

The Chronicle



The Chronicle

DECEMBER 2001/JANUARY 2002

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Submissions may also be sent by e-mail, to karmachronicle@canada.com. Send your submission within the main body of the message or save it as a text-only file, then send it as an attachment.

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).

Turn your fork green

Tooker Gomberg

It was a pleasure to speak at the Karma Co-op annual meeting. Karma is a special place in the concrete jungle — a place to buy healthy organic food, and a co-operative. In a world where competition is worshipped and the corporate worldview is ever more dominant, co-ops show that a different way of doing business is possible.

Karma proves that through commerce we can build community with a social and ecological conscience — beyond profit. The fact that Karma is prospering shows that co-operation is a commercial model that works.

One of the great challenges of our time is to find ways to lighten our impact on the Earth. We can substantially reduce our ecological footprint through our food choices. Here are some questions we can each consider when shopping.

1. Is it vegetarian or meat?

Check out these statistics from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals:

- o The meat industry causes more water pollution in the U.S. than any other industry.
- o Raising animals for food consumes more than half the water used in the U.S. It takes 2,500 gallons of water for a pound of meat versus 25 gallons for a pound of wheat.
- o Raising animals for food requires one-third of all raw materials and fossil fuels used in U.S.
- o Other studies show that an animal-based diet uses 10 to 40 times more energy than a plant-based diet.

- o Toxic contaminants bioaccumulate through the food chain, so eating meat and dairy products gives you a much greater toxic dose.

2. Is it local or distant?

- o The average food molecule in Canada has been transported 2,000 km from field to table. That requires diesel fuel for trucks, roads, refrigeration, and so forth, all contributing to pollution and climate change.
- o Buying local means the money circulates in the local economy, rather than leaving town, never to be seen again.

3. Is it organic or not?

- o Synthetic pesticides are toxic petroleum products that disrupt the health of the soil and on up the food chain;
- o Organic food uses no chemical pesticides, but rather natural pest controls and age-old systems of crop rotation.
- o Don't lose hope: Change is happening! Twenty years ago, "organic" was a marginal idea; now we have Loblaws flogging it on TV.

4. Is it genetically mutated?

- o There is growing concern about mutated foods (or Genetically Modified Organisms, or GMOs). They may reproduce and squeeze out or take over native species, as experienced by Percy Schmeiser in Saskatchewan. They may harm the food chain (research has shown that GMO corn pollen caused monarch butterflies to die) or our health (Arpad Pusztai, a researcher in the UK, showed that genetically mutated potatoes fed to rats damaged their internal

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Turn your fork green

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organs).

- o At the very least, we should label mutated foods to give people the choice to buy the product or not.

There are also broader community and justice issues to be considered. As a candidate for mayor last year I raised these issues in our food platform:

1. Everyone in Toronto should have “food security” - that is, safe, nutritious and affordable food choices. In 1999, however, 90,000 Torontonians relied on food banks, and the number is growing.
2. We must stop the sprawl to protect high-quality agricultural land. Protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine will protect Toronto’s water source. We’re stronger when we band together. Join environmental groups like Earthroots.
3. Stimulating urban agriculture would increase the level of food self-sufficiency, create jobs, ensure more nutritious food consumption, and reduce smog and climate emissions.
4. Expand community gardens dramatically. Seattle has an extensive program with 45,000 community garden plots. Toronto has long waiting lists to get a plot.
5. We could utilize more space for food growing in the city such as rooftops and vacant lots. Sixty per cent of our produce comes from afar, half of which could be grown in or very near Toronto.
6. Plant fruit trees and berry bushes throughout the city. In Berkeley, guerrilla gardeners have been planting boulevard fruit trees.
7. Transform food waste into compost (for fertilizer) and biogas (for electricity generation).



Such magical and simple technology exists up in Newmarket, where rotten food is digested in a wholly contained tank, and methane gas, or natural gas, is the product. Talk about turning garbage into gold!

Many people, I believe, are mourning the destruction of the natural world, and losing hope that things can change. My hope comes from knowing that things do change, often in slow and subtle ways. When I stopped eating meat 30 years ago, my dad, a doctor, was so worried that he insisted I visit a nutritionist. In the ensuing decades, my parents have dramatically reduced their meat consumption for health reasons. Society is much more aware today of the wisdom of eating less meat.

As I ponder how I can translate my yearning for a healthier Earth into action, I know that riding my bike and turning my fork green are two big steps. Karma helps me turn ideas into action. It is a gift to Toronto.

As I cherish the food choices Karma allows us, I am likewise mindful of Afghanistan, where millions of people are at risk of starvation should the situation deteriorate. We need to find ways to reach out beyond our daily lives and help ensure that everyone can eat as well as many of us do.

This piece is based on Tooker Gomberg’s address to Karma’s Annual General Meeting in October. A long-time environmental activist, writer and former Edmonton city councillor, Tooker joined Karma after moving to Toronto two years ago. Find his inspiring ecological stories at: www.greenspiration.org. And find out about his 2000 campaign for mayor of Toronto, where he was runner-up with more than 51,000 votes, at:

www.GombergForMayor.org

SHELF ELF

What’s new and different on Karma Co-op shelves

Suzanne Molina

Greetings, Karmians. The days are shorter, darker and colder, so pour yourself a hot cuppa, settle in with *The Chronicle*, and learn all about the new products that have taken up residence on Karma’s shelves.

Karma recently started stocking the **ECOgent universal cleaner**, which is touted as an all-purpose solution good for the bath and kitchen as well as around the house. Developed for chemically sensitive individuals, this product is certified 100-per cent natural and isn’t tested on animals. Manufactured by Cogent Environmental Solutions Ltd. of Caledon, Ont., ECOgent is gentle on the skin. It’s also suitable for those with asthma and sensitivities to airborne chemicals because it emits less than 0.05 per cent volatile organic compounds (VOCs are the nasties that pollute indoor air)

With an oral toxicity similar to water, ECOgent is suitable for use in households with children and pets. Both the original pour-top bottle version and the “glass and surface” spray-bottle version degrade under anaerobic conditions. ECOgent is perfect for septic systems and is non-hazardous to aquatic life. The company offers a full money-back guarantee. Call Cogent at (519) 927-3793 (now a local call from Toronto) or go to www.ECOgent.ca for more information

Turn to the cosmetics and personal-care shelves, and you’ll notice that Karma has stopped carrying **Tom’s shaving cream**. It isn’t being manufactured any more. Try the Burt’s Bees bay rum shaving soap, the Kiss My Face moisture shave, or the Aubrey Organics herbal mint and ginseng shaving cream instead. (See page 5 for more information on cosmetics and personal-care items.)

Justin has ordered **Meyenberg Evaporated Goat Milk** in 354 ml cans. Goat milk is an extremely digestible dairy product, because it’s very similar to human milk. It’s particularly recommended for those who are sensitive to cow’s milk or allergic to soy. (Or both, as in the Elf’s case.) The Meyenberg product — which comes from Turlock, Calif. - can be used straight from the can in any recipe that calls for evaporated milk, and can also be reconstituted and used in any recipe calling for milk. (It makes a fantastic pumpkin pie, according to official results from the Elf’s test kitchen.) Meyenberg goat milk also comes in powdered form

Look down from the canned milk and you’ll spy the **Eden Organics** line of canned tomato products. Karma now carries Eden Organics diced tomato with green chilies (no salt, unpeeled), crushed tomatoes (no salt, unpeeled) and pizza/pasta sauce (made with extra virgin olive oil and roma tomatoes). Eden Organics is based in Clinton, Missouri. Check the company out at www.edenfoods.com

Turn to the left and sidle over to the cheese fridge, and you’ll find some yummy new goat-milk cheese down on the bottom of the left-hand side. Karma now carries products from the **Mornington Heritage Cheese and Dairy Co-op**, including parmesan, white-cheddar curds, marble (made from orange and white cheddar), white cheddar,

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mozzarella and paneer (a traditional Indian cheese). All of Mornington's products are made from pasteurized goat milk, all are rennet-free, and all contain active microbial enzymes and bacterial cultures. And you won't believe the taste. The Milverton, Ont.-based co-op can be reached at 1-866-995-9903

Over in the freezer, you'll find Karma has started stocking several types of whitefish: **haddock, sole and turbot**. These fish are all frozen at source, to guarantee freshness. All are ocean fish, which makes them a healthier choice than fish from the polluted Great Lakes and certainly much healthier than salmon or other farmed fish (which, in addition to being genetically modified, are full of penicillin, growth hormones and dyes).

However, some ocean fish has been fished nearly to extinction, and some is caught using methods that contribute to widespread environmental destruction. Sole and turbot are healthy stocks, and are fished sustainably. Haddock, on the other hand, although a healthy stock, is fished using bottom-trawlers, which destroy the ocean floor. So although all three are good healthwise, only two are fished sustainably. (Speaking of sustainability, the Elf looks forward to the day when Karma stops selling not only farmed fish, but shrimp: Shrimp trawlers produce less than 2 per cent of the world's seafood, but are responsible for one-third of all bycatch (fish that are caught but rejected for reasons of size, species or supposed lack of a market). Shrimp trawlers also drown up to 150,000 endangered sea turtles every year.)

That's it for now. The Elf will be back next issue with more news.



Karma's home on the Web:

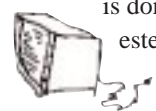
<http://home.iSTAR.ca/~karma>

Paula Kutacova

Karma now has a Web site. At this point, it is a straightforward information site about the co-op. There are some links, past minutes and reports. Simplicity was on our minds during its creation, because not everybody has access to the newest technologies. Computers and browsers might be older, or Internet connections too slow for large graphics and complex plug-ins. In short, no gimmicky stuff.

The lack of technical complexity does not put limits on the site, and there could be more than just static information about Karma in the future. We could consider creating a dynamic site, which could include a discussion board, on-line sign-up for work duties, checking members' hours and so on. These goals are achievable, providing we do the programming ourselves and use free technologies (so far, open-source Linux, not commercial Microsoft, has been used). Nevertheless, we have to keep in mind that some Karma members are not Internet users, and the Web site is an addition to Karma life, not a necessity.

At this time, a small group oversees the work and maintains the site. Most of the people came from *The Chronicle* team, and are already very busy with other work. I believe there are other members in Karma who have the programming experience to be involved in maintaining and creating new features for the site. The biggest advantage is that the work



is done when you have time. If you're interested, we'd look forward to hearing from you. Write us at: Karma_coop@yahoo.com.

Your shampoo is hurting you

Suzanne Molina

Is your shampoo green or blue? Chances are it contains artificial colouring made from coal tar. Does your toothpaste foam up when you brush your teeth? Chances are it contains the foaming agent sodium lauryl sulfate.

Here's another question: Why, if you eat organic and whole foods, do you pour petro- and synthetic chemicals on your head? Moreover, why do you put them in your mouth?

The shampoos, cosmetics and other personal-care items found in your local drugstore — and, unfortunately, on some of the shelves at Karma — contain toxic chemicals and volatile organic compounds that cause environmental degradation and immune-system dysfunction (manifested as rashes, itching and other symptoms). They're the products of an industry that places profit above safety and sustainability. (The Body Shop? It's about money, honey. That stuff is about as "natural" as a three-headed chicken.)

But there are alternatives. Karma carries several lines of natural personal-care products, including Burt's Bees and Aubrey Organics. The Burt's line is up to 98.67 per cent chemical-free, while the Aubrey line is certified organic, all-natural and (depending on the product) vegan. Karma also carries Neal's Yard Remedies — and other lines, such as Nature's Gate — that contain some chemicals, but in lesser amounts than drugstore varieties.

The store also carries lines such as **Kiss My Face**, which — despite being health-food-store staples — are actually wolves in sheep's clothing. The

trick is knowing which chemicals are nasty, which are semi-nasty, and how far you're willing to go to live a chemical-free lifestyle that's easy on the environment. The next trick is knowing how to wade through the marketing hype.

The Kiss My Face line isn't a lot different from anything you'd see at Shoppers Drug Mart — meaning, it's full of chemicals. The Kiss My Face moisture shave, for example, is advertised as fragrance-free and "natural," but it contains a list of chemicals a mile long, including methy- and propyl-paraben, TEA stearate and propylene glycol. Skip it.

The **Nature's Gate** and **Neal's Yard** lines are better, but not perfect. The Nature's Gate herbal fragrance-free moisturizing lotion, for example, is advertised as "herbal," "cruelty-free," "produced without animal byproducts," "biodegradable," and "formulated without fragrance for those with allergies or skin sensitivity." All true. Most of the ingredients are plant-sourced, and there are few chemicals listed in the ingredients list. However, it does contain methyl-paraben, which is toxic. The Neal's Yard Remedies vitamin E and avocado night cream also contains methyl-paraben, and the shampoos contain ammonium lauryl sulfate (a foaming agent) and preservatives such as polysorbate 20. Better than the drugstore brands, but still not completely clean.

The **Burt's Bees** product line contains no chemicals and no preservatives. Showing extra environmental awareness, the company also makes its plastic containers from recycled jugs and pop bottles. Karma carries a variety of Burt's Bees products, including coconut foot creme, avocado butter hair treatment, rosemary mint shampoo, peppermint shower soap, and milk and honey body lotion.

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Shampoo...

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All are mainly plant-sourced, except for those that contain honey (hence the company name). For more information on the company, visit www.burtsbees.com or call 1-800-849-7112.

Finally, to the great-granddaddy of them all: **Aubrey Organics**. The Tampa, Florida-based company boasts a complete line of more than 150 products that contain no synthetic chemicals, no petrochemicals, no foaming agents, and no artificial preservatives (Aubrey uses citrus seed extract and vitamins A, C and E as antioxidant preservatives instead). The company also uses recycled plastic for its bottles and recycled cardboard for its displays. Aubrey was started in 1967, and certified in 1994 as the first organic manufacturing plant (meaning, it handles organic ingredients with no contamination). It is currently seeking organic certification for each and every ingredient.

Aubrey products are mixed each day, hand-crafted in small batches, and are never warehoused. (Although the citrus preservatives ensure product freshness for one year, the company ships each day to maximize that freshness.) Karma currently carries a wide range of Aubrey products, including Saponin A.A.C. herbal root shampoo, ginseng shampoo, blue chamomile shampoo, Sea Wonders face and body cleansing cream (great for the shower, especially after the gym), ginseng face scrub, herbal mint and ginseng shaving lotion, and several moisturizers, cleansers and body lotions. There are products for men, women and children (although women also use the men's stuff). Special orders are encouraged, and the company also makes cosmetics — such as Natural Translucent Base, a face powder made from silk powder, aloe vera, henna, allantoin and natural flower oil (i.e., no fillers, no stinkies, no colours, no crap).

Aubrey Organics founder Aubrey Hampton was born on an organic farm in Indiana, which may explain his passion for purity. For more information on the company and its vision — and the exact ingredients of every product — visit www.aubrey-organics.com or call 1-800-AUBREYH (1-800-282-7394). This company is the real deal, and so are its products. Try them and you won't be disappointed.

Ah, but they're expensive, right? Well, yes, they are. But only because we've become used to the idea that personal-care products (and food) cost what the multinational companies say they cost. They don't — they cost more. Buying products from companies such as Aubrey — which pays its suppliers fair-market value for plant-sourced goods, hand-crafts each batch, and uses quality ingredients — means paying more than you'd pay a multinational conglomerate that uses the cheapest ingredients and mixes them up in factories with enough chemicals to allow them to sit on the shelf for a decade or two. Which would you rather smooth all over your skin?

It's just like buying organic food: a little more expensive, because it's based on a more equitable living for the producers and a more sustainable vision as a whole. There is even room in a small budget for quality personal-care products: It just depends on what you want to make room for. Besides, here's the big secret: You will use a lot less of a quality product, because of its superior formulation. A little bit goes a long way, so everything lasts twice as long as the drugstore stuff.

Finally, a question: What's the largest organ in the human body? The skin. It's our first defence against outside invaders that would threaten our immune system and overall health. So look for natural ingredients in your personal-care items. And give your skin a helping hand.

'10 Most Wanted' cosmetic chemicals

According to Aubrey Hampton, "If you want natural products, you have to be willing to search them out, to learn to read labels, and to refuse to settle for half-natural hair and skin care." Below are Aubrey's 10 Most Wanted chemicals — the ones he wants to see kept out of so-called "natural" hair and skin products.

1. Imidazolidinyl urea and diazolidinyl urea: The most commonly used preservatives after parabens. Established by the American Academy of Dermatology as a primary cause of contact dermatitis. Two trade names: Germall II and Germall 115. Neither chemical has a good anti-fungal, and must be combined with other preservatives. Germall 115 releases formaldehyde. Toxic.
2. Methyl- and propyl- and butyl- and ethyl-paraben: Used as inhibitors of microbial growth and to extend shelf life. Widely used although known to be toxic. Cause allergic reactions and skin rashes. Methyl-paraben combines benzoic acid with the methyl group of chemicals. Highly toxic.
3. Petrolatum: Used in lip products and advertised as protecting the lips from sunburn and chapping. But petrolatum is mineral oil jelly, and mineral oil causes photosensitivity and interferes with the body's own moisturizing mechanism — leading to sun damage, dry skin and chapping. This product creates the very conditions it claims to alleviate. Manufacturers use petrolatum because it's cheap.
4. Propylene glycol: This can be vegetable glycerine mixed with grain alcohol, both of which are natural. Usually, though, it's a synthetic petrochemical mix. Causes allergic and toxic reactions.
5. PVP/VA copolymer: A petroleum-derived chemical used in hairsprays, wavesets and other cosmetics. Can be toxic, since particles may contribute to foreign bodies in the lungs of chemically sensitive people.
6. Sodium lauryl sulfate: Synthetic substance used in shampoos for its detergent and foam-building abilities. Causes eye irritations, skin rashes, hair loss, scalp scurf similar to dandruff, allergic reactions. Frequently disguised in pseudo-natural cosmetics with the parenthetic explanation "comes from coconut."
7. Stearalkonium chloride: Used in hair conditioners and creams. Originally developed by the fabric industry as a fabric softener. Cheaper and easier to use in hair conditioning formulas than proteins or herbals. Causes allergic reactions. Toxic.
8. Synthetic colours: Labelled as FD&C or D&C, followed by a colour and number (e.g., FD&C Red No. 6). Believed to be cancer-causing agents. To be avoided at all costs, along with hair dyes.
9. Synthetic fragrances: Can have as many as 200 ingredients, most of which are volatile organic compounds (VOCs). No way to know what these chemicals are, since the label will simply say "fragrance." VOCs cause headaches, dizziness, rash, hyperpigmentation, violent coughing, vomiting, skin irritation and more. Don't buy a cosmetic that has the word "fragrance" on the ingredients label.
10. Triethanolamine (TEA): Used to adjust the pH and with fatty acids to convert acid to salt (stearate), which then becomes the base for a cleanser. Causes allergic reactions including eye problems and dryness of hair and skin. Toxic when absorbed into the body over a long period of time.

Pretty Food

Part I: Food dyes

Siusan Moffat

What makes food appetizing and palatable? At one time it was flavour: of a wild raspberry picked straight off the bush, of an ear of corn that went from field to table in a matter of minutes. These days, however, industry dictates what is tasty and superior, rather than Mother Nature. We have been brainwashed to believe that food is better if it is uniform in taste, colour and appearance. The value is rarely factored in when manufacturers decide on a product.

In the next few issues of *The Chronicle*, I will be investigating what I consider the three evils in modern food: food dyes, artificial flavourings and preservatives. We are lucky at Karma to have such a wide variety of healthful, flavourful foods that do not contain these things. But if you walk into any supermarket, you'll see that a high percentage of products are modified by dyes, flavourings and preservatives, all in the name of supposedly giving the consumers what they demand.

Not as new as you'd think

Food dyes have been around since 1500 BCE. They came from plants and were used mainly to hide spoiled or poor-quality products. (With shelf life being what it is, nothing has changed. The use of dyes is simply hidden under the guise of "uniform is better.") In the 1800s, scientists began fiddling around with chemicals to produce food dyes that would work better than the dyes found in nature. Because no one knew better, arsenic and other poisons were used in hard candies and pickles. People died.

In 1906, the U.S. Congress passed an act that created the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In 1938, the FDA began regulating the dye industry and made labelling mandatory. In 1960, a new law was introduced that gave government control over how much of each colour could be used in a product. Today, most dyes are made from coal tar.

Since the 1800s, there have been 80 different artificial dyes. At the moment there are only seven that are considered safe in the U.S. Every few years, allegations are made about the toxicity of individual dyes. Yet for each dye that is banned, it becomes harder and harder to convince the industry that even more dyes need to be taken off the shelves. It has become quite a crisis for dye manufacturers, and it has become a question of money over health. The more information we find about a dye being hazardous, the more the industry contests it. Industry usually conducts its own research (which refutes the allegations), and then makes it a legal nightmare to try to get it banned.

The last banned dye was Red #2, in 1974, for causing malignant tumours in rats. It caused such a ruckus in the press that the company that makes M&Ms took out its red pieces, even though the company used a different red dye. The industry had a new dye to take its place — Red #40 — but, ironically, this dye wasn't tested as thoroughly as Red #2. In 1987, the red pieces were returned to every package of M&Ms, and both food and dye manufacturers sighed with relief, safe in the knowledge that people would soon forget the controversy.

Recently, Red #3 was put on the table for review. Evidence proved it caused thyroid tumors in rats, but because of government regulations and its long-standing history, Red #3 was banned for use in external application but not for ingestion. In 1990,

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Pretty Food

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the FDA said Red #3 would soon join the ranks of other banned reds. Eleven years later, the FDA Web site says, "... FDA has announced its intent to propose rescinding [Red #3's] listing [on the Generally Regarded As Safe list]." It has taken a long time, but the mighty industry is shaking in its boots, because not only is red dye used to make the colour red, it is also used in making many other colours. The industry will fight tooth and nail to save this toxic chemical.

Not just bad for bunnies

One might say, "All these studies show that artificial dyes are bad for animals. Humans haven't been hurt!" This is false. Since the 1970s, people have been making links between artificial dyes and behavioural problems, between dyes and hives and between dyes and life-threatening asthmatic symptoms. Unfortunately, many of these cases have been in children. Hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder and many other mental disturbances have been associated with the ingestion of Red #40 and tartrazine (Yellow #5).

That's bad enough, but it becomes even scarier when you realize that most of the food that is coloured is targeted specifically at children — and it is children who are most at risk. (H.J. Heinz Co., the makers of Heinz ketchup, has recently launched green ketchup in a squeeze-bottle specifically designed to fit the hands of children. "All our advertising is targeted to kids," a Heinz spokesper-

son recently admitted to *The Wall Street Journal*. "You want that nag factor. ... We're not sure Mom would reach for it on her own.") If you are a parent with a hyperactive or learning-challenged child, I urge you to find out about how dyes could be affecting them.

Because of the irrefutable evidence, tartrazine must now be listed on all labels in the U.S. and Canada. It is banned in Norway and Austria. The FDA says the occurrence of allergic reaction is small enough that it will not ban the colour — it will only let consumers know they are eating it.

Which brings up another extremely interesting thing: In the U.S., all colours must be listed on the ingredients label, while Canada is happy to just list "colour" although tartrazine must be specifically indicated. And since some colours banned in the U.S. have not been banned in Canada, you have no idea what you're ingesting when you pick up that box of Smarties or that lollipop. If a chemical is banned in one country, it is terrifying to think we're eating it here. (There are horror stories about some countries

not banning colours that are banned nearly everywhere else, and of food manufacturers saving money by using dyes that were never intended to be ingested. Some of these foods are imported into Canada.)

The one thing that has saved our butts is the U.S. government's Delaney Clause. It states that if an additive, in any amount, is shown to cause cancer,

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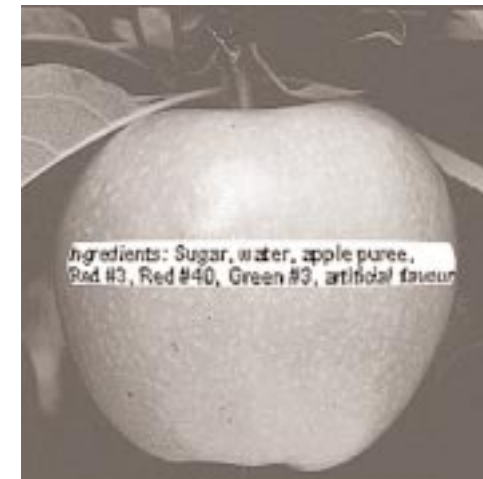


Illustration by Siusan Moffat

The co-operative cottage

Margaret Meagher

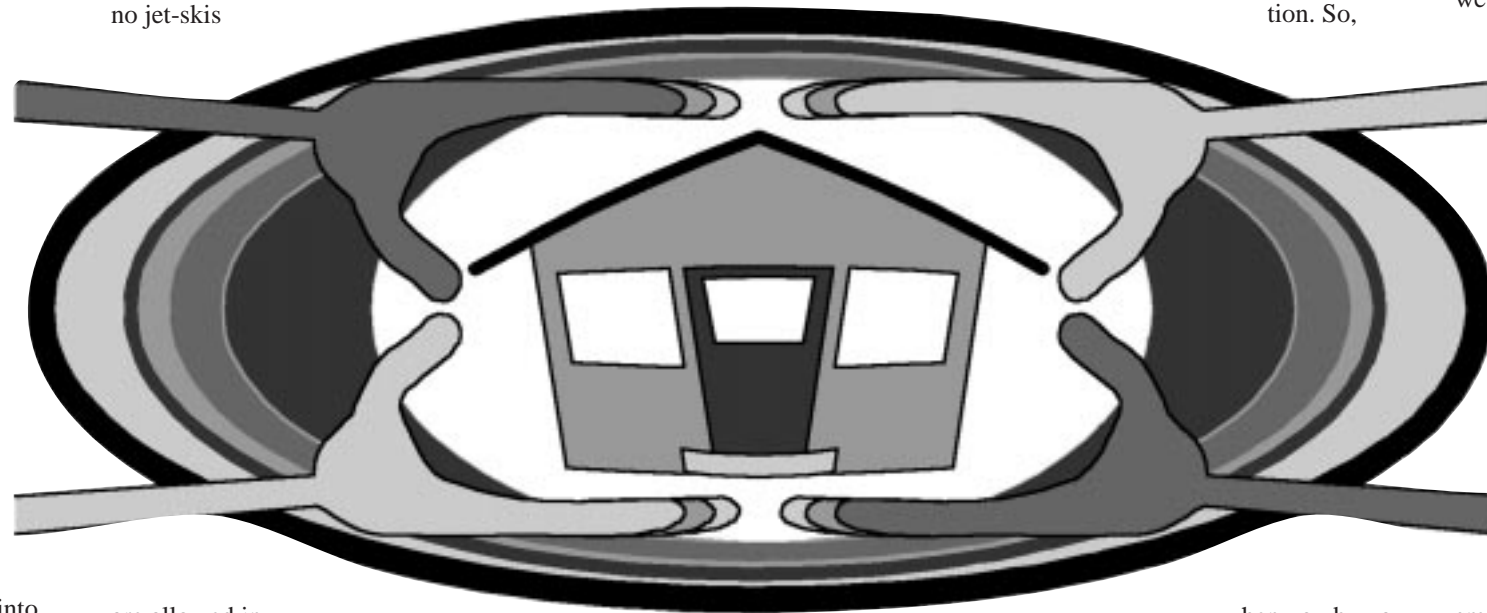
I have a stressful job. I teach remedial English at an inner-city technical school and, after years of increasing workload, in an environment of antagonism, mistrust and disrespect, my stress level has become by far my biggest concern. It has become increasingly important to me to get away, to breathe fresh air, to be reminded that things move in cycles of growth and decay, that the world doesn't make sense, I make sense.

So I began to look into the idea of a cottage. Now, my pay is decent, but not enough to buy a cottage. The middle-class cottage is, after all, increasingly rare. Further, I fear the development of the Canadian wilderness and the encroachment of urban values and commodities (read stress) on the countryside, and I do not want to contribute to these. So, how do I address all these concerns, the high cost of cottage ownership and my need to keep my "footprint" tolerably small, with my desire to be out in nature. In fact, I did find an answer: a co-op.

When my husband and I first started looking into cottages, we decided we wanted a place that was far from any other cottages, some place really remote. That meant we would have to build our own place (a nice little dream). We looked at many lovely, unspoiled lakes, but there were always other lots for sale and that meant years of building, ours and the other buyers', as well as noise, stress and no certainty about what the place might look like in 10 years. We couldn't afford to buy a whole lake, so we began to entertain the idea that we

should be looking for a place that was already developed as much as it ever would be and where the other occupants shared our values about the quality of the cottage experience.

That's when we discovered cottage co-ops. As we dug deeper, we discovered Harcourt Park, and this is where we are now. Harcourt Park is a long, windy 20 minutes outside Wilberforce up on the Shield in the Haliburton Highlands, about three hours from Toronto. It comprises 7,000 acres of mixed forest with 17 lakes, co-owned by 500 families. Our lake is no-motor — some allow them, but no jet-skis



are allowed in the park. Water quality is protected and monitored, there is a park security team, roads are plowed and graded, and there is a community centre with a good well.

How, you may wonder, do 500 families end up co-owning a piece of land? Well, it all started out as a private club for the members and guests of Sumcot Development Corp. and when, in the mid-seventies, the time came for Sumcot to sell, the members

bought the park, wrote up a constitution and the rest is history.

The first thing most people ask when discussing any kind of co-operative ownership is: What exactly do I own? In this case, we own 1/500 of the land in the park and our cottage itself. Some banks have trouble with this, but the ones in the area know the situation. The land on which our cottage sits is leased, not deeded, so the whole park is co-operatively owned. Since the only people in the park are members or renters, everyone treats everyone else's property as private. That's in the constitution. So,

when you buy a leasehold in the park, you become a member of the non-profit corporation that owns and runs the park, giving you one vote and the right to serve on the Board of Directors. The leases all have 49 years till they need to be renewed. That ought to do it for me. We do pay property tax — about \$600 — as well as a \$250 park fee.

In this park, there is a moratorium on further development, so some of our main concerns are

addressed by this type of co-op: We cause no further development, nor is there any danger of further development around us. The guidelines help us to keep our footprint smaller, and we are on a lake of like-minded people who value quiet and peace as we do. But there were some outstanding concerns: We still couldn't afford a cottage, and even if we could, we would still have to justify owning a property that we could use only one weekend in four. That's a bit excessive even for my level of desperation. So we asked around and found some friends in the same frame of mind and we co-oped at the co-op.

Now, we co-own our cottage with two other couples and rotate weeks. The cottage gets more care, we have more of a presence in our community, and if we're ever desperate for a cottage experience on a weekend when it isn't our turn, we just call. We drafted an agreement outlining priorities and how we will dissolve our partnership when we need to. The first item on that agreement is "never feel bad about asking to come up when it isn't your weekend, and never feel bad about refusing." Three years later, it is all going swimmingly (skatingly, in winter). We can afford the cottage; all fees, repairs and other expenses are split three ways; our environment is protected, we keep our footprint small; we have clear guidelines, we have a great piece of pristine wilderness and, most of all, we share that experience with our friends and neighbours.

Check out www.foca.on.ca, the site of the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations, a non-profit, voluntary organization representing more than 500 Ontario cottagers' associations.

A seasonal appeal

Merlin Andrew

Ailurphobes, and all those who deny humanity's bond with the Other Kingdom, turn the page quickly.

In my easily perceived felinophilia (Hi, Sophie; Hi, Billy), I wanted to offer a seasonally appropriate piece for this Christmas *Chronicle*, an article in keeping with the Christian ethic of compassion and love.

Whether or not we are Christian is beside the point. I believe there is not one of us who is untouched by the story that includes the words "no room at the inn" - encapsulating in that simple phrase the plight of all who have no place of shelter, no food to stay their hunger, little possibility of a kindly word or a helping hand.

From the homeless men and women on Toronto streets to the lonely and elderly shut-ins, from the makeshift shacks in the ravines to the frantic mother cat searching for food for her hungry kittens — these are the ones for whom there is no room at the inn.

So, Karma members, in your charity and love, remember all these at Christmas. Fill the Food Bank box to overflowing — and throw in a couple of cans of cat and dog food as well.

A happy, safe holiday to you all.

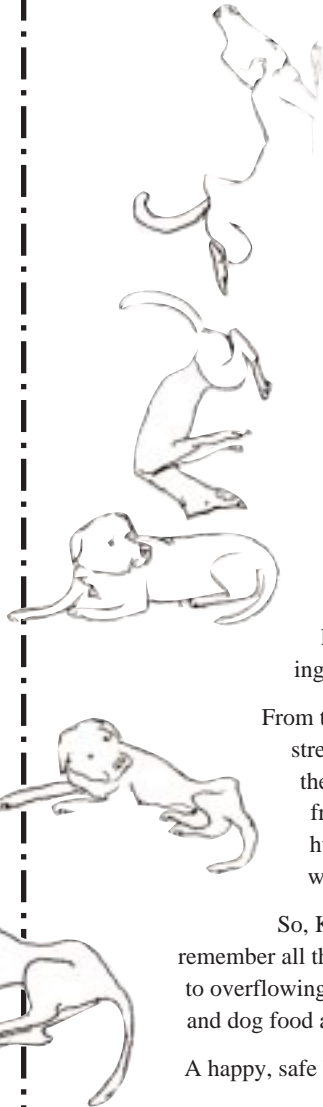


Illustration by Gail

Recipe

Emilio's rustic pasta

450 grams fusilli pasta
1 red pepper, chopped
1 bunch of green onions,
chopped
Almonds, chopped
Pine nuts
2 pears, chopped
Feta, crumbled
Raisins
Olives, depitted
Vinaigrette

Cook pasta. Put in bowl and add other ingredients. Serves 8.

Karma member Emilio Comay del Junco is 10 years old.



Illustrations by Gail



Manager's report

James van Bolhuis

I'd like to say a very large thank you to all the members who volunteered for and attended this year's Annual General Meeting. It was the best — and the best attended — AGM I have seen in my years at Karma. Many thanks to the outgoing board for their contributions to the AGM, and to the people who stepped forward to join the new board.

At the meeting, I stated that I was not going to seek the General Manager's position at Karma. But after much thought and much talk with members, I have decided to apply for the job. Thanks to all the members who gave me their vote of confidence. And if I do become the one, I am looking forward to the challenge.

After two years as Karma's grocery manager, Justin McNabb has decided to move on and has taken a position at the Ontario Natural Food Co-op. We are going to miss Justin, but wish him all the best in his new career. On a trial basis, Candace and Audrey are going to take over Justin's ordering duties, and be retitled "Perishable Purchaser" and "Non-Perishable Purchaser." It might take a little time for them to get used to their new roles, so if you find something missing on the shelves, please have a bit of patience because things will get back on track before you know it.

Karma also has a new clerk. Evan Kroeker has been working hard in produce and grocery for the past couple of months. Do say hello when you're in.

I have signed Karma up to participate in a program to help out the Daily Bread Food Bank. We have a drop box in the front foyer where members can drop off their used ink-jet printer cartridges. Daily Bread will pick these up and have them recycled, and put the money earned on this toward its own programs. So, if you can, please do help them out in this way.

The store continues to see growth in sales and membership. With this consistent growth, the working members of Karma are becoming ever more important to the day-to-day operations of the store. So if you take advantage of the working-member prices, please do your part and



Photo by David Sharp

make sure you join a work team and contribute, because we need you!

Please check out our holiday hours on the back cover of this issue: Put them on your fridge so you don't get caught without the things you might need from Karma.

Happy holidays!

Full-case purchase discount

The Karma Board has approved a new policy that we are going to introduce on a six-month trial basis. Karma has always had a mark-up that is applied equally to all products regardless of quantity. But after many requests from members, we have decided to offer a 10-per-cent discount on full-case purchases.

A few simple rules will apply:

- o the purchase must be done as a special order only, so as not to deplete general stock
- o the discount applies to full, unopened cases only, to minimize staff handling and pricing
- o the purchase must be picked up within one week of receiving (to minimize overstock) or it will be put into general store merchandise
- o if the item ordered is perishable, such as yogurt or cheese, the member will still be required to purchase the product if they fail to pick it up before its expiry date

To allow all members to take advantage of this offer, a "share board" will be put up in the overstock room so that members can post messages with a view to splitting cases with other members.



Tall Pine Drummers drummers get the Karma AGM off to a lively start

Introducing Karma's new Board

President:

Caitlin Smith

Vice President:

Jen Macdonald

Treasurer:

Charlie Lior

Secretary:

Jennifer Foster

Board Liaisons to Standing Committees:

Chronicle:

Jerry Lee Miller

Events:

Anil Reddi

Finance:

Charlie Lior
Trevor Moo

Food Issues:

Jen Macdonald

Long-Range Planning:

Carole D'Aoust-Martin

Maintenance:

Carole D'Aoust-Martin

Orientation:

Anil Reddi

Outreach/Web:

Tracey Thomas
Aysa September

Supervisory:

Caitlin Smith

Karma's new Board

Carole D'Aoust-Martin

This is my third year as a Karma Board member, and my fifth year as a Karma member. I am Board liaison for the following committees: Long-Range Planning, Maintenance and Capital Projects and Hiring.

Maintenance and Capital Projects are of special interest to me: I have also been a member of a condominium board for the past five years.

In my daytime occupation, I manage a team of analysts and developers in information technology and geographic information systems.

Jennifer Foster

I have been a Karma member for just under a year. As an organic food forager, I love the store. I wholly support the co-operative movement and am eager to help Karma flourish in my role as Secretary on the Board of Directors.

Away from Karma, I am a lawyer specializing in health issues related to privacy and to human reproductive and genetic technologies. I look forward to becoming more involved in the Karma community over the next year.

Charlie Lior

I grew up in Toronto and lived here until 1973. I lived on an agricultural kibbutz in Israel from 1974 to 1987, when I returned to Toronto. I've been a Karma member since 1988.

I agreed to serve on the board as a way to give back to the Karma community some of the positive energy that I get from being a member.

Jen Macdonald

I'm continuing on the Karma Board of Directors for the second year of a two-year term. I joined the board with an interest in working in the area of organizational structure and policies and how they affect an organization's growth and ability to

change. I'll continue this year in my role as Food Issues Committee Liason, assisting the committee in their task of examining the Karma Product Policy and Genetically Modified Foods.

In my life outside Karma, I am a health-promotion consultant in the areas of community development and capacity building, with interests in social justice and income inequality.

Jerry Lee Miller

I am the father of a teenaged daughter. I am also an artist, literacy and human right activist, radio broadcaster and have worked in television.

I am a returning Karma board member. I've worked on developing the organization's membership base, communications and outreach strategies. I have experience working with diverse communities, within an anti-oppression framework. In addition, I have facilitated recruitment, orientation, training, event planning and workshops.

Karma is more than a place to shop for me; I've been treated with respect and made friends. Now I am sharing my talents.

Trevor Moo

I've been a Karma member since 1994 and am in the second year of a two-year term on the board. I served on the board of the Ontario Natural Food Co-op for two terms, and was treasurer for one term. I was also on the board of the Canadian Co-operative Association (Ontario Region) for about five years.

I'm currently on the Member Labour ad hoc committee and am looking for committee members. I also sit on the Finance committee and the new ad hoc committee looking at how information can be gathered in a timely manner and used effectively for decision-making at Karma.

I want to see Karma become stable enough to grow.

Karma's new Board

I'm a lapsed PhD student, interested in co-operative community economic development and using Karma — with all its problems — as a model for urban approaches to such development. One of those problems is that people's lives are too busy and they rarely devote enough time to developing the spirit of local community.

Anil Reddi

I've been a member of Karma Co-op since 1989, and have worked on almost every work team (except cash) in the store. I worked most recently on the New Member Orientation Committee, which I really enjoyed. I valued the interaction with new members, and will miss working with the committee's co-ordinator, Charles Danzker.

I used to live in Western Canada, and was on the managing committee of a food co-op there. I believe in the "traditional" concept of a member-owned food co-op. I believe Karma is facing many challenges, and that I can make a positive contribution. Outside of Karma, my interests include photography and travel.

Aysa September

I joined Karma Co-op after moving to Toronto in May 2001. While in Waterloo completing my master's degree in organizational psychology, I was a member of Ebytown Food Co-op for two years. I was a purchaser for Ebytown's main supplier, Ontario Natural Food Co-op, and served on the board of directors covering the purchasing portfolio.

In addition to my previous volunteer experience with a food co-op, I bring to Karma my dedication to co-operative principles and sustainable living. I'm currently seeking employment related to sustainability initiatives. My particular interests include transportation, urban planning, renewable energy and green economics.

Caitlin Smith

I've been a member of the co-op since 1981. I instantly fell in love with "the Karma experience." Over the years, I've been a cashier, done clean up, and sat on the board of directors, the Orientation Committee and the Supervisory Committee.

I'm a marketing manager and writer. I've just made a career change to the world of fundraising.

Karma's greatest challenges are member retention and member labour. I'm looking forward to working with the new board to come up with creative and innovative ways of addressing these challenges.

Tracey Thomas

I have been a working member of Karma since I joined as a teenager in 1987. I joined because I believe food and housing are fundamental to human life and community and should not be subject to all that evil capitalist market stuff.

I joined the Board to pay my dues to the Karma community (also because I faced no competition for this prestigious opportunity) - and to make up for the shift I missed when I had morning sickness, and the shift where I spilled 18 kg of organic coffee. I am the Outreach Liaison for the Board.

I am the mother of a seven-year-old daughter. I work full-time as the property manager with Homes First Society, which provides housing and transitional support to chronically homeless people. Although I don't live in the Karma neighbourhood, I trod 40 minutes through the snow with my pram and I'd do it again just to have food with good Karma.

I entertain the perverse and naive fantasy that some day I will produce herbs and herbal health-care products from my riverside country home. See Hello Crafts on the shelf ... see my Board photo ... now you know who to complain to!

it must be banned. But even on the FDA Web site, the decision makers are saying that the Delaney Clause is out of date because scientific studies can show cancer is induced by the smallest amount of usage and that this amount is therefore “trivial” and should not be taken into account when approving additives. If the Delaney Clause is wiped out, there won't be much standing in the way of industry bringing in new chemicals or relisting old ones that have been proved toxic.

We have been taught that foods have certain colours. But the reality is, if you make strawberry ice cream at home, it will never have the colour of a commercial brand. We have been taught that the bright-pink commercial look is better, superior to our own light-pink dessert. We must unlearn what the food industry has taught us.

There are many companies that don't use artificial dyes. SunSpire is one such candy company (even their M&M-type candies are coloured with dyes from nature). Some juice companies use grape-skin extract and beet root for (purple) colour. Other natural dyes that are on the market and have no side effects include beta-carotene (orange yellow), lycopene (red), calcium carbonate (white) and turmeric (yellow).

We should pressure industry to stop using chemicals when there are perfectly decent, non-toxic natural alternatives. Until then, whole foods and homemade foods are the best.

Siusan Moffat is a Karma member. If you would like more information on the Web sites she used to research this article, e-mail her at P-nuts@bigfoot.com.

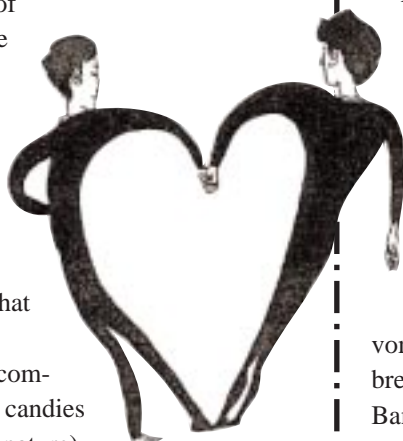


Illustration by Gail

Chemical cuisine

Here is a list of the seven food dyes permitted in Canada and the U.S..

* Red #3 (Erythrosine): thyroid cancer, hives. Banned in Norway, Australia, other places except Britain.

* Red #40 (Allura Red AC): tumours/lymphomas. Banned in Denmark, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria and Norway.

* Blue #1 (Brilliant Blue FCF): Bronchoconstriction (combined with Red #3), chromosomal damage, Eosinophilotactic response. Banned in Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Norway.

* Blue #2 (Indigotine): Nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, rashes, breathing problems, brain tumours. Banned in Norway.

* Yellow #5 (Tartrazine): asthma attacks, rashes in children, thyroid tumours, chromosomal damage, hives, hyperactivity. Banned in Norway and Austria. Required listing in the U.S. and Canada.

* Yellow #6 (Sunset Yellow): allergy symptoms, hyperactivity, kidney tumors, chromosomal damage, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting. Banned in Norway.

* Green #3 (Fast Green): Bladder tumours. Banned in Norway. -SM

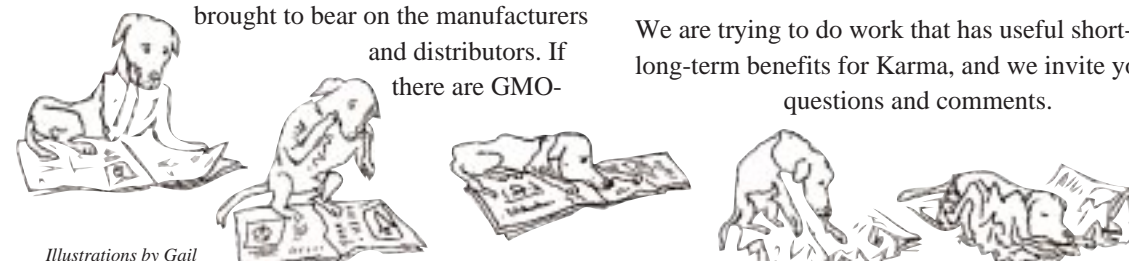
GMO concerns

Food Issues Committee

At the recent Annual General Meeting, several members called for action on the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) found in products at Karma. In response to this call, the Food Issues Committee has a few observations and action points.

It is our view that most of the GMO-free products that we carry are identifiable as such. A product that is certified 100-per-cent organic will be GMO-free. Questionable cases arise where products contain sufficient organic ingredients to be labelled organic, but still contain non-organic ingredients that may contain GMOs.

When a product is GMO-free, the producer will typically use a label to promote this fact. If GMO-free products aren't identified, pressure should be brought to bear on the manufacturers and distributors. If there are GMO-



Illustrations by Gail

free bulk products, we will discuss with Karma managers the possibility of labelling. In the case of produce (including some bulk goods — e.g., dried apricots) there are some crops that have not yet been modified, meaning even conventional produce will be GMO-free.

As reported at the AGM, the Food Issues Committee is currently preparing a member survey, the results of which will inform a product policy revision and corresponding action plan. In the interim, the committee's Andrew Macdonald has agreed to:

- o get a list of GM foods as well as GMO-free manufacturers and find a space in the store to post it
- o approach management to discuss the efficacy of labelling GMO-free bulk foods, as well as to discuss the potential for putting pressure on manufacturers and distributors who are not identifying GMO-free foods.

We are trying to do work that has useful short- and long-term benefits for Karma, and we invite your questions and comments.

Fun with colours

Here are some recipes for do-it-yourself natural dyes. I haven't tried them out yet, but you can probably add a tablespoon of the following mixtures to icing and the like and get a neat colour without any of the vegetable flavour.

Brilliant yellow: Add 1 tbsp. ground turmeric to 1 cup water. Boil mixture for 10-15 minutes then drain through a coffee filter to remove grains.

Concentrate the dye by boiling without a lid for about ½ hour.

Red: Slice 2 beets into 2 cups of water. Boil beets until they are cooked. Save beets to eat. Concentrate the dye by boiling without a lid for ½ hour.

Purple: Add 5 or 6 outer leaves from a red cabbage to 2 cups of water. Boil. Concentrate the dye by boiling without a lid for ½ hour.

People & planet-friendly events

South Riverdale environmental liaison,
Wed Jan 16, 6-8pm, Toronto

Meet neighbours, Ministry of Environment, Public Health, city planners and others to discuss local environmental issues affecting health and quality of life, from pollution to parks planning. Free. Third Wed. of every month; call for location (it changes). Info: Paul Young 416-461-1925 x241

Guelph organic conference and trade show,

Fri-Sun Jan 25-27, Guelph

Canada's largest public, organic event. Organic trade show and food-tasting fair with more than 100 tables (free to public). More than 30 workshops and courses for all levels of interest. Keynote (Saturday): Gunnar Rundgren, President of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements: "Organics in Europe: Lessons For North American Agriculture." Guelph University Centre. Info: 519-824-4120 x2558; organix@georgian.net; <http://guelph2002.organic-farms.ca> and www.gks.com/OrgConf/

Resources for Radicals — 3rd edition now available

An annotated bibliography of print resources for those involved in the entire spectrum of movements for



radical, non-violent social change, written and compiled by Brian Burch, a Toronto-based writer with a history of activism going back to the Vietnam War. The overall focus is on non-violent protest and ways to develop and implement practical alternative social institutions. Price (incl. postage & handling): \$12. Cheques should be made payable to Toronto Action for Social Change, P.O. Box 73620, 509 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto, Ontario, M6C 1C0. More info: 416-651-5800 tasc@web.ca

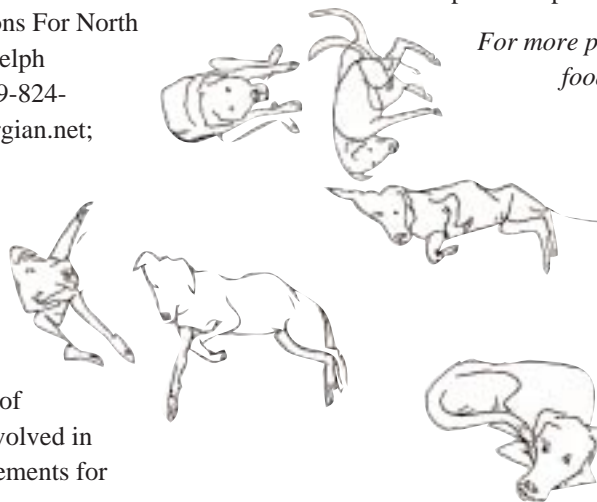
Label this! - new Web site — www.labelthis.org

A new citizens' labelling movement is exposing the genetic experiment in our food. Did you know that more than 70 per cent of processed foods in North America contain untested genetically engineered ingredients? None of these is even labeled: North American consumers are left unprotected, eating in the dark. Practical tools and advice to help you take action.

And topical links:

<http://www.planetfriendly.net/food.html>

For more peace, environment, food and organics listings, see www.planetfriendly.net. Events, courses, broadcasts, announcements, jobs. Free weekly e-mail subscription: people@planetfriendly.net. All brought to you by Karma member Peter Blanchard.



Dear Editor,

The Chronicle finally has e-mail! I've often thought of writing in about this or that issue, but now that you are easily accessible by e-mail, I've finally put mouse to screen. But why on earth would you still want contributors to drop off a paper copy of submissions? In this day and age, that's really retro and a waste of paper.

I enjoy reading *The Chronicle* and appreciate its illustration of the depth of commitment to the environment and Karma's contribution to sustainable living practices. It makes me feel good about shopping at Karma. I have found that once you get hooked on all the tasty organic and alternative stuff, it makes the more mainstream stuff seem bland and overprocessed.

I usually read *The Chronicle* cover to cover. In the Oct/Nov 2001 issue, I was disturbed by Mark Davidson's proposal for "progressive fees." It sounds like he's suggesting that our discount and member fees be on a graduated scale based on income or the amount we spend at Karma, because those working members who spend more at Karma get a larger net amount each month off their grocery bill from the working member discount (8 per cent), which translates to more money earned per workshift hour.

If I'm reading between his lines correctly, he's proposing that if we earn more or spend more at Karma, our discount would decrease, and fees increase relative to other members. This scheme sounds like: a) big brother, b) a disincentive to shop, c) penalizing working members, and d) a bureaucratic and accounting nightmare. It's not like members now get higher percentage discounts based on volume of spending — that would be regressive. How his proposal would practically work is quickly glossed over — what does he mean by a graduated loan schedule?

I think you will find that there is not a strong corre-

lation between member income and how much the member spends at Karma. I spend a large proportion of my income at Karma, not because I have oodles of money but because I like the food and support Karma's philosophy. I do my work shifts at Karma because I believe in it as a concept and a community, not because I'm earning some theoretical \$ per hour based on how much money I drop at the till. If you penalize the working members who are bigger spenders, Karma will lose income and strength, quality of selection will degrade, the labour pool will weaken and we will proceed downhill.

If you really want to be progressive, let's go back to mandatory work shifts for those who are physically able. I'm convinced that the end of mandatory work shifts is a great trap door for slackers (I don't buy the busy-ness argument). Those who join Karma as working members are making a commitment. I've dragged my tired ass across town many nights for a clean-up shift. The elimination of mandatory work shifts did not eliminate the no-show problems caused by those who are careless with their time or choose to play hooky. It also dried up the labour pool and put more pressure on those remaining, as well as pressure on those dedicated clerks who work for low pay (social justice — where are you now?) Reboot mandatory work shifts, and pay our staff more so they will tend to stay longer and become more experienced and better able to manage the store and direct the member labour efficiently. I think the staff are great — I have no complaints — but a high turnover is a killer for long-term viability.

Perhaps the change to allowing non-worker status boosted Karma's income, so would have been a trade off, but I think that Davidson's proposed "progressive fees" would be all-round detrimental to Karma. Remember, we're all in this together — rich and poor. Let's not start some sort of reverse pecking order based on income.

Lisa Simkins

Karma Co-op Staff

General Manager

James van Bolhuis (acting)

Produce Manager

Michael Armstrong

Health and Beauty/Grocery Manager

Audrey van Bolhuis

Bulk Grocery Manager

Candace Cuss

Bookkeeper

Victoria Bale

Membership Secretary

Marilou Lawrence

Member Labour Coordinator

Betsy Carter

CLERKS

Sheila Bannerjee

Sarah Fairley

Brandy Humes

Evan Kroeker

Scott Maynard

Erica Wilson

On-Call Manager

Robin Easton

Karma Co-op Hours of Operation

MONDAY	12 – 7
TUESDAY	12 – 9
WEDNESDAY	12 – 9
THURSDAY	12 – 9
FRIDAY	10 – 9
SATURDAY	10 – 6
SUNDAY	11 – 5

Holiday hours

Dec 23: 11 – 6

Dec 24, 25, 26: Closed

Dec 27, 28, 29, 30: Normal hours

Dec 31: 12 – 5

Jan 1: Closed

Jan 2: Back to normal hours

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.