

The Chronicle

August/September 2004



In this issue...

Report From the Board of Directors • AGM Update
• General Manager's Report • Making It Work... Worked!
• Product Spotlight • Natural Health and Complementary
Medicine • Spotlight on Set-Up Workers • People - and
Planet - Friendly Listings and Community Events • Recipes
• Letters to the Editor

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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.

KARMA CO-OP HOURS OF OPERATION

MONDAY11-7
TUESDAY11-9
WEDNESDAY . . .11-9
THURSDAY11-9

FRIDAY10-9
SATURDAY10-6
SUNDAY11-5

www.karmacoop.org

Guide to what's inside this month

Letters to the Editor	1
Report from the Board of Directors	5
AGM 2004: Get Involved!	5
Report from the General Manager	6
Product Spotlight	7
Making it Work Redux	9
Natural Health, Complementary Medicine and OHIP	10
Who Are the People in your (Karma) Neighbourhood?	11
Deliciously Divine Baked Goods	13
Anil's Infamous Tofu in Black-Bean Sauce	14
People - and Planet - Friendly Listings	16
Through Anil's Lens	17

The Chronicle August-September 2004

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

This newsletter is printed on New Life stock, which is certified recycled 80% post-consumer. This paper is oxygen-whitened and certified chlorine and old-growth free by the Chlorine Free Products Association. It is union made in Canada by Cascades Fine Papers.

For more information on sustainable paper stock go to Reach for Unbleached (www.rfu.org) a Canadian registered charity working for a sustainable pulp and paper industry.

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 in the store. 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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Letters to the Editor

Without zealots, I suppose that Karma would never have been created, but zealotry does become tiresome, especially for those the zealots judge by their own commitment. I've been a Karma member for over 10 years now. I used to be a working member, now I am a non-working member, and yes, I owe hours. Since I've been a member there has been a fissure between members siding on one side or another of the working question.

I applaud those who work by volunteering their time in the co-op. It is fantastic that they have the time, inclination, commitment, and privilege to do so. Those who choose not to volunteer in the co-op pay 8 per cent more to shop at Karma, and one would think that this would be enough, that this would solve the problem. But no, it does not — the zealots will not be appeased by this, which is enough for everyone else.

Karma is a grocery store, a place to buy food. It is more ethical than other options — we know this and every Karma member is probably proud of this to one extent or another, so why not leave it alone and just let the non-working members shop in peace? We choose to shop at the co-op because it is an ethical choice. We give our money to the co-op and money keeps the co-op alive; whether we work or do not work, owe hours or not, we still shop.

In its mission statement, Karma puts forth a community focus. Community means inclusiveness. Promoting and maintaining divisions between members is not promoting this end. In the April/May issue of The Chronicle, the editorial — ironically titled "A Co-op with Integrity" — stated: "As predicted, there are now more non-working members than working members. Most of the hundreds of owed hours belong to former working members who are now non-working. . . . Karma should forget about keeping

such members and reconsider permitting only working members." This, from the editor of the issue, is very inappropriate indeed. Surely Terry Fowler sees the shortsightedness of his statements, and the animosity that they promote within the Karma community? Since he is an editor, one must deduce that Fowler is intelligent, aware, and that he understands the impact of his statements. I must then ask why he would intentionally wreak such havoc in the Karma community. But whether he did so intentionally or unintentionally, it remains inappropriate that he did so.

Performing as the editor of the co-op newsletter is an extreme privilege and responsibility. To go on as he did in the editorial is an abuse of his position.

D. Wiles

Terry Fowler replies:

D. Wiles's anger at my editorial is probably shared by many Karma members, so for that reason I think it is very important to respond to what the letter writer has said.

Although she or he has been a member for 10 years, she or he still does not understand that Karma is not just a grocery store, although it might be a more "ethical" place to shop. Karma is a co-operative. The misunderstanding is wrapped up in Wiles's sentence, "We give our money to the co-op and money keeps the co-op alive; whether we work or do not work, owe hours or not, we still shop."

Money does not keep a co-op alive. In fact, money doesn't keep anyone alive. My daughter, when she was five, was starting to understand this when she asked me as we drove through the fields of southern Ontario, "Daddy, if there were no money, would the food still grow?"

Work keeps the co-op alive. A while back, the

cont'd ... see Letters on pg 2

Letters (from pg 1)

membership decided that not all of us needed to work, but could pay a surcharge instead. That might have worked out if there were only a few non-working members, and if those who said they were working members honoured their work commitments. Quite a while ago, we came to a point at which neither of these conditions was being met, a situation now acknowledged by the board and by the new working/non-working regulations.

My editorial urged everyone to work for Karma because of the crucial nature of Karma's mission.

Food — healthy food — is essential to our survival. Its production and distribution has been taken over by profit-making companies that devalue it, giving us cheaper prices but polluting the environment and gaining an almost totalitarian control over farmers and farm workers, not to mention consumers. This has happened because most of us (myself included) have been satisfied to let commercial transactions take the place of the real process of getting food into our mouths.

The letter writer wants to pay the markup and be left in peace. I'm arguing that that's the attitude that got us into this mess in the first place — GMOs, food that makes us sick, and agribusiness in complete control. That's why my wife and I, both working and with two small children at the time, chose to join Karma and work toward its vision. We did not have "extra time." Everyone has time for what he or she really wants to do. Wiles is also upset because my opinion was expressed in a Chronicle editorial. The fact is, expressing opinions is the function of this newsletter. (This exchange of letters is also the kind of critical process that must continue if

the co-op is going to have any vitality at all.) I invite Wiles to join the Chronicle Committee and write editorials too. My editorials do not, and should not, express the views of the board or the entire Karma community. My editorials are my opinion, written to promote thought about the connections between the co-op, the food we eat, and the pattern of our daily lives. They seem to have done that.

Terry Fowler

I fully support the substance of the membership changes that have been made, and I interpret the bylaws as giving the board the full authority to make such changes. However, The Chronicle's report of these events contained some important inaccuracies.

When I first read the special "Making it Work!" issue of The Chronicle about changes to our membership arrangements, I had some serious concerns, which I expressed in a letter that I sent to The Chronicle and to the board of directors. After speaking to the president of the board, Graeme Hussey, and after reading the minutes of recent board meetings on our Web site, I will focus this revised letter more directly on the matter that still concerns me: the quality of the reporting about the changes, not the mechanism by which the board implemented the changes.

I fully support the substance of the membership changes that have been made, and I interpret the bylaws as giving the board the full authority to make such changes. However, The Chronicle's report of these events contained some important inaccuracies. The article titled "Membership Policy Changes and Rationale" opens as follows: "This article is an outline of the changes the Ad Hoc Member Labour Committee has made to the membership policy...". The title and first sentence alarmed me on two levels. First, the text implied that the committee made the changes, not that it recommended changes that were adopted by the

board. Second, the text (along with text later in the article) implied that the changes had been made to the Membership Policy, rather than to the regulations that implement the existing policy. This is an important distinction. Committee members need reassurance that their work — such as that performed on the Product Policy adopted in 2002 — will not be overturned by the board.

I have since learned that both of the implications in The Chronicle article are incorrect: it was the board that acted, and it acted to change only the regulations, not the policy. The board's action was consistent with Karma practice, although not specified in our bylaws: when the general membership sets broad policies at general meetings, the board carries out the detailed implementation of those policies, interpreting them as conditions change or else referring the policies back to the members for amendment.

In the special issue of The Chronicle, the authors did not convey an understanding of these general Karma practices for policy development and implementation, practices that the current board has continued to follow. Instead, the language used in The Chronicle was likely to confuse members about their own role, the committee's role, and the board's role. Such confusion threatens democracy at Karma, for democracy requires the members to be accurately informed about the history and actions of those three groups.

Lachlan Story, writing on behalf of the Ad-Hoc Member Labour Committee, acknowledged that The Chronicle's editorial staff had very little hand in the content of the special issue. It is unfortunate that no one from The Chronicle provided the kind of constructive criticism necessary to place these recent events in their proper context, relating them to Karma's standard procedures for policy implementation. Because the information in The Chronicle was an official communication from the

board to the members, written by one of its committees, it is appropriate that the final decisions on the text were made by that committee. Nonetheless, the membership would have benefited greatly had there been someone on The Chronicle staff with both the knowledge and the mandate to help the committee produce an accurate, historically informed description of how these important changes were made.

Howard L. Kaplan

Graeme Hussey replies:

I would like to thank Howard for raising his concerns on the recent changes to the member labour system. I would also like to emphasize the board's support for the work that the Member Labour Committee, the staff, and the Chronicle Committee put into both the recent changes and the special issue of The Chronicle. I hope this letter will address Howard's concerns.

In the future, I would encourage all members of Karma to contact me or other members of the board with any comments, concerns, questions, or suggestions about the work of the board or any of its committees, either by e-mail or by leaving written correspondence in the store. Members are welcome to submit written submissions to The Chronicle, but I would like to emphasize that The Chronicle is not part of the formal complaints mechanism at Karma.

Howard raises concerns about the language in the special issue in two areas, one regarding the use of the term "policy changes" (where it should read "regulation changes") and a second regarding who exactly was responsible for the changes made to the member labour system — the Member Labour Committee or the board itself. I would like to thank Howard for helping to clarify these points to our membership. Having recognized this, I believe it is equally important to

cont'd ... see Letters on pg 4

Letters (from pg 3)

recognize that these are not significant errors when viewed in the larger picture of democratic decision-making at Karma. They do, however, point out the challenges of running and governing a co-op using member labour work. Some of these limitations include the amount of time members can commit, the experience that our member labour brings to the job, and the ability of our co-op to organize itself and retain its institutional history.

The board has recognized that there is a lack of institutional history at Karma and is actively working toward rectifying this by cataloguing and organizing information that pertains to Karma's history and decision making. The board is also developing a Web-based tool that will better catalogue information regarding Karma's practices and decisions so that future boards, committees, and staff can retrieve and use this information in a constructive way. Currently, however, the board and committees are working in a vacuum with a lack of historical and procedural information. I would like to encourage members who are currently not actively participating in the member labour system, but who have been active in the past, to work with the current board, committees, and staff members in a mentorship role. This will ensure that Karma is able to better pass on its institutional history to our board and committees, whose members are constantly changing as older members leave and new ones take their place.

The policies at Karma are not the responsibility of the membership but rather of the board, as outlined by our bylaws. Members are responsible for approving and amending bylaws and the board is responsible for approving and amending policies. The fact that the current Member Labour Committee used a different procedure from ones used in the past does not mean that there is a loss of democracy at Karma. Rather, it demonstrates that different people have different ways of

doing things. This is a reality of a member-driven organization such as Karma. It also points out that without established procedures, members are left on their own to perform their member labour work. The board is working on developing these procedures and will use the current Member Labour Committee's practices of involving and communicating with the membership, along with other past practices, for developing policies as a model of democracy.

Graeme Hussey



The Chronicle Needs You!

If you have skills in illustration or digital photography and would like to make a regular contribution to The Chronicle, we would love to hear from you! Contact chronicle@karmacoop.org.

Report From the Board of Directors

The End of the Fiscal Year

By Graeme Hussey, president

The end of May saw Karma finish its fiscal year 2004. For the Karma board, it was quite a hectic year with much to be optimistic about. The beginning of the fiscal year saw us fall in to tough times with a significant financial loss from the August 2003 blackout and the unexpected loss of two freezers. These factors combined for a total unexpected cost of approximately \$40,000 to start the year. With strong member and staff support and an increase in sales, Karma was able to recover some of this and finish with about a \$20,000 loss on the year. Although we are not happy with the loss, the board is excited about the upcoming year and the increased interest in Karma.

AGM 2004: Get Involved!

By Jason Diceman, on behalf of the 2004 AGM Committee

The Karma Co-op Annual General Meeting is planned for the evening of October 25, 2004, at the Palmerston Library (just north of Bloor, on the west side of Palmerston). We look forward to an exciting night of information, discussion, voting, and healthful eats. Child care will be available on site.

Members can now access important AGM information online, via www.karmacoop.org/agm. Members can also contact the AGM Committee online — just send an e-mail to agm2004@karmacoop.org. Members can also use the AGM section of the in-store bulletin board, which includes posted news and a submissions envelope.

The board would like to thank Ed Fielding who, after two years, has recently left the board. We would also like to welcome Jason Diceman as our latest addition to the board. Jason has a background in working with co-operatives to create change with the use of technology such as Web-based tools. We are really looking forward to his contribution.

The summer has found the board full of activity. In June the board met to develop its direction and strategy for the remainder of the calendar year. The next six months promise to be very demanding as we focus on developing short- and long-term financial and strategic plans, recruiting and orientating new board members following Karma's October AGM, and working on developing the capacity of the board, committees, and staff.

I look forward to working with you on building the Karma community. Please feel free to contact me at any time via president@karmacoop.org.

To ensure this year's AGM is successful, the AGM Committee is looking for your input. We need members to:

- help organize and carry out the event
- contribute to our bylaw review process at karmacoop.org/bylaws, or at the AGM section of the bulletin board
- submit nomination letters for the board of directors
- suggest issues for discussion at the AGM.

If you're interested in helping out with any of the above, please submit your contact details to the AGM Committee at agm2004@karmacoop.org or via the submissions envelope on the bulletin board. We look forward to your participation in this important democratic process!

Report From the General Manager

By Sarah Fairley

Changes to Karma's membership regulations rolled out smoothly on June 1. Although change is always a little scary here at Karma, the whole thing went without a hitch thanks to the excellent work of the Member Labour Committee, the member labour coordinator, the membership secretary, and the rest of the staff.

The change that is having the biggest effect in the store right now is the new flat-rate option that has been made available to non-working members. Karma doesn't have a means of determining how much each member spends at Karma each month, so we really didn't know if this option would appeal to many of our non-working members. As it turns out, this option has been quite popular. Approximately 35 non-working members chose the flat rate surcharge in the first month and many more are saving their receipts to determine which option makes the most sense for their household.

The effects of another change will likely be noticed by some working members for the first time in August or September. Members in working households are now permitted to fall four hours behind in their work shifts. Since the new regulations will be two months old in August, it is likely that there will be a few members who will be put on temporary surcharge due to owed hours.

Those members who do fall behind have a new option to get themselves back in the yellow (back to the yellow working member card); members can now pay for owed hours at the cash register, instead of working them off. This may make it easier for some members to get back to working status. Working members who find themselves really busy during a given month may also choose to pay

for hours, rather than work them, so that they don't have to work them off at a later date (just remember to give your work team coordinator lots of notice that you are not going to be working that month).

I want to stress that the new payment options should not be mistaken for a move away from our reliance on member labour. We continue to rely on member labour to complete tasks that are essential to the co-op's operation, including: set-up; cash; clean-up; and committee work.

Staff Changes and Scheduling Challenges

There have been some staff changes at Karma.

Naomi Fance and Sasha Sefer resigned their positions at Karma at the end of May. Naomi is spending the summer visiting family in India, while Sasha is putting in some hard time in the landscaping business before he begins university in the fall. We wish them both well.

Karma's new clerks are Greg Miller (in the produce department) and Christine Delay (in the grocery department). Both have previous experience in retail and customer service. Please take the time to introduce ourselves to these great new staff members.

Summer has presented its usual scheduling challenges. With so many members busy with summer vacations and other activities, Karma has experienced severe member labour shortages. So despite the drop in sales that we experience in the summer, we are unable to reduce staffing expenses because we have to draw on staff to fill in for member labour.

I am looking forward to the great days of September, when sales pick up, and the member labour schedule fills up a little more. I am also looking forward to once again seeing the friendly faces of all the members who have been elsewhere over the summer. Welcome back.

Product Spotlight

By Suzanne Molina

Road's End
Vegan/Dairy-Free
Nacho Dip, Gravy,
and Mac &
"Cheese"



Vegan products made by Road's End Organics are finally available in Canada.

The Morrisville, Vermont-based company manufactures plant-based convenience foods using a blend of nutritional yeast, tapioca starch, and spices in place of cheese and other dairy products.

Road's End offers dairy-free mac and chreeze with whole-wheat pasta, dairy-free shells and chreeze with white semolina pasta, and Alfredo-style dairy-free mac and chreeze with brown rice pasta, basil, and oregano. The Alfredo-style mac and chreeze is also gluten free. The pasta products are all low fat, high fibre, soy and nut free, and certified organic and kosher. And they cook up just like Kraft Dinner — add your favourite milk replacement and some olive oil or dairy-free margarine, and that's it. According to former Karma staffer Brandy Humes, the Road's End pastas are "rich, yummy, and surprisingly cheese-like."

Karma also carries Road's End nacho chreeze dip in both spicy and mild. These certified organic products are fat free, wheat free, low in sodium, and entirely plant based. They're made with tomatoes, water, green lentil flour, nutritional yeast, various spices, and thickened with guar gum. Both the spicy and mild versions contain jalapeño peppers, but the spicy version takes fire thanks to the magic of capsicum.

Spotlight At A Glance

Road's End Mac & Chreeze	170 g, \$2.92
Road's End Shells & Chreeze . . .	170 g, \$1.99 (s)
Road's End Alfredo-Style Mac & Chreeze	184 g, \$2.34
Road's End Nacho Chreeze Dip . . . . .	.309 g, \$3.89 (s)
Road's End Shiitake Mushroom Gravy Mix . . . . .	.28.3 g, \$1.37
Road's End Golden Gravy Mix . . . . .	.28.3 g, \$1.19 (s)
Road's End Cheddar-Style Chreeze Mix . . . . .	.31.1 g, \$1.10 (s)
Sunshine Farms Organic Sweet Baby Pickles . . . . .	.500 ml, \$5.79 (s)
Sunshine Farms Organic Pickled Baby Dills . . . . .	.500 ml, \$6.39 (s)
Sunshine Farms Organic Pickled Beets . . . . .	.500 ml, \$5.79 (s)
Sunshine Farms Pickled Carrots . . . . .	.500 ml, \$4.89 (s)
Sunshine Farms Pickled Fiddleheads . . . . .	.250 ml, \$6.39 (s)
Sunshine Farms Organic Sweet Relish . . . . .	.250 ml, \$4.39 (s)
Canadian Heritage Raspberry Maple Jelly . . . . .	.190 ml, \$5.98
Canadian Heritage Old-Fashioned Maple Jelly . . . . .	.190 ml, \$5.39 (s)
Canadian Heritage 100% Pure Organic Maple Butter . . . . .	.160 g, \$5.58

(s)=Special!!

cont'd ... see Spotlight on pg 8

Spotlight (from pg 7)

The Road's End roll call ends with a series of dairy-free gravies and sauces: shiitake mushroom gravy, golden gravy, cheddar-style chreese mix, and gluten-free cheddar-style chreese mix. The shiitake, golden, and gluten-free cheddar-style products use a base of brown rice flour, tapioca starch, and nutritional yeast, while the cheddar-style chreese mix uses unbleached white flour. Both the shiitake — which uses real shiitake 'shrooms and tamari — and the golden gravies are certified organic.

For more information on these and other Road's End products, go to www.roadsendorganics.com, www.chreese.com, or call 1-877-CHREESE.

Sunshine Farms Pickles, Pickled Veggies, and Relish

These local products have replaced most of the U.S.-based Cascadian Farms products (with the exception of kosher pickles and relish). Sunshine Farms features a range of products including sweet baby pickles, baby dills, pickled beets, sweet relish, pickled carrots, and pickled beets. The pickles and relish are certified organic.



Sunshine Farms is based in Thamesville, Ontario. For more information, e-mail jjagues@mnsi.net.

Canadian Heritage Organics Maple Jellies & Butter

Most sugar-free jams and jellies contain some sort of added sweetener (usually fructose). The Canadian

Heritage line of jellies, however, uses only the natural sweetness of maple syrup. The raspberry maple jelly is made in Quebec from maple syrup, raspberry juice, and the plant-based thickener agar (which is made from red seaweed). The old-fashioned maple jelly uses maple syrup, late-season maple syrup (which is different than the early sap), and agar. Both are certified organic.



The Canadian Heritage certified organic maple butter — which is fresh enough to need a best-before date — features a nice layer of dark maple syrup on top of the butter. Mix it in or skim it off for a tasty treat? The choice is yours. If you want to try it both ways, you'll have to buy two.

Is there a product you'd like to see featured in the Product Spotlight space?

Scribble your suggestions on a piece of scrap paper and pop it into the red Chronicle submissions box!

You can also send suggestions to chronicle@karmacoop.org.

Tell us what you want to know, and we'll dig up the (organic, fertilizer-free) dirt!

Making It Work Redux

How Have the Changes to Membership Regulations Been Received?

By Bruce Erickson

After almost two years of planning, consulting, and making some creative suggestions, Karma Co-op through the Member Labour Committee, has recently made several changes to policies that govern membership. As with all organizations, change does not come easy, and the work that Karma put into this effort proves the point. About a month after the dust settled from the June 1 implementation date, I set off to find out how the changes were affecting the members at large. I was surprised by the results.

For the sake of a good story, I wish I could report scandal, lineup delays, stressed-out members, and general rebellion. However, none of the above has happened (at least as a result of the recent changes). As one member I spoke to said, "The most surprising thing about the changes is how reasonable they are. Given the hype that surrounded and preceded the implementation of the changes, it is surprising that the changes feel so natural."

This, I believe, should stand as a compliment to the Member Labour Committee, which orchestrated the process. The members of the committee put in a lot of effort to come up with changes that would be both the most useful and the most natural for the members.

As I spoke to members on a busy Saturday in the store, I also received a lot of feedback praising the special issue of The Chronicle for its clarity and its thorough explanation of the rationale for the changes.

Perhaps the only somewhat negative comment I received when asking about the changes was from one

non-working member who understood the reason for the increase in the non-working surcharge but also said he noticed the effect the increase has had on his total expenditure. This member said that the increase did make him think twice about purchasing the occasional item. Fortunately, for him and for the co-op, prices are not the reason he is a member of Karma. At the same time, feedback indicated that many other non-working members have appreciated the new monthly flat-fee option as an alternative to the percentage surcharge.

Most working members felt that the new policies would not directly affect them unless they were to fall behind on their hours and have a surcharge applied to their purchases. And, should that happen, several members remarked that the consequences were fair (although none of these folks were currently behind on their hours).

It seems that the news, in this case, is no news — which is good news!



Natural Health, Complementary Medicine, and OHIP

Time To Extend OHIP Coverage?

By Suchot Sunday

Complementary health treatments are currently not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). Yet many health conditions respond better to treatments that are not part of the Western medical model.

Complementary medicine is not intended to replace allopathic medicine. Complementary medicine is meant to be just that: complementary to the Western medical model. Both are important, both have their strengths, and there are types of conditions for which one or the other is best used.

Allopathic medicine is excellent for any kind of medical condition that is severe or comes on suddenly. If I suddenly experienced severe chest pain and were short of breath, I wouldn't start burning essential oils or drop in on an acupuncturist. Clearly, emergencies are for the emergency room.

Complementary medicine, on the other hand, works well for chronic conditions. Although it can take longer to see the effects of treatment, complementary medicine does not only focus on fixing disease states.

Complementary medicine focuses on total body wellness. This is true of complementary therapies such as naturopathy, homeopathy, and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

There is no single modality of complementary medicine that is best to use on any one type of condition, and the same treatment will not necessarily work on all people with the same condition. Herein lies the rub of

complementary medicine. There is no one-size-fits-all, "take this pill every day for two weeks", prescription. It can be a much slower, more gradual process and often involves lifestyle changes. It's more difficult than simply popping a pill a couple of times a day, although much more beneficial in the long run.

Because so-called "alternative" modes of treatment are not covered by OHIP, they are currently only accessible to a small portion of the Ontario population — those who can afford them. This is unfair. People should have the right to choose how they want to heal, and how they want to manage their health.

We can all take steps toward improving the range of health-care options in Ontario. The next time you choose supplemental health insurance, choose a company that supports complementary health choices. There are companies that will reimburse for complementary health care in some of their packages. Let the insurer know the reason you selected it over other companies. If your current provider does not support any form of complementary medicine, write a letter explaining why it should.

You could also write a letter to the provincial health minister explaining why you believe complementary health care should be funded by OHIP. (See sidebar for contact information.)

Try out complementary health care for yourself. There are many accreditation systems that can guide individuals in choosing a qualified practitioner. One place where people can find accredited complementary health care practitioners is the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors

cont'd ... see OHIP on pg 15

Who Are the People in your (Karma) Neighbourhood?

Spotlight on Set-up Workers

By Lachlan Story

This article is Part Two in a series on the different forms of member labour at Karma. In this issue, I explore the life and activity of the elusive Karma set-up worker.

Like much of the work at Karma, set-up work is the kind of work that most of us don't notice — unless it isn't done. Yet it is integral to the store, because the things that are put to bed when the store closes at night need to be brought back out and set up before the next day's business. There are a lot of other things that set-up workers do as well; so join me as we find out who these people are, what makes them tick — and what makes them ticked off.

Habitat and Behaviour

The set-up worker is a hard-to-spot member of our co-op. Rising early and retiring just as the store opens, their elusiveness contrasts with the visibility and bright plumage of the cashier. Rarely seen in action by other Karma members, set-up workers show up with our staff a full two hours before the store opens in order to make sure that everything is ready. On a Saturday, this means they arrive to prepare the store at 8 am! I mean, you can still taste the toothpaste at 8 am! Obviously, this is not a job for the late-night reveler or the slow to wake up.

As I count myself (at times) in those two categories, trying to catch a glimpse of the life of the set-up worker necessitated that I set my alarm clock quite early by my standards. It's a virtuous feeling going to Karma so early in the morning, the birds twittering in the warm

morning sun, people fresh and hopeful with the new day's beginning. It's in marked contrast to my regular clean-up shift at Karma, which starts just as it is getting dark. My brother and sister set-up workers are my opposites in co-op member labour: we nocturnal and they diurnal, in an everlasting harmony and sequence of cleaning up from the old day and setting up for a new day of co-operative work! Okay, actually the sun was not shining when I went down to Karma, and people seemed a little grumpy on the streets of the Annex, but it is a pretty picture to imagine. Having given myself plenty of time to fill up on the requisite (organic) stimulants that one needs to greet the morning, I proceeded down to Karma earlier than I ever had before, to learn more about this type of member labour.

Coffee, Music, and Expiration Dates

The first thing I notice about the set-up shift is that there is nobody shopping in the store. This doesn't mean that there's a lack of activity, though. There are staff in the store, doing their own preparation work for the day, and although it's quiet, the atmosphere is busy. Of all the types of member labour work, it seems to me that set-up involves the most interaction with staff, as both staff and set-up workers go about the task of getting the store ready for our shopping. Coffee drinkers are in luck: this beverage flowed with abundance during the set-up shift I worked. It was also my chance to brush up on a variety of music, since our music-savvy staff put the stereo to good use.

Set-up workers have two major categories of work to do on their shift: ensuring the freshness of refrigerated products and dealing with the deli cooler. Every day, set-up workers must check the expiry dates on all the products in our coolers. And there are a lot of coolers at Karma! This job keeps those of us who forget to check expiry dates from getting a nasty bacterial surprise when

cont'd ... see Set-Up on pg 12

Set-Up (from pg 11)

we get home. But it does lead to cold fingers on the part of the set-up worker.

During this part of the shift, one begins to appreciate just how many places it is possible to hide an expiry date on a product. That said, the core-body-temperature benefits of doing this work in the hot humidity of a Toronto summer can compensate for many inconveniences. Doing this work also results in a sense of satisfaction in finding the one expired item in a sea of un-expired products: it both breaks the routine and justifies the activity. On the other hand, this means that something we bought for the store did not sell, which usually means the item has to be entered into the big Shrink Book as another loss for Karma (that means you and me). Controlling product shrinkage is one of the biggest struggles a retail food store faces, so the conscientious set-up worker always makes sure that the items that are sooner-to-expire are in the front of the cooler so they can be bought first — and so they are more easily accessible to the next set-up worker who goes through them.

What's the Catch?

If all the tasks of member labour were fun and easy, it wouldn't be called "work." And the set-up job does have its more challenging dimensions. The second big task of the set-up worker is organizing and cleaning the deli cooler. When you and I look at the deli cooler, we see yummy samosas and a variety of interesting soy products. But set-up workers at Karma see only one thing: the Dreaded Bulk Tofu Container. Crouching sullen and ponderous in the bottom of the cooler, it lies in wait for its daily struggle with the set-up worker. The set-up worker approaches, sometimes hopeful — perhaps the Dreaded Bulk Tofu Container has shrunk to a smaller, more manageable size today, or maybe it has gone away on vacation? No, it has not. It never does.

And its water must be changed.

The next time you're at the store, stand in front of the tofu container and appreciate the toil that has been done on your behalf. Lifting the container out of the cooler and carrying it to the sinks requires strength and skill. A "lift and twist" technique must be mastered, or else you'll spill cold tofu water all over the inside of the cooler and/or all over you. The tofu must be delicately removed from the container, which is then washed, and then the tofu must be put back. The whole thing must then be carried out and carefully replaced into the cooler. The cost of bringing our members an abundance of affordable bulk tofu is borne on the sturdy backs, arms, and psyches of our set-up workers!

There are several other things that the set-up worker does at Karma. Set-up workers take the baked treats out of the cooler and put them back on the check-out desk. They put away the dishes that were washed the night before.

The set-up workers I talked to seem to like their job; there was even evidence that some had defected from other member-labour jobs! As work, it is relatively calm and predictable, because set-up workers know their tasks and the time allotted for their completion. Set-up workers join the rest of us in wishing Karma's "kitchen" was a little bigger, because this would make the task of washing out the many containers the store uses much easier. But ultimately, there is a good feeling generated in the group activity of setting up the store for the day; a collective act of replenishment. It doesn't surprise me that this might be satisfying for some of our co-operative members.

Thank you, set-up workers, for the good work you do! And thanks to Henny Markus and Brenna Forester for sharing their shift with me, as well as their expertise and opinions.

cont'd ... see Set-Up on pg 15

Deliciously Divine Baked Goods (That Just Happen to Be Wheat Free and Vegan)

Submitted by Brandy Humes

When I was a Karma staffer last year, I discovered that many members don't know the ins and outs of wheat-free flours. While on shift, I would answer questions such as, "How do I use spelt flour?" "What is the difference between light and whole spelt flour?" "Is buckwheat flour really wheat-free?" "My wife/son/aunt/partner just found out they're allergic to wheat — what should I use now to make them cookies?" and "If something is wheat free is it gluten free as well?" As someone who has an intolerance to wheat, and who has also been vegan (and therefore eschews eggs and dairy) for over six years, I have experimented a lot and learned what tends to work and what doesn't. There seems to be a misconception that wheat-free, vegan baking can't be delicious — but I'm sure that these recipes will dispel that myth with one bite!

For more information on veganism, go to www.veganoutreach.org, and for more information on wheat-free diets, check out www.wheat-free.org/wheat_allergy.html.

Chocolate-Coconut Macaroons

2 1/2 c. shredded coconut, toasted (see instructions below)

3/4–1 c. fair-trade sugar, to taste

1/2 c. fair-trade cocoa powder

1/4 c. barley or spelt flour

1/4 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. baking powder



1/4 tsp. salt

8 pitted dates (if they're really hard, soak them in hot water for 10–20 minutes, and discard the water)

5 tbsp. water

Preheat oven to 350F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Mix coconut, cocoa powder, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in the bowl of a food processor.

Turn on the processor and add the dates. Process until the dates are chopped and the mixture starts coming together. Pour the water through the top, and continue processing until a dough forms.

Scoop heaping tablespoons of the dough onto the cookie sheet, flattening them slightly with damp fingers.

Bake for 15 minutes. Let the cookies cool for about 5 minutes before removing them from the sheet to a cooling rack.

How to toast coconut: place coconut on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake at 350F for 10–12 minutes, flipping it halfway, until it begins to turn golden brown. Allow the coconut to cool completely before using it in the recipe.

cont'd ... see Divine on pg 14

Divine (from pg 13)

Konga Bars (aka Blond Brownies)

These are one of my all-time favourite sweets to make. They are super-fast, and honestly, they are so good that I would eat an entire pan of them if someone didn't take them away from me! They're gooey, rich, and delicious, but not overly sweet.

- 1 1/4 c. rolled oats (quick-cooking or regular)
- 1/2 c. oat or spelt flour
- 1 c. dairy-free chocolate chips
- 1/3 c. chopped nuts such as pecans (walnuts, almonds, or other nuts will do)
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/3 c. safflower oil
- 1/2 c. maple syrup
- 2 tbsp. brown rice syrup or corn syrup
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350F and oil an 8 x 8 inch baking dish.

Process oats in a blender or food processor until they resemble coarse flour.

In a small bowl, mix oil, both syrups, and vanilla.

In a large bowl, stir together ground oats, flour, chocolate chips, nuts, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Pour the wet mixture into the dry and stir together until well mixed.

Spoon dough into prepared pan and bake for 20–25 minutes, or until it turns lightly golden around the edges.

Remove from oven and let cool for 1 hour before cutting. The mixture will look bubbly and not really cooked when it comes out of the oven, but it will firm up as it cools.

Anil's Infamous Tofu in Black-Bean Sauce

Submitted by Anil Reddi

This vegetarian recipe evolved during my student days living in co-op housing. I usually use blocks of medium-soft organic tofu. And although I used to make black-bean sauce from scratch, I now use whatever commercially available black-bean sauce is available. Just ensure that it has no MSG and as few preservatives as possible.

- 2 lbs. medium-soft tofu, cubed into 3/4-inch pieces
- 6 tbsp. safflower or sunflower oil
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp. Sambal Olek ground fresh chili paste
- 2 tsp. garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. ginger, minced or grated
- 1/4 c. water, at room temperature
- 2 heaping tsp. cornstarch
- 1 c. shiitake mushrooms, chopped (canned or fresh)
- 1/4 c. tamari sauce
- 2/3 c. black-bean sauce
- 1 1/2–2 1/4 c. cold water
- 2 heads fresh broccoli flowers, chopped into 3/4-inch pieces (discard stems)

Flash-brown the tofu on two sides and set it aside to drain on paper towel.

Cook the broccoli in an inch of water or in the microwave until just tender. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a wok. When it is almost smoking, place

the onions into the oil. Stir for about 3 minutes, then add the garlic. Add the chili paste, then stir in the ginger. Add the room temperature water, then reduce heat and cover. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add additional water if the mixture becomes too dry.

Gently stir in the browned tofu, making sure that the mixture covers and coats the tofu. If you're using canned shiitake mushrooms, add them now and stir. If the mixture is too dry, add some extra water. Cover and simmer on low heat. The tofu is delicate and can disintegrate easily, so try to keep it intact.

In a separate bowl, mix the tamari sauce, black-bean sauce, and cornstarch with the cold water. Ensure that the cornstarch is completely dissolved.

Remove the cover of the tofu mixture; it should be almost dry. Add the cornstarch mixture, stir it in, and turn up the heat to medium. Simmer to thicken, stirring occasionally. If you're using fresh shiitake mushrooms, add them after the cornstarch mixture begins to thicken. When the sauce begins to bubble and turn translucent, turn off the heat. Add the broccoli and mix thoroughly.

Serve over long-grain brown rice. Additional sauce, such as Vietnamese Sriracha hot chili sauce or tamari sauce, may be offered on the side.

Set-Up (from pg 12)

Stay tuned for the next issue, when I explore the toil and triumphs of the most elite and coveted Karma work team (for non-vegans, at least): the cheese cutters. Find out who they are, what they do, and why you can never seem to get assigned to this work shift! And finally, in a journalistic undercover exposé of epic proportions, find out about the moment in Karma history that is spoken about only by those in the know, and then in hushed whispers: the Great Cheese-Cutting Disaster!

OHIP (from pg 10)

(www.naturopathicassoc.ca/dr.html). Members of this association have graduated from a recognized school of naturopathy. And in provinces where naturopathic doctors are regulated — such as Ontario — the association can provide information on members who have passed the licensing board exams.

If more people become aware of complementary health resources, the field will attract more support and research. More support, research, and publicity can eventually lead to expanded OHIP coverage. Expanding the range of treatments and practitioners would mean better health care for Ontario, and a healthier population.

There is no one right way to care for our health. But right now people are not being presented with options.

Contact George Smitherman, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, at: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street, 11th floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4
416-327-4300 (telephone)
416-326-1571 (fax)
gsmitherman.mpp@liberal.ola.org

You can also try Smitherman's constituency office at: 120 Carlton Street, suite 413
Toronto, ON M5A 4K2
416-972-7683 (telephone)
416-972-7686 (fax)
gsmitherman.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

The home page for the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (www.naturopathicassoc.ca) provides links to the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, various provincial institutes and associations, some naturopathic colleges, and the Journal of Naturopathic Medicine.

People - and Planet - Friendly Listings

Wildflower Blossom Bounty: Community Garden Events and Workshops

Various dates and locations
across Toronto

www.evergreen.ca

416-596-1495 ext. 30

Connect with nature at a wildflower habitat community garden near you!

Wednesday, August 18, 2004, 7 pm: Beatty Boulevard Parkette Community Garden (south side of King St. West, east of Triller and west of Wilson Park Rd.).

Thursday, August 19, 2004, 7 pm: Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Community Garden (on the grounds of the Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training Centre at 167-169 Gerrard St. East).

Wednesday, August 25, 7 pm: Seaton Walk Parkette Community Garden (one block east of Bathurst, north of Bloor, west side of Albany Ave.).

Thursday, August 26, 7 pm: St. James Town West Park Community Garden (east side of Sherbourne, one and a half blocks south of the Sherbourne subway station).

The St. James Town West Park features a butterfly garden, aboriginal herb bed, and more. The Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Community Garden features organic vegetables, a composter, native plants, and plants relevant to Aboriginal traditions.



Feast of Fields 2004: "Living in Harmony with the Land"

Sunday, September 12,
2004, 2-6 pm

Glen Rouge Park, Toronto

www.organicadvocates.org/feast.html

Meet with southern Ontario's leading chefs, who will once again be preparing a delicious bounty of organic food morsels in the field. Taste organic and indigenous wines and Ontario's finest microbrews.

Organic Advocates' Feast of Fields' goal is to promote organic farming and a healthy environment. The Feast of Fields event is an important fundraiser for organic agriculture that promotes environmental sustainability and a healthy lifestyle. Meander through field and forest, tasting organic creations presented in an environmentally friendly way. The goal is to have a minimal impact on the environment. You might see delicacies served on grape leaves, in ice bowls, on corn husks, or in other presentations inspired by nature.

This outdoor event is rain or shine! Don't be disappointed — past years have sold out prior to the event! Pre-order tickets by phone, fax, or online. Fax your request to (905) 859-3772, call 416-422-1944, 1-866-803-8200, or (905) 859-3609, or go to www.organicadvocates.org/member.html#join.

This is not a tax receiptable event. Tickets are non-refundable. Free parking on site. No pets please.

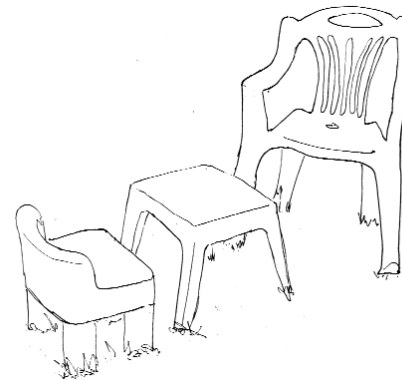


Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

Saturday, September 11 – Sunday, September 19, 2004
Across Ontario

Presented by TD Friends of the Environment
Foundation

Be a part of a conservation initiative that's making a difference throughout Ontario. Join thousands of volunteers as they clean up our river, lake, and wetland shorelines. Designed for groups of all ages. Clean-up supplies, education materials, and coordination support are provided free of charge. Registration closes August 31, 2004. Find out how you can get involved. Go to www.vanaqua.org/cleanup or call 1-877-427-2422.



Through Anil's Lens Still Life at Karma Co-op

