D2.

- People with dark skin pigmentation may need much more exposure to sunlight as fair-skinned people to generate the same amount of vitamin D.

- Without vitamin D, your body cannot absorb calcium in your intestines, rendering calcium supplements useless.

- Even weak sunscreens (SPF 8) block your body's ability to generate vitamin D by 95%.

- There are many factors which must be considered determining your need for vitamin D supplementation. Those include: skin color, diet, age, geographic location and season/sunlight exposure.

- Regarding sunlight exposure, antioxidants greatly boost your body's ability to handle sunlight better. Superfruits like acai, pomegranates and blueberries act as "internal sunscreens" and allow you to stay under the sun longer without burning.

- Sufficient vitamin D prevents

prostate cancer, ovarian cancer, depression, colon cancer, breast cancer and schizophrenia.

- Vitamin D deficiency may make type 2 diabetes worse and impair insulin production in the pancreas.

A 2005 study published in the Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology explored the connection between vitamin D intake, serum vitamin D levels, and colorectal cancer. It concluded that individuals with vitamin D intake of 1000 IU or more daily or with serum vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D) levels of 33 ng/mL experienced a 50% lower risk of colorectal cancer.

Fibromyalgia is often misdiagnosed because its symptoms (muscle weakness, aches and pains) are similar to chronic vitamin D deficiency.

Dr. Michael Holick, one of the top vitamin D researchers in the world, suggests "optimal" serum levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D to be 45-50ng/ml or 115-128nmol/l and "normal" levels to be 20-56ng/mL or 50-140nmol/l.

One must be aware that harm can occur from excess vitamin D as well as deficiency. Taking vitamin D when it is not needed is potentially dangerous, no matter what form of vitamin D you may be taking. High doses of vitamin D may be necessary for some but

for others the same doses would be excessive in the short or long term.

Krispin Sullivan, a Clinical Nutrition Researcher and Clinical Nutritionist and considered by some to be one of the world's foremost expert on the relationship between vitamin D and human health, cautions against supplementing vitamin D improperly. She advises for safety purposes that you optimize your vitamin D levels with the help of a trained professional. Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin which means that it dissolves in fat. Fat-soluble vitamins are primarily stored in the liver and adipose tissue and generally are excreted more slowly than water-soluble vitamins. Due to this, fat-soluble vitamins, such as vitamin D, can accumulate in the liver and cause toxic effects in the body.

To prevent this, Sullivan recommends regular testing of serum levels of vitamin D throughout the year. She notes that there are different types of vitamin D testing: 1,25(OH) D and 25(OH)D. The 25(OH)D test (also called 25-hydroxyvitamin D) is the better marker of overall D status as it's most strongly associated with overall health. She also urges those who spend much time outdoors in the spring and summer months to not supplement vitamin D into their diet, as in the fall and winter months, since their bodies are producing it from natural sunlight anyway. ::

## Local Spotlight continued from page 1

**Faye:** I have heard some folks say Polish Fire is expensive!

**Ray:** I chuckle when I hear that. There are over 10 separate ingredients in Polish Fire, half are liquids and half are dried spices. I use the highest quality product I can find for each ingredient. The premium organic shoyu used in PF is available for half the price in a commercial non-organic brand, but it doesn't taste as good. The same holds true for the organic lemon juice, organic apple cider vinegar, and organic molasses. I buy the ingredients through the Co-op, Frontier Herbs and Eden Foods. Skimping on quality ingredients may reduce the cost, but it wouldn't be Polish Fire. I see folks paying premium prices for a high quality wine or beer that will be gone that same day. A bottle of PF will last you a long time. Big time PF fans may burn through a bottle in a couple weeks, but for most folks it lasts months and will enhance many meals.

**Faye:** What's your marketing strategy for Polish Fire?

**Ray:** Word of mouth and giving free bottles away. Outside of individual sales to friends and family, I market almost exclusively to co-ops. There is something special about the cooperative spirit. I love the Keweenaw Co-op. I joined in 1975 when I was go-



ing to nursing school at MTU. The other day when I was standing in line at the Deli I noticed a guy with a bottle of PF in his hand so I introduced myself. We had a real fun and lively exchange. He said he tells lots of folks about PF. Two other shoppers overheard our conversation and each grabbed a bottle of PF right then and there. It's this kind of fun, friendly, and sharing environment that makes PF a good fit for co-ops.

**Faye:** I see that Polish Fire is the official hot sauce of Earthwork Music, what's the connection?

**Ray:** Earthwork Music is a cooperative of talented young musicians in Michigan that was started by a dear friend of mine, Seth Bernard. My life is so much richer because of knowing and hanging out with this group and listening to their fine music. Their spirit, enthusiasm, attitude and love of life inspire me and give me hope for the future. They truly embody the "cooperative spirit". Over the years I have given a lot of Earthwork Music folks free Polish Fire as my way of giving something back to them. Polish Fire has even made it into the lyrics of one of their songs. When Seth asked to link PF to Earthwork Music I couldn't resist. We did a fun interview about Polish Fire on their website ([www.earthworkmusic.com](http://www.earthworkmusic.com)). ::

## Praise for Fedco Seeds

### A Co-operative Among Co-operatives

by Barbara Hardy — Fedco Fan

I first encountered Fedco Seeds at the Co-op. On first glance there is not much to grab one's attention. Their seeds are packaged in plain, matte white envelopes printed with a minimal amount of green ink, and stamped (often with

little concern for alignment) with a few words identifying the seeds within. No glossy, full color photographs promising bucolic vegetable gardens. No seductively simple planting and harvesting information. Not much of anything to at-

## FEDCO SEEDS



tract the novice gardener.

In fact, when I first heard the name "Fedco" it gave me the same queasy corporate feeling as "United Natural Foods" (the 600-pound

(...continued on page 10)



## Earth Friendly Eating Food Choices and the Environment

by Susan Burak — Member-owner

More and more our health is seen as tied to the health of the air, water, and soil.

What you eat makes a difference not only to your own health but to the health of our planet

Food, health, and saving the planet are connected.

Diet, agriculture, and environmental issues are connected.

Your decisions about what to eat affect the life support system of our planet.

Michael Pollan's latest book, *In Defense of Food* tells us in brief, "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

Shopping at the Co-op makes a difference.

Buy organically grown, pesticide free food, whole grains in bulk, locally grown, as much as possible.

Your food will have a smaller carbon footprint, less packaging, and less consumption of water, oil, pesticides, topsoil.

Eating with the earth in mind nurtures the environment as well as you.

Eating less meat is better for your health and better for the planet.

Our earth is a closed system. We need to be aware of the impact our food choices have on our own well being and that of the planet. ::

### New at the Co-op! Bulk Order Your Organic Gardening Supplies...



...order before May 5

We are currently stocking OMRI-listed organic-approved fertilizers and garden products. While we don't have the space to regularly stock bulk bags of fertilizers, soil amendments and soil mixes, we plan to do a group bulk order of those items this spring. **All orders must be placed by May 5** for late May delivery. (There will probably only be one order per season, so this is a good time to think ahead for next year's seed-starting, too!) A deposit will be required, and product must be picked up within one week of delivery. Regular bulk special order pricing will apply. This merchandise is shipped by freight truck from Oregon, and shipping costs will be passed along to purchasers. To see a product list or place an order, **please ask for Karen, who's available Monday-Friday until 3pm.**

## WELCOME!

We want to welcome the following new member-owners who joined the Co-op between December 20, 2007 and March 3, 2008

Cathy Banfield  
Larisa Pollard & Alex Manou  
James Godthe  
Monica & Russ Alger  
Derek & Iris Freridge  
Rick and Tiffany Maas-Berkey  
Jenny & Brian Gleichauf  
Lynn A. Spees  
Brenda Rudiger & Bill Musselman  
Alan & Marianne Brokow  
Max Henscell  
Maria & Rodney Johnson  
Lori & Cliff Christensen  
Dennis & Sue Stratton  
Gail & Dan Loosemore  
Pat & Clark Westman  
Mary & Kevin McRae Family  
Chris Duefrene, Andrea LaCasse  
& Diane Taylor  
Carrie Ann Krueger-Sackett, Haley  
Krueger & Justin Schaub  
Dennis & Judith Karvako Family  
Megan Gilge  
Elaine and Richard Oja  
Ashley Shackelford  
Kim Duffy  
Andrew Peterson & Karl Larson  
Janet & Tom Kinunen  
Christine & Ted Bier  
Evan Lloyd, Emily Allen  
& Ken Brooks  
Eric Nielsen  
Mary Lou Mooney  
Alayne & Shane Kangas  
Kathy & Jeff Mell  
Katie & Randy McKay  
Kevin & Amy Hoges  
Cynthia Weber  
& Wellesley Pereira  
Glenna & Thomas Sprague  
Ronald Sibbald

(...continued from page 8)

gorilla of the natural foods industry). It wasn't until later that I found out the "co" in Fedco stands for co-operative. It turns out Fedco is one of the few co-operative seed companies in the United States. Like the Keweenaw Co-op, Fedco Seeds grew out of the food co-operative movement of the 1970s. They started in 1978 as a project of the Maine Federation of Co-operatives, which also ran a co-operative food warehouse. Fedco stands for Federation of Cooperatives.

Being a cooperative is at the core of Fedco's identity. Consumers own 60% of the cooperative and worker members 40%. Consumer and worker members share proportionately in the profits through annual patronage dividends. Fedco's cooperative structure gives their workers a real voice in running the company and a real stake in its success, which they believe enables them to attract and retain talented workers. And with a significant proportion of their business coming from cooperative and group orders, and many of their procedures designed specifically to serve co-ops, they are a living model of the sixth co-operative principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives.

According to C.R. Lawn, the closest thing they have to a CEO, their business philosophy goes something like this: "The cooperative ethic recognizes that we are all in this together. What is good for our managers should be good for our workers and good for our customers and vice versa."

But being a model co-operative is just one of their many qualities worth praising. They are one of the

best sources for cold-hardy seed selections especially adapted to demanding Northeastern climates. They advocate sustainable growing methods and offer a large selection of certified organic cultivars and heirloom varieties. They are dedicated to seed quality and genetic diversity (see C.R. Lawn's reasons for seed saving on the following page). They are committed supporters of small farmers, and oppose



Lawn to fellow seed lovers, that Fedco is experiencing record sales—even amidst threats of recession. "Maybe it is impact of the record oil prices, the dawning of true acceptance of the possible consequences of global warming, the renewed interest in local foods inspired by Michael Pollan, Barbara Kingsolver, Slow Foods and others, whatever the reasons, we have not seen growth like this since Y2K. And while I knew back then that the cause was ephemeral, I have a very different feeling about this surge of interest."

Next time that need for seed hits you, I recommend checking them out. Their web address is [www.fedcoseeds.com](http://www.fedcoseeds.com) or you can snail mail them at P.O. Box 520, Waterville, ME 04903. Of course, we won't need store bought seed in a couple years when we all master seed saving and start a local seed exchange, right? ::

Drawings on page 10 and 11 are from Fedco's Spring 2008 catalog.

**(The Co-op will carry a selection of bulk seeds from Fedco this season including: bean, beet, pea, kale, squash, tomato, and more. Next season we plan on carrying their retail packet racks alongside High Mowing Seeds.)**

genetic engineering and corporate control and consolidation of the seed trade. And their catalogs, which at first glance hold about as much appeal as their seed packets, are full of wonderful artwork, wit, humor, wisdom, and quality information about their products—a must read. My only real problem with them is that they are in Maine instead of Michigan.

I was delighted to read in this year's annual letter, from C.R.

**Organic Gardening Class  
Saturday, April 26**

**Instructor: Kathy Halvorsen**

*see page 4...*

## Why Save Seeds?

### Seven Reasons from Fedco Founder C.R. Lawn

To renew your age-old partnership with plants. Seeds are the life force. Plants, as living beings, desire to reproduce. By allowing them to go to seed and complete their growth cycle, you cooperate in a process essential to all life forms on Earth.

To retain control of your food supply. Some things are too important to allow other people to do for you. Food is a basic necessity and the cornerstone of our culture. Control of the seed is key to control of our food supply. By saving seeds you retain that lifeline. Over the past two generations, the seed industry has done almost no work to maintain, improve or develop open-pollinated varieties that will come true from seed. What little has been done has been accomplished by dedicated amateur seed savers and breeders. We need more such people. Instead, the industry has emphasized hybrid varieties whose breeding lines are trade secrets and whose seed will not come true to type. Lately, biotechnology research has almost completely replaced classical plant breeding at our universities and in the seed industry.

To preserve our heritage and our biodiversity. Farmers saved seeds and improved food crops for millennia. Seed companies have been on the scene for fewer than three centuries. Only in the last hundred years have farmers and gardeners become widely dependent on seed companies. Today the seed

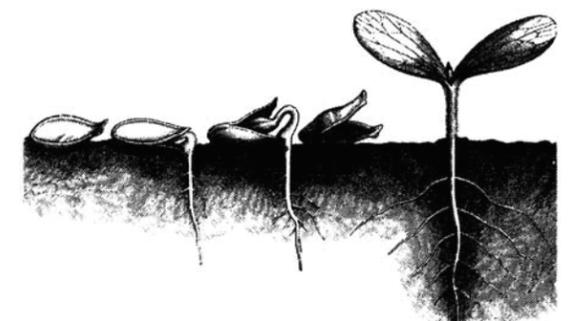
industry is so concentrated that just five large multinational corporations control 75% of the world's vegetable seed market. They add and drop varieties according to their own financial interests. Many of our present varieties have only one commercial source. If they are dropped, they will disappear and you won't be able to get them—unless you save seed.

To preserve the varietal characteristics you want. Most varieties being developed by the industry are for large-scale food processors and marketers. For the most part, they are bred for uniform ripening, long distance shippability, and perfect appearance at the expense of taste and staggered ripening. If you want the best-tasting varieties, save your own seed from the ones you like.

To develop and preserve strains adapted to your own growing conditions. The large corporations who control the seed trade bought out scores of small and regional seed companies and dropped many of the regional specialties. They are interested only in varieties with widespread adaptability. If you want varieties and strains most adaptable to your specific climate conditions, you can get them only by saving your own seed. Over several generations, seeds can develop very specific adaptabilities to the conditions at your site.

To help preserve our right to save seeds. The industry continues to place more and more restrictions on farmers' and gardeners' right to save seeds. Variety patenting, licensing agreements, and restricted lists such as that maintained by the European Union, are industry tools to wrest control of the seed from the commons and keep it for themselves. Terminator Technology, now in its developmental phase, would render seeds sterile, making it impossible for farmers to save seed and forcing users back to the seed companies for every new crop.

To increase our available options. Contrary to industry claims, patenting has not encouraged creative plant breeding. Instead it has reduced cooperation among plant breeders and restricted availability of germplasm and plant varieties. For example, Blizzard snow pea has been off the market for over a decade because the patent holder dropped it but will not grant permission to any other company to propagate it for sale. ::



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## Earth Day Festival at the **Calumet Theatre** **Saturday, April 19th**

5:00 Workshops • Demonstrations • Slideshows •  
Hand-made Goods • Refreshments  
7:00 Earthwork Music Concert

### Earthwork Concert featuring...

Seth Bernard & Daisy May  
Breathe Owl Breathe  
Jen Sygit  
Darlene  
Laura Bates  
Brandon Foote  
Chris Dorman  
Susan Fawcett  
Luke Winslow-King



General Admission tickets \$15  
Theatre Members \$13

Soup • Bread • Desserts • Beverages  
*Bring your own bowl and mug*

