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Outpost General Manager 36 weeks into A Year of Inconvenience

[Milwaukee, WI] Try this on for a New Year's resolution. Take the pledge to make all of your own food for one whole year and share your experience with 285 of your closest friends. If your answer is, "You gotta be kidding me. Fat chance. Pass me my processed corn chips," then probably not. But if you were Outpost Natural Foods Co-op's general manager, Pam Mehnert, right now you would already be into Week #36 and wondering what the heck to make for dinner tonight.

What started as a challenge back in April 2010 as part of the celebration of the co-op's fortieth anniversary, Mehnert's blog, *A Year of Inconvenience*, has become a personal adventure that explores what life would be like without all the modern food conveniences we all enjoy, and take for granted, every day such as canned tomatoes, breakfast cereal, dried pasta, and tortilla chips. Mehnert has become a pretty good apprentice in, of all things, the art of making crackers.

"One of the first convenience foods I really missed was chips – potato or tortilla, you name it. So, I got into making crackers as a substitute snack food. People are really surprised when you bring a cheese and cracker platter to a party and can proclaim that you made the crackers. And now I'm learning to make the cheese."

According to Wordpress.com, the Blog-Health-0-Meter shows 2010 was a good year for *A Year of Inconvenience*, catching the convenient interest of over 16,000 curious viewers and foodie followers, putting the blog in the "Wow" echelon. The blog has also attracted the attention of other food writers and bloggers including foodinjars.com, eatatburp.com, wisconsinfoodie.com, 12tomatoes.com, foodhappens.blogspot.com, cookingupastory.com, theperfectpantry.com, and jsonline.com/blogs/lifestyle. Many a patron has lighted upon *A Year of Inconvenience* via these sites.

For those of you thinking the life of a blogger is idle, think again. Mehnert's life is anything but sedentary, managing a successful natural foods co-op, acting as board president for the National Cooperative Grocer's Association and Our Milwaukee, maintaining her Milwaukee home and sharing it all with her life long partner.

"I guess I expected my friends to follow me if for no other reason than their own morbid curiosity. But to be followed by strangers who really love great food, willingly share their own recipes, and encourage me along the way - especially the weeks where I was so challenged by available time – that has been the best part of this entire experience."

You can follow the remaining 16 weeks of Mehnert's *Year of Inconvenience* at <http://outpostcoop.wordpress.com> or at <http://www.outpost.coop/connect/blog/a-year-of-inconvenience/>.

Serving the greater Milwaukee area since 1970, Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative operates three successful locations at 100 East Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, 7000 West State Street, Wauwatosa, and 2826 South Kinnickinnic Avenue, Milwaukee. Co-owned by nearly 15,500 individuals from Southeastern Wisconsin, it employs nearly 300 people and is the fourth largest cooperatively owned natural foods grocer in the country. (www.outpost.coop)

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