

ADUs Offer Affordability and Modern Amenities

by Betsy Teutsch, for the Shuttle

A FEW YEARS BACK, JANE CHERNEY LOST HER 95-year-old mother and two others close to her in just 10 months. Solo living was lonely in her large Virginia home, so when her son and daughter-in-law urged her to relocate to Philly to be near them and her two grandkids, she took them up on it.

She now lives in the backyard of their stone Mt. Airy colonial after joining the growing accessory dwelling unit

club. Her three grandkids (one more arrived after the invitation was issued) visit her all the time, and she pitches in with childcare, thus creating a robust, multigenerational-mutual-support system. By downsizing, she's also lightened her home maintenance portfolio considerably.

Jane has managed a family construction and design business for over 40 years, so building an ADU was not



Photo by Betsy Teutsch

Jane Cherney in front of her accessory dwelling unit in West Mt. Airy.

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Community-Owned,
Open to Everyone

The Shuttle

MARCH 2025

Since 1973 | The Newspaper of Weavers Way Co-op

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Council, Local Advocates Push Through UN Resolution To Promote Co-ops

by Corey Reidy and Mo Manklang, for the Shuttle



Photo courtesy of Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance.

Members of Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance and the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, along with members of City Council, gather outside council chambers on Feb. 6.

PHILADELPHIA BECAME THE FIRST U.S. city to sign on to the UN's resolution to declare 2025 the International Year of the Cooperative after City Council approved the measure, Feb. 6.

The resolution, which was spearheaded by council member Nic O'Rourke alongside primary cosponsor Cindy Bass, calls on the city to explore all options to support the development and resilience of local cooperative businesses. Sixteen of the 17 council members voted for it.

Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance and the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives worked collaboratively with O'Rourke's team to pass the resolution, which states in part that cooper-

atives "promote the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of local communities" and "contribute to the eradication of poverty and hunger."

During the hearing, Janet Filante, a worker-owner at Childspace Centers, a member of PACA, thanked City Council for voting to recognize the Year of the Co-op.

"Because the interests of the owners and workers are the same, Childspace has always been a strong advocate for worker rights and advancing the early education field," she said. "We appreciate any continuing support you can provide."

If you want to get involved in ef-

(Continued on Page 6)

Farmers Connect and Share Strategies at 34th Annual PASA Conference in Lancaster

by Akiva Woods, Henry Got Crops (Saul) Farm Manager

EVERY YEAR, THE WEAVERS Way Farm Team season kicks off with the Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Lancaster. Now in its 34th year, the PASA conference brings together researchers, community leaders, educators, policymakers and farmers for three days of learning and connection over sustainable agriculture and, of course, food!

Highlights from this year's conference included the triumphant return of our trivia team, the Kanamachi Kids (named for our favorite heirloom Japanese salad turnip variety), meetups for our new farm apprentices, and sessions in which we learned about everything from hickories and hazelnuts to a panel all about our favorite fruit, the pawpaw. We connected with other Philly growers to talk about land access, sang karaoke with dairy grazers, and discussed soil aggregate stability with soil scientists over lunch.

The diversity of attendees at the conference was astounding. They included rural and urban growers and farmers who raise vegetables, flowers, fruits, nuts, mushrooms, seeds and all kinds of livestock. There were even some international attendees!

This was You-Pick Manager Alé's Lomanto's third year in attendance. He thinks he learns a lot from the conference every year.



The Weavers Way Farm Team at this year's PASA conference in Lancaster.

"This year, I learned a lot about agroforestry, which feels newer to me and exciting!" he said. "I learned that Shagbark Hickory nuts are made up of 80% oil and their tannins are water soluble, which means that we can press them into oil and lose a lot of the astringency through the process. They're also native to eastern North America and are abundant around Philadelphia, making them a sustainable alternative to some of our go-to oils."

This year was particularly special, because we were able to give back to the conference with a session of our own. Jess Schweiger, our orchard manager, also works for Penn State and conducts research as part of its urban soils project. The project sampled farms and community gardens across Philadelphia to investigate soil health. In a presentation entitled "Too Much of a Good Thing: Compost,

(Continued on Page 6)



NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR WEAVERS WAY CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members may vote online beginning on April 1 through or before May 18, 2025. Voting ends 30 minutes after the Weavers Way Spring General Membership Meeting begins.

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Editor's Note

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle



BY THE TIME THIS SHUTTLE DROPS, it will be just shy of three weeks since the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Kansas City Chiefs to win Super Bowl LIX. Still feel a little glow-y, Birds fans? I do, even as our basketball team circles the drain and the Phillies kick off their season after last year's disappointing finale.

In non-Sports Land, March is basically here, bringing more daylight and (we hope) milder temperatures. Some of our content this month reflects that, including a story on the bike tour from Temple University's main campus to its Ambler campus in late April (p.8). On page 13, "The Great Foodscape" columnist Boris Kerzner dives into the debate about raised bed vs. in-ground gardening, and on page 14, Ruffian Tittmann, executive director of Friends of the Wissahickon, extols the virtues of spring birdwatching in the Wissahickon.

On p.16, Lauren Tilghman, a student studying horticulture at W.B. Saul Agricultural High School in Roxborough, offers her viewpoint on the value of local farms. I think community gardens and urban farms are pockets of sanity in our chaotic world, so knowing that someone from more than a generation behind me feels likewise is a hopeful sign.

On p. 20, Mike Bennett of "The Backyard Beet" column talks up the components of a successful garden system. All you need are soil, sun, water, and infrastructure, (a.k.a fencing). Focus on those, and you'll have a productive season.

I admit that I'm itching to get back to the garden after a knee injury sidelined me last summer. But I also want to be mindful of Marsha Low's advice to pull back on a big outdoor cleanup for the sake of our beneficial insects (Eco Tip, p. 17). Insect populations have declined by about 45% in the last 40 years, and I bet even the bug haters among us will understand that's not good. So let's do them a solid and take our time with mulching, leaf removal and the rest.

Happy almost spring! Catch you in the pages next month.

The Shuttle is published by Weavers Way Cooperative Association.

Statement of Policy

The purpose of the Shuttle is to provide information about co-ops, healthful food and other matters of interest to Weavers Way members as consumers and citizens.

Weavers Way members are welcome to submit articles (about 500 words) and letters to the editor (200 words) on subjects of interest to the Co-op community.

No anonymous material will be published; all submissions must include an email or phone number for verification. The Shuttle retains the right to edit or refuse any article or letter. Submit to editor@weaversway.coop. Articles and letters express the views of the writers and not those of the Shuttle, the Co-op or its board, unless identified as such.

Advertising

Advertising for each issue is due the 1st of the preceding month, e.g., Dec. 1 for January. Ad rates are online at www.weaversway.coop/shuttle, or call 215-843-2350, ext. 314, or email advertising@weaversway.coop. Advertised products or services may not be construed as endorsed by Weavers Way Co-op.



To see the back page pick up the Co-op Finds flyer in our stores or view on our website: www.weaversway.coop/pages/deals

weavers way COOP THIS MONTH'S Co-op FINDS

WED, MAR 5 TO TUES, APR 1, 2025

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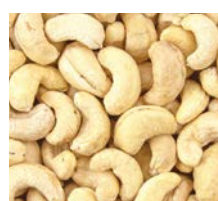
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*Sales good while supplies last. | Ambler • Chestnut Hill • Germantown • Mt. Airy | Open daily 8am-8pm

No further member discounts apply.



Sumac – The Sequel



When ground, these dried red berries become a common culinary spice that's often used in Middle Eastern and Persian cuisine. The flavor is tart and earthy, and it delivers lemony brightness to many dishes. It is not to be confused with poison sumac.

Sumac can be added to vinaigrettes or sprinkled over a salad when seasoning your greens. Even a barebones hummus can be jazzed up with a sprinkle. It's easy to add to spice blends like za'atar or as part of a dry rub for chicken, lamb or fish.

Sumac is a perfect way to add dry acidity and tartness to a dish without the liquid component of lemon juice or vinegar. It can make cooked grains or steamed and roasted vegetables pop with flavor.

Sumac can work especially well as a finishing touch, along with salt, on fried foods. Use it to

brighten up french fries, fried chicken or fritters, or toss it into a bowl of popcorn for a zesty twist.

Sumac can also be brewed into an original 'pink lemonade' with dried or fresh foraged berries. Be sure to be safe while foraging and use trusted guidebooks, or rely on the knowledge of experienced foragers.

Because sumac is in the same family as cashews and mangos, it can cause a cross-reactivity response in sensitive individuals.

the word on wellness

Connectedness and Community Are Vital to Our Health

by Karen Palmer, Weavers Way Ambler Wellness Buyer

LATELY, I’VE BEEN REFLECTING ON HOW MUCH community shapes our well-being. I have a portable office in the Ambler store and set up in the café to work. I meet so many folks in that space and overhear endless tales from our shoppers as they share their lives with one another. Our stores are safe spaces that enable people to cultivate relationships; they are a de facto support system for so many.

I’ve seen firsthand how having a strong support system can make all the difference in navigating life’s toughest challenges. And I’ve experienced what happens when that support isn’t there — the isolation, the weight of carrying burdens alone, the slow unraveling of motivation and resilience.

We often talk about health in terms of diet, exercise or mindfulness, but one of the most underrated factors in well-being is connection. Research has shown that people with strong social ties live longer, have lower stress levels and recover more quickly from illness. Community provides validation, accountability and encouragement. It reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles.

But what happens when that sense of community is lost? Life transitions, conflicts or unexpected events can sever ties and leave us feeling disconnected. Many experienced this during the pandemic, when isolation became the norm. Others lose community due to divorce, job changes, financial struggles or personal hardships that make it hard to maintain relationships.

I’ve been thinking about how to rebuild community when it feels out of reach. It requires intentionality, seeking out spaces where we feel seen and valued. That

may be a workout group, a book club, a faith community or a deepening of existing friendships. It means showing up, even when doing so makes us feel vulnerable. And sometimes, it means being the one to extend the first invitation.

The Co-op is one of the places where I see community thriving. It’s more than a grocery store: It serves as what sociologists call a “third place” — a gathering space outside of home and work where people can connect, share ideas and build relationships.

Our stores are hubs for connection, where neighbors support local farmers, swap recipes in the aisles, and build relationships around shared values of sustainability, wellness and cooperation. The Co-op offers a variety of classes and events designed to bring people together, whether through a cooking workshop, a nutrition seminar or hands-on wellness training. These gatherings create opportunities to learn and connect and remind us that we cultivate our well-being together.

Healing happens in relationships, whether through a casual chat at the Co-op, a friend who checks in regularly or a group that shares common values. These moments of connection remind us that we are part of something bigger. They keep us anchored when life feels uncertain.

I invite you to ask yourself: Who is in your community? Who lifts you up, and how can you strengthen those connections? If you’re feeling disconnected, take one small step today: Visit one of our stores or sign up for one of our events, reach out to a friend or join a group that aligns with your interests. Because in the end, our well-being isn’t just what we do with other people.

Spring Program Series at Morris Focuses on Beneficial Yard Care



Learn how to create a wildlife pond with WW Co-op member and Mt. Airy neighbor John Janik, owner of Good Host Plants.

MORRIS ARBORETUM AND GARDENS IN CHESTNUT Hill is offering a series of courses this month that focus on how homeowners can transform their garden, yard or outdoor space into a thriving ecosystem that nurtures and supports a diverse range of plants, animals and insects.

The series will guide participants through actionable steps to attract beneficial species, including pollinators and amphibians, as well as how to choose native plants. Additional topics will include guidance on improving soil health, conserving water, reducing the need for chemical additives and adopting land-care techniques that support local wildlife.

The first program in the series, “How Can I Help? Saving Nature with Your Yard” on Mar. 11 is a lecture and discussion with New York Times bestselling author Doug Tallamy, who has a new book coming out this April. He will invite attendees into a deep discussion about concrete ways we can make a positive environmental impact.



photo by Rob Cardillo

Doug Tallamy, bestselling author of Nature’s Best Hope.

Almost every day, Tallamy gets email from people who have read his books and heard his talks but still have questions about ecological land care. He will address as many of these queries as he can and leave time for attendees to pose their own. His answers will further motivate and inform us in our desire to restore ecosystem function where we live, work, play, worship and garden.

On Mar. 18, Weavers Way Co-op member John Janik, owner of Mt. Airy’s Good Host Plants Native Plant Nursery, will host an online program on how to add a wildlife pond to your home landscape. In addition to being a beautiful and peaceful addition to your yard, a pond can provide an important ecological habitat, as well as natural mosquito control. Wildlife ponds attract frogs, toads and dragonflies — all of which eat mosquitos and mosquito larvae.

Other events in the Bringing Nature Home series include workshops on gardening for monarch butterflies, attracting hummingbirds and more. For more information, visit morrisarboretum.org/learn-discover.

Did You Know?

An Auto Club Morphs into an Arts and Cultural Center

Automobile Club of Germantown
6815 Emlen St.
Built: 1894
Architectural Style: Mediterranean
Architect: Joseph H. Huston



THE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF GERMANTOWN IS now known as the Commodore John Barry Arts and Cultural Center. The building is in the Pelham District of West Mt. Airy and was built for an estimated \$11,000. John Huston is also known for being the architect of the State Capitol Building in Harrisburg.

The residents of Pelham established the club as a place to socialize in 1905. It was built across the street from the Carpenter Lane train station and featured large rooms for social events, smaller rooms for card games, a pool, bowling alley and a 24-car garage complete with a full-time mechanic. In 1936, the building became the first home to the Germantown Jewish Center, and in January 1958, it became the Commodore Barry Society, Inc.

The goal of the West Mt Airy Neighbors Historic Preservation Initiative is to identify and protect the character-defining features of the community by taking a proactive stance to recognize and protect the historic built environment for the future. For more information, contact wmanhpi@gmail.com.

—Adrienne Carpenter

Buy 10 and the 11th is on the Co-op!



Pick up a Weavers Way sandwich and bowl card from a cashier.



Students Will Hit Hill Streets to Learn Low Vision Navigation Skills

by Kinshasa A. Coghill, for the Shuttle

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN CHESTNUT HILL THIS SUMMER, you may notice groups of young adults wearing sleep shades and navigating Germantown Avenue with long white canes. They're students in Salus at Drexel University's blindness and low-vision studies programs, and they'll be donning their equipment as part of their summer residency to put into practice the theories and concepts learned from most of their online curriculum.

The school's programs combine distance learning with on-campus residencies and extensive fieldwork experiences. Hands-on training and interprofessional collaboration are pillars of all Salus/Drexel programs and ensure that graduates are prepared for work in their fields.

Salus's blindness and low vision studies department, located in Elkins Park, prepares professionals for careers in this growing and impactful field. According to 2023 statistics from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals, approximately 15 million people will be living with moderate to severe vision loss by 2030.

The school is the first and only institution in the country to offer four master's degree programs and certificates in blindness and low vision studies: low vision rehabilitation, orientation and mobility, teacher of students with visual impairments, and vision rehabilitation therapy.

Students in the master of science and certificate programs in orientation and mobility will use constant-contact cane techniques. They'll gently move their long white canes, which feature a reflective shaft, red bottom and marshmallow or jumbo ball tip, side to side the width of their shoulders without ever lifting the tip off the ground in a windshield wiper like motion. In doing so, they will learn, practice and teach the skills they will one day use as orientation and mobility specialists.

Chestnut Hill makes a great learning environment for these skills because the residential side streets of Anderson, East Meade and Ardleigh have reduced vehicular traffic, which will allow students to develop basic street-crossing skills. They'll do a deeper dive into using nonvisual strategies to understand the complexities of today's intersections by continuing to the busier streets of East Evergreen and West Gravers Lane. By walking along sidewalks and standing at corners, students can feel the sidewalk change as it transitions into the street. They'll be able to analyze traffic sounds and learn about intersection geometry.

As one of Philadelphia's oldest streets, Germantown Avenue provides environmental flow information and different intersection categories. For example, Germantown and East Evergreen Avenue is a dogleg, or skewed, intersection, in which the streets don't match up. Orientation and mobility specialist trainees learn additional street crossing strategies such as positioning yourself at an intersection for a straight-line approach and reorienting yourself after crossing.

Philadelphia neighborhoods provide aspiring orientation and mobility specialists with real world experience that's crucial for developing critical thinking skills and problem solving. Down the line, this experience can help them teach best practices for crossing simple and complex intersections by listening for when the movement of cars parallel to their path at the corner indicates that the pedestrian has the green light. The students' co-



Photo by Anne Intartaglia.

A future orientation and mobility specialist learns street crossing skills as she waits for vehicles to go from idle to a surge along Germantown Avenue in 2017. Behind her is Dr. Fabiana Perla, director of the blindness and low vision studies program at Salus at Drexel University.

orts teach and learn alongside them as they board public transportation and explore the community under sleep shades or goggles. Both simulate what a person living with macular degeneration or glaucoma might see as they travel to various places.

Schedule a presentation by contacting me at kc3835@drexeluniversity.edu. To learn more about the blindness and low vision studies programs, visit www.salus.edu/academics/dept-of-international-and-continuing-education/low-vision-rehabilitation-programs.

Kinshasa A. Coghill is a recruiter for the blindness and low vision studies programs at Salus at Drexel University.

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The Weavers Watcher

Cultures Collide, Compete and Coalesce in 'East Side Sushi'

by Jana Marie Rose, for the Shuttle

I HADN'T HEARD OF "EAST SIDE SUSHI" (2014) until it showed up as a suggested film on my Amazon Prime account this past month. I began eating sushi in 2020, when a friend suggested her favorite sushi restaurant as our monthly outing. I have loved its wholesomeness ever since (California and salmon rolls, please!), which is perhaps why it felt like such a great weeknight movie.

This debut film, directed by Anthony Lucero (who is also a poet and visual effects editor) is probably one of the sweetest, if not the sweetest, movie I have ever seen. Which is ironic, because all the food is savory.

"East Side Sushi" is about a single mom with a knack for cooking who works menial jobs until she develops a passion for making sushi. Juana (Diana Elizabeth Torres) lives in Los Angeles and runs her own food truck. Unfortunately, she's left vulnerable to theft because she's a woman and works alone on the job. She needs medical benefits because she has a young daughter, and she lives with her father, who also works for low pay.

Juana applies to an opening for a sous chef in a sushi restaurant because it offers medical benefits. While the owners are skeptical about her ability to get the hang of making sushi, they care mostly that she is dedicated and diligent. Her passion for cooking and food in general leads her to develop an interest in eating sushi the right way and creating her own sushi rolls infused with Mexican flair. She practices at home and adds a sacredness to the process of handling and making the food. She even develops a friendship with the

lead chef at the restaurant, Aki (Yutaka Takeuchi), who guides her on the dos and don'ts of eating sushi. (He's also pretty darn handsome.)

While money is a struggle for Juana and her father as they raise her daughter after her mom's death, this movie is not mired in any sense of victimhood about having a marginalized status in the United States. Rather, it is about a person cultivating and maintaining her passion for her talent and recognizing that success requires flexibility and assertiveness. Juana loves the Mexican food she has grown up with, but knows that regardless of cultural background, food has the power to bring people together. She also has a deep belief in her ability to be successful.

"East Side Sushi" was clearly made on a low budget, but the loving care of each scene and the vibrant, personable acting of Torres keep the viewer hooked. We keep wanting to know more. Is a Latina woman really going to become a chef at a sushi restaurant? Can she really make good sushi? Will people let her excel?

While the United States currently faces fierce political divides and challenges, it is a land full of diversity and majesty. One night, a few months after I moved into my apartment in Philadelphia, I felt the poignancy of cultures coalescing in a kind of artistic and flavorful symphony. I was reading a book by an author from the Dominican Republic, ordering Indian food, teaching daily at an inner-city public school and viewing paintings from Asia and France. With this



breadth and depth of our collective identity, perhaps we can take time to marvel at the resilience of people from all over the world, including ourselves, to move past our current challenges.

By showing how a Mexican American woman finds her way to a Japanese restaurant and develops a love of craft food from another country, this film helps us appreciate and celebrate the possibilities within our culture, our relationships and in film. So many filmmakers want to do something that has never been done before. Unfortunately, a lot of them veer into violence or gratuitous sex, certain kinds of language, impressive martial arts or special effects to impress the audience.

"East Side Sushi" wows us by depicting the sweetness of relationships, the importance of willpower, and the respect for different cultures in modern Los Angeles. It is not our outer identity or where our family comes from that solely determines where we will go in life. Rather, it is the light we carry, the compassion we have for others, and our determination to succeed despite any setbacks.

"East Side Sushi" wows us by depicting the sweetness of relationships, the importance of willpower, and the respect for different cultures in modern Los Angeles. It is not our outer identity or where our family comes from that solely determines where we will go in life. Rather, it is the light we carry, the compassion we have for others, and our determination to succeed despite any setbacks.

Jana Marie Rose is a writer, teacher, occasional performer and reiki practitioner. She has published a book for young women along with several short stories, and she writes about film weekly on her blog, The Ms. Wonderful Film Club (mswonderfulfilm.substack.com). You can find out more about her on her website: www.janamarirose.com.



As part of the Co-op's efforts to reduce our use of single-use plastic, customers can purchase certain items in reusable containers.

There are a variety of containers available, with different deposits required.

Total Containers by Department (February 9, 2025)

Store	Prep	Deli	Bulk	Produce	Beauty & Topical Remedies	Grand Total
Ambler	5,368	1,292	2,216	3,907	0	12,783
Chestnut Hill	6,504	2,067	1,817	0	16	10,404
Mt. Airy	2,895	1,657	2,742	0	1	7,295
Germantown	0	0	76	0	0	76
Totals Sold	14,767	5,016	6,851	3,907	17	30,482
Deposits Refunded						19,261
Return Rate						63%

How the Container Refund Program Works

1. Look for labels with a CRP logo on our shelves.
2. Buy the item – the cost of the container is tied to the product.
3. Once it's empty, wash the returnable item and take it to the Co-op; you'll get the cost of the container refunded. All CRP lids and containers must be returned fully prewashed and free of food residue.
4. Return containers in a timely fashion to prevent the Co-op from needing to keep buying more stock, and please do not write on or sticker CRP items.
5. Spread the word to family and friends, so they can help save the Earth, too!



A program run by Echo Systems with support from the Weavers Way Plastic Reduction Task Force

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AI Praise in Wellness Column Leaves Out Concerns

KAREN PALMER'S ENTHUSIASTIC praise of AI in the January-February Shuttle ("How AI Technology Can Enhance Wellness and Connectedness with Community") leaves out some critical issues.

- The environmental impact of AI is staggering. It is an energy glutton of truly gargantuan proportions and has profoundly negative impacts on the consumption of fossil fuels and water use. These impacts have tended to fall most heavily on vulnerable populations.
- AI raises significant ethical and labor issues. It has been trained on the work of authors (and you) who have never been asked for the use of their work—much less compensated.
- AI has structural prejudices. I tried it out, and although it was fun, one of the first things I discovered was that while AI overtly expressed conventional centrist liberal positions about Blackness, it

consistently refused to use identifiably Black syntax and diction because "that would not be respectful." This is only one symptom of a pervasive downgrading and stigmatization of non-white voices in AI.

I have left out all the issues with AI in education, including that significant increases in cheating have taken place with its advent. It discourages independent thinking, and as computer scientists at my university have pointed out to me, it is designed to synthesize dominant views—in short, to reproduce conventional thinking. That is not how knowledge or wisdom increases.

This is only a small sample of the issues with AI. Try the free models. Play with them. Test them. Find their weaknesses and prejudices. But weigh whatever virtues you find against its environmental, ethical and labor issues.

Anne Norton

There Are No Positives to Road Salt Usage

I APPRECIATED THE ARTICLE IN THE last Shuttle about the downsides of road salt: How it damages infrastructure and vehicles, harms the environment, worsens drinking water quality and entails enormous expense ("Balancing the Need for Road Salt with Protecting Streams, Drinking Water," Jan.-Feb. 2025). But to mention upsides as well? There are none. The one supposed benefit of safety is only an upside if you accept the ridiculous transportation and lifestyle choices our society has made.

We're absurdly overreliant on automobiles. Why not bring back trolleys? That would entail some ice mitigation, but nothing like what we do now. For the remaining car usage, put chains on tires. Use snowmobiles. Maybe cars should be built like snowmobiles; perhaps they could convert from snow to snowless modes by pulling a lever. I'm not a mechanical engineer, but it doesn't sound too difficult.

And why does everything have to be so far away? We could travel much

less if commercial and residential establishments were combined better. We also don't need to live in a boot camp sort of world with 9 to 5, Monday through Friday regimentation, in which we always have to be somewhere at a certain time.

Why not schedule our lives more in accordance with the weather? Stay home, slow down. I walk on snow and ice all the time; I just do it carefully. I also have these little gizmos, like steel coils around elastic, that slip over my shoes and let me walk on the most slippery of surfaces with confidence.

This path we're on stinks. Snow is a fact of life. What other aspects of nature are we going to fight senselessly? Too cloudy out? Let's send up massive heaters on the space shuttle to disperse the clouds. I'm sure Elon Musk could save us somehow from the horror of cloudy days. Then they can be banished the way we banish snow and ice. What could go wrong?

Fred Kittlemann

I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WEAVERS Way stores, employees and members were supportive of environmentally friendly policies and actions. That's why I was surprised and annoyed to read a column in the January-February issue of the Shuttle ("How AI Technology Can Enhance Wellness and Connectedness with Community") extolling the virtues of AI technology.

AI is known to use massive amounts

of energy—so much that Microsoft will take over the Three Mile Island nuclear plant to power its AI and cloud computing programs. Many believe that any gains against global warming are being erased by AI expansion.

The really annoying part of the column is that most of the activities the writer suggests using AI for can easily be achieved in a more environmentally friendly way. Why not talk with an actu-

al human being to learn about gardening, sewing or journaling? Is it so difficult to read a book or an article about something you want to learn? Go to a used bookstore; you'll be amazed at the great finds there.

Turning to an app if you're lonely, as the article suggests, seems counterproductive. Perhaps if you're lonely, you can opt for actual human connection.

Ellie Reader

SHUTTLE LETTERS POLICY

The Shuttle welcomes letters of interest to the Weavers Way community. Send to editor@weaversway.coop. The deadline is the 10th of the month prior to publication. Include a name and email address or phone number for verification; no anonymous letters will be published. Letters should be 200 words or less and may be edited. The Shuttle reserves the right to decline to publish any letter.

Council, Local Advocates Push Through UN Resolution To Promote Co-ops

(Continued from Page 1)

forts to promote the growth of co-ops in the Philadelphia area, email policy@philadelphia.coop. If you want to donate to support PACA's policy and advocacy work, visit <https://philadelphia.coop/donate/>.

Corey Reidy is co-op development

director at Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance. Mo Manklang is senior director of government relations for the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives.

Farmers Connect and Share Strategies at 34th Annual PASA Conference

(Continued from Page 1)

Soil Nutrients and Watershed Health," we combined this research with our practical strategies for managing nutrients on small farms.

Jess presented Penn State's research on urban soil management and discussed the problems with amendment overapplication on soil and watershed health. We then presented our farm as a case study. We shared details about its structure and history, then discussed our soil management strategies, including regular soil testing, reduced compost use, leaf mulch application, cover cropping and the ecological benefits of no-till farming.

We also shared methods to maximize bed space, including intercropping, shoulder plantings and strategic planning.

These approaches can help others grow more food in limited space and also offset the excess phosphorus found in overly enriched soils.

Overall, the presentation and conference were a success. Senior Farm Manager Alessandro Ascherio also commented on the diversity of growers, which allows them to learn from each other. "This event perennially recharges my curiosity, motivation and drive to participate in the community and food system as a farmer," he said.

With our 2025 season just getting started, we are already looking forward to getting to regather and reflect again at the next PASA conference.

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Buckle Up — A Reno of the Chestnut Hill Store is in Our Future

by Jon Roesser, Weavers Way General Manager

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IN MAY WE WILL CELEBRATE the 15th anniversary of the opening of our Chestnut Hill store. Time flies when you're having fun.

For nostalgic types, in May, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, Apple released the first ever iPad, and Spain was about to win the World Cup. Jalen Hurts was 11 years old.

Opening the Chestnut Hill store was a herculean endeavor. I was the Co-op's human resources manager at the time and was responsible for hiring the new store's staff. It was a comparatively easy job, with the country still shaking off the Great Recession and the unemployment rate at 9.9%.

The Co-op's general manager, Glenn Bergman, sweated the details associated with buying and renovating a building in serious disrepair, getting the new store designed and opened and navigating the cultural changes associated with expanding beyond our historic home at Carpenter Lane and Greene Street.

The new store was a runaway success from Day One, with sales far exceeding expectations and membership doubling. Its success allowed us to complete badly needed upgrades to the Mt. Airy store a couple years later and positioned us for the further growth we've experienced over the last decade.

Like any 15-year-old, the Chestnut Hill store finds rambunctious ways of getting our attention. Sewer lines periodically back up. Roof and foundation leaks are common. Above all, we are experiencing more equipment failures, as most of the store's refrigerated cases reach the end of their life cycle.

All of this was anticipated. So a comprehensive renovation of the Chestnut Hill store was incorporated into our long-term strategic plan, which was rolled out a little more than a year ago.

Over the last few months, we've taken the first steps in what will be a many-step, multi-year project. How long it will take, and how much it will cost, will

“**The new store was a runaway success from Day One.**”

ultimately depend on a variety of factors.

We've engaged the services of Revisions Architects, the same firm we used last year for our Germantown store. They are currently working on a master plan that will lay out the project in three phases.

Phase One will focus on the unglamorous but necessary work associated with weatherproofing the building, including improvements to the foundation, roof, exterior walls and windows. This work may commence as soon as this fall and take between six and nine months. During Phase One, there should be little to no impact on customers.

Phase Two is mechanical: upgrades and improvements to the building's plumbing, electrical, sewer and HVAC systems. Again, not glamorous, but future generations of Co-op members will benefit.

Phase Three is the fun stuff — the renovation of the store itself. Some of the Phase Three work might take place while the store is open, resulting in disruption to normal shopping routines. Count on lots of “Pardon Our Appearance” signage.

It is also likely that at some point, Phase Three will involve a temporary store closure. We did this when we renovated the Mt. Airy store, which allowed the work to get done a whole lot faster than if we had tried to keep

the store partially open.

We'd time any store closure to coincide with the slower summer months, possibly in the summer of 2026, but more likely in 2027. We're fortunate to have our three other stores, plus the Saul farm market, to give our shoppers alternatives.

The renovation will allow us to address some of the store's design flaws, including the checkout experience and the bottleneck around the rear entrance. It will also give us the opportunity to add badly needed space to certain departments, including frozen foods and bulk.

All of this is going to cost somewhere around a gazillion dollars.

Our cash position is currently strong, about \$4 million, which is more than we need for normal operations. But maintaining liquidity is prudent, given the uncertain near-term economic outlook. Until things settle down, we shouldn't commit too much of our cash reserves.

Regrettably, an unsexy project like renovating a grocery store doesn't easily attract grant money, though that won't stop us from trying. So the most likely financing vehicle is good old fashioned borrowing.

Having just opened our Germantown store, our current debt-to-equity is a bit high, which will limit our ability to borrow in the short term. As we pay down debt, we'll be better positioned to borrow again. We are still a couple of years away from the most expensive parts of the project, so we've got some time.

If we've learned anything over these last 15 years, it's that these projects always take longer, and cost more, than anyone could possibly imagine. I keep a roll of Tums in my briefcase for a reason.

We've also learned that investments like this are absolutely worthwhile and necessary to ensure our long-term success. So here we go!

See you around the Co-op.

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Bike Tour Will Showcase Temple's Greener Connections

by James F. Duffy, for the Shuttle

SEAN STAROSTA VIEWS THE WORLD IN A DIFFERENT way than those who get to where they're going by car, bus or train. For that group, the points in between whiz by like an afterthought.

Starosta is lead administrative specialist with Temple University's Office of the Provost and one of the lead coordinators for the university's Bike Tour, which returns for its second year on Apr. 27 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. They experience most of their daily journeys on a bike.

"It's how I move around in the world," they said. "I bike to work. I sometimes ride my bike to my parents, who live near Ambler — I'll take the route we have planned for the bike tour. I see so much that I would miss traveling in a different way. There's freedom and adventure to it — it's seeing the world in a way you wouldn't otherwise."

Event organizers hope participants will experience that same sense of wonder during the tour. According to Dr. Vicki Lewis McGarvey, vice provost for University College and director of Temple Ambler, the goal is to have as many bicyclists as possible — from within and outside the university — join and see firsthand how connections can be made between the city and its surroundings.

Last year's event, which attracted 125 cyclists, will be hosted by Temple Ambler, the university's Office of Sustainability and the Office of the Provost. The tour will begin at Temple's Diamond Street parking lot in North Philly and end at the Ambler campus. It covers 22 miles, including the greenway through Fairmount Park, Wissahickon Valley Park's Forbidden Drive and Fort Washington State Park. Sponsors of the event include Temple Health Chestnut Hill Hospital and Fox Chase Cancer Center.

According to Richard Newell, president and CEO of Temple Health, "the goals of the bike tour "line up very well with what we are trying to do to promote healthy living." He plans to be among the cyclists that day.

"At every bike race or tour I've been a part of — whether through sponsorship or participation — the events also get a lot of the community out to cheer the cyclists on, which is getting them outside walking and moving as well," he said. "The socialization, the relationship building, it encompasses all of the different things that [Chestnut Hill Hospital] tries to do in terms of being a good partner for the community."

At the finish line, all are invited to a celebration featuring activities for the whole family, information from sponsors, and tours showcasing the unique experiences available at Temple Ambler. The celebration will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is free, but registration is required.

The cost for the tour is \$35 for general riders and \$15 for Temple students. Early bird registration (\$30) ends on Mar. 24. Funds raised during the tour will support Temple Ambler's continued tornado recovery efforts and such initiatives as educational programming, research, outdoor wellness and the 187-acre Ambler Arboretum, which is open to the public.

For more information, to become an event sponsor or to register, visit <https://ambler.temple.edu/biketour>.

James F. Duffy is content manager at Temple University Ambler.



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Temple Health
 Chestnut Hill Hospital

Raise a Glass and Do Good with an Ales for Trails Passport

by Gabrielle Fatula, Wissahickon Trails Communications Manager

IF YOU LOVE CRAFT BEVERAGES AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS, Wissahickon Trails has the perfect way to combine both: the Ales for Trails Passport. This unique initiative supports local conservation while giving you the chance to explore some of the area's best breweries, cideries and distilleries, all while enjoying free drinks along the way.

The passport costs \$50 and grants holders one complimentary item at each of nine participating locations. Passports are valid until Nov. 30, which gives you plenty of time to sip, explore and make a difference.

Exclusive perks of the passport at each location are as follows:

- Chestnut Hill Brewing Co.: Free 12-ounce pour
- Widow's Peak Distilling (Ambler): free signature cocktail
- Round Guys Brewing Company (Lansdale): Free 12-ounce pour
- Stone & Key Cellars (Ambler): Free glass of wine or cider
- Tannery Run Brew Works (Ambler): Free flight
- Ten7 Brewing Co. (North Wales): Free draft pour
- Well Crafted Beer Co. (Lansdale or Ambler) - Free 12-ounce pour
- Favorite Child Brewing at Local Tap (Lansdale): Free flight
- Cider Belly Hard Cider (Chestnut Hill): Free 10-ounce cider

Proceeds from every passport purchased go directly to conservation efforts, trail stewardship and environmental education initiatives throughout the Wissahickon Watershed.

There are a limited number of passports available, so be sure to order yours before they sell out. For inquiries, contact Lisa Hansell, senior development manager at Wissahickon Trails: lisa@wissahickontrails.org.

Raise a glass to conservation and start your adventure today! Visit wissahickontrails.org to purchase your passport.



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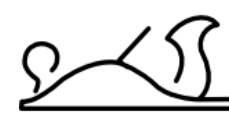
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The First Native American Doctor in the United States

In March, the Co-op's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee marks the contributions of women as part of Women's History Month.



ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-six years ago, Susan LaFlesche Picotte (1865-1915), a member of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, became the first Native American physician in the United States. The U.S. government willfully decimated the tribe's culture, resulting in her father becoming the last traditionally chosen chief.

Picotte's interest in health care began when a white physician refused to treat a dying tribal member. At 14, she left home to study at Elizabeth Institute in Elizabeth, NJ. At 19, she matriculated from today's Hampton Institute in Hampton, VA, and in 1889, at age 24, she graduated from Philadelphia's Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania and was chosen as valedictorian.

In 1913, without government funding, Picotte opened her reservation's first hospital and was its only physician. Today, the hospital she built in Walthill, NE, is a cultural center that memorializes her genius, devotion and achievements.

—Rosa Lewis



Three Workshops on Creating Healthy and Native Gardens Weavers Way Environment Committee

Get detailed assistance, see and learn from native garden experts, swap seeds and more through this workshop series!

Getting Your Habitat Garden Started

Saturday, March 15

1-2:30 p.m.

Plymouth Friends Meeting, 2150 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting
Paige Menton, founder of Journeywork, a nonprofit dedicated to helping people create healthy habitats, will share her experience on how to get a native garden started.

Habitat Gardens in Action

Sunday, June 8

1-3 p.m.

Historic Hope Lodge, 553 S. Bethlehem Pike, Fort Washington
See the gardens at one of our grant recipients and talk to Hope Lodge gardeners.

Fall Wrap-Up: Celebrate Successes, Prepare for Winter and Exchange Seeds

Sunday, October 19

3-4:30 p.m.

Plymouth Friends Meeting, 2150 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting
Paige Menton will share how to prepare for winter while maintaining a habitat for wildlife. Attendees will share their success stories and exchange seeds.



RSVP at weaversway.coop/events

\$15 per workshop or \$40 for all three. Payment at the door.
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WEAVERS WAY EVENTS

Gut Health and Digestive Wellness Tips with Kara Jo

Monday, Mar. 3 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Virtual Event

Join Kara Jo for her four-part herbalism series, in which she shares practical ways to use herbs at home. In her third workshop, she will focus on digestion and gentle ways to mend your gut issues. You will receive a Zoom link after you register.

Kara Jo, a working member at Weavers Way, has been a high school English teacher in Ambler for the last 16 years. She has her master's in special education, is certified to teach yoga and has studied at the Mindfulness Institute at Jefferson University Hospital.

Special Ed: Parents' Rights and Procedural Safeguards with Sharon Marzocco

Thursday, Mar. 6 6:30-7:30 p.m.
The Café at Weavers Way Ambler

Sharon, a special education advocate from Marzocco Advocacy Group, has worked with families to help them navigate the details and nuances of how the special education process works in our school system. During her consultation sessions, she often comes across parents who say, "Why didn't they tell me that?" or "I wish I had known about my options and rights." She will have time to review IEPs and answer questions.

Sharon provides guidance, education and advocacy to families with children who need special education services. You're encouraged to bring your child's IEP to the workshop to enable Sharon to share specific insights with you.

Gentle Chair Yoga with Mira McEwan

Mondays, Mar. 10, 17 and 24 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Virtual Events

Practitioners of this three-week online class will learn introductory yoga philosophy and practice gentle exercises that promote core activation, relaxation, optimal breathing and flexibility. Mira believes that yoga is for

"every body" and "if you can breathe, you can practice yoga." She is passionate about making yoga fun and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. She is a Weavers Way working member and has been a registered nurse for 25 years. You will receive a zoom link after you register.

Getting Your Habitat Garden Started with Paige Menton

Saturday, Mar. 15 1-2:30 p.m.
Plymouth Friends Meeting School,
2150 Butler Pike., Plymouth Meeting

Get detailed assistance, see and learn from native garden experts, swap seeds; and more as part of this three-part series. Paige Menton is the founder of Journeywork, a nonprofit dedicated to helping people create healthy habitats. She will share her expert tips and experience on how to get a native garden started. The cost is \$15 per workshop or \$40 for all three sessions. Payment will be taken at the door, and funds collected will be used by the Weavers Way Environment Committee for future grants to community groups.

New Member Orientation

Tuesday, Mar. 18 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Virtual Event

We encourage all new members to attend a member orientation. Our virtual orientation will include an overview of membership at the Co-op, how it works and why it's valuable. We'll explore our online Member Center, discuss the benefits of membership and help you choose if working membership is right for you! You will receive two hours of working member credit (the orientation lasts approximately 1.5 hrs.). You will receive a zoom link by email prior to the meeting. Please sign up via our Member Center.

Natural Facial Scrub Making Workshop with Latoya

Monday, Mar. 24 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Weavers Way Germantown Outreach Office,
326B West Cheltenham Ave.

Discover how to craft the perfect natural facial

cleansers with oats, herbs and clays tailored to your skin type. In this hands-on class, attendees will learn the best ingredients, techniques and products for keeping your skin glowing and healthy by using natural, locally sourced ingredients. You'll also learn the benefits of natural cleansers with cleansing grains and how to choose ingredients for different skin types.

Latoya Johnson, our instructor, is the founder of Natural Body Essentials. Her journey began with the development of her first body cream, which improved her skin and garnered enthusiastic praise from her coworkers.

Welcoming Homes: Where Compassion Meets Action!

Wednesday, Mar. 26 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Virtual Event

Distraught? Dismayed? Desperate to do something? Learn how to house or assist single, young adult asylum seekers. "Welcoming Homes" matches refugee and asylum-seeking young adults who are living without family or a safety net with safe homes and caring families. Mindy Maslin and Sidney Ozer, a Germantown couple, hosted two young adult immigrants long term. They realized this experience benefited both the guests and them.

Recognizing that the Philadelphia region has many young adult immigrants in need of homes and families as well as a likely population of potential families, Mindy and Sid started Welcoming Homes. Even if you don't think you can take someone into your home, there are other ways you can help. You will receive a zoom link to attend the workshop after you register.

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especially daunting. The results are spectacular: an 1,100 square foot dream house that's barely visible from the street.

ADUs are an idea whose time has come. Many cities around the country have updated their codes to facilitate, and in fact encourage, homeowners to build them on their properties. They come in endless varieties and creatively address many housing challenges.

Making Housing More Affordable

We have an extreme national shortage of affordable housing, which drives up prices and frustrates young people who are eager to purchase homes. While average households have declined in size over the past decades, the square footage of the average American house has doubled. Many are realizing smaller homes suit them better, but they're hard to find.

ADUs fill the gap for "right-sized" living places. Here are some of their benefits, as compared to traditional homes:

- They're more affordable. Smaller dwellings cost less to build, heat, cool and maintain.
- They're more eco-friendly, and lend themselves to an all-electric, greener design. They also consume fewer resources.
- They're more efficient when built in cities that already have infrastructures, avoiding car-dependent suburban and exurban sprawl.
- They're walking friendly and provide residents with nearby amenities, which contributes to local economies and helps support vibrant communities.
- They're tax generators for strapped cities.
- They enhance property values and leverage the existing assets of homeowners by making use of essentially "free" land in their backyards.
- They're income generators for property owners in locales where ADU rentals and/or sales are permitted.
- They're elder friendly when designed for aging in place, which facilitates intergenerational support.

- They offer younger households a foothold in the housing market.
- They provide urban infill while being barely visible, since they're sited in the rear of existing homes.

The top American ADU-promoting cities are Los Angeles (which already had a severe lack of housing before their catastrophic fires); Portland, OR; Seattle; Durham, NC; and Gainesville, FL. Scores of other cities are getting on board.

Northwest Philadelphia is a prime landscape for ADUs, since it has so many large backyards that are often underutilized. The city is not yet on board with promoting them, but in Mt. Airy, if a property already has a garage (as did Jane Cherney's) or carriage house, building an ADU is considered a renovation. The permit process is slow and requires an architect who knows the codes. Hopefully, Philadelphia will join other cities in creating friendlier ADU codes and zoning.

Of course, there were challenges for the Cherneys' project. It took a lot of time to go through the West Mt. Airy Neighbors, the local Registered Community Organization, and the city zoning process. Although they widened the driveway, the family ultimately realized they could share two cars, and that Jane didn't need her own. Since she now lives near bus and train lines, she finds it easy to make the connections needed for her to travel to Washington, D.C. and New York City, where she often attends meetings.

Jane plans to retire and age in place in her ADU, so she designed it to be accessible. Her entrances are level, there is no shower barrier, and there's a first-floor powder room. In addition, she designed the staircase to her second floor to be wide enough for a future chair lift, should it be needed. This type of accessible design is nearly impossible to find in Mt. Airy!

At present, Philly ADUs are connected to the host home, legally and financially. In some ADU-friendly cit-

(Continued from Page 1)



Photo by Betsy Teutsch

Jane Cherney's ADU is on the grounds of her son and daughter-in-law's house, so she sees them and her grandchildren often.

ies, they are also available for rental and even for sale.

It's fun to explore the wide varieties of ADU designs. They are space efficient, while providing full kitchens and bathrooms and endless amenities. AARP has many resources that explain their hows and whys, as well as tools for advocating for needed local zoning changes. If building an ADU interests you, know that you'll need to do your homework.

Costs vary enormously, of course. ADUs typically cost a few hundred thousand dollars, but that is often cheaper than buying a condo, the main alternative for those looking for smaller living spaces. If two households are collaborating, generally one is selling a home and relocating, and the construction will often cost less than the net profit on the home sale. Moving forward, two properties on one lot will be cheaper to maintain than two completely autonomous households.

In my next column, I'll explore the phenomenon of tiny houses. Let me know if you have experience with going tiny: bpteutsch@comcast.net.

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The Great Gardening Debate: Planting In-Ground vs. Raised Beds

by Boris Kerzner, for the Shuttle

AH, MARCH! WINTER IS NEARING ITS END, AND gardening season will soon be upon us. This seems like a good time to discuss two popular ways of growing vegetables in residential settings: raised beds and in-ground beds.

Raised beds are structures made from a variety of materials — including lumber, stainless steel or even ferrocement — filled with garden-appropriate soil. With in-ground beds, you’re planting directly in the ground. To start an in-ground bed, first do a soil test, then till the ground and mix in compost and other amendments.

Growing directly in the ground is a perfectly viable option in many cases and is more eco-friendly. Large farms always grow in the ground. That said, raised beds have advantages that can help pave the pathway to successful harvests.

Benefits and Downsides of Raised Beds

Raised beds give you more control over the soil, because you’re adding it. Existing soil on-site could be inhospitable to vegetable starts for a variety of reasons — it could be rocky, replete with hard clay or contaminated. In these cases, importing soil allows you to sidestep the whole issue. Bam! Just like that, you’ve got loose, fertile, uncontaminated and well-drained soil.

There are ergonomic benefits as well. Raised beds are elevated, so you have to do less squatting or bending. The heights of beds range from 12 inches (low) to 16 to 20 inches (medium) to a whopping 32 inches. Lastly, they provide a clearly defined visual edge

between the gardening space and the surrounding lawn, and crisp edges are key to a professional-looking landscape. It can be helpful to think of raised beds as furniture for your yard. Many people like the look of wood, and metal beds look sleek, while ferrocement beds can be custom built to enclose almost any shape imaginable.

Raised bed setups require more inputs in the form of bed materials and imported soil. This increases their price and their ecological footprint. A 2024 study of urban agriculture in Nature Cities found that the carbon footprint of urban agriculture is six times greater than that of conventional agriculture, and that infrastructure such as raised beds, compost bins and sheds are a significant contributor to this discrepancy. However, the carbon footprint goes down as infrastructure lifetime increases, so it’s better to build and use a raised bed that lasts 20 years versus a bed that will only last five.

Benefits of Growing In-Ground

Since fewer materials need to be brought in, installation of in-ground gardens is a fraction of the price of raised beds. For the same reason, in-ground gardens are also more eco-friendly. Furthermore, in-ground beds dry out more slowly as compared to raised beds. Finally, because they’re in contact with the ground, they tend to have more robust soil life out of the gate.

Consider raised beds if:

- The existing soil is inhospitable because it’s rocky,



hard or contaminated.

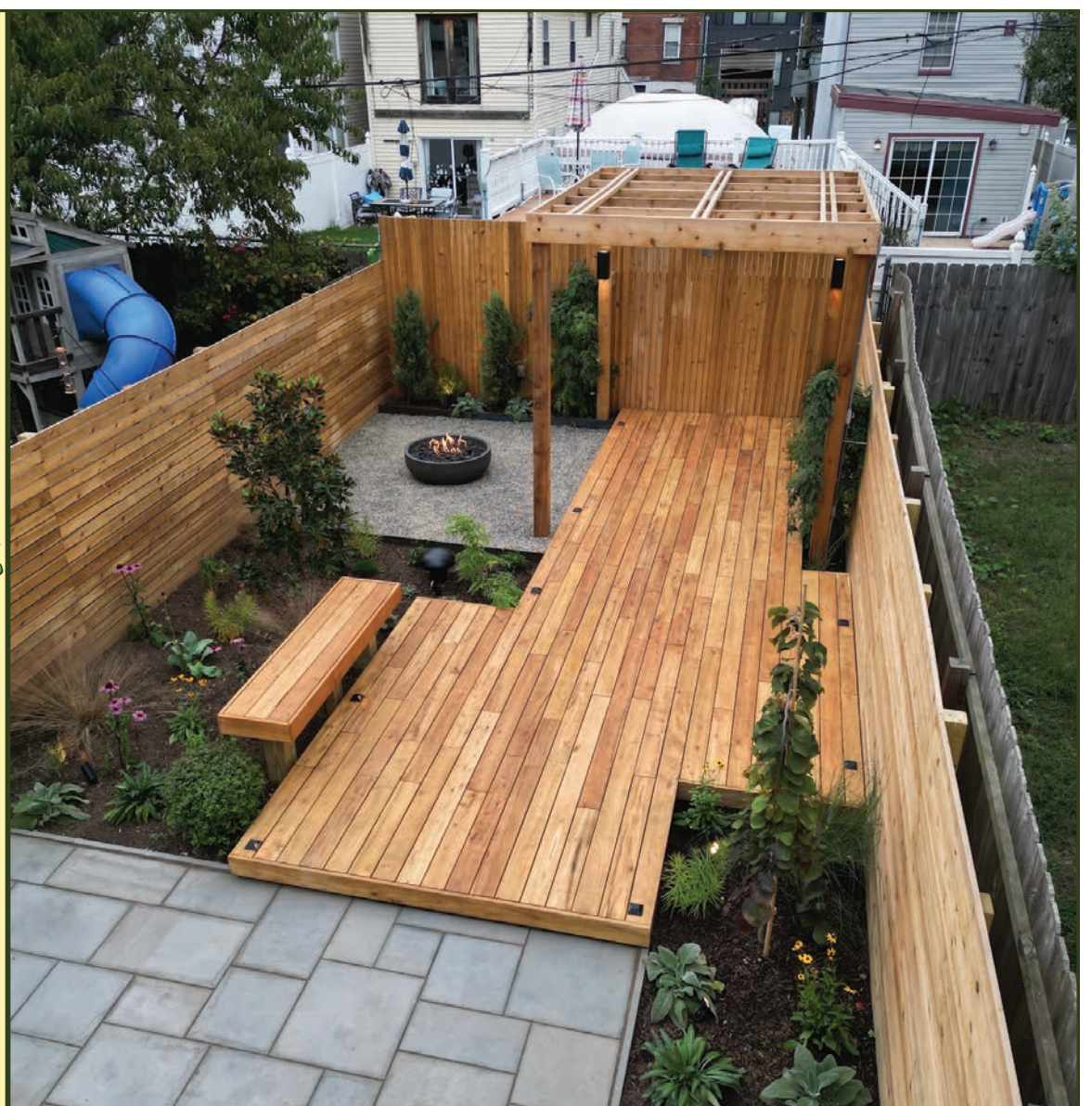
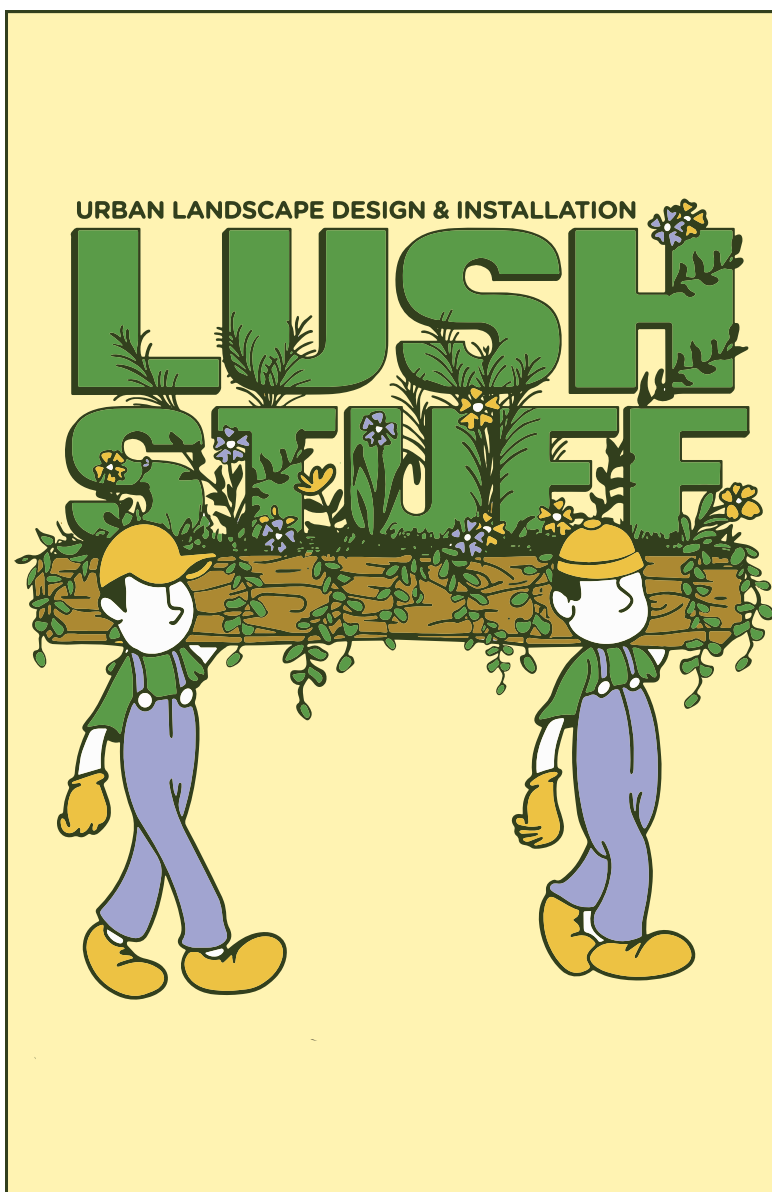
- Good ergonomics are critical.
- Aesthetics and clean lines are of paramount concern.

Consider in-ground beds if:

- Keeping costs low is important.
- Being as eco-friendly as possible is key.
- The goal is to maximize food production.

Contact Grow Our Food to set up a consult if you need help this spring setting up a new vegetable garden or refreshing an existing one. We offer design, installation and maintenance services.

Boris Kerzner is the owner of Grow Our Food (www.growourfood.com), an all-service gardening company focused on increased food-producing landscapes in the greater Philadelphia area.



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Spring's a Great Time to Learn to Identify Birds in the Wissahickon

by Ruffian Tittmann, Executive Director, Friends of the Wissahickon

BIRDWATCHING IS A CELEBRATION OF EVERYDAY magic. Many of us go through our whole lives without knowing which bird calls we wake to during mating season or spring, or which species make homes in the rafters of garages and doorways.

It's invigorating to see a flicker of color in a forest of naked trees or a melodic bird song that breaks the silence of nature. It's even more thrilling when you're equipped with the knowledge to know which bird is there with you in the world. To some, those sights and sounds are a background to their experience in the outdoors, but to the bird enthusiast, they are the highlight.

With a bit of practice, patience and advice from the pros, you'll be able to identify birds in the Wissahickon and in your own backyard based on their behaviors, movements and physical characteristics.

If you'd like to learn more about wildlife viewing and photography, join us on Apr. 9 as we kick off this year's Valley Talk lecture series with photographer and author Bill Konstant in person at the Valley Green Inn and online on Zoom. To register, visit our events page at fow.org/events.

Ready to get outside and find out about the birds that call the Wissahickon home? The Wissahickon Environmental Center is a fantastic resource for nature education of all kinds. The surrounding grounds are also a perfect place to see native wildlife. Check out the birdfeeders behind the Treehouse and learn the colors and characteristics of mourning doves, red-bellied woodpeckers and American goldfinches up close. Get to know WEC at an upcoming bird walk! Find out about their events by visiting their Facebook page: facebook.com/WissahickonEC.

Houston and Andorra meadows are some of the wilder parts of the Wissahickon. They feature tall grasses and stretches of lush foliage that are perfect for wildlife of all kinds to shelter. Friends of the Wissahickon has installed 59 bird boxes in these locations to foster threatened species and gather data on their populations.

Houston Meadow provides optimum birdwatching conditions for the native American woodcock. This month is the perfect time to view them and watch the "timberdoodle," their spring mating ritual dance. Join WEC for their Woodcock Walk this month to see it for yourself!

Based on eBird.com data, woodcocks are one of the most prolific bird species in Wissahickon Valley Park. And eBird.com is a great place to familiarize yourself with the birds in each area of the park. Houston meadow is also home to bluebirds and tree swallows in the warmer months and a variety of woodpeckers during the cooler ones.



Top, young birdwatchers (Photo courtesy of Let's Go Outdoors). Above left, a redbird and a bluebird (Photo by Karl Ahlswede). Above right, a bird watcher's guide (Photo courtesy of Stacey Gray).

For the beginner, there's no better way to learn and improve your skills than in the company of an expert. Join our partners and friends at Philly Queer Birders, In Color Birding Club, Feminist Bird Club Philly, BirdPhilly, Liberty Bird Alliance Audubon Pennsylvania, and many other organizations to immerse yourself in the thriving birding community. and make your world a little more colorful!



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Part I of II

Indoor Hydroponic Systems — The Ins, Outs, Costs and More

by Sally McCabe, for the Shuttle

EVERY WINTER I SUCCUMB TO MORE THAN A TOUCH of cabin fever. I miss my garden, and with that comes the craving for green things to see, smell, touch and even taste. My space quickly fills with houseplants and blooming bulbs that I can see, touch and maybe even smell, but I'm not going to eat any of that.

A windowsill herb garden checks all the boxes; it's fresh, green, tasty and healthful. In years past, I've planted small pots and window boxes of mixed herbs from seed indoors. Everything came up eventually and grew for a little bit. But somewhere along the line, I always forgot to water, and the plants stretched toward the inadequate sunlight. I also got soil gnats. RIP herbs.

But what if I could hire a robot to automate all of that for me? Enter the indoor hydroponic unit. It feeds, waters and has its own lights, and it fits almost anywhere.

I started looking into small indoor hydroponics — compact systems designed to grow plants without soil, typically using water-based solutions enriched with nutrients. The ones I researched had their own light unit, so I could put them anywhere and still share the windowsills with the cats. Here's what I found after I started doing my homework.

Hydroponic systems are a lot like inkjet printers: You invest in a quality setup, then you're constantly buying supplies, like nutrient solutions for the hydroponics or ink cartridges for the printer. The ongoing cost can be surprisingly high.

Facebook Marketplace had a gazillion setups available for cheap. Not all were new, and I got the impression that people bought them, played with them, changed their minds, traded up and tried out new ones. Eventually, you give up or find the perfect setup for your physical situation or lifestyle.

Pros and Cons Of Indoor Hydroponics

Indoor hydroponic systems are lots of fun and allow you to grow in even the smallest of spaces. The plants get direct access to water, nutrients and oxygen while ultimately using less water overall. Perhaps the biggest plus is the ability to grow year 'round while producing a cleaner harvest. My research also suggested that indoor hydroponic setups have less need for pesticides, but I've yet to see them prevent aphids and mealybugs.

The significant drawbacks of indoor hydroponics include a steep learning curve and initial and ongoing costs. You need to do your homework before committing to this type of setup, because a pre-made system with lights and pumps can be expensive, along with the ongoing costs to maintain water levels and nutrient concentration. Ultimately, the system is electricity dependent, so in

the event of a power outage, your harvest may be jeopardized. Additionally, while space-efficient, these systems can limit the number and size of plants they support.

Here are some questions to consider before investing in a windowsill hydroponics kit:

- Do I have enough room? This will influence what size system you choose.
- Do I have to share the space with others? (people, kids, cats, houseplants with seniority)
- Do I have sufficient light, or will I need that to be part of the system?
- Will I need electricity?
- Are there grounded outlets nearby?
- Is a windowsill the best place for all this (Is it too cold, or too near heat?)
- How much time and patience do I have to give to maintenance?
- How deep are my pockets?

Varieties of Windowsill and Indoor Hydroponic Setups

Sweet Potato in a Jar This is a passive system that's practically free. The plants subsist entirely on water and whatever food they can produce or have within. I've had sweet potatoes last for over a year, pumping out miles of vines and leaves that are edible. This type of setup requires topping off and occasional root washing. If you can handle this, move on to sprouting seeds.

Wick System This is a simple, passive system in which plants draw nutrients through a wick from a reservoir. It doesn't require pumps or electricity, so it's cheap. For reference, checkout Epic Gardening's information on hydroponics for kids: www.epicgardening.com/hydroponics-for-kids.

Deep Water Culture (DWC) This is a low to medium cost system. It's good for small to medium-scale setups and plants like lettuce, herbs and leafy greens. I looked at the Garden Cube and AeroGarden, which will hook up via Wi-Fi to Alexa. In this type of setup, plants are suspended in a nutrient solution with their roots submerged in water. Air stones or pumps oxygenate the water, like in an aquarium.

Kratky Method This is a low-cost variation of DWC, but without pumps. It's more of an a la carte method that you can assemble to grow in a bucket. It's ideal for beginners and small spaces. The plant roots are partially submerged, and the water level gradually drops as the plants take up nutrients.



Ebb and Flow In this medium-cost setup, plants are in a medium similar to clay pellets. A pump floods the tray with nutrient solution periodically before it drains back to the reservoir. Most of the ones I looked at were cheap, but probably best for an outdoor situation. This method is good for growers with a little experience. Once you've seen it in action, you can probably build one on your own.

Nutrient Film Technique (NFT) In this medium-to-high-cost method, a continuous flow of nutrient solution runs over the roots in a shallow channel. It's good for leafy greens and herbs and requires careful monitoring of solution flow and pH. It's more for the willing scientists among us!

Aeroponics As part of this higher-cost system, roots are suspended in the air and misted with nutrient solution. It's highly efficient but seems to require more technical maintenance. It's best for advanced growers or big setups.

Vertical Setups, Towers and Green Walls These high-cost systems involve growing plants in stacked vertical towers. They typically use NFT or aeroponics and are designed for high-density, commercial scale production in limited space. This is likely not happening in your dining room.

Aquaponics This is a unique system that combines hydroponics and aquaculture — the breeding, rearing and harvesting of fish, shellfish, algae and other organisms in all types of water environments. The fish poop provides nutrients for the plants, and the plants filter the water for the fish. The cost ranges from DIY to expensive.

Next month: Tips for hydroponic success.

Sally McCabe is associate director of community education for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

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Local Farms Help Educate the Public, Combat Climate Change and More

by Lauren Tilghman, for the Shuttle

LOCAL FARMS AND FARMER'S markets such as Saul High School's farm in Roxborough have given a lot back to the communities that have supported them over the years. Their most important contribution may be to educate students and adults about how food is grown and prepared.

Farm-to-table programs can give kids and adults a chance to learn how food is grown and prepared by teaching them how to plant seeds and harvest crops. They can also teach other important life skills.

"I think local farms give people the opportunity to understand where their food comes from," said Jacob Turko, a horticulture teacher at Saul. "So I think [visiting farms] allows people to engage in a lot more [about] food — where it comes from, how it's processed, and ways to manage that system as well."

Farms in the city can increase the biodiversity in an area by bringing in different kinds of animals and insects that can benefit the farm and the environment around it. They can also encourage biodiversity in a person's diet by growing a wide range of plants from around the world.

"We're right next to Wissahickon Creek, but even without a water source, we've had tons of animals that were coming in, like deer [and] foxes," said Akiva Woods, farm manager at Henry Got Crops Farm. "We have possums, we have raccoons, and those are just the big mammals. We have tons of bugs and there's pollinators who come here and we're seeing even more of them."

Farms also combat climate change by providing green spaces that take carbon out of the air and offer an alternative to the spread of urban and suburban sprawl.

"Small farms and big farms, especially ones that aren't tilling, are constantly growing things," said Alessandro Ascherio, Weavers Way farm manager. "They are sequestering carbon from the atmosphere. If we're keeping it green, whether it's farming or another kind of park, we're helping combat climate change."

Bringing people together is an important part of building a community, which local farms can do as well. CSA



(Community Supported Agriculture) farms such as Saul's allow students and supporters of the farm from different cultures to meet each other while exploring the farm. They also have a volunteer program at which you can meet farmers and work with them to harvest food. In 2024, the Saul farm totaled over 4,000 hours of volunteer work.

Alé Lomanto, a farmer at Henry Got Crops, appreciated seeing CSA member families pick their vegetables and talk to others at the farm last summer.

"After a long day's work, I would come up the field to the top of the hill and I would just see these families picking their vegetables and talking to other people and students coming from class at the end of their school day and picking herbs," she said. "A couple times a year, we'll bring our CSA members and our working members all into one space, just so they can get a feel for who's growing their food and who else is eating the food and I think that that is very valuable and brings a lot of people together."

A lot of money, materials and work go into running a farm, and we should thank those who make it happen, whether they're farmers, volunteers, farm market customers or CSA members. They all make sure people have healthy and nutritious food to eat.

Lauren Tilghman studies horticulture at W.B. Saul Agricultural High School in Roxborough. She is also a student farmer at Henry Got Crops Farm, and worked there last summer to help grow and harvest vegetables for Weavers Way's CSA, stores and farm market.



Photos by Akiva Woods.

Top left, W.B. Saul student Lauren Tilghman. Top right, the field at Mort Brooks Memorial Farm at Awbury Arboretum in fall. Above, Saul students planting garlic at Henry Got Crops Farm.

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MEMBER BENEFIT

ANOTHER GREAT REASON TO JOIN.

It's High Time We Recognize the Complexity of Plants

by Sandra Folzer, Weavers Way Environment Committee

THIS ARTICLE MAY SEEM MORE LIKE a book report than a research article, because most of the information comes from one source: Zoe Schlanger's "The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth."

It's hard to understand how scientists in the past refused to accept new theories. Generally, people don't like change, and scientists are no different. Copernicus published a book on heliocentrism in 1543. He described Earth circling the sun, which was considered heresy. While his work was admired, scientists continued to believe the sun rotated around the Earth. We still talk about the sun rising and setting as though the Earth doesn't move. Later, Galileo was tried by the Inquisition because he believed the Earth orbited the sun. Accepted beliefs are difficult to crack; it's almost as if they harden over time.

In her book, Schlanger writes about scientists being ostracized when they suggested that plants had intelligence. It didn't help that the popular book "The Secret Life of Plants" by Peter Tompkins (1973) was full of unproven theories, so grants on plant intelligence were subsequently refused.

Schlanger believes plants are far more complex than we are willing to admit. She notes that a fern genome has 720 pairs of chromosomes in comparison to the 23 that humans have. We forget how totally dependent we are upon plants, without which we would have no oxygen to breathe or food to eat.

Aristotle saw plants as instruments of man, with no sensibility, a position we've inherited. Though his student Theophrastus respected plants and compared the liquid flowing through them to human blood, we continue to adhere to Aristotle's objectification of plants.

It's interesting that all of Charles Darwin's books after "On the Origin of Species" were about plants. He believed plant roots were like a command center, seeking moist earth and growing away from rocks. He saw the root cap as the "root brain," which could regenerate in a few days if it were cut, just as other parts could be regenerated. Unfortunately, his research was forgotten for 125 years.

People can be stubborn about accepting new ideas, even when faced with evidence. In 1847, Ignaz Semmelweis, an obstetrician, proved that mortality dropped when doctors washed their hands. He noticed doctors routinely examined diseased corpses before exam-

ining pregnant women. While he didn't know about germs, he knew hand washing made a difference.

Other doctors saw his suggestion as criticism and rejected his idea, even though six times more women died in childbirth when doctors did not wash their hands. Semmelweis was considered insane and was committed to an asylum, where he was beaten by guards. He died 14 days after being committed, so he never saw the results of his research.

The Case for Intelligence in Plants

In 2006, scientists formed the Society for Plant Neurobiology after they found that plants produce electric charges for communication. They recognized that plants could store memories and make changes in their environment, but since they couldn't locate a brain, they concluded that plants had no intelligence. (They didn't consider the octopus, which has multiple "brains" throughout its body.) The society was eventually renamed the Society of Plant Signaling and Behavior.

Vibrations, which create sound, are felt by a plant when a caterpillar chews its leaves. With sensitive equipment, a plant's reaction to the chewing can be heard. Some believe the tiny hairs on their leaves act as acoustic antennae.

According to a 2017 study led by the University of Western Australia, some plant roots will grow toward the sound of water. But if there is a choice between water and only the sound of water, the plant's roots will move toward the water.

Communicating Via Wind and Using Tools

When bumblebees bite on a plant, it's a sign the bee is starving because the flowers have not yet blossomed. When bitten by the bee, the plant begins to blossom, sometimes 30 days earlier than usual.

Legume roots contain nodules of bacteria colonies to extract nitrogen from the soil. If the bacteria don't cooperate and find nitrogen, the legume chokes off its oxygen supply.

In South Africa in the 1980s, kudus, a woodland antelope found throughout eastern and southern Africa, were dying mysteriously. The acacia tree, which they ate and was one of the few plants to survive an ongoing drought, was producing too much tannin, which killed them. Scientists theorized that the increased tannin production was a defense signal that was carried down to other trees. It's considered a form of tree communication through air.

A young plant faces many threats from grazing animals and insects. It defends itself using thorns, sticky sugar or chemicals. Some plants can identify caterpillars, then synthesize their scent to attract parasitic wasps. The wasps then eat the caterpillars.

Bittersweet nightshade, a species of vine, attracts ants by exuding a sugary syrup. The syrup also attracts flea beetles, who then eat the ants. Sunflowers share nutrients with other plants, except when resources are scarce. Then they may become "allelopathic" and secrete chemicals to stop other plants from germinating.

According to Schlanger, "Plants are geniuses at synthesizing chemical compounds. They seem to be able to make whatever chemical mixture is necessary to the task at hand, excreting them as gases through their pores, or sometimes through their roots to infuse the soil. Their precision and aptitude for this is beyond any other organism...plants produce far more complex compounds than our instruments can sense."

Boquila, a genus of flowering plants from the temperate forests of central and southern Chile and Argentina, mimics other plants perfectly in order to not be eaten. To do so, it needs to know what other plants look like.

In February 2020, researchers Frantisek Baluska and Stefano Mancuso published "Planet, Climate and Humans: Plant Intelligence Changes Everything" in *Science & Society*. In the paper, they argued that higher plants possess a specific intelligence that they use to manipulate their environment, including climate patterns and whole ecosystems.

The Effect of Pollution on Plant Communication

Plants don't keep their strata open when there is too much CO₂. In the presence of ozone, bees take longer to find black mustard flowers.

How we define intelligence is arbitrary. Botanist Tony Trewavas, emeritus professor in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Edinburgh, argues in his 2014 book "Plant Behavior and Intelligence" that whole cells and whole plants show aspects of plant behavior that can accurately be described as "intelligent."

Schlanger contends that acknowledging plant intelligence means rethinking our relationship to them. Should they have rights? If so, it would affect our moral and legal systems, and it might change how we treat the earth.



eco tip

For the Sake of Insects, Hold Off on Your Spring Cleanup

by Marsha Low, Weavers Way Environment Committee

If you're fortunate to have a garden, you may be itching to get out and start a spring cleanup. But according to multiple studies, insect populations have declined by about 45% over the last 40 years. So it's more important than ever to hold off on doing so.

Many overwintering beneficial insects, including pollinators like tiny native bees and pest-eating predators, spend the winter in hollow plant stems either as adults or pupae. Others, like ladybugs and damsel bugs, hunker down under leaf litter. If you've left leaf litter and dead plant stems in place to help overwintering beneficial insects, be sure not to remove them too early. In early spring, many insects are still in a physiological state akin to hibernation, so doing your cleanup then will disturb them before they have a chance to emerge.

If possible, wait until daytime temperatures consistently reach the 50s before removing leaf litter and dead plant stems. If you want to remove dead plant stems earlier, before new growth starts, consider taking the cut stems and gathering them into small bundles of a few dozen each. Tie the bundles together and hang them on a fence or lean them against a tree. The insects sheltering inside them will emerge when they're ready. Also, since some beneficial insects overwinter in soil burrows, make sure not to mulch too early in the spring, since doing so may block their emergence.

Remember, birds need insects, too; 96% of all terrestrial bird species feed insects to their young. Doing all we can to promote healthy insect populations will help the birds that visit your yard and encourage them to nest in your trees, large shrubs or bird houses.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE COMMUNITY GRANTS

Download a form and guidelines on the Weavers Way Website:

www.weaversway.coop/community-grants

Deadline for the submission of proposals is Friday, March 7, 2025

Grant applications can also be picked up from the Weavers Way Environment Committee mailbox upstairs at the Mt. Airy store.

Weavers Way Environment Committee for grants from \$100 to \$500 for clearly identifiable public purposes resulting in tangible community improvement (examples include community gardens, environmental education, park and street plantings). Priority will be given to projects that help to address climate change.

Submissions are invited from local community groups and organizations with projects in areas served by Weavers Way and for projects located in underserved neighborhoods.



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Suggestions

by Norman Weiss, Weavers Way Purchasing Manager

GREETINGS AND THANKS FOR writing. Email suggestions to suggestions4norman@weaversway.coop. As usual, suggestions and responses may have been edited for brevity, clarity and/or comedy. In addition, no idea, concept, issue, remark, phrase, description of event, word or word string should be taken seriously. This also applies to the previous sentence.

What do eagles and chickens have in common (aside from the Super Bowl, at which the Eagles played a game, and chickens got eaten)? Both are birds; however, chickens tend to hang out in flocks and eagles tend to fly solo. An eagle might hunt and eat a chicken, but a chicken is unlikely to hunt and eat an eagle. Also, eagles symbolize strength and independence, while “chicken” is slang for being cowardly and afraid.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's proceed to the next big question involving chickens.

Thanks to high egg prices, we've learned the answer to the age-old question “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” The answer is the chicken. Eggs are in short supply because so many laying flocks perished due to bird flu. It can take up to a year for an egg farmer to replenish the chickens they lost. Egg farmers start with hens to lay eggs, so in terms of the egg supply, the chickens come first. No commercial egg farmer starts with eggs that hatch to get chickens to then get eggs to sell. There is so much uncertainty in life these days that it's nice to have this settled.

On another chicken note, you might wonder why the price of chicken meat hasn't gone up the way that eggs have: Apparently, it's because “broiler” chickens are raised on different farms than egg layers. So while broilers aren't immune from bird flu, they have less potential exposure since they don't live as long as egg layers and don't reside near them.

In other recent food news, a couple more certifications have come into existence in recent months. One is for non-ultra-processed food and is from the Non-GMO Project. The “Non-UPF Verified” logo comes under the broader umbrella of the Food Integrity Collective. It offers



a method to support human and planetary health by identifying and highlighting foods that are less processed.

The other certification is from the Upcycled Food Foundation, which aims to reduce food waste by promoting the upcycling food economy. Upcycled products use ingredients that have full nutritional value and are safe, but for various reasons, would have gone to waste.


While certifications can help consumers choose items in line with their health needs, values, dietary choices, etc., I wonder about the amount of confusion and label logo overload engendered by these certifications. I don't know if there is a comprehensive list anywhere, but I think at this point there are multiple certifications (and sometimes competing ones) for designations like kosher, halal, animal welfare, sustainable seafood, fair trade, gluten-free, soy-free, cruelty-free, vegan, organic, regenerative organic, B-Corp, keto, paleo, rainforest, GMO, natural, biodynamic and bird friendly — and those are just the ones that come to mind. I'm thinking we need an annual award ceremony for products with the most certifications — the “Certies.”

suggestions and responses:

S: “I write to ask about date syrup, a/k/a date molasses. I don't believe I've seen it at the Co-op. (Mention this in your column, and you can work in a joke about how “date molasses” is not exactly the opposite of “speed dating”). I came across this ingredient in a holiday cookie recipe and I suspect it's a product that is not familiar to many people. I was able to find it easily enough at the Acme. Could it become one of the various sugar/sweetener products the Co-op carries?”

R: (Virginia) We carry Just Organic Cal-

(Continued on Next Page)



EMAIL YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO suggestions4norman@weaversway.coop

Norman Says:

Read SUGGESTIONS by Purchasing Manager Norman Weiss every month in the Shuttle.

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(Continued from previous page)

ifornia date syrup at our Mt Airy, Chestnut Hill and Ambler stores. Additionally, Ambler also has Let's Date date syrup (it doesn't mention anything about being speedy, so I imagine it's the type you really take your time to get to know). They should both be near the other sweeteners/syrups, but if you have trouble finding these when you're next in the stores, please don't hesitate to ask a staffer for help.

s: "My family loves the Ak-Mak sesame crackers we used to get at the Co-op, but we haven't been seeing them. Any idea if they'll be back?"

r: (Danielle) Thanks for reaching out. Ak-Mak is the classic natural foods cracker! We're big fans of them here. They have historically been available to us through our main distributor, UNFI, but recently they were cut from there catalog.

Usually, when something like this happens and we can justify keeping an item, we try to source it from elsewhere. Unfortunately, our two "backup" distributors also do not carry it. Our last effort when distributors don't carry a product we want to sell is to try to get it directly from the manufacturer. If the volume is justifiable, we can receive it in our shared warehouse space at Common Market and distribute it to our stores from there. I'm reaching out to Ak-Mak to see if this final option is a possibility. Stay tuned!

(Norman) Seems a bit of a mystery. Ak-Mak's website no longer shows crackers in a box — just ones in pouches. Too bad; they were popular, and I think we've stocked them regularly since the '70s.

s: "I'm a member who typically shops at Ambler, but I visited Mt. Airy a couple of times and found Stryker Farm chorizo there. It's delicious. Is there any possibility this could be stocked in Ambler? Thank you for considering!"

r: (Mike) We could potentially introduce it in a couple weeks. Keep an eye out.

s: "Hi, there's a new bacon in town that I think people would like. It's made of mushrooms, but my partner,



It can take up to a year for an egg farmer to replenish the chickens they lost.



who eats real bacon, says it's close. Just passing this along in case we could carry it."

r: (Norman) Thanks for the suggestion. It turns out we stock it at our Chestnut Hill store, and we're looking to place it in our other locations, since it seems to be selling.

s: "Among the many nuts in the bulk food department is a bin called "Nuts and Seeds." But that's a misnomer — it's mostly raisins, which don't even figure into the title. Can you get the supplier to pack just nuts and seeds, or at least cut back on the raisins part? Or if that's impossible, then rename that bin "Nuts and Seeds, but Actually Not Really."

r: (Norman) I appreciate your sense of accuracy. I think the bins are labelled "Nut and Seed Mix." Whether the "mix" can be read to include the raisins is probably a stretch; however, there may be mitigating conditions.

Appearing right below "Nut and Seed Mix" is the ingredient list, which shows raisins first. Typically, ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, so shoppers who read ingredient lists shouldn't be surprised. There is also a degree of observational obviousness in play, since the bins are clear and the concentration of raisins to nuts and seeds is apparent.

Nevertheless, we want accurate product titles. So the next time we have labels made, we can see about changing the name to something like "Raisin, Seed and Nut Mix" (since the second ingredient is pumpkin seeds).

It's unlikely our supplier will change anything. Changing the display name may also cause some confusion for our staff, since they often go by the item names that are shown on invoices. But that's a chance we are willing to take to pursue accuracy in labeling.

s: I love shopping at the Co-op and all the wonderful products you carry. I usually shop at the Ambler store. For a while, you were carrying Black Rooster Baltic breads, but I haven't seen them in a while. Since I am of Baltic origin, I enjoyed this bread a lot. Will it be coming back? Thanks for carrying products such as these!"

r: (Danielle) Thanks for reaching out. I know how fantastic this bread is; my family is from Lithuania and Black Rooster is the only rye I've found in the states that is like what you can get in the Baltics. I buy a loaf of the 100% rye every other week.

We decided against carrying this in our Ambler location due to a history of poor sales performance, but we continue to carry it in our Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy stores, where it performed better. I will pass on your input to our bakery buyer in Ambler so she knows she has a loyal shopper if she should decide to bring it back.



WEAVERS WAY ENDS

Weavers Way Cooperative Association exists to provide commercial and community services for the greater good of its members and community, to champion the cooperative model and to strengthen the local economy.

AS A RESULT OF ALL WE DO:

END 1 There will be a thriving and sustainable local economy providing meaningful jobs, goods and services to our members and the community.

END 2 Our community will have access to high quality, reasonably priced food, with an emphasis on local, minimally processed and ethically produced goods.

END 3 There will be active collaborative relationships with a wide variety of organizations in the community to achieve common goals.

END 4 Members and shoppers will be informed about cooperative principles and values; relevant environmental, food and consumer issues; and the Co-op's long-term vision.

END 5 Members and shoppers will actively participate in the life of the Co-op and community.

END 6 The local environment will be protected and restored.

END 7 Weavers Way will have a welcoming culture that values diversity, inclusiveness, and respect.

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The Backyard Beet

Maintenance and a Well-Rounded System Are Key to Garden Success

by Mike Bennett, for the Shuttle

MOTHER NATURE SERVES AS A great blueprint for developing a successful system. From architecture to landscaping to medicine, systems of design have been created to mimic those in nature.

For me, the most relatable system to the vegetable garden is the human body. Perhaps I draw many parallels because of the similar mindset I have toward the garden and personal health — that a well-rounded, holistic setup and maintenance is the best defense against disease, which can affect productivity.

When designing a successful vegetable garden, combining key components like soil, sun, water and infrastructure in service of the greater function is essential. Maybe the dual major plant biologists and doctors among us could come up with a more thorough technical comparison. I'm just a gardener with a finance degree who tries to pay as much attention as possible to Mother Nature and my body.

The Forest for the Trees

As a professional garden consultant, it's common to visit a gardener at their home and find them deep down one or more gardening rabbit holes. There are more than enough new gardening gadgets, old wives tales and gardening hacks to keep even the most focused person distracted from what produces tangible results.

I once went to a consultation at which a passionate, aspiring gardener and homesteader had developed an impressive process to dry, freeze and grind eggshells to a fine mist to feed them to their vegetable plants. The process must have taken two hours for every batch of a few dozen eggshells. Meanwhile, the garden had lackluster clay and compacted soil, no water source and zero fencing protection. The eggshells,



although potentially mildly beneficial, were far down the list of what the system needed.

There are many quick fixes in personal health and the vegetable garden, but holistic health seems to give us the best chance of success. In gardening, I'm reminded that despite overwhelming information and stylish garden tchotchkes, a successful food growing system depends on sun, water and soil (and perhaps fencing). Everything else is either icing on the cake or potentially does more harm than good. Had the eggshell gardener spent a day moving a couple yards of soil, maybe building a raised bed, and setting up a basic fence and irrigation, they could have produced more in the time it took to put together two eggshell batches.

Balance Leads to Resilience

In many cases, productivity improves, and pest and disease issues are solved by getting a garden back on track with sun, water and soil in balance. These elements create a system that results in healthy and resilient plants and soil life that can withstand environmen-

tal pressures from drought, pests and disease.

Regular system care that affects pest and disease pressure and plant health can include weeding, pruning and offseason compost and soil conditioner. Like a garden, a person with a balanced diet, exercise, rest and mental health creates a resilient body that can withstand stress and illness.

Soil is the heart of the vegetable garden system, and we typically don't test it. With raised beds, we are creating an environment that starts out as a controlled system by using vetted and specific inputs and are trying to avoid potential contamination. We mainly need to make sure we are adding a balanced, drainable, nutrient-dense mix that is pest and disease free.

As the system interacts with environmental factors, imbalances can occur. But regular soil maintenance tends to curb those or rebalances the system. It's rare that gardens we maintain with regular care need specific nutrient profiles, amendments or experience infestations.

Ultimately, we need to manage our bodies or our vegetable gardens by paying attention to what the system is telling or showing you. Often, the solution to your gardening problems can be found in the management of sun, soil and water and how they interact with each other. So before you jump down the next garden rabbit hole, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have six or more hours of sun?
- Do I have at least 12 inches of nutrient dense, well-drained garden soil?
- Do my plants get consistent water every morning at the roots?

Mike Bennett is one of the owners at Backyard Eats, which recently released a new educational series, "Finding the Magic." More information is available at www.backyard-eats.com.



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Artists in Our Aisles

Annmarie Strolle

After showing a talent for art in first grade, my father sent me to the Manayunk Art Center for art lessons. I continued this path in high school and worked with two inspiring art teachers.

I enrolled in Penn State for a year and majored in art. I moved forward with my skills but ultimately opted to pursue a career as a registered nurse, thinking it was a more reliable source of income. Twenty years later, after raising my family, I resumed art lessons with Ann Brennan, an award-winning artist in Center Square. My goal was to learn landscapes and continue with my evolving pet portrait business. My mediums are oils, watercolors and gouache.

I have been focusing on plein air painting in recent years, which has really helped me to see color, form and value. Developing an eye for seeing colors comes with experience. The more I paint, the easier it gets. An early morning landscape contains many different colors. Developing the ability to see different colors, values, form and composition is the key to a good painting. I've been told that anyone can learn to paint, but without the eye for "seeing", your paintings will never shine. Paint on and see!



SUBMISSIONS NEEDED

We want to feature your art in the Shuttle!

Please submit the following to Richard Metz (thembones2@hotmail.com):

- Two 4" x 6" high-resolution images (300 dpi)
- A short bio
- A short statement about the work
- A headshot
- A link to a website if you have one

Weavers Words

I HAVE A DREAM

Yesterday I had this dream
 And in this dream I was in Center City, Philadelphia
 I saw a man laying on the sidewalk
 He had a blanket and a cup overflowing with change
 He took the change that fell from the cup and passed it off to the person next to him
 I asked the man "Would you like more change, Sir?"
 He politely declined
 Curious i asked "Why wouldn't you want more money?"
 The man says "I have enough."
 He had a smile on his face as he walked into a bodega
 I wake up
 I head to my bathroom and splash my face with water as I ponder the dream
 Then something clicks
 The man was happy. Content because he had everything he needed
 I think the first step in a brighter future is to make sure everyone's cups are full
 Then we'll be steps closer to the dream that I had yesterday

—Julian Coats, age 13

BOY ON THE BANDSTAND

I'm in love with the girl at the library.
 She don't give me a second look.
 Oh baby, let me turn your pages.
 Oh baby, won't you stamp my book.
 I'm in love with the man in the moon.
 He don't give me a second glance.
 Come on baby, let me explore your craters.
 Oh honey, do that moonwalk dance.
 I'm in love with Mother Nature.
 Though she don't really pay me no mind.
 Come on baby, let me lie in your valleys.
 Spread my seed across your fertile land.
 I'm in love with the Queen of the Ocean.
 She don't care about my sweet parade.
 Sweetheart let me plunge in your waters.
 Knock me over with your tidal wave.
 I'm in love with the boy on the bandstand.
 Though she don't know that I exist.
 Come on sugar, harmonize with the chorus.
 You loving me, that'd be such a twist.

—Paul Whittaker

MARCH 3

Days are getting longer
 light lingers
 birds stop by
 not scores,
 but sentinels, perhaps
 surveying
 if all can return
 to nest, roost, flit, sow
 chirp, cheep, splash, sing
 to pry annelids
 from defrosting dirt
 and let blossoms know
 their days are nearing too

—Robert Bonfiglio

Our Revised Submission Guidelines:

1. Original poems must be of a reasonable length. Lengthy poems that are the subject of a reflection will be excerpted.
2. The Shuttle editor has the final say as to whether a poem or reflection is suitable for publication.
3. The number of poems or reflections in an issue is determined by the amount of space available.
4. Members and nonmembers are welcome to submit.
5. Email your submissions to editor@weaversway.coop and put "Poetry submission (or reflection) for Shuttle" in the subject line.



Imagining a World Without Waste

Fossil Fuels, Plastics and Environmental Policy

Pennsylvania, a state carved up by rivers and industry, stands at a critical juncture. Once a cradle of coal and steel, its energy future now teeters between legacy industries and the urgent call for sustainability.

Earlier this year, Gov. Josh Shapiro unveiled an energy agenda that many hail as pragmatic, but which environmentalists view as a dangerous entrenchment of fossil fuel dependency. Paired with President Donald Trump's sweeping environmental rollbacks, these policy shifts could cement Pennsylvania's role as a petrochemical powerhouse at the cost of public health, climate stability and environmental justice.

Shapiro's "Lightning Plan" promises to streamline issuance of energy permits, lower costs and boost job creation. But buried within its framework is an implicit embrace of fossil fuels — a move that could solidify Pennsylvania's role in natural gas extraction and liquified natural gas exports. According to Inside Climate News, the governor's plan, much like Trump's broader deregulatory push, prioritizes industry over environmental health and carves out tax credits for hydrogen production — a technology that typically relies on methane gas rather than renewable sources.

The Shapiro administration has also cleared the way for expanded carbon capture and storage, a controversial method marketed as a climate solution but largely seen as a lifeline for polluters. The bill, signed into law last July, allows companies to inject captured carbon dioxide deep underground, despite serious concerns over leakage, groundwater contamination and seismic activity, according to Environmental Health News.

Meanwhile, Pennsylvania's thriving petrochemical industry, fueled by the Marcellus Shale, continues to convert fracked gas into plastic, exacerbating climate change and the state's growing waste crisis. The Shell Polymers plant in Beaver County — a multibillion-dollar ethane cracker facility — now churns out millions of tons of plastic pellets annually. This output feeds a global plastic market that's already choking waterways and communities with microplastics, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

For the people of Northwest Philadelphia and Montgomery County, these policies are not abstractions; they are lived realities. Air pollution from expanded natural gas infrastructure worsens asthma and cardiovascular disease, particularly in urban neighborhoods already burdened by environmental injustice. The influx of LNG export terminals and new pipelines threatens to expose communities to methane leaks and volatile organic compounds — known carcinogens that seep into the air and water.

Meanwhile, the state's increasing plastic production directly contributes to microplastic contamination in the Delaware River, which is a primary drinking water source for millions. According to Penn Environment, studies have already detected alarming levels of microplastics in the Schuylkill and Delaware watersheds,

which poses unknown but likely severe risks to human health and aquatic ecosystems.

In the face of recent environmental policy shifts, Pennsylvania is at a pivotal moment. The state's trajectory hinges on legislative actions and on the active engagement of its citizens. Now, more than ever, personal involvement and civil disobedience are crucial to steering us toward a sustainable future.

Engage with State and Local Reps

Direct communication with elected officials is a powerful tool for change. By voicing concerns and advocating for environmental policies, citizens can influence legislative decisions. To identify and contact your specific state representative, utilize the Find Your Legislator tool (www.legis.state.pa.us).

In Northwest Philadelphia and Montgomery County, key representatives include:

- Rep. Christopher M. Rabb (D-200th District): Serves parts of Philadelphia County.
- Rep. Tarik Khan (D-194th District): Represents sections of Philadelphia County.
- Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D-154th District): Serves areas within Montgomery County.
- Rep. Benjamin V. Sanchez (D-153rd District): Also serves Montgomery County.

Contacting these representatives to express your stance on environmental issues can significantly impact their policy positions.

The Power of Civil Disobedience and Personal Action

Throughout history, civil disobedience has been a catalyst for social and environmental progress. Peaceful protests, sit-ins and other forms of non-violent resistance have highlighted injustices and spurred legislative change. In the context of environmental advocacy, such actions can draw attention to harmful policies and practices, compelling leaders to reconsider their positions.

Personal actions, such as reducing plastic consumption, supporting local sustainability initiatives, and educating others about environmental issues collectively contribute to a larger movement toward ecological responsibility.

Community involvement amplifies individual efforts. The Co-op offers avenues for engagement through its committees and community groups, including the Plastic Reduction Task Force. This offshoot of the Environment Committee is dedicated to minimizing plastic use and promoting sustainable alternatives. Participation in the PRTF contributes to local environmental health and fosters a sense of community and shared purpose.

To stay informed and connected, consider following PRTF on Facebook and subscribing to Philly Talks Trash Quarterly, a newsletter that provides insights and updates on waste reduction efforts in the Philadelphia area. Several members of PRTF also produce the newsletter.

The path to a sustainable Pennsylvania is illuminat-

ed by the actions of its residents. By engaging with representatives, embracing civil disobedience when necessary and participating in local environmental groups, individuals can drive meaningful change. In this critical time, personal action is beneficial and imperative.

—Alisa Shargorodsky

Who Else Works on Plastics?

At Weavers Way, the Plastic Reduction Task Force concentrates on minimizing the number of plastics used in the delivery and packaging of our groceries. If you are interested in supporting or getting involved with larger organizations working on the plastics crisis, here are some of our favorites.

Beyond Plastics is a national organization founded in 2019 by Judith Enck, a former regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency. The group uses its policy and advocacy expertise to build a movement that seeks to achieve the institutional, economic and societal changes needed to save the planet from the negative health, climate and environmental impacts of the production, usage and disposal of plastics. Enck regularly invites the public to audit her seven-week online Bennington College course "Beyond Plastic Pollution."

The Plastic Pollution Coalition is an international organization focused on communications and advocacy. Its broad mission includes these stated goals:

- Individuals, NGOs, businesses and policymakers embody zero-waste values and work collaboratively to eliminate waste from our current socioeconomic and political systems.
- Human culture has reestablished a harmonious relationship with nature, in which nothing is wasted and all of life and Earth's resources are valued, protected and replenished.

—Karen Melton

Commit to Memory These Reusable Jar Tips

- Tell the bulk staffer on duty when you are dropping off your jars, so they can inspect them to see if they are appropriate for the Jar Library.
- Drop off clean, dry glass containers only — no plastic containers.
- Remove labels as much as possible. Volunteers maintain the jar library; the more labels there are to remove, the more difficult their job becomes.
- Larger jars are especially appreciated, e.g. tomato sauce or quart sized. Also, consider if the jar you're donating would be useful.
- If the incoming jar box is full, please do not leave your jars. Currently, there is no place to store surplus jars.
- For any item you buy in bulk using your own container or a container from the jar library, you will receive a 15-cent discount at the register.





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ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Saturday, April 5
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Chestnut Hill College
9601 Germantown Avenue



Anything that turns on and off



NO BATTERIES
NO LIGHT BULBS

ALL ITEMS FREE except

- Older CRT TVs and monitors \$40 - \$80 each (depending on size)
- Air conditioners, dehumidifiers, air purifiers \$25
- Flatscreen TVs \$30 • Microwaves \$15 • Computer monitors \$10

ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE RECYCLING

Suggested donation \$10-\$20

Donations finance Grants given to the community.

This event is co-sponsored by the Sisters of Saint Joseph Chestnut Hill • Philadelphia and Weavers Way Environment Committee. Recycling services provided by PAR-Recycle Works. For more information go to: www.PAR-RecycleWorks.org



Locally Grown

Illustration by Alli Katz



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What's What & Who's Who at Weavers Way

Weavers Way Board

The Weavers Way Board of Directors represents members' interests in the operation of the stores and the broader vision of the Co-op.

The Board's regular monthly meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month. Check the Co-op's Calendar of Events for the date of the next meeting.

For more information about Board governance and policies, visit www.weaversway.coop/board. Board members' email addresses are at www.weaversway.coop/board-directors, or contact the Board Administrator at boardadmin@weaversway.coop or 215-843-2350, ext. 118.

2024-2025 Weavers Way Board of Directors

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The Shuttle

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- Executive Chef**
Bonnie Shuman, ext. 374
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- Ambler**
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Assistant Store Manager
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8 a.m.-8 p.m.
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Assistant Store Manager
Stacy McGinnis
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Grocery Manager
Len Mears, ext. 217
lmears@weaversway.coop
- Next Door**
8426 Germantown Ave.
9 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-866-9150, ext. 220/221
Wellness Manager
Nicolette Giannantonio, ext. 221
nicolette@weaversway.coop

- Germantown**
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8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-1886
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jmitchell@weaversway.coop
Assistant Store Manager
Ariel Levine
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Kristina Walker;
kwalker@weaversway.coop
- Mt. Airy**
559 Carpenter Lane
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-2350
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Assistant Store Manager
Juli Cardamone, ext. 128
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- Across the Way**
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8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-2350, ext. 6
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Pet Department Manager
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Become a Member

Want to play a role in shaping your grocery store? Just complete a membership form in any store or online, make an equity investment, and you're good to go! We ask new members to attend an orientation meeting to learn about our cooperative model. You'll receive two hours of work credit for attending. We look forward to meeting you!

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Tuesday, March 18
 6:30-8:00 pm

To register visit: www.weaversway.coop/events

DID YOU KNOW?

You can read the Shuttle online.

www.weaversway.coop/shuttle-online



Lean into Spring at the Co-op



**Farm Market
Open March 7!**
Noon-6 p.m. Fridays
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays



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Ambler • Chestnut Hill • Germantown • Mt. Airy
Weavers Way Farm Market 7095 Henry Ave, Philadelphia, PA



Member Households

13,644+

Member Volunteer Hours in 2024

19,552

**Funds Raised for Community
Groups in 2024**

\$45,000+

Local Vendors Supported Total

275+

Containers Returned for Reuse

19,261+

**Pounds of Vegetables Harvested
at our Farm in 1 Year**

61,253