

How Co-op Vendors Joined Forces to Weather the Pandemic

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

WHEN LAUREN SHINN, OWNER OF ALOHA SMOOTHIES IN Ambler, was thinking of opening her shop in 2019, she wanted community to be a main ingredient in her business plan. To help achieve that, she turned to Weavers Way, which she joined in the fall of 2017, soon after the Ambler store opened.

“I had the opportunity to meet some of the local business owners and [find out about] their products during demonstrations

at Weavers Way, through reading the Shuttle or just being in the Co-op and chatting with the staff,” she wrote in an email last month.

But before she could go too far down that path, COVID-19 descended on Southeastern Pennsylvania and threw a wrench into everything, including her then-scheduled April 19, 2020 opening.



photo by Karen Plourde

Aloha Smoothie Co.'s logo adorns the back wall of their main location in Ambler.

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The Shuttle

MARCH 2021

Since 1973 | The Newspaper of Weavers Way Co-op

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Virtual Forum Aims To Renew Drive for Plastics Reduction

by Karen Melton, Weavers Way Plastic Reduction Task Force

THE WEAVERS WAY PLASTIC REDUCTION Task Force will kick off its 2021 set of activities to educate the public and reduce plastics usage with a virtual educational forum on Thursday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m.

The presenter that evening will be Carol Armstrong, a cognitive neuroscientist and neuropsychologist who was drawn to preserve marine environments, where biodiversity and ecological productivity are at great risk due to the expansion of human activities.

After 30 years of researching and caring for people with brain cancer and other neurological illnesses at Penn Medicine and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, she shifted her focus to plastics and watershed restoration. She joined the Advisory Council of the Pennsylvania Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, then completed the Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewardship Program.

Carol is active in the Stroud Water Research Center’s stream monitoring program and a longtime member of the Sierra Club. She leads service outings to clean debris from critical waters such as the Octoraro Reservoir in southeastern Lancaster County and the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. She is a frequent presenter on topics revolving around plastics and zero waste.

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Accounts Payable Specialist Dives Into Increasing the Diversity of Co-op Vendors

by Mira Kilpatrick, Weavers Way Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee



SINCE LAST SUMMER, A LOT OF BEHIND-the-scenes work has been taking place at Weavers Way to assess how we are doing through the lens of racial equity. As part of that process, the Co-op created the part-time position of vendor diversity coordinator and hired current Accounts Payable Specialist Candy Bermea-Hansan to fill it.

As part of her duties, Candy is charged with increasing the level of diversity among our current crop of vendors and bringing in a wider variety of products to the Co-op. She’s excited to take on both tasks.

“I have been passionate about diversifying the Co-op for quite some time now,” she wrote in an email. “I also always believe that everyone should be given an opportunity. Working in finance, you get to see different products come in, and I would like to see more diversity in our product selection...”



Candy Bermea-Hansan

The Co-op’s Vendor Diversity Initiative, made up of various staff members from all three stores, researched our current vendor makeup and concluded that it is severely lacking in racial diversity. Increasing that can help close the racial wealth gap, empower communities and create jobs in Black communities as well as those made up of people of color. It also will have the effect of bringing in a more diverse range of products, which in turn can make marginalized community members feel more valued in our stores.

Candy and Purchasing Manager Norman Weiss will be working with buyers at all three stores to help identify and add new vendors with the purpose of im-

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Can Changes in Policy Increase Job Growth In Philadelphia?

by Coleman Poses, Weavers Way New Economy Incubator Committee

ALTHOUGH COOPERATIVES HAVE the potential to change the ways that commodities are produced and distributed, they are still dependent upon the same governmental policies under which more traditional businesses operate. Currently, Philadelphia is the nation’s poorest large city, with a poverty rate hovering around 23%, according to an October 2020 column in the Inquirer. So can the municipal government institute policies to help accelerate job development?

The Inquirer recently launched a series of articles under the title “The Future of Work,” which identified a number of possible reasons for the city’s anemic 1.6% annual job growth rate in the private sector, which leaves it in 23rd place out of the 25 municipalities examined. Among the potential causes listed were inadequate educational achievement, the low minimum wage, high union membership rates and the difficulties of doing business here.

But what assurances do taxpayers have that government investment in these areas will be successful in generating new employment opportunities? For example, if we accept the ease of doing business as a basis for new jobs, how do

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Editor’s Note

by Karen Plourde, Editor,
Weavers Way Shuttle



WHERE WAS COVID-19 ON your list of anxieties this time last year? Right at the top? Farther down but climbing? Nowhere?

The only mention of COVID in the March 2020 Shuttle came from Head Honcho Jon Roesser, who assured us in his column that the Co-op was making plans to handle whatever the virus threw our way. He wasn’t wrong, but I don’t think anyone expected those plans to go on for a year and change.

In that issue, no one — staff or shoppers — was photographed wearing a mask. In fact, we featured a photo spread of the 2020 Membership Appreciation celebration, complete with full-faced shoppers congregating while eating cake and listening to performers singing far less than six feet away from them.

It was a simpler time.

We’re now taking our first halting steps toward post-COVID life (I won’t say “normalcy,” because what is that anymore?) As more of us get vaccinated and we continue to peel back restrictions (hopefully for good), we’ll get a truer sense of COVID’s impact on us. We’d be well served (painful as it might be) to take a long, hard look at we’ve learned from all we’ve endured. Rather than put the last year in our rear-view mirror, we should reserve a space somewhere close by for our COVID year — and carry it with us as we move forward.

Since the pandemic hit and settled in, I’ve lived for stories like this month’s above-the-fold, front-page article on how some Weavers Way vendors pooled their efforts to weather COVID-related halts to their business. (Yes, I wrote it, but it not my story.) I love that they met through the Co-op and found ways to support each other through a chaotic time.

It’s always been tough to run a small business, and the last year-plus has killed far too many. If Co-op connections, coupled with plenty of grit from their owners, made the difference for these vendors, so much the better.

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.



You’ll Take a Fancy to This
Stouthearted St. Patty’s Dessert

Recipe by Lisa Zerdes, Weavers Way Member and Professional Pastry Chef

STOUT AND OTHER DARK BEERS ARE OFTEN used in baking and cooking. The hops add a more interesting finish to this cake. Stout has chocolate undertones that marry well with the cocoa — it helps balance the sugar, and the sour cream makes it rich and incredibly moist.

Chocolate Stout Cake with Chocolate Ganache Frosting

- 1 cup stout beer, such as Guinness
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 ½ tsps. baking soda
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2/3 cup sour cream

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour or spray three six-inch cake pans, or one nonstick Bundt cake pan. If you are using a fluted Bundt pan, make sure you get butter and flour in all the nooks and crannies.

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat; add stout and bring to a simmer. Add cocoa powder and whisk until mixture is smooth. Cool slightly.

Whisk together all dry ingredients in a large bowl to blend. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat eggs and sour cream on medium speed until well blended. Add stout-chocolate mixture to egg mixture and beat just to combine. Add flour mixture and beat briefly on slow speed. Using rubber spatula, fold batter until completely combined. Pour batter into prepared pans or Bundt pan.

Bake until tester inserted into the middle comes out clean —about 35 minutes for either the cake pans or the Bundt pan. Transfer cake to a rack and cool completely before you turn the cake out.



photo by Joan Gigliotti

Chocolate Ganache Frosting

- 1 lb. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Place chopped chocolate in a large heatproof bowl. Bring heavy cream to a simmer in a medium sized pan. Pour hot cream over the chocolate and stir until mixture is completely smooth. Stir in vanilla extract.

If you are making the Bundt cake, pour or drizzle ganache over the top of the cooled cake.

If you are making the layer cake, refrigerate the frosting until it’s spreadable, stirring occasionally, about 45 minutes to an hour. If it gets too firm, put frosting in the mixer and beat with the paddle attachment until it becomes soft and spreadable.

Spread one-third of the icing over the top of each layer and use the remaining frosting to cover the top and sides of the cake. Enjoy!





St. Patrick’s Day Specials from the Co-op

IN STORES WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

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- 4-oz. Beet Horseradish Spread
- 10-oz. Honey Roasted Carrots
- Matzo Crackers

Order deadline is 72 hours prior to pick-up in Ambler and Chestnut Hill
Pre-paid orders online only, while supplies last.
Visit www.weaversway.coop to order



A Deep Dive into Nutrition Labels and Choosing Which Foods to Buy

by Dvora Konstant, for the Shuttle

Editor’s Note: This article gives a basic overview of nutrition facts; it should not be confused with medical advice. Before making any big changes to your daily diet, please consult a nutritionist or medical professional.

WHETHER IT’S OUR DAILY MEALS OR SNACKS, what we choose to eat affects our body’s health and well-being. With the pandemic requiring us to shop efficiently for the benefit of everyone, how do you decide which foods to bring home (or have delivered)? In these days of staying at home it is even more important to know what you are feeding your family or yourself to stay healthy.

Here’s a guide to deciphering the food labels found on most packaged products.

The Building Blocks of Food

Food is made up of three basic nutrients your body needs and cannot produce itself:

- **Fats** provide energy, support cell growth, protect organs, help keep the body warm, and assist in absorbing nutrients and producing important hormones. They are found in meat, fish, oil, butter and cheese.
- **Carbohydrates** are the main source of energy for the body. They are composed of sugar and fiber. Sugar molecules link together to form starches and fiber, which then break down into glucose. Naturally occurring sugars are found in fruit (fructose) and in milk (lactose), as well as white and brown sugar and honey.
- **Protein** makes up hair, blood, connective tissue, antibodies, enzymes and more. It comes from meat as well as in plant sources, including beans, lentils, split peas and black-eyed peas.

THE NUTRITION LABEL

Nutrition labels give you lots of information. We have defined some terms and added information to help you understand them.

Calories are a measurement to help manage your weight (lose, gain or maintain). The key is to balance how many calories you eat with how many your body uses.

Saturated fats are solid at room temperature (butter, for example). The American Heart Association recommends replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats. In a 2,000-calorie-per-day diet, only 5%-6% of calories, or 13 grams, should come from saturated fats.

Trans fats occur mostly in some baked goods, fast food, some snacks, some pre-prepared foods (think cookie dough, ready-made frosting, pie crusts), and vegetable shortening.

Cholesterol is a component of blood that affects heart health. There are two types: low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) and high-density lipoproteins (HDLs). It’s best to try to reduce your LDLs, which take cholesterol to your arteries, and increase your HDLs, which transport cholesterol to your liver to be expelled from your body.

According to the Harvard Health website, you can lower your LDL cholesterol level by reducing trans fats and saturated fats, eating more fruits and vegetables, and avoiding refined sugars and grains. To up your HDL level, healthline.com recommends switching to olive oil in salad dressings, sauces and lower-temperature cooking, and incorporating beans, legumes, whole grains, high-fiber fruit and fatty fish into your diet.

Sodium Americans tend to consume too much, mostly from eating packaged and prepared foods. The recommended daily amount is less than 2,300 milligrams per day, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

Dietary Fiber is mostly found in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes. The recommended daily amount for adults is 25 to 30 grams a day from food, not supplements, according to the American Heart Association Eating Plan. Most Americans get about half of that per day.

Total Sugars should be consumed sparingly, if at all. The AHA suggests an added sugar limit of no more than 100 calories a day for most women and 150 calories a day for most men.

Protein is necessary for many growth processes; it can be found in meat and plant sources. The recommended daily amount is .8 grams per kilograms of an individual’s body weight.

The following nutrients may improve individual health and reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions:

Vitamin D Found in some foods; added to almost all processed dairy milk and some orange juice. It’s needed to absorb calcium and promote bone growth.



Calcium One of the most important minerals for the body. Helps form and maintain healthy teeth and bones.

Iron Helps red blood cells transport oxygen; plays a role in energy levels in the body.

Potassium An important mineral that regulates fluid balance, muscle contractions and nerve systems.

Dvora Konstant is a writer/editor who translates scientific into English. She has kept kosher, been a vegetarian, and has diabetes as well as a genetic disease involving copper absorption. She and her husband have fed two children, one of whom is a vegetarian, and both of whom are now grown (so we must have gotten it right).

Cozy Up to Cabbage

by Kieran McCourt, Weavers Way Ambler

This humble yet sturdy green shone in 2020, a year that featured fewer shopping trips.

New Ideas:

Hold the mayo and switch up your ‘slaw game. After coring your cabbage, slice it thinly. In a wide bowl, heavily salt and massage it to make sure the salt is distributed. Put a plate on top of the cabbage and weigh it down with whatever you have at hand (canned beans or a small pot filled with water will work in a pinch). Allow to sit for at least 30 minutes to two hours. The salt will draw out the water, leaving you with a softened yet crunchy brassica. Drain the drawn liquid. If you’re concerned about the salt, you can rinse your cabbage. Dress however you please — a carrot-ginger dressing works well. Mix in julienned carrot, radishes

or thinly sliced peppers. Go bold with the flavors and enjoy a cabbage-forward slaw.

Roast it! Cabbage holds up well against the heat of the oven. There are a number of ways you can do it:

1. Core and slice thickly into planks or wedges;
2. Roast with the core still intact, or even whole. Roasting will bring out some of its natural sweetness while adding tenderness and crispy-ness. Serve plain or dress up with your favorite accompaniment for roasted Brussels sprouts. Impress your dining companions with a whole roasted cabbage sliced into wedges and dressed like a wedge salad.

Braise it! A little bit of flavorful liquid and low heat can turn cabbage into a delightful side or make it the

centerpiece of a plant-based dinner. Whether chopped or cut into wedges, this sturdy vegetable can turn silky and tender. It picks up the flavors of the liquid, whether that’s a soy sauce-based braise or a more vinegar-y affair like southern collards and turnip greens.

Ferment it! From the sauerkraut of Europe to the kimchi of Korea, fermented and pickled cabbages have been staples across the globe. A simple sauerkraut starts almost exactly like the previous slaw suggestion, except that you’ll be storing the cabbage for longer and will fully submerge it in its own liquid until the lovely lactobacillus bacteria go to work. For more detailed directions, there are numerous reliable guides online and in print.

Philly Magazine Tags the Co-op As a Meat Source

WEAVERS WAY WAS NAMED a recommended location for buying meat in the Philadelphia area in a recent article in Philadelphia Magazine.

In “Here’s Where You Should Be Shopping for Meat in the Philly Area,” Maddy Sweitzer-Lamme’ notes that the Co-op sources meat from local vendors and farmers such as Esbenshade Farm, Meadow Run Farm (both located in Lancaster County), and Stryker Farm of Saylorsburg, Monroe County.

FOOD

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An offshoot of Weavers Way Co-op

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FOOD MOXIE

We dig what we eat.

Welcome to Our Newest Board Members, and Help Us this Spring

by Lisa Mosca, Food Moxie Executive Director

THIS PAST MONTH, FOOD MOXIE WAS EXCITED TO WELCOME ELDRIDGE Ragsdale and Marie Clark to our board of directors. Here’s a little background on each of them.

Some of you may know Eldredge as one of the tour guides from this year’s Urban Farm Bike Ride at Awbury Community Garden. He spent the first 25 years of his life traveling the world and training, supervising and mentoring military personnel. After retiring as an Army staff sergeant, he started a second 20-year career with the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Following his retirement from PHA, Eldredge began a third career as a master gardener and City Harvest gardener at Awbury Community Garden. In 2014, he was elected president of the garden, a position he still holds today. He also manages the Historic Strawberry Mansion garden and orchard in East Fairmount Park, where his wife, Connie, is director. In 2018, he joined the Awbury Arboretum board, and the following year, he received the prestigious Golden Persimmon award from the Philadelphia Orchard Project. In 2020, Eldredge was honored by Food Moxie for his community food security work, which has included years of mentoring gardeners of all ages as well as growing thousands of pounds of organic produce and donating it to area emergency food providers.

Marie Clark is a communications and public relations expert. She consults with many nonprofit clients, including the Philanthropy Network of Philadelphia and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Marie has been engaged in helping facilitate citywide conversations about food access and justice. She has spent many years sharing best practices that help nonprofits to communicate with their stakeholders. Marie will bring expertise in social media outreach, email marketing, web and print design and photography and videography to our board. We are excited for both these new board members to “dig in” with Food Moxie and are

Eldredge Ragsdale

Marie Clark

(Continued on next page)

CONNECT TO MOBILITY

Learn how to alleviate and manage shoulder pain.

Strong and flexible, yet surprisingly fragile, shoulder and elbow joints control the movements of our arms throughout the day. When discomfort or injuries occur in these areas, it can disrupt our daily activities at home, at work, and most importantly at play! Don’t let shoulder pain interfere with your quality of life. Join us on our free virtual webinar with **Timothy Amann, DO, orthopedic surgeon**, to discover the common causes and latest treatments for shoulder pain, and how to improve your shoulder mobility.

WHEN: Wednesday, March 17
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FOOD MOXIE

(Continued from previous page)

grateful they have agreed to lend their talents to our all-volunteer working board!

I'm going to make a plug for spring, since this is the March issue. We have had many volunteer cancellations since COVID-19 hit, and we have been grateful that Weavers Way cooperators have stepped in to fill the breach. Food Moxie will continue to seek support for drivers to help us make contactless deliveries to our students. We also have posted shifts for support in the field, helping us fill root pouches for community plant distributions and helping us with infrastructure projects and spring cleaning.

Our workdays will continue to happen outside, with everyone masked and socially distanced. If you are a working member interested in completing your hours by supporting us, check out our shifts at the Co-op's Member Center. We could not do what we do without your support.

Fruit closeup Stenton Manor (pictured right)
Roots before, chopped and cooked (pictured below)



THANKS TO...

- Comcast Cares
- First United Methodist Church of Germantown
- Lida Foundation
- Iron Hill Brewery
- All our recent individual donors, sustainers, High Five members and volunteers
- All our partners, their staff and teachers
- The Food Moxie board and staff
- Weavers Way Co-op staff and members
- All the Coop members who have been helping with our workdays and deliveries

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Donations support Weavers Way Environment Committee's Environmental Grants program. Recycling services provided by PAR-RecycleWorks.
For more information go to: www.PAR-RecycleWorks.org

L.E.T.T.E.R.S

We Should Eat Plants

APPRECIATE THE SHUTTLE’S HIGH-lighting Joanne Fagerstrom’s nutri-tion advice undermining the miscon-ception that dairy consumption supports human health by pointing to the link be-tween consuming cow’s milk and higher rates of osteoporosis (“Wyndmoor Thera-pist Goes Virtual to Keep Patients Hold-ing Steady,” January/February 2021). But I find her praise for yogurt and sardines dubious.

According to “The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implica-tions for Diet, Weight Loss and Long-Term Health” by T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell II, there is no nutrient found in animals that isn’t better obtained from plants. That isn’t surprising, since human beings are natural plant-foraging herbi-vores, not omnivores or carnivores as widely believed. Their argument goes against the premise of Michael Pollan’s “ground-breaking” book, “The Omnivore’s Dilem-ma,” which left readers wondering: What omnivores? What dilemma?

Human beings are native to the African savanna, where they selected from a vari-ety of edible leaves, flowers, roots, berries, nuts, seeds and legumes while falling prey to big cats, reptiles, dogs and raptors. For a thorough debunking of the human “hunter-gatherer” myth, see “Man The Hunted: Pri-mates, Predators and Human Evolution” by Donna Hart and Robert W. Sussman.

Ben Lotka

Loved for Valentine’s Recipe

I JUST WANTED TO DROP A LINE OF thanks to Joan Gigliotti for the recipe in the January-February Shuttle. What a time my family of five had this Valentine’s Day! There was the impromptu kitch-en dance party featuring the baby while the eggplant sautéed. There was a valen-tine trivia game hosted by the 10-year-old while we dined. And what put it over the top was the lip-smacking chorus coming from one very picky seven-year-old.

This delicious recipe made for a real event for this cooped up Co-op crew.

Lynsey Augustus
(and Dan, Nola, Gus, and Nellie)

CORRECTION

IN “SOUTH PHILLY CO-OP OPENS ITS Doors with a Heap of Help from Weavers Way” in the March Shuttle, Val-erie Glauser states that former Weavers Way Board Member David Woo was laid off from WHYY in 2010. David emailed to let us know that he left WHYY that year to take a job with Angel Flight East, a 501(c)3 located in Blue Bell, Montgom-ery County. He was later laid off from there.

The Shuttle regrets the error.

Look Out for Third-Party Overcharging

THANKS TO A THREAD ON NEXT-door, I was advised to check my PECO bill because of overcharging by third-party electric suppliers.

I signed up with Energy Plus/NRG in 2011 to save money on my electric bill and earn American Airlines mileage points. I checked to see if the rates were comparable at the time, and the account was on autopay.

After reading the Nextdoor thread, I checked my bill, only to realize that EnergyPlus had increased its rates from six cents per kilowatt hour to a high of 19.4 cents without my knowledge. This resulted in our overpaying about \$1500 per year on our electric bill for the last 10 years!

There are plenty of customers who are in the same situation but may not re-alize the egregiously abusive rates that these companies can charge in an unreg-

ulated environment. Please check your gas and electric bills if you have signed up with a company other than PECO or PGW!

The folks at PECO admitted that this happens all too often and that they are reformatting their graphics to make the disparities between their rates and what third- party supply customers are paying more prominent on their bill. Currently, bills have a small box on the right side of the second page labeled “Message Cen-ter from PECO which, in the second para-graph, reads, “Your estimated electric price to compare is \$0.0643 per kWh.”

I am making it my business to see that fellow Philadelphians are not be-ing victimized by abusive pricing the way that I was before I switched back to PECO as my electric supplier on Feb. 1.

Christine Bamberger

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 fewer and may be edited. The Shuttle reserves the right to decline to publish any letter.

For everyone’s safety

keep
6ft apart

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR
Northwest Village Network

NVN's coordinator works a flexible schedule, 10-15 hours/week.

Qualifications: Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications and relational databases; familiarity with Quick Books; experience working with websites; strong writing and editing skills; the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse, older membership.

To learn about NVN, go to **northwestvillagenetwork.org**. NVN is an equal opportunity employer.

For a complete job description and/or to apply, please send a cover letter and resume to **Robert Harris at bbbharris@aol.com**. Application deadline is 3/10/21.

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MEDICAL BILLING



The Part the Co-op Plays in Strengthening Our Local Food Shed

by Jon Roesser, Weavers Way General Manager

“THE PROPER ROLE OF GOVERNMENT,” ACCORD-
ing to former President Dwight Eisenhower, is to
be “a partner of the farmer,” so that “Agriculture may
continue to be the sound, enduring foundation for our
economy.”

With this statement, Ike succinctly sums up near-
ly 100 years of United States food policy.

What cynics would call our “food industrial com-
plex” is referred to by the U.S. Department of Agri-
culture as our “food system.” It includes everything
from farming to food production, packaging and dis-
tribution, retail and consumption.

Since the Great Depression, presidents of both
parties have seen the federal government as a “partner
of the farmer,” primarily because they’ve (quite cor-
rectly) concluded that keeping the people fed is fun-
damental to national security. That many Americans
go hungry anyway is a failure of public policy, not a
failure of the nation’s food system, which is capable
of producing ample food to meet the nutritional needs
of all Americans.

The inevitable outcome of a century of food pol-
icy focused almost entirely on keeping the masses fed
is a food system that is undeniably remarkable but
also hugely problematic. In the name of maximiz-
ing output at the lowest possible cost, America’s food
system is highly dependent on fossil fuels, fertiliz-
ers, pesticides, genetically modified crops and single-
use plastic. And most Americans would prefer not to
think about the system’s chronic exploitation of work-
ers and the horrific conditions in which animals are
raised and slaughtered.

Industry consolidation has occurred at every lev-
el, from the farmer to the retailer, so that every year
there are fewer and fewer players that are part of an
ever-growing national food system. Put another way,
at no point in our history have so many of us been so
dependent on so few.

So far, America’s food system has proven resil-
ient during the pandemic. Early on there were some
supply chain issues, but for most people it was little

“During the pandemic,
the Co-op did not
suffer the same supply
chain woes as the big
grocery chains.”

more than an inconvenience. The system adapted and
endured.

But the pandemic did raise alarms about our food
system’s fragility. One particular area of concern were
the giant meat and poultry processing facilities that
are a critical link in the chain. At one point it was
feared the virus would force many of these facilities
to close. This could have had a catastrophic effect on
the entire system, impacting everyone from farmers
to consumers.

So an important takeaway from the pandemic
is that the nation’s food system is vulnerable and it
wouldn’t take much – another, even deadlier pandem-
ic; an act of sabotage; cataclysmic weather events – to
knock it offline. The good news for us is that an alter-
native system already exists, and we as a Co-op have
an important role to play.

As many noticed, during the pandemic the Co-op
did not suffer the same supply chain woes as the big
grocery chains. We had some problems, for sure, but
because we are less reliant on the larger national food
system, we fared better than most grocers.

Weavers Way is a critical component of the lo-
cal food system, otherwise known as the Philadelphia
food shed. And strengthening it should be a top prior-
ity in the post-pandemic world.

Our local food shed isn’t what it used to be. Sub-
urban sprawl gobbled up hundreds of square miles of
farmland that had for centuries served as the city’s
breadbasket. The city’s big food producers — meat
packing plants, dairies, commercial bakeries, etc. —
have almost all closed.

But by geographic happenstance, the Philadel-
phia region, despite being part of the East Coast meg-
alopolis, is still surrounded by an impressive agricul-
tural green belt that stretches counterclockwise from
Lancaster County into Maryland, Delaware and New
Jersey, and back around to the northern environs of
Bucks and Montgomery counties. The diversity of
this green belt is extraordinary: Farmers grow ev-
erything from sweet corn to salad greens, apples and
stone fruit, poultry and beef, and milk and cheese.

In and around the city, there’s an ever-growing
contingent of food producers who make everything
from bread to beef jerky.

Last year, the Co-op sold products from 260 local
food businesses; local sales represent about one-third
of our total sales. While we recognize there are limits
to how much locally grown and produced food we can
sell — there’s no such thing as local bananas or local
citrus fruit — there’s still opportunity for the Co-op
to play an even more important role in supporting the
Philadelphia food shed.

We should consider it our patriotic duty to reduce
our dependency on the nation’s fragile and morally
problematic food system. So allow me to borrow and
modify Ike’s quote to fit our times and circumstance:

“The proper role of our Co-op is to be a partner to
the local farmer and food producer, so that the Phila-
delphia food shed may continue to be the sound, en-
during foundation for our local economy.”

See you around the Co-op.



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Looking Forward to a New Farm Season with Some of the Same Faces

by Nina Berryman, Weavers Way Farm Manager



photo by Nina Berryman

Departing Henry Got Crops Farm Manager Josh Parr (right), harvesting celery along with fellow Weavers Way farmers Maddy Ballard and Shawn Brody last year.



photo by Alessandro Ascherio

Chelsea Mackie pruning the plum trees at Henry Got Crops Orchard last year

THERE WILL BE SOME NEW BUT OTHERWISE FAMILIAR faces around the Henry Got Crops farm this season. Previous Field Manager Josh Parr is looking to expand his farming experiences and will be working at a different farm outside of Philadelphia for the 2021 growing season. Meanwhile, Chelsea Mackie will be taking the reins in his place as the new field manager at Henry Got Crops.

Josh started with us as an assistant in the 2018 growing season at our Mort Brooks Farm at Awbury Arboretum. At the end of that season, he was eager to take on new responsibilities and in 2019 transitioned smoothly into the role of co-manager of Henry Got Crops. At the end of 2019, the opportunity arose to manage that site on his own and he gladly took it on.

Josh likes to see things through, and for that we are grateful. Managing the Henry Got Crops site is no small task, with the comings and goings of CSA shareholders, farm market customers, and teachers and students from Saul, not to mention the volunteers. Last year, all that happened during a pandemic!

He has an eye for efficiency and the gift of analysis, and he put these skills to good use on the farm. Among the lasting improvements he made were a new crop rotation, bed marking systems, and a crop profitability analysis tool. Josh put together a thoughtful planting plan for 2021 before leaving, which positions our new field manager for a successful first season. This plan, as well as Chelsea’s existing familiarity with our farms, will allow her to hit the ground running.

Chelsea has already worn many hats with us at Weavers Way Farms. We first met her when she was a shareholder in our CSA and volunteered weekly on the farm. While there, she was bitten by the farming bug and went on to gain a more in-depth experience as a farm apprentice at Pennypack Farm in Horsham. She also has spent a full season with us as a field assistant, working on both of our farms as well as at the Henry Got Crops farm market. We are excited to have Chelsea in her new role, given her well-rounded experience at Pennypack, and her familiarity with our farms. Chelsea also has a background in sustainable engineering to boot!

We are fortunate that many other farmers and farm market staff from 2020 will return for the new growing season. Look for an article in the spring re-introducing them, along with our new crew!

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RUN★RUN★RUN★RUN

NOTICE of Election for Weavers Way Co-op Board of Directors

Members may vote online beginning on or about April 1, 2021, through May 2. Voting will end 30 minutes after the the date of the Weavers Way Spring General Membership Meeting begins.

Board positions to be filled: 4 At-Large Directors for 3-Year Terms

Candidate’s application and instructions are available at www.weaversway.coop/board-elections

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Can Changes in Policy Increase Job Growth In Philadelphia?



we interpret the success of a city like San Jose, CA, which ranked fourth out of 25 cities for job growth, but ranked lower (79) than Philadelphia (71) on the ease of doing business?

More rigorous statistical methods might help civic leaders determine where investment would be most appropriate. In performing a modest analysis, I examined how job growth correlated with educational achievement (for example, the percentage of students who were proficient in reading and math for grades 4 and 8); the minimum wage, union membership rates, and the ease of doing business. This last category included such components as what’s involved in starting a business, hiring workers, getting electricity, securing land and space, and paying taxes.

The only candidates that came close to meeting the standards of statistical significance were the ones involving educational achievement, with fourth grade math percentages being particularly impressive.

Apprenticeship programs such as PowerCorpsPHL, which boasts an employment placement rate of 90%, appear to substantiate the importance of

education to employment in the city. If future exploration suggests educational achievement as an important predictor of new jobs, Philadelphia’s public schools may be a good target for additional investment.

According to the School District of Philadelphia’s website, in 2019 only 22% of the district’s students were proficient or more than proficient on Pennsylvania System School Assessment tests in math; 36% met this standard in English language arts. When it came to proficiency on the Keystone Algebra I and Literature exams, 20% and 41%, performed at least proficiently.

This analysis raises a number of concerns:

- Union membership is a debatable factor, because these numbers are based upon metropolitan areas rather than areas strictly within a city’s boundaries. Since cities are often centers of employment for many suburban union members, there may be justification for using these numbers. But there should be consensus on the matter.
- Is there no connection, or are there multiple connections between minimum wage and job growth? Whereas minimum wage is a burden to some companies seeking to lower their operating costs, other companies might welcome the better educated and trained labor force that minimum wage laws may attract.
- The connection between fourth grade math proficiency and employment seems like a stretch, but a clearer picture might emerge if we were to

increase our sample size and examine 12th grade proficiency data, once it is available.

- There are no doubt other critiques with this analysis, but such criticisms should be used to hone its method, not avoid it. This proposal is simply a starting point. More robust evaluations of possible

(Continued from Page 1)

predictors of job growth will hopefully develop along with the rising interest in how to fortify Philadelphia’s economy. We need the city to recover not only from the impact of COVID-19, but also from the effects of automation and outside competition.

A PARTIAL LIST OF POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR JOB GROWTH IN CITIES

City	Job Growth	Ease of Doing Business – Score*	% Proficient in - Math Grade 4**	Minimum Wage***	% Union membership****
Atlanta, Georgia	2.50%	78.34	31	\$7.25	4.10%
Austin, Texas	4.20%	74.38	45	\$7.25	2.30%
Baltimore, Maryland	1.40%	72.85	15	\$11.00	9.30%
Boston, Massachusetts	1.80%	69.26	32	\$12.75	10.50%
Charlotte, North Carolina	2.90%	74.88	49	\$7.25	2.40%
Chicago, Illinois	1.40%	74.80	31	\$10.00	12.80%
Columbus, Ohio	2.10%	77.07		\$8.70	10.00%
Dallas, Texas	2.90%	74.46	32	\$7.25	4.90%
Denver, Colorado	2.60%	78.23	35	\$12.00	7.20%
Detroit, Michigan	1.90%	71.80	6	\$9.65	13.70%
Houston, Texas	2.30%	80.64	31	\$7.25	3.70%
Indianapolis, Indiana	1.90%	71.21		\$7.25	6.90%
Jacksonville, Florida	2.40%	76.49	45	\$8.56	12.40%
Los Angeles, California	1.70%	64.85	20	\$13.00	13.70%
Nashville, Tennessee	3.50%	77.57		\$7.25	4.60%
New York, New York	2.50%	64.86	32	\$11.80	19.10%
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1.60%	68.40	18	\$7.25	12.60%
Phoenix, Arizona	2.70%	71.43		\$12.00	5.20%
Portland, Oregon	2.20%	67.89		\$12.00	13.60%
San Antonio, Texas	2.80%	80.58		\$7.25	3.40%
San Diego, California	2.10%	66.78	42	\$13.00	10.00%
San Francisco, California	3.50%	70.37		\$13.00	14.50%
San Jose, California	3.10%	65.85		\$13.00	9.10%
Seattle, Washington	2.60%	73.06		\$16.39	18.90%
Washington, D.C.	2.00%	69.84	36	\$15.00	8.20%

* [ASU Center for the Study of Economic Liberty, “Doing Business North America”](#)
** [National Center for Education Statistics, “The Nation’s Report Card”](#)
*** [The Economic Policy Institute, “Minimum Wage Tracker”](#)
**** [Union Membership and Coverage Database from the CPS](#)

Virtual Forum Aims To Renew Drive for Plastics Reduction

She will discuss some of the plastic reduction policies that have been implemented locally and around the world. In addition, she will walk those in attendance through the goals of zero waste and the work being done by the Zero Waste International Alliance. A moderated Q&A session will follow her presentation.

The pandemic set back several Task Force measures intended to reduce plastic use at the Co-op, but we hope to get those

back on track this year. We invite members to join us to learn about plastics, how to reduce your own “plastic footprint” and how to help advocate for reduced plastic policies at the Co-op as well as in our city and state.

For more information on the forum and a link to register, go to the Calendar of Events on the Co-op’s website.

(Continued from Page 1)



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Pronoun Sensitivity Means a Lot To The Co-op's Queer Colleagues

by Jax Arnold, Weavers Way Ambler Front End Manager



photo by Nate Rose @honey.im.not.home

Jax Arnold

WHAT ARE YOUR PRONOUNS? Some of you may know me from my many years working on the front end in Chestnut Hill, or in Ambler since the store's debut. Up until this past year, I went by Jaxson and used he/him pronouns. I now go by Jax and I use she or they pronouns. This means when you are referring to me, you should say, "she is a cashier," or "they are dynamite." I am sharing this with you because it is important to myself and other queer colleagues that we feel seen and respected by the members of the community in which we serve.

The sentiment of this article is not for me to come out to those of you who have not heard yet. More importantly, it is to let you know that you can never tell someone's gender identity from just looking at them. You can guess, but you might be wrong. That assumption, based on the person's appearance, can be hurtful.

One's identity is personal; it is an internal experience that can be expressed in various ways. Women can dress more masculine, and you should not assume what their gender is based on that. The use of correct language is one way for people to show us support.

We should normalize the sharing of one's pronouns as an act of respect and visibility. As a co-op, it is our mission to meet the needs of the community. In that context, I think it is important for us to make a conscious effort to understand and support one another.

I have been out as nonbinary/trans for about a year, and I am still learning a lot about myself and the queer community. Because I have been working at the Co-op for such a long time, it has been challenging and sometimes exhausting coming out to people who have not seen me in a long time.

I want other trans and nonbinary folks to feel welcomed and seen at Weavers Way by their colleagues and community. In recent times, we have all been unlearning our biases and reevaluating the various injustices facing our country. A large amount of our time is spent at work, and we are fortunate enough that the Co-op has been known to be caring and inclusive. But we still have much to do to continue to foster a positive work environment.

If you want to learn more about gender and gender stereotypes, please do some research. Asking your confidantes challenging questions is one way you can fuel your own learning and competencies in queer culture. Your role in being conscious of pronouns is a small yet powerful way to show allyship and support.

Artists in Our Aisles

Ruth Joray

Ruth is a lifelong painter. She started serious painting at the Corcoran Museum School in Washington, DC, while in high school, earned a bachelor's of fine arts and art teacher certification from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Master's in counseling psychology from Chestnut Hill College.



Her first Philadelphia exhibit took place at the Philadelphia Art Alliance, and her most recent was at Sweet Mabel Art & Craft in Narberth. She has participated in many exhibits in Northwest Philadelphia.

Ruth retired after a career in education, counseling, teaching, administration and clinical work, and now focuses more on her art. She works in watercolor on paper, acrylic on canvas and Jacquard dyes on silk.

Her current project imagery is inspired by microscopic biological forms. The painted images respond to the universal beauty of natural forms, no matter how small or monumental. She has a love for biology and "invisible things," and uses micro-photographic images of brain cells, other animal cells,



one-celled organisms, rare sea creatures and other elusive life forms to inspire her painting designs.

The paintings are on silk panels, done with specific silk dyes. They can be worn as an accessory or hung on the wall.

ruthjoray@gmail.com

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)

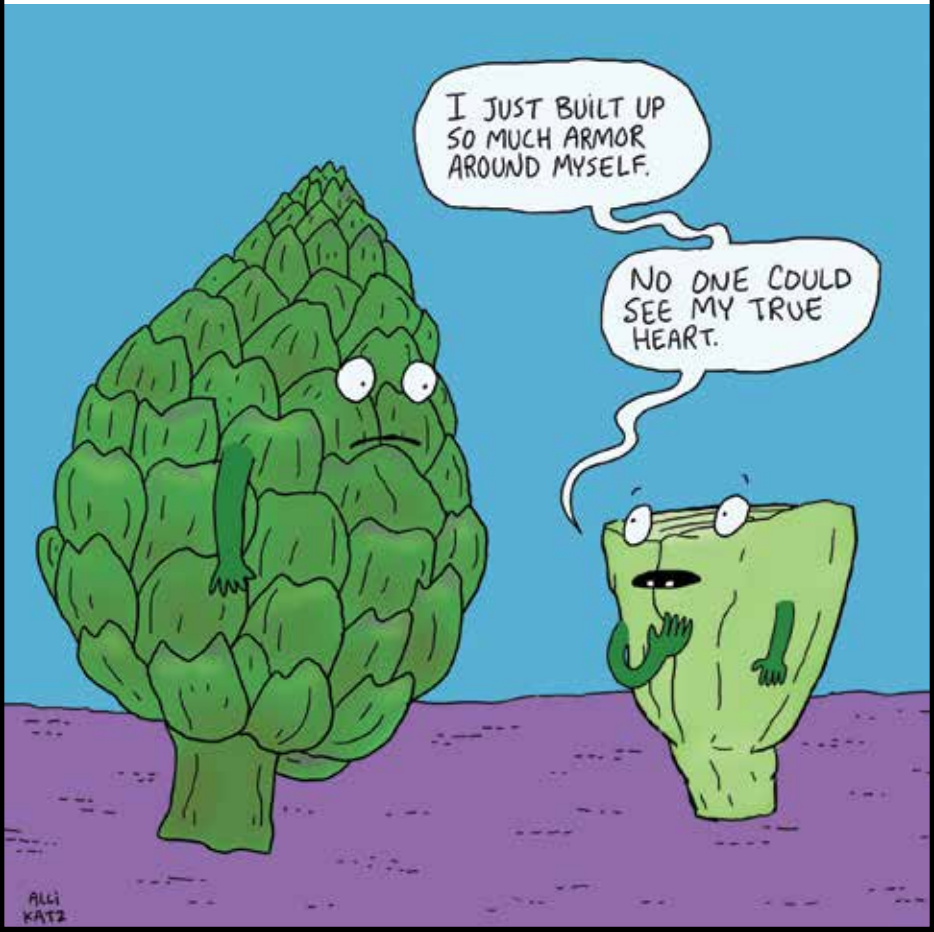
A short statement about the work • A short bio

A head shot • A link to a website if you have one

Thanks. We're looking forward to your creations.

Locally Grown

Illustration by Alli Katz



Molly Kellogg, LCSW, LDN

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photo by Kristy Morley

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are woodpeckers that are in our area only in the winter. The small holes they drill in trees are more often seen than the bird itself. Because they are made in living trees, the holes leak sap that the birds consume. In the early spring, when there may not be many flowers blooming, sapsucker holes can be a valuable first source of food for insects and hummingbirds.



photo by Kristy Morley

Most trees in our area lose their leaves in the winter, but American beech trees often keep their leaves, especially young trees. Keeping the leaves may help the trees obtain nutrients or protect delicate spring buds from predators.

Sights of the Season in the Wissahickon

by Kristy Morley, Senior Naturalist, and Margaret Rohde, Conservation Manager, Wissahickon Trails

WINTER IS A GREAT TIME TO GET OUT AND EXPLORE THE TRAILS. The season offers the opportunity to observe things in nature that are difficult to see otherwise.



photo by Kristy Morley

It's a great time to see animal tracks in the snow like these left by a dark-eyed junco. You can take a photo with your smartphone and use iNaturalist to help you identify any animal tracks you see.



photo by Kristy Morley

If the gray days of winter are getting you down, take a walk and look for snowbells in bloom. While not native to our area, they bloom early and let us know that spring is coming.



photo by Kristy Morley

Birds are more visible without all those leaves to hide them. Woodpeckers, like this red-bellied woodpecker, can frequently be seen on snags (dead trees that are still standing). Snags are an important part of the forest. Since their wood is somewhat decayed and more easily excavated, they are favored by cavity-nesting birds as well as by insects, and those insects are important winter food for many species.



photo by Lisa Hansell

Winter precipitation can cause muddy conditions on the trails, which means they are not only slippery, but can more easily be damaged. When you walk around muddy spots and puddles to avoid them, it damages vegetation on the sides of the trail, eventually widening it and making a problem area worse. If you have to pass through a muddy spot, use caution, embrace it, and try to stay in the middle of the trail.



photo by Kristy Morley

Winter is also a great time to spot bird nests in trees. Old hawk nests may be visible due to their large size, like this one made by a pair of red-shouldered hawks. Keep your eyes peeled for large nests, because you might get lucky and see a great horned owl peering back at you. Their nesting season begins earlier than hawk nesting season, and they sometimes use hawk nests from past breeding seasons.



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A Half-Dozen Tips to Remember When Switching to Renewable Electricity

by Noah Swistak, Member Services Lead, The Energy Co-op

SHOPPING FOR RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY CAN BE AS easy as shopping for your groceries. But it makes sense to understand the quality and source of both the food that powers you and the energy that powers your home or business.

Through March 31, Weavers Way members who become new members of The Energy Co-op by enrolling in its renewable electricity program will be eligible to receive a \$25 credit to their EasyPay account. Quality nourishment, quality power!

The Energy Co-op is a different kind of renewable electricity supplier and was founded by Weavers Way in 1979. As a member-owned, nonprofit cooperative, we provide 100% renewable electricity with 100% transparency and have done so since 1998. Our members know every cent is going toward our mission of helping them affordably and sustainably buy, use and understand energy.

We invite you to learn just how easy shopping for renewable electricity in Pennsylvania can be. Here are some tips to keep in mind when making your choice:

1. Choose a Pennsylvania supplier

If you’ve decided to power your home with renewable electricity, why not support your local, clean energy economy by choosing a local supplier? By doing that, your renewable electricity dollars will have the most impact. They will not only reduce carbon emissions but also will create local, clean energy jobs and investment in our region.

2. Choose a Pennsylvania supplier that offers 100% Pennsylvania renewable electricity

There is no better way to support investment in local



clean energy jobs than by buying renewable electricity generated right here in Pennsylvania. Members of The Energy Co-op have the option to power their home or business with renewable energy produced in our home state, which can help drive local renewable energy costs even lower.

3. Choose a Pennsylvania electricity supplier that supplies only renewable electricity

In Pennsylvania, the least expensive renewable electricity is offered by large, vertically integrated companies that also generate and supply electricity produced with coal, natural gas, nuclear and other non-renewable fuels. Renewable supply often makes up less than 10% of the electricity generated by these companies. There’s no assurance that the dollars you spend on renewable energy won’t be invested in non-renewable fuel projects.

Buying from a supplier like The Energy Co-op, which supplies only renewable electricity, provides peace of mind about where your clean energy dollar is going.

4. Choose a Pennsylvania electricity supplier that supplies only wind and solar power

Wind and solar power are the two fastest-growing electricity generation sources in the United States. But in many states, including Pennsylvania, electricity pro-

duced from a wide array of sources, including hydro-electric dams, wood pulping and even coal mine methane is designated as “renewable” or “alternative.” Now is not the time for 19th century technology. In the 21st century, make sure all of your renewable electricity comes from 100% wind and solar power.

5. Choose a Pennsylvania supplier that offers a 12-month fixed rate without any cancellation fee

Some renewable electricity suppliers offer fixed rates for terms shorter than a full year (only three months), or much longer (up to 36 months). Some charge fees on cancellations made prior to the end of term. Look for a supplier that offers the guarantee of a fixed rate for a year, with no penalty for cancellation due to an unexpected event. You can’t plan for the unexpected, but you can buy renewable electricity from a supplier who protects you from it.

6. Buy renewable electricity from yourself!

The Energy Co-op is a nonprofit cooperative, owned by its members. We don’t have customers; there are no tricks or gimmicks. As a cooperative, The Energy Co-op’s business is entirely transparent to its members. And becoming a member of The Energy Co-op also supports the growth of a network of local, community-focused cooperatives like Weavers Way.

As a Philadelphia-based cooperative, The Energy Co-op supplies only 100% wind- and solar-powered, renewable electricity to our members, many of whom choose our 100% Pennsylvania power option. We also offer fixed rates for 12 months with no signup, monthly or cancellation fees. Learn more at theenergy.coop and contact us at info@theenergy.coop or 215.413.2122.

Increasing the Diversity of Co-op Vendors

proving racial diversity. Additionally, the Co-op has initiated a New Vendor Incubator Program, which Candy will help facilitate. The program will help potential vendors who don’t have liability insurance, access to a certified commercial kitchen, or other factors which would normally keep their products from being sold on our shelves to overcome some of these hurdles. Weavers Way is committing \$10,000 in grants and \$10,000 in low-interest loans to the program in fiscal 2021.

Among Candy’s first tasks will be to go through an extensive list of vendor candidates who have expressed an interest in having their products sold at the Co-op.

“But I am excited to meet every one of them and hear their stories,” she wrote. “When we talk about di-

versity, I don’t want to just add a few vendors of color to make our numbers look better. I want to bring in quality products as well.”

Her short-term goal is “to find diamonds in the rough — people who have great products but do not have the know-how to get them in the stores. These are the people that I would love to help the most; it’s the best way to help a struggling community, in my opinion.”

Weavers Way is committed to improving diversity, equity and inclusion on our staff (particularly in middle and upper management), in our customer base, and in the businesses we support. As one of the people now responsible for attaining that goal, Candy recognizes that her work is an essential part of the process.

(Continued from Page 1)

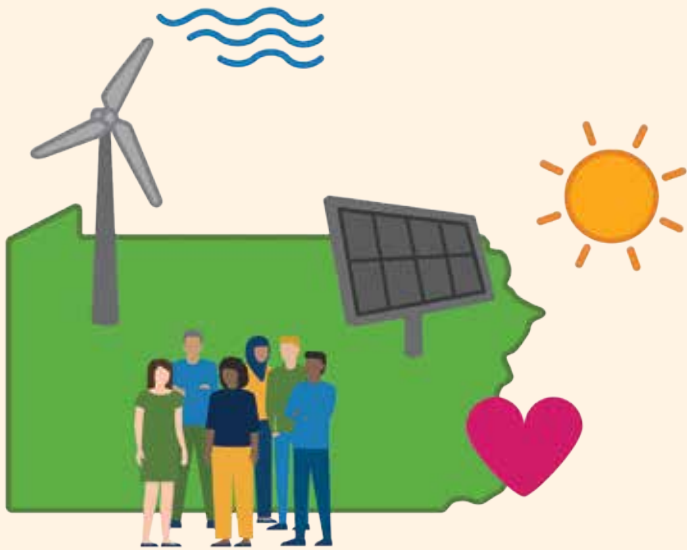
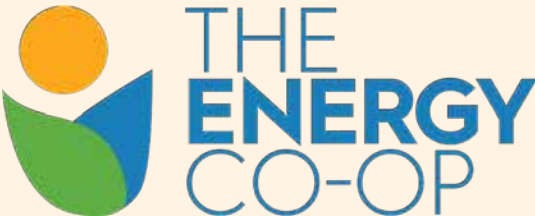
“We will search out vendors that fit the profile, which means that you do not get in because you are a minority; you get in because you have a great product and happen to be a person of color,” she wrote. “Some of these products will meet the needs of more diverse shoppers such as black hair care, more ethnic foods in the grab ‘n’ go case and halal meats.

“This not only brings more diversity to our vendor base; it provides products for a more diverse shopper so that they feel more included,” she continued. “Unconscious bias is a reality, but we are hoping to close that cultural and racial gap. I am a true believer in this program.”

Buy 100% Wind and Solar Power with The Energy Co-op!

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***Receive \$25 in your EasyPay Account** when you sign up as a new member of our Renewable Electricity program by March 31, 2021 and remain a member for 60 days! Use promo code [WW2021EL](#).

Body Awareness is Key to Adapting and Improving Your Posture

by Dan Vidal, Weavers Way Wellness Team

IBET YOU SAT UP STRAIGHT WHEN YOU READ THAT. Unfortunately, that reaction is probably doing more harm than good. Let your breath out completely, relax, and let me explain.

Most of us do the exact same things in the exact same way every single day. We brush our teeth with the same hand. We sit at our desk in the same position and use the same combination of muscles to lower and lift ourselves from the chair. We rest and sleep in the same positions on the same surfaces, and we even use the same muscles every time we run, bike, lift weights or do yoga.

In reality, there are literally thousands of different ways to do all of these different movements, but for the sake of efficiency, your body will tend to only default to one.

This is due in no small part to the lack of variability in our safe, predictable, modern environment. It's easy for every physical task to become a program — a prearranged set of coordinated muscle contractions stored in our brains that allow us to perform these actions without even thinking about them.

In our productivity-obsessed, technology-addicted, multitasking culture, this can be extremely beneficial in the short term. Having automatic programs to carry out our various physical tasks frees up mental bandwidth to do other things. While we run around on autopilot, we can carry out conversations, plan our day, listen to a podcast, respond to emails or simply take a mental break and get lost in our thoughts.

The problem is that this kind of behavior has long-term consequences. Over time, your nervous system loses the ability to adapt. You forget how to move outside of the limited ways in which you already do, and soon enough, any other movement patterns become a threat to your body's stability and safety.

The more threatened you feel, the more likely your body will default to the movement patterns it knows best. That creates a vicious cycle in which movement continually becomes more and more restricted, and our "move-



ment amnesia" becomes worse and worse.

In the long run, restricted movement can lead to chronic muscle tension, trigger point formation, myofascial adhesions, circulatory and lymphatic problems, inflammation, and nerve entrapment, just to name a few. All of these issues make movement variation even less likely, thereby perpetuating the cycle and taxing the systems of the body even more.

This means that when you try to "sit up straight" to fix your posture, the muscles you are using to do so are likely the same muscles that are already being overused to begin with!

Rather than thinking of posture as some static "healthy position" that we need to mimic, it's much more helpful to think of it as our individual ability to adapt the way our bodies move and to organize themselves for different tasks and environments.

Posture is dynamic, and the only way to truly improve it is to remain curious about your body, the way it moves, and what you are experiencing from moment to moment. This builds your kinesthetic awareness and provides your nervous system with valuable data that allow it to update its software and adapt. In turn, this makes your body more pliable, more resilient, and less susceptible to pain and dysfunction.

Receiving regular massage and bodywork is an excellent way to help improve your kinesthetic awareness. Mindfulness practices such as meditation, yoga and qi gong can be extremely powerful in this regard as well.

Even your everyday tasks can be carried out in more mindful ways that help promote kinesthetic awareness.



For instance, the next time you brush your teeth, try using your opposite hand instead.

Try to come up with a slightly different way to do at least one of your daily tasks every time you do it. Over time, this will help improve your posture in the truest sense — by making your nervous system more adaptable, your movement more fluid, and your body more capable of harmonizing with the world around it.

Dan Vidal is a licensed massage therapist, certified neurosomatic pain treatment specialist and owner of Paragon Pain Solutions in Chestnut Hill. He helps clients alleviate pain by assessing their posture and creating personalized treatment plans of targeted massage and mindful movement practice.

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Seven Ways Renewable Energy Will Shape 2021

by P.W. Loney, Vista Projects Limited

THOUGH IT MIGHT NOT FEEL LIKE IT, THE GLOBAL commitment to renewable energy is increasing with every passing year. We still have a long way to go and things could definitely stand to speed up a little bit, but the future’s looking bright.

Though we don’t know for sure what could happen in the rest of 2021, right now it looks like we’ll be seeing more growth than ever in the renewable energy sector with a push toward different forms of energy, most significantly, solar power.

COVID-19 has been a global tragedy. But with so many industries shutting down to try and stop the spread, the environment was affected in a positive way, which has been proof to us that we can change things if we alter our approach.

The changes haven’t stuck now that the world has been steadily reopening. But it has given new life to the possibility of fixing these environmental problems. So let’s look at what we could see from renewable energy this year.

1. Record-Breaking Numbers in the United States

Earlier in 2020, when Americans were being warned to stay at home, the amount of solar installations actually slowed down. Yet, by the end of the year the country still had more solar power than ever before.

According to the Solar Industries Energy Association, this amounts to 43% annual growth, in spite of what was a shaky start. If this trend continues, the United States is expected to install over 107 gigawatts of solar power in the next five years.

2. Solar Rising in Spain

Solar farms in Spain generated 15,000 gigawatts of power in 2020, an increase of 60%. At the moment, Ger-

many is still leading the charge for solar power in Europe. But at this rate, Spain will double Germany’s pace by 2023.

3. Doubling of Installations in China

Last September, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that he intends for China to reach complete carbon neutrality by 2060. As part of that initiative, the number of solar installations doubled in the country in 2020. This growth is expected to continue into the new year and then expand exponentially over the course of the decade.

4. Reduction of Coal Usage in the UK

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, the United Kingdom has been synonymous with coal usage. But according to data from the National History Museum in London, there was a month period last year when none of it went to electricity production. This was a huge step. Furthermore, Prime Minister Boris Johnson intends for coal to be phased out completely by 2025 in favor of wind farms.

Another option for replacing coal would be to switch to biofuels. This is an area which includes green diesel, biodiesel and biogas. Vista Projects, an integrated engineering consulting firm with offices in Calgary, Alberta, and Houston, is one of the leading forces in this industry and specializes in the digital transformation of large-scale industrial projects.

Their goal is to work with developers and operators to help modernize and adapt these biofuel plants in an ever-changing industry.

5. India Redirecting Solar Power Efforts

Overall, India didn’t actually see a significant increase in the amount of solar installations, and the lock-

down contributed to them falling by over 70%. Still, there was a record-breaking number of bids to increase solar power for the country.

It’s highly likely that if India’s economy sees a resurgence and power company finances stabilize, solar power could become the country’s cheapest option.

6. Australia Embracing Solar

As of 2020, almost 30% of houses in Australia are fitted with solar panels. This is due to the fact that power prices have increased to the point where solar is a much more desirable and affordable option.

Unfortunately, usage is soaring so quickly that the solar grid is becoming overwhelmed, according to a 2019 article in the Sydney Times Herald. As a result, changes need to be made if expansion is to continue. Hopefully, those can happen in the near future.

7. Prices Are on the Rise

To end on somewhat of a negative, the advancement of the technology involved in solar power and the need to use different materials has led to increased prices. So while the desire to make the switch is there, many project developers may not be in a financial position to move forward. If that’s the case, it could be a factor in slowing down projected growth in 2021.

For the most part, it’s clear that solar power is the most promising area of renewable energy and one in which we are already seeing huge advancements. Beyond that, traditional energy companies are embracing the need to diversify. I believe they will be exploring new methods and new sources of energy, and it will be exciting to see how that develops over the course of the upcoming year.

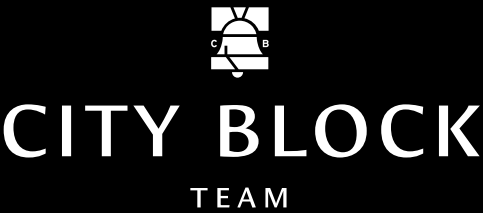


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Tips on Photographing Birds, Once They Get Back in Town

by Ruffian Tittmann, Executive Director, Friends of the Wissahickon

EVEN WITHOUT A CALENDAR, ONE of the sure signs that spring is right around the corner is the return of our bird friends from their winter homes in warmer climates. Whether it’s in my backyard or in Wissahickon Valley Park, I find so much pleasure in searching for and watching birds. So does hobby naturalist and wildlife photographer Troy Bynum, who features his wonderful photos of birds and other local animals as host of Wildlife Wednesdays on FOW’s Instagram page.

Troy has been passionate about and inspired by nature and wildlife since childhood, but his true interest in birds emerged when he moved back to Philadelphia in 2017 and went hiking with friends in the Wissahickon every weekend. He remembers seeing in the park one day what he calls his “spark” bird – the one that truly sparked his interest in bird photography: a beautiful green heron. Troy is drawn to patterns and colors in nature, and there’s no shortage of either when it comes to birds.

When the pandemic hit, Troy, like so many of us, headed to the Wissahickon for serenity, solace, and the need to focus on something other than the world’s chaos. With an abundance of birds in the park, they seemed like the natural choice for his subjects.

FOW recently checked in with Troy to find out what we can look forward to seeing during the spring bird migration. He explained that while it starts in mid-March, we won’t see the full effect until April. During that time, he recommends watching for these featured friends of the Wissahickon:

- **Red-Winged Blackbirds:** The males arrive first to claim their territory for the females, who arrive a bit later. With their loud, squawking, screeching call, you may hear them before you see them.
- **Tree and Barn Swallows:** You will recognize them as the large numbers of small birds zipping back and forth through the skies, snatching up insects.
- **Broad-Winged Hawks:** Unlike the Sharp-Shinned, Cooper’s, and Red-Tailed hawks, which stay throughout the winter, Broad-winged hawks migrate. Despite its name, this is one of the smallest hawks — about the size of a crow. Like others of its species, the broad-winged will usually be found either perched in a tree or hunting prey.
- **Eastern Bluebirds and American Goldfinches:** When the spring and summer are in full swing, the blue and gold of these two field birds are true showstoppers.



But when they return to our area in the spring, look for more muted, duller plumage until their vibrant spring colors come in.

The bird boxes that FOW installed in Andorra and Houston meadows are prime real estate for returning birds and others, such as bluebirds and tree swallows, that begin their nesting season in early spring. As part of

our Ecological Land Management Plan, we placed wood duck boxes along the creek a number of years ago. That has helped increase the nesting population of these stunning birds, who are cavity nesters. During the first few weeks of March, you might also spot a male with a couple of females, searching for an appropriate tree cavity in which to settle.

Tips for beginning bird photographers:

- **Go out early and often** Troy likes to get to the park before sunrise, when activity is starting to happen.
- **Find the food sources** The best spot to find migrating birds hungry from traveling thousands of miles is wherever the food is. There are hot spots all over the park, but birds such as warblers, indigo buntings, and other spring migrants enjoy the berries on trees and bushes in Andorra and Houston meadows. Be patient and be prepared to stay a while.
- **Contain your excitement** Any sudden movements or noises will cause your precious find to fly off before you can even get the camera to your eye. This is still one of Troy’s biggest challenges!
- **Phones are great** Cameras on today’s mobile phones are quite sophisticated. They have many features you’ll find on a real camera, such as high resolution and a variety of lenses and light exposures. Attachments are available that slide over the lens and make the camera almost like a spotting scope to zoom in and record what you see.
- **Make it a family affair** It’s never too early to engage your children in the love of nature and wildlife and nurture their future environmental stewardship. One of Troy’s favorite pastimes is taking his six-year-old daughter to feed the ducks (grains, peas, lettuce, or halved grapes, please; not bread, which sickens them) along the creek at Valley Green Inn, or to watch hawks and kestrels at the Dixon Meadow Preserve. Her curiosity and enthusiasm inspire his ongoing involvement with nature.

Join Troy for #WildlifeWednesdays and visit @tb_wildlife_photography.



photos by Troy Bynum

Red-Winged Blackbird



Tree Swallow



Wood duck

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Liberate Your Lawn & Garden

A Rare, Snow-Filled February is Cause for Our Soil to Celebrate

by Sarah Endriss, for the Shuttle

EVERY MORNING AT APPROXIMATELY 6:30, my 16-year-old cat, Maggie, begins caterwauling. For better or worse, she knows a new day has dawned and can count on us to get up and begrudgingly feed her. This morning was no different — until I looked outside. To my surprise and delight, Mother Nature had provided us three to four inches of fluffy white snow. It was beautiful!

There are many things we can count on, but sadly, snow in our region the last couple of decades is not one of them. After almost five years of warm, gray, snowless winters, this February’s snow events have been a gift for my family, the environment, and my garden.

Our recent snowfalls have provided opportunities for my children to gather, play, and laugh together with friends while sledding socially distanced. It has also granted us a pause, even if only for a moment, to appreciate the newness of a landscape blanketed in white. Snow is not just an important opportunity (or excuse) for snow angels and hot cocoa; it’s also a critical sustaining element of our natural environment, specifically, global cooling and soil protection.

According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center, snow on a large scale helps control the temperature of the Earth’s surface. A bright white snow covering in the Northern Hemisphere reflects between 80 to 90 percent of incoming sunlight or solar energy back into space and away from surfaces that would otherwise absorb it. Snowpack regulates the exchange of heat between our planet’s surface and atmosphere, helping to cool our planet. By comparison, soil, trees and plants reflect much less sunlight — between 10 to 30 percent.



February early morning in the Wissahickon (left). Snowy woods at Crystal Lake Ski & Outdoor Center in Lycoming (right).

photos by Sarah Endriss

That amount is critical in summer but is nowhere near as effective in winter. This is cause for real concern, because habitat destruction and increased carbon emissions have altered our winters and reduced snowpack. That has contributed to an average increase of eight-tenths of a degree in global temperature since the 1950s — and it continues to climb.

On a smaller regional scale, variations in snow cover directly affect weather patterns influenced by the percent of snowpack. For example, the arrival of summer monsoons in Asia and Europe is shifting, as is the timing and amount of water from spring snow melt for agricultural production in North America. Limited snowpack changes patterns and increases the potential for flooding and drought. Here’s how:

- The presence or absence of snow directly impacts our soil. First, snow serves as an insulating blanket, protecting the soil and life within it. Deeper snow

cover decreases frost layer depth, allowing the soil beneath to serve as a refuge for plants, animals and soil organisms, which are all essential elements of a healthy farm and garden.

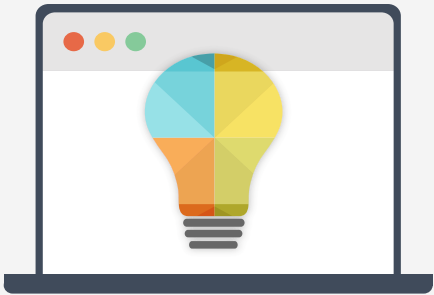
- Soil without snow cover is virtually defenseless. With no protection from wind, rain and water runoff, soil will freeze to greater depths, form ice and push everything within it upward. These freeze/thaw cycles can damage plants by pinching, ripping, and desiccating roots.

- Second, soil insulated by snow cover tends to thaw quicker as spring approaches. Thawed soils infiltrate and hold melted water, thereby reducing runoff erosion. Frozen soils cannot absorb water, which increases the potential for soil erosion and flooding. This has been an all-too-common occurrence in the last decade.

So the next time snow falls, don’t lament it; embrace its magic. Grab your hat, coat and gloves and head outside to enjoy its gifts and appreciate the critical role snow plays in our interconnected and warming environment. Also, consider making a plan to add trees and shrubs to your home landscape, because climate change is real. And snow, unlike my cat’s morning wailing, is no longer certain, but our future depends on it.

Sarah Endriss is a landscape planning and design professional specializing in ecological garden and habitat design. She is principal of Asarum LandDesign Group, adjunct faculty at Jefferson University and a restoration design consultant for WildLawn, an ecological native grass alternative to traditional lawns. Sarah can be reached at Sarah@asarumlanddesign.com.

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Weavers Way Wellness Team Workshop: Digest this!

Thursday, March 4, 7:00 PM

This online workshop with Cynthia Corabi of the Wellness Team will address ways to improve digestion from the moment food enters your mouth. Cynthia will share information about the enzymes and acids in the stomach responsible for digestion; how to increase the flora in the microbiome to boost immunity and improve absorption of minerals and vitamins; the truth about what to do about acid reflux; and, foods and drinks to make and ingest daily.

Virtual New Member Orientations

Friday, March 5, 2:30 PM

Wednesday, March 17, 12:30 PM

Tuesday, March 23, 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 27, 10:30 AM

This one-hour new member orientation is geared toward those who have joined in the past year (though all are welcome). We will give a short presentation on what it means to be a member of Weavers Way and lead a Q&A session. New Members will earn working, member credit for joining one orientation.

Qigong with the Co-op Community

Tuesday, March 16, 10:00 AM

Join us in an all-levels Qi Gong session with Co-op Member and Certified Qi Gong teacher, Moon Smith. Moon will host the class every Tuesday starting March 16th for four weeks. Virtual “spots” are limited so that all participants can be seen on the screen.

Weavers Way Plastic Reductions Task Force Public Forum with Guest Speaker Carol Armstrong

Thursday, March 18, 6:30 PM

This forum will include a presentation by Carol Armstrong on various plastic reductions policies that have been implemented both locally and around the world, the goals of zero waste, and work being done by the Zero Waste International Alliance. After the presentation, the Committee will host a Q&A with the speaker as well as a zero-waste skill share.

Weavers Way Wellness Team Workshop: Get Spring-Ready with Healthy Smoothies

Saturday, March 20, 10:00 AM

Get ready for spring with Wellness Team Member Nicole Schillinger! Since March 20 is the first official day of spring, let’s make some healthy smoothies together! We will be making a few different types of shakes that are immune boosting and anti-inflammatory, relying on different herbs and spices with the produce that is available from Weavers Way.

Not Just Wishful Thinking: Getting Rid of Plastic Waste

by Sandra Folzer, Weavers Way Environment Committee

WARNING: this article describes how to get rid of plastic —not so we can buy more, but in order to eliminate it as best we can.



USING PLASTIC REMAINS HAZARDOUS to our planet, especially all marine life. According to an article in a late October issue of Advanced Science News, Earth has now accumulated more than 8.3 billion tons of plastic. Polyethylene, a form of plastic, accounts for a third of all plastic use, from food and medical packaging to construction material and water pipes.

There are at least two processes for eliminating plastic, though both are still in exploratory stages and can only eliminate a small percentage. But it's a beginning. Meanwhile, we all should try our best not to buy plastic.

Upcycling Plastic

We have known of ways to upcycle plastic (creating new products from old) for some time, but those methods were costly and energy intensive. In fact, it has traditionally been cheaper to produce more plastic than to recycle it. According to The Economist, over 91% of plastic has never been recycled, despite what you think may happen when you dutifully put it in your recycling bin.

Unfortunately, the same characteristics that make plastic useful and resilient are the same ones that inhibit it from decomposing. Since plastics are made

by stringing together carbon-based molecules to create polymer chains, they are difficult to alter for future use. Conversion typically required solvents and temperatures between 500-1,000° to break down the polyethylene. Even then, what remained could only be used for lower-value items like plastic lumber.

Two researchers, Susannah Scott and Mahdi Abu-Omar from the University of California at Santa Barbara, recently developed a new catalytic method that simplifies the steps. It uses hydrogen to cut the bonds that hold the carbon molecules together and break them into smaller pieces. This process is used repeatedly, which then turns the polymer into a liquid.

The majority of the molecules in this liquid are alkylbenzenes (alkylaromatic molecules), which can be used for detergents, paints and pharmaceuticals. Abu-Omar, in an article in Science last year, was quoted as saying, "This is an example of having a second use, where we could make these raw materials more efficiently and with better environmental impact than making them from petroleum..." As a result, plastic waste becomes a raw material for new products.

Eating Plastic

Don't worry; you don't have to eat the plastic: The waxworm or bacteria will do that for you.

While waxworms (the caterpillar larvae of the wax moth) usually eat wax in beehives, they will also eat polyethylene, and have special microbes that excrete glycol after they've eaten plastic. At Brandon University in Manitoba, Canada last year, researchers found 60 waxworms could eat 30 square centimeters (nearly 12 inches) of a plastic bag in less than a week.

That's good news, but it would take these worms centuries to eat all the plastic waste we produce. Hence, the researchers are trying to understand how the waxworm's gut bacteria break down the plastic. With that discovery, they might be able to create tools to do the same thing.



Once waxworms become adults, they don't eat, so the larvae consume enormous amounts so they can continue to survive. They only live a few days, long enough to reproduce and create more larvae.

Meanwhile, Japanese researchers have discovered bacteria that can digest plastic. The bacteria secrete an enzyme that splits some of the chemical bonds in the plastic so that they can absorb the smaller molecules of carbon as food. Researchers in different countries have been trying to understand the process to replicate it.

In the past, using bacteria to break down plastic has been difficult because of its complex makeup. Plastic contains semi-crystalline structures that are tightly packed and are therefore difficult for the enzymes to access. The Japanese "enhanced" bacteria work more efficiently. One worry is that if these bacteria are not controlled, they might attack unintended plastic hosts, like pipes or building materials. Once we open this Pandora's box, we don't know what could happen.

As creative as these ideas are, it is best if we can be creative in our shopping and buy as little plastic as possible. I try to buy yogurt in glass jars and lettuce and salad greens that aren't prepackaged. In addition, I avoid strawberries when I can overcome the temptation and try to buy milk in glass containers when available.

Buying less plastic is the first step, but an important one.

eco tip



Give Beneficial Bugs a Boost By Holding Back on Yard Cleanup

by Marsha Low, Weavers Way

Note: This is a revised version of an Eco Tip published last spring. We're reprinting it because we consider it to be of particular environmental importance.

With all the snow we've had this winter, and with COVID-19 also keeping us indoors, those fortunate to have a garden are likely itching to get out and start doing a spring cleanup. But with the sharp decline in insects (more than 40% of insect species are declining, and a third are endangered), 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, you want to 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 at all 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.

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

One more tip: Since some beneficial insects overwinter in soil burrows, make sure not to mulch too early in the spring, as doing so may block their emergence. May your garden be filled with the sounds of beneficial insects a-hummin' and a-buzzin' this season!

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Suggestions

by Norman Weiss, Weavers Way Purchasing Manager

GREETINGS AND THANKS FOR WRIT- ing. Email suggestions to sugges- tions4norman@weaversway.coop. As usual, suggestions and responses may have been edited for brevity, clarity and/ or comedy. In addition, no idea, con- cept, issue, remark, phrase, description of event, word or word string should be tak- en seriously. This also applies to the pre- vious sentence.

In food trade news recently, Progres- sive Grocer reported that the new Coca- Cola with Coffee was scheduled to be delivered Jan. 26 and 27 via drone to sin- gle-family homes in Coffee County, GA within a one-mile radius of a Walmart supercenter. I wonder what will happen if a drone has mechanical problems and conks someone in the head with a Coca- Cola can?

This could create a whole new cus- tomer base for personal injury lawyers, but it should also result in some good ads. However, I think someone at Coca-Co- la is missing the boat. If they really want their beverages to be everywhere quickly, why not lobby to include them in munici- pal utility services? They could plumb a line right to residences, and no other de- livery technology would be needed.

In other news, "packaged bulk" is now fashionable due to COVID shutting down a lot of self-serve bulk departments. This seems oxymoronic to me. Once you take a bulk item and put it in a package



and seal and label it, by definition, it's no longer bulk. It becomes part of the grand scheme of products known as "CPG," or "Consumer Packaged Goods," of which food is one category.

CPG drives our economy and is mostly what fills Amazon and other dis- tribution centers. Once the "goods" are consumed, what you mostly have left is the package, also known as trash. What- ever happens to it now, be it recycled, landfilled, burned, composted, reused, etc., it will require more energy. If you could eat it, then it would supply energy. So what we really need is EPG — Edibly Packaged Goods, delivered via drones. Then if it falls on your head, at least you won't go hungry.

We've heard from a few members about Oatly, the popular oat milk that sold a 10% ownership share to the investment group Blackstone, whose chief executive has donated millions to a super-PAC that supported political candidates many of our members oppose. In response, Oatly

(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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BACK TO EARTH COMPOST CREW

• Offering compost collection at Weavers Way Ambler now through April 2021.

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• \$5 for up to a 5-gallon bucket of food scraps.


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(Continued from previous page)

published this on their website:

“Getting a company like Blackstone to invest in us is something we have been working on to create maximum change to benefit the planet. From a sustainability perspective, we are convinced that helping shift the focus of massive capital toward sustainable approaches is potentially the single most important thing we can do for the planet in the long term. We realize that all of you may not share this view and disagree on the right path forward to create a more sustainable world.”

In general, we do not vet vendors or brands for politics. It can be a bit of a Pandora’s box, with some companies having staff and owners that donate to a variety of issues and candidates — some in line with our values, some not. In addition, some companies may change ownership without us finding out. It would take an investigative reporter to keep track of it all.

We do encourage members to read up on brands and products they use. Products that don’t sell well usually get deleted, which is kind of a de facto boycott. Members can also propose boycotts by getting them on the agenda of a General Membership Meeting. See our bylaws on the member portal of our website for detailed info.

suggestions and responses:

s: Hey Norman. The chicken noodle soup was OK, but I was a little surprised to find that the Co-op would actually sell fresh chicken soup with MSG. I am not particularly sensitive to MSG, so it

was no biggie for me, but some people are very sensitive to it. I’m surprised that we do not have a policy prohibiting MSG.

r: (Norman) Thanks for pointing that out. We don’t have a policy prohibiting MSG (or really, any specific ingredient). Our product policies are pretty general to allow a broad variety of products and price ranges: www.weaversway.coop/pages/weavers-ways-product-philosophy-statement.

Our info is that MSG is not harmful for the majority of the population. However, in general we do avoid MSG, since so many shoppers have complained about it over the years. In this case it was a label issue; we did switch to a no-added MSG soup base years ago, but it looks like this soup’s label was never updated. It has now been fixed.

s: “Sometimes I buy produce and when I take the sticker off of it, there’s a little bit of the sticky paper stuck to it. Can we get less sticky stickers or less adhesive produce?”

r: (Norman) Probably. With “sticky” problems like this, we involve our Magic Wand department. They’ll wave it away.

s: “FreeBird chicken” is labeled “vegetarian fed.” Chickens are natural omnivores. If FreeBird chickens are fed a 100% vegetarian diet, doesn’t that mean that 1) they never get outside to scratch for their own worms, and 2) they are being fed an unnatural diet? Why would the Co-op support this unethical treatment?”

“
**What we really
need is EPG —
Edibly Packaged
Goods, delivered
via drones.**”

r: (Norman) Most large-scale egg and chicken producers make this claim as if it’s a benefit. Despite labels like “cage free,” “free range,” “free roam,” etc., the reality is that most commercial chicken producers don’t give their chickens that much freedom, so few get to eat insects, wrestle small snakes, etc. Nevertheless, in our factory food system, this is considered progress compared to keeping chickens in battery cages and feeding them animal byproducts. It’s ironic that modern, naturally-raised chickens live on a plant-based diet.

s: “Wanted to reach out to you about Mochi! Since most of the companies in the United States that made it went under in the last few years, I have been craving it so much. We found this place in

Vermont and have ordered a case and it’s great! Funny that it comes in a log style like polenta instead of flat, but I thought that Weavers Way might want to give it a try. P.S. Have you tried the new Philly Tempeh yet? It would be great to stock at the Co-op, too.”

r: (Norman) Thanks for the suggestion. Mochi just doesn’t sell these days at Weavers Way; I think it slipped off people’s radar. Philly Tempeh is a small-scale producer and right now, we are stocking it in our Mt. Airy store in the freezer section. As they scale up, we can see about adding it to our other stores. If shoppers want Mochi back, please let us know.

s: “Brianna’s salad dressings have a plastic seal around the cap and then a second cardboard disc inside the cap that then must be removed before you can use the dressing. How much security does salad dressing need? Can you tell Brianna that it’s annoying?”

r: (Norman) We did and they took offense and called us a bunch of liberal whiners. Now we have to consider if that’s grounds for a boycott.

s: “The Co-op’s hold music is awful. Can we do something about it?”

r: (Norman) We tried to change it, but then we found out our hold music was being controlled by Russian hackers. Our IT department is no match for the Russian hacker community, so we have accepted our fate. You can always hum to yourself to drown it out, maybe something patriotic.

International Co-op Principles

- 1 **Voluntary and Open Membership**
- 2 **Democratic Member-Owner Control**
- 3 **Member-Owner Economic Participation**
- 4 **Autonomy and Independence**
- 5 **Education, Training and Information**
- 6 **Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- 7 **Concern for Community**



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.

The Backyard Beet

Corral These Big Three Elements to Achieve Gardening Success

by Chris Mattingly, for the Shuttle

WHEN I FOUNDED MY HATCHBACK-BASED, full-service food gardening company five years ago, my main goal was to share the magic of homegrown food with my clients.

I wanted to make their garden goals simple and effortless to achieve. With welcoming, attractive beds of plants growing themselves, I figured every home would have their own portal to the beauty and wonder of the natural world, and experience a sense of connection to their food and surroundings. I believed that the personal transformation that comes from that experience would prove valuable enough to justify the cost of hiring professional help.

But when I started gardening for other families, I learned that discovering a “simple and effortless” way would take a lot of work. For my first clients (fortunately, they were family friends), I put together a few beds with new soil and planted lettuce, herbs, peppers, tomatoes, and other vegetables.

When I visited two weeks later (in July), I got my first lesson in how to kill a garden. The soil was too dry, the irrigation nonexistent, and the fencing far from secure. A groundhog had feasted on large swaths of the garden, and what was left was burnt to a crisp. I still remember feeling and hearing the crunch of young beet leaves as waves of disappointment washed over me.

Fortunately, I was at the beginning of a great journey. I figured if I could solve these problems and more, I could help many others enjoy season after season of success in their garden.

Here are three elements of the vegetable garden that can’t be overlooked. They’re important to get right if you’re designing a new garden, and worth looking at if your existing garden has offered more frustration than inspiration.

Soil

Raised beds can’t be beat for the ease of controlling the exact makeup of your garden soil or growing medium. By building up, you are avoiding any damp or poorly drained soils that would otherwise suffocate plant roots. You’re also avoiding the need to dig, test, or modify any of the soil on your property. The new beds and layer of new soil (at least six inches thick) can go right on top of grass.

New soil has its pitfalls, too. Bagged potting soil typically offers a light and free-draining medium that works great for pots, but might lose water too quickly. Adding compost will help find the right balance between keeping moisture around and draining excess water.

For our gardens, we use a combination of compost, topsoil, and organic coconut coir. The blend is adjusted according to the sun exposure; gardens in full sun require more moisture retention, while those in shadier or better protected spots require better drainage.

Many of our customers come to us with a garden that’s been around for years, or with a garden they inherited when they bought their house. For existing gardens, there’s a likelihood that plant diseases are happily inhabiting the soil.

Soil-borne diseases develop over time as plants from the same families are grown in the same spot year after year, especially in heavy, high-moisture and nutrient-deficient soils. The evidence is in the poor per-

formance and early death of plants. Vining tomatoes, for example, should produce fruit through October, and often even part of November. Many gardeners with lots of experience have come to accept that tomatoes are “done” by September, but they’re only done because they’ve been done in by disease.

The cure for diseased soil is to replace it. This may seem drastic, but it’s the only reasonable alternative compared to putting time, money and effort into a garden that won’t give back.

Finally, we add compost to our gardens every year in December. It’s never a bad time to add compost! Less serious soil and disease problems can be helped or solved by the addition of a layer of compost. Don’t mix it in; lay it like a blanket across the garden.

Irrigation

Watering the garden is a lovely experience, but I would urge you to make hand watering optional. Instead, set watering on auto and visit with your precious plants without a hose in hand. Practice the art of mindful observation, looking closely at each plant to discover its secrets. After all, the best fertilizer is the gardener’s shadow.

Automated drip irrigation is a surprisingly attainable feature, even for the DIY gardener. For the automated part, choose a battery-operated timer with the simplicity of an old school alarm clock, or a battery-operated timer with Wi-Fi and a smartphone app. In either case, the timer is screwed onto the hose bib, and drip irrigation tubing carries water to the garden, where smaller tubes distribute the water evenly across the soil. For more detailed guidance and pre-built kits, visit Drip Depot’s website (www.dripdepot.com).

Be wary of overwatering — excess moisture for a prolonged period leads to a lack of oxygen for soil microbes and plant roots. Start low and adjust watering up as you notice some plants beginning to wilt. Note that cucumber leaves will appear wilted in excess heat, regardless of the soil moisture.

It’s important to adjust for any significant rainfall events. While the Wi-Fi timers reduce watering to adjust for rain, other timers will require you to manually press a rain delay button.

Fencing

The most common critter concerns in our area, in order of threat level, are rabbits, dogs, deer and groundhogs. Birds, squirrels and chipmunks are in a class of their own because they’re impossible to keep out unless you build a “garden house,” a wood-framed structure covered in hardware cloth. It’s a peaceful and protected space where humans and berries alike can thrive.

We use coated wire with 2” x 3” openings for our fencing.

Rabbits can be kept out with an 18-24” fence. Pet dogs will vary with size and age. In most cases, rabbit



and dog fences can be installed along the borders of the beds. That way, you can lean over the fence to pick and maintain plants.

For deer and groundhogs, you’ll need a fence that goes around an area larger than the beds. There are an endless number of layout options, depending on your goals.

We use a five- or six-foot fence for deer and groundhogs. Deer can jump higher but are less likely to when the space to land is small and interrupted. Groundhogs exploit any irregularity in the ground or fencing near the ground to sneak underneath. For that reason, we always tie the fencing into a border or lay a piece of 12-inch wide fencing on top of the grass to secure it.

Almost everyone overlooks a groundhog’s impressive climbing ability. I’ve spent many a sleepless night trying to devise a plan to keep those voracious eaters from climbing my fences. I settled on tying the fencing to posts below the top 12 inches of the fence, so if a climber were to reach that height, they would fall backward. I don’t know if it works like a Road Runner cartoon, but I sure hope it does!

These elements can make the difference between a garden that makes you crazy and one that’s successful. If you would like help achieving your garden goals, we have a team of brilliant gardeners and builders for that purpose. To learn more, visit our website and book a consult online.

Chris Mattingly is the founder of Backyard Eats, a full-service food gardening business with an array of offerings in the greater Philadelphia area. Email him at chris@backyard-eats.com or visit www.backyard-eats.com.

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Weavers Words

THE GIFT

It was the blunt tapping of memory,
Piece after piece that finally
Cracked the shell of my soul,
Let excruciating light flood in
The blinding white Awakening
The precious despair of mortality
Warm softness of vulnerability
All bursting through the crack like life itself

—Heather Shafter

LUNAR GAZE

Come hither calls the moon
With its mournful lunar face
There's no one else out tonight
No other soul to see my light
Just you and I and the deep dark sky
I'll lead you from your inner maze
As I've done for those before
Who've sat with me at heaven's door.

—Kirstie Jones

GIFTS

Grounded in Earth
Breathe Fire....Nurture Plants
Conduit Between
Heaven and Earth
Hold Sacred Your Energy
Grounded
It Runs Free.

—Cindy Shapiro

GELLER "BELLE OF AMHERST"

sitting by her window
hidden from world's view
her words span the years
to me and you
knitting thoughts together
verse upon verse
quietly to herself
the Belle of Amherst

—Lawrence H. Geller

NEW RULES (GETTING OLD)

Stay six feet away
Wash hands and don't touch your face
Stay home if you can.

—Fern Zeigler

We're running low
on poems.
Please send more!

Feeling Inspired? Here Are Our Guidelines:

1. Poems must be written by you and can contain no more than eight lines.
 2. The Shuttle editor has the final say as to whether a poem is suitable for publication.
 3. The number of poems 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 for Shuttle" in the subject line.
 6. Preference for publishing will be given to those whose work has yet to appear in the paper.
- Thanks. We're looking forward to your creation!

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How Co-op Vendors Joined Forces to Weather the Pandemic

(Continued from Page 1)



Lauren Shinn, owner of Aloha Smoothies



photo by Karen Plourde

Aloha Smoothies’ location in the Flourtown Farmers Market opened last Memorial Day weekend.



Olga Sorzano, owner of Baba’s Brew kombucha in Phoenixville.

“I had just completed the rough-in work at my store and was ready for sheetrock and then finished surfaces. Overnight, construction came to a halt,” she wrote. “I felt strongly at the time, and still do, that stopping work at my store was the right thing to do. Even though I knew it would delay our opening, it was a sacrifice that I was willing to make to flatten the curve and to protect my contractors and their families.”

A few days after Gov. Tom Wolf’s mandated shut-down of nonessential businesses, Shinn’s Goodnature X-1 Mini cold-pressed juicer was delivered to her house. Rather than let the machine sit, she started juicing organic fruits and vegetables at home for family and friends while working around the virtual school schedules of her three daughters.

In the course of making and giving away her concoctions, Shinn found out there were people in her community who were undergoing treatment for cancer and had specific dietary needs as a result. Feeling the need to help, she decided to start looking for a commercial space from which she could sell her products until the shop was up and running. She found it in the Flourtown Farmers Market, which is owned by her friend Brian Halligan. That location of Aloha opened last Memorial Day Weekend.

“It was an amazing feeling of triumph to realize my dream of opening a juice bar despite the many challenges,” she wrote. “The support from the community was remarkable, and Aloha flourished.”

Shinn offered online ordering, curbside pickup and contactless delivery from the Flourtown store Thursdays through Saturdays. She credits Co-op vendors Caleb Mangum of Nutty Novelties, a Telford-based flavored nut butter purveyor; Olga Sorzano of Phoenixville’s Ba-

ba’s Brew kombucha; fellow Ambler vendors Christina Rizzetta and Alec Satterly of Wake Coffee; and Shannon Roche and Meagan Benz of Manayunk’s Crust Vegan Bakery for becoming part of her supply network. All now have stand-alone items on her menu or provide ingredients for her smoothies, juices, smoothie bowls, salads and gluten-free toast selections. In addition, she depended heavily on the Co-op to keep her stocked with organic produce at a time when the food supply chain was struggling to keep products on the shelves.

When Gov. Wolf lifted his stay-at-home order for Southeastern Pennsylvania last June, construction was able to resume on Aloha’s Ambler location. But building supplies, contractors, and refrigeration equipment were all in short supply due to the pandemic, so progress was slow. The Ambler store finally opened last October and has been open every day since.

Another Pivot in Phoenixville

Sorzano, of Baba’s Brew, also had to retool once the pandemic hit and shutdowns began. After five years in business with year after year of consistent growth, they lost 80% of their customers practically overnight due to the closure of restaurants, cafés, and coffee shops.

“After the initial shock and phone call with other small business owners who found themselves in a similarly dire situation, we decided that we can only survive if we bond together,” she wrote in an email.

Baba’s closed their tasting room and launched a curbside pickup operation that offered over three dozen products from 20 local vendors in addition to their kombucha. Their offerings included pizza and marinara sauce from Vesper Brothers of Wayne; sauerkraut and pickled beets from Food and Ferments of Cortland, NY;

bread from Merzbacher’s of Germantown; croissants and challah bread from Le Bus Bakery of King of Prussia, and cheeses from Caputo Brothers Creamery of Spring Grove, to name a few. Like Shinn, she initially connected with many of those vendors through the Co-op.

Unlike Shinn and Sorzano, Colleen Falicki, owner of Plymouth Meeting’s Back to Earth Compost, sells a service, not a product — curbside compost pickup in suburban Philadelphia. She and Shinn first connected at the Ambler Farmers’ Market and later during weekend compost pickups Back to Earth sponsored at Weavers Way Ambler. The company now counts Aloha as one of its customers.

For Falicki, networking with other vendors in the Co-op community is an extension of her passionate support of small and local businesses.

“I found it natural to seek out others in the Weavers Way Co-op community — those in the Shuttler and [those] whose products I purchase,” she wrote in an email. “Most times I will stop in or call the business to learn more about what service or product they provide. I am always thinking about who I can connect them with.”

Even though opening the Flourtown location and all the other adjustments weren’t anywhere in Shinn’s initial business plan, she thinks going through all those changes in her first year has toughened her up and readied her for whatever lies ahead.

“Sheer grit and a willingness to pivot created opportunity for growth, and that has made me a more capable female business owner,” she wrote. “Overcoming struggles, pivots and hurdles, which were far more ‘first year’ growing pains than I bargained for, makes me confident that nothing that can stop us now.”



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STAFF CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT

Kim Hopson

Job: Front End, Weavers Way Chestnut Hill

Since when: November 2019

Where she's from/where she lives now: Plainfield, NJ/
Germantown

Family facts: She and her husband of 32 years, Ras Ben, are the parents of seven children (five sons and two daughters), ranging in age from 14 to 31. They also have an eight-year-old grandson.

Education: She earned a bachelor's in Spanish with a minor in education from Howard University in Washington, DC.

Work background: She spent many years as a stay-at-home mom while homeschooling her children. She later worked as an administrative assistant at Greene Street Friends School, and later became the lead administrative assistant and one of the founding staff and faculty at Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School, now located in Kensington.

How she got to the Co-op: After spending several years helping Ras build his home-based crystals business, she was looking for a way to supplement her family's income. Mt. Airy Front End Manager Susan McLaughlin, whom she knew through their work on the community garden at Penn and Greene streets, suggested she apply. FYI, she's been a member of the Co-op since 1996.

Thoughts on the job: "The spring and the summer I would say was the most stress I've experienced being here...people were really edgy and nasty with each other and us as cashiers...[but] for the most part, our shoppers are very polite...on any day, eight of 10 shoppers are going to be courteous and kind."

Favorite Co-op products: Organic produce, Oatly oat milk and yogurt. She and Ras are vegan and raised their kids (four of whom still live at home) to be vegan also. She estimates they do 90% of their shopping at the Co-op.

Thoughts on the Co-op: "I've appreciated the expansion and change and growth that I've seen at the Co-op...I think it's encouraged more diversity. I'd like to see more, of course, but I think that was a significant step in the right direction."

—Karen Plourde



Follow-up Fundraiser Launched For Pleasant Playground Garden



photo by Blithe Riley

Volunteers completed the first phase of garden construction last year in time for some to plant a fall crop.

FOR OVER TWO YEARS, A DEDICATED GROUP OF NEIGHBORS IN EAST MT. Airy have been working to build a new community garden at Pleasant Playground. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and a few other setbacks, the first phase of the garden was completed last summer in time for new gardeners to plant a fall crop.

Now that spring is here, the Pleasant Playground Garden Committee is continuing its garden buildout. Upcoming projects include installing fencing, picnic tables, an outdoor bulletin board for announcements, a permanent water hookup and a three-bin composting system. The committee is also planning to plant shade trees in the space. To complete the work, they've launched a new fundraiser that includes a \$6,500 matching grant from Bob Elfant, founding partner of Elfant Wissahickon Realtors, and his wife, Nancy.

To contribute, go to <https://bit.ly/3sGHM8i>. To learn more about the garden and/or get involved, email pleasantplaygroundgarden@gmail.com.

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. Meetings are taking place online during the COVID-19 crisis. 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.

2020-2021 Weavers Way Board

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Weavers Way Mt. Airy

559 Carpenter Lane

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

215-843-2350

Weavers Way Across the Way

610 Carpenter Lane

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

215-843-2350, ext. 6

Weavers Way Chestnut Hill

8424 Germantown Ave.

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

215-866-9150

Weavers Way Ambler

217 E. Butler Ave.

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

215-302-5550

Weavers Way Next Door

8426 Germantown Ave.

9 a.m.-8 p.m.

215-866-9150, ext. 221/222

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Chestnut Hill

Store Manager

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Grocery

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Produce

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Deli

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Prepared Food

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Meat, Poultry and Seafood

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Bulk

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Bakery

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Next Door

Wellness Manager

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Mt. Airy

Store Manager

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Grocery

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Produce

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Deli

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Prepared Food

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Meat, Poultry and Seafood

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Bulk

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Bakery

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Across the Way

Wellness Manager

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Pet Department Manager

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DID YOU KNOW?

You can read the Shuttle online.

www.weaversway.coop/shuttle-online



VIRTUAL NEW MEMBER ORIENTATIONS

Friday, March 5, 2:30 PM

Wednesday, March 17, 12:30 PM

Tuesday, March 23, 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 27, 10:30 AM

To register visit: www.weaversway.coop/events

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!

Naturally Dyed Eggs

Egg dyeing is a fun way to celebrate this time of year, and it’s a tradition that goes way back—as much as 5,000 years —when Persians celebrated springtime with eggs colored with plant-based dyes. Plant dyes can be just as useful today and they’re plentiful; in fact, you might have dye-worthy ingredients in your kitchen already. Here are some great plant-based dyes made from fruits, vegetables, spices and flowers.

visit www.strongertogether.coop

COLOR	MATERIALS	AMOUNTS
pink	beets *	1 bunch, washed and sliced
bright pink	beet juice	bottled juice, enough to cover eggs in pan
lavender	blackberries or cranberries	1 container fresh or frozen berries or bottled juice, enough to cover eggs in pan
deep purple	grape juice	1-2 frozen containers
lavender/rust	yellow apples	4 apples, peels only
rust	onion skins	6 red or yellow onions, skins only
pale green	spinach or carrot tops *	1 fresh bunch, chopped
bright yellow	tumeric	2-3 tablespoons powdered spice
yellow	green tea	strong tea; 2 tea bags per 1 cup of water
olive green	marigolds	petals from 6 gold flowers
blue-gray	blueberries	2 fresh or frozen containers
light blue	petunias *	petals from 6 purple flowers
turquoise	red cabbage *	1 large cabbage, grated and sliced
pale orange	curry powder	2 tablespoons powdered spice
violet	hibiscus tea	strong tea; 2 tea bags per 1 cup of water
brown	coffee	2 cups strong coffee
brown	black tea	strong tea; 2 tea bags per 1 cup of water
red-orange	paprika	2 tablespoons powdered spice

* After dyeing with these materials, refrigerate eggs overnight to deepen color.

Dyeing

Items Needed*

White eggs (or try brown, keeping in mind color results will vary), egg carton, stock pan(s), water, white vinegar, slotted spoon and natural materials for dyeing (see table).

Directions

Hot Bath Method

1. Place uncooked eggs in a stainless steel stock pan.Add water 2-3 inches above eggs. (When using bottled juice, fill 2-3 inches above eggs. Do not add water.) Add natural dye ingredients and 1-2 tablespoons vinegar per quart of water.
2. Cover and bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes.
3. Carefully remove eggs with a slotted spoon and air dry.

Cold Bath Method

The process for cold dyeing is much the same as the hot method except the eggs and dyes are cooked separately.

1. Simmer the dye ingredients (water, vinegar and dye matter) for 20-30 minutes or longer, until the dye reaches your desired shade.
- 2.Allow the liquid to cool and submerge hard-boiled eggs in the dye for at least 30 minutes.
3. Carefully remove eggs with a slotted spoon and air dry.

Items Needed*

Tape, string, rubber bands, cheese cloth squares, natural beeswax crayons to create designs on eggs, and vegetable oil for an extra sheen.

Decorating

- Wrap onion skins around eggs, then wrap the entire egg with a cheese cloth square and secure it with string before placing the eggs in the dye.
- Wrap string or rubber bands around eggs before dyeing to create stripes (use rubber bands for cold dyeing only).
- Draw designs on hot, warm or cold hard-boiled eggs with crayons.When using hot or warm eggs, the crayon may melt slightly on contact with the egg (if eggs are hot, hold eggs with a potholder or rag to prevent finger burns). Crayon covered eggs should only be dyed in cold dyes as the crayon wax will melt in hot liquids.
- Gently wipe dry dyed eggs with vegetable oil to give eggs an added sheen.

*Additional items are required for some decorating techniques.



Notes, tips & techniques

Color variation

Colors may vary depending on steeping time and foods used to dye eggs.

Deeper colors

The longer the eggs stay in the dye, the deeper the color will be; leaving the eggs in the dye for several hours or overnight (in the refrigerator) is recommended for achieving deep colors. Allow the liquid and eggs to cool before refrigerating and ensure that the eggs are completely submerged in the dye. Eggs will be speckled if the dye matter remains in the liquid. For more uniform colors, remove the dye matter from the liquid, by straining the liquid through a coffee filter, before refrigerating. The flavor of the egg may change based on the dye, so if you plan to eat your dyed eggs, a shorter dye bath and fresh ingredients may be preferable.

Make a drying rack by cutting the bottom off an egg carton and turning it upside down.

Natural Dye: Onion skins

Materials:
stainless steel stock pot and leaves

Method: Hot bath

