

# The Chronicle

Is Karma too chi-chi?

Alvin Filsinger – pioneer of organic farming



Organic olive oil from Palestine

Cooking with rapini

and Members' Survey results!



June/July 2006

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## **The Chronicle** **The Members' Newsletter of Karma** **Co-op** **June/July 2006**

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### **Submissions**

Submissions may be sent by e-mail, to [chronicle@karmacoop.org](mailto:chronicle@karmacoop.org). Send your submission within the main body of the message. Please do not send attachments. 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).

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## Work Credits and the Committee System

### To the Editor:

Sylvia Keesmaat's letter to *The Chronicle* (April/May 2006) regarding committee work credits is timely and well intended. It correctly points to a fundamental injustice in the assignment of work credits for committee members compared to members who work in the store. As members of the board, we acknowledge that the present work credit system requires action by the board. This work will fall under the mandate of a new committee created by the board last winter and intended to study such matters.

However, Sylvia's letter incorrectly explains the context behind the change. The origin of the four-hour automatic monthly credit for committee work was not a decision of the current board.

The assignment of the four-hour monthly credit to committee members was included in recommendations made by the Member Labour Committee at the board meeting of February 23, 2004. These recommendations were implemented on June 1, 2004, under the leadership of the board at that time, which was chaired by then president Graeme Hussey (now Karma's general manager).

There was a provision in the Member Labour Committee proposal that allowed for the alteration of allotted hours as required by various committees. In the

special member labour issue of *The Chronicle* in June/July 2004, in "Modifying the Current Credit System for Karma Board and Committee Work," it is stated that "specific committees and members of committees may have fewer or more hours credited to them if the committee and board deem this more appropriate for the work that is done." But the board at that time chose not to adjust the work credits of any particular committee, perhaps because committees were being targeted for dissolution.

**The unearned accumulation in work credits referred to by Sylvia has nothing to do with the decision of the current board to return working groups and teams to full committee status.**

Soon after the 2004 changes to the work credit system, the board imposed elements of a form of governance policy called the Carver model. It was in connection with this governance model that the 2004/2005 board first proposed the devolution of committees to working group or team status. This change meant that committees that had been accountable to members and controlled by members became supervised and directed by staff. After work credits were changed, for example, the Orientation Committee remained a committee for only one year before its forced conversion to working group status.

In short, the unearned accumulation in work credits referred to by Sylvia has nothing to do with the decision of the current board to return working groups and teams to full committee status.

We agree that committees can sometimes be a cumbersome method of member labour. But

committees are currently the only structures that ensure that co-op policy is recommended, implemented, and changed by members. The idea of members' reporting to and being accountable to paid staff in a member-owned co-operative is in fundamental opposition to the structure and philosophy behind member-owned co-operatives. That is why the current board passed the motion to reinstate working groups and teams to full committee status, by a majority vote at the December 2005 meeting. It was a matter of principle.

We disagree with Sylvia's assertion that the current board has not been "transparent" in discussions around this issue. The members of the board elected at the October 2005 Annual General Meeting ran on platforms that included the return of all working groups and teams to full committee status. These platforms were made public in the pages of *The Chronicle* prior to the AGM and at the meeting itself during our speeches to the membership, prior to the election. The 2005 AGM had the highest attendance of any AGM in Karma's history, and, according to a returning officer who oversaw the election that night, some of us were elected with the highest number of votes ever received by individual candidates at an AGM election. We made it absolutely clear that we disagreed with the previous board's attempts to impose elements of the Carver governance model and to change the committee structure at Karma. And we made it abundantly clear that, if elected, we would reinstate member-driven structures at our store.

Sylvia's letter reminds us that today the Orientation Committee remains under the supervision of an employee. The current board is working to correct this error. We have already voted to return all working groups and teams to full committee status. Currently, we are working on remandating reinstated committees. We have also created a committee to examine committee issues. If you are interested in contributing your vision to this committee and its work on the committee

system (including work credits), contact board member Micki Honkanen at [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org). A sign-up sheet will also be posted on the bulletin board.

Thanks for your input, Sylvia. We appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight.

Deborah Cherry and Suzanne Molina

## Trust and Transparency

### To the Editor:

Sylvia Keesmaat's letter in the last issue of *The Chronicle* touches upon a number of issues. For the sake of brevity, I will only address two of them.

First, ethics. A co-op — or at least a working co-op like Karma — is built on trust. I trust that members will pay for the items they take. I trust that members will not surreptitiously sneak the apples they drop back into the basket. I trust that members will turn up at the AGM and vote in the best interests of Karma. And I trust that members will do the work they are to be credited for. Clearly, without trust, there would be little to differentiate Karma from any other sham co-operative that rears its fraudulent little head (insert MEC here). Personally, I do not believe that we should be policing the hours members claim, nor should employees be scrutinizing the work members do. In the end, the responsibility lies with the individual. Do members choose to abuse the system — and the most trusting systems are ripe for abuse — or do they act in the best interests of the membership (and thus their own)? Ultimately, it's a question of ethics.

Second, accountability. Is the board accountable to the members for the decisions it makes? Of course! We are elected by the membership and can thus be recalled by the membership. As a board, we meet on a monthly basis to make decisions

the membership has empowered us to make, such as the one Sylvia has taken issue with. Members are welcome to attend and to participate in meetings — as I've noticed several members do throughout my term on the board. The decision to reinstate committee status to the recently demoted working groups was made following lengthy and open discussions at board meetings. Board members debated the issue. Several non-board members voiced their opinions, quite vigorously I might add. In the end, a vote was held and a decision made. From start to finish, the entire proceeding was as transparent as water...at least to those who were at the meetings.

Mohsen al Attar Ahmed

## A Fork in the Road

### To the Editor:

Karma has come to a fork in the road. We have two choices before us.

The fork to the left requires us to make the necessary repairs to our present building. We now have an expert estimate of the costs of desirable repairs, some urgent, some less so, some quite trivial and some that we might decide not to undertake at all within the given 10-year time frame. If we go this way our challenge will be to make our snug space as attractive, neighbourly, and efficient a health food store as possible.

To the right the option is to sell our present building, either as is, or repaired first, and to buy or rent a larger property elsewhere in the neighbourhood in a more public location. The costs of this option — purchase price (or rent), renovations, shutting down the store, moving, and provisions for parking — are as yet completely unknown. The challenge here will

be to grow fast enough to pay the higher costs. Why dither any longer? We need to make a choice and make it thoughtfully and soon. But to do that *we need to have all the facts*. Who is going to lay them out for us in some comprehensible way? And when?

To my amazement I have learned that our Business Planning Committee, in the year and a half of its existence, has only this spring secured the above estimates of desirable repairs to our present building, and has yet to get around to securing estimates of what it would cost to take the right-hand fork. What a fiasco!

I make no bones about it: my preference is for the first option. Yet, with a decision unmade, the present policy of the Food Issues Committee or of the general manager — whoever it is that really sets policy on what we offer at Karma — has been stocking more and more varieties of products scarcely basic to a health food store. Snacks, chips, and pop may be organic and good sellers, but do we need to give them so much space? And we really go overboard with chocolate! (I say this though I am myself a chocolate freak.)

Is a cap ever put on the number of brands of a product we stock — say, tea or coffee? We really must accept the fact that we cannot meet all the preferences of our very diverse membership. As one experienced member put it to me recently, “We do *not* cater to any of the many groups from which our members derive. We may not carry the ingredients for a typical Indian meal, but then, we do not carry gefilte fish either.”

And what has all the new shelving and the proliferating variety and quantity of products done for us? The general manager has told the board that sales are slowly declining. Going yuppie is not working. It's high time to rethink our product mix. Personally, I'd like to see no more than three brands of any product: the most popular, the healthiest, and the cheapest (but okay) brand, organic or not, because it is our poorer members who need Karma most.

Do you, as I do, feel less comfortable in the store than you used to? For one thing, it's still cluttered up with too many oversized shopping carts. (It's interesting that we easily manage to do without them when they go outside to give space to a person displaying a new product.) All that new shelving certainly allows for stocking more items, but there are some I can't reach anymore. Also, I find those high shelves a bit claustrophobic. And who decided that new shelving was the best way to spend our regular maintenance budget, given that we knew we badly needed a new walk-in cooler? I feel less at home when items I'm looking for shift so often from place to place. What a job it must be for the staff to do all the moving! I grant you that the new shelving would serve well in a newer, larger store. Is that why we have it?

Finally, I can't agree that to survive we must grow, or that growth per se should be one of our goals. There's an odd contradiction here. Our buying policy is to support small local producers and other co-ops whenever possible and we do it. Why should we want continuous growth for our own enterprise?

I have had personal experience with what happens when a co-op grows too big to be truly responsive to its members. I joined an infant credit union at York University in the late 1960s. Fast forward about 45 years and it had become the Metro Credit Union and very large indeed. I needed a short-term loan or mortgage to finance a move from a house to an apartment. I was turned down flat by Metro *because I was moving into a co-op building*. That was standard bank policy, I was told. Do we want Karma to start down that road? Let's stay relatively small and keep our integrity. We can do it if we put our minds to it.

Margaret Knittl

P.S. Given the severe lack of information we all suffer from, I may have made a mistake somewhere above. If so, please pardon me and provide me with the correct information.

## **Response from Geoff Webb and John DeLuca-Howard for the board:**

We would like to thank Margaret Knittl for her thoughtful and very poignant letter. After much considering, we have come up with a few points that we hope will answer some of her questions and alleviate some of her worries.

The letter really deals with two issues. One concerns the decision as to whether or not to relocate the store ("A Fork in the Road"), along with the impact

### **The GM has told the board that sales are slowly declining. Going yuppie is not working. It's high time to rethink our product mix.**

of the recent report on the state of the building on this decision. Included in this point is her quite reasonable desire for more information and for some concrete decision-making that responds to the wishes of the members. The other issue seems to be about the appearance of the store, its layout and equipment, and the products that appear on the (tall) shelves. In the letter the question was raised as to who makes the decisions about such matters, since they seem to have so much of an impact on the members, as she has noted.

The issue of relocation is not one which this board has had a lot of time to deal with in our meetings, because we have been so busy dealing with the many issues raised at the AGM. Since some of these issues are rather contentious, we have had a lot of debate at the table. The issue of relocation is certainly not going to be made without considerable consultation with the membership nor, we would hazard to say, without a direct vote brought to the membership, in the form

of a referendum. We certainly would advocate some public course of action.

The facts, which Margaret wishes to have laid out for her in a comprehensible way, are available in the store for member viewing, in the form of a report by the two members hired to examine the building and to make recommendations for its repair and maintenance. They have summarized their findings in an article in this issue of *The Chronicle*.

The board is now trying to decide how to pay for the repairs that are immediately necessary, largely the result of overdue maintenance. Such a decision does not affect the choice of whether to relocate, since money raised to bring the building up to an acceptable level of repair would be recovered in the sale of the store, if necessary. So we haven't reached that fork in the road yet.

The issue as to the store's interior is a little more complicated. Decisions surrounding the stocking of the store are made according to a policy set by the Food Issues Committee. However, they decide only what sort of items go on the shelves, not how many different brands. In a situation in which the board felt it had a mandate from the membership to change product stocking practice, it would have to direct the general manager to change that practice.

If anybody out there feels the same or differently, we would love to hear about it. We value input from the membership.

## More Member Labour in the Store

The Member Labour Committee has been hard at work in recent months. Monthly reconciliation is ongoing: each month the committee reviews members' cards and issues warnings or temporary surcharges, if required, based on the hours that the member has worked. The committee is currently preparing for the year-end reconciliation in May. We are also working on a member labour policy review. A list of 10 suggestions to promote member labour in the store is being produced and will be presented to the board in the coming months. If you have any suggestions or comments on the list or any other member labour policy issue, do not hesitate to e-mail Jonathan Tracey, the current chair of the committee, at [labourcommittee@karmacoop.org](mailto:labourcommittee@karmacoop.org).

# A Time of Challenges and Opportunity for Karma

**Graeme Hussey**

As time passes, Karma Co-operative continues to face many challenges. These challenges also provide opportunities for Karma to improve and build on what makes us unique. Here are a few challenges that I have been thinking about recently.

Karma is being challenged by an increase in competition from both large conventional grocery stores and health food stores in Toronto, who increasingly are selling the same or similar products as Karma. Recently, Wal-Mart has announced that it will be selling organic groceries and produce in Toronto in the coming year.

Although there is now a larger selection of natural and organic grocery products, this is accompanied by an extreme consolidation of manufacturers and vendors/suppliers producing and distributing these products. This presents us with a challenge to find healthy products that are locally produced by smaller farmers and producers.

In my opinion, the existence of more people eating organic groceries and produce is an important opportunity to improve personal health and the environment and to develop local economic and food security. The increase in organic retailers, producers, and wholesalers can be of benefit to all. The challenge will be to ensure that organic food continues to mean to the broader public what we have known it to mean at Karma for many decades: environmental stewardship, economic livelihoods for farmers, and a strong connection between the producer and consumer.

Karma faces the challenge of meeting the needs of its diverse membership. With approximately 10 per cent annual turnover in members, Karma's demographics are continually changing. Andie Noack's summary article (in this issue) and her analysis of the past three annual Karma member surveys provide a valuable tool for staff to help set a strong vision that represents members' values.

Finally, Karma's ultimate challenge is to provide a mix of groceries that suits its members, while creating a long-term vision that ensures prosperity for Karma. With high turnover by board members and staff, this has always been a challenge. Time and time again knowledge and experience have been lost at Karma when the commitment of certain individuals has changed.

All of these challenges are not new to Karma, but we have 35 years of experience to give us the confidence in our ability to meet them, whether known or unknown.

With all of these internal and external challenges, Karma members, board members and staff need to recognize the importance of Karma Co-operative, remember why we originally joined Karma, and then use this vision to come together responsibly and co-operatively.

My favourite part of my job is talking with members and staff in the store about Karma's successes and challenges. Please stop me and let me know what you think.

## Details on the Building Assessment and New Committees

Geoff Webb

By the time this article is printed, the board of directors will have taken the opportunity to meet as many of you as possible during the plant exchange that took place on May 13, which the board also chose as a Meet Your Board event. At the time of writing, we expect to hear from many people, so if you took the time to speak to us, thank you.

If you skipped this report, and went straight to the article on the building assessment, you already know that the board received a report at the April meeting detailing the repairs that need to be made on the building, some critical, and some minor. The report, created by members James Wilkinson and Russell Richman, provides a 10-year comprehensive plan, with cost estimates, to meet both our immediate and long-term building maintenance goals. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank James and Russ for their service to Karma, and for the thoughtfulness and care they put into this enormous task.

Members are invited to come into the store and view the report in its entirety.

The good news is that, in spite of what you may have heard, the store is not about to fall down. It

is more than possible to repair the various flaws in our building. Our hard-working treasurer has been in deep discussions with the board and the Finance Committee to find ways to raise the funds to begin the most vital repairs.

In my last report I mentioned a number of new committees that have been formed. So keep an eye out on the store walls for invitations to the membership to become involved in these various committees. The committee structure is undergoing a revolution of sorts, and if you'd like to contribute your ideas are more than welcome.

Finally, the Supervisory Committee has been repopulated, and is now an active committee. We recently designated board vice president John DeLuca-Howard as our liaison. Of course, any questions and/or issues with staff should first be addressed to the general manager. However, if you require further assistance and/or feedback, please feel free to contact John at [vicepresident@karmacoop.org](mailto:vicepresident@karmacoop.org).

Thank you, and remember, "co-operation is revolution."

**The good news is that, in spite of what you may have heard, the store is not about to fall down.**

## Vice President's Message

John DeLuca-Howard

How many times in recent months have you heard that a staff person had treated a member disrespectfully? How many times have you heard a staff member talking about a rude or angry member in the store? Hopefully these are rare instances, but as a board member, I hear about this sort of thing too often.

Granted, members are also owners (we hear this statement a lot nowadays) because they buy a share in the store when they join, but what does that mean exactly? The general manager is in fact hired by a board committee and his activities are monitored by the Supervisory Committee. The rest of the staff are hired and supervised by the general manager and by the board, through the Supervisory Committee.

This structure effectively reduces the members' role as owners to electing the board at the AGM, which encourages the attitude that we are a bit like shareholders in a food store such as Loblaw's or Dominion.

This, of course, is not how we feel about Karma, nor are we run like a big chain store.

We are co-operating participants in a more than 35-year-long experiment in collective action for the benefit of a whole community. It isn't strictly a business, and it isn't just a store. It's a co-op. The rules and practices that apply to those other operations don't necessarily come into play here.

The other day I came across a book in a used-book store for 50 cents, called *The Whole Foods Catalogue*.

It was about Canadian "health food" co-operatives, and it was published by *HarronSmith* in 1980. There was an article about Karma Co-op, so I bought it.

In 1980, Karma had 300 members, and they all worked two hours a month. The article had a picture of some people surrounded by bushels of food, and you could see the brick wall next to the big north window. It was all smiling faces, and there was earnest goodwill in the look of them. Emotionally speaking, there seemed a connection to the food, and between the people who produce it and the people who buy it.

There was only one staff person, according to the article.

Which brings me back to my earlier question: what does it mean to be a Karma Co-op member (or member-owner, as some have called it)? If you are a working member, then you do your hours, and you leave. What is your responsibility after that, and what are your rights?

I personally think that our rights and responsibilities are a reflection of the co-operative spirit. This spirit is a little difficult to define, but basically, I believe it embodies the earnest goodwill I mentioned above. Have you ever been shopping for canned goods, and moved the rest of the product to the front of the shelf after taking one down (called "facing" the shelf)? You don't get member labour hours for it, but think about doing it.

And why not?

Doesn't the owner of a store often do little

things to help out, even when an employee has been hired to do it? I think someone who wants to be successful would. And the goodwill this act engenders adds something to the feeling of a co-operative. For co-ops, after all, are founded on the mutual approach of goodwill and the generosity of every member.

How you, as an individual, approach the co-op is going to become the way the co-op, as a collective entity, approaches its members and staff. This is not 1980, and some things may be different, but we are all still responsible, and we all add to what Karma Co-op is, and what it stands for. It is up to each and every one of us to make a difference.

## REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

### Surcharge Proposed to Help Pay for Building Repairs

Greetings fellow members! I am writing to bring you up to date on the store's financial condition and to discuss the upcoming budget, including the building maintenance surcharge tabled at the May board meeting. With the help of the excellent financial model created by former treasurer Amy Stein, General Manager Graeme Hussey has successfully managed the store's finances to reach the targets for this year — a modest surplus, modest capital spending and modest maintenance repairs. This has all been accomplished even though overall sales have fallen below 2005 sales.

This model will guide next year's budget process and the management of the store for fiscal 2006–2007. And while I am hoping for a modest sales increase I am counting on the GM again to keep

a careful eye on sales and costs in order to balance the budget again. I have again included some capital spending and maintenance in the budget anticipating further spending needs.

However, this budgeted spending alone will not be able to pay for the building maintenance work outlined in the Building Condition Assessment. A copy of this report (summarized elsewhere in this issue) is now available on the board's bulletin board in the store. I have proposed to the board that a separate surcharge of \$20 a year be charged to each member until the building maintenance projects outlined in the assessment have been completed. Over the years, especially in years of store losses, little maintenance has been done on the building and this is beginning to show. Both exterior and interior walls need repair, as does the floor, and the windows need repair or replacement. The list is large and growing. In addition, we need to remove the present cooler and replace it with standalone, moveable coolers. The present cooler is not only built improperly but it is also damaging the outer walls it butts up against (see the assessment).

These repairs do not come cheaply — the estimate to remove the cooler is \$20,000 and the cost to replace it with a new one is \$40,500. These sorts of funds cannot be found from within the existing store budget without raising the markup. Hence the suggested surcharge, which will raise the funds needed to make the necessary repairs and which can then be discontinued. The surcharge is based on 1,100 members each paying \$20 per year. The total estimated repairs are \$211,000 over 10 years, which works out to about \$20 per year per member. However, I am hoping we can use our own labour to reduce some costs and thus, we hope, come in under budget. Under this scenario, the surcharge could be reduced or cancelled earlier.

I am hoping that we all recognize that whether we stay in the building or move, we need to make basic repairs on a continual basis to a store in use every day

of the week. Unfortunately, as the Building Condition Assessment Report makes clear, we have fallen behind in the basic repairs. Making these basic repairs and modifications will go a long way towards ensuring our continued sustainability and viability, not to mention having a more pleasing and harmonious store.

Rolf Struthers

## REPORT FROM THE FOOD ISSUES COMMITTEE

### Colgate Takes Over Tom's of Maine

Anil Kanji

In March, Colgate-Palmolive announced their intention to purchase Tom's of Maine, the popular natural body-care company, for approximately US\$100 million. "This...acquisition gives us access to a loyal, emerging consumer group and allows us to accelerate the growth of Tom's of Maine," stated Colgate CEO Reuben Mark after the deal was finalized. Meanwhile, on the Tom's of Maine website, Tom and Kate Chappell defended their decision in one of their typical, down-home letters to their customers: "More and more people are looking for safe and effective natural products...from a company that shares their values. After much soul-searching...we realized that we cannot meet this growing demand alone. We decided to seek a partner to help us." The backlash was predictable, from accusations that Tom's was

"consorting with the devil" to bloggers creatively rebranding the company as "Tom's of Shame." Yet for the most part, their customers seem to see the positive side, even speculating that Tom's might have a positive influence on the corporate values over at Colgate.

As evidenced by the chart reprinted in the December/January 2006 issue of *The Chronicle*, multinational involvement in the "natural" or organic market is not a new trend, and we can only expect it to grow in the years to come. Large corporations are eager to cash in on the higher profit margins and affluent consumers that are associated with organics and natural body care. As more and more of these large corporations come to dominate the game, we at Karma are going to have to figure out how we feel about our favourite products suddenly being owned by the likes of Philip Morris or Monsanto.

Most players within the organics community are still deciding where they stand on the issue. On one side there are the "organics evangelists," eager to convert as much conventional farmland to organics as possible, citing the larger positive impact on the environment, and the larger pool of organic consumers, as the end that justifies the means. They point out that employing large-scale agricultural techniques and distribution systems is the only way they can meet the increasing demand for organics at cheaper prices and dismiss their critics as trying to maintain an insular, elitist food system.

On the other side there are those who feel organic producers have gotten too big. They have drifted away from their roots in fostering a stewardship of the land and connection to one's food and the people who grow it. There isn't too much difference between a large-scale conventional operation and a large-scale organic operation in their eyes — from the centralization of food distribution and the destruction of local food webs to the focus on marketing and the bottom line. They view a Colgate that scoops

up a Tom's as a big corporation trying to co-opt the goodwill and trust that an ethical company has worked so hard to build with the consumer.

There is another factor in this particular example of specific interest to Karma — namely that Colgate-Palmolive continues to employ animal testing, which is condemned under our Product Policy. Does this mean that Karma should immediately discontinue the stocking of Tom's of Maine products (even though

### **Should we drop the Tom's of Maine line...now that they've chosen to sell out?**

Tom's products themselves are not tested on animals)? Should we drop the Tom's of Maine line regardless of this issue, now that they've chosen to sell out? Or should we try to find a compromise in an inevitably changing landscape? These are the questions that the Food Issues Committee has been preoccupied with. There probably is no easy answer, and we'll probably have to continue to evaluate this on an ongoing basis. What will have the most positive outcome for our members, while keeping true to our mission statement?

Please send your thoughts and feedback to the Food Issues Committee, at [foodissues@karmacoop.org](mailto:foodissues@karmacoop.org).

### **Suggested Reading on Organic Industry Structure:**

[www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/services/images/organic-industry-jun-05.jpg](http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/services/images/organic-industry-jun-05.jpg)

Samuel Fromartz, *Organic, Inc.: Natural Foods and How They Grew* (New York: Harcourt, 2006)

## **RESULTS FROM THE 2005 MEMBERS' SURVEY**

### **Andie Noack**

Ever wonder about the people you see shopping at Karma? What are they thinking? Why do they belong to the co-op? What types of things do they like about Karma, and what do they dislike? How do they envision the future of Karma?

Some of the answers to these questions can be found in the results of the 2005 Karma Members' Survey. About 250 members shared their ideas by completing the survey last October. Hopefully, you were one of them.

It's likely that you have a lot in common with the people you shop and work with in the store. Almost three-quarters of the people who filled in the survey said that the "wide range of organic produce" was one of the most important reasons they shopped at Karma. When people were asked about the reasons they belong to a food cooperative, 95 per cent said that "supporting an ethical and responsible business" and "supporting a business that buys from local producers" were very important.

About three out of five people who returned the survey were working members. Happily, more than two-thirds of these working members say that they have an "excellent" work shift. This number was even higher among people who worked as cashiers, with 80 per cent reporting an "excellent" work shift. So if you're looking to work for Karma, think about taking on some cashier shifts — these are some happy folks!

A large part of this year's survey asked members about plans for Karma's future. The two most popular goals for the future were "increasing public awareness of Karma" and "making stronger

connections with other co-op organizations.” The former goal was supported by about 75 per cent of those who answered the question, and the latter was supported by 60 per cent. Many people are also open to the idea of changing Karma’s membership options; four out of five folks would support the idea of having a “family membership.”

Although having more member services isn’t a big priority for people, about half of us say that we would be “very interested” if Karma were to organize a farmers’ market.

**About three out of five people who returned the survey were working members. Happily, more than two-thirds of these working members say that they have an ‘excellent’ work shift.**

Of course, we know that Karma members aren’t the type of people whose ideas always fit into neat little survey boxes — so we asked everyone to write in what they thought the co-op’s priorities for the future should be. The ideas that people wrote about fell into six general categories, each of which was supported by a substantial number of people who

filled in a survey. These categories could be defined as building community, improving member participation and governance, focusing on products and product policies, improving store operations, maintaining the established business, and growth and expansion. An appendix to the full report describes in some detail the opinions of respondents relating to these priorities.

What can we learn from these survey results? The questions about priorities and plans for the co-op’s future stimulated many proposals for action. If you want to know what other co-op members are thinking, read the full report (see links below). Also, take a moment to introduce yourself and chat with other people you see in the store. Ask them about the ideas they have about Karma’s future. If you support the idea of “increasing public awareness of Karma,” tell all your friends and co-workers about what you like about the co-op. If you think that “improving member participation and governance” is a priority, then become involved and encourage others to join in with you.

If you want to know more about what Karma members think and do, you can see the full report on the 2005 Karma Members’ Survey in the web binder. The link to the report on the web binder is [www.karmacoop.org/binder/Annual+Membership+Surveys](http://www.karmacoop.org/binder/Annual+Membership+Surveys).

**Congratulations to Katie Davidman, who won the \$25 gift certificate in the lottery for those who returned their surveys.**

## Factory Farms Cause Avian Flu

“Fowl play: The poultry industry’s central role in the bird flu crisis” was released by the NGO GRAIN at the end of February. The report documents a strong correlation between avian flu and the phenomenal growth of poultry factory farms in Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam. In these countries, production tripled between 1971 and 2001. China’s production tripled in only 10 years, between 1990 and 2000.

These factory farms are displacing and replacing the traditional small-scale farms whose flocks are made up of native breeds and are free-range. These farms have been little affected by the avian flu, but they are blamed for it. For the full report see [www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org).

—Summary of David Lindsay, “Spreading avian flu,”  
*Rural Delivery*, May 2006

## Canadians Seeking Safer Food Through Organic Gardening

Lettuce, carrots, and other veggies are displacing some of the grass in backyards these days, as people look for a safer food supply and try to teach their kids how to grow it. In Canada, gardening is second only to walking when it comes to exercise, attracting 48 per cent of Canadian adults, according to the website [www.goforgreen.ca](http://www.goforgreen.ca). Baby boomers make up the largest group of gardeners. Ross Batstone, co-chair of the Ottawa chapter of the Canadian Organic Growers, says more people are becoming interested in organic food from both the garden and the farm. Canadian Organic Growers figures show that between 2003 and 2004 the number of certified organic farmers in Canada grew from 3,317 to 3,670, and area under cultivation jumped from about 391,000 hectares to 485,000 hectares.

—Canadian Press, April 12, 2006

## Canada Won’t Allow Field Testing of Suicide Seeds

Suicide seeds, which are genetically altered to produce sterile plants, won’t be planted in Canadian fields any time soon. Giuliano Tolusso, senior policy analyst at Agriculture Canada, says Canada will respect a moratorium on field testing of Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURT), which was reaffirmed at a conference in Curitiba, Brazil, last month. Canada will allow research on the seeds but only in a laboratory setting, Tolusso said. Canada’s policy places it within the consensus of countries which are parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity, but on a different track from the United States, which has not signed the convention.

—Canada.com, April 10, 2006

## Cornucopia Institute to Sue USDA over Organic Foods Records

The Cornucopia Institute has filed a lawsuit in the western Wisconsin U.S. District Court seeking to compel the United States Department of Agriculture to provide public records sought through several Freedom of Information Act requests. At issue is the record of correspondence and discussions that have taken place at the USDA between USDA staff and corporate lobbyists, farm organizations, and the public, concerning the requirement that organic dairy cows have access to pasture and obtain a significant portion of their feed from grazing. The lawsuit comes amidst a growing national debate occurring in the organic farming community over the rise of factory farms in organic dairying, milking 2,000 to 6,000 cows in confinement-type conditions, that provide little if any pasture for their milk cows.

—*Wisconsin Ag Connection*, April 13, 2006

## Dairy Report and Scorecard

The Cornucopia Institute's national survey of organic products in the dairy case showcases ethical family-farm producers and exposes factory-farm producers and brands that threaten to take over organic dairying. Based on a year's research into the organic dairy business, the scorecard rates 68 different organic dairy brands and private-label products. Here is a quotation from the executive summary:

“Consumers should...recognize that an increasing amount of milk used in certain organic dairy products is coming from factory farms that are employing suspect practices that skirt organic regulations and negatively impact human nutrition and the health and well-being of livestock. Nearly 20

per cent of the name brands now available on grocery shelves scored a substandard rating.

“As more and more of these industrial-scale livestock operations come online, the potential will develop for a surplus of organic milk. Should a surplus occur, it is likely that the downward price pressure will wash many smaller family-scale producers out of business. This will repeat the same sad story that has forced so many conventional farmers off the land — even though organics was hailed as an antidote to the effect of corporate-controlled food production and its accompanying vertical integration of farming and its application of the industrial/confinement model.”

—Archive, The Cornucopia Institute



*Aurora “organic” factory confinement dairy — Platteville, Colorado*

## New Committee Seeks Members

The Karma board of directors has created a new committee to handle occasional communications tasks at Karma. The new Communications Committee will:

- Review Karma's store brochure and other promotional materials on a yearly basis to ensure they are current and correct
- Create, review, or edit occasional publications such as employee or member handbooks, in consultation with committees, staff, and the board
- Review the store's website on a weekly basis to ensure the content is accurate, current, and error-free
- Offer editorial assistance to committees and staff with various special publications (AGM materials, special reports, etc.)
- Set an in-house production schedule, among other editorial duties

If you have editing, designing, or other communications skills, then Karma needs you! The Communications Committee will be the first stop for anyone wishing to publish anything at Karma...and it will allow the lovely and overworked folks who bring us *The Chronicle* to concentrate on the newsletter.

This committee will be a good choice for members wishing to gain work credits on an as-needed (signed-in) basis, without the commitment of regular meetings and regular work deadlines. The first step for the new Communications Committee will be to meet as a group to decide committee guidelines and review the projects currently awaiting completion.

Help make sure the public face of Karma is accurate, readable, and free of typos... [sic]

Interested members should contact board member Suzanne Molina via [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org).

# KARMA BUILDING ASSESSMENT

**The results of the building assessment show a great deal of necessary repairs, many of them structural**

**James Wilkinson and Russell Richman**

The two of us, both Karma members with some experience in evaluating buildings, were asked to look at the place Karma Co-op calls home, 739 Palmerston Avenue. The objective of this article is to present the key findings of the report to all of the Karma membership. The full report in its 30-plus-page glory is available in the member room for review by anyone at Karma.

## **Background**

We were approached by the Business Planning Committee in the summer of 2005 and asked to produce a report that would present the building's current condition. The general idea was for the report to be used as an informative tool to aid future decisions regarding Karma.

The document contains an assessment of the condition of the building structure, walls, roofs, windows, floors, foundations, and architectural finishes. With assistance from two other Karma members responsible for maintaining the mechanical and electrical systems, those items were evaluated as well. We looked at the current condition of each component, and recommended current or expected associated repairs.

To date we have presented the report to the Business Planning Committee, the Finance Committee, and the board.

## **Key Findings**

We have recommended required repairs and maintenance of approximately \$212,000 over the next 10 years at Karma. Of this figure, \$105,000 is related to the maintenance and replacement of fridges over the next 10 years, a cost that Karma already budgets for on an annual basis. Replacement of roofs over the next eight years will require \$31,000, while \$60,000 is required for the immediate repair of a wall and replacement of the adjacent walk-in cooler. The remaining \$16,000 is for other miscellaneous items. It must be noted that these are estimated costs only. Further, these estimated costs are based on our experience for similar work conducted at the present time. As noted, the bulk of these costs (\$200,000) are associated with three major building components: roofing, walls, and mechanical units. These items are discussed in further detail below.

**At one wall opening, a significant amount of moisture was found.**

## **Roofing**

The roof over the original east building at Karma is estimated to be 25 years old, and at the end of its serviceable life. This age is evidenced by continuing leakage, and by the failure of some previous repairs. It is likely that this roof can be maintained for another three years before replacement, but even this prediction may not hold, depending on future leakage. There is also some deteriorated masonry at the roof

perimeter, which we recommend be replaced at the same time as the roof. Our estimate for these repairs is approximately \$23,000.

The roof over the addition (west building) is smaller, and is still in serviceable condition. This type of roof is difficult to maintain once it begins to leak. Given the age of the roof, our estimate is that it will require replacement in about eight years at an estimated cost of \$8,000.

## **Walls**

The walls in the original building at Karma are constructed as follows, from the inside out: architectural finishes (insulated wood-framed wall), structural masonry, stucco finish. As part of our evaluation we made several interior wall openings to review the concealed conditions.

At one such wall opening on the south wall, in line with the walk-in cooler, a significant amount of moisture was found. The structural component of the wall (the masonry) was largely intact, but showed evidence of deterioration. We recommended further investigation regarding this matter.

Some of the interior finishes (wood-framed walls) are rotting and saturated with moisture. We are recommending the extent of this deterioration be determined (we estimate it might be as much as half the south wall and the whole east wall in the original building), and that the wet interior wood-framed wall be removed and replaced immediately. The estimated cost of this repair is approximately \$20,000.

The stucco finish on the exterior of the south wall (in line with locations of moisture found in the wall) is separating from the masonry to which it is bonded. We are recommending that this stucco be removed and replaced once the other repairs noted above are performed to the interior walls. Our estimate

of the cost of this repair is approximately \$11,000.

The replacement of the interior wall will have a massive impact on the walk-in cooler. However, this cooler is also at the end of its serviceable life. Its walls are built as part of the exterior walls, and as noted above these walls are heavily deteriorated. The current design is also prone to trapping moisture and will not likely dry out. In addition, the cooling system will require replacement shortly. In view of these facts, we are recommending that the present cooler be removed and replaced with a stand-alone walk-in cooler. The estimated cost for this new unit is approximately \$30,000.

## **Mechanical Units**

Karma has 16 pieces of mechanical equipment, including fridges and freezers as well as a heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system. These units require annual maintenance and, on average, one unit needs to be replaced each year. The cost for all this maintenance and repair is approximately \$105,000 over 10 years or \$10,500 per year. Karma already spends approximately this much each year addressing this major component of the building.

## **Final Words**

In short, Karma's building has an old roof (\$25,000), interrelated problems with wet walls and its walk-in cooler (\$60,000), and a lot of fridges (\$105,000). The wet wall/walk-in cooler situation is unusual and the unanticipated cost of repair will likely have an impact on Karma in the short term. The other major budget items are common for buildings of this type, and in line with expected costs.

# Karma's Annual Plant Exchange and Meet the Board

Kush Gill

Tomatoes, aloe vera, lemon balm, peppers, black-eyed Susans...the annual plant exchange on May 13 had them all. Organized by the Promotions Committee, this year's exchange was bigger and better than ever. It was held in conjunction with Karma's board of directors outreach event — Meet the Board — outside the front doors of the store. Members of the board were present to meet and talk with Karma members.

Volunteers were on hand to coach plant buyers on how to care for their seedlings through the cooler days of spring and how to keep the plants healthy during a long, hot summer. In addition, there was advice on how much space to give them, when they flowered, and what the medicinal plants could be used for.



*Karma member with children (L-R) Crispin DeLuca-Howard and Inana Webb*



*Karma members mingle at the Annual Plant Exchange*

## Alvin's Organic Apples

Alvin Filsinger has been promoting organic agriculture since the '50s — all while growing the delicious apples that are a staple at Karma

**Michael Armstrong, produce manager**

Those who shop on Thursday afternoons at Karma may encounter Alvin Filsinger as he shows up with a delivery of his harvest of fourth-generation organic apples, which are hugely popular with our members. They sit on the lower section of the fruit table at \$2.18 per kilogram as they have for decades.

When it comes to organically grown apples, Alvin has seen and tried just about everything, except for price fluctuations. His apples have been the same price for years. It was 1935 when it was so cold that almost all of his family's 68 trees died. "Crying about it is all you can really do...that's all I've been doing for 50 years," he said two years ago. Still, his buoyant presence fills the co-op as he helps to haul in the 500 pounds or so of his apples we all consume every two weeks.

It seems Alvin's vitality is as unwavering as his orchard's. We stack cases of Ida Red, Macintosh, Cortland, Spartan, Empire, or — if you're lucky to catch them — Wealthy apples wherever we can on the floor. Boxes of his cider pile up but sell out in a couple of days, while producers of prepared "gourmet" foods meet him in the parking lot to score his cider vinegar.

Meanwhile, Alvin writes up an invoice while talking passionately about the current state of his orchard. Then off he goes, still laughing that there is an apple variety on display called Pink Lady that is selling for more than twice the price of his apples.

At over 80 years of age, Alvin is famous among those who have followed the history of the organic food movement in North America since, well, 1954. Or was it 1953? He made the journey to New York City around that time to attend a groundbreaking conference, part of whose agenda was to challenge the practice of spraying apple orchards with harsh chemicals.

Alvin has always been active exchanging information and shaking the hands of many pioneers in the world of growing non-conventional, especially bio-dynamic food, such as the Rodale family, Charles Walter, and Dr. Erhenfried Pfeiffer. Alvin has also been tireless at confronting the conventional systems of growing and producing food, including what we define as "organic" or healthy.

Last season (the summer and fall of 2005), Alvin realized that his orchard was suffering due to what he determined was excess sulphur residue in his soil. This natural compound is considered a safe and permissible spray by the certifying bodies to help prevent what is commonly called scabbing of the maturing apples. He decided to use another compound to counteract this problem in the soil and this became an issue with the local organic certifying organization(s) who then denied his certification. As a result, some of you may remember seeing Alvin's apples classified not

**Alvin has been tireless at confronting the conventional systems of growing and producing food, including what we define as 'organic' or healthy.**

as organic or conventional, but as “Alvin Filsinger’s” apples. This decision by the local certifying agency was eventually overturned due to his (and other organic growers’) perseverance in protesting the decision, and we can once again call his apples and products organic!

Alvin once told me of his first visit to Karma. He was in town with a friend (this was over 30 years ago) and Alvin mentioned to him that he was hungry. This friend brought him to Karma for a snack and from that day a long and meaningful relationship evolved. Alvin is now well into his eighties and he and his family struggle with the workload and demands of running the Filsinger farm. Most recently Alvin decided to stop producing eggs in order to focus exclusively on apples and apple products. So watch for his apple crop this year, showing up in late summer, and until then enjoy his applesauce, cider, pear butter, and (if he has time to get into his hip waders) watercress. Meanwhile, I’m sure he will still insist on helping to carry the heavy boxes of his lifelong love into our co-op while we will continue to enjoy the fruit of his life: the apple.

Note: I made a few references in this piece to an excellent article about Alvin by Peter Benner called “The Apple of His Eye,” from the fall 2004 issue of *The Canadian Organic Grower*. Thank you, Peter!

## **Karma Co-op: The Cheapest Organic Produce in Toronto!**

Don’t like that tagline? Become a part of Karma history — help us write a new one for the store. We’re looking for a tag line that tells people what Karma Co-op is all about; it will be our statement to the world about what we are. What does Karma mean to you? Send us your ideas. Not only will the author of the winning entry get to see his or her tag line on all of our brochures, advertising, and other materials, but he or she will also win a \$20 gift certificate to use at Karma. Send entries to [taglinecontest@karmacoop.org](mailto:taglinecontest@karmacoop.org), or drop them in the box in the members’ room. Contest closes June 30.

## Student Tour a Big Success

Karma helps teach high school students about making human ecosystems sustainable

**Jim O'Reilly**

I'm one of the teacher "wonks" who shop at Karma, and when I'm in on weekends I spend more time rehashing the week and kicking around classroom stories with other teachers than I spend shopping.

In one of our discussions back in February, I was asking for ideas on where to take students to illustrate ideas about sustainable ecosystems. It's a unit in the grade 10 science course, and the big theme in the unit is that human ecosystems aren't sustainable unless you make conscious choices about how you live.

### **Field trips such as these plant the seeds that help students make good choices in the future.**

Graeme Hussey, our general manager, had some great suggestions and then added, "You could always bring them to Karma." Hey, why go any farther? I got some interesting questions from the other teachers at my school, but the idea was an easy sell, and

on April 26, my 25 students from Etobicoke Collegiate met at the Bathurst subway station and strolled up to Karma for a tour. My route went through Palmerston Square to get them used to the idea of a high-density residential neighbourhood, which is a key part of the walking-biking philosophy of sustainable urban design.

Then the group got an explanation of the politics of a co-op ("No, it's not a communist grocery store") and a tour of the store with an emphasis on how Karma offers alternatives to a high-energy-consumption lifestyle. But no matter how much you plan and organize, there are always unexpected points of interest that the students focus on. Can you guess what drew the most popular question? Well, you know those huge, gnarly grey squashes under the produce cooler?

Anyway, it was a great urban field trip. I know that trips such as these plant the seeds that help students make good choices in the future. And thanks to Graeme for hosting the group.

## Zatoun Organic Olive Oil from Palestine

Through olive farming for export, Palestinian farmers can become economically self-sufficient.

**Robert Massoud, executive director of Zatoun**

In the last few years, olive oil has “arrived” in North America. There is an increasing appreciation of its health-bringing qualities, not to mention its great taste and versatility in the kitchen. Now, extra-virgin olive oil from Palestine has arrived in Canada.

This oil goes by the name *Zatoun*, which is the anglicized Arabic word for olive. The oil is produced according to organic guidelines, although it is not certified at this time (independent monitoring is to begin shortly). Currently, fair-trade standards for olive oil do not exist, but they are being developed with the help of the Palestine Fair Trade Association, Zatoun’s exclusive supplier.

Zatoun oil comes from small farmers working in co-operatives in occupied Palestine. In Canada, many farms have hundreds or thousands of acres under cultivation. In Palestine, a large farm has perhaps 20 acres and many have fewer than five acres. Unlike mass-marketed oils, Zatoun is not blended with oils from many different regions, so it retains the distinct flavours of its locality.

The major aim of Zatoun as an organization is to help farmers in Palestine to earn a livelihood. The basic premise of Zatoun is that in order to have peace, people must be able to gain a livelihood. Without unhampered means to even a modest livelihood there is no basis for either life or peace.

Zatoun is helping Palestine and its people in many ways. Zatoun pays fair-trade prices to the

farmers up front when the oil is collected. It is creating demand in North America for an export market where none existed. Just as importantly, it is helping to foster and reward co-operative growing methods and democratically run organizations. True democracy cannot be parachuted in; it needs to grow organically from the grassroots in real-life activities.

Zatoun-Canada earmarks 100 per cent of its profits for initiatives such as Project Hope, which provides educational and recreational programs to Palestinian youth in the city and region of Nablus. These programs include English classes, music, drama, art, and some computer training.

Further, Zatoun initiated a project called Trees for Life, to plant olive trees in Palestine. During the recent planting season, 3,600 saplings were planted on 130 farms with the \$9,000 raised by Zatoun. Our goal for 2006 is to plant 35,000 trees with the help of partners worldwide.

At present, Zatoun oil is sold primarily through a network of students, activists, unions, and faith-based groups, as this helps to promote its social and education aims. Many buy Zatoun to give as gifts. However, Zatoun also sells through a few retail outlets such as Karma, whose food policy supports carrying such products.

# Are Karma's Shelves Overloaded?

Pop, chips, and chocolate are the biggest sellers

Terry Fowler

Do you feel that our store's shelves are getting higher and loaded with more groceries? You're not the only one.

Margaret Knittl's letter in this issue points out the "proliferating variety and quantity of products" at the store.

Concern was also expressed to *The Chronicle* by Pam McBurney. "It feels to me that there are many more packaged products than there were even six months ago. It's looking more like other stores. I was concerned when I saw all these tinned drinks — perhaps I never noticed them before. All these pops! I asked one of the clerks, 'Why do we need these?' She told me that pop, chips, and chocolate were the biggest sellers. I was dismayed by that."

When asked by *The Chronicle* about these concerns, General Manager Graeme Hussey said there was no policy to increase the number of products in the store. He said that staff members who do the ordering rely on their experience and knowledge of suppliers. They simply try to stock a mix of products that meet the criteria of Karma's food policy and that are in fact desired by members — as evidenced by whether those products get sold.

Hussey did say that, in order to attract new customers and to keep the allegiance of old ones, vendors (suppliers) are constantly changing product lines and packaging. This practice may give the impression that things are changing more than they

actually are. Another factor, according to the general manager, was that he had purchased some new shelving for the store, and those shelves provided more space for more products. Also in the last year, Hussey remarked, "The one area in which there's been an effort is fresh meat. That was a strategic direction. There is definitely more variety now, and our prices are good."

Board member Deborah Cherry, when approached by *The Chronicle* about this issue, had this to say: "Some of the principles concerning our 'product mix' were passed on to me when I was oriented in 1988, and in the early years of our produce section, in which I worked. One principle was that our stock should be limited to some grocery and health food basics, bulk products, frozen foods, and fresh produce. Another principle was to cut down on packaging. We seem to be straying from that idea."

Another board member, Mohsen Ahmed, who wrote a letter to *The Chronicle* last October on this subject, told *The Chronicle*, "The focus in Karma's purchasing seems to have shifted to high-end products. There's been a substantial expansion of luxury product lines — chocolates, chips, candy, and snack foods. I expect to see these chi-chi elitist products at Whole Foods, not at Karma. When I go to Karma, I expect a selection of wholesome grains, good bread, and fresh produce. Why are we importing bread from Germany? We have bakers in Toronto!"

In response to these views, Hussey told *The*

**I expect to see chi-chi, elitist products at Whole Foods, not at Karma.**

*Chronicle*, “Karma members have certainly commented to staff overwhelmingly in person and through the annual member survey that they like having a large variety of fresh, whole, packaged, and frozen groceries to choose from. As some members have noted [in this article], there is certainly more selection of packaged groceries with the increased space and efficiency. However, this increase in variety has not decreased our selection of the products that these members desire: fresh produce, whole grains, and fresh bread from Toronto.”

## RECIPE

### Rapini With Pasta

**Terry Fowler**

This is a recipe from my brother-in-law, who grew up in southern Italy. He insists on using orrecchiette pasta (“little ears”), but the recipe goes fine with many kinds. I use the wild rice spirals we get at Karma. It’s fast and delicious, and we use it as a one-dish meal. Amounts of ingredients can be extremely variable, depending on your taste — and what’s in your fridge!

#### Ingredients

6–12 anchovies, drained of their oil and chopped  
1/3 cup or more pitted olives  
3–6 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tbsp. good olive oil  
1–2 bunches fresh rapini (some people use dandelion greens)  
Pasta to serve 3–5 people  
Pepper and salt

Put the water on to boil for the pasta, using a large pot. While the water is coming to a boil, sauté the garlic in the olive oil until golden, add anchovies, and then stir until they become a paste. Add olives to the mixture. When the water is at a rolling boil, add a little olive oil to it, then the pasta. While it is cooking, clean and chop off the ends of the rapini. Chop it up, stems and all, and add it to the top of the pasta in the pot about 3 minutes before the pasta is done. Drain the pasta and rapini, put them in a large bowl and add the anchovy mixture. You may want to add pepper and a little salt (but remember the anchovies are already salty).

## **Sunset in the Park With Karma Wednesday, July 19, 4:00 pm to sunset**

Connect with your community! Bring a dinner picnic and join us in Vermont Square Park (just north of Karma on Palmerston Avenue). Face painting and games for the kids. Musicians welcome to join in the Karma Jam. Everyone welcome! Karma community: It's OURS! Rain date: Thursday, July 20.

## **Farm Visit to Pfenning's Organic Farm in Baden Saturday, June 24**

Organized by the Toronto Chapter of Canadian Organic Growers. (Karma carries Pfenning's carrots and potatoes.) Cost is \$15 for adults, \$5 for children. Transportation to the farm can be arranged at a nominal cost. Those wishing to attend should contact us at [torontochapter@cog.ca](mailto:torontochapter@cog.ca) or call 416-466-4420 and we will supply more details.

## **Everdale Open House Saturday, June 24, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

This is when the farm starts bursting with goodness and we invite you to come and celebrate with us. Take a tour of the farm and see the glory of the gardens. Visit Home Alive! and witness cutting-edge sustainable housing technologies. Mini workshops and activities for the kids all day!  
Fee: general admission to Everdale  
For more information, contact [info@everdale.org](mailto:info@everdale.org), visit [www.everdale.org](http://www.everdale.org) or call 519-855-4859.

## **Visit to Seed Sanctuary in Kingston Saturday, July 16, 7:30 am**

Summer tour by coach from Oshawa to Kingston to visit the heirloom seed sanctuary on the Sisters of Providence estate in the morning, followed by a guided tour of the vegetable and ornamental gardens of Bellevue House in the afternoon. Cost is \$25. For info, contact Vincent at 905-263-9907. Sponsored by the Durham Chapter of Canadian Organic Growers.

## **A Slow Food Harvest Feast Sunday, August 13, 1:00 to 6:00 pm Everdale Learning Centre**

Share in the harvest and preparation of a gourmet organic meal led by community chefs. We'll be picking the carrots, beets, greens, tomatoes and herbs right on site...and then preparing delectable side dishes. The menu will suit vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters. For more information contact [info@everdale.org](mailto:info@everdale.org), visit [www.everdale.org](http://www.everdale.org) or call 519-855-4859.

## **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!**

Food Issues Committee: [foodissues@karmacoop.org](mailto:foodissues@karmacoop.org)

Events Committee: [promotions@karmacoop.org](mailto:promotions@karmacoop.org)

Member Labour Committee: [memberlabour@karmacoop.org](mailto:memberlabour@karmacoop.org)

Web Committee: [web@karmacoop.org](mailto:web@karmacoop.org)

Chronicle Committee: [chronicle@karmacoop.org](mailto:chronicle@karmacoop.org)

Board of Directors: [board@karmacoop.org](mailto:board@karmacoop.org)

Member Labour Coordinator: Sara Pulins 416-534-1240 or [mlc@karmacoop.org](mailto:mlc@karmacoop.org)

## **Hours of Operation**

Monday: 11 am – 7 pm

Tuesday: 11 am – 9 pm

Wednesday: 11 am – 9 pm

Thursday: 11 am – 9 pm

Friday: 10 am – 9 pm

Saturday: 10 am – 6 pm

Sunday: 11 am – 5 pm

## **Staff List**

General Manager: Graeme Hussey

Grocery Manager: Lisa McLean

Produce Manager: Michael Armstrong

Health & Beauty Manager: Sara Pulins

Shift Manager: Greg Miller

Bookkeeper: Denise Stapleton

Membership Secretary: Marilou Lawrence

Member Labour Coordinator: Sara Pulins

Clerks: Christine Delay, Mike Haliechuk, Philipp Harderer, Shannon Waterman