



# Co-op News

A bi-monthly publication for members of the Olympia Food Co-op and its surrounding communities

October / November 2005



## Fair Trade Within Your Reach Connections to Fair Trade Products in Olympia

by **Grace Cox**, Staff Member



It's easy to sink into political depression these days. The news is bad, from the on-going war against Iraq to the horrible bungling 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 Citgo gas—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&B 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 Cephacafe, the export co-op located in Piura, Peru. Check out our web site, [www.olympiafood.coop](http://www.olympiafood.coop), 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 Employees 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

*continued on page 6*

### Fair Trade Links

- ☛ Transfair USA <http://www.transfairusa.org/>
- ☛ COOP America [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org)
- ☛ Equiterre [www.equiterre.qc.ca](http://www.equiterre.qc.ca)
- ☛ Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)
- ☛ Fair Trade Federation [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)
- ☛ Fair Trade Resource Network [www.fairtraderesource.org](http://www.fairtraderesource.org)
- ☛ EcoLogic Finance [www.ecologicfinance.org](http://www.ecologicfinance.org)
- ☛ International Federation for Alternative Trade [www.ifat.org](http://www.ifat.org)
- ☛ Organic consumers association <http://www.organicconsumers.org/>
- ☛ Oxfam America [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)
- ☛ United Students for Fair Trade <http://usft.org/>

**OCTOBER IS  
Fair Trade Month**  
**DO YOU  
FAIRTRADE?**

(Top): Coffee beans ready for harvest. The soft red cherry is washed away before the beans are dried for export; (Middle): Co-op members feed their freshly picked cherries into the commercial depulper in Coyona, Peru; (Bottom): Doña Dora Jimenez checks to see if her beans are dry. Dora is a single mother who farms 1.5 hectares of coffee plants.

PHOTOS—Cover: Ami Greenberg; Fair Trade photos: Grace Cox

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**Eastside Store**  
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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 360-789-7313 or at olycoopnews@yahoo.com 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.

*Acceptance of advertising does not indicate endorsement by the Co-op of the product or service offered.*

<http://www.olympiafood.coop>



# 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 Thoe** and **Terry Hogan** saw that we had a need for more filing space so they donated a larger, 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 dona-

tions! We appreciate your membership and on-going support.

**Jennifer Kratzer** does her banking business with us and noted that we had no copy machine in our little branch office. This makes sense, however, because there simply isn't room. Fortunately, these days, there are wonderful machines that not only copy, but also act as your fax and printer machines. So, she donated one of those to us! We are so excited to be able to simply do our business and also make a copy of something! Funny how 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.



# TULIP Board Openings

Please become an active participant in the efforts to equalize economic power for all residents of Thurston County. Tulip is looking for new board members to help guide and support the work of the credit union. Board positions will vary in length of commitment. If you are interested in this important work, please send a resumé and a letter of interest via email to Darlene Morales at [Darlene@tulipcu.coop](mailto:Darlene@tulipcu.coop).



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](http://www.tulipcu.coop) or give us a call at 360-570-2292. We look forward to hearing from you.

**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

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# Co-op Center Fosters Growth of Movement

by **Andrew McLeod**, NWCDC 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 Beluga Software.

In addition to this local activity, Olympia is home to the Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC), a technical assistance resource for new and existing co-ops. While not widely known in the community, NWCDC has been located near the Capitol Campus since 2000.

Originally founded in 1979 as the Seattle-based Puget Sound Development Foundation, NWCDC assists a diversity of organizations in fields ranging from agricultural production and parent education to renewable energy and technology.

NWCDC 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.

Ironically, the NWCDC has previously not done much work in Olympia itself and has worked mostly under the radar of its home city. This is largely due to the nature of its funding. The center gets more than half of its operating budget from the US Department of Agriculture. This Rural Cooperative Development

Grant funding comes with the condition that projects are carried out in rural areas. The definition of rural includes cities of under 50,000 residents. In previous years Olympia was deemed ineligible because of its contiguous boundaries with Tumwater and Lacey. However, this year that ruling was re-evaluated, and they allowed the center to include projects located in all three cities.

Due to this re-evaluation, NWCDC is planning to work with two local groups for its coming fiscal year, which began October 1st. These groups are looking to create cooperatives providing biodiesel and wireless internet access. Unfortunately, with the tremendous growth rate Olympia is experiencing, we believe that this will be a short-lived window that allows Olympia to be considered "rural." For the future, the center is also working to diversify its funding, pursuing a variety of grants and also seeking private donations that will help broaden their ability to provide services to all communities, rural and urban.

## Cooperation Among Cooperatives

In a 1994 edition of the NWCDC's newsletter *Connections*, former director Audrey Malan described the organization as "the only organization in the Northwest which actively promotes cooperative education and development." Today, this is changing. NWCDC is being joined in their pursuit of spreading the cooperative word by networks of cooperatives in Portland and San Francisco, and by the beginnings of one in Olympia, called the Community Cooperative Forum. Some individual co-ops are developing an interest in helping to mentor new cooperatives as well.

The Olympia Food Co-op (OFC) has been a leader in this trend. It has successfully aided in the establishment of two new cooperatives, including the TULIP Credit Union, and the Mountain Community Co-op in Eatonville. It has also dedicated staff time to assist three other cooperative projects. These

include the Vancouver Food Co-op, which is a collaborative effort with NWCDC and People's Food Co-op of Portland. Both organizations are dedicating hours to a joint project that is serving as a pilot for much bigger things.

Another effort of NWCDC is to organize a network of developers who work at existing food co-ops, and are active participants in the efforts to open new ones. Along with OFC, Seattle's Puget Consumer Co-op and People's have pledged to support this project. The center is also presently building relationships with several other potential collaborative co-ops in Oregon. Meanwhile, people in more than a dozen towns in Washington and Oregon have asked for help starting food co-ops.

## Opportunities

Fortunately, there are resources to help turn these ideas into reality. The National Cooperative Bank has teamed up with Wisconsin-based Cooperative Development Services and the National Cooperative Grocers Association with the goal of starting new food co-ops throughout the US. The goal is to expand from the current 300 food co-ops to 500 co-ops in the next decade. The initial year's effort is taking the form of \$10,000 grants to new groups and \$25,000 loans to more established efforts. Matching funds are required to apply for these funds.

To complement these efforts, NWCDC is developing a workshop program, modeled after similar work done to help small landholders start sustainable forestry cooperatives. In this project, groups from a half-dozen towns will come together for several workshops spread over much of a year. Each workshop will last two to three days, and will give participants the tools they need to carry out a concurrent organizing effort back home. This project is envisioned as a way to use available resources most efficiently: there will be fewer individual projects to coordinate, and participants will be able to learn from each other's experiences.

## The Future

NWCDC's goal is to become the "go-to" agency for the region, playing a key role in the growth of the cooperative movement.

In addition to providing technical assistance, NWCDC is a source for materials about cooperatives of all sorts. The center is located at 1063 S. Capitol Way, #211, and is open 9-5 weekdays. For more info, call 943-4241.

## Seven Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995. The International Cooperative Alliance is a global membership association of co-ops and co-op support organizations. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844.

### 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 democratic organizations controlled by their 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 equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

### 4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

### 5. Education, Training and Information

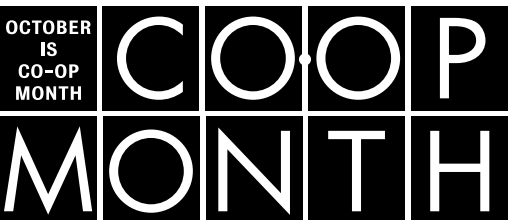
Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

### 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

### 7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.



## Co-op Websites of Interest

- Northwest Cooperative Development Center [www.nwcdc.coop](http://www.nwcdc.coop)
- Community Cooperative Forum [www.southsoundcoops.org](http://www.southsoundcoops.org)
- Cooperation Works! [http://www.ncba.coop/serv\\_cbd\\_cw.cfm](http://www.ncba.coop/serv_cbd_cw.cfm)
- Food Coop 500 [www.foodcoop500.coop](http://www.foodcoop500.coop)
- National Cooperative Bank [www.ncb.coop](http://www.ncb.coop)
- Cooperative Development Services [www.cdsfood.coop](http://www.cdsfood.coop)
- National Cooperative Grocers Association [www.ncga.coop](http://www.ncga.coop)



# 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).

Year	Growth Over Previous Year	
	West	East
2000	7.0 %	9.4 %
2001	8.6 %	14.3 %
2002	3.1 %	5.3 %
2003	2.6 %	7.8 %
2004	10.6 %	13.3 %
2005 (through July)	10.8 %	17.1%

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

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 job 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 recommend 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-ops' 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-ops' future
- e) Solicit feedback from Neighborhood Associations and local educational institu-

*continued on page 6*

# 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!



## 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 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.

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

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 green 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 Mission Statement
- e) Develop an Advisory Ballot Packet for the membership that outlines options, research, feasibility, and assessments
- f) Administer the Membership Ballot
- g) Provide final report to the Board and facilitate decision-making

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 acknowledge 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 community after Hurricane Mitch devastated Nicaragua in 1998. While aid money poured into Nueva Vida to provide emergency intervention, funding for sustainable economic 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 Burda (owner of Maggie's Organics) met by chance at a conference on organics. Originally committed 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 production 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 sew?" 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-

Women from a sewing cooperative in Santo Tomas, Nicaragua, meet with Nueva Vida workers to learn more about the project.



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 attained another milestone – they received the status of a free trade zone. Free trade

zone 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](http://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 shirts.

To find out more about Fair Trade, please refer to the sidebar for websites and organizations of interest. Visiting the above-mentioned businesses and viewing (or purchasing) products will also make the concept more tangible. Fair Trade actually allows you to feel good about shopping and more importantly, allows you to affect positive social change.



Coyona Coffee Co-op member watches as his dried beans, called pergamino, are weighed for export. With facilities for testing the dryness of the beans and accurate scales, co-op members know how much to expect from the sale of their beans. Independent coffee growers selling on the open market are often ripped off by unscrupulous exporters.



# 2005 Voter Guide

Ballot  
Enclosed

Welcome to the Olympia Food Co-op Voter Guide. Yes, it's that time of year again, and we ask the membership to use its voice to inform and determine the future of this precious community resource. The results of this year's election will provide us with a Board of Directors (BOD) and determine whether the Co-op's Bylaws are changed. This voter guide has been prepared to help educate the membership about the various issues they will vote on.

## Voter Guide Format

Within this guide you will find four parts:

1. The proposed changes to the Co-op's Bylaws. These are presented in "Bill Change Format" which shows what the original text is, as well as what deletions (in "strikeout") and what additional text (underlined) are being proposed. As these proposed changes are both numerous and somewhat complex, a rationale for each proposed change is included at the end of each section (in bold type).

2. Pro and Con statements with regard to Ballot Measure #4, the Member-Initiated Ballot, and a procedure for implementing it.

3. The descriptions and photos of individuals wishing to serve a two-year term on the Board of Directors.

4. The ballot that Olympia Food Co-op members need to complete in order for their vote to be counted. Completed ballots must be submitted to the Co-op by November 15. Additional details on how and where to do that can be found on the ballot itself. Please be sure to follow these

directions fully to ensure that your vote is counted.

Remember, part of what makes the Co-op so unique is that the **members drive the organization**. One of the greatest privileges of being members is that we DO get to have a say in how this business is run, how it impacts our community, and how it makes a positive contribution to the world at large. Please claim ownership, and help us along our way by voting.

*Thank you.*

## 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](http://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, leaving the Cooperative, active 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 leaving the cooperative" to "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 "Capitol 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 50, days prior to the meeting. In addition, notice of the meeting shall be posted at the Cooperative at least 72 hours 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 member'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 VOTING In all instances where member balloting is ordered by the Board, such balloting may be performed of member voting, ballots may be received at the Cooperative, by mail, or at a meeting of members. No proxies are allowed and each active member shall have one vote. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, or by law, a simple majority vote is required for elections and other membership actions. The Board may prescribe additional rules and procedures for elections as appropriate. The Board shall take steps to encourage maximum participation by the membership.

Section II.8. 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 III.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 notice 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 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 VII.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 10 days prior to the beginning of any vote to amend these Bylaws.

Section VII. These Bylaws may be amended through a Board or member-initiated ballot that remains open for at least 30 days. Copies of the proposed Bylaws 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.**

*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 300 active members or 1/2 of the average number 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 50 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.13.R. 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.D. 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 scaleable 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 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 store 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.



Additional Info continued on page 10

## Ballot on Reverse Side

### 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?  
What would you like to see changed?
- 4 What vision do you have for the Co-op for the next five years?
- 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 working member.
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 diversity of the staff. I would like to find ways to improve the quality of work life for staff members, possibly through increased salaries or more hiring.
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 collectively, 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 all that the co-op has to offer.
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.



**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
- 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.
4. I hear through the vine that a new system for cashier responsibilities might 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.
  5. The relationship between community and the food co-op here in Olympia dynamically feed each other. We are very fortunate.



**Jason Baghboudarian**

1. I was appointed to the Board this year to fill a vacancy, and I would like to continue the work I've been doing, such as member 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 indeed. Two and a half years ago I started as a working member in produce, eventually to do cashing, data entry and various other activities. Joining the Bylaws committee two years ago was my introduction to more of the process of the Co-op, another gift, which led to some fascinating time on the Board this past year. I've learned a lot about the Co-op, and I want to put that knowledge to further use. I'd love to continue to serve the Co-op on the Board of Directors, to work to give back to the Co-op.



**Jake Rosenblum**

1. I think I can do a good job of offering 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.



# The Ballot

Please **circle** your preference.

### Ballot Measure #1

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #2

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #3

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #4

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #5

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #6

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #7

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #8

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #9

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Ballot Measure #10

Shall the Bylaws be revised as proposed?  
Yes                      No

### Board of Directors (Vote for Two Only)

Mel Bilodeau                      Jason Baghboudarian  
Jake Rosenblum                      Kathy Strauss

## 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 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 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.

### Additional Info about Ballot Measure #4 continued from page 8

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. In addition, the petition must be clearly written so that the reader may be able to easily understand:

- Who wrote this petition
- What issue(s) are being addressed
- What is the proposed solution
- That signing the petition supports having the issue voted on in the next ballot and not implementation of the proposed change itself.

**Step 3:** The Board reviews the petition to insure that it meets the requirements in Step 2. If the Board finds that the petition meets the above requirements, the petitioners may proceed with signature gathering (Tabling Guidelines are still being drafted by the Board). In order for the issue to be included in the upcoming ballot, the petition must be signed by 1/2 of the average number of voting members from the previous three annual elections, or 300, whichever is greater, and the required number of valid member signatures must be submitted to the Board by August 1st.

**Step 4:** The Board or their designees will review the petitions to ensure that the required number of 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. If the requirements have not been met, the issue will not appear on the ballot, though members may start the process again if they wish.

### 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.

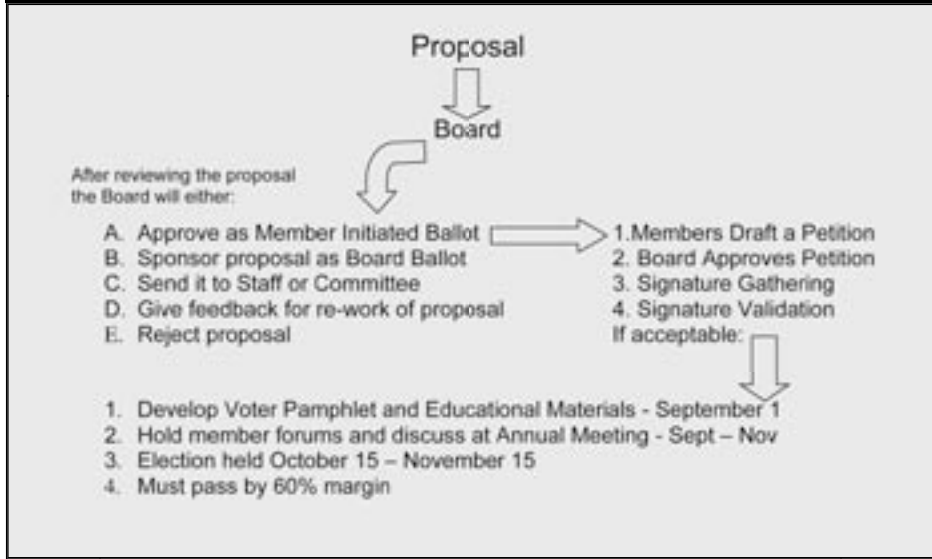
**Step 1: The Committee** develops a voter pamphlet and educational materials that will be published in the October newsletter (September 1st submission deadline).

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.

Flow Chart of Member-Initiated Ballot Procedure (above)



# 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 then will be taken to the membership for a vote. Please read the article on page 4 for more details on this process.



## 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 Capital 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 office/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 15th.

**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 offers pay without any benefits or regular hours.

At our July meeting, Jake Rosenblum, 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 space 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.

Also in the works 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 busy ourselves plowing through the 100 - 200 applications, choose 20 or so 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 along with the Hiring Team would accept applications all year round. They will review applications as they come in and recommend interviews at the end of each month. If an applicant has a successful interview, she or he becomes a finalist. When Staff recognizes the need to hire, they can then 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.



## Committee Meetings

October 6th  
**Outreach & Education Committee Meeting**

October 19th  
**Finance Committee Meeting**

October 27th  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

November 4th  
**Newsletter Committee Meeting**

November 8th  
**Standing Hiring Committee Meeting**

November 10th  
**Outreach & Education Committee Meeting**

November 16th  
**Finance Committee Meeting**

December 1st  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

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You get excited when there's no line at the Co-op register. You have no problem with those roundabouts on Harrison (but what's with those other people?) You think Lacey should host next year's Lakfair. You think downtown is cool, and getting cooler. We get excited when there's no line at the Co-op register. We like to negotiate Harrison's roundabouts in a bus: that's easy. We know downtown is cool, and we (modestly) think we help make it cooler. We are **COMPASS ROSE**, located on 416 Capitol Way South, and we sell upscale imports, jewelry, home decor, locally and regionally crafted items, and other nice things.

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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 stop-loss coverage for the entire business, which is used if the aggregate (all employee) expenses reach an even higher threshold, so that the risk to

the business is somewhat limited. The result is that the employer only pays for the amount of medical expenses incurred, plus administrative costs. Any surplus from the expected costs is kept by the employer.

The Co-op switched to a Self-Funded Insurance plan in November 2004. We liked the idea of making our own schedule of coverage, 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 book-keepers (Corey, Grace, or Harry) at 357-1106

Olympia Food Co-op Balance Sheet • June 30th, 2005	
ASSETS	
Cash and Equivalents	\$ 271,050
Accounts Receivable	28,121
Merchandise Inventory	373,499
Prepaid Expenses	31,163
Real Property	842,451
Equipment	399,040
Investments	24,618
Accumulated Depreciation	(519,010)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,450,933</b>
LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable	\$ 218,091
Vacation and Sick Leave Reserve	114,730
Loans Payable	212,067
Member Dues Payable	384,436
NET WORTH	
Accumulated Profit—Operations	\$ 366,730
Accumulated Profit—Member Fees	154,879
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Worth</b>	<b>\$ 1,450,933</b>

Olympia Food Co-op Statement of Operations January - June 2005	
Sales (after discounts)	\$ 4,194,736
Cost of Goods Sold	(2,985,597)
Gross Revenue from Sales	1,209,139
Other Revenue	8,773
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,217,913</b>
Community and Marketing Expenses	33,882
Staffing Expenses	914,123
Operations Expenses	158,553
Depreciation Expense	24,045
Interest Expense	6,857
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,137,461</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 80,452</b>

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**Submissions:** Contact Jennifer Shafer at (360)-789-7313 or at olycoopnews@yahoo.com

# 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](http://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 those 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 vegetarian 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/spiritually 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.



## Ranger: The Free Range Chicken

Ranger is the company from which we purchase most of our chicken. All of their chickens are free-range and are raised exclusively on company farms located in Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro Woolley and Stanwood. The farms are within a 25-mile radius of the plant where they are monitored by a professional team to make sure a high standard of care is adhered to. They are able to tell you which farm the chickens came from and when.

Ranger chickens are fed a diet of corn, soy, vitamins, and minerals. No antibiotics or growth hormones are used in their feed or water. They add no animal by-products or animal fats to their diets. They depend on the natural fat content of the corn to provide energy for the birds. Their feed is made by Draper Valley Farms, and they follow a rigid program that does not diverge from Ranger's strict standards.

Typical Ranger Poultry Houses (barn) are approximately 40 feet wide and 350 feet long. They are equipped with temperature control, feed and watering systems, and are ventilated for constant supply of fresh air. The houses are cleaned for every new flock. The ground surface of the pen is dirt with natural grasses and weeds. The chickens access these pens through doors along the side of the building.

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 impact.

## Applegate Farms

Applegate Farms ([www.applegatefarms.com](http://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 encourages 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](http://www.certifiedhumane.com)), whose mission is: "to improve the welfare of farm animals by providing viable, 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.

## Sara Joe's Pork Products

Sara Joe's ([www.sarajoes.com](http://www.sarajoes.com)) is a ranch owned and operated by Joe and Sara Delong in St. John's, Washington. It began as a homestead in 1863 and has been in the Delong family ever since. They raise hogs for pork products on WSDA certified organic land. The living conditions and nutritional guidelines for the hogs are strictly governed in accordance with the USDA organic food program. They do not use antibiotics, pesticides, hormones, or animal by-products. Their products come free of nitrates, nitrites or MSG.




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 humanely in small herds using progressive 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*

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# Overnight Apple Butter

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

*A mixture of apple varieties will produce a rich, complex flavor.*

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 cup apple cider
- 1 Tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- A dash of ground mace
- 10 medium apples, peeled, cored, and cut into large chunks, about 2.5 pounds

1. Combine all ingredients in a 5-quart electric slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 10 hours or until apples are very tender.
2. Place a large fine-mesh sieve over a bowl; spoon 1/3 of apple mixture into sieve. Press mixture through sieve using the back of a spoon or ladle. Discard pulp. Repeat procedure with remaining apple mixture. Return to head until apple mixture is thick, stirring occasionally. Spoon into a bowl; cover and chill up to a week. Yields 4 cups.

**Stovetop variation:** Combine all ingredients in a Dutch oven. Cover and cook over medium-low heat one hour or until apples are very tender, stirring occasionally. Strain through a sieve as in step 2. Return mixture to pan. Cook, uncovered, over medium-low heat 15 minutes or until thick, stirring frequently.

# A is for Apple

by **Maureen Tobin**, Staff Member



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 apples can be a little dizzying, reminding us that there's always 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 bitter 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 started to grow first, followed by apple cuttings from all over Europe. By the nineteenth century, even the smallest farms had a few apple trees; many of the apples would be considered poor for eating by today's standards, but were ideal for feeding to livestock and making hard cider, an important staple in those days.

One reason apples spread so thoroughly across the U.S. was due to the hard work of John Chapman, more fondly known as Johnny Appleseed, who planted hundreds of orchards especially in the Midwest and Ohio

River Valley. He also joined to help settlers in the Northwest Territories, who were required to plant 50 apple or pear trees to obtain a land deed. These efforts helped to make the U.S. a huge producer of apples as well as a major consumer—Americans on average eat 20 pounds of fresh apples a year.

About 100 varieties are being grown commercially in the U.S. today, with the top 10 comprising over 90% of the crop. Large commercial orchards and the advent of refrigerated storage changed apple production, as growers limited their crops to varieties that store well, resist bruising, and simply look good, regardless of taste. The tide may be turning, however, as higher quality heirloom apples are once again becoming popular. Red Delicious, which is synonymous with the American apple and has always dominated commercial markets, for the first time in 2002 accounted for less than half the apple crop. In fact, apples that were unheard of 15 years ago, like Fuji and Braeburn, now account for a third of the crop total.

The flavor and texture of apples are highly influenced by their surroundings, as climate and soil conditions affect sugar content and ripening patterns. Washington is such a great place to grow apples because a long cool fall is often necessary for the fruits to ripen properly. 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 flavor and cooking purpose, and not the supermarket qualities 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 too (keeps them afloat for bobbing games). The best eating apples are juicy, firm, crisp, and aromatic. Most breeding programs today focus on eating apples, because sadly, people just don't cook as much as they used to. A less juicy apple is good for pies and cobblers, and many cooks prefer a tart or acidic apple for this kind of baking (Gravenstein, Granny Smith). For baking whole in the oven, a firm sweet dessert apple works best, one that doesn't disintegrate easily, such as Jonagold or Rome. To make jellies, look for acidic, juicy apples that will seem barely ripe and should be high in pectin (Pippin is a good one to try). Apples that don't discolor easily are best for salads and applesauce, try Pink Lady or Ginger Gold. They should be stored in a covered container in the fridge, since apples like humidity.

It definitely doesn't hurt that apples are good for you! With about five grams of fiber per apple, just one provides you with a quarter of the daily RDA. They also contain pectin, which helps to control cholesterol and blood sugar, as well as assisting intestinal function. Raw apple is considered a good treatment for babies and older adults experiencing diarrhea or other bowel or colon problems.

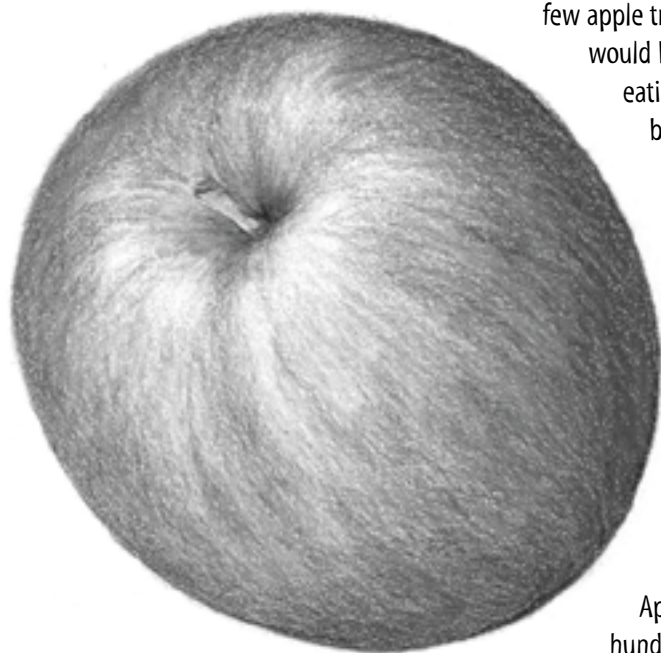
Apples are a source of potassium and vitamins C, G, and B, with a particularly high amount of vitamin A. Eating apples helps the body absorb iron and calcium from other foods and are also showing up on the lists of phytochemical-rich foods. Many researchers believe phytochemicals called flavonoids reduce 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 system too: many growers get less money for their apples than it takes 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 4 cents, farmers get 7 cents, wholesalers and transporters take 21 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.applejournal.com](http://www.applejournal.com), a website run by an apple lover in Michigan. For more information about farm worker rights, go to [www.ufw.org](http://www.ufw.org).



Animal Products *continued from page 13*

Their attention to quality, organics, environmental impact and ethical standards is common for most naturally produced animal products.

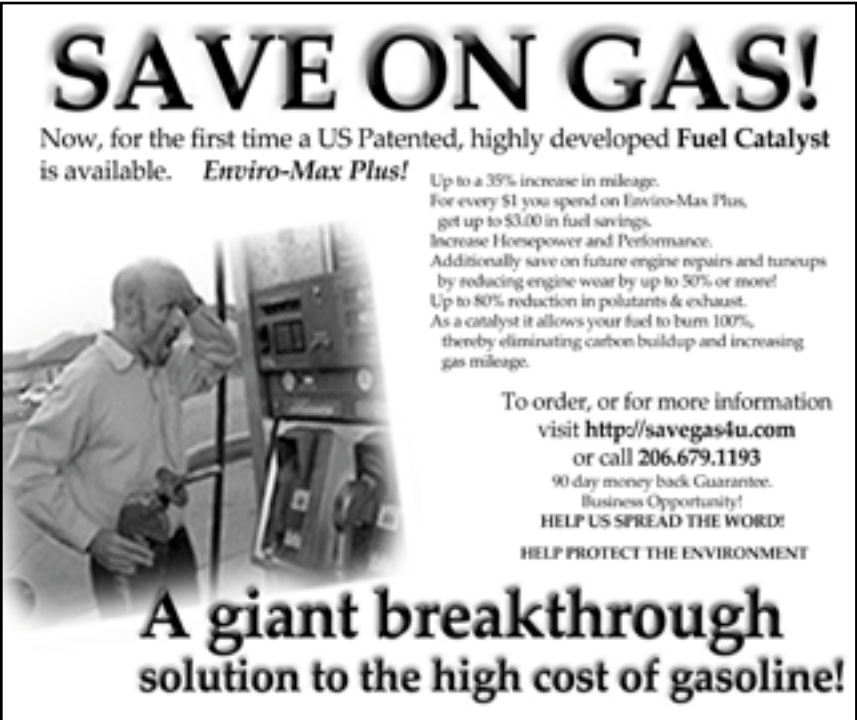
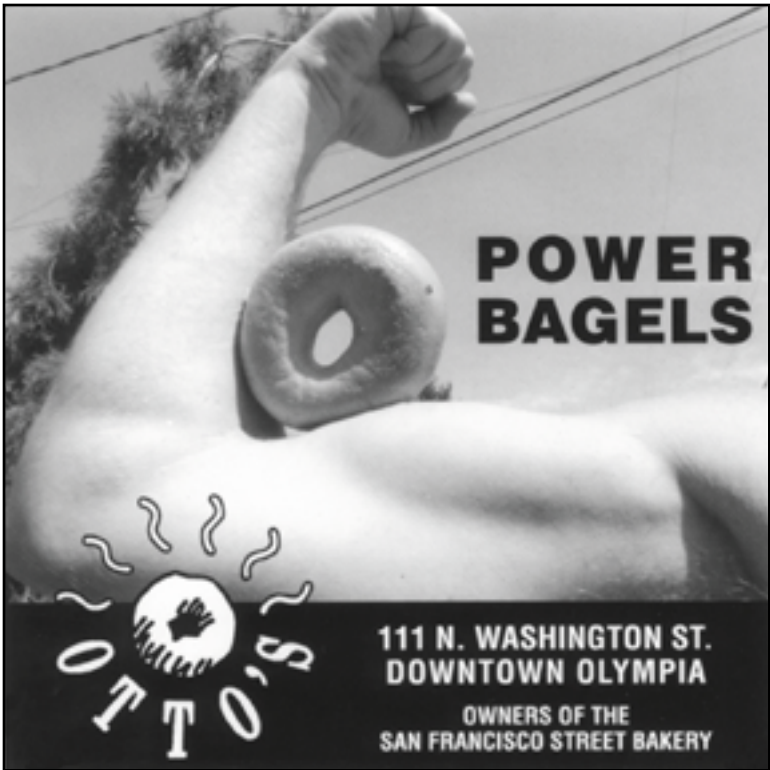
In this article, it would be impossible to argue all of the various reasons for and against diets that include animal foods. A diet is a highly individual choice and/or need and shouldn't be "legislated" by any organization. It is a quandary; most of us love animals and grew up steeped in imagery of 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.



Announcements

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 scouring 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.



# Co-op News

A bi-monthly publication for members of the Olympia Food Co-op and its surrounding communities

October / November 2005

## Celebrate Co-op Month and Fair Trade Month

**Co-op Voter Guide & Ballot**  
**Co-op Center in Olympia**  
**Fair Trade within Reach**



Co-op members  
and volunteers  
enjoy the 2005  
Harvest Party.

October is National Co-op Month—a time to celebrate the ideals and real successes of co-operative ventures. Take time to share with others your love for the Olympia Food Co-op! We continue to grow in membership, staff, and size, and the future is full of opportunities for increasing our accessibility, creating and supporting local economy and community, and sharing with others our

love for natural and organic foods and products.

This issue highlights our upcoming election cycle and provides all of us with an opportunity to enact our right to participate and vote. You will find a special **member ballot in this issue**.

Also, read on to find out how the Co-op actively supports Fair Trade, supports other groups in creating Co-ops, and

how we are beginning to determine our growth as a business and organization in the upcoming years.

Inside are the seven **Co-operative Principles** carried out by the Olympia Food Co-op and set forth by co-ops around the world. For more information about National Co-op Month, check out **www.co-opmonth.org**.



Members of the Co-op's Board  
of Directors engage in a Fall  
2005 retreat which focussed  
on long-range planning.

### Kids Corner

## What is it?



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 • Anabelle, age 10 • Amaya, age 9 • Quinn, age 7 • Torsten, age 9 • Quinn, age 3 • Kai, age 6 • Brett, age 9

### What is it?

Deadline: November 1st, 2005

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Guess \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you want to pick up  
your gift certificate?

☐ Eastside

☐ Westside

Please join the Co-op  
Board of Directors for

## 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)

What: **Meeting, Food, Entertainment, Celebration**

### 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

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