

Fair Trade at the Co-op

A Growing Presence in the Produce Department

By Desdra Dawning, Co-op Member

Fair Trade History and Vision

The Fair Trade movement, with its early beginnings in the 1940's in handcrafted goods, has become a global phenomenon. It now includes not only items from village craftspeople, and hair care products, but also the agricultural goods of small farmers who have organized to get their products to markets world-wide, side-stepping the corporate trade that permeates and has such a strangle-hold on global economy today. Going strong since the 1980's in Europe, it has now found growing support in the U.S. with the development of the Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA), a collaboration of organizations representing farmers, farmworkers, food system workers, retailers, manufacturers, processors and non-governmental organizations. Their goal is to support family-scale farming, to reinforce farmer-led initiatives such as farmer cooperatives, and to bring these groups together with mission-based traders, retailers and concerned consumers to contribute to the movement for sustainable agriculture in North America.

Our understanding of the foundation of this movement is crucial to its growing strength and survival in a world that values corporate financial return over the health and well-being of all those who bring our consumer products to us. And as consumers, we are all in a position, by "voting with our dollars," to offer support and ensure stability to small farmers and other producers locally and globally by purchasing products with Fair Trade labels whenever possible.

Taken from their website, the vision of DFTA is to see "the agricultural and economic system as a healthy community where all look after and support each other, everyone feels safe, and all contribute to and benefit from a clean and harmonious environment. Family-scale and community-scale farms and businesses thrive as all people recognize the realities, challenges, and effects of production, distribution, and labor and choose to participate in fair trade." As with the European fair trade movement, efforts are being made to "ensure just conditions for agricultural workers... strengthen their ability to engage di-

rectly with the marketplace...give them more control over their futures...and provide or facilitate access to credit." Fair trade "emphasizes a holistic approach to agriculture, supporting such sustainable practices as organic, biodynamic, non-toxic bio-intensive integrated pest management, and small-scale farming, and supports the rights of farmers to their own seed." In seeking to "educate consumers about the inequities of the trading system and the need for alternatives," fair trade is setting new standards for a more conscious and humane trade system. (www.thedfta.org)

Fair Trade Produce at OFC

At Olympia Food Co-op (OFC), our Staff Collective works tirelessly to bring to our shelves products that first of all support our local suppliers, then when not available locally, to look for fair trade items whenever possible. While this movement is still in its infancy in the U.S., it is becoming more visible and enlisting a growing following of folks who prefer that their dollars go toward offering this support.

OFC has long offered fair trade coffee, teas, and chocolates, nuts and spices, hand-crafted items and hair care products. Our fair trade coffee comes from several sources. Fog Woman Coffee offers organic fair trade beans from Cafe Femenino, a Cooperative of women farmers from Columbia, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Peru and Rwanda. Equal Exchange, a worker owned cooperative itself, has been importing and roasting fair trade coffee and cocoa for many years. They have now expanded to include bananas and avocados, as they move to serve small farmers in their struggle to survive global plantation-produced agriculture. In addition to our fair trade coffees, Olympia Coffee Roasters practices direct trade, which does not currently have a standard or process for independent certification. Direct Trade is self-certified by the importers themselves.

In addition to purchasing produce directly from nearly 20 local and regional farms, the Produce Department purchases from

continued on page 3

photo by Equal Exchange



Avocado orchard in Michoacan, Mexico, member of Prager, a small-scale farmer cooperative.

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Both Co-ops are open every day
of the year (except New Year's
Day, January 1st, for inventory).

The purpose of the Olympia Food Co-op is to contribute to the health and well-being of people by providing wholesome foods and other goods and services, accessible to all, through a locally-oriented, collectively managed, not-for-profit cooperative organization that relies on consensus decision-making. We strive to make human effects on the earth and its inhabitants positive and renewing and to encourage economic and social justice. Our goals are to:

- Provide information about food
- Make good food accessible to more people
- Support efforts to increase democratic process
- Support efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society
- Provide information about collective process and consensus decision-making
- Support local production
- See to the long-term health of the business
- Assist in the development of local community resources.

Opinions expressed in the Co-op News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Co-op Staff, Board of Directors, Co-op advertisers or anyone else. Co-op members are welcome to respond.

The Co-op News is published on a bi-monthly basis and comes out in February, April, June, August, October and December. Please contact the editor, Jennifer Shafer, at newsletter@olympiafood.coop or 360-789-7313 to discuss your article idea or advertising inquiry. You may also leave messages in the newsletter box at either Co-op or mail them to either store, Attention: Co-op News.

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<http://www.olympiafood.coop>

Cover photo by Jennifer Shafer

BOARD REPORT

By **Isabella Rogul**, Board Member

Last month an anti-oppression training was offered to new Co-op Staff and Board members. I learned that I needed to build on this training because, while a lot of us found it highly informative and very insightful, we found we needed more time to process the material. Also, it was intimidating to be put into a random group of people, working on addressing such a big topic in just 5 hours.

I decided that it would be important to share my thoughts with the Co-op membership while it is still very fresh in my mind. To be clear, I am not an expert in anti-oppression work, and my intention is not to give you a training, but rather to share how I feel. I would appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have that would contribute to our continuing this work on anti-oppression at the Co-op.

After weeks of meditating on it, and years of being on the receiving end of oppression on a daily basis, I want you to know that I accept my part in oppressing other people because we all do it, whether consciously or not. As a friend of mine put it, "It can be tempting and easy to enjoy the benefits of unearned privilege, but that privilege can only be possible if someone else is underprivileged." Oppression makes the oppressed feel confused, crazy, unsupported, depressed, frustrated, miserable, and without access to power that should be shared equally. Oppression, I find, is like the food chain. We all have a place in it. And we all also have the power to change it.

I have experienced many kinds of oppression, which has led me to learn and create safe places to talk about it, but my frustration remains and fear of violent oppression is always there for me. I have discovered that oppression is an intricate web of daily aggressions at all the levels of human interaction that can affect anyone.

The most annoying form of oppression that I have experienced here in Olympia has been the daily microaggressions that come from well-meaning friends, family, community, co-workers, acquaintances and at many places of business in Olympia.

The Wikipedia entry on Microaggression Theory says:

Psychologist Derald Wing Sue defines microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership." Sue describes microaggressions as generally happening below the level of awareness of well-intentioned members of the dominant culture. Microaggressions, according to Sue, are different from overt, deliberate acts of bigotry, such as the use of racist epithets, because the people perpetrating microaggressions often intend no offense and are unaware they are causing harm. Sue describes microaggressions as including statements that repeat or affirm stereotypes about the minority group or subtly demean it, that position the dominant culture as normal and the minority one as aberrant or pathological, that express disapproval of or discomfort with the minority group, that assume all minority group members are the same, that minimize the existence of discrimination against the minority

group, seek to deny the perpetrator's own bias, or minimize real conflict between the minority group and the dominant culture. (Wikipedia: Microaggression Theory)

Examples of microaggressions:

Asking, "Where are you from?" (Conveys that the person does not belong here. Getting to know the person is better. Eventually he or she will say who they are and where they come from.)

Saying, "Sorry, I don't understand what you are saying"—when the speaker is speaking in understandable English, but with an accent. (Also conveys that the person doesn't belong here. Tune in, if you pay attention and are open you may be able to understand clearly.)

Asking, "Dooooooo youuuuuu work here?" using an inappropriate tone. (Conveys that you are superior and that the person is incapable of doing any other kind of work and does not understand English. Do not make assumptions, look for an identifier badge or uniform. Go to the customer care desk.)

Saying, "No, we do not have it," even before the person asks for something. (Conveys that the person is not welcome. My first reaction to this is, "Then do not own a business!" But I realize that it is all about fear and preconceptions. Work on your fears, take an anti-oppression workshop.)

People making glowing comments about your skin tone, your charming accent. (Conveys that the person is different. It may mean no harm at all. But it puts people on the spot and is very wearing.)

And the most typical: being followed around the stores if you fit some stereotype. Do not target people. Anybody could steal.

We should not forget the "Black Lives Matter" movement that sprung out of people reacting to these micro- and macro- aggressions oppressing black people and so many other minorities everyday. I know that people say "we have come a long way." Yes, we have, but it isn't over yet. The recent events in Ferguson, MO, and elsewhere have proven that the daily grind of oppression can become deadly. Maybe we'd rather not name acts of violent oppression like the shooting of the brothers Andre Thompson and Bryson Chaplin here in Olympia, because it makes us feel guilty. We can no longer ignore the institutionalized oppression in this country. I wonder how responsible we may all be for this happening in our community. We should examine our own daily oppressive behaviors that may be feeding these acts of violent oppression in our community. If it is not affecting you and me directly, please let's think long and hard, how it does affect all of us regardless of our place of privilege in this town and in this world. We have the power to take action. Let's take time to learn about oppression and anti-oppression work in our communities.

Thanks for supporting me as a Board member for the past three years. If you have any comments please send them to me before the end of my term in December at: ofcboard@olympiafood.coop.

I will see you at the Annual Co-op Meeting on October 17th.

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Andy Rosser, D.C.

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Fair Trade continued from page 1

Charlie's Produce and Organically Grown Company (OGC), Erin Majors, a buyer for the Produce Department, told me recently. "Both companies" she said, "carry a limited number of fair trade items, but they are growing over time, especially at OGC" where the sales of fair trade items increased by 56% in 2014. It is important to her to order fair trade items although she realizes that "they are generally a tiny bit more expensive," adding that she feels it is worth it for our shoppers to pay a little more for produce that has been fair trade certified. She knows that these certifications ensure us that all efforts have been made to provide workers with better wages and safer, healthier working conditions, along with many other benefits to our global economy and sustainable agriculture. Because this movement in the U.S. is new, several different fair trade certification organizations have been created, lending the added controversy over which ones are the most true to the values of the movement. To help consumers understand the variations in trade labels the DFTA has created a user-friendly tool that rates each program based on the 16 principles of fair trade. <http://www.thedfta.org/> This proliferation of trade label standards challenges OFC produce buyers to be well-informed about current fair trade activities.

Being in the middle of our own harvest season, produce buyers at OFC currently prioritize purchases from our small local farms over fair trade produce from far away, except for those items that cannot be obtained locally. Our two major produce suppliers, listed above, work with several companies that have fair trade programs and through which we can obtain fair trade produce. These companies include: Taste Me Do Good--apples and pears; Wholesum Harvest--tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers; Del Cabo--cherry tomatoes; and Earth Equity--cucumbers and peppers. Bananas, beloved by most of us and certainly not grown in Washington, are only being offered by Equal Exchange on the east coast, so OFC has been purchasing our bananas from the Giving Resources and Opportunities to Workers (GROW) program which, while it is not fair trade, is well-appreciated by

the OFC produce staff for its work in Ecuador and Mexico, providing ongoing financial support to services for farm workers, their families and surrounding communities. Kimberlee Chambers, Sustainability Manager for OGC, told me that "since 2005, OGC's sales of GROW bananas have resulted in donations of \$853,321 to vision and dental clinics, education centers, student housing, school supplies and scholarships in southern Mexico and in Ecuador," and are expected to grow to \$1 Million this year. No wonder our produce team is so eager to support them!

Avocados from Pragor in Mexico

I asked Erin what fair trade produce is currently being sold by OFC. She replied by saying, "there aren't currently a lot of fair trade certified produce items available to us, but in the past year or so, we have seen an increase in items available for us to buy, especially avocados, tomatoes and cucumbers." She particularly appreciates Equal Exchange avocados, from Pragor, a cooperative of small-scale farmers in Michoacan, Mexico, a state that is "tierra caliente (a real hot spot), in that it is heavily influenced by the drug war currently raging in Mexico. While only available seasonally (September to March), they are of special interest to Erin, since they are not only rich, creamy and delicious, but are produced by a group of 20 farmers who, when faced daily with many dangerous and difficult challenges, work together to market their avocados in order to provide safer working conditions and better wages for themselves and their families. (In order to get the avocados from their huertos (avocado farms) to a packing house that will work with them and move them on to market--a 2.5 hour drive from the nearest farm--they must travel through areas controlled by the drug mafia.) "The Pragor program," Erin shared with me, "is so important because it shows that when small groups of people come together and work collaboratively, they can have a tremendous positive impact on their own livelihoods and community. The producers in the Pragor program are small-farm owners by most standards (farmers in the program own an average of 10 acres each), and yet they are able to compete with huge agribusinesses because of their cooperation with one another. It is also worth noting that many of the



photo by Equal Exchange

Pragor farmers face dangerous, drug-war related conditions to get their avocados to market.

Pragor farmers have been farming organically for 10 years or more. Pragor has a great website where they outline their mission, vision, and values, and it is inspiring to see a business that places such a high value on social principals and cooperation." See pragor.com to learn more.

Jessica Jones-Hughes, an Equal Exchange member who traveled with others to Mexico to meet with Pragor folks, describes her experience in an article titled "Avocado Obstacle Course," on the Equal Exchange website (EqualExchange.coop). "These producers," she says, "are trying, at great risk and incredible courage, to do something different." Not only are they up against local drug cartels, but also multinational corporations and intense USDA regulation (by the time Mexican avocados arrive on your store shelf they have undergone 5 official inspections). "I was struck," she adds, "by the conviction of the Pragor producers and staff for upholding their integrity in an area where fear, corruption and multinationals are in control and often working in cahoots." And once these avocados reach our Co-op shelves, they must compete price-wise with those being sold by the multi-nationals at prices that bend to the U.S. consumers' spoiled expectation for low prices. "Our cheap food mentality," she says, "does not reflect the true cost of food and energizes price wars."

So if you are a Co-op shopper who values where your dollar goes, who it supports--and does not support--and are willing to possibly pay slightly more, consider looking for signs in both OFC stores for products certified as "Fair Trade." It is one of the most direct ways that your money can influence world trade, help small farmers and support sustainable agriculture.



photo by Equal Exchange

Pragor avocados made available to OFC through Equal Exchange.

DISCOUNT TASK FORCE

By **Tamara Ulrich-Rintz**, Staff Member

Greetings Olympia Co-ops! I am a new staff member hired in February of this year. I am originally from Madison, WI where I worked a little over 14 years at the Williamson Street Grocery Co-op (known locally as the Willy St. Co-op). I am excited to be at the Olympia Food Co-op (OFC), which has a strong working member program and a longstanding reputation of quality local food and accessibility.

In 1984, The Co-op had 4 types of discounts: Staff, Volunteer, and Senior, as well as Nonprofit or Collective/Trade Businesses. At the suggestion of a volunteer cashier, a discount for members with a disability was established. Knowing that many disabilities are hidden, the discount was a low-barrier system that protected the privacy of the member. And almost 20 years ago, (1996) the Olympia Board had a retreat and set a strategic goal for the organization to "feed hungry people" and to reach out to communities that were underrepresented in OFC's membership rolls. In 1998, the Low Income membership was introduced. The self-regulated qualification program was and is intended to encourage honesty, build dignity, and establish trust to give the membership discounts, and ultimately the food to those who need it. Very few natural food co-ops offer a discount benefit because of the fiscal responsibility to the business. In addition, Olympia Food Co-op is a Cooperative Business, but our By-laws which govern our organization are Nonprofit. This is another aspect that makes OFC stand out in the cooperative community.

Every year the Co-op makes an annual budget and takes into consideration the discount systems it has in place. The Co-op offers discounts to Nonprofits (10%), Staff (20%), Working Members (25%), Senior, Disability, and Low Income (10%), and allows for compounded discounts. In 2012, the finance team presented a discount report when they discovered that the discount usage has been steadily growing, as have OFC's sales. But the proportion of discounts compared to sales has been rising as well, and if this trend continues, it would have a direct and growing impact on our store margins and bottom line. It was recommended that a task force be formed for the "purpose of facilitating organization-wide reflection and conversation around discounts, and to develop and propose changes to our discount systems if needed."

An initial proposal was presented to the collective in 2013, and after much discussion, was amended and approved in 2014. The Discount Task Force Vision is to present a discount system that values the work of staff and working members and fulfills the mission-driven mandates of making good food accessible to more people, supporting efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society and seeing to the long term health of the business. When this work is completed the task force will have confirmed the intent of each discount offered, insured that the details of the programs support the stated intent, and assessed the long-term sustainability of each discount program. The work will focus on the discounts for low-income people, seniors, and folks with disabilities, and discussions concerning combining discounts. Any proposed changes will

be discussed by the full collective, Finance Committee and the Board of Directors. Final decisions regarding discounts are in the jurisdiction of the Board.

Current task force members are Board members Teresa Young and Eric Mapes, Staff members Rafael Ruiz, Tamara Ulrich-Rintz, Grace Cox, Monica Peabody, and Laura Kaszynski. We are to look at OFC's current discount systems and propose modifications to the Staff and Board. The task force will:

- Establish an advisory council comprised of discount members and community service providers. The Staff task force members would create a system for selecting organizations and individuals to serve on this council.
- Develop a work plan that includes various ways to solicit member and community input.
- Produce a report including options for modifying the discount structure for the Board and Staff to review. Board will have final consent.

To encourage involvement the Task Force will create member surveys, and offer focus groups of Co-op members to assist us in reaching our end goal. We will be giving periodic updates in the newsletter and on the website on our progress. We value member participation and input. If you are interested in serving on the Task Force Advisory Council, please contact us via email at discounttaskforce@olympiafood.coop for an application.

Upcoming Working Member Program Orientations

Come tour the store and learn about Working Member opportunities (including cashiering, stocking, and more) at the Co-op. If you are interested, please attend one of these 2-hour orientations.

For more information about becoming a Working Member at the Co-op, please contact Alejandro at the Eastside store, (360)956-3870, and Rafael at the Westside store, (360)754-7666. You can stop by either store to get more information, or sign up for an upcoming event.

Westside Store:

Sunday, October 4th.....11am-1pm
 Tuesday, October 6th.....11am-1pm
 Sunday, October 11th.....11am-1pm

Eastside Store:

Thursday, October 1st.....5:30-7:30pm
 Sunday, October 4th.....5:30-7:30pm

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Blue Heron Bakery

Natural Before it was Fashionable

By **Marie Poland**, Staff Member

Small bakeries across America are facing the enormous challenge of trying to survive and diversify in a changing culture where local community businesses are getting squeezed out by giant corporate models. Even progressive Olympia is not immune to this corporate viral takeover where giants like Starbucks and chains like Panera inhabit the West Side.

Thankfully there are still pioneers in our community like Evan Price, owner of the Blue Heron Bakery who for over 27 years has stayed true to local sustainable business practices. Blue Heron Bakery, now 37 years strong, has been a local cornerstone bakery at the Co-op and in the Olympia community, supporting organic and “natural before it was fashionable.”

Evan is dedicated to sourcing goods locally and to supporting the local economy in Olympia, reflecting one of the many ways his ethics have been integrated with his business practices since day one. Starting in 1984 as a theatre major at TESC, Evan began working at the collectively managed bakery co-op after graduating. Along with acting, he enjoyed cooking, politics and ecological agriculture. Preparing to become a father and unsure of his future, Evan stepped into the bakery as the “granola guy.” It was then that his interests coalesced and his heron wings began to take shape. Regardless of the bakery having back taxes owed to the IRS, Evan worked tenaciously to pay off the debt, thus revealing his responsible nature. The owner of the pottery studio next door saw this and entrusted him to make a more permanent nest by taking over the lease of the space on Mud Bay. This is the space where Blue Heron flew from for over 36 years, and currently where wholesale shipments still are nested.

With reverence, Evan refers to a time when the dough was hand mixed. Even with large electric mixers, the Heron is still very much a ‘human to product’ type of business. “As businesses get bigger, there is more automation and less ‘creator to consumer,’” he mused. In some cases with big bread companies, the only time humans are actually handling the bread is at the time of loading and unloading the bread trays.

Blue Heron Bakery uses primarily organic ingredients in all of their baking and food creations. This is quite an outstanding feat, especially when organic flour more than doubled in price when the recession hit. Regardless of price, Evan has been adamant on good quality ingredients and supporting the natural food movement. The flour used for baking is grown and harvested using a “no-till” method. Some consider this method “beyond organic” due to the special nature with which the grain is handled.

Shepherd’s Grain, the no-till wheat company where Blue Heron sources their flour, has farmers based out of Spokane, Washington. Their direct-seeding practice and crop rotation preclude the use of chemicals for pests. Shepherd’s Grain also assures that no GMO wheat is included in their flours, and you can find out more about the company’s sustainability practices at www.shepherdsgrain.com. “Beyond its ability to create a more natural soil that retains nutrients and water, prevents soil erosion,

and compacts less, the no-till technique offers a number of immediate financial advantages to the farmer.” *Mother Earth News* May/June 1984

Frances Moore Lappé said, “Every aspect of our lives is, in a sense, a vote for the kind of world we want to live in,” and the way in which Evan runs his business speaks beautifully of his dedication to this statement. In addition to his dedication to sourcing as local as possible with organic and high quality ingredients, keeping personal human connections is another way that has proven Blue Heron to be a supportive Olympia workplace. Evan spoke with fondness about the Herons (previous and current workers) that have explored other life opportunities, working there while also creating other ventures, be they artistic, business or otherwise.

Evan’s dedication and perseverance toward a people-centered business has continued to build an even more resilient nest in our community. This year saw the Blue Heron Bakery expansion, offering a newly remodeled bakery and café full with breakfast, lunch and dinner options! Not to mention, it likely has the coolest Open Mic Night in town.

No surprise, the new space is an artisan creation, designed in partnership with Dennis Lyon Design. Subtle touches not to miss include the original Blue Heron sign and cedar siding from the location on Mud Bay, Evan’s daughter’s first gift of art framed, as well as well-loved baking trays hand pounded into wall sconces.

Since great blue herons rarely venture far from bodies of water, the Bakery flew just a mile or so from its original roost on Mud Bay to the 4400 block of Harrison Ave on the Westside of Olympia, next door to Jay’s Farmstand and not far from Kaiser Road. The new bakery and deli location is open every day from 7am to 8pm.

Another incredible offering to our already wonderful community, the deli offers vegan, gluten free and meat options for eat in or take out. Breakfast items include a daily toast with an array of spreads made with the Bakery’s delicious daily baked bread and frittatas. Lunch features a house

Minestrone and soup of the day offering, as well as a variety of fresh and nutritious salads, like their sweet potato quinoa and cranberry salad. Dinner includes wood fired pizza, lasagna and a gluten free potato crusted chicken pot pie. Homemade ice cream is the newest of dessert offerings and has been the talk of the town throughout the hot dry summer we just had.

Along with the ice cream, an extensive daily baked treat menu using whole grain and natural sweeteners is still offered, including the famous Mud Bay bars, raw & gluten free ‘bee bee’ round treats, spelt chocolate chip and peanut butter cookies, and chocolate and blueberry turnovers.

Bread, coffee and cold drinks are still available, and there is a variety of grab & go salads for easy take out.

With the new location, the Blue Heron has become an even better community meet-up space. There is plenty of room to sit and read with a snack and a hot drink or meet a friend for a whole meal. Another new exciting feature of the expansion is an Open Mic Night, “Sunday Sounds” from 4-7:30pm. Evan mentions that the music really keeps him going. (He is a founding and continuing member of the band Mud Cat).

So if you find yourself with a hankering to support one of Olympia’s finest bakeries and deli that’s been a forerunner in the local and natural food movement, or if you simply want some good grub (& tunes), come check out the newly expanded Blue Heron Bakery! It is open everyday from 7am to 8pm. Located at 4419 Mud Bay Rd on Olympia’s Westside and on the web at: www.blueheronbakery.com. You can also find their products here at both Olympia Food Co-ops. (Also, look for their granola in co-ops and other natural food stores throughout Washington and Oregon.)

Here’s to celebrating the essence and uniqueness of Olympia, showing our support for a local business that sustains the natural foods movement, and simply enjoying some delicious fresh baked food! See you at the Open Mic on Sunday!



Evan Price, owner of Blue Heron Bakery.

photo by Marie Poland

LOCAL FARM TOUR

By Desdra Dawning, Co-op Member

photo by Desdra Dawning



Dean and Agnes at Wobbly Cart Farms.

On September 10th, Olympia Food Co-op offered a wonderful tour of two local Organically-Certified farms: Sunbreak Farm and Wobbly Cart Farm, both located in Rochester. These two farms supply a wide variety of organic produce for the Co-op. Two vans, from Intercity Transit, and a few private cars, caravanned to the farms on a delightfully warm yet not-too-hot, summer-edging-into-autumn day. Sixteen people participated in the event, bringing with them great enthusiasm for gardening and lots of good questions for the farmers.

At Sunbreak Farm, newly returned to the Co-op's Local Farm Program, we were met by Aaron Varadi, who single-handedly works his new farm. He began by explaining that having recently moved to this farm, he is now "domesticating pasture soil," through a variety of methods to enrich the soil for growing produce. Aaron showed us around the farm, stopping now and then to answer questions about crops growing and explain his work in organic seed production. His wife, Candy, creates fancy pickles from a variety of crops grown on their land, a treat offered to us at the end of the tour--pickled daikon with jalapeños and pickled beet-juice colored turnips, along with kale salad, and a

refreshing cucumber drink.

Although Sunbreak Farm grows a variety of fresh produce for the Co-op, Aaron is finding himself more and more drawn to exploring the production of organic seeds. He works with the Organic Seed Alliance--their mission being the ethical stewardship of seeds--to test different strains, looking for vitality and longevity. Veggies produced from these tests go to the Food Bank.

Wobbly Cart Farm, located on the banks of the Chehalis River, is actually a farm collective, with several farms working together to offer production and storage sites and to market a large variety of seasonal produce, both to sell through OFC and to their own Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. With 150 members, their CSA supplies regular fresh produce from June through October, with pick up stations at the farm itself, and also in Olympia, Lacey, Chehalis, Centralia and even as far south as Portland.

Joseph Gabiou, Aoha McElfresh (Farm Owners/Operators) and Addison Bowe (Marketing Director) met us at the 7 1/2 acre farm where most of the produce is grown. Started 11 years ago,



photo by Desdra Dawning

Treat table for tour participants at Wobbly Cart Farms.

Joseph told us that the farm now supports 8-10 full time employees. In addition to selling their excellent produce at the Co-op and CSA, Wobbly Cart also sells to a number of local restaurants.

A sumptuous spread was set up on a picnic table in this idyllic setting with treats from the farm--delicious yellow watermelon and slices of colorful heirloom tomatoes with a little sea salt for sprinkling--a most refreshing treat after walking the acreage on the farm! If any OFC members would like to order cases of heirloom tomatoes, green beans, pickling cucumbers or other in-season produce from the farm, please contact: Addison at info@olympiafood.coop.

OFC offers these farm tours periodically for its members. I highly recommend signing up for one of the tours! It is quite an education, discovering where our food comes from and meeting the wonderful farmers who make it all happen!



photo by Desdra Dawning

Farm Tour participants walk the grounds of Sunbreak Farm.

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INTERCITY TRANSIT

Elections 2015

Four candidates for the 2015 Board elections were received by the Sept 10 deadline. We realize that having 1 candidate per position is less than ideal. We strive

to always having contested elections although we don't have that this year, we are committed to running the election as prescribed by the bylaws article 3 section 4 which states "elections shall be held annually."

The Board is researching and gathering feedback on reasons for the current low interest in running for the Co-op Board, and we welcome your opinion. Let us know at ofcboard@olympiafood.coop any thoughts you might have on the state of board elections.

Candidates were asked to answer the following questions:

- 1 Why do you want to be on the Co-op Board of Directors?
- 2 What general abilities and skills would you bring to the Board?
- 3 What vision do you have for the Co-op?
- 4 What else would you like to share?



Eric Mapes

1 The Co-op plays an important role in the Olympia community, making good food more accessible, providing living-wage jobs, and promoting social justice. The Co-op's growth and prosperity over the last four decades demonstrates that a business model driven more by values than profit can succeed. I feel

fortunate to have the Co-op in my neighborhood and want to do my part to keep it both economically viable and true to the Mission Statement.

2 I am committed to our consensus-based process, and have the skills to participate effectively in it. Having served as an elected member of the Co-op Board from 2009 to 2012, and as an appointed member since February of this year, I have experience with the Board's process and understand the issues the Co-op currently faces. With a B.A. from the Evergreen State College and a J.D. from the University of Washington law school, I have developed

continued page 9



Marc Hartung

1 I want to be on the Co-op Board of Directors so that I may contribute to sustainable, and accessible, healthy food in my community. I am passionate about food and believe that it is the cornerstone of health. I am also passionate about social justice, open communication and collabora-

tive processes. I would like to help the Co-op continue to move forward as a leader in the community in providing healthy affordable food, and applying anti oppressive practices in an open and inclusive manner.

2 I am familiar with consensus decision making and non-violent communication and I am committed to continuing to examine my place in our community through an anti oppression model. I do not shy away from struggle or discomfort. I believe these qualities will serve my position on the board by allowing me to facilitate moving forward in addressing difficult issues with both

continued page 9



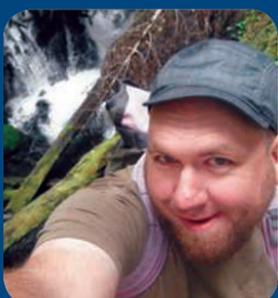
Sam Green

1 I want to serve on the Co-op's Board of Directors to ensure that the cooperative continues to effectively serve its members, empower its workers, and reach out to the greater Olympia community. The co-op is not only a great resource for food and groceries, but living proof that people

can use the cooperative model in an empowering and relevant way. I fully understand that our co-op's success is only possible because of the hard work of its volunteer members, staff collective, and board of directors. With this recognition, I am offering my time and my hard work to ensure that this great project we call the Oly Food Co-op continues to thrive.

2 I will bring years of experience in non-profit management, industry knowledge in cooperative development, and a solid understanding of community organizing to my work on the Board of Directors and for the overall Cooperative.

continued page 9



David Copley

1 Co-ops changed my life. Growing up a jaded, cynical kid, exposure to the cooperative model in my young adult years provided me with an opportunity to try to do something better than the status-quo for which I held such contempt. Some twenty or so years later, I have had the good fortune to work in a number of cooperative

organizations—from national retail chains, to tiny non-hierarchical collectives. Throughout my career, which has included a variety of positions in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, I have always strived to champion the values and ethics we built in the co-ops. While my current employment in as a bike-promoting, youth engaging, all around do-gooder is very rewarding, I miss co-ops. So just toss me a vote, why don't you, and together we can keep making this community of ours even better.

2 Well over a decade of retail experience, including approximately 7 years in cooperatives. I have worked in a variety of capacities in food cooperatives,

continued page 9

Current OFC bylaws allow only for member notification of the Annual Meeting and Board of Director elections through mailings via the U.S. Post Office. With the use of so much paper, and over 25,000 members to notify, these mailings are costly for both the environment and the Co-op. Electronic notification would greatly reduce these costs and allow the Co-op to become more paperless. However, this change in how OFC sends out these notifications requires a change in our Bylaws.

It is therefore proposed that the OFC Bylaws be amended to read:

An annual meeting of the membership shall be held each year. The place, day, and hour of the meeting shall be mailed to all active members, or sent by electronic mail to those active members who have consented to receive the notice electronically, at least 10, but not more than 50 days, prior to the meeting. To receive notice of the annual meeting electronically, members must submit a request in writing, either electronically or on a paper form available from the Cooperative, indicating their consent and designating the electronic mail address at which they wish to receive such notice. In addition, notice of the meeting shall be posted at the Cooperative at least 10 days prior to the annual meeting. The purpose of the annual meeting is to provide an opportunity for the Board and members to discuss the activities of the Cooperative. The Board shall establish the agenda for the annual meeting in a manner that allows for members to propose agenda. (Article II Section 6 of the Olympia Food Co-op Bylaws.)

Request to go paperless will also be included on the OFC Membership form.

THE BALLOT

Board of Directors

2016 2-year term



please CHECK your preference

(vote for FOUR candidates)

- Eric Mapes
- Marc Hartung
- Sam Green
- David Copley

Shall the proposed change to bylaws be adopted? YES NO



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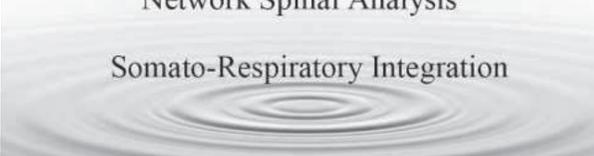
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Visit Farmsforever.org for more information and to purchase your tickets today.

Co-op Exchange with CECOSOLA!

By **Emily VanKley**, Staff Member

We are excited to announce that 4 companeros from CECOSOLA will be visiting Olympia this October, starting the 17th for 5 weeks! Visas have been received, plane tickets have been purchased, and we can expect to first meet our fellow cooperators at the Annual Meeting!

The exchange has been planned by CO-SOUND, a committee which includes Board & staff of the Olympia Food Co-op, as well as representatives from the Northwest Cooperative Development Center, the Northwest Construction Co-op, The Flaming Eggplant, The New Moon Cafe, and Evergreen. Most of the money to support the exchange has been raised through fundraising events, an Indigo campaign, a grant from Evergreen, and contributions from the participating co-ops.

This year the companeros will each spend time primarily with one organization at a time, possibly in teams of two, volunteering about 3 days per week at their home organizations, though they will all be introduced to each participating co-op, and will also plan to spend time with several local and regional organizations such as CIELO, the Food Bank, El Centro de la Raza, and more.

Please join us at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 17, from 11am-2pm, at the Olympia Community Center, in downtown Olympia at 222 Columbia St., to greet our neighbors from the South! This is your chance to welcome them to our city and our cooperative experience!

Member Voting Procedure

- 1** Write your name and address on one of the envelopes provided at either store.
- 2** Fill out a ballot and put it in the envelope.
- 3** Seal the envelope and drop it in the ballot box.

Only ballots in envelopes with members' names will be counted. Each member may vote at either store but not both. Elections will be held from October 15 through November 15. The election period ends November 15 at closing time.

Ballot Counting Procedure:

The election coordinators will check to make sure the name on the envelope matches an active member's on the membership list. To ensure voter confidentiality, all valid ballots will be removed from their envelopes and placed in a "Valid Ballot Box" to be counted later. Election results will be posted as soon as possible and no later than November 22.



(BALLOT ON REVERSE SIDE)

Board of Director Apps continued from page 7

Eric Mapes

strong written and oral communication skills. I am a licensed attorney and spent more than two years doing legal research and writing at the state Court of Appeals, so I have a good understanding of Washington law. I also spent about five years living and teaching in Japan, an experience that helped me appreciate the difficulties visible minorities face here.

3 I see the Co-op not only as a welcoming place for all people to access good food, but as a force for positive change in Olympia and the world. In terms of specific goals for the near future, I see the Co-op developing a workable, financially sound plan to expand our retail and warehouse space, investing in alternative energy systems to power our operations, and implementing a system to foster increased member input and involvement. I would also like the Co-op to revisit the issue of selling locally-produced beer and wine: I believe we can meet member demand for these products, strengthen our business, and support local producers in a way that both respects the needs of people suffering from alcohol addiction and preserves our working-member cashier system.

4 After I moved to Olympia in 1994, I worked as a cheese packager at the Westside store for many years. The Co-op both nourished me and inspired me to imagine a better world--the working member discount allowed me to enjoy a quality of life I could not otherwise have afforded, and seeing the Co-op function inspired me to think critically about the injustice in our economic system. I will always be grateful. I humbly thank you for allowing me to serve as a director of this amazing organization, and would be honored to have your vote again.

Marc Hartung

self and community awareness. I have experience working in logistics and I am skilled at seeing things from many different perspectives, asking a lot of questions, and working towards efficient solutions where necessary. I am insatiably curious and always eager to learn and contribute.

3 I envision the Co-op growing and evolving with the needs of the community as it pertains to maintaining or increasing access to food as well as increasing awareness within our community of discrimination and oppression that continue to permeate our culture. I believe that the board of directors exists to ensure that the Co-op remains a safe place that exists primarily to serve the whole community as well as its employees.

4 I graduated from The Evergreen State college with a BS emphasizing pre-medical studies, medical sociology and ethics. I have two children and I love getting out into the wilderness with them to foster their love and stewardship of our earth. I currently work part time as a care-taker, and volunteer at the Olympia Free Clinic while pursuing a career in healthcare.

Sam Green

As a union organizer, I learned the importance of bringing people together, addressing the needs of our economic lives, and looking to our principles for guidance. Later, as a chief administrative officer for a labor union, I learned the skills of financial stewardship, accountable communication, membership engagement, strategic planning, and project management. These experiences will play directly into my ability to serve on the board as a resource and as a cooperator. Most recently, I oversee the finances for a small local building company, and work part time as a cooperative development specialist with a non-profit, here in Olympia. These experiences have offered me the ability to hone my financial management skills and dig deeper into how cooperatives succeed and flourish.

3 I envision the Olympia Food Cooperative as an engine for not only meeting our community's need of food, but for providing great jobs and connecting us with great farmers. Further, I want to see the cooperative as a resource for new cooperative endeavors and small-scale, added-value food projects. I want our co-op to be a model of how consumer cooperatives may financially succeed while sticking to their principles and fulfilling their mission.

4 I am really excited to see how our Co-op grows and changes in the coming few years. Being born and raised in greater Oly, I have always admired the way the Food Co-op overcame challenges to emerge stronger. It is my hope that whoever is elected to the board will embrace these exciting times, navigate the unforeseen challenges, and keep our cooperative committed to its mission.

David Copley

doing everything from writing the paychecks to scraping the raisins off the floor. Extensive professional program management experience (about 10 years), with a focus of cooperative, volunteer-based workforces. I know how to keep a group productive and inclusive while having a good time. Public engagement --I am a confident, engaging speaker and active listener. Experience leading/supporting effective and inclusive meetings. I am a big idea person. I love to creatively envision, and have enough knowledge and experience to produce ideas that are achievable and relevant. My tofu salad is pretty bad-ass. Just sayin'.

3 I think the Olympia Food Co-op is doing pretty damn well as it is. My vision will come after I have had the opportunity to hear the interests and concerns of staff, volunteers, and patrons which make up our happy little community.

4 Edward Abbey once said, "Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul." If you are reading this, you obviously give a damn. So do I. Let's keep making things better . . . together. I promise I am not as pretentious as my verbiage may imply. I am a pragmatist at heart and will get things done!

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The Annual Meeting for the Olympia Food Co-op

**WILL BE HELD THIS YEAR ON OCTOBER 17 AT THE OLYMPIA COMMUNITY CENTER
222 COLUMBUS ST. NW, IN DOWNTOWN OLYMPIA, FROM 11:00 AM TO 2:00 PM**

By **Desdra Dawning**, Co-op Member

A lunch buffet will be catered by two wonderful local food truck restaurants: Arepa, offering delicious Latin cuisine from Venezuela, and Nineveh with its unique Assyrian fare.

In addition to annual committee reports from the Board of Directors, we will also be graced with a panel of folks from the Cecosola Cooperative who will just have arrived in Olympia from Venezuela. They will be getting a warm welcome from our members and at the same time will be accepting questions from the audience about their own cooperative organization, which employs over 20,000 people.

The candidates for the Board election will have the opportunity to take

the mic and introduce themselves to the members. A proposed By Laws change will be included on the ballot. Ballots will be available at the meeting for anyone ready to cast their vote.

Children are welcome and will have a space to gather and play during the meeting and we may even have a clown join us!

This meeting is a good chance for members of OFC to get the latest news on Co-op business, meet up with old friends, share some scrumptious food, meet Board candidates, ask questions of the current Board, and learn about how the folks in Venezuela manage to run such a huge, successful cooperative business in their country.

***Please put this date on your calendar.* THIS IS YOUR CO-OP. Your participation is what helps to invigorate and enliven it!**

Rounding Up Pays Dividends!

By **Keith Dublanica**, Co-op Member

**Community Sustaining Fund
Autumn 2015 Grant Cycle
October 2 through November 13
Decisions Made November 21!!**

The Community Sustaining Fund provides grant support for progressive, community-oriented projects in Thurston County aimed at creating and sustaining a democratic, just, nonviolent, and ecologically sound society. CSF supports groups and individuals that are actively working to educate and involve this community in challenging and correcting the social, environmental and economic inequities around us. CSF is a completely volunteer-run organization. Our leadership group is committed to the principles of consensus-based decision-making, cultural diversity and sustainability.

Please remember to “round-up” at the cash register when you shop at the Olympia Food Co-op. Be part of an innovative and unique community investment process that has lasted more than a generation – now that’s sustainability! Thank you!

The Community Sustaining Fund continues to support many deserving causes in Thurston County with “seed money” for creative and innovative ideas that need that extra helping hand. Funding decisions are made in an open and transparent fashion, and by consensus. This is done with change collected from rounding-up purchases at the Olympia Food Co-op registers when checking out. In addition, we collect donations and host fundraisers along with our friends and allies in our wonderful part of the Pacific Northwest. The CSF appreciates Dick Meyer and Traditions for graciously hosting a “Shop Your Heart Out” event this past Valentine’s Day. Dick generously donated 10% of Traditions’ sales from February 14. These proceeds went towards the spring 2015 grant cycles.

Twice a year, spring and fall, the CSF advertises the grant application cycle and that is upon us again at this time. We are soliciting you, your neighbors, colleagues and coworkers to submit an application....OR a donation! This grant cycle follows the very successful TedX Point of No Return event held at the Washington Center on September 12th. The CSF is proud to have supported this event with a grant and we are providing a table in the Washington Center lobby. This access and visibility, among a crowd of 800+ registered attendees, offers us another opportunity to meet with the community and to further spread the word about our phenomenal organization.

In addition to the TedX Point of No Return program, the CSF supported a number of efforts brought to our attention last May. Arbutus Folk School received support for a kiln; Vets for Peace was awarded a grant for counseling assistance; community bee hives were funded to increase pollination on the west side of Olympia; a traveling social forum was offered resources; the Kiwanis Club received a grant for garden tools; Pizza Klatch garnered funding for volunteer training; an African Diaspora cultural event was supported, and finally, Power Parenting at the Hands On Children’s Museum benefitted from the \$3,100.00 the CSF distributed in support of our community.

Thank you for supporting the Community Sustaining Fund. For more information, please visit our website: www.communitysustainingfund.net

Fall 2015 Grant Dates:

Oct. 2: Grant Release

Nov 13: Grant Deadline

Nov 16: Grants Committee Mtg

Nov 21: Grants Interviews



MEMBERSHIP CHANGES FOR 2015

Some Frequently Asked Questions

By **Maureen Tobin**, Membership Coordinator

The Co-op has implemented a change in the way we maintain our membership database and we have begun the process of replacing membership cards with the new, numbered design. As expected, we've started out with some smooth sailing, some rocky waters, some folks happy with the change and some feeling like they might be on a sinking ship. We hear you! The Staff and Board are working to figure out solutions to problems and to address concerns brought up by members. These are some of the answers we have now, and we will work to come up with more as time goes on.

What is going on exactly?

The Co-op uses a computer system called "Catapult" to perform all of our sales and register (point of sale, or POS) functions. Catapult is the most widely-used POS and membership system among food co-ops today. Our membership database was integrated into the POS system, after 2 years of research and consideration of the best way to address problems in our membership tracking system and the need for new software. This change enables us to assign membership numbers and new cards, to apply discounts automatically, to verify membership without carrying a card, and to accurately track member dues, to name a few benefits of the change.

Three weeks after "going live" at the registers with the new database, we have already replaced 6000 cards and have discovered mistakes on hundreds of records we are working to fix. The huge number of member records with incorrect information, or members missing from our records entirely, shows one of the reasons we found our old system so problematic and why we became interested in changing our system in the first place.

Why would we want new plastic cards?

First off, the new cards are made of Teslin, a waterproof synthetic printing medium that is a better choice than PVC in that it requires less energy to create, produces water, carbon dioxide and ash when incinerated, and is supposed to be nontoxic and recyclable. I say supposed to be because recycling depends on facilities existing, and we have to trust the manufacturer on toxicity, but the material is known to be durable and work well for ID cards, and has been used by many co-ops and stores around the country.

Second, while the old system of flashing paper cards or saying a color worked for many, the lack of security and inability to quickly verify membership has led to thousands of inaccurate member records and a general sense of inequality and difficulty at the register. The Co-op's bylaws are very specific as to how to define active members and our old system made it difficult for the organization or its members to hold true to those definitions.

If I have been a member forever, why was I not easily found in the new database?

In our first attempt to create a new version of our database, we imported mostly 'active' member records, or those that showed in our system as current on dues or low income renewal and contained an accurate mailing address. Many members who actively shop in our stores did not show up as active, often due to address inaccuracy or mistakes or delays in annual renewals. Once we discover these mistakes, we can get former members into the new system within a week or two.

What about member privacy? Does this mean the Co-op will start marketing to me based on what I buy?

Member privacy has been at the center of many Staff and Board discussions as we considered this change. No one in our organization is interested in selling or sharing member information today any more than last month or last year. We have agreed that "The Co-op will not share, sell, lease or provide your personal information to any outside entity without your express permission. Our organizational mission statement and values will be our guide in all marketing efforts, as well as the need to maintain confidentiality and respectful relationships in all that we do." For the full privacy statement, please see the membership form or our website.

What if I don't want a new card?

We have received feedback that some members do not want to switch to a new card, and while we have not consented to a policy regarding this, we hope to have considered this issue and consented to a policy regarding old cards before August 2016. Thank you for your patience through this process.

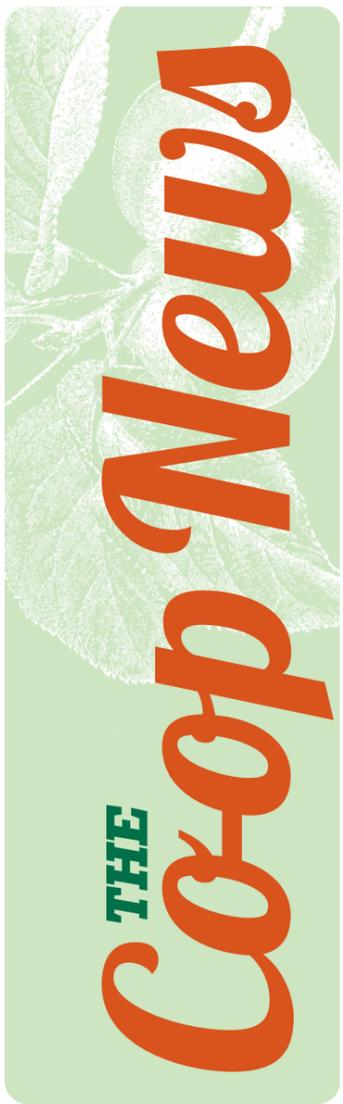
We are gathering further feedback on member concerns. Please let us know what you think, at customerservice@olympiafood.coop, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks to all the members who have been patient with us as we plod through this change. We have estimated that we have about 27,000 active members, and are excited to see a new count as we update all these records from our wonderfully dedicated Co-op members! More to come in next issue of the Co-op News.



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OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2015

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KID'S CORNER

Last "What is it?" was: **Figs**

Congrats to last issue's winners: **Annika, 5; Artemis, 6; Ayla, 11; Cecilia, 7; Elle, 9; Freya, 8; Haiaff, 9; Helen, 10; Isha, 11; Jasper, 8; Kaya, 10; Liam, 8; Lydia, 8; Numi, 9; Robert, 6; Rowan, 10; Ruby, 8 1/2; Sienna, 6; Taydee, 8; Tobin, 7**

If you're 10 or under, guess what is in this photo. Fill out the form and put it in the *What is it?* box in the Co-op office, or hand it to a Staff person, by the deadline. Enter once per issue. Guess correctly, and you'll win a \$1.00 gift certificate to spend at the Co-op!

What is it?

Deadline: November 1st, 2014

Name _____

Age _____

Guess _____

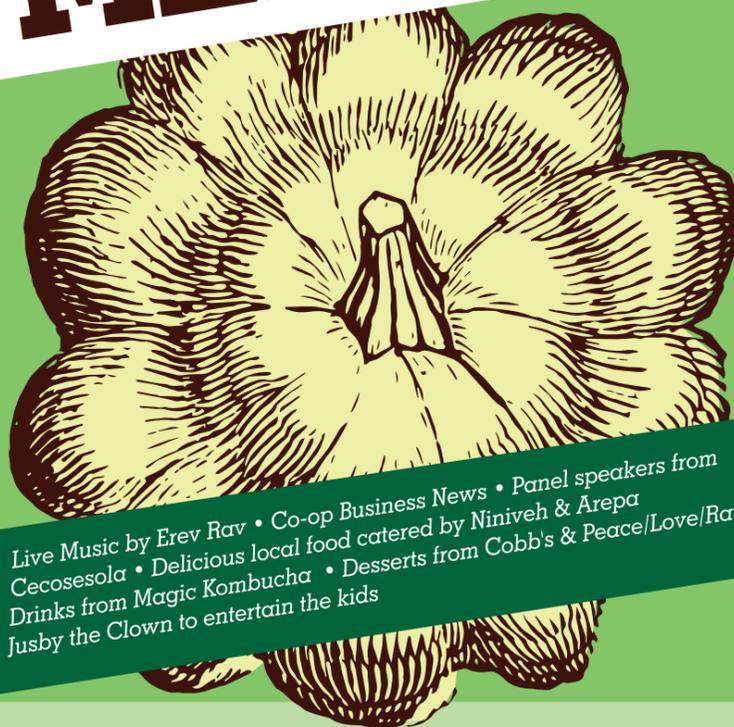
Please pick up your gift certificate at the store where you dropped off your entry.

What is it?



Join Us!

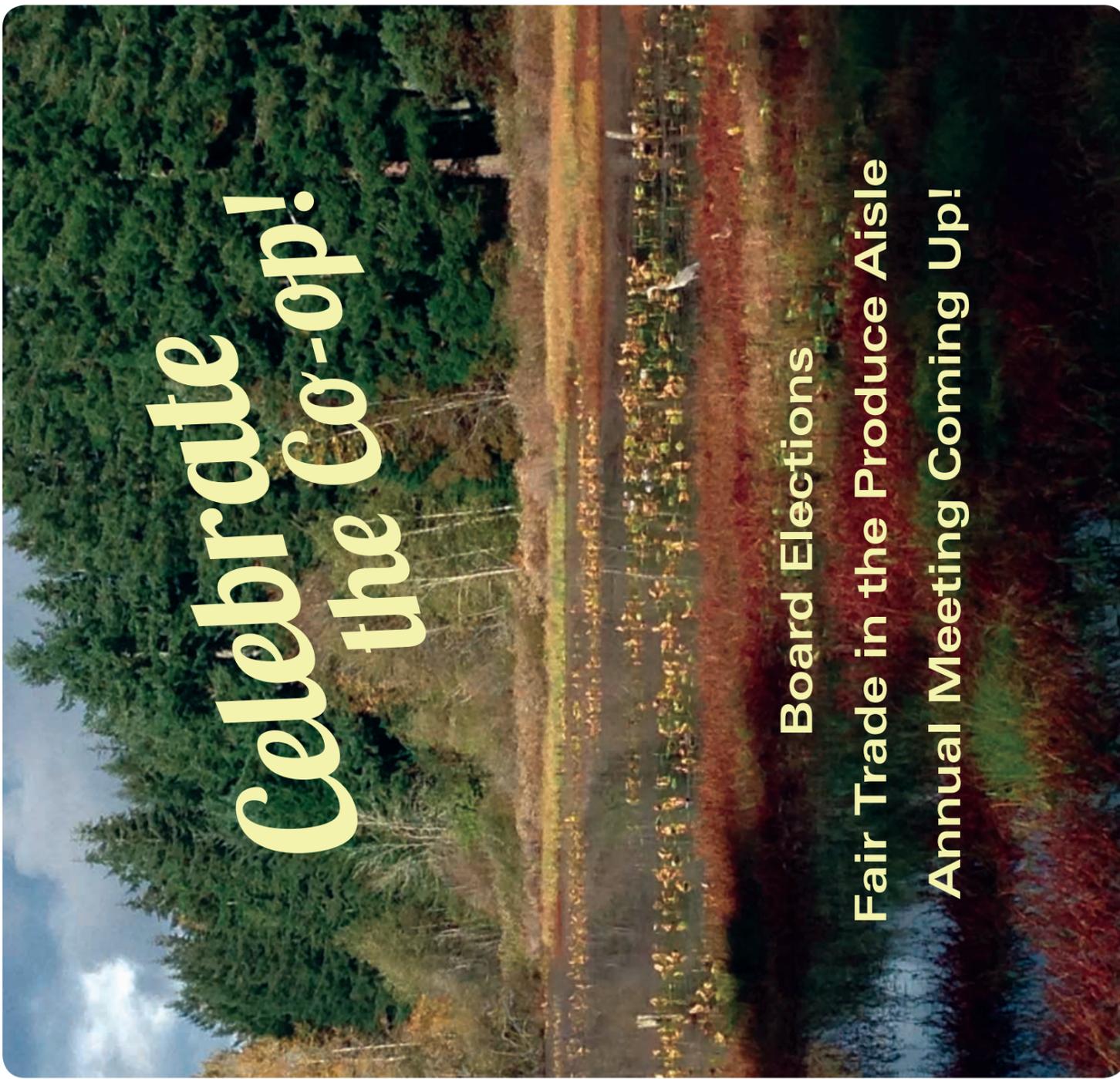
ANNUAL MEETING



Live Music by Erev Rav • Co-op Business News • Panel speakers from Cecosesola • Delicious local food catered by Niniveh & Arepa
Drinks from Magic Kombucha • Desserts from Cobb's & Peace/Love/Raw
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 11AM-2PM

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Celebrate the Co-op!

Board Elections
Fair Trade in the Produce Aisle
Annual Meeting Coming Up!