



*Opens June 13th -  
rain or shine!*

**Thursday afternoons**  
**2:00 to 6:30 pm**  
**(6:00 pm close after Labor Day)**  
**Belmont Center parking lot**

## in this issue . . .

Cheesemaking class in Belmont  
Quebrada Bakery comes to town  
BFC expands your horizons  
Recipe for whole milk ricotta cheese

## Adventures in Curds and Whey

*Food Collaborative class introduces cheese to lucky locals*

While I've experimented with making many foods from scratch, I can't say that I'd thought much about cheesemaking before reading *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, Barbara Kingsolver's celebration of local food. But her adventures in mozzarella making, and especially her road trip to Massachusetts for an afternoon with "Cheese Queen" Ricki Carroll, piqued my interest. And so, when I saw an announcement for the Belmont Food Collaborative's cheese class, I signed up immediately. (Good thing, as it quickly sold out.)

Our teachers met us in the kitchen of Belmont's First Church on a snowy Super Bowl Sunday afternoon. The group included about a dozen students, a reporter from Emerson, and teachers Joan Teebagy and Lisa Fox. Joan, a goat keeper and board member of the Belmont Food Collaborative, was pleased to have the opportunity to show the class how simple it is to make cheese at home. She pointed out that cheese is very similar to bread: It's a food made with few ingredients, but that has many variations.

Lisa, a fellow goat keeper, explained that she started making cow's milk cheese at home after joining a raw milk coop. After she started working with goats, she began making chèvre, a soft goat's milk cheese. "I wanted a healthier, safer product, and I like to cook. I like to have local milk."

Joan introduced the first cheese demonstration of the day, ricotta. She explained that this soft cheese is traditionally made from whey left over from cheese making, but is easily made from milk with a bit of added cream. While whole milk makes the best-tasting

cheese, low-fat will also work fine. Both Joan and Lisa warned the class against using ultrapasteurized milk, as it won't separate correctly. First, Joan added vinegar to the pan of milk, which separates the butterfat solids (curds) from the whey. Then we watched as the milk was heated to 185°F in a double boiler. Lisa reminded us to be patient, noting, "The hardest part is making sure you're not overheating while you're waiting for it to curdle." As we continued to wait, Joan laughingly added, "We are literally watching a pot boil."



photo: Becky Prior

*Making chèvre—instructor Lisa Fox spoons the curds into the strainer.*

Eventually, the milk separated into soft curds and a thin, yellow-green whey. Joan carefully scooped out the curds with a slotted spoon, draining them through butter muslin, then poured the remaining whey over the curds to drain. She noted that so-called cheesecloth is not actually used to drain curds for cheese, as the holes in the cloth are too large. Once the curds were strained, it was time to add salt to taste. Any pure salt can be used for cheesemaking, but it cannot contain additives like iodine, anti-caking agents, or flavoring. After

*(continued on page 4)*

# A Sweet Newcomer in the Center

## An Interview with Kay Wiggin, Owner of Quebrada

If you haven't yet been to visit Quebrada, you've probably smelled the croissants, cupcakes, cookies, and other delights as you walked by the storefront at 19 Leonard Street. Kay Wiggin, owner of Quebrada Baking Company, chatted with *ROOTS & SPROUTS* about her experience as a small business owner and her emphasis on the freshest local ingredients. Learn more and let your mouth water at [www.quebradabakingco.com/](http://www.quebradabakingco.com/)

**How did you learn the art of baking?** My father comes from a long line of German bakers; however, I learned the art of baking from my mother. We would spend many nights baking at our home in Western Pennsylvania.

**What changes have you seen over the years in terms of people's eating habits?** Many dietary fads have come and gone over the years, but the core philosophy at Quebrada has always remained the same: We use fresh, simple, and wholesome ingredients. Our roots are in the natural food industry. Quebrada was in

the vanguard of the natural food movement in the greater Boston area, with our products being sold at places like Erewhon, Bread and Circus, and Cambridge Natural Foods.

Quebrada started out in Arlington in 1977 as a wholesale business, using only whole wheat and only honey and maple syrup as sweeteners. In 1984 I opened Wellesley as the retail flagship and started using some white flours and sugars; however, many of our original recipes and products are still in our stores today. Granola and muffins are part of our original product line. All our muffins (except pumpkin and corn) are still made with 100% whole wheat flour and are sweetened only with honey and maple syrup. We have never used high fructose corn syrup or trans fats in any of our products.

**Where do you source your ingredients from?** We try to locally source as many products as possible. Our maple syrup comes from a local supplier in Western Massachusetts,

apples from an orchard in Stow, produce from Russo's market, and our coffee is roasted by Fazenda coffee in Dedham.

**What's the story about the aprons that hang on the walls?** My mother and I always wore half aprons when baking at home. I saved hers, as well as my aunt's, and have supplemented my collection with ones bought at antique stores and estate sales. I have hundreds of aprons at home and love the memories they bring back. They seem to elicit the same nostalgia for a lot of people, so they're also great conversation pieces.



photo: Brian Samuels Photography

Quebrada owner Kay Wiggin is flanked by daughter Emilie, operations manager, and son Schuyler, baker.

**What is Belmont like in the wee hours of the morning when you get to work?** The wee hours at the bakery are precious. There are more people awake than one would imagine. With all the snow this winter, there were always people plowing who would come in for coffee before we would open. I'm always grateful that I'm starting my day at dawn and not ending it!

**What's next for Quebrada?** With stores now in Wellesley, Arlington, and Belmont, Quebrada will hopefully continue to expand. Both my children are now involved in the operation, which means that Quebrada will continue for a longer time than I'd envisioned 36 years ago. I created the Belmont store as a prototype for the future of the business. For the next location, we would like to be in a more urban location closer to the city.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share about owning a store in Belmont?** I have lived in Belmont for 25 years. The best part about now owning a store in Belmont is reacquainting myself with the teachers and coaches and parents that I have lost contact with since my children graduated from the public school system, and weaving myself back into the same wonderful community on a different level.

—Leah Lesser



## Belmont Food Collaborative Board of Directors

Kim Foster  
Suzanne Johannet  
Evanthia Malliris  
Cate McGrail  
Tom Neel  
Becky Prior  
Paul Santos  
Hal Shubin  
Vicky Slavin  
Anne Stuart  
Joan Teebagy  
Heli Tomford

*The Belmont Food Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the parent organization of the Belmont Farmers' Market*

Belmont Farmers' Market  
Winner of Boston magazine's

**BEST OF BOSTON 2009**

Awarded by Boston magazine runner-up

'Best of Boston' 2010  
Best Farmers' Market

[www.belmontfarmersmarket.org](http://www.belmontfarmersmarket.org)

*The Market is a member of the Belmont Center Business Association.*

Volume 8, Issue 2  
*Roots & Sprouts* is a publication of the Belmont Food Collaborative, Inc.  
PO Box 387  
Belmont, MA 02478  
[belmontfood@gmail.com](mailto:belmontfood@gmail.com)

Editor: Jennifer Angel  
Designer: Dee Ippen  
Logo designer: Trey Klein  
Printer: Belmont Printing Co.  
Distribution: Laurie Levy and Nancy Jarzombek

 Printed on recycled paper

## 2013 Events

*Upcoming community programs presented by the Belmont Food Collaborative*

### Ornamental Edibles Plant Care Clinic

Steve Pinkerton will instruct past, present, and future Pomona Project participants in the care of edible landscape plants.

*Wednesday, April 17, 7:30–9:00 pm  
Flett Room, Belmont Public Library  
No sign up necessary. Free.*

### Homemade Ravioli Class

Learn to make traditional homemade ravioli from scratch with native Florentine instructor Anna Tommasi Nathanson. Experience making the dough and rolling it out with a rolling pin and a pasta machine. Then, prepare a classic spinach and ricotta filling, and stuff and cut the ravioli. Other pasta shapes will be discussed and demonstrated. Finally, cook a simple sauce and participate in a tasting. Take home recipes and a resource list to make your own at home.

*Saturday, May 18, 3:00–6:00 pm  
Location: 404 Concord Ave,  
First Church in Belmont  
Sign up at <http://belmontfood.org/projects/education/ravioli-class/>  
Limited to 12 students. Cost: \$40.*

## JOIN US ON TOWN DAY!

*Saturday, May 18, 9:00-3:30  
Leonard Street, Belmont Center*

Stop by the BFC table to say hello, share your ideas, and sign up to volunteer at the Market or for any of the other programs we run—such as education, food assistance, or communications.

We welcome you!

## Food for Thought

*Looking Beyond Belmont's Thursday Market*

The Belmont Farmer's Market, part of the Belmont Food Collaborative (BFC), has become a town institution, but many people may not be aware of the BFC's broader mission beyond Thursday market days. As explained by Joan Teebagy of the board of directors, the BFC aims "to afford as many people as possible access to local, sustainable, healthy food and to help those in need attain this."

Educational initiatives help promote this broader mission. Along with three other Belmont residents, Joan heads up the BFC's

education committee, with its many interesting and varied components. She is the perfect fit for the job. Joan grew up in Belmont and had a small vegetable garden even as a child. Her family always thought of food as important, particularly home-cooked food. She has always had a personal love of gardening and farming, which were hobbies even in the busiest years when her children were growing up. She has been disturbed by the trend for factory-produced meat and by the disappearance of farms (with the result that people have become increasingly disconnected from food). Since retiring from software development, she has had more time to devote to these hobbies and to raising honey bees.

Some projects that the education committee handles have been under way since the Market's inception; for example, this newsletter, which aims to bring articles of educational interest to the community, and the Pomona Project, which offers the community wholesale, regional climate-appropriate, edible plants. Other projects this past year included presentations on backyard chickens and edible landscaping, a cheese-making class (reviewed on page 1), and a "seed swap," where local gardeners shared seeds from their favorite flowers and food plants. Workshops on seed saving, seed starting, and

making ravioli from scratch have been scheduled for this spring. Joan notes, "One can put a whole lot more into ravioli than one finds in stores, such as collard greens."

The projects and scope of this committee are constantly expanding. Last year, the BFC started a garden to supply the Belmont Food Pantry with fresh produce to complement their canned and packaged goods. The committee is currently looking for more space to enlarge the garden and for people who can volunteer on a regular basis or for a few hours at a time (students can receive community

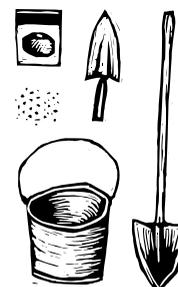
service for participating). The purpose of this collaborative garden is to have commu-

nity members learn how to plant and harvest a garden of their own while producing food for the Food Pantry. Joan assures people that they can start from no experience and learn within a supportive community, and that everyone can benefit as well as contribute.

Other initiatives being considered for the future include running a child-adult cooking class (followed by the pleasure of sharing a meal together; for example, for Sunday dinner), and offering a composting workshop. Community members are encouraged to offer suggestions and to propose classes they may want to teach or areas they may want to learn about. If you are interested in volunteering, suggesting ideas, or helping in any way, please send an e-mail to [belmontfood@gmail.com](mailto:belmontfood@gmail.com) or visit our newly launched website at [belmontfood.org](http://belmontfood.org)

—Denise Umans

*The BFC wants to make local, sustainable, healthy food accessible to everyone in town*



(continued from page 1)

adding two tablespoons of heavy cream, Joan put the prepared cheese in the refrigerator. In less than an hour, we had watched the entire process of making ricotta.

Lisa led the chèvre demonstration, first heating the goat's milk carefully to 86°F. As this cheese would be made with bacteria, she



photo: Becky Prior

recommended that we use a thermometer to ensure correct temperature. If the milk is too hot, it can be cooled by placing the pan in a pot of cool water. Once at the correct temperature,

Lisa added the chèvre bacteria to separate the curds. She then drained the cheese using a jelly bag, her preferred strainer. Unlike ricotta, which is drained only briefly, chèvre is drained for at least six hours, then salted. The cheese can be suspended by a spoon or even a faucet over a bowl. One student asked how the variations in weather affect the finished chèvre. Joan noted that chèvre has worked for her in all weather. "It's always been very forgiving. I've made it in December and in hot humid weather." Lisa noted that, in especially hot weather, she had simply hung it to dry in the refrigerator. As both women are goat keepers, both admitted that chèvre is their favorite cheese. Joan added, "For the effort, it's really good."

Making our final cheese, paneer, was very similar in process to the ricotta, but with lemon juice used in place of vinegar. As it's harder

to know the acidity level of lemon juice, it took a bit of experimentation to get the perfect amount. Once the curds had separated, Joan drained them in muslin, then showed us how to place them on a plate and press with a weight to harden. The hardness can be varied, depending on preference. "Press to a paneer-like consistency," Joan added helpfully. She also noted that this is a cheese that works well without salt and with low-fat milk, as it's a cooking cheese.

By the end of the two-hour class, I was amazed at how quick and easy it was to make the cheeses. And all three were delicious!

—Becky Prior

For more information, please see Emerson reporter Pamela Cyran's article at: [www.jsons.org/boston/mass-residents-learn-to-make-cheese-1.2984885](http://www.jsons.org/boston/mass-residents-learn-to-make-cheese-1.2984885)

Chèvre suspended from a faucet is drained for up to six hours.

## Whole Milk Ricotta

*Missed the cheese class? Here is a recipe from the class instructors to try at home. Making cheese, like making bread, depends a lot on technique and feel, so don't expect perfection on your first try. Remember you should not use ultrapasteurized milk. Avoid milk with a "U" on the carton labeling. It is fine if the cream is ultrapasteurized because it is added after the cheese is essentially complete.*

- ½ gallon whole milk (not ultrapasteurized)
- 2–4 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cream
- ½ teaspoon salt

Heat the milk and vinegar to 185–195°F. Enough vinegar must be added to curdle the milk—that's why a range of 2–4 tablespoons is given. Also, note that the milk will curdle more as the temperature gets higher—you will need to be patient and watch it carefully.

Turn off heat and let set a while, until there is no milky whey (approximately 10 minutes).

Drain in butter muslin, just until it stops quickly dripping.

Place in a bowl, add the cream and salt, and mix gently.

Place in the refrigerator. Note that the cheese will firm up a bit in the fridge, so do not drain it too long in the previous step, or it may end up firmer than you want.



## We need you!

Do you like words, support local food, and believe in our our mission?

We are seeking a new volunteer editor and a new designer/layout artist for this newsletter, starting with the fall issue. This is just one of the many ways you can help at the Belmont Food Collaborative, and meet others who share your interest.

Please contact: [belmontfood@gmail.com](mailto:belmontfood@gmail.com)