

# COMMUNITY GARDEN

BY SARA FALCONER

**"We were cool before, but now we're really, really cool,"** says Anne Winship, chair of the fair trade steering group in the newly certified Fair Trade Town of Wakefield.

Wolfville, Nova Scotia beat them to the punch as the first Canadian Fair Trade Town, but it's hard to imagine a place that's more crunchy.

"I mean, we have a village poet," Winship exclaims. "How many places have that?"

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Fair Trade in Canada, and Winship, owner of Bean Fair Coffee, was one of its early champions.

"I'm a little bit food-obsessed," she admits. "When I first tried fair trade coffee, it was out of a sense of obligation, but then it tasted so good," she says. Fair trade is a movement where farmers get a fair price for their work and that promotes social and environmental standards. In particular it focuses on exports from developing nations.

The municipality of La Pêche, which encompasses Wakefield, ratified the designation as a Fair Trade Town in September, committing to serving fair trade coffee and tea at city council functions.

Twelve businesses in Wakefield sell fair trade goods – including coffee, tea, wine, sugar and even cotton – well over the five that are required for certification by TransFair Canada, the industry's regulatory body.

Solstice Books, which has been open since June, has a coffee bar that offers fair trade beverages.

"It seems obvious to me," says owner Roberta Bouchard. "I've done a lot of travelling in countries where coffee isn't fairly traded and I've seen how destructive it is to the environment and the people who live there... Companies like Nabob and Maxwell House, they don't care what impact their farming practices have on the country."

Wakefielders are already well on the way to thinking about the big picture, she explains. "They're beyond being told that it's good to recycle. People have moved here because they share certain values and lifestyles. It's very mature as far as socio-economic issues go," she adds.

Local eating also goes hand-in-hand with the Wakefield model. The book *100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating* by Alisa Smith and J.B. Mackinnon was a big seller in Bouchard's store. Case in point, earlier this year locals actually held a One-Mile Dinner.

Kalina Ostrowska opened the artisanal Pipolinka Bakery last year with her husband, using organic butter, spices, chocolate chips and as many local goods as possible in their pastries.

She says she isn't squeamish about spending more money for these luxury goods. "I don't want profit at the cost of bad karma."

She explains that once people learn about the fair wages for farmers and sustainable environmental practices associated with fair trade, they're usually willing to shell out too. Ostrowska polls her customers to see if, for example, they would be willing to pay 25 cents more for cookies made with fair trade sugar.

"I've had nothing but positive feedback," she says. "If they actually do buy it and taste it, they're guaranteed to come back and buy six more."