

THE CHRONICLE

The Members' Newsletter of Karma Co-op
October / November 2008



AGM update
Renovations report
Easy packed lunch recipe
What to do with apples and pears



The Chronicle

The Members' Newsletter of Karma Co-op

October/November 2008

The Chronicle is published by members of Karma Co-op
739 Palmerston Avenue
Toronto, ON M6G 2R3
416-534-1470
416-534-3697 fax
www.karmacoop.org



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

This newsletter is printed on New Life stock, which is certified 80 per cent post-consumer recycled. This paper stock is oxygen-whitened and certified chlorine- and old-growth-free by the Chlorine Free Products Association. It is union made in Canada by Cascades Fine Papers. For more information on sustainable paper stock, go to www.rfu.org, the website for Reach for Unbleached, a Canadian registered charity working for a sustainable pulp and paper industry.

Submissions

Submissions may be sent by e-mail, to chronicleeditor@gmail.com. Send your submission within the main body of the message. Please do not send attachments. Upcoming editorial deadlines are posted on the bulletin board. 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 October/November:

Editor: Kat Tancock
Designer: Dave Howard
Copy editor: Jennifer Neufeld
Proofreader: Lisa Guthro

Chronicle Committee

Karen Fliess, Lisa Guthro, Dave Howard, Jennifer Neufeld, Jennifer Ralston, Chris Shepherd, Kat Tancock, Jillian Thorp-Shepherd

Illustrations/Photos

Chris Shepherd: contents, pp. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.
Stock images, all else

Contributors

Neil Benvenuti, Deborah Cherry, Irene Fedun, Karen Fliess, Michael Herring, Justin McNabb, Jae Steele, Joerg Wittenbrinck



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to the Editor 1

Report From the General Manager
Justin McNabb 1

Report From the Building Committee
Joerg Wittenbrinck 2

Report From the Food Issues Committee
Michael Herring 3

Report From the Web Committee
Neil Benvenuti 4

AGM Update
Deborah Cherry 5

Product Spotlight: Local Fall Fruit
Karen Fliess 6

Storing Fruits and Vegetables
Irene Fedun 8

Bagged Lunch Gets Fresh: Pesto White Bean Bowl
Jae Steele 9

Contribute to *The Chronicle*

Share your articles, committee updates, news items, recipes, events and photos with the rest of the Karma community! Deadline for the December/January issue is Wednesday, November 19. Send submissions to chronicleeditor@gmail.com.

REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

By Justin McNabb

We did it! We made it through three months of renovations, somehow managing to keep the store open all the while. Karma Co-op is now the proud owner of two new state-of-the-art walk-in coolers, gorgeous new doors and light fixtures, and a great open-concept floor plan. Kudos to the Building Committee, who really raised the bar as to what a group of Karma members can achieve. The staff were also put through their paces and can be proud of a job well done.

Thanks especially go out to the Karma membership. You have been nothing but supportive, patient, and enthusiastic during the entire project.

But wait, it's not over yet. Our next priority will be to finish the newly located members' room. After that, we need a new roof. Karma's roof is in bad shape and, although we recently got the worst spots patched up, we are still going to see some leaks. Ideally, our new roof will be not only waterproof, but also well insulated and white (or silver) to reflect heat away from the store.

Please note a correction about the building fee. In the last edition of *The Chronicle* I suggested that members would no longer be able to work off the building fee. Not true! This fall, members will still be able to pay their building fee with two hours of member labour.

Also, please note a small change to the store hours: Karma now opens at 11:00 am

on Fridays.

Finally, Natalie Boustead, grocery clerk, is leaving Karma for a new job. She has worked for us full-time since last spring. I am sure that the staff, like myself, will miss her energy and humour around the store. Good luck, Natalie.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

I have been shopping at Karma all through the summer, and almost every time I shopped during August the store had a different layout, with shelves and products in different places. We had been well warned that this was going to happen and that Karma wasn't going to be carrying all its usual products while construction was underway, so I wasn't irritated.

But after a few shopping trips it dawned on me that all this

internal rearranging was being performed — it seemed as if it was two or three times a week at one point — by our staff. Imagine having to rearrange your own work space that often for a couple of months.

This is simply to express my admiration for and thanks to Karma's staff, who did all this work cheerfully during all this time on top of their usual tasks. They deserve gratitude from us all.

—Terry Fowler

REPORT FROM THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

By Joerg Wittenbrinck

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE. ALL DONE? YES AND NO.

A year and a half in (and over a thousand e-mails in my Karma mailbox later), the biggest renovations at Karma are done. You will hear all about detailed results, financial and physical (and emotional?), at the upcoming AGM on October 20. And you will probably have seen and judged the results yourself by now — perhaps you were there for the grand reopening on October 4. At the time of writing, however, we are still a week away from moving into our new store. I cannot write anything definitive yet, except that it looks like success to us and people I have talked to.

The contracting company, Gen Pro, and our architects, Cathy Tafler and Doug Rylett, were cooperative and accommodating of changes during the design and construction process. As well, the contractor, architects, board members, general manager, Karma staff and Building Committee worked together very well over these past few exciting months. Let's also not forget the workers who were so nice and lovely to have around the store. We'll miss them, too. And thank you to the Karma staff and all the volunteers who put in many hours moving shelves and products around the store as we moved between construction phases. I am mentioning all this especially because the first year of renovation preparations had been anything but conflict free and, in fact, quite rocky at times.

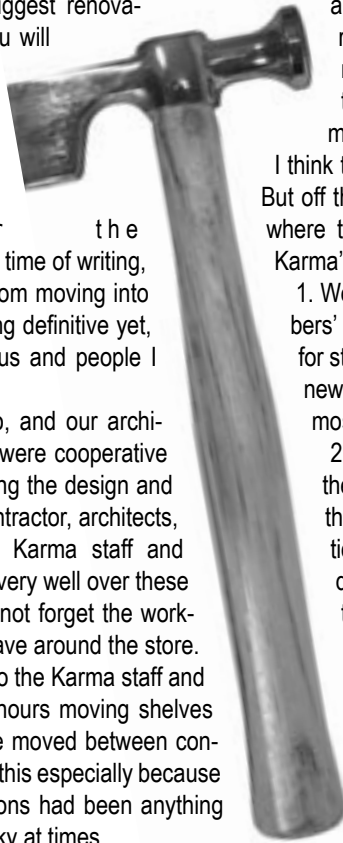
So is the Building Committee all done with its work? Before we go on a long vacation (which we definitely deserve), let's

take a look at the three basic tasks in our mandate: to help Karma carry out necessary repairs (particularly the replacement of the walk-in coolers and the repairs to the south and east walls), to integrate these repairs with a redesign of the store along Karma's philosophy and mission statement, and to act as a repository of ideas to be employed in future rounds of renovation and maintenance.

I think that overall we have fulfilled our mandate up to now. But off the top of my head I can think of three project areas where the Building Committee should continue facilitating Karma's work on our store:

1. We have to decide how we want to use our new members' room, which is currently unfinished and being used for storage and moving things around as we grow into the new store. We then want to design and build this room mostly with member labour.
2. The roof will need replacing in the near future, and the Building Committee will help in exploring options that include skylights, a green roof, and forms of insulation (just some of the ideas that members brought up during the consultation for this past round of renovations).
3. Finally, there is the washroom and kitchen area, which we wanted to renovate but weren't able to at this stage.

There are probably other projects you can think of that Karma should address. So let's hear it! If you have comments or questions about this past round of renovations, or if you want to get involved with future projects, the best way to reach us is via e-mail at building@karmacoop.org.



REPORT FROM THE FOOD ISSUES COMMITTEE

By Michael Herring

The Food Issues Committee has the difficult job of trying to assess the wide range of Karma members' values and to make sure the products in the store reflect them. Our challenge is to evaluate the economic, environmental, and social aspects of the products Karma sells and make sure they are in line with our common values. The committee's main tool for decision-making is Karma's Product Policy, which was passed by the members at an AGM. (You can view the Product Policy at www.karmacoop.org/committees/foodissuesdocs/ProductPolicyOctober2002.html.)

We are currently undertaking a project to make Karma free of GM (genetically modified) food, and have just completed an inventory of the ingredients of all products sold at Karma. We have begun to contact suppliers to ascertain whether these ingredients come from GM sources and during the next year will be vetting products in an attempt to make Karma GM free.

The Food Issues Committee welcomes new members. If you are interested, please contact the committee at foodissues@karmacoop.org.



REPORT FROM THE WEB COMMITTEE

By Neil Benvenuti

One of the critical components of a well run co-op such as Karma is the presence of open, direct, and easily accessible communications channels. One of those channels exists between the board of directors and you, the members of Karma Co-op. The board communicates with you in various ways, such as through signs posted in the store or mass electronic mailings. These messages often contain details about upcoming meetings or other important information regarding the operation of the co-op.

The Web Committee maintains a database of e-mail addresses that members voluntarily submitted when they joined Karma. Unfortunately, whenever we send out mass mailing notices, some of the addresses bounce back to us as undeliverable. This happens for various reasons such as when people change e-mail addresses and do not notify the store, or when someone writes or copies down an address incorrectly. If you would like to receive Karma news and information via e-mail or if you need to update

your e-mail address with us in order to get these messages, please write to the Web Committee at web@karmacoop.org. You will receive three to five e-mails per year and you always have the option to unsubscribe from the list.

Over the past year, the Web Committee has developed and implemented an online tool that facilitates communication between Karma members. We call it the Roundtable and it can be found at

www.karmacoop.org/roundtable. The Roundtable is a forum where Karma members can create discussion topics and participate in other Karma-related conversations and debates. Here, you can find out what members think of the new look of Karma's renovations. Do you have questions or concerns about cer-

tain products that Karma carries? Or are you simply looking for a really good recipe? We encourage you to drop by the Roundtable and see what other members are talking about.



AGM UPDATE

By Deborah Cherry

Please join us at Karma's Annual General Meeting, taking place on October 20 at Friends' House (60 Lowther Ave.) for store updates, tasty treats and elections to the 2008-2009 board of directors.

Consider volunteering at the AGM — it's a good way to stock up or catch up on work hours! We're looking for help with registration, food prep, child care, and elections.

Set-up begins at 6:00 pm, the meeting starts at 7:00 pm and we aim to end by 10:00 pm.

If your membership dues are not paid for 2008, you can pay at the door.

Please contact Hilary Krupa at hilary.krupa@gmail.com if you are interested in participating.

RUN FOR THE BOARD AND TAKE A LEADING ROLE AT KARMA

The board of directors is Karma's governing body. The board is comprised of 10 directors, who are elected for one- or two-year terms by the membership. Serving on the board involves policy development, decision-making, and planning for the future of the co-op. We will need to fill seven vacancies on the board at the AGM on October 20.

Board members should expect to spend approximately seven to eight hours a month on member labour dedicated to board meetings and committees.

We encourage participation by members with experience in co-op development, human resources, other boards of directors, financial planning, management, accounting, conflict resolution, legal knowledge, and strategic planning, as well as any members with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

Interested? Contact Deborah Cherry as soon as possible at d.cherry@sympatico.ca.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS: REQUEST FOR BIG BUCKS LOANS

Karma is seeking to borrow funds from its members (called "big bucks" loans) to help finance the major and necessary improvements to Karma's infrastructure. They include the renovations that Karma has committed to undertake this summer and into next year. These loans, together with the annual building fee, are intended to cover the costs of the work. By borrowing funds from members, Karma aims to reduce the cost of borrowing while enabling members to earn a fair return. Karma is seeking to raise approximately \$245,000.

Members can lend the co-op \$500 or more. The interest rate will be a quarter of a percent higher than the Alterna Savings and Credit Union investment savings account (as of August 2008, Alterna's rate is 3.05%. "Big bucks" loans would return 3.30%). Interest is payable on the last day of Karma's fiscal year, May 31. This capital-raising effort is explained fully in the Offering Statement, approved by the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, which will be provided to all interested in investing. You can also obtain a copy at the store.

For more information or to invest, contact the following, in person or via e-mail:

*Justin McNabb, general manager
manager@karmacoop.org*

Michael Armstrong, assistant general manager

*Karma board of directors
board@karmacoop.org*

*Thank you for your consideration,
Margaret Knittl, president*



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: LOCAL FALL FRUIT

By Karen Fliess

Eating with the seasons offers an opportunity to highlight and savour different flavours at different points in the year. After all the abundance of summer sweetness, the stalwart apple and pear offer a distinct autumnal flavour that lends itself to a multitude of possibilities well into the winter months.

According to the Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada website (www.agr.gc.ca/malus/history_e.html), apples are the most important tree fruit crop in Canada. The apple's history in our country begins in Atlantic Canada where it was introduced to Nova Scotia by the first French settlers sometime in the early 1600s. Each homestead had several apple trees and by drying apples, settlers could have fruit year-round to make pies, puddings, tarts, and many other dishes.

Four hundred years later there is a renewed interest in drying, canning, and preserving fruit to extend the season. Though we are able to purchase virtually any fruit year-round, there is

something to be learned from living with the seasons, enjoying what is from our landscape or "terroir" and the flavours it offers. In this context, apples and pears, simple local staples, can really shine.



Apple or pear sauce is one of the simplest yet most beautifully yummy and tangy transformations of these two fruits. Peel and quarter three to five apples, put on a very low heat with a small piece of butter and the gentle heat will slowly create a delicious sauce. If the heat is too high it will burn, so low and slow is

the best way. You can add a tiny pinch of cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, or ginger while it cooks. Good sauce can be made in 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the juiciness of the fruit. Stir regularly. It is delicious with breakfast yogurt, served as an accompaniment to a savoury meal, or for dessert with ice cream or yogurt. The sauce can also be used in muffins.

It's not much of a stretch from there to make a larger batch

of sauce and jar it up in clean 500 mL jars. Process them in a canner for 20 minutes and you've just preserved your own sauce. Both jars and canners can be purchased at Canadian Tire and many other grocery and hardware stores.

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is an old yet remarkably relevant saying. Apples are high in boron, a trace mineral that affects the electrical activity of the brain. According to James Penland at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Research Center, skimping on boron can subdue your mental alertness and cause drowsiness (*Food: Your Miracle Medicine* by Jean Carper). This obscure mineral also has a great influence on preventing osteoporosis. A lack of boron can hamper your calcium metabolism. And, most surprising, eating foods rich in boron can boost estrogen levels in postmenopausal women to a stunning degree, according to another study at the same centre (same source). In addition, apples reduce cholesterol, contain anti-cancer agents, and have mild antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-inflammatory activity. They are high in fibre, contain some vitamin C and beta-carotene (in the skin), and help to prevent constipation and suppress appetite.

Apples are a great snack to take to work and also serve to naturally clean the teeth! Thinly sliced or grated apples are a wonderful addition to a salad. Combinations of any of the following are a refreshing side dish: apple, carrot, and cabbage; apple, carrot, and beet; apple, carrot, and celeriac; the possibilities are endless. You can add a squeeze of lemon to grated or sliced apple to keep it from going brown. Nuts, celery, and cheese can be added to make a classic Waldorf salad or a concoction of your own.

Pears are nutritionally similar to apples, but can be sweeter. When cooked, pears become exceptionally sweet. I slice and simmer pears in the morning and have them warm with breakfast. Pears can be used interchangeably in any of the classic apple desserts, such as tarts, pies, crisps, and crumbles, or mix both fruits together for a more complex flavour. Apple pie is such a classic, ever-enjoyable dessert. Wedges of apples, yams, and fennel, baked in the oven with a little thyme, olive oil or butter, and salt and pepper make a nice side dish for an evening meal.

Pears at Karma are supplied mainly by Filsinger's, as are the apples. Filsinger's provides Karma with an extensive variety of local apples. By the time you read this Karma should have a good supply of the following:

- Macintosh
- Winesap (an older early variety and a little sour)
- Spy
- Russet (another older variety, great for cooking but very very sweet — don't be turned off by the slightly rough skin, they are delicious!)
- Empire (good as both an eating and cooking apple with pretty crispy flesh)
- Spartan (good for cooking and eating)
- Ida Red (very hardy, and available through the winter)
- Red and Golden Delicious (supposedly the most nutritious apples)
- Cortland and Crispin (another older variety that used to be called Mitsui, the secret apple used by many bakers as they are really good for pies)

Alvin Filsinger was the first organic farmer in Canada. He started farming in 1954 and was recently awarded several lifetime achievement awards for his contribution to organic farming. Two years ago he sold Filsinger's Organic Foods, the farm, and processing facilities to the Becker family, who have wholeheartedly taken on the business. Michael Armstrong told me Alvin used to complain that apples don't have the nutritional value they used to. "Brix" is a way of measuring the sugar content of certain foods (usually juice, soft drinks, or wine): in apples, the more sugar content, the more nutritional value. Apparently, Filsinger's apples have four times the Brix content of your typical apple.

Thanks to Michael Armstrong, Karma's produce manager and assistant general manager, for this information on apples.

A GREENER CHRONICLE

Join our email list and get new issues of *The Chronicle* e-mailed to you in PDF format. Save paper, save Karma money! Write to chronicle.subscribe@gmail.com to get added to the list.



STORING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

By Irene Fedun

In southern Ontario, the growing season is almost over. Only the hardiest fruits and vegetables remain to be harvested. Many whose season extends for a long time have already been discussed in previous issues.

Now it's time to consider the winter squashes and pumpkins, a bountiful and varied group of fruits. The hard-shelled varieties such as acorn, Hubbard, butternut, and buttercup will keep for several months if picked when mature with the stem attached and stored in a cool, dry area. Be careful that you don't put them in the fridge, as it's too cold in there and chilling injuries can occur. Also, protect squashes from cuts, scratches, and bruises.

Horseradish can be harvested earlier in the year but is best when dug up in October or November. Keep the roots out of light as this will turn them green. Cut off the foliage one inch above the crown before refrigerating.

Most of the produce we consume over the winter comes from California and other warm agricultural zones. It often requires different treatment from our local produce.

Bananas are picked green and then ripened to a certain stage before being sold. For organic bananas this may be particularly difficult because they're not designed for lengthy storage. Especially in winter, they may be picked too green. As with tropical fruits, they may never have the opportunity to ripen. If you purchase organic bananas at Karma and they stay forever green, produce manager Michael Armstrong urges you to bring them back to the store for a refund. Needless to say, bananas should not be refrigerated and they should be stored away from tomatoes and other fruits such as apples and pears. Bananas produce ethylene, a gas that acts as a ripening agent, which can act upon nearby fruits.

Like tomatoes, avocados do not belong in the fridge. In fact, this is true for all tropical fruit, pineapples, mangoes, and papayas among them, as refrigeration suspends the ripening process. If the fruits are kept cold for too long (as they can be during transport), they might simply go rock hard and become inedible.

Lemons, limes, oranges, and grapefruit can be refrigerated but it is not necessary. They, too, have a tendency to off-gas, so keep them away from other fruits and veggies.

Ripe, ready-to-eat kiwis yield to gentle pressure when squeezed in the palm of your hand. They will keep for several days at room temperature or over a week in the crisper.

To ripen pineapple, stand it upside down on the counter but then use it within two days. Once you've cut it, cover it in its own juice in an airtight container, refrigerate, and eat within five to seven days.

Fresh ginger can be kept in the fridge in plastic, but ideally you would keep it in the freezer. It doesn't lose any of its nutritional value and it's easy to grate when frozen.

We've covered the most common fruits and vegetables in this series of articles, but the information given is by no means exhaustive. If you have other ideas or suggestions on how to store fruits and vegetables, or you have any questions, please e-mail the author at chronicleeditor@gmail.com.



BAGGED LUNCH GETS FRESH:

PESTO WHITE BEAN BOWL

By Jae Steele

I still remember my pale yellow My Little Pony lunch box, which my mum would fill daily in my first years of elementary school with a peanut butter and jam sandwich with the crusts cut off, a small yogurt, and an apple. When my palate was so basic, I was easy to impress. But meals on the go have been a troubling affair ever since. What, other than a sandwich, travels well and is enjoyable when not heated? How can I make sure that I'm eating my way toward the four to five cups of vegetables I want to consume in a day when I'm out of the house? A simple veggie salad is often not enough to keep me going — I need grains and/or legumes to ground me. And on top of all that, it wouldn't hurt to make it tasty. My solution: the following recipe. It's one of my favourites.

PESTO WHITE BEAN BOWL

This meal-in-a-bowl is quick to put together and tastes great at room temperature for lunch or dinner out of the house. Both white beans and quinoa are great sources of protein, calcium, magnesium, and fibre. The bok choy and the pesto add a nice freshness to the meal. Feel free to grate in a clove of garlic if that's your kind of thing, or add any other vegetables on hand as well (sometimes I grate in carrots or zucchini).

- 1-1/2 c. cooked white beans (cannellini or navy) — if I'm in a rush I use a can of Eden Foods Cannellini or Navy Beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 c. pesto (homemade or store bought, and any flavour will do: basil, cilantro, kale or oregano)
- 1/4 tsp. sea salt
- a good couple of grinds of the pepper mill
- 2 – 4 bunches of baby bok choy (or organic baby spinach) — about 4 c. chopped
- 2 c. cooked quinoa (cooked millet or brown rice would be fine, too)
- flaxseed oil or olive oil, to taste
- a sprinkling of hemp seeds (optional garnish)

1. If you don't already have quinoa or some other grain cooked (yay, leftovers!), you'll want to put that on first thing.
2. Gently mix the white beans, pesto, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl (if you need a good pesto recipe, check my blog at domesticaffair.ca).
3. Rinse and chop the bok choy into bite-size pieces.
4. Grab two litre-size portable containers and portion the quinoa evenly into each one. Add the bok choy (or spinach) and then the pesto and bean mixture. Drizzle with oil and season with additional salt and pepper if you think it's needed.

Serves two. Enjoy.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our aim is to:

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

CONTACT YOUR CO-OP — AND GET INVOLVED!

Board of Directors: board@karmacoop.org
Building Committee: building@karmacoop.org
Chronicle Committee: chronicleeditor@gmail.com
Events Committee: board@karmacoop.org
Finance Committee: board@karmacoop.org
Food Issues Committee: foodissues@karmacoop.org
Member Labour Coordinator: mlc@karmacoop.org
Orientation Committee: orientation@karmacoop.org
Web Committee: web@karmacoop.org

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday 11 am – 7 pm
Tuesday 11 am – 9 pm
Wednesday 11 am – 9 pm
Thursday 11 am – 9 pm
Friday 11 am – 9 pm
Saturday 10 am – 6 pm
Sunday 11 am – 5 pm

STAFF LIST

General Manager: Justin McNabb
Assistant General Manager: Michael Armstrong
Grocery Manager: Sara Pulins
Health & Beauty Manager: Sara Pulins
Shift Managers: Christine Delay, Paul Dixon, Filip Haderer, Greg Miller
Bookkeeper: Denise Stapleton
Membership Secretary: Marilou Lawrence
Member Labour Coordinator: Christine Delay
Clerks: Vanessa Butterworth, Mike Haliechuk, Sophia Muller

