

Spring: Fresh Vegetables & More

Spring is in full swing and summer is just around the corner. As the growing season progresses, the New Salem General Store will be stocking a growing variety of fresh, local vegetables as well as locally grown flowers and organic sunflower sprouts.

This month we're tasting Goose Island beer on Thursday, May 20th, and ChocoVine all month long. (Let me tell you, a mixture of cabernet wine and Dutch chocolate definitely sounds and looks odd, but the taste is guaranteed to delight your palate.) Be sure to sign up for our e-mail news updates so you'll know about additional events too.

Finally, after a long week, don't forget about our Friday night pizza – and our great deal on cheese pizza: two for \$15.99. See you soon!

Rick

Rick Oliver, Proprietor

Local Vendor Spotlight: **Dean Cycon, Dean's Beans**

'You can make a positive contribution and still be profitable.'

By Jake Ware

Any coffee drinker in the Pioneer Valley knows about Dean's Beans and its owner, Dean Cycon. An icon for socially responsible business, Dean talks to us this month about how he got his start 17 years ago, and what means the most to him when it comes to modeling socially responsible, for-profit business. Stop by the New Salem General Store for a fresh brewed cup or get a pound of beans for home. To learn more, you can also read Dean's blogs and articles at www.deansbeans.com.



Did you think you were going to sell coffee or were you interested in the social responsibility aspect first? I was a social activist, and I was asked to co-found a profit development group in coffee, and through that I saw the charity was helpful but was not really bringing any significant change to coffee villages. So I decided to start my own business to model how a for-profit business could effectively participate in social change. *(Continued on page 2)*

News & Events

Beer Tasting **Thursday, May 20** **4:30-6:30pm**

Goose Island will be the featured beer at this sampling.

Chocolate Wine Tasting **Daily throughout May**

Just ask the cashier any time for a sample of ChocoVine, a distinct and unusual beverage made of 70% fine French cabernet combined with a rich, dark chocolate from Holland.

Hilltown Business Club **Wednesday, May 26** **6:30-8 p.m.**

The group is preparing a print business directory for New Salem, Wendell and Shutesbury. To learn more, visit www.hilltownconnect.com – and list your business for free.

Organic Sunflower Sprouts



\$3.50 a container

18-Pack Beer Sale:
Rolling Rock & Miller High Life
Just \$10.99 plus tax/deposit

Dean's Beans
Coffee of the Month:
Mud Pie
Fresh brewed daily!

Local Vendor Spotlight: **Dean Cycon, Dean's Beans** (Continued from page 1)

What's your favorite aspect of traveling from place to place?

It's a cultural aspect, learning all the different cultures and different languages.

Have you picked up quite a few different languages now?

I speak Spanish, Portuguese, and Indonesian, I'm studying Swahili, and I get exposed to a lot of indigenous languages so I get to learn little bits of a lot of indigenous languages. Also, I like showing people in other countries what Americans can be all about. The news often shows us as colonizers and military types. Americans are also incredibly giving and friendly, and so I think it's really important for people of the world to see a balanced view of who we are, by meeting someone like me.



So do you consider yourself an ambassador?

You bet. An ambassador of goodwill for America. I make no bones about that.

How do you make fair trade marketable?

Well, we don't sell fair trade. Fair trade is just a tool in our toolbox. We sell really high-quality coffee at a low price and that's what people get turned on by, and then when they get to know more about us, that's when they learn what kind of a business we are, and that brings them back. The loyalty we have from our customers is through the roof.

So do you sell in many stores across America?

Primary we sell in cafes, small markets, and general stores around the country. That's the majority of our sales. About a third is Internet, a third cafés and small stores, and then a third institutions like Whole Foods and other national retailers.



Pretty much everyone around here has heard of Dean's Beans, but probably most local folks have no idea how nationwide you are.

We sell all over the country, but we don't really advertise. It's all word-of-mouth. We've been growing through grassroots word-of-mouth for 17 years now. Last year we grew 17%, and this year we've grown 12% so far. We haven't been affected by the downturn, because our prices are very low and our customers are very loyal. So you know, we've done quite well. And because of that, we've been able to keep our prices about two dollars a pound less than anyone else.

That seems to capture the local feel to a nationwide distribution.

We have very personal relationships with all our customers; we don't use distributors or brokers. Everything is direct, so we know all of our customers and have really good personal relationships with them. So it does make that local feel, even though we are distanced. We're on the leading edge of trade justice around the world, working directly with the farmers. Frankly, no other company does what we do.

Would you like to elaborate on the phrase "trade justice"?

Well, I think that coffee as a commodity has been subject to a set of unfair international trade rules for hundreds of years, and I consider it an important part of justice by trying to restructure those rules by having those direct relationships that reflect the farmers' needs and our need, not what the international market dictates.

How well known are you in coffee growing regions around the world?

I am more well known in Latin America than I am in Amherst. Seriously, I was just hanging out for two days with the president of Timor, yet I can't get a meeting with [U.S. Rep.] John Olver. I'm much more known and respected internationally than I am locally, which is fine with me, because my focus is on the farmers. I want to throw this in there: just in this year alone, I've worked in Peru, Timor, Indonesia, and Kenya to deal with farmers on community development issues and coffee quality issues. Better growing techniques, better harvesting techniques. Improving the quality of the coffee for them, not just for us. As importantly, I've been doing community work, such as refinishing a school as well as the desks and blackboards and things in Timor right now.

So helping to rebuild institutions then?

Yes, and working with a women's fishing cooperative in Kenya to increase their income and strengthen their cooperative.



It sounds like it goes well beyond coffee.

Definitely. You can make a positive contribution and still be profitable.

