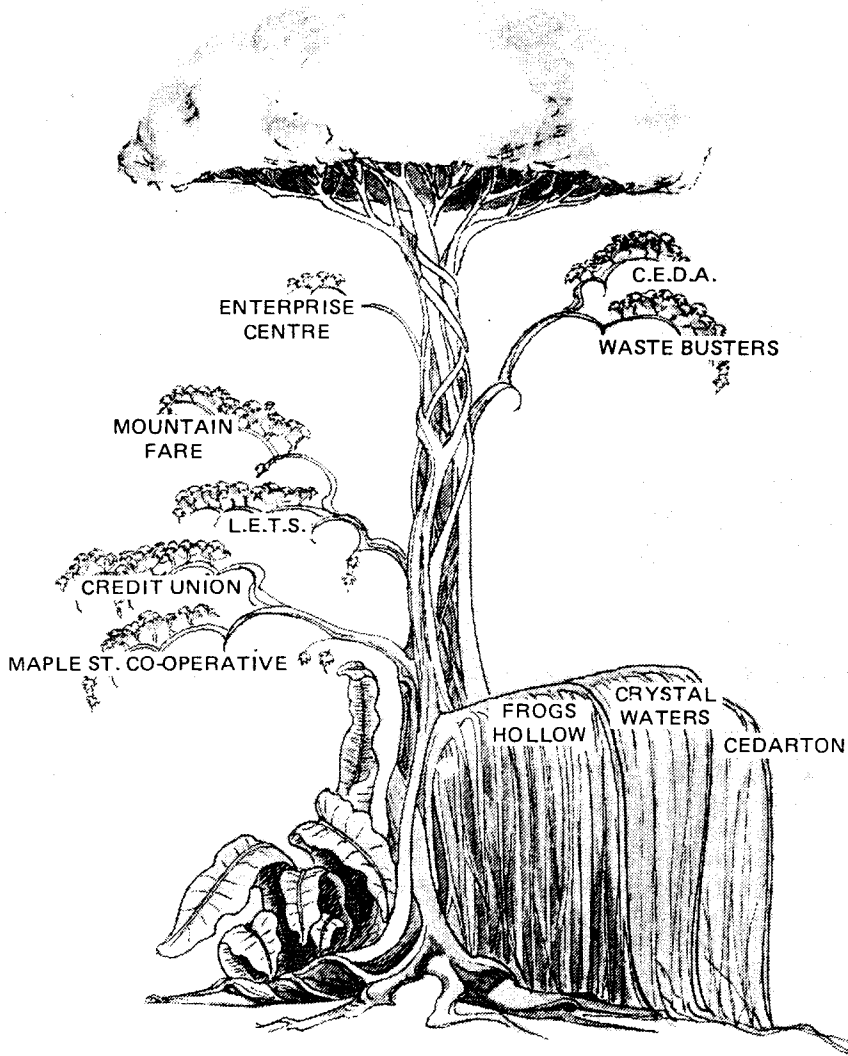


Maleny Co-operatives

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue No. 1

1st Quarter 1990



EDITORIAL:

Welcome to the first issue of the combined Maleny Co-operatives' Newsletter! To us it is a landmark in our development - a new level of co-operation between co-operatives. The embryo of this concept was seen in a Credit Union Newsletter earlier this year. The production you are about to read brings the idea to fruition.

Because this is the introductory issue, many of the articles are overviews, or historical pieces. This enables these who are new to Maleny and/or the co-operative scene to gain some perspective on our activities to date.


The newsletter will be produced quarterly, and will review progress and new developments in Maleny Co-operatives. We anticipate that it will be of interest both to members of Co-ops (whether in Maleny or further afield) and to the wider community. To this effect, our initial circulation is 1250 copies.

We invite contributions from anyone interested in sharing information of benefit to the community, and ask that articles or graphics be submitted through one of the co-operative organisations represented in this newsletter. Our advertising rates are listed below; ads should also be submitted through the Co-ops.

ADVERTISING RATES:




1/4 page \$35

1/8 page \$20




MALENY L.E.T.S.
LOCAL ENERGY TRANSFER SYSTEM

WE ARE TRADING IN NUTS -
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FOR MORE INFO:
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MALENY FOLK CLUB
QUEENSLAND

3rd Saturday of each month
Maleny Hotel
All musicians welcome to play
Childminding facilities available
Enquiries: 94 4365

COSTS FOR OWNER BUILDING.

A new home.

Since the experience of building my house out of secondhand timber seemed very interesting to people I have compiled a brochure on the subject, using more recent costs. This brochure is about a timber weather board house (10 * 10) using all new materials and finished by licensed plumbing and electrical contractors.

Copies are available
for 1 Bunya
at the LETS office.

Ursula Thiessen
Ph: 942895

MALENY & DISTRICT

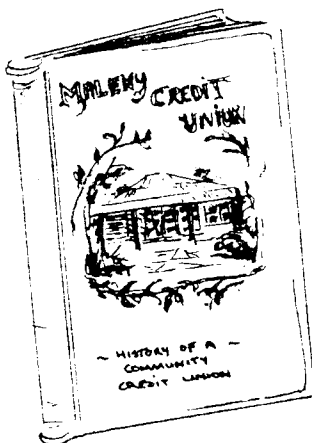


28 Maple Street, Maleny, Q. 4552

Telephone : 942 144

LIMITED

A SHORT HISTORY.



Arising from an "alternative economic summit" convened late in 1983 by Bill Mollison, of Permaculture fame, the idea of Maleny's own regional ethical financial organisation was floated

at a Maple Street Co-op General Meeting in April 1984. The response was sufficient, from potential users of such a financial organisation and from people prepared to put energy into running it, for a working party to research options. This working party concluded the best model to be that of a Credit Union, and, with help from others in the Credit Union field (especially those remembering their own humble beginnings) worked towards the formation of the credit co-operative.

Following the formation meeting on June 25th, 1984, and incorporation in August of the same year, the Maleny and District Community Credit Union Ltd began trading in one small room in its current premises at 28 Maple Street. All work was voluntary to begin with, and small wages for the staff came nine months later. It was not too long before the Credit Union outgrew its office, moving into larger offices beside its "older sibling" organisation, the Maple Street Co-op. Nine

months later, growth again meant a move, back to half of the building at "28". So suited was this as a home for our Credit Union's activities, that the building was purchased for members (50% in 1987, the remaining 50% in 1988). These days, the eight staff receive (casual part-time rate) award wages for 7 hours a day. The Credit Union ended 1988/89 financial year with a surplus, some of which was set aside for co-operative education, while a resolution at 1989 AGM also enshrined the practice of putting a percentage of annual surplus into a Community Land Trust.

Growth has been rapid, with over 1100 members currently using the Credit Union's services, and over \$4.5 million having been lent to members to help them settle on the land, build their own houses, start their own businesses and obtain capital-intensive items that they would not otherwise have been able to afford. All this, and to date, the Credit Union has had only one small bad debt! This is due to the commitment and dedication of the wonderful management and staff, and the loyalty of the members, who know that to do the wrong thing by their community Credit Union would be to harm themselves - as everything the Credit Union has and does, reflects on them.

The next period will need to see further growth "hived off" to new, autonomous branches within the Credit Union's bonded area, as well as continued support to those in other regions who are keen to gain financial empowerment by starting their own ethical investment organisation.

THE FUNCTION OF COMMITTEES in the Maleny Credit Union

An organisation as complex as the Maleny Credit Union requires a great deal of effort to keep it running smoothly. As well as the considerable time put in by the management and staff to achieve this efficiency, behind the scenes others are working towards this goal. In the Credit Union's structure, three committees have been set up for different functions; for financial analysis, for PR/Education, and for loan application assessment (the Credit Committee). Each committee consists of a number of directors, at least one of the co-management team, and members with expertise or special interest who are invited to join one of the committees. This being a co-operative, time spent in these committees is given voluntarily by all participants.

The financial analysis committee meets monthly after the end-of-month books have been balanced to look at the overall financial situation. It recommends, for example, staff wage increases or capital expenditure on the Credit Union building in sound times, and these together with recommendations for interest rate changes, are ratified at full directors' meetings.

The function of the PR/Education committee is to improve the Credit Union's image, both within the membership and in the general community. To this end, it produces the articles for the local paper, the Range News, updates information on Credit Union brochures, and organises social functions for members.

Then there is the loan committee, which to those participating is seen as the most interesting committee because it involves people and their situations. Assessing what information members give, and somehow "judging" them on that information. (Can be quite difficult at times.) Due to rapid growth in the Credit Union the days are long gone where committee members know every Credit Union member personally.

Unfortunately, not every loan is clear-cut and wonderfully ethical, and sometimes, the most ethical is not the most affordable. In spite of all the changes, the Credit Union still has only one bad debt (and a few "wonky" loans, where borrowers need constant encouragement). The majority of these cases have been businesses outside the bonded area, which speaks worlds for the benefits of staying local,. Credit Union policy has now been adapted following this finding.



MUCH MORE THAN A FINANCIAL ORGANISATION.

Children playing, friendly greetings, laughter, hugs, smiles, and "What's happening?" Is it a party, a picnic? No its the foyer of the Credit Union! Outside, the rainforest garden shaded seats cater for the spill-over; while beyond are the busy streets of a vigorous hinterland town.

Inside the office, telephone rings. "Hello. Is this the Maleny Co-op?" Feeling the value of being well-known, we direct the caller to the co-op that they want. The range of enquiries is astounding - from a Brisbane-based African band looking for a local venue, to questions about houses to rent and employment possibilities. And do we sell German shoes?! There has never been an enquiry of any nature to which we have not been able to give some assistance. And, of course, the more usual enquiries about the services we DO offer - finance for small businesses, houses and land, motor vehicles, debt relief, and just about anything that members may need. The never ending flow of communication! We advise, inform; counsel, reassure, encourage. And welcome the opportunity.



On the notice board is news of community projects, and information about the Credit Union's activities both past and present. Signatures are collected - to support a troubled group somewhere, donations are arranged to save a special tree, or forests everywhere, a threatened species, precious bits and pieces of our earth and the people on it.

We are a collective energy;

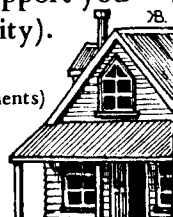
We are your community
Credit Union!

MALENY and DISTRICT COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

The more you
(the members
of the community)
support us.

The more we can support you
(our community).

- Savings A/Cs
- Term Deposits (Investments)
- Xmas Club A/Cs
- Loans



28 Maple Street, Maleny Q 4552
Phone : 071 / 94 2144

MALENY & DISTRICT
COMMUNITY
CREDIT UNION
LIMITED

For the past few months you may have heard mention round the ridges of the Caloundra Enterprise Development Agency (or CEDA as those in the know call it). Well, here's the true and unexpurgated story of what it is and where it came from.

About 5 years ago, Margi O'Connell, then a partner with Paul Hood in Maleny Hire Service, decided to while away the office hours doing an employment creation study of the Maleny area. (Not really such a strange hobby given that she is a community worker by trade.)

Unemployment being what it was/is, a lot of people became involved in the exercise of identifying money making opportunities and a lot of small business ideas were tossed around. At the end of the study one of the major recommendations was that there needed to be some form of support service to new enterprises - particularly if they were being set up by people who were unemployed; inexperienced in business; new to the area or who wanted to work together collectively.

From the interest and ideas generated in the

community by the study, a group of people set up the Sustainable Education & Employment & Development group, or SEED.

SEED's specific charter was to secure a property which could be shared by new businesses thus cutting overheads. The Enterprise Centre is a recent model of this concept. (See Jill's article.) Thanks to the people involved, particularly Beau Thomason, the idea of this form of co-operation took hold. SEED's major problem however was financing such a new concept. This was pre-Credit Union days and the project fell through due to lack of suitable capital. However, a few of us, now joined by Geoff Young and Gail Perry, recognized the importance of a collective approach to solving business problems and began to offer a free "Think Tank" to people in business or entering business for the first time.

Rumour and statistics say most successful business people come from families in business. We think that's because families in business understand the problems and support each other with information, advice and referrals.

These are the services we began to offer.

As well we started to address some of the issues identified in the Employment Creation Study. One of these was the lack of employment for women. In this we are no different to most rural areas but it is still a serious problem for those effected by it. So last year, calling ourselves Enterprise Centre Maleny, and now joined by Iain Duguid, we received a federal grant to address the issue with a series of workshops aimed at women involved in small scale organic farming (a growth industry if ever there was one!). Out of this came Mountain Fare.

Parallel to our own local efforts, the rest of the first world was discovering similar strategies for dealing with unemployment and we were approached by the Queensland

Department of Employment, Vocational Education & Training to consider formalizing our structure and extending our service to the whole of Caloundra City. What a good idea - particularly when they were willing to resource us with capital equipment and a helping hand in running costs. Just the kick start we needed and so CEDA came into being.

Of course we need to be self sufficient in the long run and we're exploring ways to do this through a mix of:

- 1) Charging a fee to established businesses
- 2) Gaining support from the community and industry - and
- 3) Establishing businesses ourselves.
- 4) Joint venturing with other people.

CEDA is registered as a company limited by guarantee. As a non-profit company any surplus goes to providing new ways of fostering community prosperity.

Membership entitles you to vote at general meetings and to be kept informed of our activities. (Of course our relationship with our clients are totally confidential.)

Margi O'Connell is the managing director of CEDA. She's not a business consultant although she'll tell you Maleny Hire was her university. She's a community

worker with 15 years experience in employment creation and for the past 3 years has been national consultant in the field. Her real skills are in helping people get a handle on their problem/opportunity, providing support when you need it and putting you in touch with people like accountants, lawyers, distributors, promoters, artists, government

departments and whatever else you might need to side step the pitfall of small business or collective business.

From January CEDA will be operating from the Baptist Church Hall at the top of Maple Street. If you want to become a member, a consultant or to talk over a problem or opportunity drop in and make an appointment. Explain your interest briefly to Virginia McClaw, the office co-ordinator and let's work together.



With the start of a new decade will also be born a new venture in Maleny - the Enterprise Centre. Pioneered some ten years ago in Ireland, and now a burgeoning strategy for regional economic development in many countries, Enterprise Centres are springing up "like mushrooms after summer rains". Essentially, Enterprise Centre provides flexible, low-cost rental space for fledgling businesses, and shared office facilities. Many such centres also provide business advice and other support services.

In today's uncertain economic climate, where "employment" per se (ie, having a job which pays wages) is hard to come by, especially in rural areas such as Maleny, self-employment is one of the most viable options available to people. However, in starting a new business venture, many people do not have access to the capital needed to "go it alone", while others do not have the confidence in their business skills to develop their idea and market their products. An Enterprise Centre provides a climate which nurtures such new businesses through that initial period - bringing failure rates for small enterprises down from 85% to 15%.

Having obtained funding from State Government sources to establish such an Enterprise Centre in Maleny, CEDA (Caloundra Enterprise Development Agency) is now poised to develop the premises for this project, which will enable the first tenants to move in and set up their businesses. Several fledgling enterprises have expressed interest in sharing space in the Centre.

The success of such a large-scale venture is virtually assured with Maleny's history of co-operation (both recent and not-so-recent), and by the wealth of talented people who live in the district. Many of these people could benefit from such an opportunity as the Enterprise Centre will provide.

If you are interested in starting a small business, in learning more about the Enterprise Centre, or in becoming a potential tenant, sharing space and facilities in the new venture, please contact :

Margi O'Connell on 942318

THE MAPLE ST CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD

CO-OP

31 MAPLE STREET, MALENY, 4552 QLD

THE FIRST TEN YEARS.

In the Seventies new people brought new needs to Maleny. The journey to Nambour or the Coast for a choice of healthy foods became unacceptable. People were discovering wholesome, organic, unprocessed food and they wanted it locally. So the idea began.

In 1979 the embryo took shape, lists of needs were made over kitchen tables, alternatives looked at and finally a consumer co-operative agreed on. In early 1980 the Inaugural Meeting was held, shares pledged and we were up and running. 48 Maple Street (now the Cedar Cottage) was our first home - it had lots of little rooms then - and we sold crafts as well as food and had an information area. The co-op feeling was there right from the start; the smiles, the friendliness, the no hurry and the caring all came together from day one.

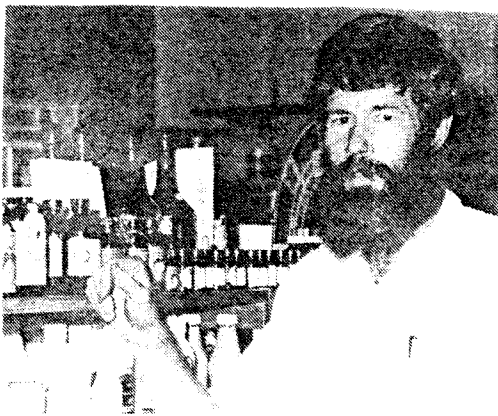
We were soon splitting our seams. It was a time of energy, optimism and rapid growth and the main problem was enough space for the food and the escalating consignments of vegies and fruit which were coming in. So the Co-op made its first big decision - move to 37 Maple Street. Lots of member input, painting, scraping and carpentry made our new home bright and shelved to take all the goodies, at least for the time being. Later came our self doubting, adolescent stage. Volunteers had to be coaxed to help, the economy was flagging and prices were hard to keep down, people spent less money and we started asking is it worth it? A few people doing all the work! Where is the co-operation? Where are we going?

Our ethic remained strong

but we were faltering in our commitment. Happily we hung in there and suddenly new energy started coming from all over, a growing population and more money on the move and we were off again. And that is where it's at now.

Looking back it is vital to recognise the things which have been constant throughout the Co-op's history. They are all important. The first is the feeling, the ambience of the Co-op. You all know it, it is hard to define but quite tangible; you can almost touch it. The staff began by giving all of their time free and they are still, ten years later giving some of their time for nothing so that we can have our Co-op. Third is the ethic which underpins our existence. At Annual General Meetings, at workshops and from surveys, the clear, ringing message is ethics before economics. Clean food, environmentally safe, healthy products before fat profits. Our members have never left the directors in any doubt about their basic belief. Fourth is the Co-op's adoption of consensus decision making. Co-op meetings are non-threatening, non-point scoring experiences where consensus is arrived at after all view points have been heard and considered. Consensus decision making has proliferated into other co-ops and the message is moving into the wider community.

Finally, the Co-op is part of the community, not only the local Maleny community but the wider Australian community. It was the first step in a movement to give back to the people some control over their lives. Our first ten years was exciting, the next ten years could be more so.



A HOME FOR THE CO-OP.

We are looking into what is available in Maple St. The choice is fairly limited. To buy anything, we will have to raise at least \$120,000 - not to mention the cost of moving. So. We need low, or even **NO** interest loans from people interested in ethical investment. If 26 people could invest \$ 5,000 we would be well on the way. Four such loans of \$ 5,000 are already promised. There is also the possibility of donations from members. Could you afford \$ 40 ? If all of us did, that would be about \$ 15,000 we would not have to borrow . With our premises secured we could expand into some of the areas that have been suggested. We could have our "sidewalk" Cafe, for example.

IN THE PIPELINE FOR

Maple Street Co-op

Following the Co-op Futures Day, a strategic planning workshop has been organised to help us move into action. Meanwhile steps are already being taken towards implementing some of the most popular ideas. Themes which emerged strongly from the futures day were:

- the need to buy a permanent home for the CO-OP as soon as possible - before we are squeezed out.
- more worker control of shop business, in particular, decisions about wages.
- the need to maintain & extend the availability of organic food.
- the importance of putting some energy into publicising positive aspects of the Co-Op & countering our "high price" image.

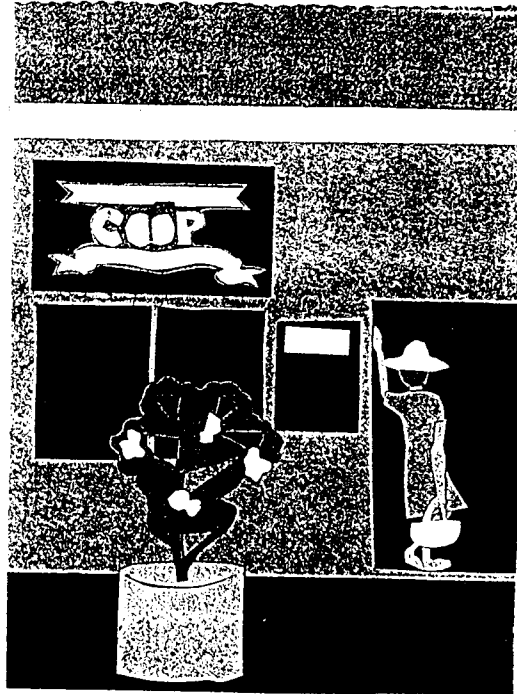


WORKER CONTROL.

At the moment we are a members' Co-op, but we operate like a workers' Co-op - ie. our staff hold the major responsibility for keeping the business viable. However, many decisions which directly affect our workers are still made by the members representatives - the directors. In particular, directors have the final say about whether the business can stand wage rises. We feel that the time has come for the workers to have more power over this. They are, after all, in the best position to know what the business can stand. Those with the responsibility should have the power.

ORGANIC FOOD.

We want to maintain and extend our range of clean food. There are pragmatic as well as ethical reasons. Organic produce is our market edge, but we are in danger of losing this edge as the demand increases - unless we secure our supply. Moves have already been made. Jim and Ann Hunt, some of our biggest & most reliable organic suppliers are now selling fruit & vegies directly to the Co-op. This means their income is protected & we take the risk of spoilage, plus more responsibility for controlling internal competition. Considering the high quality of their produce, it is a small risk indeed. Further moves are planned to extend our relationship with commercial organic growers.

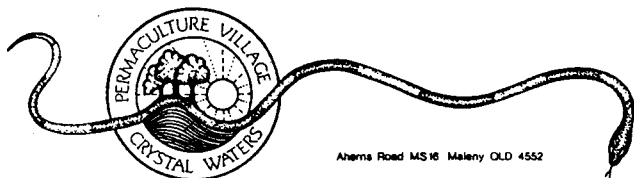


PUBLICITY.

Progress has been made on a sign for the shop setting out Co-op policy. We are also looking for some one to coordinate publicity efforts. If you are keen enough on this kind of work to put in some voluntary time, we are dying to hear from you. I know there is some one out there among our 370 - odd members. (Even a not so odd one would be good !)

THE FIRST MALENY CO-OPS

While Maple St. was the first of the "new settlers" co-ops in this town, it is important to acknowledge that Maleny had co-ops before most of us were born - including the Maleny Co-operative Dairy Association. Our tree, if you like, has roots. In our next edition, we look forward to running an article on the first wave of Maleny co-ops, thereby filling in a very important part of the history of economic co-operation in our township.



CRYSTAL WATERS PERMACULTURE VILLAGE.

Most people in this district know that Crystal Waters Permaculture Village is well and truly a reality. Some have been to visit and some have been involved in the detail of our development. But we thought this newsletter was a great opportunity to give an overview to anyone who hasn't heard it before.

You'll notice I used the word 'development' above. Usually 'developments' of the subdivision kind are not things we think of kindly. But Crystal Waters was a development with a difference. A development carefully planned using Permaculture principles and which took into consideration the needs of the environment, the need to keep good agricultural land productive and the need of the people to live in a community.

The total property here is 259 hectares and only 20% of this land has been used for 83 residential lots, the Village and Visitors Areas. The rest of the land will

either remain in its natural state and serve as wilderness area or be available on lease for agricultural activities.

Residential lots are about 400 sq. metres (one acre) in size and are generally north-facing to allow maximum use of solar energy. Steep land was not used to minimize erosion, and buffer zones were created between lots and the 18 dams that have been constructed, both to avoid any danger of pollution and to provide wildlife corridors. Cats and dogs are not permitted here to further protect wildlife.

Perhaps the most important word in our title though is 'village', because a village traditionally offers social benefits that are hard to find in urban Australia. What we have done at Crystal Waters is to create a living situation for ourselves where community members are able to support each other and make decisions together. And like a traditional village, many community members are able to earn their living in the place where they live.

Of course it is early days yet; it will take some years to reach our Permaculture goal of sustainability. However Crystal Waters is already more sustainable than any suburb in a large city and hopefully offers a model to those who are looking for one.

Sue Fitzsimmons



EARTHCARE ENTERPRISES

PO Box 500 Maleny Q 4552

Ph 071 943177

Permaculture Consultants - If you are buying land, building a house or designing a garden or orchard, let us help you make the right decisions to maximize your gains. Earthcare Nursery (Crystal Waters) - Propagating a wide range of useful Bamboos, aquatic food plants and other useful plants with economic potential. This months special - Hybrid Willows suitable for basket weaving and animal forage, fast growing \$5 each.

THE VILLAGE.



Since its inception the Crystal Waters Permaculture Village has been more than just a land subdivision. Up and down the East coast it is possible to visit communities of various kinds. Many have a strong social ethic and others have strong environmental ethics. Unfortunately most of their members either commute to paid employment in nearby towns or are recipients of unemployment benefits. Here at Crystal Waters we also have a strong 'prosperity' ethic.

The main physical manifestation of this prosperity thinking is the Visitors Area (see separate article) and the Village Area. In addition to supplying a social focus for our community the Village will create employment and self-employment opportunities for our members and possibly for some of our neighbours.

In the long term we will attract many visitors and tourists interested in the wide range of craft goods, organic produce, professional services, light-manufactured articles and educational activities being offered. Plans also include a restaurant, office space, short-term accommodation, a tavern and childrens play area.

Late last year Geof Young and Max Lindegger were commissioned to develop the initial detailed concept plans for this area. Gabor Farkas was employed to create the initial focus for the development, a small lagoon, waterfall, brick paving and to install some initial infrastructure such as drainage and power reticulation. Francis Lang is currently landscaping this area. Within weeks Eden Fruits will be opening their retail nursery on site and tenders for the construction of the first building (a multi-purpose storage/joinery shop with a small office and retail shop attached) are currently being received.

In order to expedite the development of this area the Co-op is currently considering undertaking long-term lease arrangements on various village sites with members who wish to take the opportunity of investing in this unique venture.

Creating an economically viable environment is an essential part of the Crystal Waters concept; the Village is a key to that environment and while we realise it is a long-term project we are proud to announce that we are on our way.

Skye Roth

Crystal Waters Visitors Area.

The Visitors Area is situated in the centre of Crystal Waters, adjacent to one of the larger dams and within five minutes walk of the Village centre. It is a pleasant place for a temporary stay with shady sites for tents and caravans and a modern amenities block which offers hot showers, toilets and laundry facilities.

The Visitors Area exists to provide accomodation for people interested in the concept of Crystal Waters, as well as those attending the variety of courses and workshops run here, and also 'lotholders' while they build their homes.

Visitors need to be willing to observe the By-laws that help us keep Crystal Waters a living example of Permaculture. These include things like recycling refuse, no cats or dogs, no firearms or toxic chemicals etc.

PERMACULTURE NURSERY

Fruit & Nut Trees
MULTIPURPOSE
NATIVE &
EXOTIC PLANTS

Agent for
EDEN NON HYBRID SEEDS
944690



EDEN FRUITS
Crystal Waters Permaculture Village
Kilcoy Lane CononDale

Stage 1 of the Visitors Area has been completed. This included establishing sites, roads and car parking, some landscaping and the amenities block, complete with stained glass windows.

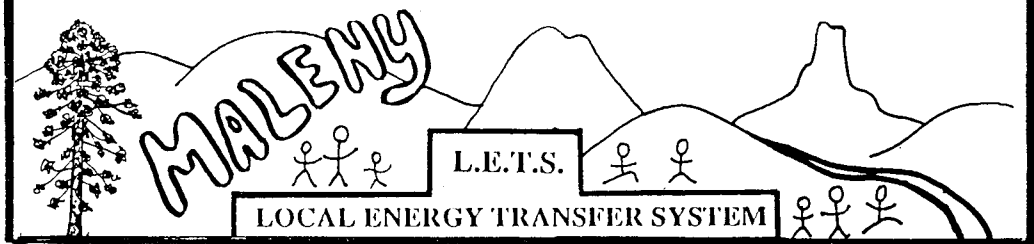
Earthcare Enterprises has just been commissioned to undertake a Permaculture design for Stage 2 of this area. The proposed development works include a bush camping area, additional carparking, more powered van sites, landscaping and upgrading of existing facilities. BBQ's, childrens play structures, nature walks, outdoor seating and a recycling point are also envisioned.

A process whereby Co-op members can lease land in the visitors area to build cabins and bunkhouses for rental to visitors is cuurently being investigated.

Essentially the aims of the Visitors Area is to provide a quality experience for visitors staying at Crystal Waters, to provide a practical example of applied Permaculture and to provide a source of revenue for the Co-op.

The Area is already returning a profit and is much appreciated by visitors and residents alike.

Robin Clayfield



What is LETS ?

Often people ask "What is this LETS system?" The Maleny LETSsystem is similar to the neighbourhood trading system that operates in local communities everywhere - you help a neighbour out one day and he returns the favour the next; or you barter a load of firewood for some fresh eggs and vegies.

The LETSsystem takes this one stage further by recording your work/energy or goods exchanged in local units or tokens - Bunyas in our Maleny LETSsystem. This means that you are not just dealing with the person you traded with but with the whole community of LETS members. You can now get help or services from someone even if you have nothing to directly offer them - you acknowledge them so many Bunyas and then you owe goods/services or energy to the same Bunya value to the LETS community. At a later time you can then help or trade goods with someone else to pay back your community debt.

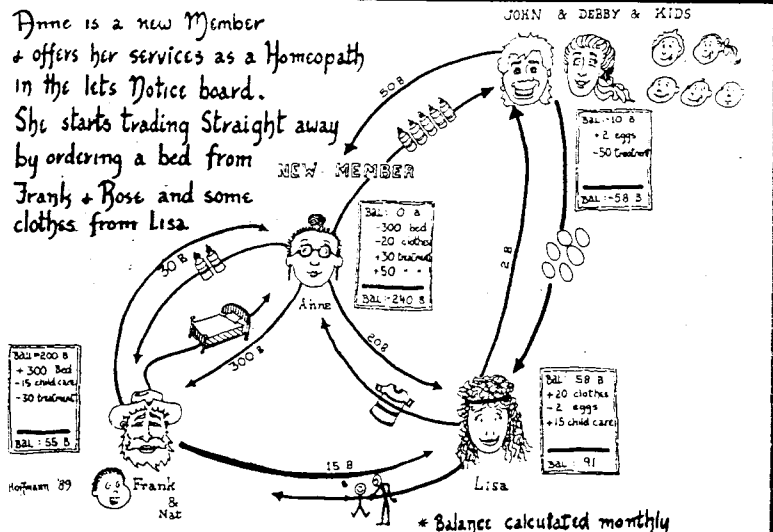
Unlike money systems the LETSsystem has no interest for credits or interest charges for debits or pay back time limits, so members can trade when they really need the services. No need to put off doing things or face hardships while saving for a project.

Besides the recording system another major aspect of the LETSsystem is the Notice Board. The Notice Board is like a "Yellow Pages" listing of skills, goods and services offered by members. The listings also have "Wanted" or requests for goods and services. Members can just check the listing and then contact the person directly to take part in LETS trading. Each month the members each receive any updates and new listings together with a statement of their transactions and their current Bunya balance.

This transfer of energies within our local community is what LETS is all about and gives rise to its name: Local Energy Transfer System.

An example might work like this:

Anne is a new Member & offers her services as a Homeopath in the lets Notice board. She starts trading Straight away by ordering a bed from Frank & Rose and some clothes from Lisa.



MEMBERS' FEEDBACK.

LETS BEGINNER.

It was all new to me; as an absolute beginner to the LETS system. Then one day ... I spent a day in the life of the LETS office.

I was impressed by all the skills, services and products available to members.

Furthermore the wonderful people who buzz around that tiny office servicing the members are well worth acknowledging for their activity and organisation.

There is a special preparation involved before one can feast on Bunya nuts. I would like to thank the LETS system for making feasting on the good things in life so accessible.

Melisah Feeney.

Dear LETS,

After feeling a little reluctant to join LETS because of Taxation worries, we finally decided to join. At first there didn't seem to be a lot happening in our respective fields and we were a little disappointed. This feeling was reinforced after trying to trade in a few apparently reluctant areas. Anyway to cut a story short we took out all our back issues and began making a few more calls. Jubilation, we began trading and trading and trading.

After those first few steps the system has started to flow for us and we are thrilled with the results. There seems to be an enormous amount of variable skill and energy awaiting a phone call.

Many thanks to all the people who work so hard to keep it all going.

Sky and Robyn Goozée

Homoeopath

D. Hom. (H.C.A.) A.A.P.H. Memb.

Registered Nurse

Robyn Goozée

18 Coral Street,
Maleny. 4552

Phone
(071) 94 2413

The LETS (R) EVOLUTION.

In October 1987 we started up with 27 "professional" Maleny group supporters. The LETS barter idea was thought to be great and everyone of the 50 people enjoyed the LETS Play involved at the Inaugural Meeting. The actual LETS trading over the next half year period continued to be quite playful, a bit like a new kind of Monopoly Game. Members started trading for little amounts around 1 - 5 Bunyas for mostly already established friendship favours. Now they had found a good way of saying "thank you".

At this point in time we look at our trading figures and we are reaching up to 1400 Bunyas for one acknowledgement between members. Our total trading over the last 2 years is 153,520 Bunyas and we have 243 members.

The initial game turned into an amazing reality, opening up new creativity, self-confidence, and support of friends, neighbours, and newcomers. Trusting in a new approach to services, work, barter, and money related values wasn't all child's play but it definitely started us putting an idea(l) into life.

LETS keep it growing !

Janel Skrandies

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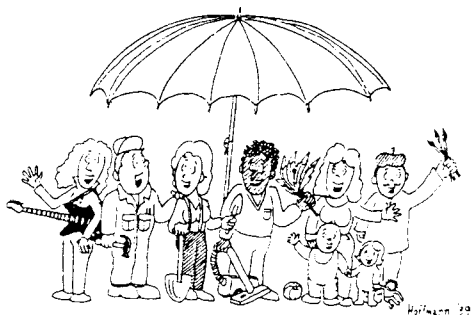


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LETS AS A COMMUNITY REBUILDING TOOL.



Having read the previous article on the mechanics of LETS, it will be apparent to the reader what the benefits of the LETSsystem are to a local economy, but the even more subtle benefits that accrue to a region that embraces such a strategy may need to be explained.

In this day and age, feelings of alienation are commonly reported by psychologists and sociologists as being a symptom of our society. These feelings are thought to be at the root of vandalism, crimes of violence and, more insidiously, land degradation practices (from loss of "sense of place").

Alienation has been increasing since the breakdown of the family or tribal unit, which came with increased mobility and independence spawned by an affluent technological society.

Alienation and disempowerment are reflected in large sections of our population in different ways. For example, growing numbers of elderly (yet capable and spry) citizens report feelings of uselessness. Often cut off from their families, they live out

frugal lives on a pension, dying without passing on the great store-house of knowledge and skills that they have built up over a life-time. What a tragic waste - for all of us !

A local LETSsystem can help reverse this process. Old people can trade their skills/ knowledge by teaching others (informal "apprenticing") what they know, gaining community credits which they can then use to acknowledge vigorous youngsters to do the jobs they no longer have the physical capacity to do. The economics of living on an old-age pension means many are not able to afford to pay for having their lawns mowed, or the windows washed. Their surroundings become unkempt, and the spiral of self-worthlessness continues. "Earning" on the LETSsystem enables them to be able to afford these services, "bought" by trading their skills.

And, of course, in the trading that takes place, relationships are formed, rebuilding those bonds between people, between generations that have gone by the board, along with many other worthwhile values, in the last forty years or so. The sense of belonging, the sense of having some worth, some part to play, in the community can be rekindled, and with it, hopefully, enough of everything for us all. This prosperity consciousness is the result of a healthy community.

WASTEBUSTERS



Launched in April, 1989, at a time when environmental awareness was just about to become "flavour of the month" with the general public, Maleny Waste-Busters is the newest of

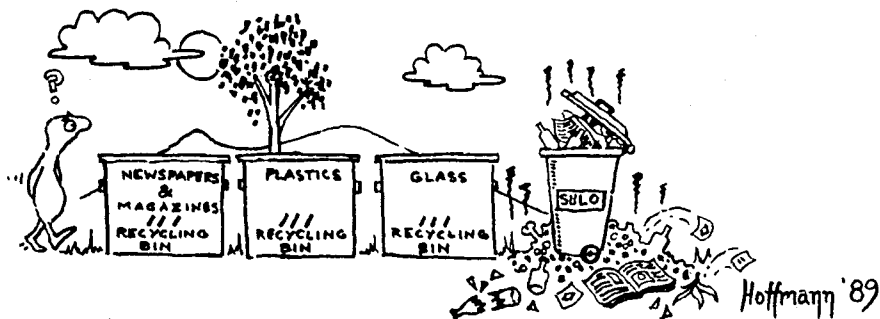
the Maleny co-operative ventures. Initial planning for a recycling depot in Maleny proved difficult because of Council's new waste management strategy being introduced into Division 2. However, the group, encouraged by overwhelming community support, began a joint venture with Division 1 in the shape of a recycling depot at the Witta Refuse Tip, some 12 kms from Maleny.

Since starting the depot in mid-July, in spite of the considerable vagaries of the markets for recyclables (and other factors), the project has gone from strength to strength. Thanks to Division 1's subsidy of \$100 a week, workers were paid for at least some of the hours they put into the depot from the start. Sales of recyclable resources, items from the "Steptoe shed" and value-added items like screen-printed T-shirts (re-cycled of course!) meant that extra workers were

soon able to be brought on board. Recently, we have been able to purchase a 2 1/2 tonne Mazda truck as a result of donations and fund-raising. As well as being essential for our regular commercial pick-up in Maleny, the truck (with a driver) is available for hire to earn a supplementary income for Waste-Busters.

This venture has, maybe more than any previous co-operative effort in Maleny, involved a huge number of the community. Whether working "at the tip face" (literally!), donating time to meetings/working bees, or materials for shed-building or other capital works, helping with fund-raising, or separating former "waste" into recyclable categories at home, Waste-Busters have been at work.

Not only has the concept of community involvement in recycling taken off with a bang in Maleny, but in many other towns as well. There are now over 20 Waste-Buster groups along the Sunshine Coast, each with interests and expertise specific to their area. As well as this, a Brisbane group and a Mackay group have formed. Sunshine Coast Waste-Busters meet regularly, are in the process of incorporating the regional group, share information and resources, and present a strong lobbying front necessary for legislative change muscle-power. The local radio station 4SS has a weekly spot on Waste-Buster news, and this has become a great source of public education.



A broader view of Recycling.

We tend to be preoccupied, especially in a town like Maleny where so much is being done, with the local scene, thus losing perspective on the greater picture - what is happening in the rest of the world.

In America, private industry has taken up the recycling challenge, with many profitable recycling operations as a result. Even the huge conglomerate Dow Chemicals advertises the need for and profitability of plastic recycling. The proliferation of both large-scale and small, local recycling operations has in the main been prompted by the public reaction to the proposed solution to the mounting garbage problem - large-scale incineration. Increasingly, public awareness of the airborne pollutants and toxic residues produced by such incinerators forces Government and industry to look for more acceptable means of waste disposal. Recycling is proving to be the most effective so far, although it in itself does not solve the problems associated with our use of toxic materials.

In European countries, the fact that they have little land has accentuated the need for solutions other than land-fill "disposal" more rapidly than in land-rich countries like America and Australia. In Germany, recycling is common practice, and

has been for many years, on the initiative of the Government. Plastic bags at supermarkets cost 10 cents, a good incentive to bring your shopping basket! In Sweden, dioxin is a thing of the past for their paper production, while in Cairo, once-poor families now earn their living by recycling the city's waste. Quite inspirational!

Throughout the rest of Australia, interest in recycling is growing. Many City and Shire Councils are employing recycling officers, and instituting or encouraging existing schemes run by 3 local charities, etc. Some of the large cleansing contractors are building recycling options into their collection services. This, of course, appeals to governments, as it doesn't require much change on their parts!

Although, at this stage, most large recycling initiatives would appear to be prompted by knee-jerk reactions to current problems in waste disposal, and motivated solemnly by profit, hopefully it will not be too long before there is general acceptance of the need to conserve resources. This will lead to a minimisation of waste, which is one of the main areas of public education for committed recyclers. The next stage must be the total phasing out of toxic material usage; this HAS to come, and quickly, if we are to continue to inhabit our planet much longer!

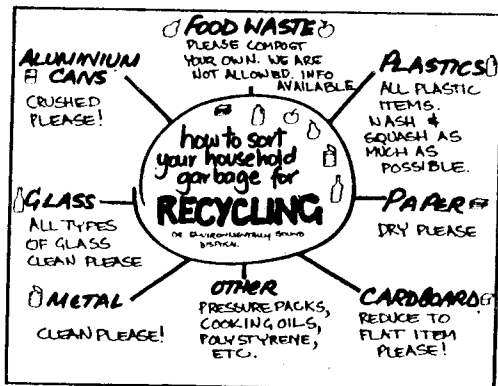
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BUNYAS





- MARKETING -

• EXISTING •

- Within our area it was necessary to fit in with the existing recycling of bottles by the Scouts and aluminium cans covered by the Lions group.

Within a short time of our establishment there was a significant increase in the collection of both items; we found that a percentage basis of profit was the simplest method so there was no interference to these established service groups.

• OTHER TRADITIONAL ITEMS •

- Paper and cardboard were the easiest to distribute on the Sunshine Coast, but it seems important to create set markets as in all cases of recycling due to the fact that the world is turning green too fast from a marketing/distribution point of view. Metals, similarly, fit into this category. Plastics, within the first month of our operation, moved with ease, but due to the flood of plastics being collected in Australia they are now on a four month hold and even then difficulties exist in their future distribution.

• FUTURE POTENTIAL •

- As all things in life, much depends on this factor. Firstly, three-phase power will be our major step so that we can ease ourselves into local industry and distribution - that is organic fertilizer plant, paper shredding for packaging and horse stable litter, polystyrene balls for bean bags, a bench-saw for offcut firewood, and a tooled workshop for the repair of furniture, toys, electrical appliances, etc. The further expansion of our "STEPTOE" shed (second-hand sale shed) with itemised shelving and monthly distribution/turnover is potentially our greatest asset.

- TRANSPORT -

- The cost of transport hire made it essential for us to obtain a two-tonne truck with a seventeen foot tray for our local needs. This truck's importance is based not only on distribution of our marketing items, but collection of locally donated items. Also timber and household removal transport promotes a further potential income.

FOR MORE INFO
CONTACT



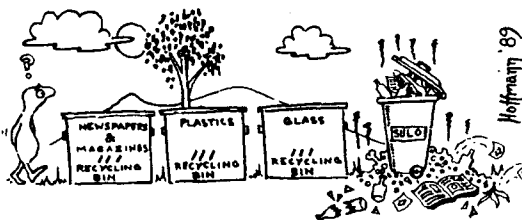
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MOUNTAIN FARE - AN INTRODUCTION.

Mountain Fare co-operative (Inc. Pend.) has been in operation for two years and its incorporation as the State's first women's co-operative is imminent. We aim to provide social and economic support for women on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. In fulfilling this aim, we are mindful of the disadvantages that women experience in relation to men in generating an income and we seek ways of working that reflect women's priorities.

Mountain Fare began as an organic herb growing and marketing business. While maintaining our interest in herb growing, the co-operative has diversified to include a training section, a catering wing and a vegetarian frozen food business.

Get into training. by Meg Barrett

The training group develops training programs which respond to women's needs and which improve women's ability to manage their environment. Child care is provided and training is offered at times and in timeslots that cater for women with dependent children. Courses are designed which assist women to identify their skills and ambitions and which extend their repertoire of skills.

With the aid of sponsorship by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training, we have provided "in house" workshops covering a range of topics such as Goal Setting, Project Planning and Decision Making, Energy Monitoring and Marketing. A very enjoyable weekend workshop at Lake Cooribah not only helped us to develop processes for successful group

management, but also generated friendship and enthusiasm within the co-operative. In 1989, the training group presented a "Women in Business" course to the public. This five week course covered areas relevant to setting up a small business and was well supported by women from the general community. Through its training arm, Mountain Fare has taken more than fifty women to the stage of completing a business plan. A number of members have used these skills to create employment within the co-operative and others have established small businesses.

In the pipeline for the training group for 1990 are a number of projects, some of which are dependent on sponsorship from government. It is hoped to develop a system of enterprise support for fledgling businesses started under auspices of Mountain Fare. Specific attention will be paid to the areas of distribution, marketing, production involving technology new to women, and financial planning. A further series of workshops, to be held in Maleny and other centres in the hinterland, is awaiting sponsorship. Finally, an ambitious plan for a "winter school" which aims to reveal the unique quality of Maleny and its co-operative organizations will be the culmination of an exciting year for the training group.

Mountain Fare is growing.

When Mountain Fare was conceived all the women involved had a common interest in growing herbs. Originally we felt our main function could be culinary herb growing.

While we were looking for co-operative structure to suit our needs we realized that Mountain Fare could be the umbrella for functions other than herb growing, for example catering and training, which we were already starting to develop an active interest in.

Publicly, the catering and training groups have taken off in a big way, while the "growers" group is quietly establishing their gardens.

There are now 2 growers groups.

The Conondale women are an organic herb growing group who grow and change with the seasons. At the moment they are primarily giving each other support with their individual gardens and organizing field trips to notable gardens. They are also in the process of setting up a small pyramid herb dryer. Meetings take place once a month where everyone brings a plant to swap and a picnic lunch to share.

The Bridge Creek women have only recently formed into a group and have access to a small area of land at Frogs Hollow, where they are in the process of setting up a "community" commercial herb growing plot. They have recently had a fencing party, a ripping day, and are mulch gathering. Research into "no dig" gardening has been undertaken and they've now decided that this is the style of garden they'd like to work with.

GENERAL PLANTING GUIDE FOR DEC/JAN

It's not Spring anymore but you could be planting any (or all) of the following:-

thyme	sunflower	cucumber
sage	nasturtium	sweet corn
rosemary	African marigold	sweet potatoes
mint	amaranthus	leeks
marjoram	watermelons	tomatoes
fennel	okra	lettuce (mignonette is best)
chives	beans (bush, pole & snake)	marrows
basil	parsnip	rockmelon
peanuts	beetroot	zucchini
parsley	cabbage	endive
garlic	pumpkin	silver beet
ginger	radish	eggplant
chinese water chestnuts	carrots	celery
cowpeas	rosellas (if you do it now)	squash
jerusalem artichoke	capsicum	choko

Things like dill, coriander, lettuce, etc. will go to seed too quickly if you plant them now.

Start planting winter vegies in January, i.e. cauliflower, broccoli, etc.

Happy gardening.
Robin Clayfield



Our main aims were to always follow our ideals, these being -

- * Vegetarian Meals
- * Use local foods
- * Be organic
- * Employment for local women

and, most importantly

- * Have Some Fun!

CATERING - by Lyn Blunt

It all seemed to start so innocently with the National Folk Festival at Easter - could we, as a group, do some catering for anywhere between 500 to 5000 people? From this "small" beginning, we tried our hand at catering for the Maple Street Co-op Annual Dinner, a mere 150 people and a mere 8 courses. I suppose after being thrown into the "deep end" we all had to learn very quickly.

Catering is always hectic - it is not as easy as one would think but through all the worry and uncertainty, learning and friendships have evolved. Word spreads fast in a small and well informed community such as Maleny and to date the catering team have developed a reputation for fine cuisine.



We are happy to announce that FFF is being distributed to Health Food shops along the coast. At last there are Health High Quality Vegetarian Frozen Dinners available, at a reasonable price. It has been a rewarding process, which started off as a "Great Idea".

We did not realize at the time, its a long road from the idea to the finished product. Firstly, Business Objectives were set, followed by, Market Analysis, Market testing, Health Department regulations, Weights and Measures Department, Printing, Premises rental, Distribution, millions of phone calls and meetings and finally a business plan emerged.

Of course, none of this could have been done if not for the invaluable information learnt at the "Mountain Fare - Women In Business" course held recently and the readily available continuing support and advice and experience from the members of Mountain Fare.

At this point we would like to thank the Maple Street Co-op and Francoise in particular for the support and advice given and also for the chance to do market testing and gathering feedback.

Our FFF cooks have over 15 years of experience in Vegetarian Cooking and are always on the lookout for exciting new menus to try.

To date we distribute a Vegetarian Lasagne made from beans, onion, organic tomatoes, Mountain Fare herbs, celery, wholemeal lasagne, and rennet free cheese. A very filling meal for one or a lunch for two with a fresh garden salad. We also make a Vegetarian Complete Meal, comprised of three lentil and sesame patties, potato and cheese celeste and Mountain Fare herbs in our tomato sauce. This meal is made absolutely wonderful with the additional purchase of our Hot Peanut Sauce. Of course, our popular peanut sauce will enhance many meals!

With purchase of our chemical free Ice Cream maker and all this lovely organic fruit available, we can now test our many Ice Cream recipies.

Karen Symmis



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