It’s easy to sink into political depression these days. The news is bad, from the on-going war against Iraq to the horrible blundering of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort, with all of its racist and classist implications. In downtown Managua, Nicaragua, dying banana workers are living in a tent city, under black plastic held up by sticks. Poisoned by Nemagon, a U.S.-manufactured pesticide used on non-organic banana trees, the workers are begging their own government for assistance for themselves and their families. Meanwhile, the U.S. government passes the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement, which will limit the banana workers’ rights even further, including taking away their right to sue the U.S. corporation that poisoned them.

It’s clear that the governments aren’t going to fix these problems, at least not in the short run. People-to-people efforts are our best hope. As consumers in the world’s largest market, we have the ability to improve the health and well-being of our fellow workers throughout the world. By choosing to honor boycotts & buy-cotts (such as buying Cligo gas—which wholly owned by the Venezuelan government and therefore not contributing to the greed and blood-thirst of the U.S. oil corporations) and buying fairly traded products when possible, we can use our dollars more wisely.

Opportunities to purchase fairly traded products here in Olympia have grown significantly in recent years. Downtown, The Old Bakery coffee shop brews only fairly traded coffee beans. The coffee shop is located just off the corner of 4th and Washington, in the first floor of the Security Building. The coffee they serve is roasted by Full Circle/Olympia Coffee Company, and several of their roasts are available at the Co-op.

Batdorf & Bronson, long committed to improving conditions for coffee producers through the Coffee Kids program as well as by paying a fair price, have recently certified some products with TransFair, the major U.S. fair trade certifying agency. These beans are now available at B&G outlets as well as the Food Co-op.

The Oly Food Co-op has maintained its commitment to fair trade coffee for years. In 2003, I had the privilege of traveling with Equal Exchange to Coyona, Peru. Equal Exchange is the largest U.S. importer of fairly traded coffee from around the world. A worker-owned cooperative, Equal Exchange works with cooperative coffee exporters who in turn work with base level producer co-ops.

Coyona is a tiny town high in the mountains of northern Peru. All the residents of the community grow coffee, and all are members of the Coyona Coffee Cooperative. Together they own a small depulping and drying facility as well as trucks to transport their coffee to the processing facility. Coyona Coffee Cooperative is a member of Cepacafe, the export co-op located in Piura, Peru. Check out our web site, www.olympiafoodcoop.org, for a slide show of my visit and more information.

Bananas, not only a great source of potassium, are now available fairly traded at both Co-op locations. Mangos and several new chocolate bars also have fair-trade certifications.

The most exciting news, however, comes from Traditions Fair Trade. There you can find t-shirts and sneakers you can feel good about purchasing. In the retro style of Converse All-Stars (now owned and produced by Nike in sweatshops around the world), these “No Sweat” shoes come complete with a comprehensive labor content disclosure form. Produced by members of the Confederation of Indonesian Employers’ Unions, Textile, Clothing & Leather, the shoes were introduced in 6 locations in the U.S., and Olympia was lucky to be one.

Workers who produce these shoes earn a base wage that is 20% above minimum wage, a significant rice allowance, and 100% coverage of medical expenses (80% for family members). They also receive allowances for accidents, burial, maternity, meals, work clothing and shoes, transportation, gratuities, pension, and 8 weeks pay for Ramadan. Originally available only in black low-top style, the shoes now come in several colors, including pink, thanks to a collaboration between No Sweat and Code Pink, the organization of women activists for peace in the 21st century.
TULIP Thanks Members for Support

By Darlene Morales, TULIP staff

W

e have had wonderful support from the many Co-op members who joined TULIP and use our services. This helps us tremendously as we struggle to grow your credit union.

We want to recognize some of those individuals who not only help us through their membership, but also through their donations and word-of-mouth referrals.

Patty Theo and Terry Hogan saw that we had a need for more filing space so they donated a large, four-drawer filing cabinet. I can’t tell you how helpful that was, since we have been wondering where we’ll file things as our two-drawer cabinet gets fuller and more difficult to manage. They also thought we could use a little facelift and donated some paint for our interior walls. Thank you to Patty and Terry for your thoughtful donation!

These little things get us so excited…

Jennifer also referred a friend to the credit union, who joined TULIP and took out a loan (it’s what we’re here for!). Thank you, Jennifer, for your support and for sharing TULIP with a friend.

Keri Fisher has supported TULIP as a member for quite a while. Recently, she started working for Consumer Credit Counseling Northwest, where we refer many of our members. Keri is also referring her clients back to us. In addition, she refers companies such as Pacific Mountain WorkSource, who have clients who benefit from TULIP’s services.

We are excited that we have Keri as a contact to these two companies as we build stronger working relationships with both of them for the mutual benefit of our members and their clients.

Thanks, Keri.

Credit Unions are all about “people helping people.” It’s nice to know that our own membership exemplifies that philosophy. Thanks to all of you for your on-going support of TULIP Cooperative Credit Union.

For information about membership, our services, and referring friends, visit our website at www.tulipcu.coop or give us a call at 360-519-2222. We look forward to hearing from you.
Co-op Center Fosters Growth of Movement

by Andrew McLeod, NWCoD Cooperative Development Specialist (former Food Co-op Staff Member)

Olympia is one of the United States’ hotbeds of cooperative activity. It boasts a food co-op with an unusually high per-capita membership rate and such a high level of familiarity that it is commonly known as “the Co-op.” There are also a variety of other cooperatives in the community, including housing co-ops, like the Black Walnut Association, and worker co-ops, like Beulsa Software.

In addition to this local activity, Olympia is home to the Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCoD), a technical assistance resource for new and existing co-ops. While not widely known in the community, NWCoD has been located near the Capitol Campus since 2000. Originally founded in 1979 as the Seattle-based Puget Sound Development Foundation, NWCoD assists a diversity of organizations in fields ranging from agricultural production and parent education to renewable energy and technology.

NWCoD is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to assist the development of cooperative businesses in the Pacific Northwest. Services include strategic planning, board and member training, partnership building, feasibility studies, and business planning for aspiring cooperators in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, and Hawaii. In recent years, its budget has grown to more than $500,000, while its staff size has ballooned from two people to seven.

Cooperatives serve their members most economically. Members contribute equally to, and proportion to the business they conduct in, a cooperative. This benefits members in the following ways:

1. Economic Participation
   Members contribute equally to, and proportion to the business they conduct in, a cooperative. This benefits members in the following ways:

2. Democratic Member Control
   Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

3. Members’ Economic Participation
   Cooperative members contribute to and retain control of the cooperative. This benefits members in the following ways:

4. Autonomy and Independence
   Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with, or raises capital from, external organizations, its autonomy is not thereby compromised.

5. Education, Training and Information
   Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
   Cooperatives serve their members most economically and effectively through sharing of financial resources. They may also provide capital assistance.

7. Concern for Community
   Cooperatives consider their relationship with local, national, regional and international communities.

Co-op Websites of Interest

- Northwest Cooperative Development Center www.nwcdc.coop
- Community Cooperative Forum www.southsoundcoops.org
- Cooperation Worksho  http://www.ncba.coop/serv_cbd_cw.cfm
- Food Coop 500 www.foodcoop500.coop
- National Cooperative Bank www.ncb.coop
- Cooperative Development Services www.cdsfood.coop
- National Cooperative Grocers Association www.ncga.coop

Seven Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
   Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control
   Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by the members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members’ Economic Participation
   Members contribute to and retain control of the cooperative. This benefits members in the following ways:

4. Autonomy and Independence
   Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with, or raises capital from, external organizations, its autonomy is not thereby compromised.

5. Education, Training and Information
   Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
   Cooperatives serve their members most economically and effectively through sharing of financial resources. They may also provide capital assistance.

7. Concern for Community
   Cooperatives consider their relationship with local, national, regional and international communities.
A Growing We Will Go….

by Harry Levine, Staff Representative to the Board of Directors

The Olympia Food Co-op has been growing since 1994 (the year we opened the Eastside store). Sales were $2.4 million in 1993 at just the Westside store and will top $8 million between the two stores in 2005 (roughly 65% East and 35% West). Sometimes the growth is steady and at other times, it’s frenetic (see chart).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Growth Over Previous Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (estimates)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We responded to similar growth in the late 1980’s and early 90’s. We conducted a growth process that culminated with the membership deciding by an overwhelming majority to open the Eastside store. The goal was to accommodate the growth, make it easier for members who didn’t live on the west side of town to get to the Co-op, and to cut sales at the Westside store by at least 25% to make it easier to shop and work.

The Eastside store is exactly twice the size of the Westside store. Eleven years ago, we doubled our space, yet during that time, we have more than tripled our sales. Once upon a time, the Eastside store seemed huge with ample parking. Four cashiering lanes seemed more than enough, and the aisles seemed spacious. At both stores, we have run out of parking space, shelf space, shopping space, office space, warehouse space, and meeting space.

As in 1991, we need to make decisions about how to respond to and plan for growth. At the Board planning retreat this past August, we decided to embark on a thorough and inclusive process that will culminate in choosing a path for the future. This path might mean expansion. Or it might mean seeking alternatives to expanding; as expansion is not the only response to growth.

The Growth Process

The simply stated question we seek to answer boils down to:

Will the Co-op expand? If yes, how? If no, why?

In order to answer this question, we are creating The Growth Response Oversight Committee (GROC). The general goals for the committee are to:

- Solicit input from the Co-op community about response and planning for growth
- Assess current space needs and project future needs
- Identify options for expansion and for non-expansion response to growth
- Research and assess feasibility of all identified options
- Actively inform the membership of all elements regarding process around growth and expansion
- Present an advisory ballot to the membership on the options

Using this process, the Board will chart the future for the Co-op and will begin implementation of whatever option/s are chosen.

The Growth Response Oversight Committee (GROC)

The Membership of the GROC will consist of nine people:

Up to 3 Board Members (chosen by the Board)
Up to 3 Staff Members (chosen by the Staff)
Up to 3 General Members of the Co-op (members chosen by the membership)

The general members will submit applications to the Board by October 26, 2005, and the Board will select applicants at the October 27, 2005 Board meeting.

The Board and Staff will choose their representatives to GROC by October 1, 2005. There will be a preliminary organizational meeting held in October with the Committee commencing officially at full strength.

The purpose of the GROC is to implement the work plan (see next section). It will be up to the GROC to do and/or delegate this work as it determines.

GROC will be coordinated by 1-2 of the Staff representatives. The job of the GROC Coordinators shall be:

- Ensure that communication between GROC and the membership, the staff collective, and the board is up to date, accessible, and formatted consistently
- Facilitate and document the steps of the work plan as needed
- Assist in the content of the work as needed
- Monitor the overall budget and time line
- Insure that the process is being followed
- Coordinate on-going staff and board evaluation of the work plan
- Work to make the process inclusive and accessible

The GROC Work Plan

The following work plan identifies general goal areas and many of the specific tasks to be carried out. The goal is to complete this work within nine months (June 2006) and no later than September 1, 2006. The first goal of the GROC will be to:

- Review the general work plan and make suggested changes as needed to the Board
- Set deadlines and assign responsibility for all designated tasks. Propose timeline to the Board by December 2005 meeting.
- Review goals and tasks and propose an operating budget to the Board to carry out work to completion. Propose budget by December 2005 meeting.

Goal 1

Assess Current Space Needs and Project Future Space Needs

a) Compile all financial info pertaining to growth, transactions, inventory turns, growth over the years (before and after expansion), and project growth numbers for the next 5 to 10 years.
b) Survey Department Managers at both stores regarding current and projected needs for display and storage
c) Perform parking assessment at both stores
d) Research ways to incorporate alternative transit options at both stores
e) Assess potential impact of immediate increase of store hours and recommended changes as needed
f) Conduct customer/member survey assessing space and shopping needs
g) Conduct an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) assessment for both stores
h) Conduct an environmental assessment for both stores

Goal 2

Gather Input about Response to Sales Growth

a) Solicit feedback from members regarding their needs and wishes for the future of the Co-op as relates to growth. Do this through surveys, forums (meetings and electronic), etc.
b) Solicit feedback from Board and all Board Committees, Staff, and Volunteer Working Members regarding response to growth
c) Solicit feedback from other businesses with similar mission and goals to the Co-op regarding their vision for their future and the Co-op’s future
d) Solicit feedback from non-profit organizations with similar mission and goals to the Co-op regarding their vision for their future and the Co-op’s future
e) Solicit feedback from Neighborhood Associations and local educational institutions continued on page 6
Volunteer Events

October-November 2005

Be a hands-on member in your store! Volunteer as a cashier, stocker, cleaner and more. Attend a Volunteer Intro Tour (V.I.T.). Come tour the store and learn about volunteer opportunities at the Co-op. If you are interested in volunteering, please attend this 1/2 hour orientation.

Cleaning Parties happen several times per month at each store. They’re a great way to volunteer three hours of time and get to know your Co-op. Help us get the stores looking spic & span. Come help us scrub, wipe, wash, polish and clean the stores after they’re closed. Snacks will be provided for all cleaning parties, and you are encouraged to bring music you’d like to listen to.

Mark Your Calendars! The next Working Member Party will be Saturday, January 28th, 2006. The Co-op invites everyone who has contributed their time during 2005 to get together for food and fun. We can’t wait to celebrate you and all the hard work you donate to your Co-op.

Volunteer Profile: John Fuller

by Tatiana Boland, Staff Member

If you have ever been to the Westside Co-op on Tuesday or Friday mornings, you may have met John Fuller cashiering at the third register. John is bright and likes to joke and is dedicated to his weekly cashier shifts. He has been in a wheelchair since a car accident in 1977 which has also affected his motor functions.

John has worked as an extra cashier at the Co-op since March 2004 and has developed regular customers. He says this makes him feel good and he thinks of them as more than just customers; they are friends.

Through his involvement with the Co-op, John has been recognized in other places by Co-op shoppers. He has been able to meet people he wouldn't have known otherwise, building his community.

John has had support from Morningside, an organization that helps place workers in positions that meet their abilities. He is now working with Community Resources, another local organization, while volunteering at the Co-op. His support people, Sara and Mac, have also been trained in cashiering in order to help John if he should need it.

John says the most challenging part of cashiering for him is “handling the money due to (my) limitations.”

I asked John what he hoped to gain from working at the Co-op. He said he wanted “people to notice I’m able to do a lot of things with my disability.”

Thanks for all your hours of volunteering, John. The Co-op wouldn't be the same without you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 October</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Westside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Westside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1 November</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Westside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Eastside Bulk Clean Party, 8:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Westside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Eastside V.I.T., 6:10pm</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about volunteering at the Co-op, please contact Amanda or Eunsil at the Eastside store, (360) 956-3870 or Tatiana or Bec at the Westside store, (360) 754-7666. Or stop by either store to get more information, fill out a volunteer application, or sign up for an upcoming event.
Growth  continued from page 4

tions regarding their vision for the future as pertains to
the Co-op
f) Survey non-members (prospective members) of the Co-
op regarding their needs
g) Survey Co-op local vendors, distributors, and delivery
personnel regarding their vision of the future as pertains to
the Co-op

Goal 3

Research Trends that Could Affect Growth and Expansion
a) Investigate economic and growth predictions and trends
for Thurston County
b) Perform real estate assessment for Thurston County
c) Research basic information comparing greening building/remodeling to conventional building/remodeling
d) Meet with City of Olympia to assess their development and planning process as to how it could relate to Co-op expansion

Goal 4

Identify Expansion and Non-expansion Options for Response to Growth and Assess Feasibility
a) Solicit ideas and provide information and options for
growth response from the Co-op community and the
community at large through surveys, forums, the Co-op News, on line communication, tabling at Co-ops, etc.
b) Organize the input into delineated feasible options
c) With Finance Committee, assess financial impact and
feasibility of each option
d) For each option, assess impact on Staff, other interest
groups at Co-op, and cohesiveness with the Co-op Mis-

Goal 5

Implementation
a) Propose implementation process to the Board for each
option on the advisory ballot

Conclusion

The Board is very aware that pressures brought by growth
have been building for some time. We wish to acknowledge
all the hard work going into restructuring the Staff as it
continually adjusts to all the changes and growth brought
on by previous expansion. The Staff will be deeply immersed
in its restructuring efforts for the next year. We also acknow-
ledge the importance of the Co-op in our community and
how it affects all who work and shop there.

We all want an answer for the future of our Co-op. The
Board wants to develop this answer in a mindful and
thorough manner. We want the process to be welcoming,
transparent, accessible, and inclusive. We appreciate all
participation.

Fair Trade  continued from page 1

committed to promoting peace and ending
global corporate dominance.

This summer I had the opportunity to visit
the Women’s Sewing Cooperative of Nueva
Vida, outside Managua, Nicaragua. Nueva
Vida was established as a refugee com-
unity after Hurricane Mitch devastated
Nicaragua in 1998. While aid money pored
into Nueva Vida to provide emergency
intervention, funding for sustainable eco-
nomic development was not available. The
intentional community known as Jubilee
House asked Nueva Vida residents what
they needed most. The answer came clearly:
we need sustainable employment.

At about the same time, Mike Woodard
of Jubilee House and Bela Bursa (owner
of Maggie’s Organics) met by chance at a
conference on organics. Originally commit-
ted to producing clothing exclusively inside
borders of the U.S., Maggie’s Organics
had lost several suppliers to bankruptcy.
Additionally, they were increasingly aware
that immigrant women, under conditions of
indentured servitude, produce much U.S.-
made clothing in domestic sweatshops.
Still, they were reluctant to move produc-
tion offshore. When Bela asked Mike about
his work in Nicaragua, she heard of the
great need for sustainable employment in
Nueva Vida. She asked, “Does anyone there
sweat?” Mike responded that some 40,000
Nicaraguans work in the textile industry in
sweatshops in the free trade zones. Thus,
collaboration was born.

Jubilee House had identified worker-owned
cooperatives as a viable means to achieve
economic sustainability. When Mike re-
turned to Nueva Vida, he met with a group
of women to discuss Bela’s proposal. The
women were excited, yet unsure they could
overcome the obstacles before them. First,
they would need a building. Intimidated
by the project, the women spent a week
deciding whether or not to proceed. But
once the decision was made, the women
of the cooperative dedicated themselves to
the construction project. They cleared the
land, placed the supports, built the walls
with concrete block, and installed windows,
doors, and the traditional corrugated tin
roof. Once the machines were installed, the
women of Nueva Vida Women’s Sewing
Cooperative knew they could realize their
dream of sustainable employment. “I cry
sometimes from happiness because of
the strength we have,” said Zulema Mena,
president of the Sewing Cooperative.

In 2004, the Nueva Vida Cooperative knew
they could realize their
status gives manufacturers a series of
tax breaks and access to lower import/ export fees. This status is generally given
to large multi-national corporations who
run sweatshops in the zones. Nueva Vida
is the first cooperatively owned enterprise
to receive free trade zone status. To read
more about Nueva Vida, check out their
web site at www.fairtradezone.jhc-cdca.
org. And now, the t-shirts they produce are
available right here in Olympia, Washington,
and we plan to use them for the next run of
Olympia Food Co-op shir
Proposed Amendments to the Co-op Bylaws

Some members have expressed concerns with regard to member governance at the co-op. In response to those concerns, the BOD created an Ad-Hoc (temporary) Bylaws Committee to look at improving democratic processes within the organization, as well as honing some aspects of the Bylaws that were already in existence. This process has taken nearly two years of Committee and BOD work, guided by membership input.

What follows are the ballot measures containing the proposed changes to the Bylaws. Only those sections of the Bylaws that contain proposed revisions are included here. The entire text of the current Bylaws can be found on our website www.olympiafood.coop, or in the organizational handbook located at the Eastside and Westside stores. This Guide uses Bill Change Format — underlined sections (like this) are the proposed additions/changes, and lines that have been struck out (like this) show proposed changes. Following each section you will find the reasoning behind the changes printed in bold letters (like this).

Proposed Bylaws Amendments

Ballot Measure #1
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section II.3. MEMBER STATUS An active member maintains a current address on file and keeps current in their dues. An active member becomes an inactive member if they:
A. fail to pay dues; or
B. fail to maintain a current address on file for one year; or
C. fail to renew a low income membership;
D. request inactive status.

This updates the Bylaws to make them current with our membership policies.

Ballot Measure #2
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section II.4. CAPITAL ACCOUNT Members shall pay dues into a capital account. The Board may set the amount of dues. Upon becoming an inactive member (inactive cooperative members may have all money they have paid into the capital account refunded unless the member's dues have been transferred from the capital account pursuant to paragraph II.5) we propose restating "Upon becoming an inactive member" to use language consistent with #5, Inactive Member Dues. We also want to add "unless the member's dues have been transferred from the capital account pursuant to paragraph II.5" to clarify to members that dues can be transferred to the Cooperative's account if not obtained upon leaving the Co-op. Currently, these unclaimed dues remain in the "Capital Fund" account ($373,237 as of 12/31/2004) long after members have left the Co-op. This change was recommended by auditors and financial consultants to the Co-op.

Ballot Measure #3
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section II.6. ANNUAL MEETING An annual meeting of the membership shall be held by October 31 of each year. The place, day, and hour of the meeting shall be mailed to all active members at least 10, but not more than 30, days prior to the meeting. 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 items.

We propose removing the October 31st deadline to allow the Board more flexibility. Next, we increased the minimum time to post notice of the annual meeting at the Co-ops from 72 hours to 10 days to give more people opportunity to hear about and plan for the meeting. We propose adding the last statement to give more clarity about membership’s ability to participate in developing the meeting agenda.

Ballot Measure #4
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

The following are all of the Bylaws changes related to the creation of a Member-Initiated Ballot.

Section II.7. MEMBER-INITIATED BALLOT Any member may initiate a ballot for vote by the general membership by following the Member-Initiated Ballot Procedure and Petition Requirements that are prescribed by the Board. All petitions for initiating a ballot must be signed by 1/2 of the average number of voting members from the previous three annual elections, or 300, whichever is greater. Unless otherwise specified by State law, a 60% majority is required for a member-initiated ballot to pass.

Section II.11. REMOVAL Any Director may be removed from the Board whenever the Board determines that such removal will be in the best interest of the Cooperative. Before a Director is removed, that Director shall be given reasonable prior notification and a reasonable opportunity to speak before the Board at a regular meeting. Removal shall require a consensus minus one vote of the Board. The membership may also remove a Director upon petition by 1/10 of the active members and a vote of 2/3 of those members voting. The membership may also remove a director through the member initiated ballot process.

Section III.1. VOTE NEEDED These Bylaws may be amended in one of three ways:
1. by a 2/3 vote of those active members voting at the annual meeting of the membership or
2. by a 2/3 vote of those active members voting at a special meeting of the membership called for the purpose of amending the Bylaws or
3. through a membership ballot called by the Board. Copies of the proposed bylaw changes shall be available at all locations of the Cooperative at least 30 days prior to the beginning of any vote to amend these Bylaws.

Section VIII. These Bylaws may be amended through a Board or member-initiated ballot that remains open for at least 30 days. Copies of the proposed Bylaw changes shall be available at all locations of the Cooperative at least 30 days prior to the beginning of any vote to amend these Bylaws.

There was no consensus reached at the Bylaws Committee or Board about whether the co-op should or should not have a member-initiated ballot. Instead, we decided members should make this decision. See Pro and Con statements, and a draft of a member-initiated ballot procedure (if voted in) in this voter guide.

Thank you.

October / November 2005

continued on page 8
Proposed Amendments  continued from page 7

Ballot Measure #5
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section II.10. SPECIAL MEETING. 5% of the active membership, 100 active members or 1/2 of the average of voting members from the previous three elections, whichever is greater, may petition for a special meeting of the membership to take place within 90 days from the filing of the petition with the Board. The petition shall state the business to be discussed at the special meeting and the meeting shall be limited to such business. The Board may also call special meetings. Notice of special meetings shall be mailed to all active members at least 10, but not more than 30 days prior to the time of the meeting. The notice shall contain the time, place, and agenda of the special meeting.

The current number of signatures needed to call a special meeting is 5% of the general membership, or approximately 700 people. This is more people than have voted in most elections at the Co-op and seems too high a number. We recommend using the same number required for the initiative process we propose in #4 above.

Ballot Measure #6
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section II.13. COMMUNICATION. Members shall maintain free-flowing communication with the Board, Staff, and other members.

This is an addition to be consistent with the Board and Staff sections. Members also have a responsibility in the communication flow at the Co-op.

Ballot Measure #7
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section III.10. REIMBURSEMENT. The Cooperative may, if authorized by a general Board resolution, reimburse individual Directors for reasonable expenses required to attend Board and committee meetings. To be eligible for reimbursement the Director must be present for the entire board meeting.

We propose adding compensation to Board members for reasonable expenses incurred in committee meetings as well as Board meetings. This is to support people in their commitment to and involvement in the Co-op.

Ballot Measure #8
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section III.1.2 B. Provide an annual report to the members to include a financial report, committee reports, and a summary of other significant events, held and actions taken by the Cooperative during the year.

We added this section to require provision of a consolidated annual report to keep members abreast of the Co-op's happenings.

Ballot Measure #9
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section IV.1D. Maintain accurate and up-to-date corporate records, articles, Bylaws, Board meeting minutes, membership meeting minutes, staff meeting minutes, and required reports; and make these documents accessible to members.

We are adding Staff meeting minutes to the records to be kept. Also an addition is to make all records accessible to members. These provisions, we believe, will help members be more informed in what is happening at the Co-op.

Ballot Measure #10
Shall the Bylaws be revised as follows?

Section V.2. AUDIT COMMITTEE. The Board shall name an audit committee or select an experienced accountant to conduct an audit every three (3) years. Members of the audit committee or the accountant may not be employees, or officers of the cooperative or their immediate families, Board members may be on the audit committee, but the committee may not be composed entirely of Board members. The audit committee or accountant shall report their findings to the Board in writing and in a timely fashion.

The proposed addition is to insure that an audit committee will be composed of other people besides just Board members to insure other input and oversight in the process.

Additional Info to aid voter decision-making about Ballot Measure #4, Member-Initiated Ballot

Pro and Con Statements written by Jason Baghboudarian, Board member and Bylaws Committee member

Pro:
The Olympia Food Co-op needs an initiative process written into the Bylaws to make the Bylaws consistent with the fact that we are a member-owned and member-run organization. We need to streamline the Bylaws and make them scalable for our growth and expansion, while deepening the roots of our commitment to our mission. An initiative process fits the bill. Not only will we have a comprehensive plan for any member governance issue in the future, but also in the process of providing that plan we will have strengthened the existing membership support structures (e.g. tabling and committee guidelines) along the way.

Technically, as it stands now, every instance of member balloting is prescribed by the Board. I like the Board as much as the next person, but let’s be clear; if the purpose of the Co-op is to be a member-run, then why does the membership have to go through the Board to hold a vote for itself?

Currently, it is the province of the Board "to resolve organizational conflicts after all other avenues of resolution have been exhausted," but where in the Bylaws does it describe those “avenues of resolution”?

Yes, after much effort of gathering many signatures, members can call meetings, but what good is a meeting if there is no decision-making power attached? Member-run should mean exactly that. The Member-initiated Ballot would eliminate guesswork in interpreting the Member governance portions of the Bylaws by providing a clear route for any issues or ideas of the membership that simply won’t or can’t be resolved otherwise.

It’s all well and good to take an idea to the Board, but what happens when the Board and the membership disagree? In the interest of “support[ing] efforts to increase democratic process” and “supporting efforts to foster a(n) . . . egalitarian society,” let’s give the membership the power to vote on our own terms, and not at the whim of the Board. Let’s ensure that the members have a say; let’s put into writing what is already supposedly in practice.

Con:
The Olympia Food Co-op does not need an initiative process simply because the power and spirit of a member-driven initiative is already written into the Bylaws. According to the existing Bylaws, and as a part of state policy, there are a number of ways in which members can express their views.

Most of the communication within the Co-op takes place at the two stores. According to the Bylaws, Staff members have the responsibility of operating the stores. Usually when a member has an idea they go to a Staff member, who listens and takes the appropriate action. The Co-op has various processes outlined for member input, suggestions, and grievances.

If an issue is not about the stores directly, then members approach the Board or the appropriate committee(s) of the Board. If a member or group of members feels that they aren’t being heard by the Staff or Board, then they still have recourse: members can call special, topic-specific meetings of the Board, as well as of the Membership as a whole to address whatever concerns or ideas they may have. Members already vote on current issues and elect members of the Board. Members may also vote to remove Board members and to amend the Bylaws (such as this ballot).

All of this is adequate and sufficient. The very fact that this item has come to the membership for a vote demonstrates that the existing processes work; so why fix what isn’t broken? This issue has served as a good test of the Co-op’s processes. The Bylaws Committee and Board have done a good job of streamlining the Bylaws and identifying areas of potential change through all of the other proposed changes. Why reinvent the wheel and build up an edifice of paperwork to mimic what we, in effect, already have? No, the Member-initiated Ballot is redundant. We should use our resources towards more productive ends, such as improving our selection of local goods at affordable prices, as well as ongoing projects of expansion, outreach, and community support.

The Membership elects the Board to "manage the affairs of the Cooperative." Let them do so. The Board approves processes to hire Staff who run the two stores. Let them do their jobs. Let the Members simply enjoy good food and each other. Let’s use our resources at the Co-op wisely, to concentrate on furthering our mission.
Board of Directors Election

Candidates (below) 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 would you bring to the Board? What specific abilities and experiences would you offer to help provide direction in dealing with the Co-op’s challenges?

3. What do you see as current strengths of the Co-op and what would you like to see maintained?

4. What would you like to see changed?

5. Other comments…

Kathy Strauss

1. I’ve been a member of the co-op since moving here seven years ago and I think it is one of the greatest gems of our community. I love having access to healthy food at affordable prices and being able to shop at a store that has a stated philosophy. I agree with The co-op enriches my life and I want to be on the board to learn more about how it operates and to play a role in its growth and continued prosperity.

2. I am conscientious, responsible and work well with others. I am a good listener, communicator and excel at bringing people of different backgrounds together. I am a mother of two young children, speak Spanish and have a background in journalism and photography. I am also a former volunteer.

3. Good products, knowledgeable staff and a democratic management style are qualities of the co-op that I would like to see maintained. I also appreciate the working member.

4. My vision for the co-op for the next five years is for sustainable growth and visibility while maintaining the integrity and collective management of the stores. While a larger organization is tougher to manage, I think growth is inevitable to meet the increasing demands for healthy and organic products. I realize many people in our community are not aware of this. I will find ways to improve the quality of work life for staff members, possibly through increased salaries or more hiring.

5. 5. The very available and helpful staff and the support of other groups and events dynamically feed each other. We are very culturally rich the co-op is. The support of other groups and events also helps in extending to community. I crave being part of this process. I am in love with the support it holds through sustainable methods.

Mel Bilodeau

1. I moved to Olympia in 1994, and I’ve consistently been learning of and loving how culturally rich the co-op is. The co-op to me represents a cohesion of good food and people in extension to community. I crave being part of this process. I am in love with the support it holds through sustainable methods.

2. With a history of a Biology degree and many years in customer service, I will bring positive outlook and energy to the board. I am gifted in this way, and a good attitude seems to help everything. It’s important to remember to be flexible and weigh options and possibilities when learning through a challenge. Challenges often denote the need for change.

3. There seem to be so many strengths. If I could pick three, they would be: • the knowledge and diversity of food available • the support of other groups and events • the very available and helpful staff and volunteers

4. The things I would like to see change, because I’ve been a cashier for ten years, would be a more fluid checking out process. Register and labeling practices could use some polishing.

5. While staying consistent with the mission of the organization, I would like to see the co-op reach out to a wider part of the population. I suggest we consider more community outreach including the schools, the farmer’s market and the local media.

Jason Baghhoodarian

1. I was appointed to the Board this year to fill a vacancy, and I would like to continue with the work I’ve been doing, such as membership involvement issues. I also want to explore other areas, such as building a stronger local foodshed, examining our environmental impact, as well as long-term planning and design.

2. I’m good at looking beyond the surface to see what lies at the heart of the matter at hand. I have experience as a working member, committee member, and this year as a Board member, all of which have given me different perspectives and knowledge from which to operate as an effective Board member.

3. I love how the Co-op works with local organizations and individuals to strengthen our community. I think the Co-op’s biggest strengths are the people who work here, as well as the processes by which we all work. I don’t have any specific agenda, except to help with the processes that best facilitate the directions in which we all choose to move.

4. I would like to see the Co-op just do more of what it’s already doing now, making really good food affordable and accessible, while at the same time providing support for community members working for positive change.

5. I love the Co-op. To be a part of such a completely unique organization is a great gift. I want to help foster a healthy transition. As both a patron and a working member in produce, eventually to be revised. This seems like it may be a bit of a challenge. I would like to help foster a healthy transition. As both a patron and worker, it is hard to envision this co-op evolving much further.

Jake Rosenblum

1. I think I can do a good job of fostering creative ideas and help lead the Co-op further down the path of radical democracy.

2. I have been organizing people for social change for several years. Most recently I started a computer re-use and recycling project called Free Geek Olympia. I have experience with technology, consensus, and conflict resolution.

3. The Co-op is a veritable institution supporting economic justice. I want the Co-op to continue that tradition, and pursue its role as an economic arbiter of the community even more fully. The Co-op should sponsor projects to understand more fully the local economy.

4. I see the Co-op opening another store and tapping into a broader market by offering more household goods. Along with the re-structuring of the staff which is also taking place, I envision volunteers and paid cashiers formally represented within the decision making process. The new and exciting initiative process should be reformed to be more compatible with consensus decision-making.

5. I see the free store occupying space in a separate building, to offer an alternative junk-swapping service to Goodwill Industries.
Member Voting Procedure
Step 1: Write your name and address on one of the envelopes provided.
Step 2: Fill out a ballot and put it in the envelope.
Step 3: Seal the envelope and drop it in the ballot box.

Only ballots in envelopes with member names will be counted

Ballot Counting Procedure
The election coordinators will check to make sure the name on the envelope matches an active member 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.

Flow Chart of Member-Initiated Ballot Procedure (above)

Additional Info about Ballot Measure #4
If Ballot Measure #4 passes, the following procedure would be implemented:

Olympia Food Co-op
Member-Initiated Ballot Procedure and Petition Requirements

I. Petition Process and Requirements
Members may submit an item for vote by the membership on the next ballot by using the following procedure.

Step 1: A proposal may be brought to the Board by any member, clearly describing the issue(s) in question that he or she wants to see on the next ballot. At this time the Board must do one of the following:
   a) Approve the proposal to move forward as a member-initiated ballot
   b) Agree to sponsor the member ballot and make it a Board ballot
   c) Identify appropriate committee or staff to address the concern/idea
   d) Give feedback for possible reworking/rewording of the proposal
   e) Reject the proposal. The Board may reject the proposal if it is illegal or deemed financially irresponsible or financially unfeasible. The Board will provide a written statement to the author(s) of the proposal articulating its reasons for rejection.

Step 2: If the proposal is approved to move forward as a member-initiated ballot, the member(s) draft a petition to support conducting a vote on their issue(s) in the next ballot. The petition must be lawful, and must be reasonable based on financial feasibility. The petition must include provisions for the Board or their designees to validate that the petition signatures are from active members. The results of this review are presented to the Board. If the required number of validated, signed petitions was collected, the issue will appear on the next ballot.

II. Ballot Procedure
After successfully completing the above Petition Process and Requirements, the Board or Board committee (referred to as “The Committee”) works with the petitioners to put together the member-initiated ballot.

Step 1: The Committee develops a voter pamphlet and educational materials that will be published in the October newsletter (September 1st submission deadline). The voter pamphlet must include the following information about the ballot issue:
   1. Benefits (pros);
   2. Impacts (cons);
   3. Costs;
   4. Legal aspects;
   5. Purpose, vision

Step 2: Between September 1st and November 15th, at least two Member Forums will be held at which the member initiative will be the main topic. In addition, the member initiative must be included as an agenda item for the Annual Meeting. The Committee will also work with the petitioners to ensure that the membership be given an opportunity to educate itself with regard to the issue during this period. Other methods of education that should be utilized are notebooks at stores with ballot and educational materials, the website, and tabling at the stores.

Step 3: The Election is held October 15th through November 15th. Unless otherwise specified by state law, a 60% majority of active Co-op members is required for a member-initiated ballot to pass.
The Board Report

by John Nason, Board Member

It has been another busy summer for the Board. We just finished our annual Board Retreat. This year we decided to focus on ideas and process around growth and possible expansion of the Co-op. For several years now, sales growth has been steadily increasing, peaking in the second quarter of this year at the Eastside store at just over 17%. We’re rapidly approaching $8 million in sales this year. Certain times of the day it’s difficult to even find a parking space at the Co-op. In terms of process, the Board will form a committee to explore ideas for growth. The committee will come up with a list of alternatives, which will then be taken to the membership for a vote. Please read the article on page 4 for more details on this process.

Paid Cashier Update: Paid cashiers are volunteers for the Co-op who agree to work cashier hours for pay when no volunteers are available. Currently, under ideal circumstances, all cashier shifts at both stores are covered by volunteers. Paid cashiers step in to fill shifts that are empty or when cancellations occur. Usually they receive only a few hours notice for their shifts. Many members are uncomfortable with the system that often pay without any benefits or regular hours.

At our July meeting, Jake Rosenthal, a volunteer and paid cashier for the Co-op, presented a proposal to form a cashier collective. The role of the collective would be to give the cashiers a voice that would help influence policies set by Staff and Board. At the August meeting, we heard from Megan Davis, who has been leading Staff discussions on revising the paid cashier system. Apparently Staff has been working on this issue for about two years, and is getting closer to a proposal that would also seek to redefine the role of the paid cashiers.

Another exciting development has come to us through the Olympia Free School. This involves the possibility of a new meeting space and a new office downtown. The Olympia Free School is currently looking for new space to accommodate an increase in their class size. Co-op Staff and Board are interested in pursuing this possibility, and both groups are currently looking for a location to share.

In the work at the Co-op is a new Hiring Process. Up until now, when the Co-op staff recognized the need for new workers, the Board would form a Hiring Committee usually made up of 2 staff, 2 directors and 1 or 2 members at large. We would invite applications from the community, usually accepting them for about six weeks. Once the applications had all been received, we would bus ourselves plowing through the 100 - 200 applications, choose 20 or so to people to interview, choose 5 or 6 to hire immediately, and if we were lucky, ask another 5 or 6 to be in a hiring pool. This takes 100 hours or more of work for each person involved. The whole process from start to finish usually took about six months.

The newly proposed Standing Hiring Committee will work along with the Hiring Team to accept applications all year round. They will review applications as they come in and conduct second interviews of all the finalists on file and are ready to hire immediately.

Anyway, thanks for reading this and for participating in the Co-op. If you’re interested in seeing the board at work, feel free to show up at one of our meetings. They are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, in room 320 of the Security Bldg. at 7PM.

Some of the ideas from the initial brainstorm include:

Building more neighborhood stores: Just like we have a neighborhood store on the Westside, we could have a store in the Eastside neighborhood of roughly the same size. Other neighborhoods that would benefit from having their own Co-op include the South Capitol Neighborhood, Downtown, Tumwater, Lacey, etc.

Expanding/rebuilding the current Eastside store: Rebuilding the store to accommodate more products, more parking, more customers, and a service deli would probably involve purchasing a lot adjacent to the Eastside store.

Building a Downtown Co-op Community Center: The focus here is on revitalizing downtown Olympia. This vision involves new construction with green building materials, providing space for a full service food co-op, and offices/meeting space for the Co-op and other like-minded non-profits.

Expanding the hours of the current stores: seen as a possible solution to overcrowding of the stores without having to set up a new store.

In August, we finished editing our proposals for Bylaws revisions. The most talked-about part of this revision is the Member-initiated Ballot Procedure, which details a process for members to petition for a vote. Please review the statements for and against this new piece of Co-op legislation and attend one of the upcoming forums if you can. The vote will happen October 15th through November 13th.
Finance Report

Co-op Staff are “Self-Insured”

By Kitty Koppelman, Staff Member

One of the things that makes the Co-op a great place to work is the fact that we provide full medical, dental, and vision benefits to all full-time staff members and their dependents. (We also cover a pro-rated portion for part-timers) Historically, the Co-op spends around 13% of our entire labor budget on medical benefits. In 2004, we spent $175,000 on medical benefits. As insurance options have dwindled to a tiny handful, premium costs have also risen at a rate of at least 15% each year. In 2004, our insurance provider notified us that the upcoming year’s premium would be increasing by 25%! At the same time as the Co-op has been facing higher costs and less options, we’ve found that the types of coverage that insurance companies offer was not aligned with the type of health care that the typical Co-op Staff person (if there is such a person!) desired. Among other oddities, our staff tends to use more alternative forms of treatment and less prescription services. Although we had what would be considered “Cadillac” coverage, many staff people were not getting their healthcare needs covered, despite the exorbitant premiums the Co-op was laying out for our benefit.

Over the years, we had heard from a couple of other Co-ops who have taken control of their medical coverage needs by forming “self-insurance” plans. Through these programs, the employer creates their own coverage schedule, and sets aside an amount of money to cover the expected costs for employees’ health care. The employer contracts with a third party administrator to negotiate and disburse payments to providers, and to oversee coverage issues. In addition, the employer buys “stop-loss” coverage for each employee, which goes into effect after an individual employee reaches a certain level of annual expenses, and especially liked the idea of only paying for the coverage that is used. The coverage we have is better than what was offered in the “Cadillac” plan, and because we are no longer bound by the restrictions and limitations of the big insurance companies, we can change our schedule of benefits if we decide we want to. Some of the items that we couldn’t get covered by the big companies, (and now we have) include massage therapy, naturopathic prescriptions, transgender surgery and drug therapies, and increased coverage for vision, acupuncture, and outpatient physical, speech, and occupational therapies.

But one of the sweetest benefits of all is the fact that the Co-op is no longer sending tens of thousands of dollars to a profit-driven corporation whose ultimate motive is to earn revenue for its shareholders. Instead, the Co-op’s Staff is getting the type of health care that reflects our values, and we are getting a better value for our labor budget dollar. For the time being, with only a few months of experience under our belts, we’re budgeting to spend around the same amount as we have spent in years past, but in the end, any funds that are not actually used through claims is the Co-op’s to keep. Stay tuned for future reports on how it all plays out in reality. For more information about this or any of the Co-op’s financial details, feel free to contact me or any of the bookkeepers (Corey, Grace, or Harry) at 357-1106.
Animal Products at the Co-op

by Jennifer Shafer, Editor

Recently, a member inquired to the Olympia Food Co-op’s on-line forum about the sale of animal products at the Co-op. Their eloquent inquiry asked about animal suffering and raised questions about the practicality, humanity, and necessity of such practices. (Please go to www.olympiafood.coop/forums for more details). This article is intended as a response to the inquiry. The Co-op’s decision to sell animal products is simple, or at least simple from a policy point of view. The membership voted by member ballot to carry meat.

From the Product Selection Guidelines:

“sale of meat products was limited to naturally or organically raised meat products with some consideration also given to quality of life issues in the raising of the animals.”

The policy does not go much further than that, and dairy products are not mentioned. Also from the Product Selection Guidelines:

“Many Co-op members have special dietary needs and restrictions. The Co-op is committed to carrying products that are low/no salt/sodium, low/no fat/cholesterol, non-dairy, wheat/gluten free, vegetarian/vegan, etc. Co-op members also come from a diversity of cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. Therefore, the Co-op will carry foods that reflect these lifestyles such as Kosher foods, Asian and Macrobiotic foods, and other appropriate culturally specific food. . . . Lastly, the Co-op believes in making choices available to our members rather than trying, through our buying procedures, to control what people eat. Therefore, we prefer to err on the side of flexibility rather than rigidity.”

While we may be able to buy ethically produced animal products, it still doesn’t answer the question of whether it is humane to kill the animals for our own purposes. This is a huge debate and touches many emotions. There are those members who are diabetic, hypoglycemic, or allergic to soy and other vegetable foods and therefore cannot choose a vegan lifestyle, and then there are those who feel that there is no other choice than an animal-free diet and feel physically/spirittually better without animal foods. There are those who find it more affordable to buy vegetarian/vegan foods, and there are those who can feed their family for a week from one animal. For some, animal sacrifice is part of a natural cycle that is sustaining, while to others it is an inhumane and unnecessary practice.

While the Co-op chose not to make such choices for its membership, recognizing the diverse dietary needs and preferences of its membership, we can, as consumers, look at the companies we buy our meat from and ensure a standard of quality and ethics.

The chickens are processed locally in Mount Vernon using strict guidelines of the HACCP/USDA (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point/United States Department of Agriculture) with microbial testing along the way. They have a Quality Control Department in place also to ensure they produce the highest quality product available. They have also recently implemented a Vegetative Environmental Buffers Program for a reduction of environmental impacts.

Applegate Farms

Applegate Farms (www.applegatefarms.com) is a company started by Stephen McDonnell, a former vegetarian who wanted to promote a better way of producing meat products that encourage healthy and balanced consumption of animal products. It is made up of over 250 family-run farms that provide meat for Applegate. All of their products are free of nitrates, nitrites, and chemical preservatives. They never use antibiotics or growth hormones in the raising of the animals. The livestock receive only vegetarian feed with no animal by-products. Their products are gluten free, casein free and do not contain MSG, fillers or excess water. The Co-op purchases Applegate’s sausages, bacon, and deli meats.

A progressive aspect of this company is that they are “certified humane” by the Human Farm Animal Care Program (www.certifiedhumane.com), whose mission is to improve the welfare of farm animals by providing “credible, duly monitored standards for humane food production and ensuring consumers that certified products meet these standards.” It is a group created by and made up of animal scientists, activists, farmers, and veterinarians who are knowledgeable and dedicated to animal welfare.

From their pamphlet, they state: “Their animals are raised in conditions that are environmentally friendly, fed grass, hay, and grains raised organically and without synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, raised unconfined and in small herds using careful pasture grazing practices and careful manure management systems, and processed in USDA slaughter and processing houses with stringent quality control.” Although there are many more farms from which the Co-op purchases animal products, these are three examples of the kind of businesses with which we work.

continued on page 15
Recipe

Overnight Apple Butter

(Reprinted from Cooking Light Vol. 18, #9)

A mixture of apple varieties will produce a rich, complex flavor.
1 1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup apple cider
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

A dash of ground mace

A

Apples are one of the most popular fruits in our country and around the world. With so much year-round availability, many people don’t even realize there is a specific season for apples. Luckily around here, apples are literally falling from the sky, and we can benefit from the best of all apples—those that don’t need to travel far from the tree. Since Washington State is the largest apple producer in the U.S., we have access to all the commercially popular varieties as well as some of the more unique breeds our local growers offer. Even with the sophisticated knowledge and tastes of our locale, the selection of varieties can be a little dizzying, reminding us that there’s still something new to discover about apples.

Apples are, by their very nature, all about variety (there are almost 8,000 found around the world today). A member of the rose family, the apple is capable of infinite possibilities because each and every seed can grow into a new variety. If you plant a seed from your Gala apple and it becomes a tree, the tree will not produce Galas, but something different. Therefore, apple growers must propagate by grafting wood from the original parent tree onto rootstock. The chance seedlings that apple seeds produce are usually not the choice quality apples we like to eat—they tend to be bland and small. Of course, it should be pointed out that nature’s creation sometimes works perfectly; some of the most popular apples today began as chance seedlings, such as Cameo and Red Delicious.

The historical origins of the apple stretch back many thousands of years, cropping up both symbolically and religiously on cave walls from the Stone Age, Greek and Roman mythology, Egyptian pyramids, ancient Chinese art, and of course, the many stories of folklore. Apples are believed to have originated in what is now Kazakhstan, in central Asia, and made their way along trade routes around the world, helped by the Roman Empire. In the Americas, crabapples were planted early in the settling process, and seedlings that apple seeds produce are still being propagated, but were ideal for feeders and observation purposes. Some varieties will seem barely ripe and should be eaten quickly, while others ripen slowly. Some apples taste better after a period of storage, while others are best eaten in early summer, as soon as they can be picked. The best way to select an apple is based on its color and cooking purposes and not the supermarket-quality apples are usually chosen by uniformity, lacking blemishes, glossy and without a thought to the flavor they bring to the kitchen.

Apples contain a lot of water and some air in the apple’s cells. Many apples will easily mash, while others don’t disintegrate easily, such as Jonagold and Pink Lady. The best apples to use for this kind of baking (Gravenstein, Granny Smith) need to be picked early, to get the proper balance of flavor and cooking purposes. Apple juice may be heart healthy due to their antioxidant properties associated with the flavonoids found in apples. Other research into lung, skin, and colon cancer has concluded that the more apples consumed, the less risk of suffering these diseases.

Buying apples grown close to home is important for more reasons than flavor and freshness. Some apples travel thousands of miles from grower to market, using untold amounts of resources and disconnecting the consumer from the people who grow their food. This connection is important for consumers to understand, as labor rights for farm workers have been slow to improve over the last decades.

Apples in Washington are picked and packed by a work force comprised mostly of Mexicans who average only $7,000 a year in pay and live and work in unsafe conditions. Unfortunately, farmers are suffering in the same way. Many growers get less money for their apples than they take to produce them. Both the apple farmers and workers are at the bottom of a food system controlled by corporate middlemen and retailers. According to the United Farm Workers (UFW) only a small part of the retail price of apples trickles back to the producers. Out of each dollar spent on apples, workers get 7 cents, farmers get 4 cents, wholesalers and transporters take 23 cents, and the retailers, dominated by Wal-Mart and Safeway, take 68 cents. What does this mean to you, someone who buys apples? Buy local and direct from growers whenever possible. The Co-op buys apples direct when we can, and gives a higher wholesale price to farmers, in order to get more of each dollar to farmers and workers. Buying organic also means that farm workers are not exposed to dangerous pesticides and chemicals while they work. The hope is that one day soon, the Fair Trade movement will expand to include more crops, such as apples, so that consumers can use their buying power to help change destructive and unfair practices.

There are lots of great internet resources for apple information, recipes, and sources for trees. Burnt Ridge Nursery sells many types of apple trees and is a good source of growing information. They can be found at the Farmer’s Market. Check out www.applejourn.com, a website run by an apple lover in Michigan. For more information about farm worker rights, go to www.ufw.org.

A is for Apple

by Maureen Tobin, Staff Member

Apples are a source of potassium and vitamins C, G, and B, with a particularly high amount of vitamin A. Eating apples helps the body absorb iron and calcium from other foods and are also showing up on the lists of phytochemical-rich foods. Many researchers believe phytochemicals called flavonoids reduce the risk of several chronic diseases, including heart disease and cancer. Apples and apple juice may be heart healthy due to their antioxidant properties associated with the flavonoids found in apples. Other research into lung, skin, and colon cancer has concluded that the more apples consumed, the less risk of suffering these diseases.

Buying apples grown close to home is important for more reasons than flavor and freshness. Some apples travel thousands of miles from grower to market, using untold amounts of resources and disconnecting the consumer from the people who grow their food. This connection is important for consumers to understand, as labor rights for farm workers have been slow to improve over the last decades.

Apples in Washington are picked and packed by a work force comprised mostly of Mexicans who average only $7,000 a year in pay and live and work in unsafe conditions. Unfortunately, farmers are suffering in the same way. Many growers get less money for their apples than they take to produce them. Both the apple farmers and workers are at the bottom of a food system controlled by corporate middlemen and retailers. According to the United Farm Workers (UFW) only a small part of the retail price of apples trickles back to the producers. Out of each dollar spent on apples, workers get 7 cents, farmers get 4 cents, wholesalers and transporters take 23 cents, and the retailers, dominated by Wal-Mart and Safeway, take 68 cents. What does this mean to you, someone who buys apples? Buy local and direct from growers whenever possible. The Co-op buys apples direct when we can, and gives a higher wholesale price to farmers, in order to get more of each dollar to farmers and workers. Buying organic also means that farm workers are not exposed to dangerous pesticides and chemicals while they work. The hope is that one day soon, the Fair Trade movement will expand to include more crops, such as apples, so that consumers can use their buying power to help change destructive and unfair practices.

There are lots of great internet resources for apple information, recipes, and sources for trees. Burnt Ridge Nursery sells many types of apple trees and is a good source of growing information. They can be found at the Farmer’s Market. Check out www.applejourn.com, a website run by an apple lover in Michigan. For more information about farm worker rights, go to www.ufw.org.
Their attention to quality, organics, environmental impact and ethical standards is common for most naturally produced animal products.

In this article, it would be impossible to argue all of the various reasons for and against diets that include animal foods. A diet is a highly individual choice and/or need and shouldn’t be “legislated” by any organization. It is a quandary; most of us love animals and grew up steeped in imagery of animal friends through cartoons, stories, songs, and literature. Animals are essential to our education about the environment, emotional characteristics, and relationships. It is often a horror when we, as children (particularly those divorced from food production), discover that people kill and eat animals, as often they are our friends in reality or imagination. Some choose to see our relationship with animals as kin; others choose to see it or not but continue to consume animal foods based on their specific dietary needs and likes. I would venture to say that most people do not like the fact that animals are killed and/or suffer for the nutrition we glean from them. Most shoppers at the Co-op choose to purchase their animal foods at the Co-op because they know that the Co-op will make the best choices available to minimize animal suffering and environmental degradation.

As humans began as hunters and gatherers, it is unlikely that people will cease to consume animals, and as Co-op shoppers continue to eat animals, the Co-op will likely continue to sell animal products. However, it is a realistic and worthy goal to advocate that the Co-op carries out its activities regarding the treatment of animals raised for their meat (and dairy) through means available to the membership: the Board, boycotts, letters to the store, and ballot initiatives.

We could do more at the Co-op to make further information about animal products available to our membership. Currently, there is a notebook at the Eastside Store that contains basic product information about the companies from which we buy meat. For anyone who is passionate about animal welfare in food production, it might be useful to form a committee to update this information or research companies with high standards or certified humane status (and encourage the Co-op to do business with such companies). Lastly, the on-line forum is also a great way to continue the dialogue about animal products and to educate each other about our various perspectives regarding this or any other Co-op-related issue.

**The Olympia Health Alliance**

The Olympia Health Alliance is an effort to start a health fund modeled after the Ithaca Health Alliance (www.ithacahealth.org). The IHA provides reimbursement for members’ medical expenses and is now looking forward to opening its own clinic.

Paul Glover, the founder of IHA, will be visiting Olympia on October 18-20, to share information about the alliance there, as well as alternative currencies and community economic development.

For more details, please visit www.olyhealth.org. Donations are tax deductible.

**“Learning Through Play”**

The Westside Cooperative now has openings for fall enrollment, ages 18 months – 5 years. For more information, please call the school at 360-866-7383 or check us out on the web at www.westsidecooperative.org.

**Olympia Free School**

The Olympia Free School is proud to present Fall Quarter classes starting in October, 2005. Please check our website at www.olympiafreeschool.org to register for a class.

Normally, we would invite you to call or stop by the office, but right now the Free School is going through a transitional phase and as of October, we will be spaceless. We are scouting the community for the perfect new location to fit all of our growing needs. Please check our website for updates.

If you are interested in facilitating a class next session, the deadline for class submission for your Winter Quarter catalog is December 15th, 2005. Classes can be submitted online; just go to the Facilitators page on our website.
Celebrate Co-op Month and Fair Trade Month

Kids Corner

What is it?
Deadline: November 1st, 2005

Name: __________________________

Age: __________________________

Guess: __________________________

Where do you want to pick up your gift certificate?
☐ Eastside  ☐ Westside

If you’re 10 or under, fill out this form and put it in the What is it? box in the Co-op office. Please enter once per newsletter. Guess correctly, and you’ll win a $1.00 gift certificate to spend at the Co-op!

Remember that the deadline is November 1st. A winners list will be at both Co-ops, where you can ask for your coupon. Print neatly!

The answer to last issue’s What is it? was: Ginger

Congratulations: Emily K., age 11 • Arabelle, age 10 • Amaya, age 9 • Quinn, age 7 • Tomien, age 9 • Quinn, age 3 • Kai, age 6 • Brett, age 9

The Co-op’s Annual Meeting
When: Sunday, October 23, 12-3pm
Where: Olympian Ballroom, 116 Legion Way SE (Upstairs above the Urban Onion—elevator available)

Co-op Voter Guide & Ballot

Please join the Co-op Board of Directors for the Co-op’s Annual Meeting

Meeting Agenda:
Introductions
Board Report
Finance Report
Board Candidate Statements
Bylaws Forum
Long Term Planning Report
Committee Reports
Report from Staff
TULIP Credit Union presentation

Co-op Ballot
Inside this Newsletter

Olympia Food Co-op
3111 Pacific Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Address Service Requested