



THE Garlic Press

SEWN WITH
PURPOSE

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SPRING 2025

SPRING 2025

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A Note From the CEO

The Garlic Press is back—now on a quarterly schedule! We're excited to relaunch with a fresh new look while staying true to our original purpose: staying connected with our owners and shoppers. In today's demanding world, connection has never been more important—or more meaningful. Whether it's the connection between people, ideas, or communities, it's the thread that binds us together and drives real progress within our communities.

At the co-op, **connection is at the heart of everything we do.** It's what fuels our business, shapes our culture, and deepens our relationships with owners and shoppers, community partners, local farmers, and each other. Especially in times of change, it's those human moments of understanding, collaboration, and shared purpose that make the greatest impact.

The spring edition of the Garlic Press celebrates the power of connection. Inside, you'll find stories of people uniting around a shared purpose—across continents and right here in the Driftless region—as well as partnerships blossoming within our communities. You'll also discover vibrant recipes that highlight fresh spring produce like scallions and herbs. These adaptable dishes can carry you through the entire growing season—just swap in whatever local ingredients are in abundance as the weeks go by.

Our outreach team has a full calendar this spring. Check out pages 17 and 18 for a full list of places you can find us. Join us at these events and make sure to say “hi!” If you can't catch us out in the community, we'd love for you to join us in-store for connection and celebration at our **Summer Open House on June 7**, from 10 AM to 1 PM at both locations—featuring food, farmers, music, and more!

We'd love to stay connected with you—follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), and sign up for our [weekly emails](#) to stay close to the heart of our co-op community.

As we move forward, let's all continue to build bridges. Stay curious, remain open, and, most importantly, keep fostering those connections that bring us together.

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Interim CEO

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Board Message

Annual Meeting Recap:

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the January 2025 Annual Owners Meeting. It was wonderful to see the turnout and enjoy the great food and lovely company. We discussed the activity and achievements of the board in 2024. The board also welcomed **three new directors**: Jeff Lachman, Rachel Brown, and Katya May. Michael Sersch is filling a vacated seat that opened in January. Welcome everyone!

The People's Food Co-op held its Annual Owners Meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2025. The agenda included a review of the co-op's mission and global ends, reports from the Board President and Treasurer and presentations from our **2024 La Crosse PFCCF winners**. *(Find article on page 20)*

The President's Report highlighted the approval of the Rochester store lease, successful Open House events and PFC's participation at numerous community events. This past year we also had board members take part in community events. In Rochester, Verna Simon coordinated PFC's presence at the festival for **Utsav**. Brett Townsend also represented PFC at the **La Crosse Area Adventure Film Festival** and brought door prizes to attendees. We are proud to have a developing partnership with Lotus Health Foundation in Rochester. We are one of the sponsors for their 2025 Lotus Health Foundation Symposium and Gala.

Jason, the La Crosse store manager, presented on his trip to Colombia through Equal Exchange and described the farms and farmers that were visited. The trip highlighted the difference that fair trade goods make for small farmers all over the world. *(Find the article on page 8)*

The Treasurer's Report included an update on profit and loss for Fiscal Year 2024 and compared it to past years. Fiscal Year 2024 posted losses of approximately \$200,000. The report also discussed the improved Rochester lease, the hiring of a new CEO and Rochester Store Manager, managing cultural shifts, and welcoming three new board members.

The Operations Report highlighted marketing initiatives, personnel changes, cost savings, additional square feet in Rochester and community partnerships. The co-op is working on **sales growth, store standards, merchandising and pricing programs**, and **a food service program**. Plans include sustainable business practices, highlighting local vendors, and a sales driven mindset. The co-op plans to focus on employee engagement and community outreach. The Rochester deli is now back in action, and we are excited to see our new meat cases in the back of the store. These upgrades will allow us to expand options in food service surrounding holiday pre-orders, hot and cold bars, and take-and-bake options.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS:

April 24 | 5 PM

May 22 | 5 PM

June 26 | 5 PM



01. *Fresh*
PERSPECTIVES

Helping the Planet

ONE STITCH AT A TIME

A Conversation with Jill Dickson of The Driftless Stitch

Written by: Greg Lovell

From aprons and shopping bags to hats, mittens, and more, everything new at The Driftless Stitch comes from something old.

To friends and family, Jill Dickson has long been known as the rummage queen. From her early years of seeking out materials to fashion into clothing for her own children to her prolific sewing output of today, Dickson's work has always featured a common thread: upcycling.

About five years ago, Dickson took her love of sewing and environmental ethos to the next level when she launched The Driftless Stitch. "The whole premise of The Driftless Stitch is that everything is upcycled," says Dickson. "Even to the point where I've declined requests to make items out of new material. There's just too much of that."

Down to Earth Values

Dickson's core value is sustainability, and she believes every one of us is capable of taking good care of the planet. "We have to start loving the earth," she says.

To that end, the mission of The Driftless Stitch is clear and simple: salvage the good quality parts of stained or damaged garments and turn them into stylish new creations. "There is so much that's thrown away. I don't buy anything new except bag straps, thread, and zippers," says Dickson. "Virtually everything is upcycled."

Dickson visits many rummage sales and thrift stores to hunt for novel materials past their prime that can be transformed into something new. She even posts her leftover sewing scraps online to give away so they do not end up in a landfill. Dickson also keeps her prices low so that people know upcycled products are accessible, affordable, and fashionable.

Threading the Needle of Growth

The Driftless Stitch began when her kids were growing up and wanting name brand clothes. "I'm not gonna spend all that money when I can make that," Dickson, now 61, recalls saying. As her sewing prowess and eye for style grew, her kids eventually told her, "Mom, you should sell this stuff!" "That's kind of where it all began."



Mittens are Driftless Stitch's biggest seller!

Years later when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, The Driftless Stitch took another big step borne out of a big community need. “It really started booming with face masks,” Dickson recalls today. Seeing the shortage of masks at the time and having all the necessary materials on hand, Dickson took action by sewing masks to provide to people in need.

Dickson estimates she donated around **2,000 face masks**, at one point even setting them out in a cooler at the end of her driveway for pick up. “People lined up for months,” she recalls. While donating masks to co-op grocery store workers, Dickson also began showing them her other sewed items, particularly aprons and reusable grocery bags. It turned out they were interested, and the items started selling well in-store.

Fast forward to today and she can hardly keep up with the demand, churning out upwards of **200 pieces per month** from her basement-turned-sewing studio just outside of Westby. Through it all, Dickson has enjoyed the work, saying her passion is sewing and that The Driftless Stitch is “really a feel-good business.” “One of the best things is that I work with the nicest people, like the people at the co-ops I partner with,” Dickson adds. “It makes me smile.”

Sew Many Options

Upcycled mittens are the biggest Driftless Stitch seller, but Dickson



Variety of Driftless Stitch Aprons

makes a range of other items as well. (See Image 1) She says aprons are her favorite to make as they tend to sport bold, fun designs. “You can show off your personality with an apron,” says Dickson. (See Image 2)

Driftless Stitch items are available for purchase at The People’s Food Co-op, her [website](#) and several other area retailers ([GreenHouse Holistic Co-op](#), [Larson’s General Store](#), [Bluff Country Co-op](#), [Viroqua Food Co-op](#), and [Organic Valley](#)). Dickson also takes custom orders for those looking for a more personalized creation.

Looking Ahead

With so much customer interest and demands high, Dickson is hopeful her grassroots, upcycling-driven business will continue to spread a message of stewardship and bring smiles to many faces. “It has the potential to really go somewhere.”

While she doesn’t know exactly how that will look right now, Dickson is open minded and simply savoring the ride as she makes friendly connections and bumps into people who have enjoyed her products.

“

It’s like my gift. There’s a reason I’m sewing, and this is it.”

Beyond the Brew

THE EQUAL EXCHANGE MISSION

Written by: Quin Graves



In today's fast-paced world, we often grab a bag of coffee without considering the journey it takes to get from farm to cup. In Colombia, the coffee industry is shaped by both environmental challenges and a commitment to fairness, and Equal Exchange plays a crucial role in supporting farmers.

As the leading organization behind **90% of the organic coffee trade in Colombia**, Equal Exchange is dedicated to ensuring that coffee is grown sustainably, and that farmers receive fair compensation and work in safe, equitable conditions.

Growing Coffee in the Clouds

On a recent trip to Colombia, Jason Krautkramer (La Crosse Store Manager), had the opportunity to see how Equal Exchange works with farmers in remote, high-altitude regions where coffee is grown. These high-altitude areas, often located on the side of mountains, produce the best quality coffee due to the **cooler temperatures** and **rich soil**. The farms are typically shade-grown, meaning coffee plants are cultivated under the canopy of trees such as mangos and bananas, which helps preserve biodiversity and protect the environment. As well as providing another crop for the farm. This method also reduces the need for pesticides and herbicides, allowing farmers to produce organic coffee that is better for both the land and the people working it.

Behind Every Bean

Many of the farms he visited had no road access, so all the coffee beans are hauled by hand, often in **100-pound bags**, over long distances. This labor intensive process highlights the resilience and determination of the farmers, who are committed

to producing the highest-quality beans despite the physical challenges. Equal Exchange's support of these farmers goes beyond just purchasing their coffee. By partnering with cooperatives, farmers can negotiate better prices for their beans and access the resources they need to improve their farming practices and their lives.

Farming for the Future

Sustainability is at the core of Equal Exchange's mission. The organization encourages farmers to adopt organic, sustainable farming practices that protect the environment and ensure the long-term health of the land. Farmers use **polyculture systems**, planting coffee alongside other crops like bananas and mangos, which help maintain soil fertility and reduce the need for synthetic chemicals. This approach supports biodiversity and makes the farms more resilient to climate change, an issue that many small-scale farmers face.



Look for the Fair Trade logo
when you're shopping!



Jason Krautkramer (far left), Miguel (second from left) and his family at their farm in the valley, and Susan Redlich (far right)

Fair Wages, Stronger Communities

Fair trade certification ensures that farmers receive fair wages and work in safe conditions. During the visit, the farmers and workers spoke about the pride they felt in receiving fair wages, which allowed them to send their children to school, invest in their communities, and access healthcare. Equal Exchange's work with cooperatives also helps farmers weather the challenges of fluctuating coffee prices and market instability, offering them more security and opportunities for growth.

Your Coffee Choice Matters

Through its commitment to fair trade and sustainable practices, Equal Exchange is helping create a better future for coffee farmers in Colombia. The coffee grown on these farms is not just a product; it's the result of **hard work, dedication**, and a **desire** to create a more just and sustainable coffee industry. By choosing fair trade coffee, consumers can be part of this global movement, supporting not just their morning routine but also the farmers who make it possible.

More Products to Love!

Equal Exchange isn't just about coffee—they're dedicated to ethical sourcing across a variety of products.



At People's Food Co-op, you'll also find their organic teas and decadent fair trade chocolates, all crafted with the same commitment to sustainability and farmer empowerment.

Susan Redlich and our
guide Jose hiking with us
30 min into the valley to
visit our first coffee farm





02. *Flavors* TO SAVOR

Kuku Sabazi

INSPIRED FRITTATA

Kuku Sabazi is a cherished dish in Persian cuisine, offering a vibrant mix of fresh herbs, eggs, and spices. This savory herb frittata is not only delicious but also a great way to make eggs stretch further, making it an ideal dish for feeding a crowd or using up extra eggs. Packed with **parsley, cilantro, dill, and other fragrant herbs**, Kuku Sabazi is both aromatic and nourishing, offering a flavorful and satisfying meal.

This dish is also perfect for spring holiday brunches or gatherings, where its beautiful green hue and herby flavor can shine alongside other seasonal offerings. Whether served warm or at room temperature, it's an easy-to-make, crowd-pleasing option that's sure to impress.

Pair it with **fresh flatbread, tangy yogurt, or a side of pickles** for a complete meal. Kuku Sabazi brings a touch of Persian tradition to your brunch table while offering a delicious, wholesome way to celebrate the season.

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups parsley, finely chopped
- (about 1 large bunch)
- 3/4 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- (about 1/2 bunch)
- 1/3 cup green onions or scallions, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons dill (fresh or dried)
- 3 tablespoons tarragon
- (optional, but traditional)
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil
- (for greasing the pan)
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- (optional, for fluffier texture)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- (optional, for extra flavor)





INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven:

Preheat your oven to 350°F

2. Prepare the herbs:

Wash and dry all the herbs thoroughly. Finely chop the parsley, cilantro, green onions, dill, and tarragon (if using). Set aside.

3. Prepare the egg mixture:

In a large mixing bowl, crack the 6 eggs and whisk them until well beaten. Add the turmeric, black pepper, salt, cumin (if using), and baking powder (if using). Mix to combine.

4. Combine herbs with egg mixture:

Add all the chopped herbs to the egg mixture. Stir gently to incorporate everything evenly.

5. Prepare the baking pan:

Grease a 9-inch (23 cm) round or square baking dish, or any similar size oven-safe pan with a little oil. You can also line it with parchment paper for easier cleanup.

6. Bake the Kuku Sabazi:

Pour the egg and herb mixture into the prepared baking dish and spread it out evenly. Place the pan in the preheated oven and bake for about 25-35 minutes, or until the eggs are set and lightly golden on top. Check by inserting a toothpick in the center—it should come out clean.

7. Serve:

Once done, remove the Kuku Sabazi from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes before slicing. Serve warm or at room temperature with flatbread, yogurt, or a simple salad. You can also serve it with pickled vegetables on the side.

Spring

COLD NOODLE SALAD

This Cold Noodle Salad is the perfect balance of vibrant, crunchy vegetables and tender noodles, all tossed together with a tangy, slightly sweet dressing that brings everything to life. Whether you're looking for a light and refreshing lunch, a quick dinner, or a dish to bring to your next potluck or picnic, this salad fits the bill.

The mix of fresh ingredients like **crisp cucumber, sweet apple, and colorful bell peppers** adds both flavor and texture, while the optional toppings like feta cheese and pumpkin seeds elevate the dish with an extra layer of richness and crunch.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Salad:

- 8 oz noodles
 - (preferably pasta like spaghetti, fusilli, or rotini)
- 1 medium green apple (thinly sliced or cut into ribbons)
- 1 carrot (julienned or shredded)
- 1 English cucumber (thinly sliced)
- 1/2 red bell pepper (thinly sliced)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley or basil (optional)
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds (optional)

For the Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon garlic (minced)
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

HELPFUL TIPS:

Make it more filling: You can add grilled chicken, tofu, or chickpeas for extra protein.

Storage: This salad stores well in the refrigerator for up to 2-3 days, so it's great for meal prep.

Vegan option: To make it vegan, omit the feta cheese or replace it with a plant-based alternative.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cook the noodles:

Cook the noodles (spaghetti, fusilli, or rotini) according to the package instructions. Drain and rinse them under cold water to stop the cooking process and cool them down quickly. Set aside.

2. Prepare the vegetables and apple:

Green apple: Thinly slice or julienne the apple. If you prefer, you can toss the apple slices with a little lemon juice to prevent browning.

Carrot: Julienne or shred the carrot into thin strips.

Cucumber: Thinly slice the cucumber.



Red bell pepper: Slice the bell pepper into thin strips.
*If using, chop the fresh parsley or basil.

3. Make the dressing:

In a small bowl, whisk together the white wine vinegar (or apple cider vinegar), Dijon mustard, olive oil, honey (or maple syrup), lemon juice, and minced garlic. Season with salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste. Mix until the dressing is smooth and well combined.

4. Assemble the salad:

In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooled noodles with the prepared green apple, carrot, cucumber, and red bell pepper. Add the fresh parsley or basil if using and toss to combine.

5. Add optional toppings:

Top the salad with crumbled feta cheese and pumpkin seeds (if using) for added texture and flavor.

6. Dress the salad:

Pour the dressing over the salad and toss everything together until the noodles and vegetables are well coated.

7. Serve:

Serve the salad immediately or refrigerate it for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to meld together.

Calling all Cooks!

Food brings people together—and we want to celebrate the many flavors, stories, and traditions that make up our co-op community.

Do you have a recipe that's been passed down in your family, a favorite dish from your cultural background, or a go-to comfort food that tells a story? Whether it's a treasured holiday meal, a weekday staple, or a street food classic, we'd love to hear from you.

All recipes are welcome—no matter where they come from or how simple or complex. We're especially hoping to highlight recipes that reflect the many cultures, identities, and flavors that make our community unique.

Send your recipe (and a photo if you have one!) to marketingteam@pfc.coop by **June 30** to be featured in the Fall 2025 issue of the Garlic Press! *(Bonus points if it's fall themed)*

Let's fill our pages with love, flavor, and the stories that bring us to the table.

03.

Upcoming

AT THE CO-OP

Spring Outreach Calender

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



Lotus Health Symposium & Gala

April 17 & 18 | Rochester

Premier event dedicated to health and well-being through evidence-based, holistic, and functional medicine approaches. PFC is a proud sponsor.



Yoga at the Co-op

April 26 | 7-8 PM | Rochester

PFC is partnering with The Amethyst Yogi to bring accessible, donation-based yoga to the downtown community! This 60-minute vinyasa-style class is open to all levels and takes place in a private space within the co-op.

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



La Crosse Earth Fair

April 27 | 11 AM-1 PM | La Crosse

Celebrate sustainability, community, and the planet at Earth Fair 2025! This family-friendly event includes the Green Goose Scavenger Hunt, live music, local food and artisans, a farmers market, kids' activities, hands-on nature fun, and more.

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



DMI Downtown Clean-up

May 3 | La Crosse

Celebrate Earth Day and come together to keep our downtown La Crosse beautiful and vibrant! Gather your friends, family, or coworkers and make a positive impact.



EarthFest

May 3 | 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM | Rochester

Celebrate sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community connection. Join us at Saint Mary's University-Rochester to explore exhibits, workshops, and activities that inspire a greener future for Rochester.



Rochester Pride

May 17 | 12–5 PM | Rochester

People's Food Co-op is proud to be tabling at this year's Rochester Pride celebration. The event takes place at Soldiers Field Park. We're excited to support and celebrate our LGBTQIA+ community!



Med City Meander

May 24 | 8 AM – 5 PM | Rochester

People's Food Co-op is excited to be part of Med City Meander 2025, Rochester's premier community bike ride celebrating local trails, businesses, and the joy of cycling! Organized by **We Bike Rochester** and **BikeMN**, this annual event brings together riders of all levels for a scenic, community-focused ride showcasing the best of Rochester's trail network.



DMI Wine Walk

May 31 | 12–5 PM | La Crosse

Take a delightful stroll through downtown, with opportunities to savor exquisite wines and local food. With over 40 businesses showcased, this event promises a vibrant mix of experiences that cater to every taste.



Summer Open House

June 7 | 10 AM – 1 PM | Both Locations

Grab your Camp Card and hit the tasting trail! Meet local makers and musicians, complete fun foodie activities, and earn badges along the way. Collect a few to win a prize—or go for them all to become a Camp Co-op legend.



Driftless Folk School: Farm to Yarn

June 14 | 9 AM – 4:30 PM | La Crosse

Immerse yourself in a full day of woolly goodness and the wonderful world of fiber arts! Learn how to spin your own handmade yarn, the process of taking sheep wool from farm to fiber, and how to hand dye beautiful fibers for spinning or felting.

Seeking Interest!



Upcoming Outreach Events:

Scan the QR code to take our survey and share your thoughts.

All events & classes have

[Hyperlinks](#)

Click on the titles and they'll take you where you need to go!

GIVE **WHERE YOU** LIVE

* SPRING RECIPIENTS *

April 

La Crosse

Rochester

- **GROW La Crosse**

<https://growlacrosse.org/>

GROW is a non-profit on a mission to connect youth with healthy food and nature through hands on garden based experiences to nourish growing minds and bodies.

- **The Village Agricultural Cooperative**

<https://www.rochvillage.org/>

The Village Agricultural Cooperative creates opportunities for our communities to produce culturally relevant food.

May 

- **Mississippi Valley Conservancy**

<https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/>

The mission of Mississippi Valley Conservancy is to conserve native habitats and farmlands for the health and well-being of Wisconsin's Driftless Area.

- **Zumbro Valley Audubon**

<https://zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/index.html>

Our mission is to bring environmental awareness, appreciation, and advocacy to the Rochester community.

June 

- **Catholic Charities**

<https://cclse.org/>

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse proclaims Christ's Gospel of Life and promotes human dignity by alleviating poverty and strengthening individuals and families.

- **LifeGate Services**

<https://lifegateservices.org/>

Lifegate Services is a place where lives are touched and hope restored. Individuals of all ages, genders, races, and socio-economic statuses are welcome and served.

View All Recipients at:

<https://www.pfc.coop/community-involvement>



04. *Deals*
TO WATCH



Wellness BOGOs | April 16-29

Double the Wellness, Double the Deals

Boost your routine with our **Buy One, Get One Free** sale on select supplements, body care, and more! Whether you're refreshing daily essentials or trying something new, this is the perfect time to save.



Frozen Sale | April 18-20

A Freezer Full of Savings

Get **\$5 off your \$25 frozen purchase**. From easy weeknight meals to organic veggies and ice cream treats, now's the time to grab your favorites. **Excludes meat and seafood.*



Earth Day Sale | April 22

Go Green, Save Green

Scoop up some savings in our bulk department. Take **15% off all items** (spices, coffees, baking ingredients and more!) **Bring your own container and add an additional 5%!** **In-stores only.*

Available at
THE CO-OP!

"The Laid-back Foodie"

Black Bean Burger

cool, confident & all about that plant-based life



How do you spend your weekends?

Kicking back in a hammock, soaking up the sun, and pretending I don't have a to-do list 🌿



Call for Photography!

**Want to see your photos featured in
The Garlic Press?**

We're looking for stunning shots that showcase the beauty of our community—scenic landscapes, local farms, seasonal moments, and all the little details that make our region special.

Guidelines:

- No people, please!
- High-resolution images preferred
- Send submissions to marketingteam@pfc.coop

**Show us your perspective—we'd love to
feature your work!**

The Garlic Press is published by the People's Food Co-op of La Crosse and Rochester, 315 Fifth Avenue S, La Crosse, WI 54601 and 519 1st Avenue SW, Rochester, MN 55902. The Garlic Press serves to educate shoppers about food issues, community activities and events, co-ops in general, and ownership in PFC. All articles and pictures submitted for publication become property of People's Food Co-op. PFC reserves the right to refuse publication of any article for any reason.

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