

The Co-op Communicator January, 2006 Price: a pearl of great.

Co ho ho and a bottle of delightful fruit nectar. The silly season is over, and it's that time of the month again. This month's newsletter features the "Shameless Plug Competition." The reader who finds all the shameless plugs for co-op produce will win a stunning award that will not only be an object of beauty, but a conversation stopper, too. It'll drive you nuts trying to find them all. So, on with the news...

New Members: It seems membership in co-op is the hottest ticket in town for new arrivals—a big welcome to everyone who has signed up recently. Please consider donating a couple of hours a month towards opening the shop—it's not as hard as it looks, and it's a great way to get to know people around town. If you want someone to run through the procedures and perhaps buddy up with you until you're confident, either add your name to the roster on a day when someone else is on, or contact us and we'll arrange a tutorial. To our older ... oops ... more experienced members, please make our new members welcome by showing them the ropes.

Busy bee, February 4th & 5th: After the underwhelming response to our last busy bee, another has been scheduled to try to get the interior of the shop fitted out. Whatever your skill level or abilities, there will be a job to suit, so come along and pitch in.

We're also looking for people with fencing experience to help erect a fence around the co-op property. If you can help, either let Roy know, or drop us a line and your details will be passed on.

The Great Karri Ride, March long weekend: Our dynamic secretary Helen Nixon is organising catering for the awards and presentation night this

year. This event promises to be a great fundraiser for co-op: it's not often that a large boost to the bank balance is possible, so please support her in her efforts. Helen is putting together a team, both for pre-planning and the day, so if you are able to help in any capacity, please contact her. When (and it will be when, not if) she calls, please give her every help. It's just one day, but will make a big difference to our financial viability. Donations of fresh produce, time, and labour are eagerly sought. Watch this space (or another one like it).

Looking for a logo: The long running logo competition is being cranked up again, so if you've any ideas, start putting them on paper. An announcement will be made in the next newsletter about closing dates and such like, which is likely to be sometime in March. It sounds a long way away, but it'll creep up on you before you know it. I can't say if there will be any worthwhile prizes, but, heck, none of us are in this for the money.

Keep the flags flying: We can't open without you, our members, so please consider donating a couple of hours a month towards opening the shop. If each member donated 3 hours a month towards co-op, we'd be able to open seven days a week. We need to increase not only our turnover, but our opening hours to make co-op financially viable, so if you and a couple of friends are able to open regularly on another day, it will make it that much more likely that co-op will prosper. Rosters are pinned up in the shop, so if there's a blank spot, fill it in.

Currently, the opening hours are:

Wednesday: 2-5 pm

Friday: 2-5 pm

Saturday: 9 am- 12 noon.

Karri Country Good Food, Inc. 13 Wheatley Coast Rd, Northcliffe.

Perhaps a useful and easily achievable New Year's Resolution (it's not too late to make one) would be to be more active in co-op. That's got to be easier than giving up chocolate, or smoking, or whatever else it is that people resolve at this time of year.

Happenings: A small band of intrepid T/A's turned out last December to help with the shop refit. In spite of the low numbers, a great deal was accomplished, and a good time was had by all. Thanks once again to "Jack" Moss, who got us organised and working.

The bracken bale garden mentioned in last issue is flourishing. For all of you with orders in for bales, expect them to be arriving very soon. With the late break of season (has anyone had summer yet?), there's still plenty of time to get new garden beds up and running, and to renovate your existing beds. While you're doing that, consider planting a couple of extra to sell at co-op. Fresh produce is always in demand, both by members and by passing trade, so it's one way to earn a little extra money.

It's my Co-op and I'll ask if I want it:

Don't forget that if you want something that co-op doesn't stock to add it to the list pinned up at the shop, and we'll try to get it from our suppliers if possible.

If there's anything else you'd like to see co-op doing, talk to your fabulous committee member. If there's enough interest, things such as workshops, dinners, demonstrations and all sorts of exciting activities can be organised. We'd like to see co-op become a vibrant hub for the community, and by exercising our imaginations, it might just happen sooner rather than later.

Cooking with Co-op: Tired of feeling guilty every time you pass the co-op fridge? Wondering what to do with tofu? Looking for a tasty addition to your culinary repertoire that is quick and easy enough to make for a weeknight meal, while being luscious enough to serve

even the most discerning dinner-party guest? Well ... read on.

Tofu Stroganoff

2 blocks firm tofu (I use Tallyho Farm)
2-3 heaped tablespoons plain flour
2 teaspoons paprika
1 heaped teaspoon garam masala
Peanut oil
1 kg mushrooms (field, button, Swiss brown, whatever you like or a combination), chopped
3 or more cloves crushed fresh garlic
50gms or more of butter
2 tablespoons tomato paste
A little stock (I use Massel vegetarian chicken-style stock)
Sour cream, to taste
Basmati rice, to serve

1. Cut tofu into 2 cm cubes. Combine flour, paprika, and garam masala in a freezer bag, add tofu, and shake to coat.
2. Add to hot peanut oil and cook until outside of tofu is crisp and crunchy. Add tomato paste, cook for another minute or two, and set aside in a bowl.
3. Melt butter in same pot (don't scrape out the floury bits left over from the tofu), and lightly sauté garlic until soft. Add chopped mushrooms, and cook on low heat (with the lid on), until mushrooms are plump and firm. There should be at least an inch or two of mushroom juice in the bottom of the pan. If necessary, add a little chicken stock.
4. Return tofu mixture to pot, and stir until sauce thickens. If necessary, add a little cornflour. Mix sour cream with equal amounts of hot liquid before adding to pot (this stops the cream separating and making your sauce lumpy)
5. Simmer gently until the sauce is thick, stirring occasionally.
6. Serve with Basmati rice, extra sour cream, maybe fresh crusty bread, a salad, or whatever else takes your fancy.

This dish also freezes well, though the texture changes slightly, and should serve at least 4-6 hearty eaters.