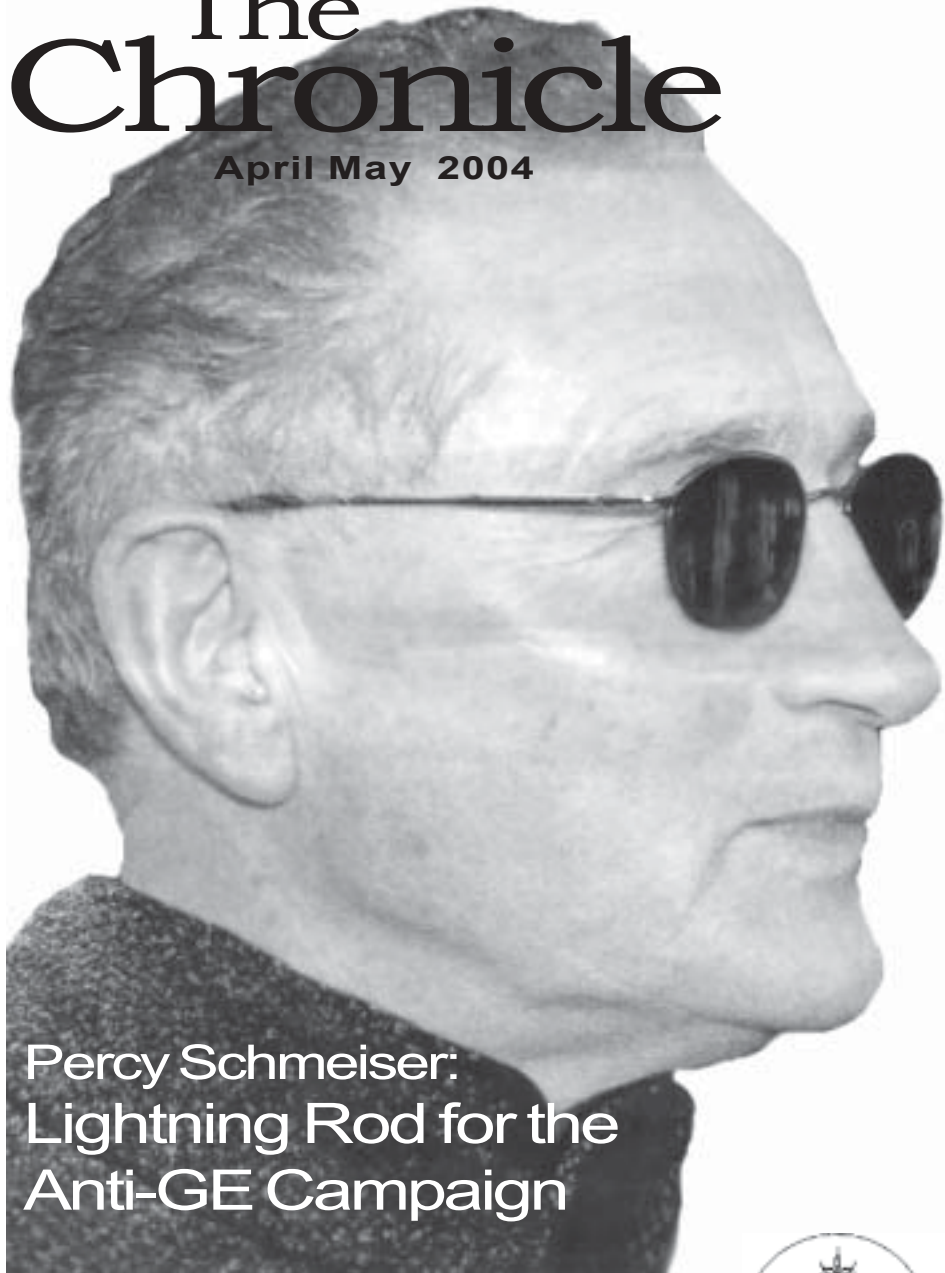


The Chronicle

April May 2004



Percy Schmeiser: Lightning Rod for the Anti-GE Campaign

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The Chronicle April/May 2004

The Chronicle is a link between members of this and other co-operative communities; the only viewpoints herein endorsed by Karma Co-op Inc. are those published as reports of the board of directors and its committees.

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Submissions

Submissions may be sent by e-mail, to chronicle@karmacoop.org. Send your submission within the main body of the message. Please do not send attachments. Submissions are also collected from the red box. All envelopes, articles, and disks must be clearly marked with the author's name. Upcoming editorial deadlines are posted on the bulletin board and the box. *The Chronicle* will publish any Karma-related material, subject to editorial policy guidelines. Letters to the editor must contain the writer's full name and telephone number, although names will be withheld at time of publication upon request. All published articles are eligible for work credits (letters to the editor and announcements are not).

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Board of Directors Report: Financial Recovery

By Graeme Hussey, president

I often think of Karma first and foremost as my community and find it easy to forget that Karma needs to compete with other retail food operations. To do this, Karma must provide products and services at a price and quality that is competitive, with efficient and friendly service.

In the retail food industry, one thing is certain: expenses increase on a year-by-year basis. Our two largest expenses at Karma are the cost of the products we sell and the cost of our paid staff. As time goes on, these expenses will inevitably increase due to the cost of living and inflation.

To maintain our competitiveness, we must increase our revenues on a year-to-year basis. This is a basic concept in business and one that is even more relevant in the retail food industry. Increased revenues can flow from either internal or external growth. How do these two options relate to Karma?

To increase our revenue through internal growth, we must identify our inadequacies and inefficiencies and address them in a systematic fashion. Once we have developed a sound operational system, we need to determine whether we can increase the amount of money that members spend at Karma, and, subsequently, how we can do this.

Increased revenue through external growth means looking at expansion — a larger store, an increase in members, or an increase in the products and services that we offer our members.

The membership advantage

Internal and external growth are both difficult in the ultra-competitive retail food industry, but as a co-op with an emphasis on natural foods and co-operative values, we have an inherent advantage over our competitors. Karma offers its members more than just food — we offer democratic decision-making and an inclusive community that is based on a set of common values. These factors have helped us develop a loyal membership — something our competitors lack, leaving them to compete solely on the basis of price and quality of product.

Karma has seen its community advantage pay off over the past few months, with three Saturdays in January generating revenue between \$8,500 and \$9,000. These included a one-day Karma sales record of approximately \$9,070 on Saturday, January 15. Saturday is always the busiest day of the week at Karma in terms of sales and in recent years Karma had seen its sales on busier Saturdays average between \$7,000 and \$8,000. In the summer months, however, they can be as low as \$5,000.

The Karma board will continue to work on resolving identified problems that have led to our temporary financial concerns, and building on what makes Karma unique. We look forward to doing this with you.

General Manager's Report

By Sarah Fairley

After what seems like a rather long winter, I am excited about the return of spring, and with it the return of community events in Karma's parking lot. Popular events such as the Craft Show and Sale, the Plant Exchange, and Bike Day will all be returning to the parking lot this spring. As with last year, open houses are scheduled to coincide with these events. Last year's open houses attracted numerous local residents, many of whom have since become Karma members. Although prospective members are always welcome to check out the co-op, open houses have proven to be especially effective at encouraging our neighbours to come in and find out what we are all about. What attracts current members to these events is the chance to chat with other Karma members while selling pottery, picking up a few ferns, or getting a bike tuneup.

Karma has been a very busy place throughout the winter. Sales have risen to levels not seen since the early months of

2002. This is great news! This level of sales was sorely missed throughout much of 2002 and 2003. Our increased sales have resulted in increased purchasing power, and with this purchasing power we have been able to secure great volume discounts for all Karma members.

We have more great news at Karma. Eli, the first child of produce manager Michael Armstrong and his partner, Liz Forsberg, was born on February 16. Congratulations to both Michael and Liz. Congratulations are also in order for Mike Haliechuk and Sasha Seftor, who kept the produce department in top-notch shape through Michael Armstrong's absence.

Lastly, Karma has received sad news. Karma member Matthew Dolmage died on February 21. Matthew had been working at Karma every Tuesday afternoon for the past nine months. Like all working members, his labour was of great value to the co-op — but his smile and sense of humour will be missed most of all.

The Chronicle
SPECIAL ISSUE

MAKING IT WORK!

The Chronicle
SPECIAL ISSUE

MAKING IT WORK!

A special issue of
The Chronicle, devoted to
June 1st changes to Karma
Co-op Membership Policies

...see page 6 for more details...

Letters To the Editor

I am amazed and saddened by the article on Brita filters written by the Food Issues Committee in the February/March issue of *The Chronicle*. I don't understand why the Food Issues Committee is concerned about the cruelty of testing these products on animals when at the same time Karma sells meat products. It seems like a double standard to me.

I am not concerned about Brita products no longer being on Karma's shelves, because I don't use them. What does concern me is that we don't seem to worry about the pain and cruelty of killing animals so that people can satisfy their taste enjoyment. It is obvious to me that the members of Karma Co-op are fully aware that it is not necessary to consume animal products to maintain a healthy lifestyle that is also beneficial to the environment and to all other living entities.

Why is the committee worried about animal testing by the Brita filter manufacturers, but not worried about the senseless slaughter of innocent animals?

Merril Lobel



I'd like to congratulate the Food Issues Committee on its decision to discontinue Brita products at Karma. I support this decision. I used Brita filters throughout the 1990s, but I started drinking local spring water several years ago after becoming concerned about the non-recyclable nature of Brita products. I have since noticed a huge difference in my health, which I attribute to the naturally occurring minerals in the spring water I now drink.

I remember a time when the Food Issues Committee was extremely active in the co-op, making recommendations and decisions about the products on Karma's shelves. That active stance was sorely missed during the last few years as the committee did the necessary and important work of revamping the Product Policy. Now that the policy work is complete, it's good to see the committee once again taking a frontline role.

It takes courage to seek truth, and even more courage to speak out and defend that truth. I urge the Food Issues Committee to continue enacting its mandate, and I look forward to further initiatives. Perhaps making Karma a GMO-free zone could be next?

Suzanne Molina

Editorial

A Co-op with Integrity

Food is essential.

It's not as if we can live without it. We have to eat several pounds of the stuff every day, and Canadians spend, on average, 10 per cent of our disposable income on it (the least in the world). Poorer people spend a higher percentage.

Considering its importance, it's dumbfounding how casual we are about where food comes from and what's in it. Most of us — including many Karma members — are woefully ignorant in this respect. The food industry depends on this ignorance, because, so far, they have produced food very profitably (not cheaply) by using large amounts of petroleum-based pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers — something we probably wouldn't do if we grew our own food.

Karma Co-op was created because some of us wanted to participate more actively in deciding what went into our mouths. We found farmers such as Alvin Filsinger, for whom growing apples organically was as important as making a profit, or at least a living. He is in the minority, though, since an increasing proportion of what's left of the "farmers" are simply people who work for large-scale agricultural operations and buy all their food at the supermarket.

On the other hand, a wonderfully diverse group of people, beginning in the 1970s (even before), started food co-ops, Community Shared Agriculture ventures, organic farms, and health-food stores. These people were largely responsible for the dramatic growth in organic agriculture across North America, because they got involved.

Nevertheless, agri-business has grown increasingly aggressive at industrializing agriculture with machines, petro-chemicals, and genetically engineered food. (See "The Great Wheat Uprising" in this issue.) Percy Schmeiser has made us aware of the police-state tactics used by Monsanto to ensure that their unproductive, less nutritious, and genetically toxic canola (not to mention soybeans) are growing everywhere. (See "Percy Schmeiser" in this issue.) Yet on the retail end of things, in addition to a myriad of health-food stores and stores that sell in bulk, there are supermarkets such as Whole Foods that sell organic products. Loblaws even sells them too.

A Complex Member Labour System

Perhaps you're already saying, "I know this already. What's he getting at?"

Here's my answer. The next issue of *The Chronicle* will be a special one, devoted entirely to changes to our member labour system. The changes were outlined in the package handed out at the AGM and can also be gleaned from the Member Labour Committee binder. Unfortunately, the system is so complex and in such deep trouble that it was thought inadvisable to print a summary of those changes in this issue, for fear of creating misunderstandings. Instead, the full description of the changes, including the history and rationales for them, will appear in one single, eye-glazing document, available to all members the week of May 10. The main reason for this is

that the proposals and explanations make up an integrated whole, but a secondary reason is that some of us who owe many work hours might just try to take advantage of the system during the changeover.

This is a dreadful state of affairs. As a longtime member of Karma, I can tell you that we have had problems with member labour since we started, over 30 years ago. However, those problems were seriously exacerbated by the decision to increase our size significantly and then, some 15 years ago, to allow non-working members in hopes of attracting more. A high proportion of newer members had nowhere near enough commitment to the ideals of the co-op.

What were those ideals? They can be found on the back page of every issue of *The Chronicle*. The first one reads “Our aim is to create a community of actively participating members.”

To me, participation means working for the co-op. And not just cleaning the floors and putting away produce, as crucial as that is. My wife and I ordered the dried fruit and nuts for almost 30 years before we were told that the staff needed to do that, even though at the time we knew far more about suppliers and product than anyone who was going to take over our job. The point is, all the jobs need to be done, and to have to pay 12 staff members to do so many of them is a sign that we are not living up to our mission statement. (Please note that I have nothing but good things to say about our excellent staff, who are as committed and skilled as they could be. I am writing about basic principles.)

Shopping Is Not Participation

Shopping is not participation, although apologists for capitalism would have us think otherwise. More important, doing a work shift just because it's part of the rules

isn't participation, either. If our work isn't done out of a commitment to being more in control of where our food comes from, and to finding out more about its production and distribution, then we are stuck in the old system of Cargill and Monsanto.

Even more important than that, we are fooling ourselves if we don't find the work in some way pleasurable and rewarding. If we're doing it because we feel we ought to do it, forget it. Happiness is not a byproduct.

Many who voted against allowing non-working memberships in 1989 left Karma in disgust, but my wife and I stayed on. As predicted, there are now more non-working than working members. Most of the hundreds of owed hours belong to former working members who are now non-working. Some of these owe more than would be covered by their loan if they left the co-op.

Unless we want to jettison our mission statement, the solid base for which I have tried to explain, Karma should forget about keeping such members and reconsider permitting only working members. Then, contrary to what Graeme Hussey says in this issue's board report, we don't have to compete with anyone, because we shall once again be operating under a different set of rules, not trying to straddle two different worlds.

This would probably mean, for a while, a co-op with fewer members, fewer products for sale, and fewer staff, but a co-op with far more financial stability and certainly more integrity. Is this realistic? A Brooklyn, New York, co-op has 8,000 members, all of them working. Why not Toronto?

I think Karma can benefit from the new consciousness about food by structuring itself to attract people who are truly committed to change. That is the only way we can be part of that change.

Member Labour Rules Are Changing!

By Lachlan Story, board liaison to the Member Labour Committee

The next issue of *The Chronicle* will be a special one, devoted to changes in member labour policy and to member participation in general. The issue will be out a few weeks earlier than usual — on May 10, instead of early June — so that everybody will have plenty of advance notice about the changes before the June 1 implementation, which is timed to coincide with our annual membership renewal date.

The special issue will present the changes as a coherent package and provide details on the rationales for the changes. In general, the changes involve making member participation in the co-op easier, more flexible, fairer, and more transparent. This involves policy changes that affect us as individual Karma members, but also involves reorganizing how Karma administers member participation. People really keen to get some additional details before the publication of the special issue can look in the Member Labour Committee binder (in the members' room) or skim through the minutes of the last few months' board meetings.

I, for one, am excited not only by the changes and but also by the process that led up to them. Over the years our co-op and its members have changed in many ways. We have endured a retail climate

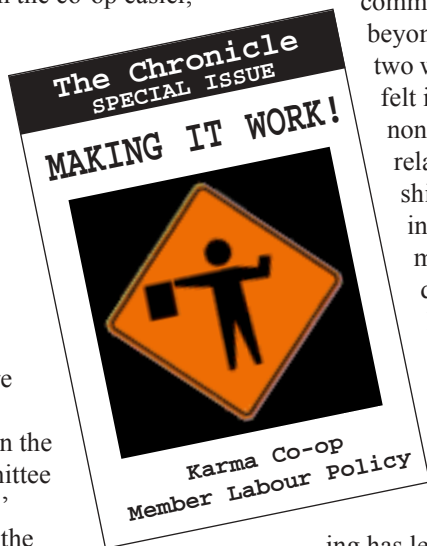
that increasingly challenges our survival. Throughout all these changes, our policies, when we have any (we often just have conventions), are often outdated or quite unclear.

Mandate and scope

The upcoming changes were initiated at the 2002 AGM, and resulted in the creation of a new committee at Karma: the Member Labour Committee. The committee was originally given a mandate to examine and propose solutions to member labour problems, but the scope of the

committee has since expanded beyond this narrow focus in two ways. First, the committee felt it was important to look at non-working membership in relation to working membership, because the steady increase of non-working members over the last decade is a trend the co-op has yet to confront seriously. Second, since the committee was formed, declining and/or unpredictable sales and uncertainty as to why this was happen-

ing has led to broader participation in the committee by additional board and staff members. As a result, the Member Labour Committee has incorporated into its recommendations ideas as to how we might make changes to membership policy that would enable and facilitate not only



...CONT'D ON PAGE 17

Product Spotlight

By Suzanne Molina

Equibar Organic Whole Food Bar

There are hundreds of protein/energy bars on the market, but only Equibar has clean ingredients and a parent company that's concerned about the environment and sustainable development.

Equibar is manufactured by Bioetik in Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec. The company was launched in December 2002 with recipes created by company president José Gagné, a fitness instructor. Every Equibar is jam-packed with wholesome ingredients such as hemp seed, almonds, wheat greens, dried fruits, rice syrup, sprouted cereals such as spelt, kamut, and rye, and puffed rice and millet. They're cold-made (using no heat), so enzymes and vitamins are not destroyed. The wheat grass is freeze-dried to preserve chlorophyll, minerals, and proteins. These all-natural bars contain no refined or isolated ingredients, no genetically engineered ingredients, no preservatives, no added fats, no trans fats, no cholesterol, no additives, no dairy, no eggs, and no artificial aromas, colours, or sweeteners. Most of the ingredients are certified organic.

Equibar comes in five flavours: almond, almond and carob, peanut butter and carob, apricot, and fig. The almond bars contain 53 per cent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin E, while the almond and carob bars contain 45 per cent of the recommended daily intake — the highest sources of vitamin E of any bar on the market. Every Equibar is a good source of vitamins A, B, C, and E,

along with calcium and iron. And each bar contains linoleic acid and omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, which reduce cholesterol. These high-protein bars offer a balanced mix of ingredients selected for their specialized properties: organic hemp seeds, for example, are a source of gluten-free protein. The organic sprouted cereals are “functional foods,” and slippery elm is “energizing and nutritive.” Carob, meanwhile, has known properties as a stomach settler. The Bioetik Web site (www.bioetik.com) has a detailed description of the nutritional aspects of each ingredient.

Equibar is a perfect snack and/or meal substitute for athletes and cyclists, and has been endorsed by the Cirque du Soleil as an “approved snack” for its performers. But Equibar is also good for “small bodies” (Gagné has two small daughters), and anyone who wants a healthful, tasty snack. The bars are particularly good for diabetics and hypoglycemics (company executive Pierre Trahan is diabetic).

Bioetik — which subscribes to “a philosophy of equitable business” — won two awards in the 2003 Quebec Entrepreneurship Contest: the National Grand Prize in the Agri-Food Category, and second place in the Job Creation Category. It has a code of ethics that includes environmental responsibility: the Equibar packaging, for example, is made with 100 per cent recycled material and no aluminum (a notoriously dirty product, and one that is not recyclable). Part of Bioetik's mission and values is to create and foster an equitable relationship with

food producers, employees, distributors, and consumers. Their forward-thinking mission is illustrated by the fact that 30 per cent of Bioetik's workforce is physically challenged/differently abled.

This is a product and a company Karma members can be proud to support. For more info on the company's products, mission, and values, visit their Web site or call them toll-free at 1-877-762-5616.

Green Cuisine Amasake

Amasake is a sweet fermented rice beverage made with the same culture as miso, soy sauce, and sake (but unlike sake, the rice culturing is halted before alcohol is produced). Green Cuisine, the Victoria, B.C.-based manufacturers, make their amasake from organic brown rice. The culturing process changes the rice starches into maltose, creating a sweet drink without any added sugars or sweeteners. In Japan — where amasake is most popular during the winter months, especially around the new year — the drink would be served warm and unadulterated. Green Cuisine gets creative, though, by flavouring its amasake with roasted nuts and berries to make four flavours in a 455-ml size: natural, almond, hazelnut, and wildberry. It has also recently introduced three new flavours in a 255-ml size: maple pecan, hazelnut fudge, and almond chai.

Amasake contains the vitamins and minerals of brown rice and a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fatty acids.

According to Green Cuisine, that makes it “a meal in a bottle.” It can be enjoyed straight up, but Green Cuisine also suggests the following: blending the drink with fruit or yogurt to make a smoothie, mixing it with a soy beverage, or using it as a topping for cereals, porridge, and desserts.

Green Cuisine amasake isn't homogenized, but it is pasteurized to prevent it from becoming vinegar or sake. For more information, check the Web site at www.greencuisine.com.

Pur Plaisir Vegan Pâtés

Pur Plaisir vegan pâtés — which were under development for a full five years before being marketed to the public — are manufactured by Aliments Pur Plaisir, a division of Montreal's Académie Culinaire (which offers cooking courses taught by professionally trained chefs). These pâtés, which are ready to serve, are low in saturated fats. They contain no cholesterol, gluten, or preservatives. And just one 55 g serving (each package is 125 g) contains 100 per cent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin B12. The patés come in four flavours: green peppercorn, Mediterranean, mushroom, and roasted vegetable. They aren't organic, but they are completely vegan: the jelly on top, for instance, is made from water, lemon juice, carrageenan, maple syrup, and sea salt. For more information, go to www.academieculinaire.com or call 1-877-393-8111.

The Great Wheat Uprising

National Grassroots Call For Action

By Linda Brown and Lucy Sharra

In December 2003, over 60 local farmers and citizens mobilized for a protest outside the constituency office of then federal Minister of Agriculture Lyle Vanclief. A cavalcade of pickup trucks and cars with protest banners and signs drove down the main street of Belleville, Ontario, to deliver a fresh loaf of homemade bread made without genetically engineered wheat and a large greeting card to the minister wishing him “Joy not GE.” The protest was supported by the National Farmers Union, the Polaris Institute, the Sierra Club of Canada, and Greenpeace, and was covered extensively by local media.

Inspired and empowered by the Belleville protest, a collective of concerned farmers and citizens across Canada, supported by organizations involved in the struggle, have been engaged in a series of grassroots actions to stop the introduction of GE wheat. Farmers faxed letters describing their reasons for not supporting GE wheat, resulting in over 60 handwritten messages pasted into a huge Christmas card that was then sent to the new Minister of Agriculture, Bob Speller. On Valentine’s Day, a similar card with the same message was sent to Prime Minister Paul Martin. The week of March 13 to March 20 was designated a Week of Action, to provide focus for group and individual efforts such as letters, faxes, and visits to the offices of local MPs. Earth Day, April 22, will be another key date for collective and creative grassroots action.

According to information from the Polaris Institute in Ottawa, Monsanto and Agriculture Canada have been working together since 1997 on the development of Roundup-Ready wheat and studying the agronomics of RR wheat at government research stations. Before 2001, GE wheat field trials were conducted with a buffer zone of only 10 per cent of what is now recommended. Trials at seven of the research farms in Western Canada used a three-metre gap between the GE crops and other test plots. The buffer is now 30 metres. In 2000, trials were stopped at the Indian Head, Saskatchewan, facility because of contamination concerns. Greenpeace calls the introduction of GE wheat a disaster for Canadian farmers and a huge risk to the environment. Despite pronouncements by Monsanto and Agriculture Canada, the government could approve GE wheat this year.

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Percy Schmeiser: Lightning Rod for the Anti-GM/GE Campaign

By Terry Fowler

Percy Schmeiser has been farming near Saskatoon since 1947 on land homesteaded by his grandparents. He has been a provincial legislator, and has also served as mayor and councillor in his own community. He and his wife, Louise, have five children and 15 grandchildren. Schmeiser grows mainly canola, and has always saved his own seeds to plant the following year.

In August 1998, Schmeiser received a letter from Monsanto. They were suing him, they said, because he had infringed on their

patent for their genetically modified/engineered Roundup Ready canola. The Roundup Ready canola had been found growing in a roadside ditch and even in some of his fields.

Never mind the lawsuit. As Schmeiser puts it, “I realized that 50 years of research and development on our pure canola seed — seed that was suitable and adaptable to certain conditions on the Prairies, climatic and soil conditions, and especially diseases that we had in canola — could now be contaminated.” (*Common Ground*, January 2004; www.commonground.ca)

So he countersued Monsanto. There are a series of stories here, but what follows

is a very brief summary of one of his speeches, reproduced in *Common Ground*:

Monsanto uses ex-RCMP officers to intimidate farmers into admitting that they are growing GM canola illegally and that they owe the company thousands of dollars. Farmers are encouraged to snitch on each other, although they do not. When

Schmeiser lost a case to Monsanto, they sued him for \$1 million in costs, put a lien on his farm, and parked security guards in his driveway. They sent agents onto farmers’ land, without permis-

sion, to take samples.

They have good reason to look for their GM plant in fields that have never grown it, because this plant (or mutations with its Roundup-resistant gene) is now being spread across the Prairies by the same natural processes that spread other seeds. Schmeiser shows clearly that there can be no safe “buffer zone” that prevents the spread of this patented plant material. It is highly probable that it will soon be in every farmer’s field, and each one will be liable to pay Monsanto, just like Percy Schmeiser.

Soybeans from GM/GE plants, contrary to Monsanto’s claims, have lower yields and less nutritional value than conven-



KARMA COFFEE KLATCH



April 19:
Cory Eichman of the
Saugeen River CSA will
be sharing informatioin
about organic gardening.

May 17
June 21
Topic and site TBA

July 20
August 17
no meeting

*The Promotions Committee and
Sandy Moon of Grapefruit Moon
welcome you to an informative
evening on the third Monday of each
month.*

Grapefruit Moon

968 Bathurst Street
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm
*the third Monday of each
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...CONT'D FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tional soybeans. Furthermore, the wide-spread application of the herbicide Roundup has produced superweeds that are resistant to it and are taking over throughout the region.

Europe and Japan are preparing to shut down all their orders of Canadian soybeans because of this contamination problem, which also affects closely related species as well, such as turnips,

radishes, and cauliflower. Canadian farmers face total economic meltdown because of the introduction of this toxic plant.

The wheels are in motion to introduce GM/GE wheat [see "The Great Wheat Uprising" in this issue]. The experience farmers have had with soybeans should make this proposal totally unacceptable. Apparently not.

Confessions of a Pringles Addict!

Segment of an anonymous diary found on the floor at Karma and passed on to The Chronicle:

December 30, 2003

Dear Diary,

Please forgive me Karma, for I have sinned. I have missed many work shifts. I have had “unco-operative” thoughts about my fellow Karma members while shopping and in the check-out line, especially those in front of me who forgot they meant to buy something and wander off to find it, leaving me waiting. In this time of financial hardship for the co-op, I have darkened the doors of many evil non-member-owned retail stores and bought things that I could have gotten at Karma.

For my New Year’s resolution, I resolve to be a better Karma member. Like the ancient Arthurian paladins of old, I resolve to be pure in thought and action for the greater glory of co-opdom. Top on my list of temptations for straying from the Karma Path are: Pringles chips, Loblaws Decadent Chocolate Chip cookies, and No Frills “Tre Stella” medium gouda. I resolve not to buy these items, the lures that lead me into those dens of Capitalist Excess. Notice to 7-Eleven and the Westons: your day is done! I will contribute to your overflowing coffers and profit margins no more!

January 5, 2004

Dear Diary,

On a whim, I bought some rice crackers today at Karma. At the checkout, the woman doing cash asked if I was a celiac, because she was one. I didn’t know what a celiac was, but she was really cute, so I said yes. She seemed intrigued! When I got home I looked “celiac” up on the Internet and it’s a person that can’t eat any gluten! What if she sees me buying bread some time? I live on gluten! I eat it all the time. In fact, I eat so much gluten I think I must be a special gluten-based life form.

Now I can't buy any gluten products at Karma, in case she sees me and realizes just how ignorant and shallow I am. Forget the yummy little Kashi crackers, forget the Stickling's 12-grain bread. Oh god — this is not a good start to my new year!

January 28, 2004

Dear Diary,

I went out on a huge bender last night, and woke up with a tube of half-eaten Pringles chips in the bed! I have no idea how they got there. I just don't remember. There was a club, a party, a cab, and then — nothing. Blackness. Oblivion.

The chips seemed a little embarrassed that I didn't remember them, so I made them breakfast (or rather, I made a breakfast of them) and then said goodbye to the tube. Maybe I'll see you down at the 7-Eleven sometime, I trilled. I've now renewed my vow to be loyal to Karma chips. I really do love them. Okay, one brand tastes like crunchy cardboard, but the rest are heavenly. One small bite for me, but one giant leap forward for chip-eating-kinds everywhere. And so healthy too.

February 1, 2004

Dear Diary,

I see the Anti-Gluten Girl whenever I shop now — she's everywhere! (Or at least she might be.) And she's looking in my shopping basket for gluten. Rice bread is terrible, so I've found, and don't get me going on the crackers! I snuck into Loblaws and bought three loaves of "real" bread to put in the freezer. This is getting stupid — next time I see her I'll say that I made a full recovery, and can eat gluten again! Smart of me to think of that.

February 4, 2004

Dear Diary,

Like a moth to a flame, I was suckered into Loblaws again today, this time by a window display of potted plants — \$5.99 a pot for some lovely, vibrant herbs. The Karma Plant Exchange and herb displays are months away! I couldn't wait! But when I brought them home, I detected the presence of my old arch-enemy: spider mites. I've battled (and lost) with these micro-evils before. Of course,

everyone gives me helpful advice about how to get rid of them, none of which works. Soap spray is always offered up as the panacea, but I'm beginning to wonder if my Karma biodegradable soap is up for the job: the mites eat it like it's a yummy appetizer, laughing at me all the while in their tiny, squeaky, diabolical voices.

If there had been an eighth plague visited upon the Egyptians in the Torah, my bet is that it would have been spider mites. My poor Columnar Basil, I weep for you. Healthy and glossy on the outside, underneath the leaves of this façade you contain the seeds of your own destruction. A lesson on all products from Loblaws, I think. It was probably genetically engineered, too. I will not be lured inside again!

February 12, 2004

Dear Diary,

Was doing clean-up at the store tonight and encountered an awful mess. Some #\$\$%&*!%\$!*# Karma member decided to fill up a container with bulk honey, but the container they chose was one of those clear plastic berry containers — the ones with all the slits in them, bottom included. You can imagine the result. Then, rather than deal with the problem, the member decided to hide the evidence of this dripping disaster by quickly tucking the container on the floor in between two nearby freezers! And then they walked away! As I dealt with this sweet, sticky, dusty puddle, I fantasized about what I would do if I were Supreme Leader of Karma:

Scene 1: The Karma Court (led by me, in a big white wig and black robe):

ME (firm and menacing): "Karma member 5925, on the conclusive basis of DNA testing, we have established that you, on the afternoon of February 12, were indeed responsible for the honey

calamity before us. You are charged with the Class 1 Co-op Felony of Not Cleaning Up After Yourself. You are also charged with the Class 2 Co-op Crime of Wasting Excessive Amounts of a Bulk Product. How do you plead?

MEMBER 5925 (in chains, babbling): "I'm not guilty! Nobody told me that the container had holes in it! Nobody told me I had to clean up my own mess! I just — I just thought someone else would deal with it!"

LAWYER FOR MEMBER 5925: "Really, Your Honour, intent to commit the crime can't be established, following the principle of *mens rea*. My client is a victim of a hierarchical, capitalist, consumer society where the customer is always right. My client assumed that someone had been hired to deal with their mess — a reasonable assumption in the retail food industry given..."

ME: "Enough! Willful ignorance of the basic laws of co-op society is no excuse! Member 5925, you are sentenced to one evening hard labour breaking down cardboard boxes, and one week on rice bread and water!!!"

MEMBER 5925: "No, no, please! Anything but a gluten-free diet! Arghaaaaa..."

Curtain slowly falls, as MEMBER 5925 contemplates his terrible fate. Exclamations of horror and dismay by all present in the courtroom (except the Supreme Karma Leader).

THE END

Should more entries from this shocking diary see the light of day? Contact The Chronicle at chronicle@karmacoop.org with your input!

Recipes!

Submitted by Brandy Humes

Cranberry-Orange Muffins

- 1 c. orange juice
- 1/2 c. safflower or sunflower oil
- 1/2 c. maple syrup
- 4 tbsp. orange zest (about 2 oranges)
- 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. orange essence (optional – use if you want a strong orange kick)
- 3 1/2 c. of non-wheat flour such as barley flour
- 1/2 c. dry sweetener such as fair-trade unrefined sugar, Sucanat, date sugar, or maple sugar
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. allspice or cardamom
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1–3 tbsp. non-dairy milk such as rice, almond, or soy
- 1 1/2 c. frozen or fresh cranberries, chopped*
- 1/3 c. flax seeds (optional)

Preheat oven to 350F. Oil or line a 12-cup muffin pan.

In a small bowl, mix juice, oil, syrup, zest, vinegar, and essence (if using).

In a large bowl, mix flour, dry sweetener, baking soda, baking powder, allspice or cardamom, and salt. Pour wet ingredients into dry and mix thoroughly — but don't overmix or your muffins won't rise well. The batter should be quite stiff, but if it seems too stiff and there is still some flour that hasn't been stirred in, add 1–3 tbsp. of non-dairy milk such as rice, almond, or soy. Fold in the cranberries and flax seeds (if using).

Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake for 25–30 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 15 minutes in the muffin cups, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely.

*Do not thaw frozen cranberries before using — they will seriously discolour the batter. Instead, chop frozen berries by hand or pulse in a food processor until they are roughly quartered.

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Chocolate Walnut Brownie Cookies

1 c. non-wheat flour such as whole spelt or oat flour
1 c. walnuts, almonds, pecans, or brazil nuts, chopped
1/2–1 c. chocolate chips
3/4 c. quick oats
1/2 c. cocoa powder
1/2 c. dry sweetener such as fair-trade unrefined sugar, Sucanat, date sugar, or maple sugar
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
2/3 c. maple syrup
1/3 c. safflower or sunflower oil
1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.**

In a large bowl, mix flour, nuts, chocolate chips, oats, cocoa powder, dry sweetener, baking powder, and salt.

In a small bowl, mix syrup, oil, and vanilla.

Pour wet ingredients into dry and mix well. Scoop by heaping tablespoons onto prepared sheet. Flatten slightly, using the bottom of a glass dipped lightly in water to prevent sticking. Bake for 15–20 minutes or until cookies are firm around the edges. The cookies will seem soft when they come out of the oven, but they will firm up as they cool. Cool 5–10 minutes before removing from pan.

Makes about a dozen cookies.

**Parchment paper may seem like a wasteful baker's tool, but I find it a necessity. It not only saves me from having to scrape my cookie sheets to remove stubborn cookies, but it also saves the appearance and roundness of the cookie (there were some very misshapen cookies coming out of my kitchen in my pre-parchment days). Using parchment paper also saves time and water during clean up. Just rinse the baking pans and they're clean! A final note about parchment: the same sheet of parchment paper can endure many batches of cookies — I have been using the same 8x16 sheet of unbleached parchment (sold at Karma) for almost two months, and have made about 50 batches of cookies.



U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

A T K A R M A

Craft Sale & Open House Saturday, April 24 noon–4 pm

Celebrate spring by stopping in at the Karma Community Craft Sale and Open House. Check out the wonderful wares from Karma's talented artisans — and bring a friend! Non-members are welcome to do a trial shop at the member rate. (Cash only, please!) Invite your friends to check out our organic and natural foods while connecting with a friendly, ecologically focused community. There will be a store tour at 2:30 pm. Anyone wishing to book a table should contact Stefani Brown at 416-787-3585 or e-mail the Promotions Committee at promotions@karmacoop.org.

Plant Exchange & Open House Saturday, May 15 10 am–2 pm

Don't miss the ever popular Plant Exchange and Open House. This year, we're planning some fantastic children's activities, so bring the whole family and join us for some green-thumb fun! (Don't forget your extra seedlings or cuttings.) Non-members are welcome to do a trial shop at the member rate. (Cash only, please!) There will be a store tour at 2:30 pm. For more information visit www.karmacoop.org or e-mail promotions@karmacoop.org.

Bike Day & Open House Saturday, June 5 noon–4 pm

Back by popular demand! A team of Karma members who also happen to be amazing bike mechanics will be offering free tuneups for Karma members and visitors to the store. Non-members are welcome to do a trial shop at the member rate. (Cash only, please!) There will be a store tour at 2:30 pm. For more information visit www.karmacoop.org or e-mail promotions@karmacoop.org.

Member Labour

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increased working, but also increased shopping and better retention of both our working and non-working members.

If anyone has specific questions or concerns before the special issue comes out on May 10, please feel free to contact the Member Labour Committee by e-mail at labourcommittee@karmacoop.org or leave a message for me at the store, and I will contact you by phone.

I urge all Karma members to read the upcoming special issue carefully and thoughtfully, so we can move forward together as a co-op.

MISSION STATEMENT

OUR AIM IS TO:

1. create a community of actively participating members;
2. foster a healthy connection to the food we eat, the people who grow it, and the other organizations who share our beliefs;
3. co-operatively educate ourselves on environmental issues;
4. exercise political and economic control over our food; by operating a viable co-operative food store.

STAFF LIST

General Manager
Sarah Fairley

Grocery Manager
James

Produce Manager
Michael

Health & Beauty Manager
Sara

Shift Managers
Sheila
Paul
Michel

Bookkeeper
Victoria

Membership Secretary
Marilou

Member Labour Co-ordinator
Sara

Clerks
Naomi
Mike
Lisa
Sasha
Kevin

HOURS OF OPERATION

STORE CLOSED APRIL 9 APRIL 11



Monday 11-7
Tuesday 11-9
Wednesday 11-9
Thursday 11-9
Friday 10-9
Saturday 10-6
Sunday 11-5