

Pasa Study Serves Up More Good News About Our Farm Soil

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

WEAVERS WAY FARMS’ SOIL AT BOTH SITES continues to shine, according to the results of the 2024 Pasa Sustainable Agriculture soil health study, which were released at the end of last year.

Our farm soil currently scores an 86 on a scale of 0-100, which is eight points higher than the 2023 num-

ber and 36 points higher than the average farm in the state. Regarding the degree of organic matter, our farm soil scores a 99 of 100 — around the same score as in 2023, when it hit 100. Typical farm soil in the state scored a 50 for organic matter in 2024.

According to the graphic, organic matter rapidly

absorbs water during heavy rains and slowly releases it during dry spells, which allows crops to withstand damage from severe weather. It also secures carbon in the soil, which helps mitigate climate change.

In the category of “Days of Living Cover”, which refers to the number of days in which farmers keep

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Community-Owned,
Open to Everyone

The Shuttle

MARCH 2026

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Provisions: The New Way to Preorder

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

FOR DECADES, THE PRE-ordering system at Weavers Way has been a stealthy, analog operation. Members fill out a form in the store, a staff person contacts them about their order and how much it will cost, and then again when the order is ready to be picked up. Plus, you mostly have to know what you’re looking for based on seeing the item in one of our stores.

Enter Co-op Provisions: a new, online ordering platform from which members can order everyday essentials, pantry staples and specialty items from the full UNFI catalog for convenient pickup from our Ambler or Germantown stores.

Provisions, which was started by Orcas Food Co-op in Eastsound, WA, now has 10 other co-ops, including Weavers Way, as part of the program. The platform is designed to be easy and intuitive. Shoppers can create custom product lists, search by dietary needs or product attributes and order on a schedule that works for them.

The platform was launched late last year and from the beginning, members had questions. Chief among those was, “why switch to this system?”

“Before Provisions, we didn’t have a way for our members to have access to full product catalogs from UNFI, so they can see what’s available,” said Jess Beer, the Co-op’s retail director. “What flavors does it come in? What size does it come in and how much is it actually gonna cost me? There’s been so much back and forth previously.”



Photo by Rachel Coats

Member picking up her first Provions order, carried by Weavers Way staffer Jake Six

Photo by Dakota Foster

Boxes of flour waiting for pick-up.

Since the UNFI catalog contains 25,000 items, members will be able to order many products that the Co-op doesn’t carry and isn’t likely to anytime soon.

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These Are Milestone Years for Awbury Farm, Saul CSA

by Alessandro Ascherio, Weavers Way Farm Manager



WEAVERS WAY HAS BEEN FARMing at Mort Brooks Memorial Farm in Awbury Arboretum for 25 years. Also this year, our Henry Got Crops CSA is entering its 18th season. It might be time for a party — or at least a ceremony and celebration — as the farms enter their adulthoods.

Thousands of people and dedicated organizations have contributed to making our farms and farm market possible. They include the founding farm committee formed over two decades ago, Co-op leadership and staff over the years, legions of working members, the general Co-op membership, those who work as part of their CSA share, Saul students, staff, and administration; Awbury Arboretum, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Bennett Compost, Philadelphia’s



Photos by Dakota Foster

Above, Awbury Farm work area. Below, raidishes from Saul CSA.

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

Members may vote online beginning on April 1 through or before May 7, 2026. Voting ends 30 minutes after the Weavers Way Spring General Membership Meeting begins.

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Editor’s Note

by Karen Plourde, Editor,
Weavers Way Shuttle



AS YOU’RE PAGING THROUGH THIS issue, please note the ad on page 11 with the headline, “Hey, Shuttle Readers!” After a delay of a couple years (maybe more?), we can now solicit donations from readers who want to help financially support the Co-op’s newspaper. Click on the QR code in the ad to make that happen.

Postage rates keep going up, as does our circulation. While it’s great to see our membership numbers climb, that also adds to the number of papers we have to print and mail out 10 times a year. We thank those who’ve switched to reading online, but we know this method isn’t for everyone. Besides, we can all use time away from our screens.

This is strictly voluntary, of course: No one is going to cut off your paper subscription if you don’t contribute. But helping close the gap between what we spend to put out the paper and what we make helps ensure that we’ll stick around. Thanks for reading, critiquing and paying attention.

This month, we offer a primer for how to use our new Provisions preordering platform (p.1). The program expands the number of items you can preorder by the tens of thousands, and more vendors will be added down the line.

On page 3, Neal Fordham’s coffee column, “Thinking Coffee”, which ran in the Shuttle in years past, is officially back with its original name. An awful lot of us may drink joe daily and can’t imagine doing without it. But Neal is positively poetic about it.

Also on the front page, Farm Manager Alessandro Ascherio notes that this year marks 25 years of Weavers Way farming the field at Awbury Arboretum, and 18 years of our farm CSA. I think I’ve been a CSA member for about 10 years, and can’t imagine a summer without it. I’m already looking forward to securing the week’s veggies, snipping flowers and herbs, walking the fields and all that fun stuff.

Catch you in the pages next month.

Check It Out!

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

Attention, olive lovers: No, the Co-op has not decided to start serving martinis. However, two of our local bakery vendors are offering their olive-studded loaves on sale through the end of the month. **Metropolitan Bakery’s** rosemary olive oil loaf is **20% off** (regularly \$7.99 each) and **Merzbacher’s** of Germantown’s herby citywide loaf with olives is **\$1 off** (regularly \$6.99 each).



The martini lovers among you might enjoy a slice of either loaf from the comforts of home with your favorite libation. Or you can save that indulgence for happy hour and pair either bread with your favorite variety of Lansdale’s own **Backyard Beans** coffee. Through Mar. 31, all 12-ounce bags of their beans are **\$2 off** (regularly \$14.99 each) and all 12-ounce cans of their cold brew are \$1 off (regularly \$3.99 each). For the ride-or-die cold brew fans out there, 64-ounce cartons of their Punch in the Face are **\$3 off**. After all, the weather is starting to get warmer.



Going On in Grocery

Are you on the hunt for a new snack? Consider **Bjorn Corn**, the all-natural, vegan, solar-popped popcorn. The Co-op carries it in five flavors and two sizes. The one-ounce bag flavors are sun-popped, classic (seasoned with nutritional yeast and salt), cloudy (slow roasted and salted), and spicy. The three-ounce size comes in original, cloudy, spicy, maple and truffle (Flavors and sizes will vary by store).



Through the end of the month, one-ounce bags of Bjorn Corn are **2/\$4** (regularly \$2.49 each); three-ounce bags are **2/\$7**(regularly \$4.49 each).

Hot Takes from Our Kitchens

The menu for March features deals on some Co-op classics. Our garlic hummus is **\$1 off** a pound (regularly \$6.99). Same goes for our mango curried chicken salad (reg. \$14.99), ballpark potato salad (a personal fave — \$5.99) and Ethiopian lentil salad (\$9.99). Our creamy tomato and basil soup, meanwhile, is **\$1 off** a quart through Mar. 31 (regularly \$9.99).



While we’re talking about hot takes, be sure to check out the QR code for the Spring Holidays menu on the back outside page. It features some new items and fresh spins on a couple favorites.



The Daily Deli

A pair of cheeses from Northeastern Vermont’s **Jasper Hill Farm** are \$5 off a pound all month, so now might be an ideal time to give them a spin. Their Cabot Clothbound Cheddar (regularly \$32.99 a pound) is coated in lard, wrapped in an additional layer of cloth and ripens in a specially calibrated vault. It’s buttery, yet slightly tangy with a finish of caramel sweetness.



Jasper Hill’s Whitney (regularly \$29.99 a pound) is a raw milk, Alpine style with a smooth texture and notes of toasted nuts and sweet cream. It’s modeled after classic melting cheeses and would work well with a raclette machine for a cozy late winter or early spring snack or light dinner.





SLICE IT DICE IT SERVE IT

8 YEARS

Bring the Heat with Horseradish



by Kieran McCourt, Weavers Way Ambler

Horseradish is a root vegetable and member of the brassica family of plants, like cabbage, broccoli and more tellingly, mustard. It’s native to southeastern Europe and Western Asia, from Italy to the Arabian Peninsula. There are records about its culinary and medicinal properties that go back to ancient times.

While horseradish often finds its way onto the table for the spring holidays, as part of the seder or as an accompaniment to the Easter lamb, this punchy root is a versatile way to add a bit of interest and bite to most dishes.

While intact, horseradish’s roots are supremely inoffensive. Its piquant taste only reveals itself when the root is cut or grated and a chemical reaction creates compounds found in mustard oil.

Whether prepared fresh or from a jar, horseradish can add bite and heat to many dishes. If you want to make it yourself, be careful! An open window for air flow, a mask and even safety goggles can help you to weather the release of those mustardy fumes. The roots, once peeled, can be grated using a box grater or chopped into manageable sizes for a food processor. Once grated, combine the horseradish with vinegar to create the familiar paste.

When made at home, prepared horseradish can be stronger than store bought, but the heat can be controlled, depending on when the vinegar was added. The sooner vinegar is added to the grated root, the less bite the horseradish will have.

Whether it’s a Sunday roast, hot roast beef, or a shrimp cocktail,

horseradish pairs well with many types of animal proteins. Pile it straight on or make into a creamy sauce to pair with beef, lamb, game, pork and fatty fish. Mix it into mustard with a little honey for a glaze for salmon or a sour cream sauce for beef.

A little heat and acidity cuts through rich proteins or livens up something simple like cooked shrimp. To make your own cocktail sauce, combine ketchup and horseradish to taste.

Horseradish can be mixed into a salad dressing for a little extra bite, especially a salad made with heartier greens like kale or a ranch dressing. It can also be added into your preferred slaw preparation. Mix it straight into a batch of mashed potatoes, with or without gravy. Don’t forget the other salads as well; egg, potato and pasta salad can all get a lift with a touch of horseradish.

And let’s not forget beverages. A Bloody Mary is a staple for the horseradish cocktail or mocktail. Horseradish can be infused into spirits to make using it easier and more palatable for a drink; generally vodka or other flavorless spirits work best. A little goes a long way and the flavor will depend on how long you let it infuse; taste it regularly before removing it. Horseradish is also one of the many ingredients steeped in vinegar and then sweetened to make a fire cider tonic.

Horseradish will keep for months refrigerated in a sealed container.

The Shuttle is published by
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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.

Thinking Coffee

Black Silk Espresso’s Fruitiness Comes to the Fore as It Cools

by Neal Fordham, for the Shuttle

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF OUR COFFEE SHOPPERS ACTUALLY make espresso? If you have a nice automatic espresso maker, with the push of a button and some ticking and hissing, you get to greet the day with a crema-topped espresso.

Does anyone besides me actually pull a shot using a manual lever espresso maker? We’ll be testing an espresso this month, so if you are not a drinker of espresso, please continue reading. I promise at least one paragraph that mentions birds, cows or trees.

Equal Exchange Black Silk Espresso

Tasting Notes: Fruity and dark chocolate, pomegranate and berry

As I ground Equal Exchange’s Black Silk Espresso, a delicious smell wafted into my nostrils. It grew even stronger as I poured it into my cup. With a few ounces of water waiting there, it would become my Sunday morning Americano.

I own James Hoffmann’s “The World Atlas of Coffee” and usually refer to it each month as I prepare my articles. This month I found a surprising note: “You will get the full expres-

(Continued on Page 6)



Pasa Study Serves Up More Good News About Our Farm Soil

(Continued from Page 1)

live plants growing in their fields, our farms did that for 335 days in 2024 — 114 more than in 2023 and 190 more than the average farm in the state. The average farm number in this category is the state benchmark for typical corn and soybean farms that are planted without cover crops. Living cover protects nutrient-rich topsoil and keeps waterways and drinking water clean by helping fields better absorb and filter stormwater.

The results are rated on a soil health rating scale developed by Cornell University. Pasa’s soil health benchmark study is a farmer-driven research project that measures soil health on over 200 farms.

Weavers Way Farm Manager Alessandro Ascherio noted that even though the Co-op’s farmers have been “decent” caretakers of the land they’ve been growing on since the early 2000s, the bulk of the soil was formed long before they got there.

“Weavers Way Farm has been lucky to be part of the Soil Health Benchmark study with PASA since 2019,” he wrote “It’s fascinating and helpful to measure aspects of our soils, in addition to nutrients and organic matter, that can help paint a more holistic snapshot of what might be going beneath our feet, which ultimately helps us make more informed decisions and be better stewards of the land we are growing on, and the land surrounding our farms.”

Weavers Way Cooperative

2024 RESULTS

WE’RE GROWING HEALTHY SOIL. HERE’S PROOF.

We’re participating in Pasa’s Soil Health Benchmark Study, a farmer-driven research project measuring soil health on over 200 farms. By comparing soil samples with our field management records, we’re learning how we can continuously improve our farming methods to leave our land better than we found it.

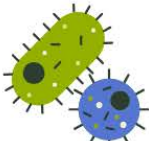
Take a look at our farm’s latest results.

SOIL HEALTH SCORE

Compiling results from decades of research, Cornell University’s Soil Health Lab developed a soil health rating scale. The scale measures a comprehensive array of chemical, physical, and biological features that indicate how healthy a soil is.



Healthy soil feeds nutrients to plants naturally and makes our food more nutritious.



It also fosters a thriving community of beneficial organisms that naturally defend crops from pests and diseases.

OUR FARM

AVERAGE FARM*

86

ON A SCALE OF 0-100

50

ORGANIC MATTER SCORE

Organic matter is formed when plant debris and animal manure decay over time. Small increases in organic matter have significant implications for improving soil health. Organic matter is a stable source of slow-release nutrients to crop plants.



Organic matter rapidly absorbs water during heavy rains, and slowly releases water during dry spells, helping crops withstand damage from severe weather.



And it helps mitigate climate change by securely storing carbon in the soil.

OUR SOIL

AVERAGE SOIL*

99

ON A SCALE OF 0-100

50

*Calculated by Cornell University’s Soil Health Lab for similar soil types.

DAYS OF LIVING COVER

Days of living cover refers to the number of days farmers keep live plants growing in their fields—or, in other words, the number of days fields are not left bare.



Keeping fields in living cover protects nutrient-rich topsoil we rely on for our food from erosion.



Also, living cover keeps waterways and drinking water clean by helping fields better absorb and filter stormwater.

OUR FARM

AVERAGE FARM**

335

DAYS PER YEAR

145

**Pennsylvania benchmark for typical corn and soybean farms planted without cover crops, estimated with 2022 National Agricultural Statistics Service data.

Help us spread the word about soil health! Scan the code to take our 2-minute survey:

Pasa SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



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the word on wellness

What’s Really Happening to Our Sex Lives as We Age

by Karen Palmer, Weavers Way Ambler Wellness Buyer

FOR A LONG TIME, MANY OF US WERE LED TO BELIEVE that desire has an expiration date. We were told that as we age, especially after midlife, our interest in sex would naturally fade, politely and without much fuss. Hormones would decline, bodies would change and we would simply “move on.”

But that’s not what’s happening. In fact, for many, desire doesn’t disappear at all. It changes, deepens, and sometimes — surprisingly — it intensifies.

I assumed that by the time I reached my 60s, sex would feel like a fond memory rather than an active part of my life. Instead, I find myself feeling curious, alive and wanting connection with a kind of urgency I didn’t expect. More than fading, my desire feels awake. And from conversations that I have had with customers in the aisles, I know I’m not alone.

It’s time we talk about sexual wellness — not as something taboo or indulgent, but as a legitimate and important part of whole-body health.

A Shift in Hormone Conversations

For years, hormone therapy, especially for women, was framed as risky, frightening or unnecessary. Many people were told to simply endure symptoms like low libido, vaginal dryness, erectile difficulty, mood changes or loss of vitality as an inevitable part of aging.

That narrative is shifting.

Today, hormone replacement therapy and other hormone-support strategies are increasingly viewed through a more nuanced lens. When thoughtfully prescribed and individualized, hormone support is being recognized for

symptom relief and for its impact on quality of life — energy, mood, bone health, cognition and yes, sexual desire.

Libido is not frivolous. Desire is not a moral failure or a youthful luxury. It’s often a sign of circulation, hormone balance, nervous system health and emotional vitality. When it disappears, it can be a signal worth paying attention to — not something to dismiss or shame.

Erections and the Myth of Inevitability

Let’s talk about men for a moment, because this is where silence has done real harm.

Erectile dysfunction is often treated as an unavoidable consequence of aging, or reduced to a quick pharmaceutical fix. While medications can be helpful for some, the bigger picture is often missed.

Erections are not just about performance — they are about blood flow, nerve signaling, nitric oxide production, hormone balance and stress levels. In other words, erections are a health indicator.

As testosterone levels naturally decline with age, men may notice changes not only in sexual function, but also in mood, muscle mass, motivation and confidence. Add chronic stress, poor sleep and or diet, cardiovascular strain or unresolved emotional pressure, and sexual function can suffer further.

But conversations are expanding. Pelvic floor health for men, circulation support, nervous system regulation, movement (the difference weight lifting makes here is noteworthy), and individualized medical care are all part of a more holistic approach. The goal is function and vitality — without shame.

Women, Arousal and the Lie We Were Told

Women were given a particularly limiting story: that menopause marks the end of sexual interest. The reality is far more complex and far more hopeful.

Desire doesn’t always show up the way it did at 30. Many women experience responsive desire rather than spontaneous desire. Arousal may require more time, more presence, more safety and more blood flow. Estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, circulation and lubrication all play a role.

But here’s the part we rarely say out loud: With fewer distractions, deeper self-knowledge and less concern about pleasing others, many women discover a new relationship with pleasure later in life — one that is embodied, curious and unapologetic.

Feeling desire in midlife and beyond isn’t strange; it’s human.

Sexual Health in Your 30s and 40s

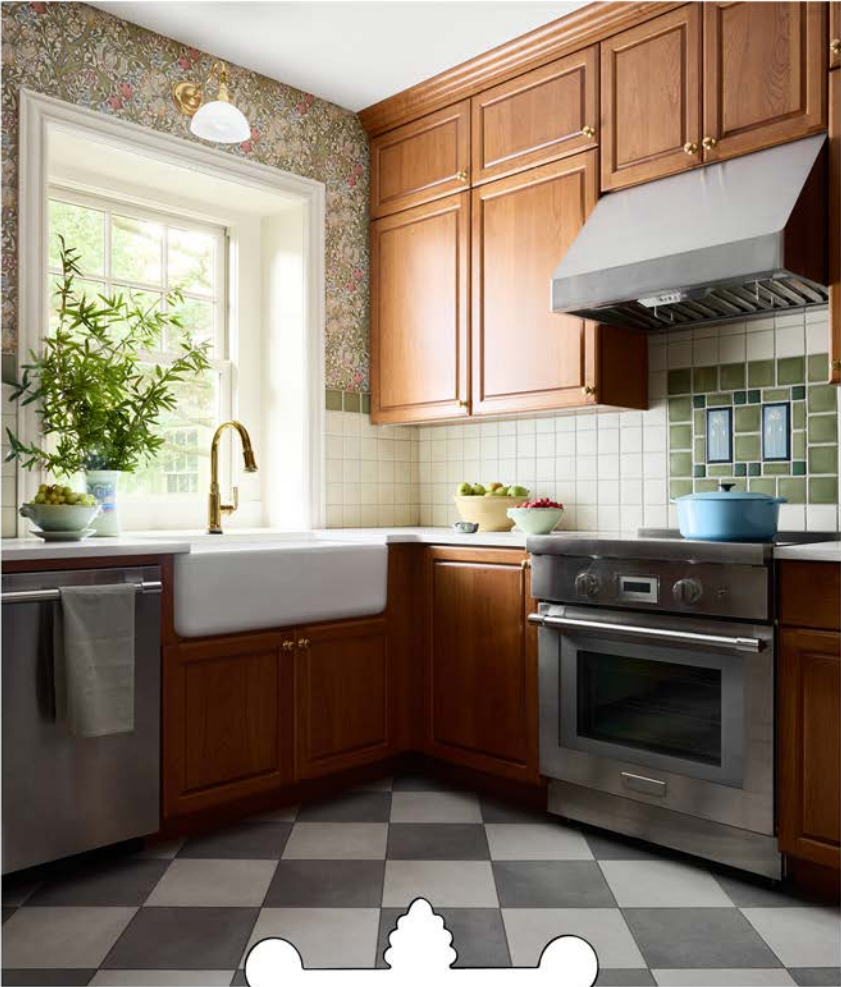
Sexual wellness in later life doesn’t begin at menopause or retirement — it’s shaped decades earlier. The habits, stress levels, relationships and health choices we make in our 30s and 40s quietly set the stage for how desire and arousal show up later.

For everyone, sleep, stress management, movement and circulation are foundational. Chronic stress and exhaustion keep the nervous system in survival mode, making pleasure harder to access. Alcohol awareness, emotional communication and tending to overall health are acts of sexual self-care.

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Local Foodie

Tommy's French onion soup recipe



The Great Foodscape

Good Fences Make for a Productive Garden that Keeps Out Wildlife

by Boris Kerzner, for the Shuttle

GROWING VEGETABLES AND FRUIT IS REWARD- ing. But it can prove challenging in leafy neighborhoods, where a plethora of wildlife — deer, rabbits, groundhogs, etc. — also want to take a bite out of our hard work.

On some properties, these animals make edible gardening difficult, if not impossible. A fence can make all the difference.

Let's start with deer. They are beautiful, voracious and can jump, so deer fences need to be at least six feet tall. You may have read that they should be up to 10 feet tall, but that applies to a large fence with lots of open space around it, which deer can use for a running start before leaping over. In most residential settings, six to seven feet is plenty. Welded wire fencing with large apertures, affixed to sturdy posts, works just fine — the main purpose here is a physical barrier. The deer will peer in, but not enter.

Rabbits are easier to protect against. They are not good jumpers or climbers, and a two-foot welded wire fence should do the trick. The apertures in the fence need to be smaller, such that even a baby rabbit couldn't squeeze through. A raised bed that's two feet tall or taller would automatically exclude rabbits.

What about groundhogs? They can climb, dig and burrow. Unlike rabbits, they can wreak havoc on the produce you've lovingly tended for months. A three to four foot tall fence with a wobbly top will prevent them from climbing. To prevent them from burrowing under your fence, dig a trench and bury the fencing material 12 inches deep.



Photos by Boris Kerzner

Two types of fences that will keep out deer, rabbits and groundhogs and allow you to keep your homegrown vegetables intact.

Since digging a trench is hard work, another option is to lay 12 inches of your fencing material on top of the ground and pin it down with landscape staples. Mow the lawn tightly before doing this and in a month, the grass will grow through the fencing material on the ground and obscure it.

All of the above fencing strategies can be combined in one sturdy, well-designed fence that will serve you for many many years to come. A good fence can be the difference between near-constant disappointment and worry-free gardening. We've built a lot of fences and know how to do it right, so don't hesitate to reach out if we can help.



Boris Kerzner is the owner of Grow Our Food, an all-service gardening company helping people grow their own food and beautiful native plants. They service the Greater Philadelphia area. Reach us at www.growourfood.com/contact or 267-415-6076.



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SPRING AHEAD

Daylight Saving Time starts Sun, Mar 8, 2026

These Are Milestone Years for Awbury Farm, Saul CSA

(Continued from Page 1)

Department of Parks and Recreation, Food Moxie, current and past CSA members, and, of course, the constantly shifting mosaic of farm managers and crew.

Beyond the groups we can easily name, there are the generations of growers, seed keepers, land stewards and food workers — many unseen or uncredited — whose shared knowledge and labor shape how all of us farm today. It truly takes a city!

As a Weavers Way farmer, I feel the momentum of all these people and efforts converging to make our farms and our many beautiful, health-giving projects in Philadelphia and beyond a reality. Having this kind of operation in the city is special. The amount of food waste we create is a fraction of what I’ve seen at more rural farms, many of which don’t have immediate access to communities, markets or processing options to move extra produce quickly enough.

With the support of the Co-op and the surrounding community, our farms can lean on the knowledge that the markets are there, the stores are down the block and the people we serve live near our farms and visit every week.

This closeness allows us to dig into questions and initiatives that make our farming livelihoods and food systems

more sustainable and resilient. How can we grow better — and more — in the space we have? How can we give back to the land we steward? What does it take to make farmers want to stay and grow with our farms? How can we continue leaning into care of land and people, and away from control?

As many of you may know, both farm sites now supply the Henry Got Crops CSA, which is enrolling a record 300 members this year. I think that is a carrying capacity for the land and facilities we steward. We also offer a robust Fall CSA program and, for the first time, a flower bouquet subscription. And did I mention the Horseshoe Ranch egg share?

Please find more information about our CSA programs in this edition of the Shuttle or on our website. The farm also continues to grow many thousands of pounds of produce for the Co-op’s stores and our on-site farm market at Henry Got Crops.

I’m so proud of our team this year, and we can use all the support we can get to keep our mighty farms running through thick and thin. That will help us continue to ask big questions and carefully try to answer them. Like I said before, it takes a city!

Black Silk Espresso’s Fruitiness Comes to the Fore

(Continued from Page 3)

sion of a coffee’s flavor when its temperature is closest to your body temperature!”

The experience of drinking my first Black Silk benefited from this advice. The flavors became more pronounced as the coffee began to slowly cool. A strange fruitiness came forward, but which fruit? Was it pomegranate, as Equal Exchange suggested I might discover?

On a frigid Saturday morning, I opted for a Vietnamese coffee, which I think of as the perfect drink for the coldest morning. I usually order coffee when I find myself at a Vietnamese restaurant; I love a cup that has been brewed with a Phin Vietnamese stainless steel filter. There is already a dollop of condensed milk in the cup, and hot coffee pours down to blend with the milk. It is always delicious, if a little too sweet and creamy.

For my version, I first added condensed milk to the cup and then added hot water to the milk. Then I topped it with the brewed Black Silk coffee. When the espresso began dripping into the milk, my wife expressed delight at how it smelled of caramel. But once all the espresso had dripped into the cup and more coffee aromas arose, her appreciation ended, while mine increased.

As I held the warm cup in hand, I looked out to our frozen backyard, where I’d thrown seed for the birds. First to

come were a dozen morning doves — the early risers. They were joined by a horde of house sparrows, a handful of tree sparrows and a fetching example of female cardinal perfection. Late to the feast were the elegant mockingbird in its formal attire and the yard-clearing blue jay. All the birds scattered at the sharp dressed jay’s appearance.

The rising sun shone over the birds and colors flashed: little arm bands of chestnut from the house sparrows, paler streaks of it on the song sparrows’ chests. An award for visual trickery goes to the juncos, who seemed half invisible, as their undersides blended perfectly with the snow. But it was the green and violet that shone at moments upon the graceful necks of the doves that suddenly turned my attention back to my cup.

That color brought to mind the flavor I detected in my espresso. I am sorry to say it also brought to mind a bottle of 19 Crimes red wine that had a tasting note of “fruity finish.” Well, so did my espresso. The wine may have also said “dark fruit,” so let’s call it pomegranate! I highly recommend the Black Silk Espresso (and 19 Crimes wine).

Equal Exchange Black Silk Espresso is available at Weavers Way Ambler and by preorder from our other stores.

What’s Really Happening to Our Sex Lives as We Age

(Continued from Page 4)

For men, supporting testosterone early through strength training, adequate protein, sleep and stress reduction matter. Erections can offer early insight into cardiovascular and nervous system health. Pelvic floor health and emotional regulation deserve attention long before problems appear.

For women, tracking cycle changes, understanding perimenopause and knowing that desire may change shape — but not disappear — can prevent years of unnecessary frustration. Pain, dryness or loss of interest are not character flaws; they are signals that support may be needed. Prevention, not panic, offers the most options.

One of the most overlooked aspects of sexual wellness is the nervous system.

Desire requires safety.

Chronic stress, anxiety, grief, exhaustion and emotional disconnection can shut down arousal for people of all genders. When the body is in constant fight-or-flight mode, pleasure becomes inaccessible.

Practices that support relaxation — sleep, touch, breath, movement and presence — are not luxuries. They are foundational to sexual health. Intimacy isn’t just physical; it’s physiological.

Silence breeds shame. Education restores agency.

When we don’t talk about sexual wellness, people assume something is wrong with them. They stop asking questions. They disconnect from parts of themselves that are still alive.

Opening the conversation, gently, respectfully and without judgment, creates room for choice. It invites people to explore what support might look like for them, whether that’s lifestyle changes, herbal support, medical care, honest communication with a partner or permission to want what they want.

Our bodies don’t stop speaking as we age; we stop listening. Maybe it’s time we changed that.

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(Supplements available at Weaver’s Way)

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MacaLife by Symphony Health

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MacaPause by Symphony Health

Hormone balance, menstrual and reproductive health

MacaHarmony by Symphony Health

Hormone balance at 50, 60, 70 and beyond

Macalibrium by Symphony Health

Men’s hormone health for energy and vitality

MacaFlow by Symphony Health

For better prostate health

Sexual wellness is deeply individual. Supplements are one piece of a larger picture that includes sleep, movement, stress management, and open communication. Our Wellness staff is always happy to help guide the conversation and encourage discussions with healthcare providers when appropriate.

for health, balance, manifestation

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Our Farmers Are Back, So Spring Can't Be Too Far Away

by Jon Roesser, Weavers Way General Manager

LIKE THE SWALLOWS RETURNING TO CAPISTRANO, we here at the Co-op have our own annual harbinger of spring: Our farmers are back.

Being a Weavers Way farmer is not glamorous work, and during July and August it can be downright brutal, with little downtime between long, hot days. But the upshot is that they get to disappear for a while during the winter, so when they start popping back up, we know the crocuses aren't too far behind.

As a group, they are much friendlier than the rest of us, so it is always good to see them, but especially this year. Their smiling faces and can-do spirit are a balm for the hard-pressed and increasingly cranky grocery team, which is anticipating the final liquidation of every last snowflake.

I'm an avowed summertime superfan, so I have been quite content with the Coastal Carolina-like winters of the last few years — cold, but not too cold, with puny snow "storms" that melt away in a few days. But winter came back hard this year, and it's testing my resilience.

I really have tried to make the most of it, and I admit winter in Philadelphia can be beautiful. I've bundled up for quiet, peaceful walks in the Wissahickon, enjoyed a few evenings watching the Olympics while sipping hot chocolate in front of the fireplace, and have come to appreciate the beauty of a frozen Schuylkill River.

But enough is enough.

As a proper Philadelphian, I know it is our civic duty to freak out in the days leading up to a snowstorm, and this year has given us ample opportunity to do so. My colleagues who hail from places like Wisconsin and Upstate New York shake their heads in disbelief at our behavior.

With an approaching storm, sales go through the



When snow

comes, carbs

still rule.



roof, but it's the grocer's equivalent of a sugar high: After going gangbusters for a few days, we sit around twiddling our thumbs until home larders are depleted. Besides, it all evens out in the end. Sales spikes around snowstorms notwithstanding, our overall sales growth since Jan. 1 is around 9%, the same pace as last year.

According to legend, in the mad rush preceding a winter storm, the Big Three foods to stockpile are milk, bread, and eggs (French toast being the preferred breakfast for hungry snow shovelers). But it's 2026, and shopping patterns have evolved.

For the week leading into the big storm on Jan. 18, overall sales were 83% higher than usual, with every single category up. In other words, we sold more of just about everything in the store. And while eggs and milk were ahead of that overall average (111% and 98%, respectively), bread sales, oddly, were only up 65%.

The major category winners were frozen pizza (up 178%), pasta sauce (177%), and baking mixes

(151%). Protein might be all the rage these days, but when snow comes, carbs still rule.

Other categories that stood out were fire logs (147%), hot cereal (141%), and soup (135%). One can begin to sense a pattern.

But the biggest winner? Pet food, up 332%. Pet food is usually a small category for us, and brick and mortar stores like Weavers Way have been losing ground to the likes of Amazon and Chewy.com for years. But when people anticipate possible supply chain disruptions, everyone wants to make sure Fido is well fed.

Oh, and the second biggest winner? Poop bags and cat litter (up 190%). You can't make this stuff up.

To give you an idea of what this means, in the week leading up to the Jan. 18 storm we sold \$24,681 worth of chicken. That's compared to \$11,354 the previous week, a much more typical figure.

All these extra sales come with extra operating costs, including staff overtime. Plus, we pay staff for hours missed when we close early or open late. By the time this winter is over, we'll have spent more than \$30,000 for snow removal.

So I can be forgiven for looking forward to spring.

Our farmers — cockeyed optimists, to the last — remind me that this long, hard winter is a good thing. It's supposed to be cold this time of year! And this winter's extended deep freeze will suppress the population of stink bugs, spotted lantern flies and Japanese beetles. Cold winters make for better harvests.

Now that's looking on the bright side!

See you around the Co-op.

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

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Current and Upcoming Projects Will Upgrade Access and More

by Sara Stevenson, Friends of the Wissahickon Executive Director

THE WISSAHICKON IS ONE OF PHILADELPHIA’S most treasured public spaces, but it is also a working watershed and complex ecosystem. At our recent Public Projects meeting, Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW) outlined the capital projects that are underway to improve access, restore habitat and strengthen long-term resilience.

City partners from Philadelphia’s Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems and Philadelphia City Planning Commission joined us to share related updates on their projects impacting Wissahickon Valley Park.

If you missed the meeting, you can watch the recording on our YouTube channel by scanning the QR code on this page.

This year, FOW is closing out Phase I of the Germantown Neighborhood Connection Project, also known as the Harvey Street Project. Launched in 2020 at the request of Harvey Street residents, this initiative reflects FOW’s broader commitment to expanding access to nature while strengthening ecological integrity.

This little-known access point is separated from the park’s main trail system by Lincoln Drive, a major vehicular thoroughfare. Addressing this disconnect requires more than trail work; it demands thoughtful planning regarding transportation, safety, habitat restoration and community engagement. In close partnership with neighborhood residents, we have reimagined this entry point as a safer, more welcoming gateway to the park. The success of the project is underscored by community leadership and involvement in a variety of volunteer efforts.

Phase I improvements include updated wayfinding, a new kiosk, strengthening existing trails, rerouting unsustainable ones and bolstering the surrounding habitat with more than 350 native plantings. We’ve also restored three historic stone staircases and installed a new wooden footbridge to improve trail continuity.

In February, we convened Germantown residents and the broader Wissahickon community for a project-specific virtual town hall meeting to outline next steps and gather input.

If you want to stay in the loop on upcoming project updates and events, sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at fow.org/newsletters.

As we close out Phase I, we are continuing to strengthen connections from the Harvey Street trailhead and improve pedestrian access through our partnership



Photo courtesy of Friends of the Wissahickon.

Above, the wooden footbridge at Harvey Street that was completed by FOW’s volunteer structures crew. Above right, the new kiosk installed at Harvey Street. Far right, the refurbished stone staircases at Harvey Street.

with the Philadelphia Streets Department and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

This work includes installing approximately 1,100 linear feet of ADA-compliant sidewalk along Harvey Street between the SEPTA overpass and Lincoln Drive, adding a crosswalk and implementing traffic-calming measures to improve safety in this high-traffic area.

Finally, we’ll enhance the landscape around the Henry Houston statue with native plantings and two crushed stone trails from our brand new sidewalk to the statue’s seating area.

As part of Phase II, FOW is in the development stage of the park’s first All Persons Trail, which is designed to be universally accessible for people of all ages, abilities and those who use mobility devices such as wheelchairs, walkers and strollers.

Back in the mainstem of the park, FOW is launching the Wissahickon Valley Park Streambank Resiliency and Flood Study. With the help of expert contractors, we will identify locations along Forbidden Drive and adjacent access trails that are most vulnerable to flooding and erosion or susceptible to bank collapse.

The findings from this study will inform the next decade of resiliency-focused capital projects and enable FOW and its partners to make data-driven decisions that balance environmental restoration with public engagement and recreational access. Future projects will implement solutions to protect Wissahickon Creek’s wa-

ter quality, which provides drinking water to one third of Philadelphians, and to provide safer, more enjoyable trail access for park visitors.

Down the pipeline, FOW will restore an actively eroding 500-foot gully along the access trail behind Pachella ballfield. In addition to limiting trail access for park users, the erosion threatens critical city infrastructure. Environmental engineers estimate that 22,000 pounds of sediment and 34 pounds of phosphorus enter the creek from this site each year. The project will reduce sediment and phosphorus loads entering the creek and improve trail safety for the park’s more than two million annual visitors.

We are still actively fundraising for this project. If you would like to contribute directly to this or any of our capital projects, please contact Senior Director of Advancement Sarah Marley at marley@fow.org.

We look forward to sharing additional updates as these essential projects advance. Community input is integral to FOW’s work, and we invite you to stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to provide feedback.



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Tree Tenders Awarded Grant to Plant and Maintain Northwest Canopy

by Liz Hersh, for the Shuttle

MT AIRY TREE TENDERS connects people with trees. Recently, our work to nurture, restore and grow our tree canopy got a boost. Two of our local nonprofit partners, West Mt Airy Neighbors and Friends of Carpenter’s Woods, successfully sponsored our submission for a “Tree Forward” grant by Philadelphia Health Management Corporation to “Cool Down Northwest Philly.”

This project is part of our ongoing effort to break out of our silos and build a true Northwest collaboration around trees in all stages of their life cycle. It brings together tree tender groups from Germantown, West Oak Lane, Awbury and Nicetown-Tioga, along with larger Philadelphia-wide organizations like the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, TreePhilly and Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light.

Mt Airy Tree Tenders, which covers the areas east and west of Germantown Avenue, began a renewed effort to plant more trees on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic. While walking around our community, we felt the temperature difference between shaded streets and blocks with no trees.

According to the Philly Tree Plan, there is a 22-degree difference between the hottest and coolest areas of the city, and this is related to inequity in our tree canopy. Trees play a crucial role in naturally cooling city spaces through shade and releasing water absorbed through their roots into the air. They are nature’s air conditioners.

We started going door to door talking with neighbors about planting free street trees, doing direct outreach to homeowners. Between 2021 and 2023 we planted 138 new trees, many on streets that had limited or no tree cover. Canvassing and information sharing became a core part of Cool Down Northwest Philly. Making trees available for free also helps!

In listening to homeowners talk about why they didn’t want to plant trees in their yards or along their front walks, we heard important concerns about trees damaging pipes, causing a mess and costing a lot to maintain or remove.

This is where equity comes into play. The responsibility for planting, caring for and maintaining trees falls on the property owner, and caring for an urban tree takes time and effort and costs money. While the Tree Forward grants are among the important steps the city is taking



Photos courtesy of Mt. Airy Tree Tenders.
Mt. Airy Tree Tenders volunteers pitched in to prune young trees in the neighborhood this winter.

to reverse canopy decline, there are still real concerns to address.

The Right Tree In the Right Place

Trees are known to damage pipes and uproot sidewalks, but we now know how to prevent this problem. The key is to plant the right tree in the right place, allow plenty of space for roots and prune early to nurture healthy growth. A larger pit and early pruning reduce braiding and help the roots get air and water, making them less apt to grow down into pipes.

The right tree can make a difference when it comes to sidewalk damage, because not all tree roots grow the same. While we need more big shade trees like the mighty oak, for some people and places, a smaller tree like a dogwood or redbud is a better choice.

For many of us, the benefits of trees outweigh the costs: healthier people, cooler streets, safer neighborhoods, homes for birds, fruit (like pawpaws), wonderful cooling shade, higher property values and lower utility prices. However, everyone has different tolerances and preferences.

For example, trees drop their leaves, and for those of us who love trees and value their contribution, raking is a small price to pay. Leaves make great compost and habitat. (I got itty bitty salamanders the first year I left the leaves in the garden.) As children, who didn’t love to jump into a big pile of leaves? As volunteers, we work together to help those neighbors who want the benefits of trees but can’t manage the maintenance.

While tree maintenance can be costly, careful pruning in the first few years of a tree’s life strengthens it and contributes to less maintenance later on. PHS, which organizes and supports Tree Tenders, has completed an inventory of recently planted trees to support our systematic pruning. They have prioritized maintaining trees as a critical part of sustaining and caring for the canopy. Planting alone is not enough.

At the same time, we are advocating for the city to invest more in tree care. For now, we are amping up our early pruning as an important and doable down payment on healthy long-term growth.

Mt Airy Tree Tenders, WMAN and Carpenter’s Woods are proud to be part of a larger, organized city-wide strategy to make Philly’s Tree Plan a reality by creating a culture of valuing and investing in trees.

Trees are calming. They reduce heart rates and improve concentration and focus. Deeply Rooted, a community-academic initiative, ran a study and found that vacant lot greening can reduce gun violence by 29% in neighborhoods struggling with poverty.

Thank Trees For Cleaner Air

Trees play a crucial role in absorbing and filtering out air pollutants; they are natural air purifiers. Rates of childhood asthma in Philadelphia are three times higher

(Continued on Page 19)



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Dog Tip of the Month

Appreciating the Predatory Behaviors Sequence in Canine Play

by Christopher Switky, for the Shuttle

IN THIS MONTH’S COLUMN, WE’RE TAKING A LOOK at a series of behaviors, the “predatory sequence”, that are deeply wired in the canine brain, and how those behaviors are expressed in what dogs do during playtime.

First, here’s, a bare-bones outline of the predatory sequence: (1) Orient, (2) Eye, (3) Stalk, (4) Chase, (5) Grab, (6) Kill, (7) Dissectand (8) Consume.

A dog sees, hearsor smells a potential prey animaland turns toward it. She watches and assesses, then slowly and stealthily moves toward it. When she senses the right moment, she chases and then grabs it in her mouth. Once she’s gotten it, she kills it with a few violent shakes, then rips it apart and eats it.

This sequence of behaviors are what our dogs, as well as wild canines, are designed to do, both mentally and physically. By providing them with activities that are partial outlets for these behaviors, we can increase the happiness and enrichment factors in their lives and help them stay in touch with their “inner doggedness.”

Fortunately, in dog-dog play situations, most pet dogs will do a subset of the first five predatory behaviors and proceed no further. Below are a couple of examples from the Positive Canine Concepts playdate

archives (in some cases, names have been changed to protect the innocent).

Misty goes to visit her friend Luke, who has an enclosed yard. When Luke sees Misty enter the yard, he crouches down low in the grass and freezes (behaviors #1 and #2). After a few seconds, Luke takes a few slow steps forward (behavior #3), then jumps up, chases his friend and delivers a playful (low pressure) bite to the neck (behaviors #4 and #5). Misty reciprocates the play-biting, and then chasing and wrestling ensue as the dogs get into a game they both enjoy.

Here’s a different playtime example that goes a little further during the fetch games that I play with my dog Simon.

Simon watches while I pick up the ball and get ready to throw it (#1 and #2). Once it’s thrown, he runs after it and grabs it (#4 and #5, and notice how #3 got skipped since there’s no need for stalking in this game). After he picks up the ball, he shakes it back and forth, as if killing a small animal (#6).

Most dogs with whom I’ve played fetch pick up the ball and bring it back, or joyfully run around with it in their mouths. Simon has a little more predatory edge to himand has to shake that ball after each pick-

up. Both of the dogs I had before Simon did the same thing. Something about me must attract this kind of animal — I’m not sure what.

OK, back to Simon, who picks up the ball and gives it a death-blow shake. He does not proceed to behaviors #7 and #8, dissect and consume, but that’s because I use a hard rubber ball that he can’t rip apart. If I threw a tennis ball for him, he would tear it up and eat it, and we’d be racking up some big invoices at the Vet Clinic ER.Fortunately, I knew this about Simon when I adopted him and we have only played with hard rubber balls from day one.

Simon does get to do some dissecting and consuming, but it’s separate from our fetch games. He gets a bullystick (from Weavers Way Across the Way) every morning after breakfast. He likes food in a bowl and never turns it down, but he’s happiest when ripping apart and eating a bullystick. Perhaps he’s communing with his ancestors while expressing his “inner doggedness!”

Chris Switky is the founder of Positive Canine Concepts Dog Training, and regularly teaches a “Basic Manners for Dogs” class through Mt Airy Learning Tree. See MtAiryLearningTree.org for more details.

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Medicare & Us

Should You Use a Broker to Sign Up for a Medigap Supplement?

by Joan Adler, for the Shuttle

I've been reading your column in the Shuttle with interest as I'm 71 and about to go off my wife's employer's health insurance. I signed up for Part A and I've been in touch with a broker. I've submitted an application for Part B to start on Jan. 1 (which is when my coverage ends).

I'm wondering what advantage (or disadvantage) I might have in dealing with a broker.

I've heard horror stories about Medicare Advantage plans and assume that's not what s/he will try to sell me. I'll also ask about dental, hearing and vision coverage. Any thoughts on this? Thanks!

You sound like you have all of your ducks in a row.

Brokers are a good way to go. The broker can protect you from high-pressure tactics if you call the insurance companies directly. They can help coordinate your benefits and sell you a Medigap plan. You may also ask about dental/vision/hearing coverage, although there is no requirement to buy it, and there are no timelines.

It is important to find an honest broker. Most people call a broker to get a Medigap supplement.

There are different supplement plans, like Plan F, Plan G or Plan N. The benefits vary slightly, but the costs are wildly different. All plans with the same letter are identical in the guaranteed benefits you will get. They have a contract with Medicare (the government) to provide these benefits. The only difference is what the plan will cost. Sometimes the company will say they have extra benefits, like a gym membership or other perks, but these "extras" are not covered by the contract with the government and may be somewhat of a scam.

You don't pay the broker — they are paid a percentage of what they sell you as their fee. The insurance company can charge whatever they like; they are only bound by competition. If the price of a Plan N varies from \$105 to \$250 per month, the broker will obviously make a higher fee if they sell you the more expensive but identical plan.

Brokers do get a somewhat higher fee for enrolling someone in an Advantage plan (Part C), but they have to sell you what you are asking for. In general, we at PA MEDI would not refer you to a broker to get an Advantage plan; we can do that for you directly.

The broker should work for you and compare costs and plans. They work with many, but not all, insurance companies. When you call us, we'll give you the three lowest prices for the plan you choose, so you can compare prices with what the broker tells you. The honest brokers' quotes should be within the range we give you.

How do you find an honest broker? You can go to www.medicare.org and follow the prompts. You will get a list of brokers licensed to sell plans in your zip code. These brokers have sworn to work on your behalf.

Currently, brokers are not earning a fee for Part D enrollment, but many will enroll you if you are buying another product. If not, your PA MEDI counselor can enroll you in a Part D (Drug) Plan.

If you have questions about brokers, you can contact your PA MEDI counselor at 215-456-7600 or me, directly, at 215-844-0439.

Joan Adler is a Medicare counselor with Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight (PA MEDI), a free and confidential statewide service operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

Hey Shuttle Readers!



We love sharing the Shuttle with our community,

and we're always looking for ways to keep it accessible for everyone. Printing and postage costs have gone up, so we wanted to share a few easy options for staying connected.

- **Read Online:** You can read both current and past issues of the Shuttle anytime online at www.weaversway.coop
- **Pick up in Store:** Prefer a print copy? They're always available to pick up at any of our store locations.
- **Donate to the Shuttle:** If home delivery is your favorite way to read, you can donate to support printing costs (just scan the QR code).
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Thanks for being part of our community and for supporting the Shuttle!

Co-op membership has its perks. Here's a new one:



- Access to our primary supplier's full catalog – thousands of items by the case at a discounted rate.
- Volume discount tiers: The more you buy, the more you save.
- Shop Co-op Deals for even deeper discounts.
- Weekly pick up available at our Germantown or Ambler stores.

Members will receive an email invitation to open a Provisions account, or visit the member center to find a secure link.
Need help? Email provisions@weaversway.coop

Provisions: The New Way to Preorder

“Our stores are quite small; even Ambler is only carrying a portion of their catalog,” Beer said. “The question we often get from members is ‘why don’t you stock this flavor?’ ‘Why don’t you stock this product?’ The answer is that a lot of these products have less demand.”

Members also wondered why they’re limited to picking up their Provisions items in Germantown and Ambler — at least for now.

“Part of that was that they’re newer stores, [and] they have less customers using our legacy program,” Beer said. “And they also have more physical space.”

However, Beer added, the plan is to roll out Provisions in Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill this summer. Once that happens, members will be encouraged to shift away from the legacy preordering system and toward Provisions. But it’s likely the old system will continue in some form, mostly because the Co-op won’t be able to add all our vendors to the Provisions platform.

“We’re planning to get our pet vendors on there, since we do so many pet preorders,” Beer said. “We’re working on getting Lancaster Farm Fresh on there, [and] potentially our produce vendor, Four Seasons, so people can buy all sorts of things by the case.”

Because member discounts are already built into the wholesale price being offered through Provisions, the senior and working member discounts don’t apply to items purchased on the platform.

“[With] our legacy program, we often ended up overdiscounting some items, because when all the membership discounts stacked with the preorder discount, we were sometimes paying people to take products home,” Beer said. “So with Provisions, we’re just cleaning that up a little bit and making sure that the Food for All discount exists — they get an additional discount — and that all other members get the same discount.”

However, all members have access to volume tier discounts on the program. If a member orders \$150 of merchandise on Provisions, they get an additional 5% off their order. At \$450, they get an additional 10% off. And if they order \$750 of product or more, they get an added 15% off.

“A larger order requires less labor per dollar than a smaller one, so we can pass those savings on through lower prices,” Beer said. “Think of it like the Costco model: They run fewer staff per transaction and make it up in volume, which lets them offer lower prices. On Provisions, our average transaction is higher than in-store, so we can afford to offer bigger discounts on bigger orders. The more you spend, the more we can give back.”

Beer is also hoping that the program will allow the

(Continued from Page 1)

Co-op to grow the number of institutional accounts it has.

“Most small businesses and nonprofits struggle to order from UNFI directly — the minimums are high and the pricing is tough,” she said. “Through the Co-op, they’ll likely get better pricing than they could on their own, with no minimum order required.”

Helpful Hints for Using Provisions

When you’re making your list, be sure to check out the monthly Co-op Deals and Co-op Basics sections. Deeper discounts are available when you refine your search to Co-op Deals and Co-op Basics, because items in those categories will have extra savings attached on top of the low bulk pricing. However, according to Beer, because of when the products get ordered and when they land in the stores, the National Cooperative Grocers Deals cycles are slightly different on the Provisions platform.

“Sometimes a customer will say, ‘Hey, this was on sale in the store, but not on Provisions,’” she said. “It’s because the promo period has already changed over on Provisions — [they’re] a little ahead of the game.”

These shelf-stable essentials are used often, store well and deliver the biggest savings when purchased in bulk:

- Canned legumes (black, chickpeas, kidney, lentils)
- Diced tomatoes, crushed tomatoes, tomato paste
- Broth and stock (vegetable, chicken, bone broth)
- Olive oil and cooking oils
- Coconut milk and nut butters
- Honey, maple syrup, agave
- Rice, quinoa, oats, pasta
- Baking basics (flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder)
- Vinegar and soy sauce
- Spices you use regularly (salt, pepper, cinnamon, garlic powder)

Items Worth Stocking Up On:

Perfect for households, workplaces and anyone who likes to be prepared:

- Cereal and granola
- Snack bars and crackers
- Coffee and tea
- Plant-based milks and shelf-stable dairy alternatives
- Sparkling water and beverages



- Condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo, hot sauce)
- Applesauce and fruit cups
- Baby food and toddler snacks
- Cleaning supplies and paper goods
- Personal care basics (soap, toothpaste, etc.)
- Favorite Brands:
- Bianco DiNapoli
- Spindrift
- Ollipop
- Rao’s
- Kettle chips
- Truvani protein powders
- Frontier spices and teas
- Lara bars
- Siete chips
- Saratoga Springs
- Justin’s nut butters

To get started, go to the Member Center and look for the secure link under “My Message Board.” If you still have the Provisions email the Co-op sent to members at the end of December, the link is the same as the one on the Member Center message board.

“Give [Provisions] a shot,” Beer suggested. “If you are someone that goes to Costco on a quarterly basis, see if we have an option for you. Remember, every dollar spent at the Co-op is keeping the money in the local co-operative economy and not going elsewhere.”

ANNDÉE HOCHMAN

PARENT TRIP

Unexpected Roads to Form a Family

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Recently completed projects

Weavers Way Co-op, Germantown

The Mercantile

Greene St. Music Teacher Cheery About ‘Extraordinarily Blue’ Album

by Karen Plourde, Editor, Weavers Way Shuttle

HOW FAR DID YOU GET WITH YOUR PAN-
demic project? Alek Barkats, a Weav-
ers Way member and music teacher at Greene
Street Friends School in Germantown, com-
pleted his with the help of longtime friend and
fellow musician Howe Pearson: an album of
kids’ music, “Extraordinarily Blue,” that was
quietly released last fall.

The album, which features quirky, fun-
ny songs about blue things and blue feelings,
was recorded re-
motely, with Pear-
son contributing
from his home in
New Orleans and
Barkats in the Bay
Area and later in
Philadelphia.

Pearson, who
sings and handles
percussion for the
Americana group
The Deslondes and
plays with other
groups, also taught
music to elementa-
ry school students
in the past. Current-
ly, he teaches music students privately. The
Deslondes will put out an album of covers later
this year.

The duo had talked about doing the al-
bum for a while, but got serious once the CO-
VID-19 pandemic hit and much of the world
started working remotely. They started send-
ing each other titles of songs as part of an ex-
ercise in which each would write a song in 30
minutes as a way of committing themselves to
their first thought.

“In that way, too, no one can really claim
they fully wrote the song,” Barkats said. “...
The best part of the song that I wrote is the title
that Howe gave me.”

Working from a distance lengthened
the amount of time it took the pair to finish
the project. Pearson and Barkats would send
rough demos of the songs played on acoustic
guitar and give each other little, if any, feed-
back. They then got together for a handful of
recording sessions in which they would lay
down different instruments — bass, drums,
recorders, clarinets and more — and swap the

recordings back and forth.

“Most of it happened pretty fast, and then
the finishing touches took a long time,” Pear-
son, 35, said. “It takes discipline to put [the
project] over the finish line. Alek has been do-
ing it,”

“Once we got together for recording ses-
sions, we’d work on the songs separately,”
Barkats added. “And then eventually we got
together for a final recording session about a
year ago.”

Barkats spent
the next two to three
months mixing the al-
bum in his home stu-
dio when he could
find time. He then sent
the file to a friend in
Massachusetts, who
mastered the album.

As part of their
recording adventure,
Barkats and Pearson
went to a blueberry
farm in New Orleans
where Pearson was
playing with one of
his bands. The owner
of the farm later sent Pearson a video of the
staff listening to “Just a Blueberry,” the first
song on the album.

The duo has two album celebration shows
scheduled: one in Brooklyn on Mar. 20, and
one at GSFS on Mar. 21. CDs of the album
will be sold at both, along with other merch.

“Right now, it’s about taking a breath and
enjoying, and then we’ll do the next color,”
Barkats said. “We’ll see if we finish the whole
rainbow...If we can both live til we’re 80, I
think we can do it.”

Pearson and Barkats hope that families
who listen to the album will be inspired to
make their own music.

“Sometimes you listen to a band, or lis-
ten to some really heady jazz music, and
you’re like, ‘I could never,’” Barkats said. “...
The playful approach feels like ‘I could make
something like that.’”

“Extraordinarily Blue” can be listened to
on Bandcamp or via distrokid.com.



Howe Pearson (left), and Alek Barkats.

Howe & Alek's Extraordinarily Blue Celebration

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Stay Calm and Cautious Should You See a Coyote on the Trails

by Gabrielle Fatula, Communications Manager, Wissahickon Trails

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE NEWS from a neighbor or even spotted one yourself: Coyotes have been seen more frequently along local trails and preserves. While sightings like this can be surprising, coyotes are an established part of Pennsylvania’s ecosystem, according to the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Still, these moments can be a helpful reminder that our local preserves may be surrounded by a highly developed region, but are still living landscapes where wildlife moves freely. Understanding that context helps everyone enjoy the trails safely and responsibly.

Coyotes are relatively small, wary animals that typically avoid people and large animals. They are not considered a threat to people, children or horses, and attacks on humans are extremely rare. Most sightings are brief, with the animal passing through and continuing on its way.

If you encounter a coyote on the trail, the following consistent response is recommended:

- Stay calm and continue moving steadily; don’t run.
- Give the animal space and avoid approaching or feeding it.



Photo by Kristy Morley

- If needed, make yourself appear larger and use your voice or noise to encourage the animal to move along.
These actions help maintain coyotes’ natural wariness of people, which is im-

portant for everyone’s safety.
Dogs should always be kept on a leash while visiting preserves and shared-use trails. Keeping pets under control reduces the chance of a close encounter and

helps protect wildlife as well as other trail users.

If horseback riders spot a coyote nearby, they should remain calm and keep moving forward. Remaining calm, maintaining control and continuing steadily down the trail helps prevent sudden reactions and keeps riders, horses and other trail users safe.

Our local preserves may be surrounded by roads, neighborhoods and businesses, but even so, they are connected natural systems. Wildlife sightings are part of what makes these places special. Respecting that wildness, through simple actions like leashing dogs, giving animals space and following trail guidelines, ensures that we can continue to enjoy these natural spaces while allowing them to function as habitat.



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The Basics of Siting, Building and Filling Your Raised Beds

by Sally McCabe, for the Shuttle

IF YOU’VE SPENT ANY TIME GARDENING IN THE PHILADELPHIA region, you know our soil can be a bit of a mixed bag. Gardeners frequently run into clay, bricks, car parts, cement and maybe even a little “topsoil” brought in from the nearest construction site. Rather than hiring excavation equipment and/or using dynamite to dig down, it’s generally easier to build up.

When your native soil is unpredictable or compromised, raised garden beds offer a practical, accessible way to create healthy growing conditions with no heavy machinery required.

In its simplest form, a raised garden bed is a frame, usually made of wood, stone or metal, that holds a mound of soil above the level of the surrounding ground. While in-ground gardening is traditional, learning how to make a raised bed allows you to bypass poor local soil entirely. These beds are the gold standard for growing vegetables, herbs and even cut flowers because they provide a controlled environment in which the soil never gets stepped on and compacted. They drain better, warm faster in the spring and when they are built high enough, they can really save your back.

Wooden beds are no more effective than cinder block, brick, rock or steel, but they do go together faster. If you’re not afraid of drills, this is a beginner-friendly DIY project you can easily knock out in a single afternoon.

Choosing the Right Location

Just like with an in-ground garden, location is everything. Choose a spot for your raised bed that gets six or more hours of direct light, has level ground if possible (not necessary, but it makes construction easier) and is close to a water source, so you don’t have to lug a heavy hose long distances.

The golden rule of raised bed dimensions is reachability. Keep it three to four feet wide, so you can reach the middle from either side without ever stepping into the bed. The length should be up to you and your space, although four to eight feet is standard for stability. If the bed is any longer than eight or 10 feet, and it’s a nuisance to walk around, you’re going to accidentally step in the bed.

Four feet by eight feet is the standard size for a raised bed, because almost any car can hold three eight-foot planks. Any longer and you’ll have to borrow a truck, which will delay your project by at least two weeks.

When deciding on the height of your sideboards, think about what you want to grow. I use carrots as my standard. How long would you like them to be? Also think about what’s under your bed and the state of the ground beneath it.



Photo courtesy of Pennsylvania Horticulture Society.

If you are building on top of concrete or particularly trashy urban soil, you’ll need a depth of at least 12 inches to give roots enough room to thrive. However, if you’re placing the bed on decent lawn or garden soil, eight to 10 inches is usually the sweet spot. This provides enough vertical space for the critical mass of high quality soil needed to support heavy feeders like tomatoes.

To build a standard 4’ x 8’ x 12” bed, you will need:

- Two 2’ x 12” x 8’ boards (for the long sides)
- One 2’ x 12” x 8’ board (cut in half for the ends)
- One 4” x 4” x 4” post (cut into 12” corner stakes)
- Three-inch exterior-grade wood screws
- A drill/driver
- Hardware cloth, cardboard or landscape fabric (for the bottom)

How to Make a Wooden Raised Garden Bed

1. Clear any tall weeds or large rocks. You don’t need to remove the grass, but it helps to scalp it short.
2. On a flat surface, butt the end boards against the side boards to form a rectangle. Use your 4x4 corner posts for stability and screw the boards into the posts.
3. Place the frame in its permanent home. Check for level and adjust by digging out a little soil under the high side if necessary.
4. Line the bottom with hardware cloth. If you have burrowing pests like groundhogs, use a layer of cardboard to smother the grass.

Untreated cedar or black locust can last 10 to 15 years, while standard heat-treated pine may need replacing after five to seven years. To extend its life, avoid using pressure-treated wood from decades ago, which contained arsenic. Modern ACQ-treated wood is generally

considered safe, but many organic gardeners still prefer natural rot-resistant woods.

FYI, cedar is expensive. I’m experimenting with a layer of pressure-treated 2’ x 4’ on the ground, pressure-treated 4 x 4s as corners, and then build my bed up with 2 x 10s of heat-treated pine. Since most of the rot happens at corners and the soil line, I’ve extended the life of my beds by at least two additional years.

The Best Soil For Raised Beds

You went to all this trouble so you could have control over the soil, so don’t just fill your bed with dirt from your yard! The secret sauce is a raised bed mix. In the Philly area, we recommend a 70/30 mix (compost to topsoil) to fill the beds initially. In subsequent years, as compost breaks down and feeds the plants, add more compost to keep up the level. Topsoil contains minerals and chemistry to keep plants fed, while compost has nutrients and biology. Together, they do a good job of supporting our crops. You can always top off with a few bags of whatever the garden center recommends for particular crops.

While the initial setup takes a bit of sweat and a small investment in materials, the payoff of a raised bed is years of easier maintenance and higher yields. At the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, our mission is to grow confident, successful gardeners, and there is no better way to start your journey than with a bed you built yourself.

Happy building, and I’ll see you in the garden!

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



If you have mobility issues or just want to save your knees, don’t be afraid to go higher. 24 to 30 inches makes for a very comfortable table-height gardening experience. To save money, fill at least the bottom half of a tall bed with junk like logs, sticks, brush, or anything non-toxic to take up space, then top off the last 10-12 inches with decent compost and higher-end bagged soil.



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WEAVERS WAY EVENTS

Live Music at Weavers Way Ambler

Thursdays, Mar. 12, 19 and 26 **6-7:30 p.m.**

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Dogs Have Feelings, Too! Learn to Speak Dog

Tuesday, Mar. 17 **7-8 p.m.**

Virtual Event

Did you know that dogs primarily use body language to communicate? People use body language too, but also a lot of chit chat. Our dogs often don't know what our words mean, unless we teach them, but they are masters at reading our body language. By reading their bodies, we can better know how our dogs feel so we can interact with them safely and respectfully.

This event is geared toward children but is valuable for adults as well. An adult must be present to supervise and assist as needed. This is an online workshop and a Zoom link will be emailed to you after you register to attend the session.

Longtime Co-op member **Lisa Cruz** is the owner and canine coach at Brighten Up Pup, LLC, located in West Mt. Airy, where she lives with her husband, two children and their goldendoodle.

Virtual New Member Orientation

Wednesday, Mar. 18 **6:30-8 p.m.**

We encourage all new members to attend a member orientation. Our virtual session will include an overview of membership at the Co-op – how it works and why it's valuable. We'll explore our online Member Center, discuss the benefits of membership and help you choose if working membership is right for you. You will receive a zoom link by email prior to the meeting. Questions? Contact membership at member@weaversway.coop

Meet the Author: Joseph Natalicchio

Saturday, Mar. 21 **11 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Weavers Way Ambler

Join us to celebrate Joe and his book, "Baseball's Most Outrageous Promotions." Stop by his table and hear anecdotes about his inspiration and writing process. The

book chronicles the 13 most outrageous promotions in the history of major league baseball, including one that involved a fight with weapons between baseball players and fans, an explosion on the field large enough to create a crater, a mass wedding and a Beatles concert performed before a nearly half-empty stadium.

Joe worked for the federal government for 30 years and as a high school guidance counselor for 10 years. In retirement, in addition to his latest book, he has published stories in print in the Avalon Literary Review and online at the Mystery Tribune website. He lives in a suburb of Philadelphia.

How to Stay Safe Around Dogs

Tuesday, Mar. 24 **7-8 p.m.**

Virtual Event

Did you know that any dog can bite – even the sweet ones? And most bites are preventable! Let's learn how to safely and respectfully interact with our pups so we can enjoy each other's company and live harmoniously in peaceful forever homes.

This event is geared toward children, but the content is equally valuable to adults. An adult must be present to supervise children and assist as needed. This is an online event, and you will receive a Zoom link to join the workshop after your register to attend the event.

Lisa Cruz is a lifelong dog lover whose mission is to help families build a strong foundation for their pet's forever home through education, mutual respect and understanding.

Women's Wellness with Kara Jo

Wednesday, Mar. 25 **6:30-7:30 p.m.**

The Café at Weavers Way Ambler

Join Kara Jo for an informative session focused on boosting your wellness and feeling great inside and out. She'll discuss different aspects of women's health, focusing on gut health, digestion, blood sugar regulation, inflammation modulation and stress support. She'll show us how all these important factors affect hormone regulation and how they can be managed. Attendees will receive free samples of products and coupons.

Kara Jo is a longtime Co-op member who shares her love and knowledge about holistic remedies with the Weavers Way community. She also has a range of natural products for sale at some Co-op locations.

Rescheduled – Stitching and Stuffies Project with Brighten Up Pup

Saturday, Mar. 28 **1-2:30 p.m.**

326B W. Cheltenham Ave., Germantown

Brighten Up Pup's Dog Savvy Kids Club is hosting our third annual Stitching and Stuffies Project to support the local nonprofit Glad Dogs Nation. Children will have fun with a simple sewing project to add squeakers to donated and repurposed stuffed toys. Dogs living in shelters and rescues across the country will thank you as they enjoy snuggling and playing with their new toys! Recommended for children ages 4 and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited to 20-25 people.

How to Stay Safe Around Dogs You Don't Know

Tuesday, Apr. 7 **7-8 p.m.**

Virtual Event

Lisa Cruz will share her top tips to stay safe and have fun with dogs you don't know. Dogs are all around us, so let's be ready to interact with them in a safe and respectful manner. Learn how to ask a dog's permission to pet them and how to tell if they are enjoying it. Also, learn what to do if you're approached by a strange dog or one that might be jumping on you.

This event is geared toward children, but the content is equally valuable to adults. An adult must be present to supervise children and assist as needed. This is an online event, and you will receive a Zoom link to join the workshop after you register to attend the session.

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For more info: www.weaversway.coop/events

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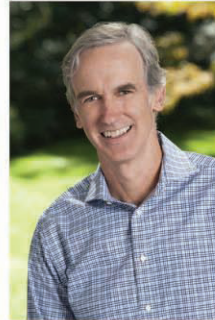
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Resources for Native Plants in Our Area — and Beyond

by Becca Dickstein, Weavers Way Environment Committee

YOU MAY BE PLANNING TO ADD NATIVE PLANTS TO YOUR garden this year to help the pollinators or so you can enjoy their beauty close at hand. Below is a list of where you can buy native mid-Atlantic plants in Northwest Philadelphia and southern Montgomery County and where to find help with garden design, installation and more. This is a noninclusive list because I’m limited to what I know:

- **America Plants** (dennisburton.wixsite.com/americanplants; AmericaPlants2@gmail.com). Roxborough-based native plant grower and seller. Sign up for their email list to be notified of sale days.
- **Backyard Biome Design** (backyardbiome.com; backyardbiomedesign@gmail.com). Sells native plants and provides design, installation and maintenance on various-sized properties. Check their website for native plant sales at local farmers markets.
- **Collins Nursery** (ambler.temple.edu/arboretum/collins-nursery; collinsnursery@temple.edu). Native plant grower located at the Ambler Arboretum on the campus of Temple University Ambler. Subscribe to their email list to be notified of sale days.
- **Germantown Kitchen Garden** (germantownkitchengarden.com; germantownkitchengarden@gmail.com) Germantown-based small farm that sells native and non-native plants. Subscribe to their email list to be notified when plants are available.
- **Good Host Plants** (goodhostplants.com; info@goodhostplants.com). Mt. Airy-based grower of straight-species native plants local to the mid-Atlantic region. Check their website for plant availability.
- **Hepatica Landscapes** (hepaticallandscapes.com; info@hepaticallandscapes.com). Provides native plants, design installation, natural-area restoration and maintenance for small-to-large gardens.
- **Homegrown Habitats** (homegrownhabitats.com; HomegrownHabitatsLLC@gmail.com). Provides native-garden design and installation for smaller gardens.
- **In the Garden** (inthegardendesign.net; InTheGardenWithCharlotte@gmail.com). Provides

harmonious design, installation, maintenance and garden coaching services, including caring for native plants for small and mid-size properties. Also offers hands-on gardening education upon request.

- **Journeywork** (journeywork.org; paige@journeywork.org). Helps transform lawn areas using native plantings; offers low-cost DIY programs and custom projects.
- **Keystone Permaculture** (keystoneperm.com; info@keystoneperm.com). Designs, plans, installs and maintains various types of landscapes, including native gardens for small to large landscapes.
- **Primex Garden Center** (primexgardencenter.com; info@primexgardencenter.com). Family-owned, full-service nursery that sells native as well as non-native plants.
- **Weavers Way** (weaversway.coop). Sells a variety of plants at their stores and the farm market, including mid-Atlantic natives from several wholesalers.

Here are several other native plant resources, including some that are out of our area:

- **The Township of Abington’s** list of native plant resources in Montgomery County (abingtonpa.gov//198/Gardening-Native-Plants).
- **Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve** (bhwp.org/grow/native-plant-nursery/). Bucks County native plant nursery that is part of a large demonstration native plant preserve.
- **Landhealth Institute** (landhealthinstitute.org; info@landhealthinstitute.org). West Philadelphia organization promoting environmental education, ecological design and repair of degraded land, including native plantings.
- **Mt. Cuba Center** (mtcubacenter.org). Hockessin, DE, native plant demonstration gardens, research and plant sales on a former DuPont estate.
- **Xerces Society** for Invertebrate Conservation (xerces.org/publications/plant-lists/native-plants-for-pollinators). Noninclusive list of native plants that help pollinators.

Becca Dickstein is a plant biologist who works on sustainability, using molecular and genetic tools.



Now is the Best Time To Prune Your Trees

by Marsha Low, Weavers Way Environment Committee

If you have trees on your property that need pruning, you may be wondering when the best time to do that is. Except for dead branches, which can be pruned or removed at any time, now (late winter to early spring) is the best time to prune most trees, since they have not yet woken up from their winter dormancy.

If you have the proper equipment and can reach the branches that need pruning, you can do it yourself. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has an excellent video on YouTube about the process, entitled, “PHS Presents Basic Tree Care: Pruning”

For large trees, you may need to hire an arborist. Just make sure they are certified by the International Society of Arboriculture so that you know they will avoid tree “topping”: cutting off the tops of a tree’s main branches to the stubs, a destructive practice that severely harms tree health and structural integrity.



No More Neonicotinoid-Treated Plants in Our Floral Departments

THE WEAVERS WAY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE is pleased to announce that plants treated with neonicotinoids (neonics), a class of insecticides, will no longer be sold at the Co-op.

After our committee discovered that several neonicotinoid-treated plant products from one vendor were being sold at Weavers Way, we asked manage-

ment to discontinue them. We also requested that the Co-op make a policy to not knowingly sell plants treated with these long-lived pollinator killers.

General Manager Jon Roesser and senior retail staff acted quickly, met to discuss the topic, and agreed that neonics have no place at the Co-op. Now members and other customers will be able to purchase hanging

baskets this gardening season and beyond and poinsettias during upcoming holiday seasons without having to worry about harming pollinators.

Thank you, Jon and the Co-op’s retail staff for making this decision.

—Weavers Way Environment Committee



Member Households

14,650+

Member Volunteer Hours in 2025

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Funds Raised for Community Groups in 2025

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Suggestions

by Norman Weiss, Weavers Way
Purchasing Manager

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

Ever hear of “SKU proliferation”? What about “SKU rationalization”? SKU stands for “stock-keeping unit.” It’s a unique item in the supply chain, typically with its own barcode. SKU proliferation is how supermarkets end up with 50,000-plus items on their shelves. By comparison, Trader Joe’s stocks about 4,000 SKUs. Aldi is more in the 2,000 SKU range.

Weavers Way has about 27,000 total SKUs, but not in any one store. Ambler has the most, with about 8,500. Chestnut Hill, our busiest store saleswise, has about 7,000 SKUs.

A classic example of SKU proliferation that I remember was when Muir Glenn first came out with organic canned diced tomatoes. They were an instant success. Within months, we then saw the same product but in unsalted, then fire roasted, then fire roasted unsalted, then petite diced, then petite diced unsalted, then diced with green chilis, then more of some of the items in a larger can.

From a small retailer’s perspective, there was pressure from both the indus-



try and shoppers to expand the selection from one basic Muir Glen Diced Tomato SKU to somewhere between four and 10. Since our space doesn’t expand with SKU proliferation, either something else gets crowded out or we just don’t offer everything. That results in some shopper dissatisfaction, and even shoppers going to other stores to get their favorite version.

What happens after SKU proliferation? Often, retailers realize they’ve devoted too much space and inventory money for not a lot more sales and margin, so then the retailer decides to cut back. This leads to “SKU rationalization,” i.e., trimming back the selection so as to achieve the right balance of selection, inventory and sales.

Of course, throughout this process there are salespeople who offer retailers incentives to add their items. Often, salespeople are compensated extra for placing additional products in a line. At no point in this process are things like the overall sustainability or efficiency factored in, since every brand is competing against every other brand in our market-

(Continued next page)


Norman Says:

EMAIL YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO
suggestions4norman@weaversway.coop

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


WISSAHICKON LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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(Continued from previous page)

based system of food production and distribution.

By the way, a Walmart Supercenter has about 120,000 SKUs, most of which are not grocery items. Amazon is the SKU king by far; estimates are that they list around 600 million SKUs, although Amazon’s own (not third-party sellers’) SKU count is more like 12 million.

Every SKU has a story. Someone thought to create a product and then have it manufactured, packaged, labeled, marketed, distributed and so on. Sometimes it’s a formal process with market studies and similar research. Other times, it’s an entrepreneur with an idea. Sometimes it’s a company knocking off another company’s ideas.

Whatever the origin story, the product ends up as a SKU on a shelf in a store or a warehouse or both. We as consumers end up with lots of choices and brands trying to get us to choose their SKUs. Consumerism could also be called Skumerism.

suggestions and responses:

- s:** “Who can I contact with information about the amount of toxic chemicals used in growing the organic celery that I buy at the Germantown store? Everything I can find out about most ‘organic’ celery seems to indicate that celery is so difficult to grow that even most organic growers resort to using chemicals that have toxic impact. So I am trying to find out if that is the case for the celery you are purchasing.”
- r:** (Mira, Ambler) Thanks for reaching out. I am the produce category manager for the four stores and haven’t heard that and am curious where you did. If something is certified organic, it has to meet the standards of that certification. Celery can be slow to grow and is a “heavy feeder” (needs a lot of nutrients), so I believe a large amount of fertilizers would be used to grow it. But there are many organic fertilizers that can be used to meet organic standards. We also don’t buy celery from one farm; we buy it from a vendor who sources celery from many different producers. But again, any

“

Every SKU

has a story.

”

- of those producers would need to follow organic standards for certification. Hope this helps.
- s:** “Does Mt. Airy have bolted hard red wheat flour freshly ground?”
 - r:** (Virginia, Admin.) Unfortunately, we do not carry bolted hard red wheat flour in our stores. However, I have copied Julie and Vam from our Mt. Airy store, who may be able to preorder it for you if you’d be interested. I know that bolted hard wheat flour is available from Castle Valley Mills from one of our suppliers (Lancaster Farm Fresh Co-op). If you’d like to start the preorder process, just let us know.
 - s:** “Hi, Do you carry soy curls at any of the locations? Also, will rye flour be returning to the bulk bins soon? Lastly, I noticed a shortage of sticks of vegan butter; any clue when those will be back?”
 - r:** (Virginia) Here’s what I’ve uncovered: We do not currently stock soy curls in any of our stores, but we’ll certainly consider it in the future. If you’d like, you can place a preorder for it. I can put you in contact with our grocery team in Germantown to help with this. Rye flour has been out of stock from our primary supplier. In the meantime, my colleagues in Germantown said they can stock a packaged option or may be able to get an organic dark rye from another supplier. Please check back. Finally, regarding vegan butter, we’ve had

- stocking issues with both Miyoko’s and Earth Balance. We’re trying to get Violife as a replacement, but it appears our supplier is having some widespread stocking issues. It’s unclear if it’ll come in on the upcoming order.
- s:** “When I joined the Co-op in 1974, prices were a lot lower. Can we bring back those prices?”
 - r:** (Norman) Apples were like 35 cents a pound, eggs were 60 cents a dozen, bacon was 99 cents a pound, and tuna was 49 cents a can. Today an empty paper egg carton costs about 60 cents. So we could have those prices, but the containers would be empty.
 - s:** “John’s red beans and rice is the best! Consider having them available throughout the year, not just in February!”
 - r:** (Jess) Thanks for your kind words about the red beans and rice! I have passed along this feedback, and hopefully they will become a more frequent feature.
 - s:** We’re members and we miss the McCutcheon’s barbecue sauce you used to carry. Can we order it again?”
 - r:** (Norman) After decades of stocking McCutcheon’s products, we decided to drop them because they stopped selling well enough to justify their shelf slots. We have heard from a few members that miss some of their items, so we refer those members to ordering direct, since there is an online store: McCutcheon’s Online Store | McCutcheon’s Apple Products. Sorry for the bad news.
 - s:** “With all the bottled water choices offered to people, why is there no bottled water marketed to dogs and cats? They are water consumers too, and feel neglected.”
 - r:** Dogs and cats struggle to open bottles, since paws and claws have not evolved to manipulate modern water packaging. Maybe this will change as AI gets more involved with packaging.

Tree Tenders Awarded Grant to Plant and Maintain Northwest Canopy

than the national average, according to an Inquirer article published in June 2023. Neighborhoods in the city that have fewer trees have higher rates of asthma and other lung diseases.

Trees provide nesting spots, protection, migration stops and food for birds. It has been found that cities need at least 30% canopy coverage to support healthy and diverse populations of birds. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, large trees along streets can increase prop-

erty values by up to 15%

Trees are also linked to reducing crime. Several studies found that trees and other vegetation are inversely associated with crime, so adding them would be a relatively low-cost way to lower the crime rate in certain areas.

Moreover, trees help conserve energy and reduce utility bills. The U.S. Forest Service found that urban trees and forests alter building energy use and associ-

(Continued from Page 9)

ated emissions from power plants by shading buildings, cooling air temperatures and altering wind speeds around buildings.

To learn more and get involved, go to mtairytreetenders.org — or plant more trees and encourage friends and family to do the same!



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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.

Brenda's Cat Tales

Selecting the Right Type of Litter for Your Cat — and You

by Brenda Malinics, for the Shuttle

YEARS AGO, THERE WERE TWO LITTER choices: clumping or non-clumping. Today, aisles are full of options, including crystal, wood, paper, wheat, walnut shells and corn stalks. Which is right for you, your cat, your household and your budget?

Litter can be purchased in bags or tubs and can be lightweight or heavy. Most litters come in 20 or 40-pound bags. If you live in a fourth floor walkup, you need to consider your back as well as your budget. Storage is a consideration, as is disposal. I live in Philadelphia, and when trash cans are too heavy for the collectors to pick up, they might not empty them.

Another serious litter consideration is the health of your cat. Recently, vets and pet parents have noticed an increase in respiratory conditions like asthma, coughing, congestion and heart issues in cats. The culprits are often thought to be either cat food (preservatives) and/or litter (chemicals), but it could be a combination of both.

Cats use a litter box several times a day. That means a lot of scratching, which means inhaling a lot of litter dust particles. It's easy to see how quickly and dusty the areas around litter boxes become. The dust, combined with the concerns I hear from clients at vet offices, spay neuter clinics, rescue colleagues and pet parent friends, have convinced me to stop using clay litters in the many boxes I maintain at my house. Instead, I've switched to walnut shells and wood pellets.

Cats instinctively bury their excrement to hide their scent and avoid predators, and they like to dig in litter that is several inches deep. They tend to prefer the size and texture of sand or dirt, but many cats do not mind other textures. However, some do and will avoid using the box completely.

Never abruptly change your cat's litter type. A litter box must be large enough for a cat to easily move around in and kept clean with daily scooping.

The Current Litter Landscape

Here is a list of most of the available litters, with their positive and negative attributes. My cats and I have tried them all.

Clay Litters (Clumping and Non-clumping): Made from Bentonite, an absorbent, naturally occurring plastic clay from weathered volcanic ash. It swells when wet and has many uses in food, construction and detergents.

Clay litters are inexpensive, easily available and easy to scoop. But they release silica dust, which is harmful to cats and humans and can cause respiratory issues. If eaten, (young kittens should never use clay litter) the clay can swell in the stomach and cause gastrointestinal blockages. Young kittens often urinate on their feet, and the pieces can get caught between their toes and cause abrasions. Clay litter is dusty, heavy and is not biodegradable.

Crystal Litter: Made from silica gel crystals which absorb moisture and odors. It's low dust, long-lasting and lighter weight than clay. It is also expensive and does not clump, so the urine and poop need to be removed often. The texture is rough, and some cats will not use it.

Pine and Other Wood Litters: This is one of my favorite litters. It's inexpensive, dust free, and biodegradable, and when it gets wet, it breaks down into sawdust. I recycle this into my flower gardens and use the dust on my sidewalks and driveway for traction in the winter. It's lighter than clay and has excellent odor control. Not all cats like the larger texture, but the pellets are smooth, unlike with crystals. Pellet litter boxes must be sifted, so some consider them high main-

tenance. However, there are now special sifting litter boxes available that will cut down cleaning time.

Paper Litter: This is low dust and the one that should always be used post surgery and for kittens (No debris gets into wounds). The pellets remain intact and swell when wet; they do not explode like wood litters. This litter does not clump and has poor odor control. The entire box needs changing often.

Corn and Wheat Litters: These are made from ground corn and ground wheat, respectively. Both clump, are low dust and lightweight. They also have good odor control, a soft texture and are biodegradable. On the downside, both are moderately priced. Corn litter can grow mold in humid environments, and both types can also attract pests.

Grass/Soy/Other Paper-based Litters: These are made from grass seed, soy fiber, coconut husks or similar materials. They are lightweight, clump, and are low dust, renewable and biodegradable, but they're expensive. They also have limited availability in some areas and lead to greater tracking outside the box due to their fine textures.

Walnut Shell litter: This type, made of crushed walnut shells, is the darkest litter and easily seen when tracked outside the box. It has strong, natural odor control, clumps when wet, and is low dust and biodegradable. It is expensive and can stain carpets or floors.

If your cat is not using the litter box, there is a product called "Cat Attract" which helps attract a cat to the litter box. There are also litters that claim to reveal medical issues and some litters that are totally non-absorbent and used when attempting to obtain a urine sample for the vet.

Litter choices, like food selections,

Meet Blossom!



Blossom is a young female beauty who is curious, independent and entertaining. She is searching for her human and a home where she can fully blossom.

Although she tolerates her foster roommates, she prefers to be the center of attention in a home where she can chase toys and be a carefree cat without competition. She is totally vetted and ready for adoption.

Contact Brenda's Cat Rescue at 215-872-1636.

keep evolving and are so vast that knowing what to buy can be overwhelming. But trust that your cat will let you know when your purchase was not the right one.

Brenda Malinics has worked with cats for over 65 years and founded the nonprofit Brenda's Cat Rescue. She also has over 30 years of wildlife rehab experience and is a bat specialist.

A Leader in the Effort to Make the Web More Secure

IN MARCH, THE CO-OP'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY and Inclusion Advisory Committee honors the contributions of women to history, culture and society as part of International Women's Month.

Rinki Sethi is a global cybersecurity expert and trailblazer of East Indian heritage. She is chief information security officer at Upwind Security in San Francisco. Her profile omits personal information, but she is thought to be in her early 40s.

As a teenager, Sethi was mesmerized with computers and spent time disassembling and rebuilding them. This grounded her programming

orientation to information processing systems, which consist of interconnected, dependent components. Her fascination magnified her ability to fine tune how and what hackers think. She skillfully deconstructs how programs work and is able to predict threats She can identify adversarial anomalies and patterns and support strategic rather than reactive responses.

Sethi developed the Girl Scouts' first national cybersecurity badges. She previously held top security roles at eBay, IBM, Instacart, Intuit, PayPal, PG&E, Rubrik, Twitter and Walmart.

—Rosa Lewis





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Artists in Our Aisles

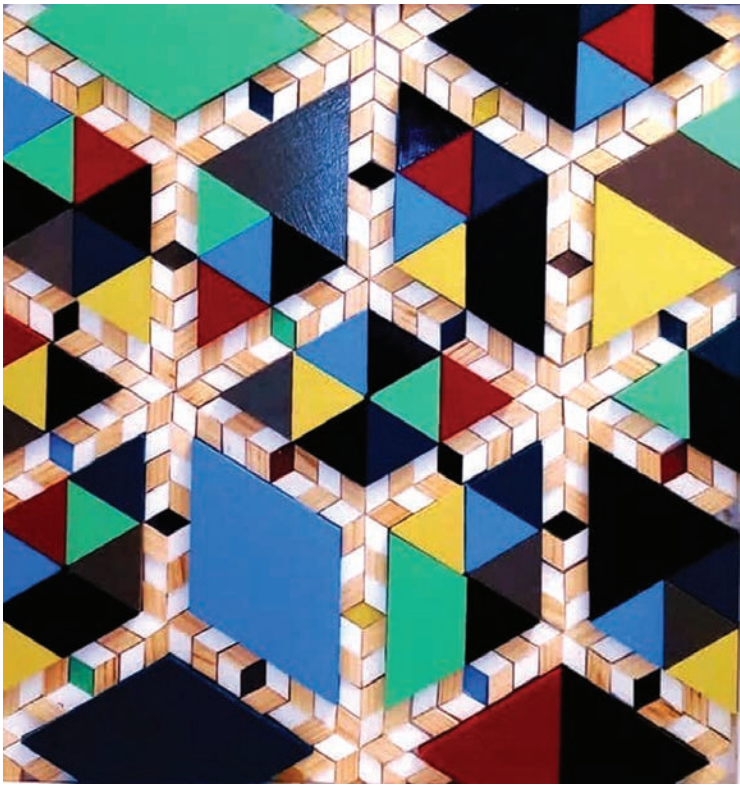
Frank Cardone

Frank is a Philadelphia-based artist and union carpenter. He has a passion for family, personal growth and transforming discarded job site materials into reclaimed art.

With help from his daughters, Violet and Enedina, he upcycles and repurposes construction scraps to create fun, visual geometric pieces of wall art. So far, his pieces have been made from old glass windows, broken skateboards, door trim, metal spikes and small pieces of stone. Frank cuts the materials and he and his daughters paint and stain them.

Frank welcomes commissions. Please visit his Instagram pages to see what they do!

frankcardone1 or
the_wooder_department



SUBMISSIONS NEEDED

We want to feature your art in the Shuttle!

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

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

Weavers Words

FROST AND FOG

Frost and fog, frost and fog, they warned:
It's going to be icy come the morn.
The yellow band parading 'cross my set
Forecast the slippery doom that we would get.
And duly, when I woke and looked outside,
The world had taken crystals for its bride.

Dew and crystals hung on every thing
Except the furred and feathered on the wing.
I wanted to escape into that space
And feel the sprinkled air upon my face.
I walked through rays of sun to gently melt
The worry and the pain my body felt;
To pry the icy fingers from the trees
And let the branches float upon the breeze;
To melt the sugar icing on the grass
And let the creatures silently to pass.

An oak in white, and swathed in nets of air
Stood forward as with light upon its hair.
I glanced around to find a bashful groom
And saw the pine tree shining from the gloom.
A winter consummation thus occurred,
And I can say my TV passed the word.

—Jenny French

Today it seemed as though we would invade Greenland.
I say we, but I don't know who we are.
I am not invading Greenland, but somehow I am associated with the people who might.
And if Greenland is conquered then somehow their people will be associated with me.
Against their will, and against mine.
I have never met any Greenlanders and perhaps I never will.
But I pity them.
My heart breaks that they are not being consulted in this,
That our emperor doesn't care what country they would like to be a part of,
Doesn't care if their lives would be better or worse after annexation.
And all of the other emperors are waiting with bated breath for this theft to happen.
So that they can proceed with their own burglaries.
I weep for Ukraine. I weep for Taiwan. And for Gaza.
I weep for hundreds of other peoples and places that will be victims of the whims and greed and hatred of their neighbors.
The way most people always were, for all of our bloody human history.

WE

Except for one shining, strange interlude where that was not how it worked.
Where it was accepted, and enforced, that one people did not invade another.
That empires were finished, and of all the things we still had to fear and suffer,
Foreign armies erasing our very existence was usually not one.
And my people, the we that I understood, did so much to build that interlude.
A century of Americans strove to abolish the old law of the jungle.
At times courageous, at times clumsy and callous, it was nonetheless the project of a better kind of empire to build a better kind of world.
But all that is gone now, and we shall be the worse for it, just like everyone else.
We were not ultimately an "exceptional people." We were just one more empire.
And no empire lasts forever.
One day some bigger fish will come to snap us up, or a school of them, each taking a bite here and there.
And perhaps we will remember what we did and didn't do in the crucial moments as we cease to exist, and become *them*.

—Ben Graves

Our Revised Submission Guidelines:

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



Imagining a World Without Waste

The Corporate Capture of “Health Food” and Packaging Pollution

There are two images related to this article in the images folder – ‘Nestles food for infants’ and ‘Cereal food packaging’. Neither requires a credit.

Over the past several decades, the U.S. health food and natural products sector has undergone extensive consolidation by multinational corporations. Brands originally founded to prioritize organic agriculture, minimal processing and ecological responsibility are now frequently owned by global conglomerates whose growth strategies depend on industrial scale, ultra processing and single-use plastic packaging. This corporate capture has weakened product integrity, increased chemical contamination risks and intensified plastic pollution, undermining both public health and environmental sustainability.

Major corporations now dominate large portions of the natural and supplement markets. Nestlé acquired The Bountiful Company (Nature’s Bounty, Solgar, Puritan’s Pride) in a \$5.75 billion transaction, dramatically expanding its footprint in the health and wellness sector. Procter & Gamble acquired New Chapter, a leading organic supplement brand, in 2012. Hain Celestial now controls dozens of organic and natural brands sold primarily through mass retail. These acquisitions integrate health-branded products into shareholder-driven business models that prioritize cost minimization, long shelf life and packaging-intensive distribution, often at the expense of food quality, transparency and environmental impact.

Independent testing and peer-reviewed research have documented widespread contamination of packaged foods with chemicals associated with plastics and food-contact materials. In 2022–2023, Consumer Reports tested nearly 100 common foods and found that 99% contained phthalates and 79% contained bisphenols, chemicals used in plastics and food processing equipment.

These substances are well-documented endocrine disruptors and are linked in scientific literature to reproductive harm, metabolic disease, developmental effects and hormone disruption. Crucially, these chemicals were found across conventional and organic-labeled foods, demonstrating that health branding does not protect consumers from packaging-related chemical exposure. That’s why the Plastic Reduction Task Force has been ringing the bell on single-use plastics at the Co-op for a decade.

These findings are consistent with large scientific reviews showing that thousands of food-contact chemicals migrate into food and are detected in human blood, urine and breast milk. A 2024 international study published in the Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology identified more than 3,600 food-contact chemicals that were detected in humans, including bisphenols, phthalates and PFAS, many of which are classified as substances of great concern. Food packaging is identified as a major exposure pathway, and the plastics/chemicals research has categorized data illustrating that there are more than 16,000 chemicals of concern in plastic packaging today.

Industrial food processing further compounds these risks. Ultra-processed foods now account for more than 50 to 60% of total caloric intake in the United States. Large cohort studies and meta-analyses published in leading medical journals have consistently found that higher consumption of ultra-processed foods is associ-



ated with increased risks of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and all-cause mortality. A major 2022 systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis found that each 10% increase in ultra-processed food intake was associated with a statistically significant increase in mortality risk.

Many packaged “health” foods — despite organic or natural labels — meet the scientific definition of ultra-processed under the NOVA classification system. The environmental consequences of this model are severe.

Food and beverage companies are among the world’s largest plastic polluters. Coca-Cola has publicly acknowledged producing over three million metric tons of plastic packaging annually, equivalent to more than 100 billion plastic bottles per year. Independent brand audits conducted by Break Free From Plastic have re-

peatedly ranked Coca-Cola, Nestlé and PepsiCo as the world’s top plastic polluters. Plastic production is fossil fuel-intensive and contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, microplastic contamination and long-term ecological harm.

Bulk food systems directly address these systemic failures by eliminating single-use packaging at the source. Bulk shopping reduces upstream plastic production, downstream waste and consumer exposure to packaging-derived chemicals. It also prioritizes minimally processed whole foods — grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, spices and dry goods — thereby reducing reliance on ultra-processed products that are associated with chronic disease.

Weavers Way is a leading example of how bulk systems can operate at scale. The Co-op maintains one of the region’s largest bulk food departments, enabling shoppers to use reusable containers and dramatically reduce packaging waste. Their bulk and reuse-friendly systems demonstrate that packaging-free shopping is not a niche alternative, but a practical, community-centered model that advances public health, waste reduction and climate goals.

In the past few years, the Co-op has taken a step in the right direction to support a deposit-based program, now called We Return, in which tens of thousands of deposit-based containers are used, returned and reused.

We encourage shoppers to continue to press Weavers Way to expand these programs to additional food items. The Co-op’s Jar Libraries, managed by PRTF volunteers, have circulated more than 2,300 reusable, sanitized jars. In addition, the Co-op gives a rebate to shoppers who bring their own reusable containers or use ones from the Jar Library.

In an era of corporate consolidation, plastic dependence and ultra-processing, bulk shopping represents a scientifically grounded, economical and health-protective strategy. Supporting bulk food systems like those at Weavers Way is a direct investment in public health, environmental protection and a food system aligned with genuine human and planetary well-being. If you need support and information on how to begin your bulk shopping journey, follow the PRTF Facebook page and message us there.

—Alisa Shargorodsky

Keep These Tips in Mind When You Visit the Jar Library

- Tell the bulk staffer on duty when you are dropping off your jars, so they can inspect them to see if they are appropriate for the Jar Library.
- Donate clean, dry glass containers only — no plastic containers.
- Remove labels as much as possible. Volunteers maintain the Jar Library; the more labels there are to remove, the harder their job becomes.
- Larger jars are especially appreciated, e.g. tomato sauce or quart sized. Also, consider if the size of jar you’re donating would be useful.
- If the incoming jar box is full, please do not leave your jars. Currently there is no place to store surplus jars.
- For any item you buy in bulk using your own container or a container from the Jar Library, you will receive a 25-cent discount at the register.

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Plastic Reduction Task Force



Shoppers get a **25¢ credit** for each reusable container they use while shopping. BYO container or get one from our Jar Library.

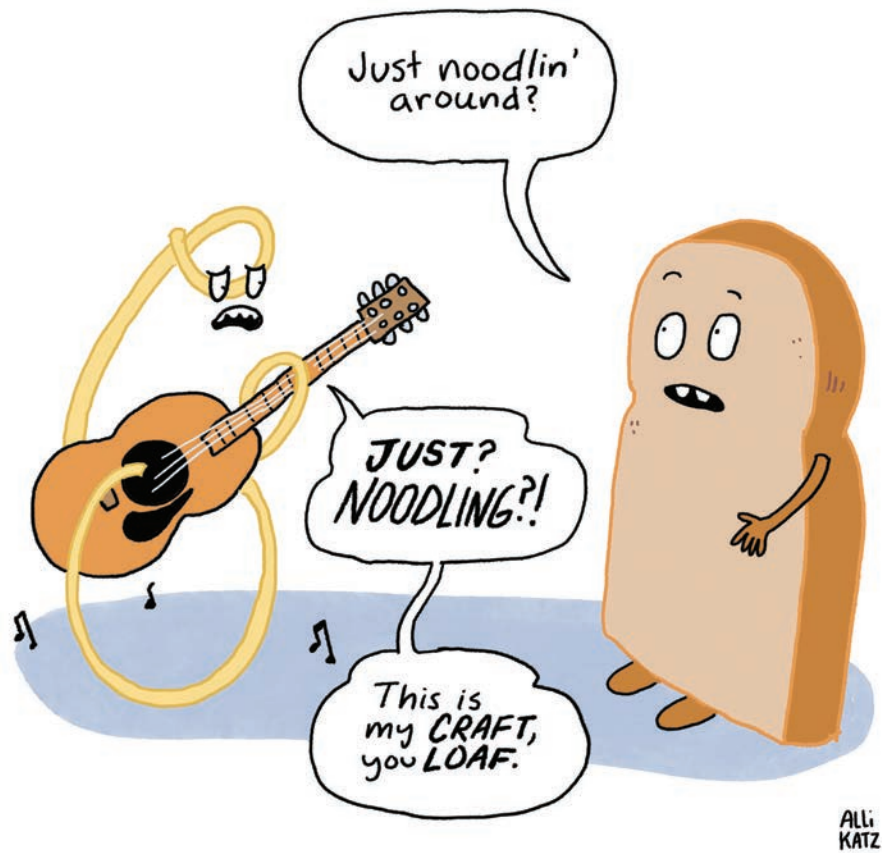


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Illustration by Alli Katz



ALLI KATZ



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

Weavers Way Board

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

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

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

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The Shuttle

Editor: Karen Plourde
editor@weaversway.coop, 215-843-2350, ext. 135

Art Director: Annette Aloe
annette@weaversway.coop, 215-843-2350, ext. 130

Advertising Coordinator: Karen Plourde
advertising@weaversway.coop, 215-843-2350, ext. 135

Proofreaders this issue: Holly Beck, Wendy Greenberg, Louise Hayes, Pam Ozaroff, Sheryl Panka-Bryman

Contributors this issue: Alessandro Ascherio, Kieran McCourt, Neal Fordham, Jon Roesser, Sara Stevenson, Liz Hersh, Chris Switky, Joan Adler, Gabrielle Fatula, Sally McCabe, Becca Dickstein, Marsha Low, Weavers Way Environment Committee, Norman Weiss, Brenda Malinics, Rosa Lewis, Alisa Shargorodsky, Alli Katz.

HOW TO REACH US

www.weaversway.coop contact@weaversway.coop

Admin
215-843-2350
General Manager
Jon Roesser, ext. 131
jroesser@weaversway.coop
Chief Financial Officer
Lindsay DelaFuente, ext. 105
ldelafuente@weaversway.coop
Purchasing Director
Norman Weiss, ext. 133
normanb@weaversway.coop
HR Director
Donna Thompson, ext. 132
hr@weaversway.coop
IT Director
Jon Hojnacki, ext. 127
IT@weaversway.coop
Operations Manager
Rick Spalek, ext. 101
rick@weaversway.coop
Membership Manager
Kirsten Bernal, ext. 119
member@weaversway.coop
Retail Director
Jess Beer, ext. 121
jbeer@weaversway.coop
Outreach Manager
Nima Koliwad
nkoliwad@weaversway.coop
Farm Manager
Alessandro Ascherio, ext. 325
farmer@weaversway.coop
Facilities Manager
Doug Keener, ext. 128
dkeener@weaversway.coop
Admin (Ambler)
215-302-5550
Development Director
Kathleen Casey
kcasey@weaversway.coop
Marketing Manager
Rachel Coats, ext. 151
rcoats@weaversway.coop
Culinary Program Director
Chazz Alberti, ext. 371
calberti@weaversway.coop

Ambler
217 E. Butler Ave.
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-302-5550
Store Manager
Heather Wigley, ext. 300
hcarb@weaversway.coop
Assistant Store Manager
Karen Gemmell, ext. 379
kgemmell@weaversway.coop
Grocery Manager
Nancy Timmons Melley, ext. 373
nmelley@weaversway.coop
Chestnut Hill
8424 Germantown Ave.
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-866-9150
Store Manager
Ann Marie Arment, ext. 212
aarment@weaversway.coop
Assistant Store Manager
Stacy McGinnis
smcginnis@weaversway.coop
Grocery Manager
Len Mears, ext. 217
lmears@weaversway.coop
Next Door
8426 Germantown Ave.
9 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-866-9150, ext. 220/221
Wellness Manager
Alison Wear, ext. 221
Awear@weaversway.coop

Germantown
328 W Cheltenham Ave.
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-1886
Store Manager
James Mitchell
jmitchell@weaversway.coop
Assistant Store Manager
Ariel Levine
alevine@weaversway.coop
Grocery Manager
Kristina Walker;
kwalker@weaversway.coop
Mt. Airy
559 Carpenter Lane
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-2350
Store Manager
Matt Hart, ext. 101
matt@weaversway.coop
Assistant Store Manager
Juli Cardamone, ext. 128
jcardamone@weaversway.coop
Grocery Manager
Keith Souder, ext. 140
ksouder@weaversway.coop

Across the Way
608 - 610 Carpenter Lane
8 a.m.-8 p.m.
215-843-2350, ext. 6
Wellness Manager
Sarah Risinger, ext. 114
srisinger@weaversway.coop
Pet Department Manager
Anton Goldschneider, ext. 276
petstore@weaversway.coop
Farm Market
267-876-3101
Manager
Jenna Swartz
jswartz@weaversway.coop
Catering
cateringMA@weaversway.coop,
cateringAB@weaversway.coop,
cateringCH@weaversway.coop
Preorders
MApreorder@weaversway.coop,
CHpreorder@weaversway.coop,
ABpreorder@weaversway.coop

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!

DID YOU KNOW?

You can read the Shuttle online.
www.weaversway.coop/shuttle-online



NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30-8 pm
Virtual

To register visit: www.weaversway.coop/events

Weavers Way Farm Henry Got Crops CSA

7095 Henry Ave

Options are open for 2026 enrollment!

Main Season CSA (May-October): Weekly pick-up of produce, also includes pay-what-you-can access to our bountiful area of flowers, herbs, and more veggies!



You-pick ONLY CSA (May-October): Choose from two season lengths to pick your own flowers, herbs, and veggies. Pre-picked produce is not included in this option.



Flower Bouquet CSA (June-August): Weekly flower bouquet pick-up at the Farm during the peak of flower season. You can purchase this option as a stand-alone CSA or in addition to the Main Season CSA or You-pick CSA.



Early enrollment in our popular 8 week
Fall CSA (October-December)



A CSA PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Learn More and Sign Up at
www.weaverswayfarm.csaware.com/store



Payments accepted: EBT, Philly Food Bucks, cash, credit, debit, and EasyPay.



Spring Holiday Menu



Preorders Open 3/16 to 3/27.
Order pick ups 3/31-4/4. Available in the stores while supplies last.

