

# the heart beet

A Pulse on What's Happening at the **Viroqua Food Co+op**



## Summertime~Bike Time

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# A Few of My Favorite Things

Charlene Elderkin, Marketing & Membership Manager



It has been my privilege to serve as the VFC Marketing Manager for the past fourteen years. As I head towards retirement this autumn, I'd like to reflect on a few of the many things I appreciate about working at the Co-op.

As a mission-driven person, it is important to me that the work I do in the world has a larger purpose than providing me with an income. And what work is more essential than being part of providing food to your neighbors through a community-owned co-op with an emphasis on good local food?

I love the cooperative business model, and love working at a place where the rock stars are our local farmers and food producers. And not just that we sell their food, but that we have assisted many local farmers and food businesses get their start in the retail world and go on to build an even wider distribution network. Being a link in the chain of connections that brings

food to the tables of our community and beyond has been very rewarding.

I love how VFC trains, educates, and facilitates outside trainings to further the expertise of our staff. I love how VFC promotes from within whenever possible, and how an entry-level job can become a career. I've watched over the years as a grocery stocker was promoted to Grocery Manager and then became the Operations Manager. I watched as a baker trained to be a cashier and eventually became the Customer Service Manager. There are many more examples.

Change is constant at the Co-op, which means a VFC job will be challenging but always interesting. I learned about radio and TV advertising, social media, capital campaigns. I worked through a U.S. economic financial collapse, years later our major store expansion, and then a global pandemic. We make a plan and we pivot when necessary, and that ultimately teaches us about priorities and brings out our creativity.

I'm very grateful for those who have worked alongside me – Shana, Haley and Bjorn in the Marketing Department (you're the best!) and all the members of the Management Team – for their professionalism, compassion, commitment and being all-around stellar human beings.

I want you to know that the people who work at and manage the Co-op work very hard and utilize all the tools and expertise available to make decisions on behalf of VFC. Know that the Viroqua Food Co+op is in good hands, the very best of hands.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Bergquist, *President*  
Elizabeth Tigan, *Vice President*  
Eric Snowdeal, *Treasurer*  
Aurora Boyd, *Secretary*  
Olive Reynolds  
Julie Tomaro  
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## GENERAL MANAGER

Jan Rasikas

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

## PUBLICATION TEAM

Charlene Elderkin (pg.2)  
*Editing, Writing*  
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*Design, Editing, Writing, Photography*  
Haley Stafslie (below)  
*Photography + Cover Photo, Design, Writing*



The Heart Beet is intended as a vehicle for communication among VFC 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.

The Heart Beet is printed and available in-store monthly. A digital copy is available online at: [viroquafood.coop/vfc-publications](http://viroquafood.coop/vfc-publications)

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## Pre-register for classes

### Driftless Folk School Class **Fermentation A-Z:**

*A day fermenting whole & wild food.*

**\$10 off for VFC Owners**

**Instructor:** Linda Conroy

**Saturday, July 10, 9am-4:30pm**

**Pre-register by:** Sunday, July 4

**Register at:** [driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)



### Driftless Folk School Class **Wild Food/Wild Medicine**

*for health & nourishment.*

**\$10 off for VFC Owners**

**Instructor:** Linda Conroy

**Sunday, July 11, 9am-4:30pm**

**Pre-register by:** Monday, July 5

**Register at:** [driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)



### Driftless Folk School Class **Beginner Vegetable Fermentation**

**\$10 off for VFC Owners**

**Saturday, July 17, 9am-12:30pm**

**Instructor:** Laura Mathes

**Pre-register by:** Saturday, July 10

**Register at:** [driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)



## Cooperative Principle #5 – Education, Training & Information

The fifth cooperative principle states: *“Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of cooperation.”*

While natural food stores have led the way in teaching about natural food and the importance of environmental-sound agriculture and food production, we have not been as effective at teaching about the practices of coop-

eratives themselves – “the cooperative difference.” Failure to do this leads us to become indistinguishable in the public mind from privately-owned natural food retailers such as Whole Foods, Inc. Cooperative education has to be more than product information, as critical as that is. Co-ops can play an important part in solving complicated problems our part of the country faces when trying to feed, clothe, and provide economic opportunity to the ever-expanding population. But it will only work if people are willing to be engaged in the process.

Co-ops range from little stores run by

members to huge marketing groups like Equal Exchange and Organic Valley. We share a vision of people helping themselves by working together, guided by the cooperative principles. We need to redouble our efforts, to teach our members, managers, the public (future members) and above all, our children, about the heart and soul of the cooperative dream: the cooperative principles.

This article has been paraphrased from our online posting: [Archerd, E. \(1996 Nov/Dec\). “Cooperative Education,” Co-op Consumer News. https://www.viroquafood.coop/about-us/what-is-a-co-op-education-training-and-information](https://www.viroquafood.coop/about-us/what-is-a-co-op-education-training-and-information)

# Bike Repairs *on the go!*

**M**innesota-based bicycle rack manufacturer Dero describes themselves as “bike parking nerds.” We love that! Dero’s mission is to populate the world with bicycle infrastructure. While they may be fulfilling such world-wide dreams, they have also claimed their stake right here at the Viroqua Food Co+op.

Our friends at local nonprofit **Vernon Trails** donated this Dero Fixit Station to the VFC in 2018. We’re so glad to see it be utilized by our fellow bike riders, more and more each year.

The Fixit Station includes all the necessary tools to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance – from changing and pumping up a flat to adjusting a brake. The tools are attached to the stand with cables and fasteners so you can freely access whichever tool you need. Hang your bike from the hanger arms to allow the pedals and wheels to spin freely while making adjustments (see cover photo) .

Dero products are primarily fabricated from steel, which is a fully recyclable material. Find our Dero Fixit Station outside the VFC next to our bike racks for everyone’s convenience!





**Screwdrivers**

*Phillips  
& Flat-head*

**Box Wrenches**

*8, 9, 10, 11  
15 & 32mm*

**Tire Levers**

*(x2)*

**Allen Wrenches**

*2½, 3, 4,  
5, 6 & 8mm*





# Hot Fun in the Summertime!



*My bumblebee bicycle is from [Bluedog Cycles](#) and I made the Pack Basket at a [Driftless Folk School](#) class (pages 3 & 8)!*

*Shana Meshbesher,  
Assistant Marketing Manager*



# Snack vs. Meal

## Pack for a snack or a meal!

The quandary that never ends: *When does a snack qualify as a meal? A sandwich doesn't need a plate or cutlery, but can gratify even the gluttonous! Although – hard salami, slices of cheese, some fruit, and a favorite beverage can fill one up... So, which is it? A snack or a meal?*

I love snacks and the more they keep my energy levels consistent, the more likely I am to keep them on hand! If you're hopping on your bike this summer, keep a snack "go-bag" ready. I keep a cloth bag of reusable cutlery, one sharp knife, a dish towel or reusable cloth napkins, all wrapped in a beach towel or table cloth that can convert into a lawn blanket – and perhaps a resealable container, to save some snacks for later!

When you get to the Co-op, now all you need to grab is a protein, a fruit, a carb' if you enjoy a good cracker or bread, and a 4-pack of whatever wets your whistle!



## Zhoosh up snacks to make a meal!

- **Raw nuts & seeds.** Not all raw seeds/nuts are alkaline forming, but they do all offer a good source of protein, fiber, healthy fats and other nutrients.
- **Fermented foods.** I normally rely on home-made combos, but Fizeology's Kickapoo Kimchi is my ultimate flavorful substitute for salad dressing.
- **Cheese & mushrooms.** Raw cheeses and sautéed mushrooms create pleasurable substitutes when meat is what you crave, but \$\$ is what you save. Ever grill portobello steaks?! They soak up marinade + grill faster than any meat protein!
- **Tapanades, pestos & salsas.** Eliminate food waste with those yummy half-finished jars of olives, rich pestos or leftover salsas and sprinkle them atop a salad or nacho plate. Level-up your snacking!

So next time you can – *bike to the Co+op, bring your snack "go-bag," stock up, and snack steadily friends!*

# Give Where You Live

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

Visit [www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach](http://www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach) for a complete schedule.

## Round up this month for WDRT – 91.9FM Driftless Community Radio

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



Featured Driftless Folk School Class:

## Beginner Vegetable Fermentation

Learn the easiest ways to get started fermenting food for your health!

**\$10 off**  
for VFC Owners  
**Viroqua**  
food **coop**

See all discounted classes with QR code below!



in partnership with the

## Driftless Folk School

DFS classes fill up fast so pre-register online today!