

Cast Your Vote for 2nd Pizza Night!

Friday night pizza has been a big hit with our customers. We're continuing to offer more choices of toppings – including chicken, broccoli, and jalapeños – available with your choice of homemade red and pesto sauces. Now we're planning to offer pizza another night of the week – either Thursday or Saturday, or possibly both additional nights. Our dilemma: which night would be best for our customers? Let us know your preference next time you are in the store, or you can cast your vote online at www.newsalemgeneralstore.com.

This month's vendor spotlight features an interview with the maker of Hedgie's Hot Stuff, our favorite salsa. Be sure to grab a jar next time you're in the store – if you haven't tasted Hedgie's before, you're in for a real treat.

Rick

Rick Oliver, Proprietor

Beer on Sale!



Special on Budweiser
18-packs \$13⁹⁹ + dep.
30-packs \$20⁹⁹ + dep.

Clearance on Opa Opa Growlers \$5⁰⁰ + dep.
Get 'em while they last!



Steve Nelson, founder of Hedgie's Hot Stuff, holds his company mascot (and family pet)

Local Vendor Spotlight: **HEDGIE'S HOT STUFF**

'Fresh local ingredients ... that's the key.'

By John W. DeWitt

Don't let the cactus in the picture with Steve Nelson fool you. The founder, president, and CEO of Hedgie's Hot Stuff lives just down the road in Belchertown, and he makes his salsa products in Greenfield using fresh tomatoes from Whately. We recently ask Steve how a New Englander ended up making salsa – and what makes his color-coded salsas so delicious.



Q: *What's the Hedgie's Hot Stuff story?*

A: I was laid off from the best job I ever had shortly after 9/11. I'd been making salsa for years and was repeatedly told by friends and family I should sell it. But I had held back because I knew it's one thing to make it for family and friends, another thing to make for the general public. The first year made a couple of pallets. Last year we used 20,000 lbs. of local tomatoes from Harvest Farm in Whately.

Q: *There are innumerable salsas on the market. What makes yours stand out?*

A: It's fresh local ingredients – I really think that's the key. Over 90% of the salsas out there are made with canned tomatoes, tomato paste, and assorted dehydrated vegetables like onions, peppers, and garlic – because the price of these ingredients doesn't fluctuate. My local tomatoes are vine-ripe – picked two days before I cook them. I can go out and see who is picking the crop. The peppers are the same way, vine ripened, and I use virtually every piece. The end result is that I get the best quality produce for the lowest possible price. The only downside is that I can only cook salsa during the harvest season – typically August and September.

Q: *What's a hedgehog have to do with salsa?*

A: I'm addicted to the heat and don't feel it, so needed to use my kids to test salsas. The kids were OK with the milds, scared of the mediums, and didn't want to test the hots at all. So I told them they could pick the company name, but they didn't pick one of the five names I wanted. They wanted their pet to be famous.

NEW SALEM GENERAL STORE