



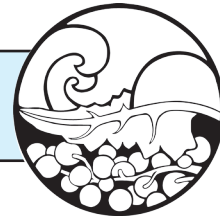
2012 is the International Year of the Cooperative!

# OTHER AVE-NEWS

Other Avenues Food Store Cooperative  
3930 Judah Street, San Francisco, CA 94122  
415.661.7475 [www.otheravenues.coop](http://www.otheravenues.coop)



NEWSLETTER *Spring 2012*



## State of the Store by Ryan Bieber

My fellow Americans (I've always wanted to say that!). I am occasionally asked how the store is doing. Since I do not typically have the time to go into detail, I thought I would take this opportunity to present a miniature "State of the Store" address.

I feel like we are privileged to even have customers that are concerned about our well-being. This hopefully owes something to our longevity in the community, but also to the transparency and dialogue that we try to create as a worker-owned cooperative. Our goal is to have a functional feedback loop between the workers and our customers, and to have a system where each benefits the other. Communication is a vital sign of our health.

To return to the initial question, there are a few different ways of looking at how we are doing. As in life, we are essentially governed by two separate concerns: what we can control and what we can't.

Also, as in life, the things that we cannot control are the ones that can be the most trying. For us, this includes health insurance rates and the health of the economy.

We pride ourselves in providing health insurance for every worker, but the

consistent rate increase (far greater than increases in standard of living) has put more strain on other aspects of the business. Since we are a grocery store, and people always need groceries, we are somewhat insulated from the effects of the economy. However, we will readily



*The State of the Store is...pretty!*

admit that the high quality and sourcing of our products make them more expensive than, say, Costco, and we depend on a customers that are knowledgeable and concerned about food.

As for the things within our control, I am happy to admit that our store has never seemed stronger, better curated, or more vibrant. Despite facing ongoing challenges such as paying down the loans on our building, and making sure everyone is happy with their schedules and not too overworked, we have an inspiring group of workers who are up to the challenge. It is in this way that our governance model is especially effective: Without one person calling the shots, we are forced to arrive at solutions that are amenable to ourselves and the business.

To summarize, the state of the store is great. It isn't easy or lucrative to run an organic food store, but we're not doing this because it's easy. We're doing this because we believe in our mission, and we believe that cooperatives are an empowering and inspiring approach to business and life. We face many challenges, but we've never been more prepared to meet them.

In the rest of this issue, Molly, one of our newest workers, writes about her first experience in retail. Colin examines the hidden facet of food production (the workers!), Nicole reviews a fabulous new book on cooperatives, and Shanta presents a couple great new recipes. Happy reading and happy spring!

## Learn to prep for three meals at once!

a cooking class with Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff



Shanta will demonstrate how to prep vegetables that can be used for three ethnic soups over the course of a week. In the OA meeting room!

Sunday, March 25th,  
from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Complete organic,  
vegan lunch served

**\$25**

for more info write to [shanta@otheravenues.coop](mailto:shanta@otheravenues.coop)

# The Cape-ron

by Molly Breen

This February marks my six-month anniversary working at Other Avenues. I am our newest worker, and by far the greenest. And by green I mean behind-the-ears-green, not stewardship-of-the-environment-green. That competition is unwinnable around here.

I've been a shopper at the store for years when I began working here, but I never had a retail job before. I also never had a cash-handling job, a manual labor job, a food service job or a customer service job. This makes me sound like a dipstick for sure, but I want to express how awkward I felt those first few weeks, lurking in the aisles of our tiny store like some yuppie ghost, haunting the poor shoppers looking for mustard. If



*Super Molly's  
secret weapons*

someone actually asked me where the mustard was, I wanted to run away. I do in fact know where the mustard is now, and only recently felt triumphant locating the xanthan gum (in our baking section!). But just as often a customer will ask if we carry, say,

beeswax, or Women's Nordic Vitality Omega Plus, or Irish Moss, and I breathe and stare like a pug.

Making myself available to customers is an important part of this job, and when I started I worked three floor shifts a week. I couldn't hang around the kitchen sanitizing tongs forever. It was then I discovered the power of the broom and the apron. This part of the story makes me feel like Don Quixote (despite never reading Don Quixote, so that may be bunk). I do think all you need in this world to feel legitimate, heroic and purposeful is a) a costume, and b) a signature weapon. Daredevil has his red suit and white-cane-convertible-to-billy-club, Green Lantern has his mask and ring, Batman has his bat ears and utility belt. I have my apron and broom.

Well, I don't disable criminals with the broom. But I could! For me it essentially functions like a cigarette: It turns hovering/lurking/waiting/idle hoping into a respectable (if occasionally gross and prematurely aging) activity. Being new at anything involves a lot of hovering. I know there is work to be done, but the precise nature of the work eludes me, and in the beginning I lacked the skills to do the work anyway. Being useful involves asking someone else who is busy to show me how to be useful, which isn't that useful. So I love to sweep. I like the floor to be clean, but I also love being busy above

being idle. I love certainty above uncertainty. My lowest moments in life, great and small, are those when I Do Not Know What I Am Doing. With sweeping, I always know. And because the gremlins that live in the bulk section like to throw oats and spaghetti on the floor, there is a lot of sweeping to do.

But even more than I love the broom, I love the apron. Like a superhero's cape, it makes the wearer distinctive, but shields my innermost self from view. It has functions essential to the job at hand (pockets for Sharpies and rogue guavas that rolled into the soap and sponges section). It announces to others "my role here is different from yours. I am not a by-

The Cape-ron  
says I do! I can!  
I work! I am!

stander." It confers on the wearer a dignity of purpose, an identity at once public and secret. I think that's the best thing about it. A person wearing an apron and pushing a broom is in some ways the most invisible person in the world. But in other ways, the apron grants its wearer authority and integ-

ity. I can be present but occupied. I can watch for signs of mustard location confusion and offer advice. People don't have to wonder, "who is that person over there by the nut butters in the carefully unco-

ordinated cotton separates? Does she work here? Can she help us?"

The Cape-ron says, I do! I can! I work! I am!

## Other Avenues Book Nook

by Nicole  
Gluckstern

Did you notice the new cooperatives section on our bookshelf created just for 2012—the year of the coop? We feel there's no better time than the present to get educated about the lasting implications of cooperativism in work, housing and economics, and are proud to carry a varied selection of books relating to those topics. *Cheesemonger: A Life on the Wedge*, by Rainbow Gorcery's Gordon Edgar (Chelsea Green, 2010) humorously illustrates how working with cheese in a cooperative is like

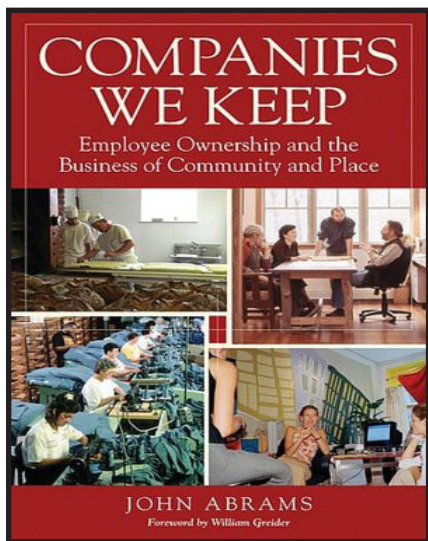
punk rock. Canadian coop developer John Restakis' *Humanizing the Economy: Cooperatives in the Age of Capital* (New Society Publishers, 2010),

and *For All the People*, by Berkeley's Heartwood Cooperative Workshop member John Curl (PM Press, 2009), are thoughtful and thought-provoking tomes that illustrate multiple facets of cooperative culture for rank amateurs and old pros alike. In this issue we're reviewing the inspiring *Companies We*





*Keep*, by John Abrams (Chelsea Green, 2005/2008). Look for more book reviews in future newsletters of some of our other, equally inspirational, titles.



*Companies We Keep*, by John Abrams  
(Chelsea Green, 2005/2008)

This brick-and-mortar primer of cooperative structure is built like one of South Mountain Company's houses—simply, solidly, and with an eye towards the future. Written by John Abrams, original founder and present co-owner of the 32 year-old worker-owned building and design enterprise that is South Mountain Company, *Companies We Keep* details one business' protracted evolution from single-employer ownership to cooperative ownership, providing a template that could potentially be adapted by any kind of operation with an eye towards similar transition. With real-life examples and anecdotes, Abrams draws an easily understood

blueprint for creating worker-ownership opportunities within the small business economy. Beginning with the foundation of mission and goals, Abrams shows us how the structure of worker-ownership is built, piece by piece, finishing off with a treatise on taking the long-view, and of how a single business can contribute to the stability of an entire community—not just the workers themselves.

Relentlessly honest and even-handed, Abrams doesn't skip over describing the challenges of building stable worker-ownership and horizontal management, but he doesn't skimp on describing its rewards either. South Mountain Company's current incarnation includes seventeen owners and sixteen additional workers working towards ownership—not a bad percentage for a sustainability-minded, custom-building outfit on an island (Martha's Vineyard) with only about 15,000 permanent residents. With chapters championing alternative views on "standard" business values such as "Challenging the Gospel of Growth," and "Practicing Community Entrepreneurism," this book will be as valuable for persons already deeply involved in cooperativism to those who are just beginning to take an interest. Most valuably, Abrams includes a detailed Appendix with policies and procedures of South Mountain governance, resources for transitioning to a worker-owned business, a clearly written section on facilitation and consensus, and an exhaustive reading list.

# Vegan and Gluten-Free Quick Breads

by Shanta Sacharoff

Being a vegetarian at home was not a problem—in the Hindu tradition, my family made the decision for me. But then I moved from India to Upstate New York to attend college, and the menu on campus was mostly meat, with a few canned vegetables. When I moved out of the dorm, I was motivated to experiment with ingredients and recipes to create nutritious and flavorful dishes, and I became interested in creating recipes for those with further dietary restrictions due to health or ethical reasons.

## Veganism

A vegan diet contains no animal products at all—no meat, dairy or eggs. Some vegans make this dietary choice to avoid exploiting animals. The late farm union leader Cesar Chavez was a vegetarian, and later became vegan mainly because he believed in animal rights, saying “We cannot ...have peace until we respect everyone, animals and all living things.” Other vegans question the un-sustainable use of farmland to raise animals instead of growing plants. Food and justice activist Frances Moore Lappe explained it this way: “If we all eat more beans, more people can have beans.” Health conscious vegans promote animal-free food products for their health benefits.

A vegetarian diet that is not nutrition-

ally balanced can be as unhealthy as a typical meat-based diet. Even vegetarians can suffer from diseases that are usually linked to a high consumption of meat products if their diet is filled with fat, cheese and dairy. A balanced vegan diet that is devoid of animal fats is recommended by health practitioners to combat cardiovascular diseases and other illnesses. Dr. Neal Barnard, President of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, advises a vegan diet to stay healthy. California cuisine already uses a variety of seasonal vegetables, therefore it is very easy to be a healthy vegan here.

## Gluten-Free Diets

Everybody loves bread, or “the staff of life.” There is nothing more inviting than the smell of baking bread. However, many people are discovering that they suffer from celiac disease, which triggers an allergic reaction to the presence of gluten in the digestive system. Gluten is a protein that is found primarily in wheat, rye and barley. It is the magic component of wheat that makes bread rise. Common symptoms of gluten intolerance include abdominal pains, headache and skin rashes. Gluten sensitivity can vary. Some people can eat a small amount of gluten with no adverse effects, while true celiac disease sufferers cannot consume any gluten at all,

and must avoid any food that is made in a facility that processes grains that contain gluten.

Whether one has a known gluten allergy or not, avoiding gluten can have other health benefits. Most crackers,

cookies, pastries and breads are made with an abundance of processed flour, fat and salt. Homemade versions of these foods can be healthier. Here are two recipes to try; both are vegan and gluten-free.

## Green Corn Tortillas

These easy-to-make tortillas are enhanced in color and nutritional value with leafy greens.

2 ½ cups of gluten-free masa harina flour (such as Bob's Red Mill)  
½ cup finely-chopped spinach leaves  
(wash, drain and remove stems before chopping)  
½ cup finely-chopped mustard greens and mustard greens  
2 tablespoons minced cilantro leaves  
2 teaspoons minced jalapeno pepper  
1 cup warm water  
½ teaspoon salt  
A few tablespoons of oil

## Ingredients

Mix the masa flour with the salt, chopped greens and jalapeno peppers. Add the warm water, a small amount at a time, to form a dough that is neither sticky nor dry. Cover the dough and let it stand at room temperature for about 40 minutes.

Divide the dough into 10 small pieces, pressing each piece with the palm of your hand. Set them aside. Using two pieces of waxed paper, or a small amount of masa flour on the surface of the counter, roll each piece into a five-to-six-inch disc.

Heat a heavy skillet or griddle on moderately high heat, and gently place a tortilla on it. Turn it after one minute, and cook on the other side for two minutes. Turn the tortilla again, spread a small amount of oil over the surface, and cook for another minute. Turn and spread the oil on the other side. The tortilla is ready when it shows a few speckles on both sides. Serve with rice and beans or daal.

Note: You can roast the tortillas without oil, but adding a little amount of oil while roasting makes them soft and easy to store.

# Gluten-Free Cornbread

This gluten-free version of cornbread is less puffy than you might be used to, but equally as delicious as cornbread that

uses wheat flour to make a light texture. Adding some garbanzo flour (besan) fortifies this cornbread nutritionally.

½ cup brown or white rice flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1 ½ cups gluten-free corn meal  
¼ cup besan (garbanzo flour)  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ cup maple syrup  
1/3 cup oil  
3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
¾ cup water, and more water as needed

## Ingredients

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Generously oil the sides and bottom of a 9" or 10" cast iron pan. In a large bowl, sift the rice flour with the baking powder using a flour sifter or a sieve. Add the corn meal, garbanzo flour and salt. Stir the mixture well.

In a separate small bowl, whisk the liquid ingredients briefly. Combine the wet and dry ingredients, stirring only as much as necessary. Add more water, a little at a time, to create a batter that is a bit thicker than pancake batter. Spread the batter evenly in the greased pan and sprinkle a little oil on top.



*Note: Cornbread is not necessarily vegan or gluten-free*

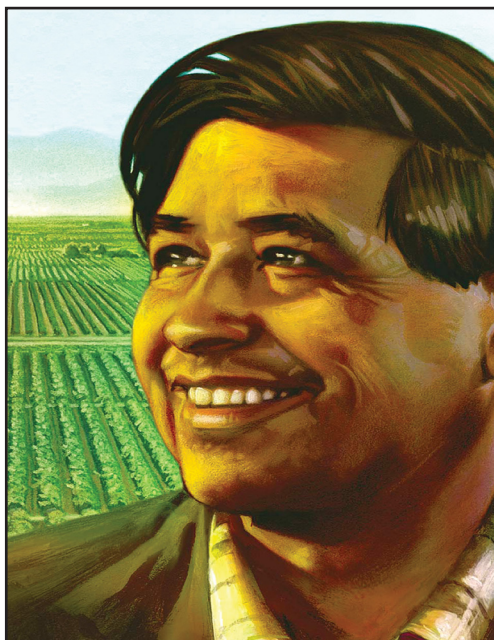
Bake the cornbread for about 45 minutes, or until the surface seems dry and when a fork or toothpick comes out clean. Turn the oven to broil and cook for just a few minutes longer to allow the surface to become golden brown, being careful not to burn the bread. Serve this bread hot, with vegetables, for a delicious meal!



# Celebrate Cesar Chavez!

by Colin Peden

This year, the United Farm Workers (UFW), a labor union famous for its struggle for workers' rights and organizing farmworker strikes and powerful consumer boycotts, celebrates its 50th anniversary. César Chávez, famous labor organizer, nonviolent protestor, co-creator and longtime head of the UFW, is commemorated on César Chávez Day, March 31st. As the holiday approaches, public schools in California discuss the history of the farm labor movement in the United States, and Chávez' role therein. As a retail community of buyers and sellers, we should take this time to consider the quality of life of the people who labor to bring us our food.



*Chavez probably thought your food should be more expensive*

All of our food comes at a cost, and that toll is paid both at the cash register by the consumer, and by the farm worker in the field. From the soil and the hoe, to the hand in the crate to the store, and finally to your table. Did the food come from near, or far? Was it grown organically, or was it grown via petrochemical agriculture? Was it fair? In the natural food environment, we pay attention to what the food does to us, then to what the food does to the land, and only then, perhaps, do we consider what the food does to the bodies and livelihoods of those who cultivate

and harvest it. As César Chávez Day approaches, let's think about where our food comes from, how it's cultivated, and who works the fields to bring us this food. Organic food requires labels, but we lack labels describing the social consequences of our domestic food choices.

I remember back not too long ago when I spent time working on a small organic farm outside of Austin, Texas, with a farmer, his family, and a small contingent of farm workers. The farmer was frustrated with the retail price of a pound of organic green beans, especially considering that a large grower down in the Rio Grande Valley was hiring day laborers from Mexico, paying them as little as \$20 a day to pick the certified organic green beans. The produce flooded the grocery stores, even the local consumer coop, with "local, organic" green beans at a wholesale price that the farmer couldn't match, even if he sold them at a loss. The human cost of the green beans shifted off of the shoulders of the consumers and onto those of the Mexican day laborers, and the local farmer and his better-paid local workers, who lived in, and contributed to, the local economy. Without adequate data as to the provenance of the produce, it can

be prohibitively difficult for the produce buyer and consumer alike to know how socially just their food is.

It might be surprising (or not) for people committed to ethical food choices to discover that we live in a country where, overall, 9% of per capita income is spent on food, and the share of disposable income that goes to food has decreased over the last 30 years. Most of that food deflation comes from the changes in eating habits nationwide (dining out rather than eating in), and the proportion of calories derived from converted soybean oil and high fructose corn syrup. To quote community activist Frank Bardacke, this shift can be traced to “the virtual destruction of a unionized workforce in the fields of California in the 1980s [...] due finally to the overwhelming social, financial and political power of the biggest business in our Golden State.” César Chávez Day is a reminder that a great civil rights struggle still exists, with environmental and social consequences. The choices that buyers make (grocers and consumers alike) change our own physical wellbeing, and impact our natural environment.

Perhaps most importantly, our choices contribute to the lives and livelihoods of the people who work to feed us. If César Chavez Day reminds us of this great labor organizer and civil rights leader, it should also make us think of the tremendously skilled people who make our food possible, and who deserve to make a decent living for themselves as they feed us. Frank Bardacke said about the future of the labor movement in American agriculture: “Imagine if all the electricians or plumbers disappeared—it wouldn’t be easy to replace them. These are skilled workers, and they have power during harvest time. That can be the basis for some sort of renewed militancy in the fields.”

During this year of the coop, and the season from Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to César Chávez Day and International Workers’ Day, this year that marks 50 years of the UFW and the great strides that were made by organized farm labor, let’s renew our appreciation for the lives of the people who bring us our food. Can we vote with our choices, our voices and our wallets? Si, se puede!

**FIND US ON THE WEB!**

**[www.otheravenues.coop](http://www.otheravenues.coop)**



**and check us out on  
Facebook and Twitter!**



# Department Highlights

**Dairy:** St. Benoit milk in liter glass bottles, and St. Benoit basil yogurt cheese; we now stock Straus lactose-free and 1% milk; Try Drinkwell Softers probiotic soft drinks, and Sierra Nevada organic butter

**Vitamins:** Five new Zyflamend support supplements from New Chapter—Nighttime, Breast, Prostrate, Heart and Whole Body; Raspberry Ketone Fusion from Razberri-K—ketones and EGCG green tea-based antioxidants

**Housewares:** Green Heat eco-logs for fireplaces; World Centric compostable garbage bags; Biokleen laundry powder is now available in bulk!

**Bread:** Locally-made Liege waffles from Suite Foods, a Belgian-style snack waffle with or without chocolate

**Coffee:** Brew the finest espresso with our new, elegant Italian stainless steel stovetop espresso makers made by G.A.T.

**Grab 'n Go:** New Lydia's Loving Foods organic, raw, vegan, gluten-free and local items—Raw "Burgers" and "Kreemy" pizza

**Beer/Wine:** Unity Vibration kombucha beer—ginger and raspberry with 8% a.b.v.; Widmer Brothers Reserve Lemongrass Wheat Ale, brewed with lemongrass and muscat grapes for a 9% a.b.v.

**Herbs:** Enjoy bergamot-rich loose Earl Green tea from Taylor Maid

**Chocolate:** Local chocolates are our favorite! Try Kika's Treats chocolate-covered caramels, or awesome local Tcho drinking chocolate

**Body Care:** Suki facial care for dry or combination skin is clinically tested for the most effective results (we love the Cleansing Clay); Sports injuries? We stock Incredibraces for the wrist, ankle and knee

**Gifts:** New classy-looking recycled journals (lined, graph and unlined)—the look and feel of Moleskin journals made from recycled materials

**Bulk:** New organic cranberry beans and black beluga lentils are here; Fair-trade chocolate earthballs are back (and tastier!)

**Grocery:** Rancho Gordo heirloom beans are here, and pozole (a.k.a. hominy); Four varieties of Maya Kaimal Indian simmer sauces

**Nonfoods:** Fentiman's Old Timey sodas are delightful! Try Oogave sodas (sweetened, of course, with agave nectar)

**Cheese:** Sainte Maure, a dense yet flakey ash-rolled goat cheese from France; Holley Cow, a Swiss cheese from Paso Robles; look for seasonal selections from Weirauch Creamery—organic and local!

**Produce:** Cherimoya, a sub-tropical fruit with a custard-like texture and notes of pineapple and pear are now in stock from Southern California

# HelloGoodbye

Other Avenues would like to welcome some new workers and say goodbye to some that are departing.

Wendy has left after five years to pursue her other business, Paul's Hat Works, at 6128 Geary.

Anna is ALSO leaving to pursue her other business, Three Babe's Bakeshop at 2128 Folsom.

We are pleased to welcome Kim back after a short break for education.

We are also pleased to welcome our newest worker Rebecca. We're excited to have you!

Also, we found this really cute snail but had to let it go.

Comments?  
Concerns?  
Questions?  
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newsletter@  
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for more details.

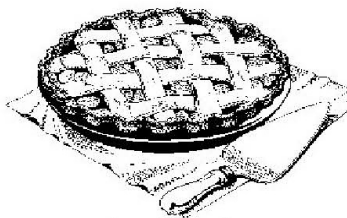


Have you colored your Other Avenues logo sheet? Grab one at the register and we'll hang up your work of art!



Locally made, organic, sweet and savory

# PIE.



*visit our website for seasonal offerings,  
locations and delivery*

**ThreeBabesBakeshop.com**

## WHO WE ARE

Other Avenues is a worker-owned cooperative, currently run by twenty-three worker members to mutually serve the business and the Sunset community. Other Avenues is open seven days a week, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., 363 days a year. We are closed on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and on May 1st, International Worker's Day.