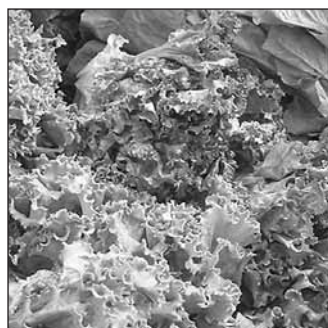


# The Chronicle

August/September 2005



## Contact your co-op – and get involved!

Food Issues Working Group: [foodissues@karmacoop.org](mailto:foodissues@karmacoop.org)  
Events and Promotions Committee: [promotions@karmacoop.org](mailto:promotions@karmacoop.org)  
Member Labour Committee: [memberlabour@karmacoop.org](mailto:memberlabour@karmacoop.org)  
Web Team: [web@karmacoop.org](mailto:web@karmacoop.org)  
Chronicle Committee: [chronicle@karmacoop.org](mailto:chronicle@karmacoop.org)  
Board of Directors: [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org)  
Member labour coordinator: Sara Pulins 416-534-1240 or [mlc@karmacoop.org](mailto:mlc@karmacoop.org)

## Karma Co-op Staff List

General Manager: Graeme Hussey  
Grocery Manager: James van Bolhuis  
Produce Manager: Michael Armstrong  
Health & Beauty Manager: Sara Pulins  
Shift Managers: Paul Dixon, Lisa McLean

Bookkeeper: Victoria Bale  
Membership Secretary: Marilou Lawrence  
Member Labour Coordinator: Sara Pulins  
Clerks: Christine Delay, Mike Haliechuk,  
Greg Miller, Kevin Wyse

## 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; and
4. exercise political and economic control over our food by operating a viable co-operative food store.

## Karma Co-op Hours of Operation

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

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### Submissions

Submissions may be sent by e-mail, to [chronicle@karmacoop.org](mailto: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).

### Chronicle staff for August/September

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### The Chronicle

The Members' Newsletter of Karma Food Co-op  
August/September 2005

*The Chronicle* is published by members of Karma Co-op

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*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.

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# More Space = More Products

By Graeme Hussey, general manager

Karma has a very dedicated and loyal membership. Whenever there is a change in the store – from no longer sourcing a certain product to moving the community notice board and renovating the member's room – we hear what many of you think about these changes (pro and con), along with your constructive feedback and new ideas. In many ways, these conversations symbolize one of the proud values of Karma membership: open and positive dialogue. And these conversations have certainly continued lately with the installation of the new grocery shelf.

The new shelf was installed with the help of six members late on a Sunday evening in the middle of July after the store was closed. (Thank you to all those who helped.) It's the latest step in a strategy to improve operations and members' overall Karma experience.

The staff and board are actively trying to improve your shopping experience, from the variety, quality, and price of products provided to the communications you have with staff and other members. Over the next year we hope to

better utilize our limited real estate by increasing floor space in the store for greater shopping ease, while at the same time offering a wider selection of products.

Our new grocery shelf has allowed us to introduce more varieties of coffee from Ideal Coffee in Kensington Market. In addition to broadening existing product lines, we have also been able to introduce completely new products. At the same time, we have consolidated some of our smaller displays to increase free floor space. I encourage you to continue to offer suggestions on how we can improve things, and to offer your assistance when you have the time and interest.

Finally, in the heat of the summer, power is a major concern. Karma is very concerned about the prospect of losing power for a sustained period of time. We are actively considering all of our options. Do you have a good idea about what Karma could do if we had another blackout? Or do you have a generator? Please let me know!

# Communicating at Karma

By Jason Diceman, president

As a new president I have found it quite challenging trying to figure out where our board should focus its energy. To find answers I have read several articles in Co-operative Grocers' magazine, reviewed assorted co-op board guidance books, and attended a co-op governance workshop by Anthea J. Radford at the Ontario Co-operative Association Annual General Meeting. The answers I have found so far:

1. To recognize member preferences, in terms of our common:
  - a) values (e.g., our ethical product policy and sense of local community);
  - b) mission (i.e., our mission statement on the back of *The Chronicle*);
  - c) goals (e.g., to end the year with a small surplus and to create a five-year business plan).
2. To supervise the general manager to ensure she or he conducts the operations and projects of the co-op in line with our values and towards our mission by achieving our goals.
3. To write policy and make decisions that guide member and staff activities so that they support our common values, mission, and goals.

4. To not micro-manage, create unnecessary bureaucracy, or generally get in the way of members and staff who have work to do.

This is a recommended approach for co-ops of our size, and it seems to make sense for Karma. The real challenge is recognizing collective member preferences. With 1,120 active members who all have their own opinions, this is quite a monumental task. Luckily we have a variety of techniques that together can give us some useful insight.

## Meetings

We have the Annual General Meeting, but it is only once a year, is only attended by 5 to 8 per cent of our membership, and, in general, privileges those with the time to attend and the confidence to engage in public debate. That said, it is the official representation of the co-op according to our bylaws and Ontario law, so it always has the last word.

We may also conduct other meetings throughout the year, such as the recent Karma Caucus (see notes at <http://karma.1coop.ca/Karma+Caucus+May+2005>).

While meetings do support excellent discussion and generate lots of ideas, they are attended by only 2 to 3 per cent of the membership, so they

## Communicating at Karma...continued

may or may not represent the feelings of the collective.

### Committees

Committees have been a traditional way of getting input from the membership, but since committee members are not elected, we cannot assume these dedicated members will intuitively know the preferences of the collective. That said, committees are useful for investigating issues, deliberating options, writing articles, and conducting some activities.

### Written Messages

Through *The Chronicle*, e-mail, and letters, the board hears the voices of another 2 to 3 per cent of the membership. Again, this is not ideal for understanding member preferences, but it is a great way to publicize ideas, share information, and promote transparency and discussion.

### Surveys

Our 2004 annual survey was completed by about 27 per cent of our membership. This is by far the most representative insight we can get into membership preferences. The challenge is to include useful questions that actually identify membership priorities. On the down side, surveys are not a dialogue and can be biased by current gossip that may change a month after the survey is submitted.

### Dotmocracy

Dotmocracy is a new and evolving approach to member input that has had some promising results. So far, only about 3 to 5 per cent of the members participate by grading proposals with dots, and only a handful write comments. But the process is accessible to all members every time they shop and has provided us with some useful

insights, both through the dotting patterns and the comments. To address concerns about dotting fraud, I have added a requirement to sign each sheet when you stick your dot. The approach to how proposals are generated and managed is evolving, but I think with time this ongoing process will prove to be the most useful technique for gathering member input all year around.

### Web Binder

Our Web binder documentation Web site ([www.karmacoop.org/binder](http://www.karmacoop.org/binder)) is used mostly by the board and some committees and/or working groups. While it provides unparalleled access to governance and project activities and supports distributed ongoing collaboration, it's not really a tool for recognizing membership preferences.

Compared to many other large co-ops – which don't even conduct in-depth member surveys – Karma is doing quite well in our efforts to be democratic. By recognizing trends and the continuity of popular opinions over time and through our various means, we as a board are able to recognize and document Karma's values and goals and reference them with every decision we make, policy we craft, and business plan we approve.

You can see our maturing list of member preferences in our Web binder at <http://karma.1coop.ca/Our+Common+Preferences>. And please take the time to participate in dotmocracy in the store, fill out the upcoming annual survey, and attend the AGM on Monday, October 24. If you are interested in taking a more active role in guiding the future of Karma, please consider joining the board. Contact us via [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org).

See you in the store!

# Who's the Better Shopper? On Being Yourself at Karma

By Betsy Carter and Garrett Kerr



Consider this: while shopping at Karma you grab a delicious-looking bundle of asparagus, but you check your backpack and you have no baggies with you. You could put it loose in your pack but your asparagus deserves better. The used bags are looking pretty grimy and they're all too small, so you saunter over to the bag roll to get yourself a gleaming virgin bag. But then you spot the sign: "WARNING: These plastic bags possess the following qualities that prevent us from promoting their purchase, blah blah blah..."

So what do you do? You need a plastic bag, but here's a sign telling you it's bad. Does Karma want you to use it or not? It's on the shelves, implying the bag is okay to use, but are you being told not to buy it? Are you being tested? With no apparent option you dejectedly place the asparagus back on the shelf.

That sign, if it actually existed, would have been placed there by the Food Issues Working Group. We'd like to give you some insight into what we do here at Karma, and present some answers and options.

Karma members are not being tested, nor are

...continued on next page

## Who's the Better Shopper...continued

we being told not to buy any product on our shelves. In the above scenario, the member was just being told of the problems with plastic bags, so that he or she could make a more informed choice about what they buy. That's all.

### Slogans and Expectations

Some hints of what Karma expects of us as members (i.e., what we expect of ourselves) are hidden in the many slogans the co-op has used over the years. We've used "Co-Operation is Revolution," "Your One-Stop Shop," "Shop Karma," "Karma Co-op – It's Ours," and "A Better Way to Shop." All of these represent a different aspect of our co-op.

Take a closer look at "A Better Way to Shop." The slogan is both boastful and restrained (note that it doesn't say "the best"). It proclaims how good shopping at Karma can be while also recognizing that Karma can make no claim to perfection. In a way, it's telling us not to waste all our energy on the best way to shop, because that "best" way probably doesn't exist. The best we can do is act with our eyes open. And educated Karma members who want to think about and learn about the products they buy can do better than shoppers elsewhere who blindly accept everything on the supermarket shelves at face value, where much of the information available is mere advertising.

The Food Issues Working Group is getting closer to completing its evaluation of store products. The goal is to qualify how good or how bad the products we sell are. The aim is to make it easy for our members to make the best choice, when available, and the better choice when the best doesn't exist.

### Using the Product Policy to Decide

Determining what factors make a product or producer better is a tricky activity. This is where Karma's Product Policy comes in. If you don't know what the Product Policy is, please visit [www.karmacoop.org](http://www.karmacoop.org) and check it out. Or check out a paper copy of the policy, which is posted on the Food Issues Working Group display board above the freezer across from the bottled juices. If you need a copy to read at your leisure, drop a note in the Food Issues box in the members' room with some contact information, and we'll get you a copy.

The Product Policy, created and approved by Karma members, is the measure by which the Food Issues Working Group will evaluate all the products that we sell in our store. Not all products will rate perfectly – in fact, very few probably will. But in the end, we will finally have information about the strengths and weaknesses of everything that we buy from our shelves.

It will take a while to assess all the products in the store, but that goal is real and we are approaching it. Info on familiar products will be posted in the store and articles will be written in *The Chronicle*. There will also be more detail on the Food Issues Web pages. Because we aim toward "a better way to shop," some things will need to go the way of the Brita filters (which are no longer carried at Karma), while others will just be de-emphasised through education, signage, and labelling.

### What About My Product?

Of course, it doesn't make financial sense to stock items that Karma doesn't intend to sell. The products that will remain in the store will be there because members may still choose to

...continued on next page

buy them when they need them. So don't feel pressured, stressed, or judged. Simply take the information in, and know that you are making the better decision to "shop Karma."

What do you do if Karma no longer stocks an item, and it is one you want? Well, first, understand that there is more than one reason why it may not be in the store. If you have seen no communication regarding the product from the Food Issues Working Group, then the reason could be as simple as the product being out of stock or discontinued by our supplier. Or we might have stopped carrying it due to low demand. To find out, ask the staff. Please remember that if you have any questions regarding the Product Policy, a staff member can refer you back to the Food Issues Working Group.

If we have communicated with the membership regarding a discontinued product, then please contact us with any questions or complaints. And if we confirm that the product is gone due to policy implementation, that doesn't mean you have to throw in the towel. Remember, the policy implementation is all about educating ourselves about products we sell, while keeping product options available.

### Check Out the Options

There is one quick thing you can do right in the store if you discover a product that you wanted has been removed – just take a few minutes to consider whether Karma carries any alternatives. Most days Karma can fulfill your needs for a "one-stop shop," so have a look around.

If nothing satisfies you, you still feel disappointed that the product is gone, and you remain unconvinced by the reasons given for

its removal, your next step would be to communicate with the Food Issues Working Group. Please feel free to forward us any information that you feel may shed new light on the product, how we evaluated it, or why we should reconsider its removal. Your opinion is important – remember, it's "our" co-op, which means it's yours, too.

### Less Than Perfect?

In the meantime, don't feel less than perfect (read: guilty) buying that item elsewhere. After all, you will still be a Karma member, and you will still be contributing to the fact that "co-operation is revolution." Even with our best efforts and intentions, Karma cannot fulfill every need all the time.

The important thing to remember is that the evaluation of products has two purposes. The first is to remove items from our shelves that clearly fly in the face of our collective and shared values, those reflected in the Product Policy. These are generally products which are produced using means that the Policy does not condone, such as animal testing or genetically modified organisms. The second purpose is to then qualify the products that we do sell with the intent of informing ourselves about the reality behind our purchasing choices.

Almost every product on the shelf has some merit even if it also has flaws. No one should be afraid to make a fully informed choice to buy any product that Karma is selling, warts and all. And if Karma doesn't sell that something you feel you need, and you go elsewhere to buy it, just be sure to give an understanding smile or a warm hello to any other Karma member you might see in the checkout line with you.

# The Business Planning Committee's Critical Path

*Karma Receives Funding From Ontario Co-operative Association*

By Nina Bregman

Despite the long, hot days of summer, the Business Planning Committee isn't slowing down at all. We've been meeting regularly and working our way toward the goals outlined in our "critical path" planning document. You can take a look at Karma's Web binder to get a full picture of our tasks and timelines ([www.karmacoop.org/binder](http://www.karmacoop.org/binder)). In the meantime, here's a brief overview of what the Business Planning Committee has been up to.

At first, we thought that we'd use external funding to hire a professional consultant to create a five-year business plan that we would present at this fall's AGM. Over time, however, we've learned that the process is as important as the final product, so we've amended our timelines and expectations. We've decided that member feedback and member labour are our greatest resources. Our approach now is to take a step back and look closely at the needs and direction of Karma – past, present, and future.

Karma's current members have a long legacy to honour, learn from, and support. To help us all learn from our past and keep historical context in mind, we have asked a Karma member to take on the massive task of compiling a detailed written history of Karma.

### Engineering, Marketing, and Practice

To help us understand Karma's present (physical) state, two members, who are civil engineers, are currently in the process of completing a structural integrity analysis of our property. This analysis will allow us to clearly understand what kind of shape our building is in, so that we can quantify the costs of building maintenance and structural needs. This analysis will also involve an assessment of Karma's applicable municipal zoning and bylaw restrictions.

The staff recently completed an assessment of Karma's current display and merchandising practices. While the main purpose was to

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## The Business Planning Committee...continued

improve the shopping experience for current members, it is also our hope that this assessment will allow us to improve our sales and help us decide whether we can accommodate more members over time.

In order to gain insight into how Karma compares to larger grocery chains and health food stores, another member, who has experience in marketing and strategic planning, is in the early stages of developing a market survey. This will further allow us to clarify our strengths and weaknesses.

### Member Feedback and Store Direction

Of course, member feedback and contribution is one of our biggest priorities. What do members want to see in the co-op's future? We are in the process of analyzing the last two member surveys to help us determine Karma's long- and short-term needs and direction. We are also using dotmocracy in the store to give us a sense of members' views on a number of subjects (see the poster in the store

summarizing dotmocracy results so far). Karma's third annual member survey is also expected to be conducted this fall. We are also working on creating focus groups to provide additional opportunities for member input.

Finally, our application for funding from the Ontario Co-operative Association was recently accepted. They're giving us \$5,000 to help us develop a five-year business plan.

Stay tuned for a special edition of *The Chronicle* dedicated to discussing all these projects in more detail.



# Hey! Eat Your (Local) Vegetables!

By Michael Armstrong, produce manager

"So, what do you think of the little green flying saucers?"

This question comes from one of Ontario's most skilled organic farmers, Bob Felhazi, as he calls me up at home on a hot summer evening. I'm working on a stir-fry of lovely fresh organic vegetables, which includes the odd-looking UFO-shaped summer squash he's grown. I'm confident his goods will be an amazing feature of the dish, yet I'm not sure how to answer his question except to reassure Bob that his produce is always a real treat and

that I'll let him know how they taste when we talk the next morning. That would be 7 am, when I get into Karma to start my shift as produce manager. In the summer months the phone starts ringing around that time as the people who grow the local produce we Karma people eat start to make their inquiries.

There is something on the back page of every issue of *The Chronicle* that reminds me why I love my job. Have a look. Point #2 in our Mission Statement states that "Our aim is to foster a healthy connection to the food we eat

## Call For Volunteers Annual General Meeting Committee

Karma's AGM will be held on Monday, October 24, 2005. Volunteers are needed to serve on the AGM Committee for some or all of the time period between now and the meeting. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact AGM Committee board liaisons John Deluca-Howard or Christie Stephenson at [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org).

[and] the people who grow it.” I’m not sure if my chat with Bob applies here, but I do know that aim is nearly impossible to fulfill most months of the year, when the majority of what we eat arrives from massive production facilities in California or Mexico. However, there is a time when this connection with our food supply really happens – though it is dramatically short and unpredictable.

Extreme heat. Frost in late May. Too much rain. No rain. Tomato blight. Deer break through electric fences. Aphids attack. High winds destroy greenhouses. Hail damage. Chickens get loose (they like carrot tops, did you know?). Then winter comes. And so nature makes for a situation where we must savour the locally grown goods that actually make it to our humble co-op food store. These farmers have found a way to grow some amazing food despite the conditions. Today I counted 39 items on display, all grown less than 200 kilometers from Karma.

Say hello to some of the people who show up with the goods:

**Alvin Filsinger** is probably one of Karma’s most celebrated farmers, with 65 harvests to his name. I watch almost every member pluck one or 20 of his apples from our produce section every day. He can’t hear a word I say but we have some great conversations every time he shows up with a delivery.

**Allan Murdoch** cooks at a restaurant in Bowmanville that buys local and organic produce. But Allan also grows an amazing assortment of heirloom tomatoes that he brings to Karma.

**Peter Vanderbilt** has seeded extra arugula and Japanese mustard greens for us on his

solar-powered farm near Barrie.

**Dael Wilson** looks more than haggard these days after gathering fiddleheads, wild leeks, and blueberries for your eating pleasure.

**Mike Sidlar** insists on growing oddities like salsify (a big hit in France) or blue potatoes. It has to fit in the trunk of his car no matter what he’s bringing.

Folks from the **Clayton Farm** will soon be harvesting their seedless table grapes in the Niagara region – four varieties of intense flavour for our delight. I love the annual call from Linda announcing that these grapes are ready.

A lot of what we see comes from bigger local growers like the **Stoll Family**, who (if all goes well) will knock our socks off with their assortment of melons later this summer.

**Ted Eng** has perfected the art of growing bok choy and green onions, while **Ted Thorpe** feeds almost all of organic-eating Toronto (including Karmians) his beautiful lettuce.

All of these people, and the people who work with them, are passionate about their produce. They put their hearts into what they present to us and I try to convey that to Karma’s members. That’s where I see our “connection to the food we eat [and] the people who grow it.”

So I talk to Bob Felhazi the next day about his odd-looking saucer-shaped green summer squashes, and it turns out I agree with some of the chefs he supplies. The squashes are truly amazing. It could have been Ted Eng’s green onions or the Stolls’ potatoes in the mix, and hey, who can argue with a few slices of Mike Sidlar’s horseradish root? Let’s just say that next spring is a long way away.

# Chickadee Farms Tea

By Karen Fliess

One of my favourite products at Karma is Chickadee Farms herbal teas. But according to James, our grocery manager, not many members are buying them. They’re obviously one of Karma’s best-kept secrets! Their low-key, environmentally friendly packaging may also be camouflaging their value. Modestly packaged in a plain, 100 per cent recycled cardboard box and clear cellophane, these teas are wildcrafted or grown organically. Overshadowed by more colourful boxes of bagged tea with marketing-invented names, these simply packaged boxes sit on the tea shelf by the bread wall.

Chickadee Farms teas are a rare find because the plants are grown and harvested on a small family farm near Flatbush, Alberta, with over 50 years of experience in growing and wildcrafting healing herbs. (The wildcrafted plants are gathered in approved areas in the local boreal forest.)

Chickadee Farms specializes in well-known native and common herbal teas, and they plan harvests to coincide with the time when the plant has the highest content of active ingredients. The herbs are packaged on the farm without the use of fumigation or irradiation.

Because Chickadee Farms tea is packaged as a loose tea, there is a lot more volume per box than pre-packaged bagged tea. The price is therefore incredibly low when you think of the amount of tea you’re getting in every package. And because they market only what they have harvested in the current or previous year, the freshness is more than evident in the flavour.

These teas are uplifting and delicious – and they also have medicinal benefits. Some of my favorites are yarrow/peppermint (great for digestion among other things), nettle (good for circulation, the kidneys, and arthritis), horsetail, chamomile, dandelion, and Labrador tea. They also have wild mint, peppermint, spearmint, wild rosehip, echinacea leaf, echinacea root, St. John’s wort, raspberry leaf, and others. Any good book about herbs will tell you all you need to know about the medicinal value of these herbs, which, over time, really do make a difference to your health.

### Tasty and Easy to Make

Don’t let the unusual names and the good-for-you aspect stop you from trying them – these teas taste like a good cup of brew should taste. Even diehard coffee lovers have commented on the uniqueness of these teas! To

## Chickadee Farms Tea...continued

make a single cup of tea simply place a stainless steel strainer over a cup, put 1/2 tsp. of tea in the strainer, pour boiling hot water overtop, and steep for five minutes.

Chickadee Farms also offers some outstanding culinary herbs: basil, French or garden thyme, dill, oregano, parsley, marjoram, and lovage to name only a few. One of my favourites is their Savoury Soup Mixture, which combines parsley, leek, garden thyme, sweet marjoram, celery leaf, and garden sage. As well as being good in soups and stews, this mixture is a great addition to stir-fries and as a general seasoning for a variety of dishes. Unlike other spices (even organic ones), these herbs have a colour, freshness, and flavour that come from being hand-picked. Because they are so fresh, you can use a lot less

of these seasonings in your cooking.

Karma doesn't carry all the herbal teas and culinary herbs I have mentioned, however if demand for Chickadee Farms products increases, James can broaden the product line.

When I spoke to farmer Monica Marenholtz on the phone recently and asked her why their teas aren't available in more stores, she said, "We only produce what we can grow and harvest on our farm and gather in the northern woods. We don't want to grow larger than what we can handle on our farm."

This low-impact, organic, solar-powered family farm deserves your support. So the next time you're at Karma pick up a package of Chickadee Farms tea – you're in for a treat!

## Join Karma's Board of Directors!

The board of directors is Karma's governing body, comprised of 10 directors who are elected for one- or two-year terms by the membership at the co-op's Annual General Meeting. Serving on the board involves supervising Karma's general manager, policy development, decision-making, and planning for the future of the co-op. Interested?

Elections for five positions on the board will take place at this year's AGM on Monday, October 24, 2005. Board members should expect to spend approximately 12 hours a month on board-related matters. Karma members with experience in management, other boards of directors, business planning, strategic planning, marketing, human resources, financial planning, accounting, and law are particularly encouraged to get involved.

Want more details? Contact the board at [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org).

## Recipe & Letter to the Editor



# Millet Tabbouleh

By Elizabeth Nyburg

This is a good way to use up overgrown garden mint. For best flavour, make this dish two hours ahead.

- 1/4 c. dried chickpeas OR 1/2 cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 c. millet
- 1/2 c. lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 c. parsley, chopped
- 1 c. fresh mint, chopped
- 2 wild leeks OR green onions, chopped
- 3 raw tomatoes, diced

If using dried chickpeas: combine chickpeas with millet in the pressure cooker. Cover with 3 c. water. Close cooker, bring to a boil and simmer on low for 35 minutes. Drain and place in a salad bowl. If using cooked chickpeas: drain chickpeas and place in a salad bowl.

Place millet in a cooking pot. Add 2 1/4 c. water. Simmer over low heat, covered, for 30 minutes. Avoid stirring, as this will disturb the grains and create a mashed texture instead of individual grains.

Add millet to the chickpeas. Add remaining ingredients. Chill for at least one hour. Enjoy!

## Letter to the Editor

Recently, I happened to see a jar of masala in the box of donations for the food bank. The jar wasn't in its original packaging. I'm sorry to say that most food banks won't accept it.

I spent a couple of hours last winter helping sort donated items at the Daily Bread Food Bank. I was shocked at how many items arrived damaged. A cellophane package that has had other things dumped on top of it is likely to be torn; there were lots of those. They are thrown out, along with anything else that has been opened. Dented cans are iffy. Outdated cans are pitched.

I hate to say it, but money is better. Food is easier – you buy an extra item and put it in the box – but money goes farther. When you give food banks money, they can buy wholesale. They can buy what they need. And they don't have to sort things out when they arrive.

Maybe we could have a collection point in the store for cheques and cash, instead of for actual food?

*Elizabeth Block*