

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOOD CO-OP

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NEWSLETTER - AUTUMN 2012

Helen Caldicott to Give Talk in Katoomba on Japanese Food Safety Post Fukushima

The Blue Mountains Food Co-Op is delighted to announce it has invited Dr Helen Caldicott to come and speak to our members on the crucial topic of "Is Food from Japan Safe Post Fukushima?"

Dr Caldicott will speak at 7.30pm on Wednesday 30 May in the Grand Dining Room of the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba. Ticket prices are: \$15 non-members, \$10 members and concessions.

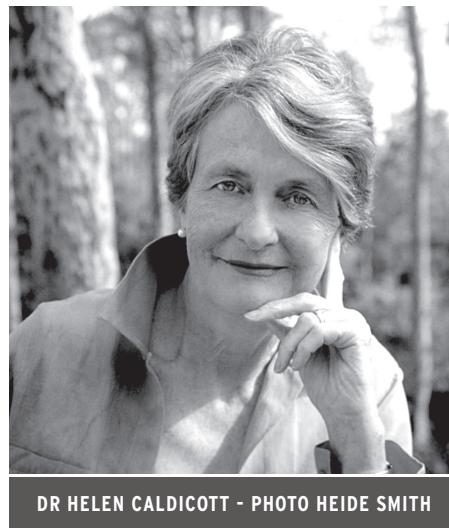
She has indicated she is preparing this talk especially for the Co-op, and is not booked to deliver it elsewhere. This is a unique opportunity for members to get reliable and up to date information on the safety of food from Japan in the wake of the March 2011 tsunami and meltdown of reactors at the nuclear power station at Fukushima that resulted in large-scale releases of radiation into the atmosphere and ocean.

Named by the Smithsonian Institute as one of the most influential women of the 20th century, Dr Helen Caldicott is a renowned anti-nuclear environmental activist.



Born in Melbourne, she gained her medical degree from the University of Adelaide in 1961. She later moved to the United States, where she was an instructor in Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. She resigned in 1980 to work full-time on the prevention of nuclear war, and has devoted herself ever since to a passionate international campaign to educate people everywhere about the medical hazards of the nuclear age, and on ways to stop environmental destruction. She was personally nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by US scientist and Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling, and currently divides her time between Australia and the United States, where she lectures.

LARRY BUTTROSE



DR HELEN CALDICOTT - PHOTO HEIDE SMITH

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EASTER OPENING HOURS

GOOD FRIDAY:	CLOSED
EASTER SATURDAY:	8.30-5.00
EASTER SUNDAY:	10.00-3.00
EASTER MONDAY:	10.00-3.00

Japanese Food Update

Following the Tsunami in Japan last year, and the subsequent damage to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, we are continuing to monitor and assess the safety of imported Japanese foods. Despite reassurance from AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) and FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) who have so far found all imported Japanese food to be considered within internationally accepted safe limits there are still strong concerns regarding food safety.

Subsequently the Co-op has not purchased any Japanese seaweed products harvested since the event and we are currently sourcing sea vegetable products from elsewhere.

For a full update on the safety of Japanese food products please come to Helen Caldicott's talk in Katoomba on 30th May.

Just a reminder -the popular dulse leaf and flakes continue to be of Canadian origin.

Tasmanian Wakame Now in Stock

The seaweed wakame, Undaria pinnatifida, began growing in the pristine waters around Tasmania after being accidentally introduced in discharged ballast from Japanese ships in the 1980s. It is a great source of minerals including iodine, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and trace amounts of zinc, copper, manganese and selenium. In addition, wakame contains beta carotene and folate, along with low levels of vitamin K, vitamin C, niacin, choline and vitamin E.

Try the Tasmanian wakame in soups and simmered dishes or try deep frying to make crunchy yummy chips!

To use just soak a small amount of chopped wakame in water for 5 – 10 minutes before adding soaking water and wakame to your dish. Remember dried wakame will expand by up to 10 times its size when soaked so a small amount goes a long way.



Fresh Tempeh from St Peters

Following an enthusiastic recommendation from Co-op supplier and member Gary Hepworth, we are now stocking fresh unpasteurised tempeh. Daniel Yap produces small batches of unpasteurised tempeh in his factory in St Peters and has been supplying a number of Sydney outlets including Alfalfa House. Word of mouth of the tasty tempeh has been spreading quickly and discerning mountain folk will now be able to buy it fresh at the Co-op.

Tempeh is a complete protein which contains all the essential amino acids. Because the tempeh is unpasteurised, the benefits of the enzymes, vitamins and the fungus, which is part of the fermentation process, are not destroyed. The tempeh can be thinly sliced, dipped in soy or salted water and deep fried or marinated in a sauce of your choice and slowly simmered. Because the tempeh is a fresh product it does have a very short shelf life. We will be receiving our supplies every Thursday with the fridge goods delivery so get in quick, you probably won't be able to wait to get home and eat it! Enjoy!

Rumour has it this is the yummiest tempeh you will find anywhere.

Hemp Seeds and Hemp Oil now at the Co-op!

An Australian grown super-food? A plant based protein source of Omega-3 and Omega-6? A sustainable farming product? It must be hemp! But don't try eating your clothes or ingesting funny cigarettes, instead come to the Co-op and stock up on our new hemp seeds and hemp oil. As well as the aforementioned essential fatty acids, hemp is an excellent form of protein (33%) and can be used in a variety of sweet and savoury recipes. For more information see www.hempfoods.com.au/nutrition and www.hempfarm.com.au



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Volunteer at the Co-op

*SHOP SMARTER, EAT HEALTHIER AND
SAVE MONEY AT YOUR CO-OP*

Thanks so much to all our wonderful vannies who help with filling, chopping, cleaning and a multitude of other things that help to keep the shop running smoothly and efficiently.

If you haven't already volunteered then consider putting your name down to do a few hours at the Co-op in return for even greater savings!

You can do 4 hours volunteer work in a month and receive an extra 20% discount on your shopping up to a total of \$250. You can do this in either one 4 hour block or two 2 hour blocks. If you're interested just ask one of the staff at the counter to put your name down. If you have trouble with lifting or heavy work, just ask about some of the other lighter jobs you could do.

It's a great way to become more involved, learn more about the products we stock and save money!!

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Enquiries Mike 0403969336**

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST?

You've all heard the saying 'Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dinner like a pauper'. Makes sense when you think about it - but how many of us actually eat like that? Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day since it sets you up with the fuel you need for the rest of the day - well at least the morning. You could say **YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT - FOR BREAKFAST**.

The following suggestions are sourced from passionate Co-op breakfast eaters including members, staff, directors and from the legendary Kay Ridgway, a local naturopath who volunteers in the shop every second Wednesday to answer health and nutrition questions.

KAY'S BREAKFAST TIPS:

Try to think about the next meal in advance so that you've always got some nutritious and sustaining options and don't need to rely on quick junk food. Try preparing something the night before like:

- Soak grains for porridge
- Soak dried fruit for a delicious fruit compote
- Make a tray of polenta to have the next morning with poached eggs and greens if you are on gluten free diet.
- Stew some seasonal fruit to have with yogurt or porridge.
- Make up a batch of pancake mixture so that it's all ready to go in the morning.
- For a sustaining breakfast you can't go past eggs for a complete protein and greens to clear the liver. Think green omelet or poached eggs with steamed greens.
- If you can't face a big meal first thing in the morning, or if you're a commuter try starting the day with some fruit and yogurt and take a piece of frittata with you to work or school to eat later in the morning.
- Adding cinnamon to your breakfast is great for:
 - » Regulating blood sugar levels
 - » Helping to control overgrowth of yeasts and fungus in the body
 - » Boosting brain function

HEARTY GRAIN PORRIDGE (CONTAINS GLUTEN)

With the cooler months fast approaching it's time to be eating warming porridge. As an alternative to the usual oats Kay recommends the following combination of whole grains to provide slow release energy to get you through the morning.

- Oat groats
- Pearl barley
- Whole spelt
- Buckwheat

Soak equal parts of each grain overnight in hot water.

In the morning cook for about 5 minutes with extra water or milk as needed, adding your choice of dried fruit, chopped apple or pear and cinnamon. Serve with yogurt, ground linseed and the other usual porridge suspects like stewed fruit and your choice of milk.

NO KNEAD BREAD RECIPE (CONTAINS GLUTEN)

For those who love toast for breakfast, this is the easiest and one of the tastiest bread recipes around. It takes a long time to rise but hardly any time to make. Try it with spelt flour and don't be afraid to experiment with extra goodies such as seeds and kibbled grains.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose or bread flour
- 1/4 teaspoon of dry yeast

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 5/8 cups of lukewarm water
- You'll need a heavy covered pot (5 litres or larger cast iron, heavy stainless steel, pyrex, ceramic, enamel...something that can go into a hot oven.)

METHOD

- Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly in a big bowl
- Add the water and stir until a wet shaggy dough forms.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and rest in a warm place for 18 hours. It will double in size, bubble and long gluten strands will form.
- Tip the dough on to a floured surface. Fold ends of dough over a few times and shape into a ball.
- Generously dust a cotton tea-towel with flour and lay the towel in a bowl. Put the dough seam side down on top of towel and cover with the ends of the towel. Rest for 2 hours.
- 30 mins before your dough is ready preheat oven to 220c. Put your heavy covered pot into the oven as it heats.
- Your dough should have doubled in size. When dough is ready, carefully remove pot from oven. Slide your hand under towel and turn dough over into pot, seam side up. Shake pan once or twice if dough is unevenly distributed; it will straighten out as it bakes. Cover with lid and bake 30 minutes, then remove lid and bake another 15 to 30 minutes, until loaf is browned. Cool on a rack.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/08/dining/08imrex.html>

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST?

MIKE B'S BREAKFAST PANCAKES (GLUTEN FREE)

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup buckwheat flour
- 1/2 cup brown rice flour
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp gluten free baking powder
- Handful of shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp of psyllium husks
- Rice milk – add to right consistency

METHOD

- Combine dry ingredients, add egg and rice milk.
- Stir thoroughly to add some air.
- Fry in a bit of coconut oil.
- Spread with a thin layer of unhulled tahini, add chopped banana, mixed berries, coconut yoghurt and maple syrup. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts.

Mike makes enough pancakes for a week and keeps them in the fridge, heating them as needed.

LARRY'S YOGHURT (GLUTEN FREE)

You don't need powders, packets and yoghurt machines to make your own plain yoghurt at home.

All you need is milk and a little of your last batch of yoghurt.

1. Pour 2 litres of your favourite top quality organic/biodynamic milk into a saucepan and bring to near-boil (bubbling) on the stove.
2. Allow the milk to cool a little and pour into clean glass jars.
3. Allow the milk to cool further until it is between hot and warm (it's a touch thing - by trial and error you'll work out the right heat for optimum yoghurt). Add a tablespoon of your last batch of yoghurt to each jar and stir in.
4. Put lids on the jars and put in a small cardboard box or carton filled with packing material and/or tea towels to keep it warm. Close up the box and put it in a small cupboard that you won't open until next morning.
5. Next take jars of yoghurt out of box and refrigerate.

- 2 eggs
- Salt and pepper to season

METHOD

- Fry onions and garlic in a little olive oil in a small pan.
- Add tomatoes and cook for a few minutes until soft.
- Crack eggs on top of tomato mixture.
- Cook with lid on until egg whites are firm.
- Sprinkle herbs on top.
- Great with slices of fried/grilled polenta or gluten free toast.

JOHN CHAPMAN'S BREKKIE SEEDS (GLUTEN FREE)

John reckons this recipe is an excellent energy booster and helps with regularity.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Buckwheat
- 1 cup Organic raisins
- 1 cup Rice bran
- 1/2 cup Sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup Sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup Linseed seeds
- 1/2 cup Pepitas seeds
- 1/2 cup Chia seeds
- 1/2 cup Poppy seeds
- 1/2 cup Amaranth seeds
- 1/2 cup Quinoa seeds
- 1/2 cup Dried Cranberries

INGREDIENTS - 1 SERVE

- 2 large tomatoes chopped
- Seasonal herbs such as parsley, basil, dill

METHOD

- Mix together and store in a large jar. Does not need to be in the fridge.
- Serve 1/4 cup of the mix soaked overnight in double quantity water per person and top with your favourite fruit and yogurt.



PHOTO BY MIKE BAIRD

THE BENEFITS OF ORGANIC FOOD

The common word “organic” simply indicates something living, or something derived from a living organism. However, over recent years the term has taken on a much more specific meaning in the context of food production; and when a food is certified “Organic”, in this new sense of the word, then a great many good things are implied. In this short article I examine both the environmental and health benefits that come from supporting and eating organic food!

WORDS AND PICTURES BY
CRAIG LINN

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

First, let us acknowledge that all food production will in some way disrupt and alter the pristine natural environment. What differentiates the organic approach from most conventional agriculture is that organic methods explicitly seek to minimise impacts on surrounding ecosystems, ensure that farms are biodiverse in their own right, and improve the health and resilience of the soil from year to year. Organic farming practices (See Reference 1) include the following.

- The soil's organic matter content and biological activity are increased through methods such as composting, cultivation of green manures as part of crop rotation programs, and well timed minimal tillage techniques – all within the context of conserving and recycling nutrients on a farm wide basis.
- Organic and mineral (e.g. rock dust) fertilisers are used where required, rather than synthetically derived and highly soluble fertilisers which are prohibited in organic farming.
- There is a focus on intrinsically resilient and locally adapted crops; any pests, diseases, or weeds are managed primarily by biological and physical means. Synthetically derived pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides are prohibited, and there are extremely strict controls on the use of naturally derived agents (e.g. pyrethrins).
- An absolute prohibition exists on the use of genetically modified



organisms and their products; similarly the use of ionising radiations and nanotechnology is prohibited.

- All livestock are raised in free-range open-air environments that allow for the expression of natural behaviours. Animal feed is fresh on farm or itself organically certified if brought in.
- Synthetic growth hormones are prohibited, as is the routine use of antibiotics on livestock.
- Buffer zones are provided, as required, to protect adjacent natural areas or to protect the organic farm itself from unwanted drift of sprays etc from adjacent non-organic properties.

Such practices result in a healthy environment for farm workers and animals, as well as producing food that is safe and healthy for consumers.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Nutrient runoff to adjacent lands and watercourses is minimised, as organic methods build fertility through increasing stable organic matter (humus) rather than by using highly soluble synthetic fertilisers. Similarly, as synthetic toxins (i.e. pesticides etc) are not used on organic farms, there is absolutely minimal toxic runoff to adjacent lands and watercourses.

Organic standards (1) specify that more than 5% of total farm lands must be devoted to “*regionally appropriate tree, bush and/or native grassland areas so as to enhance on-farm flora and fauna protection and biodiversity.*” Many organic farmers adopt a much higher figure: 20% is not uncommon.

Over the long term, with increasing climate instability likely, organic systems

will actually yield more. Long term (30 year) studies by the Rodale Institute in the U.S. have shown that in typical years organic and conventional systems have fairly similar yields, but in adverse years (very dry or very wet) the greater resilience of the organic soil produces significantly greater yields. (2)

Organic farms have a smaller carbon footprint, using up to a third less fossil fuel than conventional farms - primarily by not using synthetic nitrogen fertilisers which are extremely energy intensive to produce. No-till organic systems can produce even greater fossil fuel savings. (3,4)

Organic farms are also superb systems for the sequestration of carbon, for the simple reason that the primary focus of organic agriculture has always been building fertility through increasing the amount of stable organic matter (i.e. carbon) in soils. (3)

Finally, organic farms through their dedicated natural areas, their shelter belts, their crop biodiversity, and their overall toxin free nature provide a safe haven and respite for flora and fauna (including humans!) in this increasingly toxic and industrialised world.

HEALTH BENEFITS

ORGANIC FOOD IS CLEANER FOOD:

The earlier section on environmental benefits made it clear that organic production is a remarkably clean and natural process. The best way to appreciate how clean and natural the organic way is, is to have a look at the alternative of conventional agriculture which is based on the heavy use of synthetic fertilisers and toxins. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in conjunction with the National Toxics Network (NTN) summarise Australia's poor regulatory track record in conventional agriculture as follows:

"About 75% of the pesticides approved for use in Australia were moved into our current system 15 years ago, as a legacy,

without a modern safety assessment. Some were first registered as far back as the 1950s.

FACTS ABOUT PESTICIDES:

- More than 80 of the pesticides registered in Australia are no longer authorised in Europe*
- At least 17 pesticides registered for use in Australian agriculture are suspected carcinogens, and 48 are potential hormone disruptors*
- 8 chemicals with known safety risks have been under review by our regulator for more than 13 years, some for more than 15 years*
- Over 40 chemicals have been nominated for review because of concerns about their safety*

Australia's chemical review process simply has not been able to keep up with the task of addressing risks to human health and the environment." (5,6)

This record of inadequate assessment of many of these individual chemicals is bad enough, but in addition one needs to consider the following points.

- Many of these pesticides are systemic and will be found in all of the plant's tissues. They cannot be washed off!
- It is often said by the chemicals industry that many of these chemicals "decay" relatively quickly. What is not so often said is that the decay products are sometimes actually more dangerous than the original chemicals.
- When these chemicals are used or ingested in combination they will have completely unknown synergistic (cocktail) impacts on health.

The above are not just fringe concerns. In the United States in 2010 the well respected President's Cancer Panel (PCP) released a major report (7) that explicitly recommends "choosing, to the extent possible, food grown without pesticides or chemical fertilizers and washing conventionally grown produce to remove residues [if possible]" in

order to reduce the risk of cancer.

ORGANIC FOOD IS NATURE'S CREATION:

Toxic chemicals are just one of the risks. Large scale agri-business and biotech corporations want complete control of the world food chain, and one of their strategies is reckless in the extreme: life-form ownership via Genetically Modified (GM) crops and animals. Evidence of the significant health risks associated with GM foods continues to mount, so much so that the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) has stated that: *"There is more than a casual association between GM foods and adverse health effects. There is causation as defined by Hill's Criteria in the areas of strength of association, consistency, specificity, biological gradient, and biological plausibility."*

(8) With the AAEM further asking: *"Physicians to educate their patients, the medical community, and the public to avoid GM foods when possible and provide educational materials concerning GM foods and health risks."* (8) Very importantly, organically certified food is as far as is humanly possible completely free of GM contamination.

ORGANIC FOOD IS MORE NUTRITIOUS:

The North American Organic Trade Association (OTA) put it this way:

"Growing crops in healthy soils results in food products that offer healthy nutrients. There is mounting evidence that organically grown fruits, vegetables and grains may offer more of some nutrients, including vitamin C, iron, magnesium

(CONT. PAGE 8)



and phosphorus, and less exposure to nitrates and pesticide residues than their counterparts grown using synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.”

While the OTA are being cautious in their statement, the evidence is growing steadily that organic food is simply better food in nutritional terms than that produced by conventional (synthetic chemical-based) agriculture. For a comprehensive list and summary (including links) of just some of the scientific evidence supporting this statement see reference (9).

OTHER HEALTH BENEFITS:

In addition to the above organically certified food is not subject to irradiation, nor may it contain nanoparticles. It is simply good clean real food.

THE ISSUE OF PRICE

To conclude, it is often remarked that organic produce is great but it is too expensive! The answer to this is actually complex as it involves an examination of the true cost of the food we eat to our own personal health and the health of our planet. However, in brief, the cost of organic food accurately reflects the cost to produce real food over the long term in a manner that does not destroy soil and biodiversity nor treat animals as factory commodities - that is a truly sustainable and humane food production system. Conventional, synthetic chemical-based, food production is all too frequently not really agriculture at all, but rather a form of mining that poisons the environment and in the long run depletes the soil, depletes biodiversity, and depletes food of its vitality. In short, the true price of food will always be paid, either now in cash, or in the future through impoverished food and a degraded environment passed on to our children and grandchildren.

But rather than leave it at that, I have done a preliminary, but still reasonably comprehensive, price comparison of

organic food versus conventional food in the Blue Mountains. The comparison covered a broad spectrum of foods with an emphasis on unprocessed whole foods. The findings (excluding anomalies) may be summarised thus: yes, there is usually a premium to be paid for organic food, but not always; prices ranged from 15% less for organics through to 90% more for organics, with the average coming in at around a 25% premium. This figure can however be reduced significantly by a little astute purchasing (eating in season and buying staples in bulk) and some home gardening. And very importantly, for the vast majority of organic items examined, the BM Food Co-op had the best price!

While having to pay more may seem daunting, keep the benefits prominently in mind! Organic production means a vastly cleaner environment for all of us and better nutrition, and hence well being, for each of us. In my view, such benefits are a bargain; good health is, quite simply, priceless.

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About the Author: Craig Linn, a retired academic, coordinates the BM Food Coop's GM-Free Working Group, and is Project Officer (Food and Environment) for the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

THE PURPOSE OF A TREE IS TO GIVE FRUIT BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY GARDENS NEEDS YOUR HELP

Jed Walker

Blue Mountains Community Gardens is seeking more volunteers! At present we don't have enough people to efficiently assist this idyllic site to produce the abundance of which it is capable. You may have your own garden, but volunteering with us is a gift to the community: the fruits of our labour are for all to enjoy. We need people to help build soil, plant, advise, prune, treat pests, learn stuff, drink tea, eat food, plan, map and organise – there's something for everyone. You might like to adopt a tree, cultivate a corner, run a workshop, get fit and strong or just hang out and pull the odd weed. We've got lots on the go and you might just go home with a basket full of food.

Best of all you can give the world some fruit, so nobody can cut you down!

We're in Harold Hodgeson Park, Victoria St, North Katoomba.

- Volunteers meet on Fridays 10.30am–2pm and Sundays 10am–12 midday
- turn up during volunteer sessions or visit the website for more information: bluemountainscommunitygardens.org



GROWING LOCAL

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR LOCAL GROWERS

Steve Alton

Take a compacted gravel car park, a big pile of lucerne hay, some manure and two years of love, passion and an “exuberant amount of time” and you’ll be amazed at what can be grown in Katoomba, just 800m from the Co-op.

Steve Alton has been a passionate gardener for most of his life. He learnt the art from his father, who was a ‘victory gardener’, growing produce in allotments as a necessity during wartime. For Steve, gardening is an essential part of life and he has always had gardens wherever he has lived. Katoomba has been one of the more challenging places to garden due to the poor soil, cold winters and erratic rainfall.



Steve sees his garden as an example of what’s possible in Katoomba, especially when it’s important to start considering issues such as food miles and food security. Many of you will be familiar with Steve’s bountiful beans, luscious lettuces, superb silverbeet and hearty herbs all tied up in flax bundles that he brings in to the Co-op several times a week. And he still has enough left over to feed himself!

So how did he go from having a compacted gravel carpark to an incredibly productive garden in just two years? The first step was to determine the sunniest part of the site. Then he mattocked up the gravel to loosen it and marked it out into rows. Thirty-five kilograms of seed potatoes were then laid on top of the gravel, sprinkled with blood and bone and covered with lucerne mulch. As the potatoes grew, more mulch was added, becoming rich, deep compost over time. The potato crop served several purposes. Not only did it provide Steve with an ample food source for the following year, the potato



roots helped to aerate the soil and gravel base of the garden and the lucerne mulch layers formed the basis for the deep raised beds which now grow a wide variety of vegetables. Elsewhere in the garden fruit trees are already established and bearing fruit, thriving on a rich diet of mulch and manure.

Steve is a great recycler, sourcing windbreaks, wire and netting from council cleanups. An old bathtub and a row of repurposed eskies collect water from the roof of the house to use on the garden and a friend collects old toilet rolls for Steve to use for raising seedlings. That way the plants have a head start before the snails get them and the toilet rolls can be planted straight into the ground to reduce the risk of transplant shock. Steve makes most of his compost in trenches to avoid double handling, but every now and again lashes out and builds a hot compost pile. A forty four gallon drum near the veggie patch contains a potent brew of liquid manure (a mixture of cow and horse manure in a sack suspended in water) which gets diluted and poured on the garden once a week during the growing season.



Steve is keenly aware of his local ecosystem and his garden is a constant source of wonder. He regards it respectfully as “the microcosm that feeds you.” You may remember his engraved pumpkins from the last couple of years reminding us of the fecundity of the earth, to forgive and not to treat the soil like dirt.

BY HALIN NIEUWENHUYSE

IMAGES BY ALISON GARLAND & STEVE ALTON

BOOK REVIEW

BY AMANDA QUINN

Where am I Wearing: A Global Tour to the Countries, Factories, and People that Make Our Clothes, by Kelsey Timmerman.

Journalist and activist Kelsey Timmerman wakes up one day and ponders: where have these clothes come from? Who made them? This sets him on a journey to answer these questions, literally going to the countries and factories where the clothing he is wearing has been made.

The working conditions vary from country to country, but on the whole conditions for workers don't look so great, to say the least.

What makes the book most interesting is that the author meets with the people who make our clothes and puts a name, a face and a story to them. He tells us what these people sacrifice daily to work in clothing factories.

Timmerman doesn't simply look at the appalling pay, terrible physical conditions and long working hours, he examines the bigger picture of developing countries' whole way of life and the idea that making cheap items for the west has in many ways become a backbone of survival that comes at great cost both to the people that produce them and to the planet as a whole.

So much is being lost on multiple levels for the young people who work in the factories. They often miss out on getting an education, raising their children and being with their families and community. Tradition and knowledge about the land and local agriculture dwindle as people from rural areas leave to work in factories based in the city. The environment also suffers as soil, air and water quality diminish with the large output of waste and pollution produced by the textile industry in countries that have little to no environmental protection legislation.

Timmerman shows it's not a simple black and white issue and that the whole industry needs to change. Capitalism and corporations based on self interest and profit rather than fairness have created multibillion dollar brands that in many cases are just that: a brand. The corporation itself is not skilled in making shoes, clothes etc, the corporation is skilled at

promoting its product to make large profits for its shareholders.

Timmerman points out that almost half of the world's shoes are made in China. At one point he visits a factory to find out what it's like for the people that make his Teva sandals. He finds that the people work up to 100 hours a week, have very poor living conditions and in many cases not only are they paid poorly, they are not paid their overtime. They are expected to make the stuff for free!

As consumers we want to know where our food is grown, how it is produced and what's in it. The same interest should be applied to the clothing and other 'stuff' we buy. We have a right to know where our clothing is made, where the materials are sourced to make the product, what the working conditions are like, how the making of that product affects people, animals and the environment, so that we can make an informed choice.

This may sound like a dark topic, but within the book there is hope. Hearing the stories of the people who make clothing for a living is deeply humbling. They are living lives we could hardly imagine, yet within this we hear of hope of friendships and dreams they have for the future.

Acknowledging the reality of the consumer world is liberating. Big business may have set people up to act like mindless consumers who go from one shopping experience to the next, but I think the majority of people do care about human rights, fair treatment of animals, the environment and ethics. At least I'm hopeful that we do. We need intelligent media and business to inform the public, to be transparent and to 'play fair'. As consumers we can participate in change through asking questions, buying second-hand or swapping, looking for alternatives, supporting individuals and businesses that are trading fairly, opening conversations on the topic with others and educating ourselves. Ultimately, being a responsible consumer comes down to not buying stuff that we don't need and re-thinking our choices before we open our wallets.

Most of us have walked past a rack at a mega stall and thought: how can they sell those tops for \$5? Well this is how - they pay their workers next to nothing and take a whole lot in profit.

SWAP TIL YOU DROP: THE ART OF CLOTHES SWAPPING

BY AMANDA QUINN

For some people the New Year or a change of season is a good time to clear out the wardrobe of all the things they don't wear, that don't fit or just plain don't suit them. As the saying goes 'one person's trash is someone else's treasure', and what better way to share the treasure, save the planet and have an excuse for a tea party than to organise a clothes swap? Get together with a few of your friends or acquaintances that you suspect might have amazing hand-me-downs and let the swapping begin!

For me, swapping clothes for the past eight years or so has created opportunities to connect with a circle of cherished friends, meeting new ones as the circle grows, and a time for sharing or storytelling. Our clothes have stories, some more than we wish: the jumper your grandmother made you but you never wore, the shirt from an ex-lover you can't bear to wear again, the dress you can't believe you ever wore. As our clothes move on, these stories move with them and take on a new life.

Maybe you have your clothes swap down pat? Me and the posse of friends I have the privilege to swap with have some rules to the game so to speak, some structure, and being a self confessed organised freak, I'm all the calmer that we do.

THE RULES

Around ten people are invited to the swap. The venue is swapped between homes to share it around. An invitation goes out and the date and time are booked in. We allow around three hours for the swap (time for lots of tea, chat and food). Once an invitation is received we reply and then gather the clothes we wish to swap. Naturally we all bring along a plate of food to share! After about half an hour chat time we sit in a circle with our bags of clothes to swap. One person shows their wares at a time. At this point people can express interest in the items - if only one person wants item they get it! If more than one person wants the item it goes in the 'fight pile.' If no one wants the item it goes in a bag for charity or is saved for a future swap.

Once everyone has swapped their stuff we move on to the fight pile. This is the time when those who are keen on the 'fight pile' strut their stuff. For those familiar with the film Zoolander, this is where we pull out our 'blue steel' - our most dagged up poses and facial expressions to achieve the winning look. Once the 'fight pile' is complete, generally we sort it out quickly and then move onto our last round of tea and then clean up.

In the weeks following the swap, it's fun to watch each other wearing one another's clothes and remarking how fabulous we all look.

BATHURST WHOLEFOOD CO-OPERATIVE NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS



The Bathurst Wholefood Co-operative (BWC) commenced trading on Friday 20th January 2012, although it took over a year for community momentum to sufficiently build through the BWC Board of five members to over 150 local BWC customer members. The first year of existence involved raising funds, awareness and preparing for the eventual shop opening.

You can find the BWC in Shop 5 of Macquarie Plaza fronting the main street (William) of Bathurst, with accessible parking, wheelchair access in a central location – as requested by our members.

Bathurst Co-op offers reciprocal membership discount to members of the Blue Mountains Co-op. So drop in if you're in the area.

Website: www.bathurstwholefood.com

OPENING HOURS

Thursday 9.30am - 5.30pm

Friday 9.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday 9.30am - 2.30pm

WHAT'S IN SEASON?

LOCAL PLUMS
PUMPKINS
LOCAL APPLES
PEARS
FIGS
LOCAL QUINCES
NASHI PEARNS

PUMPKIN
ZUCCHINI
KALE
LOCAL SILVERBEET
TOMATOES
GARLIC

THE BACK PAGE

NEW POS SYSTEM UPDATE

You will be pleased to know the new point of sale system is slowly getting the kinks ironed out of it and is getting faster. Thank you for your patience during this settling in period.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

We hope to implement scannable membership cards in the very near future so please keep in the habit of showing your membership card when you shop. This will save us all an enormous amount of time.

YOUR SHOPPING HISTORY

Just to let you know—the information retained on the Co-op retail system is only used for Co-op planning and purchasing purposes.

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUGGESTIONS

Marlena, one of our dedicated Directors, sends a big thank you to everyone who made the time to contribute to the Golden Creative and Innovative Ideas Box. Look out for a summary of the collection in the next newsletter.

BLUE MOUNTAINS
FOOD CO-OP
EST. 1981

OPENING HOURS

Monday	9.00-am 6.00pm
Tuesday	9.00-am 6.00pm
Wednesday	9.00-am 6.00pm
Thursday	9.00-am 6.30pm
Friday	9.00-am 6.00pm
Saturday	8.30-am 5.00pm
Sunday	10.00-am 4.30pm

Public Holidays 10.00-am 3.00pm
Shop 1&2 Jones House Ha'penny Lane
(underneath the Post Office)

PHONE: 02 4782 5890
EMAIL: hello.foodcoop@exemail.com.au
WEB: www.bmfoodcoop.com.au
POST: P.O. Box 305,
Katoomba 2780

CALLING FOR YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPES FOR OUR NEW WEBSITE!

We would love your favorite recipes to share with others on our website.

If you have any tried and tested favourites that you'd love everyone to enjoy, please send as a word document to Halin at editor: editor.foodcoop@exemail.com.au

Please attach a picture too if you have one either of the ingredients, the finished product or you and/or your family eating it.

ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER

If you have something to offer our community and would like everyone to find out, send your enquiries to Halin at: editor.foodcoop@exemail.com.au or leave a message at the Co-op.



PUMPKIN BY STEVE ALTON