

co-opnews Jan. 2006



Newsletter of the Dublin Food Co-Op



Dublin Food Co-op News Jan. 2006

Welcome to the January issue of Co-op News. In this issue we wish to launch a Members Forum which provides an opportunity for members to voice their views through the Co-op News. Anthony Harris has decided to "get the ball rolling" and written an interesting and challenging letter on his own behalf as a member. Anto Dillon has also put pen to paper with his views on the changing face of Dublin and the need for vegetarian "spaces". We look forward to other views on the issues he raises or indeed any other that may be of concern or interest to members. There is also news from one of our producers/stall holders George Heise and details of courses and events coming up which may be of interest. The new post of Office Administrator is also advertised here; the post is designed to provide administrative support to the CB and ensure more efficient running of the Co-op systems.

The AGM is approaching, and is likely to take place in early April. (Dates to follow in next newsletter) At this stage, we would welcome members to consider whether they would wish to go forward for election on to the Co-ordinating Body or indeed whether they can identify talent out there that they may persuade to put themselves forward! It's all in a voluntary capacity of course, but the work is challenging, creative, fun and sometimes hard work. Please do give it some thought as we do especially need talented and creative individuals for our next Board as we continue with the work of developing the Co-op and of seeking premises of our own. We are currently considering other premises in Newmarket Square; it is an old church needing converting but would be fabulous for the Co-op if we were to go ahead. It would be particularly helpful if potential Board members had some relevant professional skills to assisting with this development work...

Monica Haughey (Editor, Co-ordinating Body)

Food Co-op Walk For January

WHERE: Seahan, Corrig, Seefingan and Seefin mountains. These are a group of hills overlooking Bohernabreena reservoir on one side and Kilbride and Blessington on the other and which have megalithic tombs along with the fine views. It is a moderate to long walk.

WHEN: Next Sunday, 29th January.

MEET: At the Old Mill Pub (formerly known as Bridget Burkes) carpark in Oldbawn on the Firhouse road where it meets Bohernabreena, Tallaght at 10.30 am. Buses to there include the 49 and the 75.

BRING: comfortable walking shoes, warm waterproof clothes and some food. For more info or if you need a lift contact Larry Gordon at 2882957(H) or at 087-6832827(Mobile).

Dublin Food Co-Op Events

Fáilte: Welcome to New Members

Saturday 4th February '06 11am to 12pm

An introduction to Dublin Food Co-op for new members by Pauric Cannon and Eoin Dinan.

Oisín Coughlan, Director of Friends of the Earth speaks on Climate Change.

Saturday 4th February '06 12 noon to 1pm

Why Ireland needs to do its fair share to prevent climate change having catastrophic consequences. Oisín will suggest steps which you can take to help prevent some of the damaging effects of climate change before it's too late.

Small Change Big Gain

Saturday 11th February: 11am to 12pm

Bernadette Bohan gives a talk on how small changes in diet and lifestyle have brought major benefits to her life.

For more information see: www.changesimply.com

Contact Bernadette Bohan by email: b@changesimply.com

(Bernadette Bohan is also giving a public seminar on the 29th of January in the Clarion Hotel.)

Shiatsu morning at Dublin Food Co-op

Saturday 18th February: 11am to 2pm

The Irish School of Shiatsu is holding a drop-in Shiatsu morning to allow people to experience this wonderful Japanese massage.

All welcome. Donations accepted.

"Shiatsu works on Acupressure points through clothing"

Contact: Josephine Lynch (Shiatsu Practitioner) 01-4652338.

Email: shiatsu@eircom.net

<http://www.shiatsu.ie>

The need to protect Ireland's water resources

Saturday 4th March '06 12 noon to 1pm

Sinead O'Brien, Coordinator of SWAN (Sustainable Water Network) presents a talk on: 'The need to protect Ireland's water resources for present and future generations

Slide show on Pauric Cannon's visit to credit unions, co-ops and farmers markets from Moscow; Ulanbatar, Beijing; Mongolia; Tokyo to San Francisco.

Saturday 18th March '06 11am to 1pm

Pauric Cannon presents a slide show of his recent round-the-world trip which included visits to a credit union co-op and a farmers market in Moscow; an organic farm in Mongolia; the Gung-Ho Co-op in Beijing, China; Seikatsu Co-op, Japan and a co-op and farmers market in San Francisco.

Note: all talks take place upstairs in St. Andrews in Room (2).

Help Rota Teams & Dates

Team	Dates 2006
A	28 Jan
B	4 Feb
C	11 Feb
D	18 Feb
E	25 Feb
F	4 Mar
G	11 Mar

The Help Rota is the backbone of the Co-Op's functioning every week, carrying out the essential tasks of setting up the Co-Op on Fridays and Saturday mornings and taking it down on Saturday afternoons. There are seven teams the duty of which comes around every seven weeks, for a two hour shift Fridays (9-11am, 11am-1pm, 1-3pm, 3-5pm) and Saturday afternoons (3-5pm). Duties include such tasks as unloading pallets, stacking shelves, stock-taking, moving trolleys etc. As an incentive Help Rota volunteers receive a 10% discount on the Co-Op's goods.

The Help Rota is always looking for new volunteers so if interested please get in touch via email to:

co-ophelprota@dublin.ie to Pauric Cannon (Help Rota Co-ordinator) or Anthony Dillon (Volunteer Co-ordinator). Alternatively ask at the welcome desk.

Plastic Bags - An Environmental Concern for the Co-op

A recent visitor to the Co-op was astonished at the amount of plastic being used in packaging in the Co-op both in the sale of the Co-op "dry goods" and also by some of the "stall-holders". Here are some of the facts he highlighted :

Each year an estimated 500,000 billion bags are used worldwide, this is approximately one million per minute.

Thousands of sea turtles, whales and sea animals die every year from mistakenly eating these.

On land many cows, goats and other animals suffer a similar fate when they accidentally ingest plastic bags while foraging for food.

Plastic bags don't bio- degrade they photo- degrade-breaking down into small toxic particles which contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals ingest them.

Editors Note:

Clearly the issue of plastic is an issue needing addressing. In the Co-op we do use bio-degradable wrapping in our packaging but much of our produce from our supplier comes wrapped in plastic. Perhaps we all could give more thought to how we could reduce our use of plastic.

Members/Stall holders may have views on this which they may wish to forward to Co-op News.

(For further info see: www.reusablebags.com)

George's Bread at the Food Co-op: A Word from George

We are delighted and proud to be making Bread for the food Co-op since the Autumn 2000 and it is really because of the Co-op that we ended up baking in a big way and expanding to a Pastry Shop and Bakery in Slane, County Meath.

We started with a small selection of specialty Breads, wheat and gluten free and very quickly and steadily expanded from 5 types of Bread to over 20 types.

The wheat and gluten free specialty breads have not changed and are an important part of our selection, so much so that we are now supplying 5 Health food shops around the country on a regular basis with those breads, including our sourdough rye bread and carrot cake.

The selection of yeast breads is what has really grown over the past few years.

The most popular breads would have been the Focaccia, the Multigrain Loaf with Sunflower and Pumpkin Seeds and the Sun-dried Tomato & Onion Bread.

Nowadays the Multigrain Loaf is still the number one seller, followed closely by a new variety, the Holzfaeller Brot or Health grain bread which is made from Rye and wheaten flour with a fermented starter and yeast, but the reason for it being so popular are all the seeds inside and on top.

People are definitely looking for healthy breads with lots of fibre and grains containing minerals and vitamins.

The next best newcomer must be the white Spelt yeast Bread which is wheat free and low in gluten as well as the brown and the white Spelt Soda Bread.

I am almost afraid of introducing a new variety, as I know you will like it, and the selection will keep on growing further and further - how shall we cope?

"Only joking",

If there is anything you would like us to try and bake for you, please just let us know and we will do our best to give it a go.

We would like to thank you for your custom and wish you all a Happy New Year. Yours sincerely,

Georg Heise MCA & ABI
Master of Culinary Art & Artisan Baker of Ireland

News From Members

One of our members Gill Riordan is running the following course which may be of interest.

Six-week course based on the spiritual teachings and work of Dr. Joshua Stone. "The single most important aspect of achieving psychological an spiritual health is learning to own your own personal power" Dr. Joshua David Stone. The Course includes such topics as:

What it means to own your personal power and how this is often misunderstood.

Discipline and the path of the disciple.

The relationship between power, love and wisdom.

Affirmations and visualisations.

How to clear the negative uses of power and how to integrate the higher uses of power.

Venue: Terenure/Templeogue area.

Date: starting Wed. 22nd February 2006. Time: 7.45pm-10pm

Cost: 40euro [negotiable]

Maximum of 10 participants

If you are interested please contact Gill Riordan at 4906216 or 087 4197330

Space for Vegetarians?

My first experience of Dublin Food Co-op was in 1997 at the World Vegetarian Day, after I had seen it advertised on a billboard while walking to work one morning. Dublin at that time seemed to me to be a hive of 'alternative' activities with a collectively-run bookshop (The Garden of Delight near Christchurch), a thriving D.I.Y./independent music scene, and a flourishing output, at the time, of independent publications (freesheets and zines as they were known). The Co-op and Vegetarian Day (for me, then recently converted), was all part of this alternative scene, though at that time I lived at home in the suburbs and shopping for myself would have been a fairly radical move in itself.

Over the years that followed, in Dublin, the so-called Celtic Tiger flourished and cappuccino and mobile phones became the dominant cultures, while alternative scenes such as those I felt part of disintegrated and were pushed even further to the fringes. While before hopes of acquiring premises for gigs (or whatever purposes) seemed like possibilities in the new environment of property developers, rising rents and an all-conquering yuppie culture, anything with any kind of not-for-profit ethos was pushed aside. The Garden of Delight closed down to become a recruitment agency, the D.I.Y./independent music scene has been on a perpetual tour of the back rooms of Dublin's dingy pubs ever since, while the writers and producers of independent publications have mostly long moved on; some to web design, others graphic design or whatever else. The Dublin Food Co-op is one of the few constants over this period, in my mind; though without a doubt its remit has changed over the years (what with "organic" almost becoming the chicest choice when shopping for the affluent classes these days).

There are in Dublin city about four vegetarian restaurants out of how many thousand restaurants. Of the four, hypothetically lets just say one of the four never changes its menu, perhaps another is a little too expensive, and maybe Jimmy Vegetarian had a row with the management in another; so basically that's not too many options for Jimmy on where he might eat. While over the years, being vegetarian has become more accepted and in some cases vegetarian options in restaurants have improved, as a whole though, vegetarian options in non-vegetarian restaurants are fairly dismal if you're looking for a well-balanced healthy meal. That's right I'm talking about the lasagne options or the badly-cooked pasta option, and how about holding back on the cheese; beans on toast would be preferable.

Ok, so by definition a vegetarian space is a space that doesn't sell meat products, right? A vegetarian space then is defined by what it is not. So excluding the four or so vegetarian restaurants and perhaps our fleeting time spent in health food stores, if the Dublin Food Co-op began to sell meat would there be any space left for vegetarians?

Anto Dillon (Co-op member)

A letter to the editor DFC newsletter

Dear Madam,

I was talking recently to a staff member in my favourite charity shop and extolling the virtues of a film, *His girl Friday*, – an old video version of which they had on sale - when I noticed a "parental warning" printed on the cover of the box that contained the cassette.

The dangers to our children that lurked within its black spools were that the film - an excellent old black and white - contained "adult concepts".

We had a great laugh about that but it later got me thinking about where we, as a society, were when this film was transferred to video format – around the time that the DFC was founded - and how we had moved on since.

I also had reason, this week, to recall another recent conversation – this time in the Co-op itself – when I was discussing, with a founder member, that very topic of moving on. I was likening our Co-op to the State itself and making the point that, although the State was born in bloody revolution (a point with which he disagreed), it had now moved on and that we should do the same. Our members' survey had shown that, unlike at the time of our inception, members now had plenty of choice of sources for the food they wanted and most members sourced most of their food elsewhere.

The analogy and the discussion came back to me this week when I heard of the recommendations of *The All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution* on the thorny issue of the possible amendment of those provisions of the Constitution that relate to *the family* thereby allowing the recognition of same sex marriages.

It was the reasoning which was adopted by the committee to base its recommendation – that no action be taken - and the fact that it was an all party committee making the recommendation that made me think of the Co-op. Their reasoning was classic DFC logic and should not, perhaps, have been unexpected from an all party committee.

Such committees, like the Co-op itself, have representatives from across the spectrum and are normally created to take on thorny issues so that no one party will be politically exposed if an unpopular outcome ensues. So it was, perhaps, no surprise that they reasoned that, as any change would require a referendum and as any such referendum would prove divisive, there should be no change.

I faced this very reasoning when I first suggested, nearly 3 years ago, that we should try to better define our relationship with our "Producer Members", a term not defined in our rules. Raising any such topic would, I was told, cause disquiet and lead to an "us and them" situation.

The same logic later applied to questions about staff terms and conditions, about the whole proposal to move premises and expand our membership, and to the thorny issue of the ban on the sale of meat and meat products by the Co-op.

During my remembered conversation, I had been told that the whole Board should resign for even asking members the dreaded M question in the survey, that the Co-op was a vegetarian organisation and that an SGM should first have sanctioned the asking of members about their dietary habits.

Well if the Co-op is a vegetarian society, its rules do not make this clear and it has, I am reluctant to advise you, been infiltrated

by a large number of omnivores and pescitarians.

The question of what the Co-op is has also arisen in a different context too. Are we, for instance, our consumer members or are we our producer members? Are we a location, a great idea or just somebody else's goodwill?

In fact, the Co-op is as eclectic, in dietary terms, as any self respecting all party Oireachtas committee and is a very good representation of Irish society as a whole.

During my time as Chairman, I have met many interesting and dedicated members from across a wide spectrum, from those who will only wear vegetarian shoes to those who eat their meat raw.

Ignoring these and other unpleasant facets, lest they cause division, has, I believe, held the Co-op back over the years and has done us no service. Open debate and discussion about where we are and where we are going should not only be permitted but actively encouraged and stimulated and hence this letter which I hope will spur some replies for your next issue.

After all, our members are not children and they will be able to handle the adult concepts involved in any such discussion.

Yours personally opinioned,
Anthony Harris

Recipe Section

We have another lovely recipe from Dorene Palmer; this recipe is especially appealing to children although you may wish to omit the chilli. We also would love to have other members send in their favourite recipes, especially if they are "family friendly"

AROMATIC LAKSA

1 dtsp sesame oil
1 head of pak choi, spinach or york cabbage, quartered
1 tbsp tamari or soya sauce or more to taste
2 small carrots, thinly sliced
100g/ 4 oz. sugar snap peas or beans
A handful of shitake mushrooms, thickly sliced
1 litre of stock
200mls/7fl oz coconut milk
1 tsp. umeboshi paste
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
4cm/2inch piece of ginger, grated, squeezed and the juice reserved
2 dried red chillies or spicy red curry paste
2 stalks lemon grass, bashed and split or juice of lime
2 noodle nests
1 courgette, finely diced
2 tbsp white miso or regular brown miso
A small bunch of coriander

Heat the oil in a large pan and throw in the greens. Toss it about quickly until it wilts, splashing it with a little tamari at the end.

Transfer to a dish and keep warm. In the same pan, add the carrot, sugar snap peas and shitake mushrooms. Toss over a fierce heat for a few seconds and pour in the stock, coconut milk, umeboshi paste, garlic, ginger juice and chillies or paste.

Add the smashed lemon grass or lime juice. Bring to the boil and add the noodles. Stir a few times to loosen the tangled

threads, throw in the courgette, and boil again until the noodles are cooked, which should not take more than 4 minutes.

Retrieve the lemongrass and stir in the miso (the miso must never be added sooner than this or it loses its healing properties) and fresh coriander, reserve a couple of sprigs for decoration.

Season with tamari and generally adjust the seasoning. Serve at once, piping hot, into bowls with the pak choi and coriander set on top.

Dorene Palmer regularly runs courses in Airfield House. (Tel: 2149662 / 085 7062039 for further information)

Dublin Food Co-op seeks Part-time Office Administrator

A vacancy has arisen at Dublin Food Co-op for an Office Administrator. The successful applicant will be required to provide management support services to the existing operations management team and the CB (Coordinating Body) i.e., the Co-op's Board of Directors. Candidates must also be willing to play a hands-on role in running the Co-op on Fridays, including receiving goods.

The successful applicant will be responsible for:

- organising and maintaining all existing paper and computer database records at the Co-op's North King St. office.

- maintaining and enhancing the Co-op's Website.

- ensuring that accurate suppliers payments records are kept.

- assisting the editorial team in the production of the Co-op's newsletter Co-op News.

- to provide secretarial support to the co-op Secretary and CB.

Skills and experience:

The successful candidate will have relevant experience in a similar position; have ECDL computer skills or equivalent with good communications skills, both verbal and written.

Final date for applications 22th February '06

CV's and application letter to: Tom Simpson, Secretary, Dublin Food Co-op., 12a North King Street., Dublin 7. Tel: 01 8730451.

Dublin Food Co-op is an equal opportunities employer.

Co-Op News:

Any articles for inclusion in next newsheet should be forwarded to editor@dublinfoodcoop.com.

Editor of this newsletter is Monica Haughey (Co-ordinating Body). Layout and Design by Anthony Dillon (Co-ordinating Body).