

# Dishing up a Humble Living

A Profile of the Pumphouse Creamery

Story by Chuck Banks | Photograph by Carol Banks

“I like the idea of local sustainability, the farmer will come here, drop off the milk and cream. I make ice cream and sell it locally. It is a whole cycle of community sustainability. I love that fact! That’s the primary reason I am here.”



The Pumphouse Creamery

I’ll admit it. I am an ice cream “junkie.” I will eat ice cream any time of the year, even when it’s thirty below outside. In one of my frequent searches for a fix, I discovered Pumphouse Creamery in south Minneapolis and soon found a favorite flavor or two. Okay, five: Peanut Butter Chocolate, Malted Vanilla Fudge, Oatmeal Cookie, Guinness Toffee and something called Kulfi...

I visited Barb Zapzalka, founder and owner, and she shared some of her visions for operating her store. One of her comments was most insightful, and summed up Barb’s business philosophy for Pumphouse Creamery. “I try to use local organic milk and cream, which is my main goal. I like the idea of local sustainability, the farmer will come here, drop off the milk and cream. I make ice cream and sell it locally. It is a whole cycle of community sustainability. I love that fact! That’s the primary reason I am here.” One of the results of these principles, when applied, is an ice cream that has a rich but clean taste and texture.

So how does one start an ice cream shop with a philosophical bent? Barb did so by first realizing her unhappiness with her corporate sector job. She next remembered how much she enjoyed managing a Mexican restaurant in college. She was aware of her own serious ice cream affliction and was a dedicated organic food consumer. Sounded like a business plan...

Barb had made her own ice cream at home but had no idea how to produce it commercially. She did extensive research, and found that the University of Wisconsin-Madison offered a three-day seminar on ice cream production. This gave Barb the opportunity to gain knowledge of the process and machinery, but also tap into the experience of others in the class. The side benefit, of course, was having the task of producing and tasting as much ice cream as possible in three days—nirvana for an ice cream junkie.

Having already secured a lease on her Chicago Avenue location, it was now time for Barb to take the plunge. In early 2003, she resigned from her corporate position, and set up shop. Barb applied her commitment to community by trying to hire residents from the neighborhood. She loves seeing her employees hanging out in the neighborhood when they’re not working, but her community commitment doesn’t end in the shop itself—the Pumphouse Creamery also provides ice cream for a summer event held by the Midtown YMCA.

Though Barb does not actively solicit other retailers, she currently supplies ice cream to Zeno Coffee & Dessert Bar and is interested if other local businesses contact her. Barb’s marketing is strictly word-of-mouth, and it seems to be working, as she has a loyal local following.

“Pumphouse Creamery,” continued on next page

Pumphouse Creamery's use of locally made ingredients has led to some challenges. The local organic milk and cream supply is something Barb needs to constantly monitor. In three years of operation, Barb has used many different vendors. She is currently working with a local organic dairy that hopes to be able to meet her supply demands.

Some of her other suppliers also demonstrate Pumphouse Creamery's commitment to local vendors. Take one of my favorite flavors: Oatmeal Cookie. It turns out the cookie pieces are supplied by The Baker's Wife, located on the corner of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This is one of my favorite neighborhood bakeries, so this "local" thing is definitely working to this ice cream lover's advantage.

Another of Barb's suppliers is Classic Provisions. Pumphouse Creamery uses them for as many flavorings and supplies as possible. This is due to the personal service touches they provide, and the quality of the products they sell. Barb said that many times she has had to place a small order and has needed to get it quickly. The Classic Provisions salesperson will deliver it right to the store. The salesperson works hard at the relationship they have established, and Barb wishes she could find more vendors like Classic Provisions who provide such personal service to local businesses.

"I am here to make a humbled living," says Barb, finally, "I

am not out to open another store or expand. My goal is to bring a nice product to the local customer. I want to bring a product that a farmer 45 minutes away produced. He milked his own cows, bottled with his own hands, delivered it to my local area. That is what is gratifying to me." With that said, I believe Barb has achieved her ideals on local sustainability with Pumphouse Creamery.

Oh, and the Kulfi? It turns out to be an East Indian-inspired flavor suggested to Barb by a friend of hers who hales from that part of the world. So there—creative flavors and a commitment to keeping things local. This is all good news for Twin Cities ice cream lovers.

## details

Pumphouse Creamery is located at 4754 Chicago Avenue South in Minneapolis.

It is open from March through the end of November. Summer hours are from Noon to 10 p.m., seven days a week.

Spring and Fall hours are from Noon to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

## Breakfast on the Farm!



Celebrate sustainable agriculture and eat locally-grown foods at Gale Woods Farm on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 from 7:30–10:00 a.m. In addition to an excellent breakfast of food produced by local growers, there will be shepherding demonstrations, wagon rides, garden and barn tours, live music and more.

Gale Woods Farm is a 410-acre park located 30 miles west of Minneapolis that features a contemporary, small-scale educational farm. Visitors of all ages can participate in programs designed to enhance their understanding of agriculture, food production and land stewardship. The farm produces and sells: lamb, beef, chicken, eggs, vegetables, wool, yarn, maple syrup and honey. Most of the products are sold through shares that are reserved in the spring and sold on-farm as available. Lamb, beef and chickens are primarily pasture-raised and the produce is grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

The food at the Breakfast on the Farm event will be produced and processed locally. All of the participating farmers use good land stewardship practices and most of them sell directly to consumers. Many of them will be on-hand to share information about their farms and talk about the joys and challenges of sustainable agriculture. Rain or shine come enjoy this event in a large picnic pavilion overlooking beautiful Whaletail Lake.

Reservations are recommended. Call (763) 559-6700 for reservations and reference activity number 337401-06. Reservation fee: \$8/participant; \$20 for a group/family of 3-4 and \$25 for a group/family of 5-6. At the door: \$10/participant; \$25 for a group/family of 3-4 and \$40 for a group/family of 5-6. Kids under 3 are free.

**GALE WOODS FARM** is located at 7210 County Road 110 West, 3 miles west of Mound. From Highway 394, take County Road 15 West to Mound and turn south on County Road 110. From Highway 7, turn north on County Road 44 and then west on County Road 110. Follow County Road 110 to the main entrance.

Visit [www.galewoodsfarm.org](http://www.galewoodsfarm.org) for more information.