

pea soup

Autumn 2020



Wonderstate Coffee

what's that little bug in the logo? (page 4-5)

Board News & Views

by Eric Snowdeal, VFC Board Treasurer

As I write this, it's hard to believe autumn is rapidly approaching and all that the season brings: the changing colors of the leaves, longer nights and shorter days, schools starting, and VFC Board elections. For me, it tends to be a contemplative time, all the more so in the strange times we find ourselves.

I'm approaching the end of my 4th year since being elected to the Viroqua Food Co+op Board of Directors. It has been incredible to have the opportunity to represent the owner-members during what has ended up being a time of great change – first with the expansion of our wonderful Co-op and more recently with Covid-19.

In the process of the expansion, I was truly impressed by the hard work of the staff and General Manager Jan Rasikas to make the Co-op a special place in the Driftless region. I thought of how proud I was to serve as board member as we worked to carry out the responsibilities of the board during those times of change.

And then I witnessed the leadership Jan and the employees have shown in response to Covid-19 to ensure the safety of shoppers and staff. I, and other board members, have heard from numerous shoppers who are tremendously grateful for all the efforts that have been taken to safeguard the community while serving the mission of the Co-op. In the words of one owner, "The combination of competence, compassion and proactive behavior is inspiring. You are all deeply appreciated!"

As I mentioned, the board elections are approaching. Board members are elected to represent the membership and act as stewards of the Cooperative. To continue to stay true to our mission and address the needs of our membership and greater community, we need your participation!

We are very excited to have three candidates seeking election to the three open board seats. It is yet another testament to how special a place we live that people are willing to serve their community in this capacity. See pages 14-15 for details. All VFC Owners are invited to the online Annual Owners Meeting on Wednesday, October 14, to review the past year's fiscal and operating performance. More event details are listed on page 12.



L to R: Olive Reynolds, Peter Bergquist, Karen Mischel, Mike Link, Eric Snowdeal, Elizabeth Tigan, Aurora Boyd

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PEA SOUP PUBLICATION TEAM

- Charlene Elderkin
Design, Advertising, Writing, Editing
- Shana Meshbesh
Editing, Design, Writing, Photography
- Bjorn Bergman
Research, Writing
- Haley Stafslie
Photography, Design

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mike Link, *President*
- Peter Bergquist, *Vice President*
- Eric Snowdeal, *Treasurer*
- Elizabeth Tigan, *Secretary*
- Olive Reynolds
- Aurora Boyd
- Karen Mischel

The Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Temporarily, meetings are hosted online. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at the meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: vfcbod@viroquafood.coop

ADVERTISEMENTS

Ad space is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Ad sizes and prices are as follows:
1/8 page: 3.5" w x 2.25" h – \$50
1/4 page: 3.5" w x 4.75" h – \$100
Ad deadline for Winter: November 2
Email: marketing@viroquafood.coop

Pea Soup is intended as a vehicle for communication among Co-op owners and shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice. Ads printed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the VFC.

The Pea Soup is published quarterly.
DOWNLOAD THE PEA SOUP

Cover Photo: Wonderstate Coffee

Cooperative Strength

by Jan Rasikas, General Manager

Thank you for all your love and support over the past 6 months! We are honored and grateful to be selling wholesome foods for you and your families. Thank you for understanding all the changes we've made to our operations to keep you and our staff safe.

We are dedicated to delivering great service, being a great place to work, having strong relationships, and being an active part of our community.

We are doing our best for our community and this world by adhering to the rules and regulations put in place by our state government and health organizations to ensure everyone's safety during this pandemic. We understand that some of you may feel like these rules are frustrating or not necessary. We also understand that there are others in our community who do not think the rules and regulations are strict enough. Please understand that we want to provide great service to everyone.

We believe in showing appreciation and care in all our actions – so if you don't want to wear a mask, we promise to be kind when we tell you that you simply cannot shop inside the store. We're happy to serve you through our [Curbside Pick-up Program](#). Let us help you find a way to get the foods you need.

We have an amazing staff and we cannot express enough appreciation to them right now. We hired these wonderful individuals to purchase and cook great food, to keep the store clean and the shelves stocked, and to deliver the service you are used to at the Co-op. We never envisioned that it would include enforcing safety rules

during a pandemic. Please be patient and kind with them while they are doing their job. We're doing our best to adapt to the changes and we strive to do better each and every day.

We've already seen price increases as a result of the upheaval caused by the pandemic. The disruption of the supply chain and distribution, the closing of many food manufacturers, and extreme weather conditions have far reaching impacts that we cannot completely predict. Several grocery categories have shown record increases since February, and recent storm activity in the gulf will impact seafood prices – the same as we experienced with hurricane Katrina 15 years ago. The fires in California will also impact produce availability and prices for the months to come. The natural and organic food channel is not immune to these impacts.

Our strength as a cooperative business helps us to navigate disruption, stay flexible, resilient, and respond quickly to the changes. Our relationship with local producers is more important than ever, and can secure fresh products for our community better than if we were completely reliant on fresh products from far away. For the other products on our shelves, we will focus on negotiating the best weekly sale prices, strengthening our Basics Program, and continue to search for similar products to replace those we can no longer source.

We very much appreciate your support, your patience, and your understanding. While the Co-op looks and operates differently than in the past, we are doing our best to serve our community in this trying time. We're in this together!





Local Producer Profile

Wonderstate Coffee

Fifteen years ago, Denise & TJ Semanchin and Caleb Nicholes began roasting coffee in an old train depot in Viroqua. Since then, their roastery has moved to the Food Enterprise Center on Main Street and business has grown to include three cafes in Milwaukee, Bayfield and Viroqua. But through all this change, coffee has remained their way of celebrating place and community. A mission-driven business, in 2015 they became one of the first 100% solar powered coffee roasteries in the world. In 2017, they committed to one of the highest minimum price guarantees to farmers in the industry – 81% above the Fair Trade Conventional price and 51% above the Organic minimum price. Additionally, they commit to raising this price each year to keep pace with ever-rising production costs.

When the company was founded in 2005, Denise, TJ and Caleb chose the name Kickapoo Coffee. “The intention was to honor the Kickapoo River Valley they call home. But Kickapoo is not simply the name given to a river. The Kickapoo are a People, with tribes in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Mexico. By using ‘Kickapoo,’ we claimed a name that was never ours to take and perpetuated a cultural erasure,” shared the owners.



Like the small Midwestern town we call home, we know you don't have to be big to make an impression. That little bug in our logo is a cicada. Their big, ominous hum sparks a sense of mystery in us. We think coffee isn't so different; there's always more to it.

–Wonderstate Coffee

After initiating an internal review of their name in 2019, they apologized directly to the Kickapoo Nation and shared with them their decision to step away from Kickapoo as a name and fully rebrand. They are deeply grateful to everyone who brought them through this transition and held them accountable along the way. Just over a year later, on June 11, Wonderstate Coffee was born.

Even though their bags may look different, Wonderstate's values are still rooted in the principles that motivated them to begin roasting in 2005. In fact, the bags are now compostable – a clear next step in commitment to sustainability. Wonderstate wants to create everyday experiences that spark connection, inspire curiosity, and build integrity into their communities. Every cup connects us to people across the world: the farmers who picked the cherries, the workers who processed and shipped the beans, neighbors in Viroqua who roasted and bagged them, and the baristas (or partners, roommates, friends) who brewed it for us. Wonderstate is a celebration of that connection, the spark of awe when encountering something good.

While the coffee remains the same, Wonderstate has taken the opportunity to rename some of their blends. You'll recognize some classics like their bestselling Organic Driftless Blend and seasonal blends, but there are also some thoughtfully crafted new blend names. So don't worry, your tried and true blend favorites haven't changed or disappeared, they've just gotten a visual update. To help you find your favorite blends in this transition period, the names of the old blend will appear on stickers adhered to the bags and signs within the bulk section.

Whether you're brewing one of Wonderstate's blends or a fresh crop single origin, their coffees honor familiar and long-lasting relationships they've nurtured with family farms around the world. As for the people who make up Wonderstate Coffee, they continue to believe that great coffee must serve a collective future. From guaranteeing higher pay for farmers, to supporting resilient agriculture and innovative ways of doing business, Wonderstate is working to do their part to create a just food system.

They humbly continue to follow their core values that have guided them from the start. But now, as Wonderstate Coffee, they are able to more fully inhabit these values without bearing the contradiction of appropriating an Indigenous nation's name.

"We still have a lot of work to do. Taking action in regards to our name change only resolved our most blatant transgression against the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community. Not just in this moment, but in the months and decades to come, we must show up for BIPOC, and all marginalized communities, in substantive action and systemic change," shared the owners.

They invite you to join the conversation and learn more at wonderstate.com and [@wonderstatecoffee](https://twitter.com/wonderstatecoffee).



New name, same award-winning coffee!



In 2015, the Roastery went 100% solar powered.



Wonderstate Team at a cupping event in their lab.

Apples Anytime

Ah, autumn — perfectly embodied in the humble apple. More than 17,000 varieties of this tempting fruit have been identified, and Red Delicious is only the beginning.

At the co-op, you'll find apple varieties that boast wide-ranging flavor profiles, from the oh-so-tart to satisfyingly sweet. Some are ideal in a lunchbox, while others shine in baked goods. Explore an array of possibilities for savoring this versatile fall favorite at every meal with these recipes. You'll quickly discover that "an apple a day" isn't nearly enough!



French Toast with Warm Apple Pecan Compote

Servings: 6. Prep time: 60 minutes.

Compote

- ¾ cup water or apple juice
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- 3 cups apple, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons butter

French Toast

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 5 large eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- Pinch of salt
- 1-pound loaf of soft-crusted bread (such as brioche or challah) cut into 1-inch thick slices

1. To make the compote, bring the water, brown sugar, maple syrup, cinnamon and raisins to a boil in a saucepan. Add the pecans, apples and salt. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cornstarch and butter and simmer another 3 to 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Keep warm while preparing the French toast, or prepare the compote the night before and reheat.
2. Heat the oven to 300° F. Place a metal rack in the oven to keep pieces of finished French toast warm while the rest is cooking. Melt a little of the butter in a large skillet (or two skillets to make the process go faster) over medium-low heat. Whisk the eggs, milk, maple syrup and salt in a large bowl. Soak each slice of bread in the egg mixture for about 30 seconds on each side. Place in hot skillet and cook each side for 3 to 4 minutes until golden brown. Add more butter for each new piece of toast added to the pan. Slice French toast into triangles and serve topped with warm apple compote.



Waldorf Salad with Yogurt and Honey

Servings: 4 - 6. Prep time: 30 minutes.

- 1 lemon, juice and zest (about 2 to 3 tablespoons juice)
 - ½ cup Greek yogurt
 - 1 teaspoon honey
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 2 cups apple (1 large apple), cut into bite-sized pieces
 - 1 cup seedless grapes, halved
 - 1 cup celery (2 to 3 ribs), cut into ½-inch pieces
 - ½ cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
1. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, zest, yogurt and honey. In a large salad bowl, gently toss the apples, grapes, celery, and walnuts with the dressing. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Substitute nonfat Greek yogurt for a lower-fat version if you like.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner — or anytime in between — there are endless ways to enjoy apples all day. Visit welcometothetable.coop to find more delectable apple recipes.



Cinnamon Apple Coffee Cake

Servings: 8. Prep time: 55 minutes; 15 minutes active.

- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil or melted coconut oil
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup diced apple
- ¼ cup dried cranberries

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter or oil an 8 x 8 inch pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flours, oats, baking soda, salt, spices and sugar. Stir in the remaining ingredients until just combined. The batter will be very thick. Spread the batter evenly into the pan. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until a toothpick stuck in the middle comes out clean. Let cool before slicing.

This moist cake featuring dried cranberries and whole grains is sure to become a coffee break favorite.



Gingered Beet and Apple Salad

Servings: 6. Prep time: 30 minutes.

- 1 pound beets, peeled
- 1 apple (about ½ pound)
- ¼ pound carrots, peeled
- ½ cup fresh parsley, minced
- 2 tablespoon apple cider
- 2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Using the shredding blade of a food processor or a grater, shred the beets, apple and carrots. Mix well with the remaining ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately or refrigerate to let the flavors blend.

Fresh apples and apple cider make this beautiful, jewel-toned slaw refreshing and delicious. Try using a variety of beets — like golden or chioggia beets — for an even more colorful salad.



Butternut Apple Bisque

Servings: 6. Prep time: 45 minutes.

- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon butter or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon curry powder (or more, to taste)
- 1 butternut squash, about 1 ½ pounds, seeded, peeled and cubed
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored, peeled and cubed
- 5 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- Sea salt to taste

1. In a 4-quart pot, heat the butter or oil and saute the onion over medium heat until soft, about 5 minutes.
2. Add curry powder and sauté 3 more minutes, being careful not to burn.
3. Add squash, apple and vegetable stock to the pot and bring to a boil.
4. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook 20 to 30 minutes, or until the squash is tender.
5. Puree the soup in a food processor or blender and salt to taste.

Tip: For some extra spice, add 1 tablespoon ginger, peeled and chopped, to the pan at the same time as the onions, or add chopped candied ginger as a garnish before serving.

Autumn in a bowl! Warm up with tart Granny Smith apples, creamy butternut squash and a dash of curry powder.



Apple Raspberry “Nachos”

Servings: 4. Prep time: 20 minutes.

- 1 cup frozen or fresh raspberries
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- 2 large Honeycrisp apples, halved, cored and sliced thin
- ¼ cup pecans, chopped
- 2 tablespoons shredded coconut
- 2 tablespoons plain or vanilla yogurt

1. In a small pot, simmer the raspberries and maple syrup for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove the raspberry sauce from the heat and pour into a small container through a fine mesh strainer to remove the seeds. Set aside the finished sauce.
2. Melt the chocolate chips either in a double boiler or by microwaving for about 3 minutes on low, in a microwave-safe bowl.
3. To build the nachos, spread out or overlap the apple slices on a platter or large plate. Lightly drizzle the apple slices with the melted chocolate and raspberry sauce, sprinkle pecans and coconut over the top, and serve with yogurt as a dipping sauce.

Mix and match your favorite toppings for a creative, kid-friendly afternoon snack.



40 Acres & A Mule Project

With community support & a socially-distanced BBQ fundraiser, local resident Adrian Lipscombe has surpassed initial goal of raising \$100,000 toward historic project of restitution!

The brutal death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer in May sparked worldwide protests to end systemic racism in our culture. At that time, many folks started to look at ways to help. That is when individuals started sending money to local chef and urban planner Adrian Lipscombe.

Lipscombe owns and operates the [Uptowne Café and Bakery](#) on the north side of La Crosse. Adrian and her family have deep roots in black foodways and culture. She grew up in Texas and they moved from Austin, Texas four years ago in search of a slower way of life. She was drawn to the north side of La Crosse by a vacant restaurant and the work to revitalize the area. She opened the Uptowne Café and Bakery on Caledonia Street where she focuses on keeping black foodways alive with her food and efforts to revitalize the community through storytelling and civics projects.

As one of the only black restaurant owners in the Coulee Region she was a little confused with what to do when folks started sending her



money. Overnight she had a realization and created the **40 Acres and A Mule Project** on GoFundMe. The project is raising money to purchase at least a 40-acre farm for black farmers to produce food for the local food industry, serve as an outlet for black foodways, and be a safe haven to secure the legacy of black foodways.

The name of the project connects historically to the end of the civil war. On January 16, 1865, with the support of US President Abraham Lincoln, Union General William T. Sherman issued special field order No. 15, which gave 400,000 acres of land stretching from South Carolina to Florida to 40,000 newly freed black families. A later order also authorized the army to loan out mules to the new families, giving rise to the phrase “40 acres and a mule.” The action by the Union Army was the aim of the U.S. Government to give restitution to African Americans for enslavement. Unfortunately, when President Lincoln was assassinated, his successor U.S. President Andrew Johnson overturned the order, which returned the land back to the confederate owners. Without land to grow on, many freed slaves became sharecroppers for large white landowners, which continued the cycle of oppression.

Freedom, land ownership, and the means to prosper were seen as a significant pathway to empowerment by enabling African Americans to be a part of the economy, create businesses and community following the Civil War. The reparations movement, which continues today, sees “40 acres and a mule” as a viable promise by the U.S. government to make restitution for enslavement. The significance of this promise to Black people was to present a conduit not only to be free, but also to own land and be integrated as a part of the fabric of the United States to achieve a more equal footing.

Since launching the 40 Acres & A Mule Project, Lipscombe has seen an outpouring of support for the project and surpassed her initial goal of raising \$100,000. The project has been featured in the Washington Post, Huffington Post, Food & Wine, The Table Underground, A Hungry Society Podcast, and more. Since then, she has upped the fundraising goal to \$250,000 and started asking for support from larger corporations.

Our local community came out to support the project in a big way! Adrian and Dani Lind of Rooted Spoon Kitchen Table co-hosted a 40 Acres & A Mule BBQ Fundraiser in Viroqua on August 1st to support the project. Many other local businesses stepped up and helped with the fundraiser, including Mary Kastman of Driftless Café, Fat Porcupine Noodle Bar, Driftless Brewing Company, Parrish Music (live music provided by Catherine & Ted Parrish), Meadowlark Organics, Viroqua Floral Mercantile, Bard Bread, Circadian Organics, and Viroqua Food Co+op. All of these people behind these businesses donated their time, food, and/or money in support of the fundraiser.

Viroqua Food Co+op is a proud donor and supporter. If you would like to support the work of Adrian Lipscombe’s 40 Acres & A Mule Project, visit the project on [GoFundMe](#).

Knowledge is like
a garden; if it is
not cultivated, it
cannot be
harvested.

African Proverb

#40acresproject

In 1920, there were over one million black farmers in the United States. In 2019, there approximately only 45,000. A 2002 USDA report revealed that only 1% of rural land is black owned.



VFC & many local businesses supported the socially-distanced fundraiser hosted by Rooted Spoon Kitchen Table!

VFC News

Vote for Your Favorite Nonprofits for Give Where You Live – 2021

Voting takes place in October and is conducted online only. Be sure that the VFC has your current contact information since VFC Owners will receive a weblink via postcard and/or email. Send all address & email updates to: outreach@viroquafood.coop

Owners vote for up to five organizations on the ballot. Results are announced in the Winter Pea Soup and on our website at: viroquafood.coop/community-outreach

VFC's *Give Where You Live* donations program allows our owners and shoppers to “round up” to the nearest dollar for the nonprofit of the month each time they check out. These organizations are elected by VFC Owners through a yearly ballot. VFC Owners may nominate local community organizations that have 501c3 status to be on the annual ballot.

Grant Application Deadline for VFC Cooperative Community Fund

Applications are now available for the **VFC Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) Grant!** Local nonprofit organizations are invited to apply for a VFC CCF Grant, for any amount up to \$600, by **October 31, 2020**.

Priority is given to grant requests for educational projects, development projects and local events that match VFC's mission, and focus on but are not necessarily limited to: food and food systems, nutrition, health and well-being, cooking education, sustainable agriculture, cooperative education, and social change.

The VFC Cooperative Community Fund was established

in 2016 with the specific goal of providing grant funding to local nonprofit organizations that have a mission consistent with the Viroqua Food Co+op. VFC CCF is an endowment that is administered through Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation (501(c)(3)). As more money is added to the fund, we accrue more interest and can give out larger grants.

Be sure to **round up** your purchases at the register during October 2020 to contribute to the VFC Cooperative Community Fund and help make a bigger impact! Learn more about this opportunity and download an application here: www.viroquafood.coop/ccf

Be the First to Find Out About Thanksgiving Turkey Deliveries

Hear about turkey updates first by subscribing to our **“Sales & Special Events”** email! Given the evolving food landscape, we are not able to allow for turkey reservations like we have in the past.

Subscribing to our email will guarantee you'll be the first to find out about our turkey delivery schedule – and much more!

Organic Frozen Turkeys from **Organic Prairie** **\$2.99/lb**

Free-range Fresh & Frozen from **Ferndale Market** **\$1.99/lb**

We are offering local organic turkeys from **Organic Prairie** this

November. They are raised by cooperative family farmers who are serious about the health of the land and their animals. The birds have access to plenty of fresh sunshine and air, and are fed 100% certified organic feeds!

Ferndale Market Turkeys are free-range, antibiotic-free, and raised in Cannon Falls, MN. They are available in both fresh and frozen.

Viroqua food co-op 609 N Main St, Viroqua, WI 54655, 608.837.7511. Hours: 8am-8pm daily. #ViroquaCountryCovered.

OUR STORE | OWNERSHIP | BOARD OF DIRECTORS | ABOUT VFC

Sign up for our "Sales & Special Events" email. PEASOUP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER. * Get notified when the VFC's Pea Soup Quarterly Newsletter is ready to view online.

SALES & SPECIAL EVENTS EMAIL. * This advertising email comes once a week - or less - and features weekly arrivals of local and fresh produce, new products for sale in-store, as well as upcoming Co-op events and sales that apply to VFC Owners and non-owners, alert Sign-up for this to receive special coupons, discounts, Co-op breaking news and information on food-related issues, along with fresh sales.

Want to know what's on sale this week? **CLICK HERE** to go to our Current Sales Page!

Want to get waxy, quick & healthy recipes? **CLICK HERE** to go to our Recipe blog!

CLICK HERE!

Sign Up!

First Name*

Last Name*

Email (we will keep your email completely private)

Zip*

Select "Your Interest":
 Pea Soup Quarterly Newsletter
 Sales & Special Events Email

Submit

VFC Board Election & Annual Meeting

This year has proven to be a year of surprises and needing to adjust with a world-wide pandemic affecting every aspect of life. The Viroqua Food Co-op Annual Owners Meeting is no exception. To protect the health and safety of our owners, board and staff, we have decided to host our Annual Meeting virtually. If you have any questions, please reach out to Bjorn Bergman at: outreach@viroquafood.coop

SAVE THE DATE

Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 from 6-7pm

Location: Meet online from the comfort of your home! All owners will be mailed an official postcard invitation with an online link to attend the meeting.

Items on the Agenda:

- 2020 Ballot Results
- Board Report on Fiscal Year 2019-2020
 - President's Remarks
 - Financial Report
 - General Manager Report
- Question & Answer

Viola Becomes 100% Renewably Powered Through New GoMacro Initiative

GoMacro, known for its organic, plant-based nutrition bars, announced in late July that all residences, businesses, and schools in Viola, Wisconsin will be powered by 100% renewable wind energy beginning in August 2020 thanks to a new partnership with the Village.

GoMacro worked with the Viola Municipal Electric Utility, the Upper Midwest Municipal Energy Group, and renewable energy advisors to design and ratify a program to replace all traditional energy sources in their community with wind power. In the first known arrangement of its kind in the country, GoMacro will cover the additional costs of purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs) for the entire municipality, so that residents won't see any difference on their energy bills.

Founded and headquartered in Viola, GoMacro has been utilizing 100% renewable energy to power its production facility since December 2018. The company's journey to green manufacturing began in summer 2017 with the installation of 844 solar panels on the roof of their production facility. To supplement the panels on cloudy days and at night, GoMacro purchases renewable energy credits to cover the remaining energy use.

"We're very grateful for the collaborative effort of everyone involved, and for the opportunity to share the

benefits of 100% renewable energy with our neighbors," said Jola Sonkin, Co-Founder, and CEO of GoMacro. "This project is really a testament to the power of companies, communities, and public services coming together to create a more sustainable future for everyone involved. Though it was the first of its kind in our state, we hope this project will encourage other companies to think creatively and use their resources in a way that creates large-scale change both inside and outside their doors."

Learn more by clicking on their feature from the local Channel 8 News coverage here:



<https://www.news8000.com/viola-now-runs-only-on-wind-energy-thanks-to-gomacro-area-partners/>

VFC Election

Vote for three Candidates: September 14 - October 14, 2020

VFC Owners with a current email address on file receive a link via email to the online ballot that is open for voting starting September 14.

All other owners receive a postcard with a link to the voting site. Paper ballots are made available, but only in the store upon request.

There are three open seats. Two are 3-year terms, one is a 2-year seat to finish the term of Tonya Wagner. Tonya moved out of the area shortly after her term started in 2019 and the VFC Board appointed Karen Mischel to fill her seat for one year.

2020 Annual Owners Meeting

Wednesday, October 14 • 6-7pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

VFC Owners will receive a postcard with a link to both the online voting as well as the online annual meeting.

Vote for 3 Open Seats on the VFC Board

New Candidate – 3-Year Term

Elizabeth Haucke

1. Why are you interested in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?

Our Co-op – its mission, local suppliers, owners, and team – represent the best of our community. The commitment to healthy food access for all of our neighbors, a thriving local economy, and a sustainable environment align with my personal values, and they are why my family and I are committed to the co-op model. Especially in this time of intense social, economic, and cultural transformation, I want all our children to see the cooperative spirit grow and thrive. And that takes a lot of hard work and intention from the entire co-op community. I am running for the Board of Directors because I want to offer my skills, knowledge, creativity, and support to bringing out the best in everyone in the VFC community who is working toward a more fair, just, and sustainable future for our community, and beyond.



2. What skills do you bring to a Board of a \$7+ million business? Note any relevant business experience you

possess and/or positions of leadership in finance, community involvement, cooperatives, education and/or boards.

I am a startup founder working across the food and agriculture system, with a focus on regenerative crop production, farm logistics, and consumer products. Prior to starting my first company, I worked in affordable housing finance in New York City, where I managed over \$80 million of investments in low and middle income housing across the US. From there, I completed my MBA at MIT before starting my entrepreneurial journey. In my role as a startup founder, I have raised over \$850,000 in startup capital, reported to boards, served on nonprofit and corporate boards, and seen financial and agricultural organizations through financial recovery. Specifically, from 2014-2017 I served on the board of a community bank in Minnesota with a strong presence in farm communities as it emerged from the tail end of the 2008 crisis. I believe my creativity, experience across the farm and food system, and previous governance roles position me to contribute meaningfully to the VFC Board.

See full profile at:

www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election

New Candidate – 3-Year Term

Julie Tomaro

1. Why are you interested in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?

Community is not a static thing, it is always changing and evolving. It is shaped by the hands of those who participate. I am always seeking ways to contribute to my community, from organizing parent/child groups and activities to many years of helping the Harvest Parade get off the ground. I love the Viroqua community and all its potential. I feel the same way about Viroqua Food Co-op. I want to be one of the people helping it evolve, both now and into the future.

2. What skills do you bring to a Board of a \$7+ million busi-



ness? Note any relevant business experience you possess and/or positions of leadership in finance, community involvement, cooperatives, education and/or boards.

Several months after Hurricane Katrina I got the opportunity to volunteer with a nontraditional grass-roots disaster relief organization called Emergency Communities. I spent nearly thirteen months leading the inventory and receiving department of an organization consisting of a hundred volunteers, serving several hundred returning residents daily. We supplied hot meals, internet access, household items and house gutting. I spent much of that year working out logistics amongst my organization, local residents and aid groups as well as some government agencies.

See full profile at:

www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election

Incumbent – 2-Year Term

Aurora Boyd

1. Why are you interested in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?

I have been serving on the Board of Directors for the past three years, and in that time I have gained a firm understanding of the fiduciary responsibilities we, as a board, owe our membership and our co-op. I would like to continue to serve for the 2-year position because I think it's important to have consistency on the board as we transition out of our expansion, and also through these unprecedented times. I also think that new candidates would benefit from serving the full 3-year term; I learned so much from my first two years, I finally felt that in my last year I had a better understanding of the strategies of the VFC. I know that the other members running are incredible candidates that will offer our community a diverse range of skills and experiences.

2. What skills do you bring to a Board of a \$7+ million



business? Note any relevant business experience you possess and/or positions of leadership in finance, community involvement, cooperatives, education and/or boards.

I have been able to glean so much from my participation on the BOD, and I think that the board has begun to diversify in terms of opinion, professional, as well as life experiences, which is a huge benefit to our membership. When I first ran in 2017, Karen Mischel was the only other woman on the board. We now have 4 women and 3 men. I am hopeful that the board will continue to diversify in the coming years.

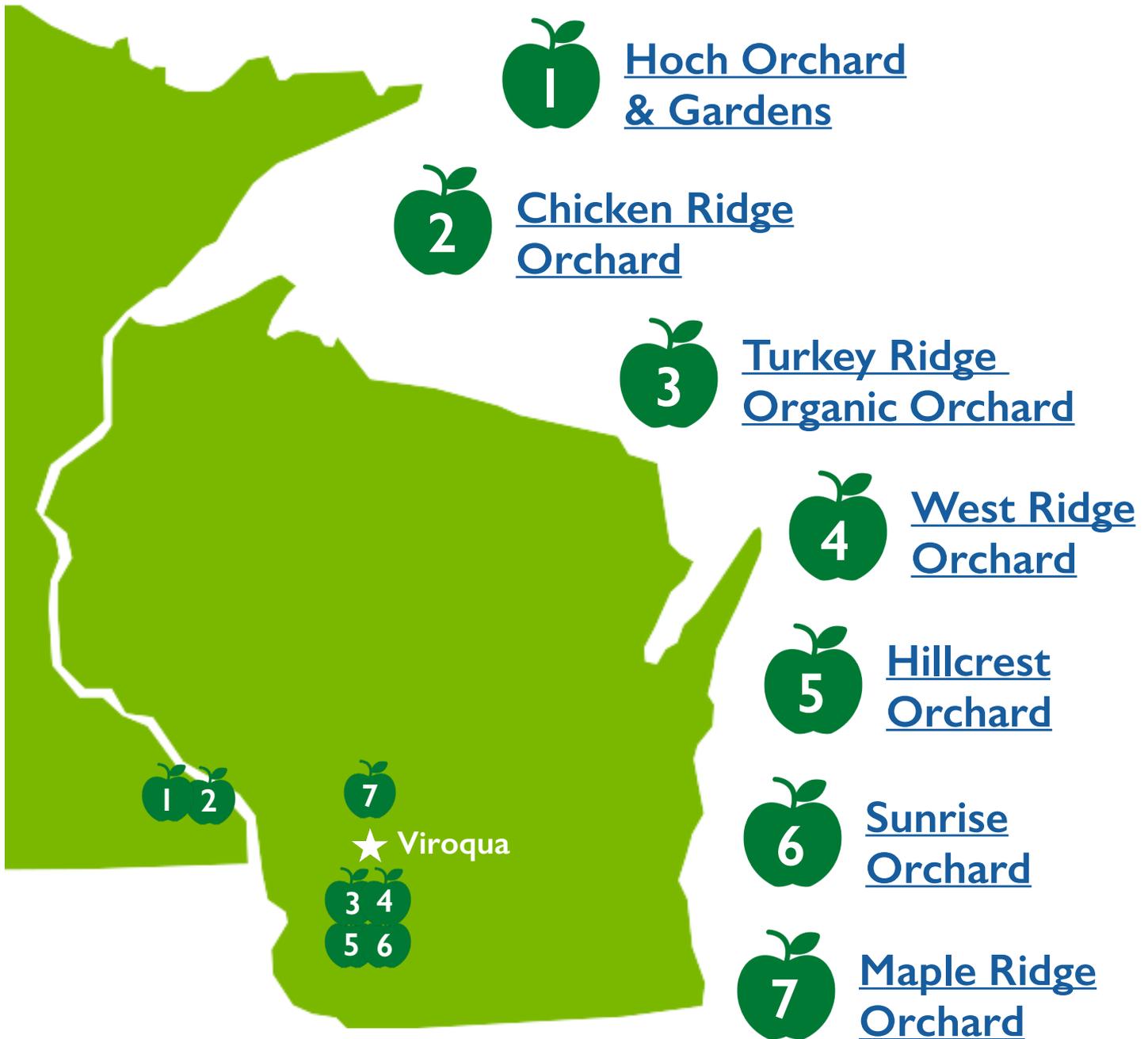
I've always loved being a student, and I learned so much about interpreting research from UCLA, where I obtained my bachelor's degree. Over the past three years on the board, I have actively participated in the meetings, asking questions to better understand all sides of an issue, speaking up when I feel it's important, and listening when others are sharing their experiences.

See full profile at:

www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election

Discover Local Orchards

*Opening dates, availability and hours may vary.
Always call ahead before visiting!*



Orchard Trip Tips

Bring the Family

Our local orchards are kid friendly and are a great spot to make some family memories. With lots of goodies to eat and places to see, you are always in for a good time and lots of smiles!

Respect the Orchard

Let the orchard thrive and leave nothing but footprints.

Pick with Care

Pick only ripe apples by gently rolling the apple upward off the branch followed by a little twist. Resist the urge to shake apples off branches!





Preserving Peppers – 101

As the growing season comes to a close and the first frost of the season is on the cusp, many of us have one question on our mind: How can we preserve the great flavors and bounty of harvest season so that we can enjoy it in the depth of wintertime? Peppers are a simple, easy and delicious vegetable to put up in your larder for use in the depths of the winter. Whether you have tons of pepper plants loaded with fruit in your garden, have more than you can eat in your CSA, stocked

up at the farmers market, or purchased a basket full from VFC, we've got you covered on how to preserve both your sweet and hot peppers quickly and easily. Let us jump right in and examine!

First thing's first, let's talk about color. Generally (there are always exceptions), peppers are green at first then they ripen to red, yellow, or orange. Peppers are best (have the most sugar and flavor) when they turn color. So if you are preserving peppers, go for ones that are most colorful.

Hot Pepper Disclaimer

If you are cutting up hot peppers with bare hands, beware of what you touch! **Capsaicin** (pronounced: **cap-say-sin**) is an oil in peppers that give them heat or a burning sensation in your mouth and on your skin, and can easily be transferred to your face or other areas of your body if you are not careful. The best policy is to wear reusable or disposable gloves when processing hot peppers, and be mindful of what you touch.



Drying

Drying peppers is such an easy way to preserve them! The easiest peppers to dry are ones that have thin fruit walls, which is more typical for hot peppers. If a variety has thin walls, all you need to do is:

- 1) Take a needle with thread and run it through the stems of peppers. Tie the ends of the thread together once all peppers are strung.
- 2) Hang up on a wall or in any other location that gets good ventilation and let them dry until they are shriveled and crispy. If you want to expedite the process, you can dry whole peppers in a dehydrator set at 125°F until shriveled and crispy.
- 3) Store dried peppers in an airtight container until ready to use.

Dried peppers can be used crumbled and added to any dish that calls for a pepper pick-me-up.

Freezing

The simplest and easy way to preserve peppers is freezing by following these steps:

- 1) Give the peppers a quick rinse.
- 2) Cut peppers up into the shape of your choice (e.g. slices, diced, or minced).
- 3) Put in a freezer container (a Ziplock bag or jar) and remove as much air as possible.
- 4) Put in the freezer.

When you want to add a touch of the past season pepper harvest to a soup, pizza or lasagna, all you need to do is take them out of the freezer and toss them in or on and cook them. This works equally as well for both sweet and hot peppers. Now, wasn't that easy?



Fermented

While fermenting peppers may sound complicated, it is super easy. All you need are peppers, water, salt – and to follow the recipe below. Once you get the hang of fermenting peppers, you can start adding other veggies like garlic, onions, carrots, and/or green beans to add variety.

Ingredients

- 3 cups water
- 1 ½ Tbsp sea salt
- 14 oz hot or sweet peppers, sliced in strips or rings, and seeds removed (if preferred)

Directions

- 1) Mix water and sea salt until salt is dissolved.
- 2) Add pepper strips/rings to wide mouth mason jar and pour in salt water brine.
- 3) Put a regular-mouth ½-pint mason jar inside the wide mouth to weigh down the peppers and keep them covered in brine. Place quart mason jar in bowl or pan to catch any brine that might overflow out of jar.
- 4) Ferment should sit out of direct sunlight on kitchen counter for 5-7 days. Check fermenting peppers every day to make sure peppers are covered in brine.
- 5) After 5-7 days, remove jar weight and try a sample. Ask yourself: *How does it taste? Do I like the level of sourness and the texture of the ferment? Are the peppers crunchy or soft?* If you like the flavor and texture – put lid on jar(s), place in fridge, and consume within one year. If a more-sour/less-crunchy ferment is preferred, put jar weight back and let it ferment for a few more days. Repeat taste testing until done to preferred sourness and crunchiness.



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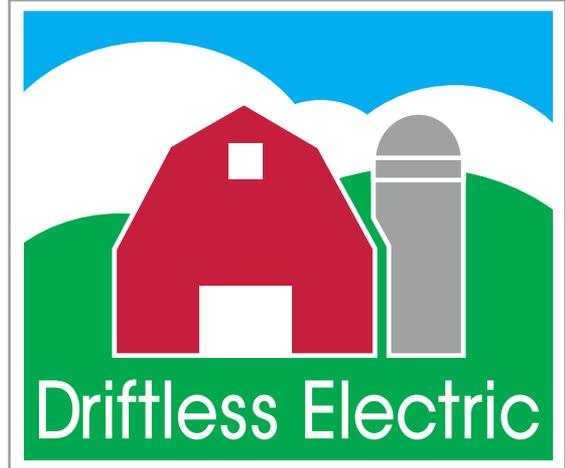


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“Round Up” for Local Nonprofits to Make a Bigger Impact

Give Where You Live



MAY 2020

Vernon Trails

VFC staff present a \$3,111 check to Pete Taylor of Vernon Trails.

Vernon Trails is committed to developing and maintaining sustainable roadways and trails, while continuing to create access for human powered users.



JUNE 2020

Community Hunger Solutions

VFC staff present a \$2,675 check on behalf of the Community Hunger Solutions Team.

Dedicated to increasing access to healthy food by providing food pantries with surplus fresh produce from local farms.



JULY 2020

WDRT

VFC staff present a \$2,997 check to Robert Lambert, volunteer DJ at WDRT – Driftless Community Radio.

WDRT 91.9FM is a listener-supported and programmed, non-commercial, volunteer-run, educational radio station in the Driftless Region of southwest Wisconsin.

Give Where You Live – Autumn 2020 Schedule

September Viroqua Farm to School
October Co-op Community Fund

November Bethel Butikk Food Pantry
December Kickapoo Valley Reserve

Visit www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach for a complete schedule.

Fuel The Heroes



In gratitude for the services provided by essential workers in our community, the VFC Deli supplied breakfasts or lunches to essential frontline workers who kept our community afloat during tough times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Picture includes VFC employee Cecillia and local USPS workers. Deliveries were also made to the staff working at Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Vernon Manor, Nelson Agri Center and Animal Tracks Veterinary Service.

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