



3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2001

SUSTAINABILITY I

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## The Sustainability of a Cooperative or “How This Newsletter Has a Life of Its Own”

*a letter from the board of directors*

Hello everyone! Originally this newsletter was going to be all about sustainability — renewable energy, agriculture, building, packaging, technology, etc. However, so much is going on within the Coop that we decided to devote more space to the *sustainability of People's* and explore other parts of sustainability in another issue. So, read on, fair member, and think about where you see your Co-op in ten years, how we can get there and what you can do to help.

The way we see it there are three interdependent parts to the workings of the Co-op: the staff and store, the board of directors and the membership. Together we work to accomplish the goals of providing our community with good food at a reasonable price and educating about health, food safety and the environment. It takes all of us to make this system sustainable.

### *The Staff & Store:*

Sue, Maria, Benji, Andy, Lucy, Elizabeth, Ryan, Alex, Steve and Jenny Joy are your faithful PFC staff; they keep the store looking good and full of the good food that we depend on. They work hard, often beyond the call of duty. Accolades are in order to Maria and Sue (and several die-hard volunteers) for a brilliant showing at this year's Taste of Kalamazoo — they exchanged 350lb. of sweet potato fries (!) and gallons of ginger lemonade for several thousand dollars toward the moving fund.

If you have suggestions about the store, feel free to mention them to the staff or Sue. On the flip side, if you see something that makes you proud to be a member, mention that too.

Everyone has been working hard for the move in the next year: We have a new cash register and water filter system that will move with us; personnel policies are being created and implemented; an assistant manager will be hired in the next several months (interested in the job? call Sue); and we are currently working on putting together in-services to educate the staff in areas that interest them and to improve customer service. All this helps to make the Co-op more sustainable.

### *The Board:*

The board, with staff and volunteer help, has begun to focus on several key areas:

1. *The creation of a non-profit, educational component*—In keeping with our goal to educate our community about issues related to food safety, health and the environment, we are applying for tax-exempt status. This will help in raising money and applying for grants to help to create a position for an educational coordinator; build on our environmental education series and punch up our yearly events schedule. Your ideas are welcome.

2. *The move*—There is no way for the PFC to continue to expand our grocery and educational components without expanding our space. (See the “Relocation Update” on page 5.) We have spent that past several months

actively searching for a new location. Before finding the right place, however, we need to tweak our vision and explore funding options.

**The Membership:**

You are to be congratulated. Without your commitment to shopping at People's we couldn't keep our doors open. Many of you volunteer in the store and for events, making our and the staff's job easier. You are an integral part of PFC and we appreciate all you do.

So, now we're going to move and need concrete ideas from you as to what you want in your Co-op. Three years ago we asked you for your input and your answers helped to guide us through the crisis. Now, we need your help again. Help us identify problem areas, create effective solutions and generate a vision for the future of the PFC. How? Just fill out the enclosed survey and drop it at the Coop. Easy and very important.

In addition to that key piece, we need you to consider giving your time to some of the many activities, events and functions that keep the PFC vital in our community. Some ideas:

- Run for the board of directors in March, 2002;
- Write with creative ways to fund a move, ways to build equity and so on;
- Take it on to help coordinate an event like the Spring Gathering, the Co-op Rummage Sale or Island Fest;
- Write an article for the *Coop Scoop*;
- Volunteer in the store for an hour;
- Cook on *Co-op Kitchen* on cable access or call Rhonda (383-2455) or Sue at the store for other ideas.

Thanks to everyone for continuing to help the People's Food Co-op to grow and to educate our community.

*Yours very truly,*

*Susan, Rhonda, Leslie, Cori, Fred, Earl and Chris*

**A special thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time and energy in the store, garden and events. Thanks to Dave, Tom, Shirah, Lorali, Christina, Jamie, SueAnn, Catherine, Lucy, Shannon, Paul, Dennis, George, Sara and Matt. Thanks, also, to Portage Printing for their donation of printing services.**

A hot tale for a warm day...  
**LOVE affairs of a BENCH**  
Written and Performed by the Cooperative Players with Jay Tatara

1 My heart...is unsatisfied.

2 He could not quiet his heart... on the one leg pleasure... on the other leg pain... Pain! Pleasure

3 He tried again to still his heart.

4 When a sweater got stuck in a door Pinch! The bench had its senses aroused... Product PLACEMENT

5 Stir 'til your passion subsides young one. He sought help from a master... EAST WIND Nut BUTTER

6 calm and steady our heroic bench sat and waited for evil-doers and eager bottoms...er, tired bottoms

7 Until... The eyes of the iron woman crashing about the herb aisle excited his passion once more. CLUNK HUP Hot love PANEL

8 And he fell madly in love with a grain sack. RICE

See us next time for more Co-op Comix! BZZZ

**VEGETARIAN ADVOCACY GROUP**

Have you ever wondered if your favorite restaurant grills your vegetarian meal after your friend's hamburger? Have you ever wished that more restaurants had a vegetarian menu? How about your child's school? Many communities have an advocacy group helping to educate about vegetarian and vegan lifestyles. If you are interested in helping to start such a group, call Leslie at 344-3247.

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## Book Review: *Suburban Nation*

*Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*

By Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Speck.

by Michèle Richards, member



As a just recently recognized phenomena, urban sprawl is receiving an immense amount of attention these days. Environmental think tanks have managed to weave together the threads that create our environmental destruction and label the product "urban sprawl". You notice it as you drive from downtowns all across America. The city center has decayed due to businesses and residents moving further and further out into the suburbs. As these suburbs grow (and strip malls invade the once idyllic "country"), people attempt to move further out without looking at the causes

of the degradation and their part of the solution. In steps *Suburban Nation*.

This very readable book picks apart the blight we've created for ourselves through the eyes of planners and landscape architects. From the original source, the personal auto, to the details of the aftermath, this book covers it. The authors deliver an inside look into the mechanics that began in the fifties (the auto and white flight) and how our planning laws continue to sap money, resources and people from downtowns and into the unpleasantness awaiting us at the wings of every American city. The authors also give the reader many ideas upon which the reader may act readily to combat.

I highly recommend this witty and enlightening book to whomever cares about the environment, society, and/or social equity. The way the threads tie together may surprise and inspire you.

Have you read a good book that you think the membership might find interesting? Write a review. For more information contact Chris Dille at [pickle@net-link.net](mailto:pickle@net-link.net) or 381-2716.

## Speak Out for Cleanup of the Kalamazoo River — A Citizens-Only Event

by Mary Powers, member  
and Kalamazoo drain commissioner

Citizens concerned about the public health dangers of PCB's are urged to attend this special meeting sponsored by the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council. *This open event is structured to identify citizen concerns about PCB's and the cleanup of the Allied Paper, Portage Creek, Kalamazoo River Superfund site.* We will also identify other non-Superfund related concerns such as non-point source pollution, land

use, air deposition of toxics, sediments, soil erosion and other sources of concern.

### River Roundtable #4

Monday,  
September 17, 2001  
7:00–9:00pm

Comfort Inn, Plainwell  
Michigan

For more information call the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council @ 616-373-1157; 132 N. Burdick St., Suite 203 Kalamazoo, MI 49007

If you want to help speed the cleanup of our River think about volunteering a few hours a month working on public outreach or providing financial support for the office.

## How's the Garden Growing?

by Genevieve Malek, garden manager

It is now mid-August and the Co-op Garden has seen better days. As a result of the cool temperatures early on in the spring, we had a surplus of lettuce which was sold both at the Farmers' Market and the Coop. The lettuce was also used by Maria for the heaven-sent deli wraps. Mid-summer saw extra-hot temperatures which caused the lettuces to go to seed and become bitter. I'm awaiting the arrival of a fall crop of arugula and radishes which were sown several weeks ago. Farmers' Market regulars will be tickled pink to see the Irish blue potatoes that I've been harvesting.

Working in the Co-op Garden has been an unbelievably enriching experience for me, as I've learned a lot about vegetable gardening and the PFC. I'd like to thank everyone who volunteered their time, knowledge and positive energy, without which this garden would not be what it is. There is still more to the season and I'd love it if anyone was interested in helping.

I'm already thinking about next year's season at the garden and what I will do differently. I'd like to try growing some unusual crops that aren't found at the Farmers' Market — any suggestions?

Thanks again to Conrad Kaufman, Chris, Cathy, Lucy, Shannon, Paul, Dennis, George, Sara and Matt.

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# Sustainable Energy and Cooperation

by Steve Schnaar, staff member

On some level, our energy problems are just part of the way that "civilized" peoples have treated the Earth for thousands of years — as so vast that humans couldn't possibly significantly affect it — and the way we've allowed the luxuries of one generation to become necessities for the next. Yet in recent years, the destructive and unsustainable nature of our energy use has had more to do with the fact that our socio-economic system serves greed and profits rather than human needs and cooperation.

For at least fifty years, many scientists and citizens have been sounding the alarm about fossil fuels. Extracting these fuels wrecks havoc on sensitive ecosystems and nearby waterways, and burning them blackens the air, spreads mercury and acid rain for hundreds of miles, and changes the nature of our atmosphere through releasing carbon dioxide. Whole regions and populations are poisoned and displaced for these fuels, and coal mining takes a horrible toll on the health and life-spans of the miners. On top of all these problems, fossil fuels are a limited resource which will someday run out.

In a society based on meeting the needs and health of its people and future generations, every possible step would have been taken to conserve energy and to develop cleaner, renewable power sources. Instead, we've maintained a society which uses fossil fuels as quickly as possible and virtually ignores every alternative except nuclear power, which is even more dangerous and irresponsible. A major reason for this is that the oil and mining companies have always had strong ties to the government. Thousands of times more tax money goes into subsidies and research for fossil fuels and nuclear power as for cleaner and renewable alternatives. Opposing almost the entire rest of the world, our country (the biggest polluter) ruins every international attempt to deal with the threat of global warming.

Through diplomacy and military or CIA interventions, our government ensures that multinational corporations can exploit and poison people in poor countries and steal their resources.

Rather than continue these destructive and murderous policies which serve profits rather than people, we should be striving to be more energy efficient and to use and invest in cleaner alternatives. Already, we have the technology to cheaply institute energy efficiency measures and to produce about 1/5 of our energy from wind power. Unfortunately, President Bush's energy plan is only accelerating our reckless tendencies, and it's going to take a very educated and mobilized public to turn this around. With the media so corrupted by corporate influence, we have a lot of work to do.

Yet in the long run, even energy-saving changes like implementing energy efficiency standards and utilizing wind power simply aren't going to be enough. With so many people in the world, there's just no way everyone could live as extravagantly as Americans in a just and sustainable society. We're going to need to stop being so wasteful, live simpler, use more public transportation and less fossil fuel-intensive farming practices, better designed buildings and homes, etc. In short, we need to shift over to economies based predominately on local resources and local, smaller-scale production.

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# Volunteer Compensation System to Change October 1

by Rhonda Wright, board member

We know that you volunteer because you love the Coop and want to be a part of the coolest grocery in town. However, we want to make the system benefit you even more, so we are revamping the way it works. Currently our system requires volunteers to work 5 hours/month to get a 5% discount that month. Starting October 1, after one hour worked in the store, you will receive 5% off your next \$100 of groceries. If you are a current, paid member, you receive an additional 5%, so 10% off \$100 of groceries.

The main benefit here is that volunteers will receive immediate results. No longer will you need to wait until you have worked 5 hours in a month to be considered for the discount. We will keep cards with each volunteer's name on them at the store to track hours worked and money spent. They will look something like this:

work hours	\$10 Amounts Spent @ Discount									
X	X	X	X	X						

The volunteer whose card is shown has worked one hour and has spent \$35 at an additional 5% discount.

When you intend to use your volunteer discount on groceries, alert the staff person while you are at the register to pay. If you are a member volunteer, show your card and get 10% off. Also, get this, your volunteer hours never expire!

To find out about upcoming events and other volunteer opportunities or if you have any questions call Rhonda at 383-2455.

## Relocation Update

by Sue St. Onge, store manager

The rumors are true. The Co-op is looking to expand into a larger location. We are excited about this endeavor, primarily because it means our impact within this community is expanding.

While the PFC prides itself for the service we provide to our community, it is much more than a health food store. It is a way of life. We are continually educating our community about sustainability issues and social and environmental responsibility. We believe that it is important to keep pushing through barriers which keep society unaware of the threats to our future. We feel that we will have more of an impact when we expand.

We hope to get as much feedback and support from our members as possible throughout this transition. We would like for you to start by filling out the brief survey, enclosed and returning it to the Co-op. While we have some great ideas of our expansion needs, it'd be great to hear what you think.

As far as location, I can tell you this, we are looking to stay downtown and would like to move into a space that will help us to actualize our goal of an expanded deli. Parking is a definite issue, as well as loading space. If you have any suggestions or comments, please give us a call. As always: Thanks for your support.

## from the CO-OP'S KITCHEN

### Raw Berry Pie

by ELIZABETH

*Our own Elizabeth (on very short notice and with the help of several amazing volunteers) brought David Wolf, raw foods guru and author of Raw Power!, to the Royce-Henderson Castle (generously donated by Fred—thanks, Fred) to speak at a banquet, the proceeds of which went to benefit the PFC's moving fund. In case you missed the event, we're including this great dessert recipe.*

This is a basic introduction to a fantastic raw dessert that goes over as well in the fall/winter months as it does in the dog days of summer—the least desirable time to crank up your oven for your favorite berry pie.

#### Basic Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups seeds/nuts soaked for 8–12 hrs
- 1 cup dried fruit
- 1 tbsp. water
- 2 tsp. flax (ground)

#### Super Yummy Filling:

- 1 1/2 cups almonds or cashews, soaked for 8–12 hrs
- 1/2 cup soaked dates, figs and raisins
- 1/2 frozen banana (optional)
- 1 dash vanilla
- 1 dash cinnamon
- ? blackberries/raspberries

For the crust you may choose to use any combination of raw nuts or seeds—hazelnuts, almonds, pumpkin or sunflower are some suggestions. The same goes for the dried fruit—mix and match dates, raisins, figs, prunes, or anything else your (or your family's) heart desires. After draining the nuts allow them to dry in the sun for 30–60 min. or pat dry with a towel. In a food processor, chop the nuts until they are evenly ground. Add the dried fruit and chop until they are also evenly ground. Add water while processing. The crust must appear slightly damp and hold together before adding the ground flax. Add more water if necessary and then press into an 8–9" pie pan.

To make the filling: drain the seed/nut combo and place in a blender. Add the soaked fruit, reserving the water for later use, as well as frozen banana, vanilla, cinnamon and process adding soaking water until thick and creamy. Pour this into the pie crust and arrange fresh berries in a circle or spiral pattern covering the cream filling.

This may seem like it is complicated; it is not. Decadent, healthy and delicious, but not complicated. Try it and see. For an extra treat, try the creamy filling over other fruit any day for breakfast.

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## Save the Bounty!

by Jamie Blake, local chef and writer

Canning homegrown or local produce has its obvious benefits: preserving your summer long labors, eating the best food year round, and knowing exactly what you're eating starts the list. Don't forget the human dimension. Use your canning efforts to reconnect with "lost" family members, as a learning project with your kids or my favorite, as an excuse for a party with friends.

The wine was flowing in Marty's kitchen last month as she schooled me in the peach preservation arts. Since her moving to Richland and starting a family, she and I have had fewer beer drinking sessions. We found that canning is a great way to reconnect. We each had our own agenda as well: I wanted to learn and get material for an article, she wanted to test her hypothesis that clingstone peaches are as good or better than freestone varieties for canning.

We set to work early in the day washing and sorting fruit, sanitizing jars, and readying the equipment. Marty showed me her tried and true method instructions complete with a medium syrup recipe, all in an old Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook. "Every time is a little different," she explained.

Variations in method depend on the pH of your product. Fruits with high acidity are easiest, and peaches fall into that category. Then there are differences in type, clingstone vs. freestone; and in variety, we used "baby gold." Even the

growing season fluctuations can dictate differences in method. You must be flexible in order to make things work. A good life's lesson applied when Marty increased the regular blanching time to make the peach skins come off.

By the end of the day we had a counter full of bright glassed trophies, a peach pie, leftover peaches for jam and at least one empty wine bottle. She had evidence to prove her theory. I had information for this article. We each have another great friendship memory.

Happy Harvest and Carefree Canning!

## Clean and Green: Disinfectants

by Michèle Richards, member and Americorps volunteer with the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program

As fall falls upon us, we begin to look at the common germ threat and think "oh my heavens! I must disinfect my house!" And immediately you find yourself reaching for the bleach. Put on the brakes! It's not that bad, really. There are several arguments against bleach, as well as a few for letting some of those buggers survive in your home.

Bleach is a powerful disinfectant used for many decades now, but most folks don't understand how it works. Let's look at it in a different frame of reference. Bleach, like pesticides, is a biocide. The roots mean "bio" – life, and "cide" to kill. So bleach, like pesticides, kill life. Bleach acts by ripping cells piece by piece...a little cell membrane over here, some mitochondria over there...anyway, it's not a terribly pleasant death. It does this to humans as well, though fortunately for us we're not single celled organisms.

So what can you do when it comes time to combat germs in your home? The first thing to do is relax. If no one in your home is ill, you have little to worry about. A few germs in your house will more likely boost your immune function than make you ill. And eventually, just like antibiotics, bugs will become resistant to even

bleach. The next thing to do often is wash your hands. Dirty hands are one of the primary vectors of disease.

If there are surfaces you desperately want to manage, there are several options that are far less toxic than bleach. Borax is a mineral that acts as a mild disinfectant. You can make a solution of it and clean surfaces, boost your laundry with it (it does have a brightening effect but is color safe), and clean cloth diapers with it. Ammonia also works well for surfaces and laundry, but it's a little unpleasant to work with. If these items are too toxic for you, tea tree oil diluted in water or water and Dr. Bronner's Sal Suds will fight bacteria, but the jury's still out on its virucidal properties.

### Mary B. Powers Metalsmith

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# So, What's a Co-op? —Part I

by Kim Patrie, member

When an acquaintance asked me that question, I hesitated; how could I put it succinctly? A co-op is much more than a storefront, but I wasn't sure why. Then a fellow co-oper directed me to the Rochdale ethics.

Rochdale (rhymes with "scotchdale") was the first successful cooperative organized in England in 1844 by disgruntled textile workers (see cartoon below for more of that story). The "rules" of their organization came to be known as the Rochdale ethics, and every cooperative in the world today uses this "code of conduct" as their basis. Below is a very brief synopsis of the Rochdale ethics:

### 1. Open, voluntary membership —

Anyone can join a co-op, so long as there is no perceived intent on their part to do harm to the co-op.

### 2. Democratic control —

One member, one vote. When all members participate everyone contributes to the decisions made.

### 3. Limited return on capital —

Members supply a share of the capital needed to equip the co-op, and the co-op uses that capital to serve the member. This basically limits an interest rate in order to protect the individual members and the co-op from exploiting each other for monetary gain.

### 4. Organized for Service, not for profit —

When we choose to serve, all the members benefit. So what do we do with the "profit"? a. Further develop the business, b. Provide more services, c. Distribute it back to members in proportion to their transactions.

### 5. Education —

The idea here is to train individuals in the concepts necessary to enable the cooperative to conform to the members' will. This in turn instills the will to control the cooperative democratically.

### 6. Cooperation between cooperatives —

Promoting cooperation on personal, organizational,

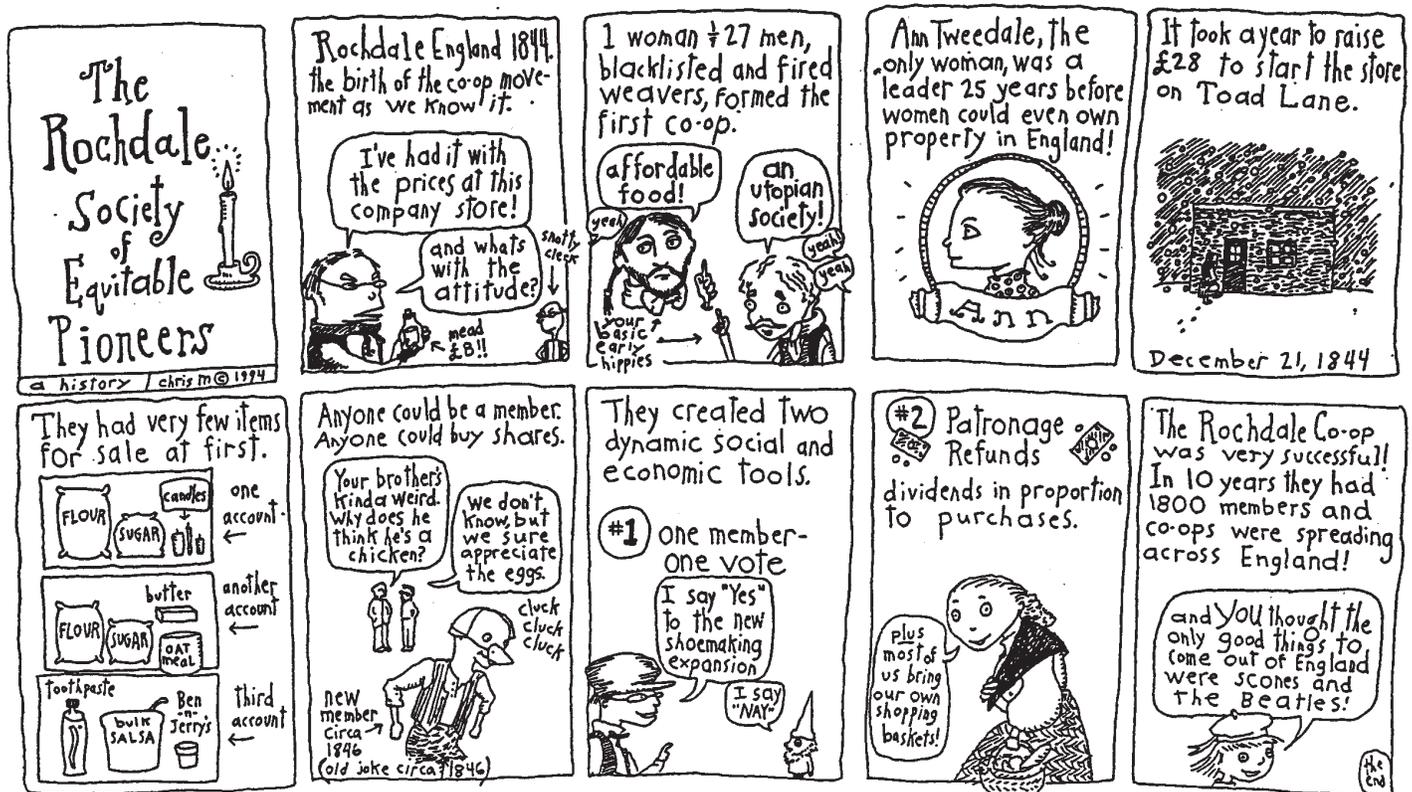
and worldwide levels will make the world a safer, more pleasant place. Presuming a mutuality of interests bridges the differences between all the people of the world.

### 7. Political and religious neutrality —

Within the co-op, members must give first priority to the cooperative's purposes shared in common with the other members. A cooperative that ignores this principle hurts itself by alienating members (or potential members).

So there you have it. The cooperative world view is alive and well in Kalamazoo, and through our efforts it can continue to grow and spread. Hopefully you've been inspired to make our co-op a better place; we'll all benefit. And the next time someone asks you, "What's a co-op?", smile, assume your cooperative obligation to educate, give them a (VERY) abridged earful, then invite them to become a member!

*Kim has been involved with various types of cooperatives as a volunteer, board member, and employee for 14 years. She lives in Parchment with her husband and 5 kids, 3 of whom she homeschools.*





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**Community Events Calendar:**

- Sept— **Co-op Garden Workday**
- Oct Every Wednesday, 5:30–7:30pm (any amount of time will be much appreciated)  
 2119 N. Westnedge Ave.
- Sept 18 **Permaculture Learning Rhizome**  
 A Workshop on Permaculture Principles  
 presented by Jay Tatar and KCGI members at the Royce-Henderson Castle  
 call Tyler Bassett for more information: 385-4954
- Oct 8 **Board Meeting**  
 PFC, 7pm
- Oct 9 **Summer Ed Series**  
*Co-op Kitchen* with Maria Panone—Great ideas for local, fall produce.  
 MSU Extension, Rm 303, 6–8pm
- Oct 28 **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Fiesta & Salsa Contest**  
 Bring a dish, some friends and expect incredible food, local entertainment and great company. Kraftbrau, 2pm to Midnight. Tickets are \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members.
- Nov 12 **Board Meeting**  
 PFC, 7pm

If you have items you wish to see included in the Events Calendar please send them to [pickle@net-link.net](mailto:pickle@net-link.net) or drop it at the Co-op, Attn: *Coop Scoop*.

**K-zoo Community Gardens Initiative**

Even though this summer growing season is winding down, KCGI is still going strong! At our weekly meetings we will be discussing future educational events, seed saving, cold-frame gardening and our two undeveloped sites in the Edison and Eastside Neighborhoods among other concerns. Join us anytime!  
*Sunday noon @ 124 Lovell St. (Infoshop)*

**Wish List**

- computer
- a CPA with some free time
- empty baskets for holiday baskets
- calculators
- volunteer coordinator
- stereo receiver/boom box

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