About Privilege and Oppression

The subject of anti-oppression is multifaceted and makes every person think of something different. Even though there are many researched and documented facts on the subject, it inevitably triggers massive amounts of emotion. Some of you may be reading this and thinking warily: “What weird stuff is this Co-op staff person going to say that could possibly touch on my experience?” Many of you maybe asking, “So, what exactly is anti-oppression?” To break it down to basics, I’ll just say this: the society we live in continues to function by keeping many different populations oppressed, the dominant culture/population in control, and everything as “normal.” We see this every day in acts of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, anti-Semitism, binary gender expectations, xenophobia, ageism, etc. These oppressive thoughts, behaviors, and habits are all ways to keep the dominant culture on top and anyone or anything else down. The more we identify with populations that are oppressed, the more we see things through those eyes. They are all attempts to define an individual or a group of people as something other than “normal.”

It’s More Than Just Talking

Anti-oppression is about recognizing these realities we live with and getting down to the truth about how these realities actually affect us as individuals, as a community, and as a larger society. The work continues as we break down oppression in order to make changes that will be better for all of us. In order to do the work of “anti-oppression,” we have to be ready to get down and dirty and uncomfortable. We have to be ready to get rid of lies we have believed that have sometimes kept us comfortable. We have to be able to get past the intentions in our actions and the actions of others and face their true impact. Make no mistake, this work may not be very fun, but it can be transforming and liberating, and therefore very rewarding. No instant gratification here. In this work you will feel like you are going over the same points time after time, but when you look closely, you will see that each time you pass the same landmark, it has changed a little bit. This is, of course, the simplest explanation of oppression and anti-oppression. As you may know, or at least may be guessing by now, this issue is deep and multi-dimensional and will not be explained in a short article.

What Does This Have to Do With the Co-op?

The Olympia Food Co-op has traditionally been dedicated to social justice issues. The founders and early workers (some of whom are still working here) were and are activists on many different levels. Social change work was written into the founding documents. The mission statement of the Co-op states: “We strive to make human effects on the earth and its inhabitants positive and renewing and to encourage economic and social justice.”

Some of the goals in the mission are:
- “Support efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society” and “Support efforts to increase democratic process.”
- “We have to be ready to get down and dirty and uncomfortable. We have to be ready to get rid of lies we have believed that have sometimes kept us comfortable. We have to be able to get past the intentions in our actions and the actions of others and face their true impact. Make no mistake, this work may not be very fun, but it can be transforming and liberating, and therefore very rewarding. No instant gratification here. In this work you will feel like you are going over the same points time after time, but when you look closely, you will see that each time you pass the same landmark, it has changed a little bit. This is, of course, the simplest explanation of oppression and anti-oppression. As you may know, or at least may be guessing by now, this issue is deep and multi-dimensional and will not be explained in a short article.”
Co-op News

Finance Report

Why Doesn’t the Co-op Take Credit Cards?

By Kitty Koppelman, Staff Member

ack in 1999, the Co-op did extensive research to decide whether to join the throngs of merchants and consumers who were moving into the wonderful world of plastic payment systems. At that time, we decided that the costs couldn’t justify the convenience, so we bought ATMs to try to address the needs of members who shop without carrying cash or a checkbook. Since then, paying with plastic has increasingly become the accepted (and expected) norm for conducting business. The ATMs have done very well, but in the interest of serving our membership, it may be time to enter the 21st century. The Co-op’s Finance Committee has decided to take another look at this possibility.

How it Works

Here’s what happens when you use your credit or debit card to buy something in a store: First, your card number is scanned, swiped, or entered into the store’s system. The store has a contract with a data processing company to process retail transactions. The data processor sends and receives information electronically between three places: the cardholder’s bank, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the store’s bank. After the card is swiped, the availability of funds or credit for the card is checked. If the funds or credit are there, they are withdrawn or debited and sent through the Federal Reserve Bank’s Automated Clearing House. Then the funds are transferred (within 1-2 business days) to the store’s bank account.

How Much Does it Cost?

All of this may sound fast and easy, but the part that the consumer doesn’t necessarily know about is the fee that the store pays to use this service. For a business of our size, the cost of the data processing ranges from 1.4% - 1.8% of the sale, plus transaction fees of $0.12 - $0.25 per transaction. Now, 1.8% - 1.4% of the sale, plus 1.8% of the sale plus transaction fees, plus the cost of the data processing ranges from 1.4% - 1.8% of the sale, plus transaction fees of $0.12 - $0.25 per transaction. Now, 1.8% might not sound like a huge price to pay for the convenience of plastic, but let’s look at the big picture.

We polled several co-ops who accept credit/debit cards and found that an average of 40% of their sales are paid for with plastic. If our Co-op were to achieve its budgeted sales of $9.3 million in 2006, and 40% of those sales were paid for with plastic, and our processing fee was 1.5%, it would cost us $55,800 in data processing costs plus around $25,000 in transaction fees for the year. Other food co-ops simply absorb these costs as part of their regular expenses. And in case you’re thinking what I’m thinking, stores are prohibited from passing fees on to the cardholders.

Should We or Shouldn’t We?

Our members adapt to so many things that are weird about our Co-op, and not accepting credit and debit cards is just one more thing that makes our Co-op special. But we wonder how much we are actually losing in sales because we don’t accept cards for purchases. Although the costs seem quite prohibitive, we can’t ignore the fact that our members are constantly asking us to accept plastic. There’s still much research to be done before we jump off the cliff. It doesn’t seem like our sales growth is hurting because we don’t take cards, but sales would likely increase even more if we did start taking them. The other co-ops we’ve talked to tell us that their percentage of card sales (as well as sales in general) is going up all the time. We are truly an anomaly among 50 million (and even smaller) businesses.

There are many philosophical issues to be grappled with. Among them are: the fact that supporting big-business data processing corporations like VISA goes against our mission; consumers who don’t even use plastic end up paying for it through higher prices as businesses attempt to recover costs; although a fact of life for many, buying food on credit is not sustainable and doesn’t support our mission; and member requests and convenience shouldn’t be ignored. Keep watching here and in the stores as we go through the steps of re-examining this complex and potentially expensive issue. In the meantime, we still accept cash!
**Working Member Profile**

**Jim Morgan**

by Bec Giffen, Working Member Coordinator

It's a cool December morning. Walking into the Eastside Co-op I'm relieved by the warmth, but when I open up the cooler door, and Jim Morgan steps out, a rush of cold air comes into the hallways. He mentions to me that his hands were freezing this morning, too, while he was out at his place feeding the animals. It's been a cold morning for him.

We step into the backroom to warm up and get comfortable. Quoting him from an earlier phone conversation, I ask Jim if he's ready for his “ten minutes of fame.” We laugh and start the interview.

Jim first came to Olympia on a vacation in 1989. He stopped to use the bathroom at the Lacey library and loved the building. Soon after that trip, in early 1992, he moved here from L.A. That’s when he started volunteering at the Westside Co-op, which held out about through one of the local papers. At the Westside store, Jim did just about anything; the only things he hasn't done are produce and cashiering. When the Eastside store opened he moved over here and “Kinda helped open the store.” For five years Jim worked in the cooler on Tuesdays and remembers with fondness that there were a crew of people he got to know.

After a while he saw that there was a need for more help on Thursdays with the delivery and started volunteering on Thursdays as well. For Jim, volunteering is about being in fondness that there were a crew of people he got to know. After a while he saw that there was a need for more help on Thursdays with the delivery and started volunteering on Thursdays as well. For Jim, volunteering is about being involved in a “cooperative thing.” He says he’s been here long enough that he knows the cooler well and can help with ideas about moving things around and solving problems.

Jim is a big fan of the cooler. He says, “A lot of people don’t want to work in the cooler. I like the order. I like to focus and make it look neat. My house isn’t like that.” He enjoys the solitude and he feels a satisfaction in getting the job done at the end of his shift, “not like fighting a never-ending battle with the onions.”

Jim likes that the Co-op is like an old fashioned grocery store; people know his name, like a corner store. He compared the Co-op to a place in his neighborhood he went to as a child called the “little store.” It was in a garage in a house, a place that he’d go to after school and get a soda pop, and the owner knew him by name; she knew everybody. Jim says the Co-op fills a gap that Safeway doesn’t. He’s impressed that Fred Meyer and Top Foods try to imitate the Co-op, but they can’t beat our prices.

As a retired social worker, Jim says he chose the Co-op to volunteer at, and not somewhere else, because it was easy and it didn’t require much training. He also said that he wanted to find, “a new part of me” away from thirty years of social work, away from all the paper work, and besides, “it is a nice way to spend a morning.”

I asked Jim about the funniest thing that’s happened to him since he’s worked at the Co-op. He lifted up his chin and started laughing. He recalled a time when he was working in the cooler, stocking cheese and salsa. There was a kid standing there sucking her thumb with her mom looking into the cooler with the door open. They were there for a while with the door open so inside the cooler Jim said, “Could you close the door?” The kid started screaming; she was so scared. Jim came out and let her know it was just a person in there. He said this is not uncommon in the cooler. One time he was pushing forward the eggs, and someone jumped. Shoppers don’t always realize that there is someone in there stocking the food on the shelves.

In his last words, Jim said, “I would encourage people to want to volunteer to work in the cooler; it’s an interesting part of the operation.”

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**Volunteer Events February-March 2006**

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 1½ hour orientation.

Cleaning Parties happen periodically 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.

Volunteer where you really count—Inventory. Inventory is a fun and easy way to help out. The next inventory will be Friday, March 31st, 7 pm at both stores. Please join us for food, friends and fun, while we count everything in the store.

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For more information on volunteering at the Co-op, please contact Polly 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.
Anti-oppression continued from page 1

opened, there were 12 collective members, and that number doubled with the opening of the new store. Each year, more staff has been needed to meet the demands of the ever-growing business. At this time, the collective has 56 members.

As the group was growing, Staff felt the need to "diversify." At that time, diversity mostly meant recruiting and hiring qualified people of color. While this was a well-intentioned act, growth and actual diversification meant dealing with issues the organization wasn't prepared to face. Conflicts over gender, race, and class came up as a result of the growth. This outcome and how it manifested was unexpected. In order to help Staff get through the ensuing challenges, there was an effort to become more educated about attending "diversity trainings."

One thing that became more and more clear was that there was a whole new dynamic atmosphere when it came to communication here at the Co-op. You see, when you have diversity, you bring into the mix all the realities of the society at large. The varying realities of oppression automatically make it so that not everyone has the same voice. Remember the part from the beginning about how our society is made up of individuals who are all in different places with this work, based on their identities and self-awareness. In a survey that we did last year, we found that the spectrum of Staff awareness goes all the way from thinking that oppression doesn’t even exist and efforts towards anti-oppression should be kept out of their workplace to some who are dealing with it on a daily and continual basis and desperately wanting their workplace to be safer for them. So, now where do we go? How do we find a common place to work on this together as an organization and to share it with the larger community? Can we?

In the last few years, many conflicts based on issues of oppression have led Staff toward having to figure out our stance on anti-oppression work in the organization. Many Staff have been doing individual work toward their own understanding. That work looks like everything from a book group, to intense conversations, to dealing with privilege and the conflict that brings. Reflecting on the survey I spoke of earlier, everyone is still in dramatically different places with that work. As for the organization, there has been a slow movement to incorporate anti-oppression into our daily work and awareness.

We are trying to get our organizational documents to reflect ideals of social change through anti-oppression. In the Staff’s Collective Process and Consensus Decision Making Manual it states: “The Olympia Food Co-op was founded and developed almost exclusively by white people. The main issues of privilege were around class, sexual orientation, and gender. We have consciously worked to diversify our staff. With that end, we have worked to improve our education with regard to oppression and empowerment. In order to survive we must continue that work wholeheartedly. This means that we must examine our agent rank and make goals to develop into change agents. All of our current materials regarding work and how we work together must be evaluated and expanded in order to create a dynamic of change and growth and empowerment. It is not enough that we say we believe in diversity and equal rights for everyone. We have to actively embrace our different jobs with regard to change and development, and we must evaluate our progress with regard to that work as we evaluate our progress meeting order deadlines and giving customer service.”

So, we are talking about embracing this work. Agreeing on how to do that and using the tools of consensus with a group of people as large as we are has proven to be a daunting task. We are merely at the stage of realizing that in order to do this work as a group, we need to start with ourselves as individuals, and we also need to acknowledge the effect of this work on everyday tasks in the stores. As a collective, we need to agree upon ways to support each individual in their own work and be able to recognize this work in an evaluative and empowering way that acknowledges our differences in ways that go further than we ever have. We need to be able to see each individual work with and be aware of how societal oppressions affect one’s reality as a collective member. We need to look at ourselves with that lens also.

Scratching the Surface

Beyond the ideals written into our documents, the actual expectations remain ambiguous. At this time, new Staff and Board of Directors members go through a 3 to 6 hour intensive anti-oppression training. We are also spending quite a bit of time trying to figure out how to rework our collective management structure to better fit our growth in numbers and awareness of social justice. In our reorganization of the management structure, there are a number of organizational committees either existing or being created for the purpose of supporting, educating, and empowering individuals in the issues of oppression. Some of these committees are the Anti-oppression Committee, the Conflict Resolution Committee, and the Consensus Process Committee. These committees and others are creating space to deal with how societal reality impedes equality and consensus at the Co-op, in Olympia, and in the world as a whole. We are trying to create structures we can all agree to that will empower the voices of oppressed individuals.

We are just beginning to scratch the surface of understanding. As we slowly evolve, we hope to share our community with what we discover, and we also hope to support the efforts being made by groups and individuals outside of the Co-op to move toward a more aware, egalitarian, and sustainable society.

Tara Perkins
(Member-at-large)

Cathy Harding
(Member-at-large)

Jackie Krzyzek
(Member-at-large)

Tom Bozeman
(Staff member)

Onyx Dixon
(Staff member)

Kim Langston
(Staff member)

Marie Poland
(Staff member)

Samantha Chandler
(Staff member)

Every Thu 7pm:

The Nalanda Institute
Dharma discussion
Meditation &

The Blue Heron Bakery
www.blueheronbakery.com

The Nalanda Institute Buddhist Study and Meditation Every Thu 7-9pm MEDITATION & DHARMA DISCUSSION
QUALITY TEACHING, FRIENDLY GROUP 1211 Wilson Street, Olympia INFO AT (360) 786-1309 www.nalandaolywa.org

February/March 2006

page 4
Putting Anti-oppression Ideals into Your Shopping Cart

by Virginia Lange, Merchandizing Co-Coordinator and Grocery Department Co-Coordinator

From the Product Selection guidelines (the full text is available on the Co-op’s website: http://www.olympiafood.coop):

“The Co-op will not carry products whose retail packaging is deemed exploitive or oppressive. Such determination may be made by the department manager, the merchandising team, or the staff as a whole. Packaging may be considered exploitive or oppressive if the graphics, narrative or product name use or promote harmful stereotypes based on sex, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, looks, class, education, politics, religion, national origin or species. The Co-op will actively confront producers who use such stereotypes in merchandising their products. In the event that wholesale packaging, which is not used in a display, is deemed exploitive, we may continue to carry the products in question. We will notify the producer of such products that we find the packaging offensive and why.”

The Staff Buys it First

It happens every month. My eyes meet those of other Staff across the loose circle gathered in the crowded back room at the Eastside Co-op. Sometimes the looks are incredulous and coupled with a snorted, “What were they thinking?” Other times the looks and the silence stretch out as we try to wrap our minds and hearts around the nuance of the situation. After the long and inane “discussion” that can precede it, the talk is always the same. We look and the silence “What were they thinking!” Other times that are beginning in the commercial world, has a great product, but we are not likely to be able to access mainstream stores. We often sign “intent to sell” sheets, which help small manufacturers get into distributorships. These “intent to sell” sheets are used by distributors when they decide on picking up new products. Often these are women- or minority-owned businesses that lack marketing departments. Our fame for pickiness combined with robust sales is powerful with distributorships. Our reputation in the co-op world for our adherence to non-oppressive packaging is formidable.

Deciding What (not) To Sell

Yet, as hard as we try to be non-oppressive, there are still issues we can’t figure it out. It’s like the time someone explained to me the difference between the Christian Catholic concept of sins of commission and omission. Both are wrong, but do they have the same weight of wrongness? Is it okay for a minority-owned business to make funny stereotypical images on their products of their own culture? What about companies who make wonderful products that meet our needs and have bad labor practices? Are the manufacturers of a product stupid or oppressive? How do we know, and how can we prove it to the satisfaction of all? It’s easy to say no to a diet product with a skinny, bouncy blonde woman on the label, but what about the new Blue Sky Soda packaging or the Buena Tortilla? Is it oppressive to have “packaging that reflects the Southwest” as the vice president at Blue Sky said, or is it a rip-off of Native culture? Is it okay for someone who is Romany to sell a recipe for tea labeled “Gypsy Tea”? Are we shutting off that woman’s access to a lucrative market to avoid offending Romany customers?

The Co-op’s Merchandizing Coordinators are trying to figure out a process to figure it all out. The moral high ground is shifting underneath our feet, which is why we are trying to figure out a system rather than a list of “no-no’s.” Our concepts of oppression become broader as we gain awareness (just look at a magazine from the 1950’s if you disagree). We’re working on the beginning stages of what that would look like as a group process and also a grid system to evaluate a product. We would like to be able have the ability to have more transparency around product selection. Many of our systems are still holdouts from the old days of one Co-op, only a few thousand members, and twelve staff members, when you could run into whomever you needed to ask about a product in the course of a day. How we have fifty plus staff, at least 13,000 members, and two stores. We still embrace the small and different vendor, and we are working to support them in a system that will grow and change as the Co-op matures.

I’ve included the Product Selection Process guidelines for your information. “Product line decisions are made by a group of different individuals and groups. The first level of responsibility for product selection lies with department managers; the merchandising coordinators are responsible for overseeing all ordering and the storewide product mix. The staff collective oversees and can override decisions made by individual staff members and makes proposals to the Board of Directors. The Board makes decisions concerning broad Co-op policy. Individual members can impact product line development and production policy through the suggestion bowl, interaction with department managers, proposals to the staff collective or the Board, and, finally, through referendum and ballot measure to the general membership.”

The Co-op is always accepting employment applications for Staff collective positions.

Applications and information are available at the stores, or can be downloaded from the Co-op’s website: www.olympiafood.coop
Getting Into Grains: A Closer Look at Millet and Amaranth

by Maureen Tobin, Staff Member

Whole grains are all over the nutritional news these days. The benefits of including whole grains in the diet are unparalleled; the vitamin, mineral, and fiber profile of whole grains cannot be substituted for a healthy diet. There are many grains that don’t have much popularity in our society but deserve a lot more fame. Millet and amaranth are two that fit that description: they are versatile and easy to cook, sustainable to grow, inexpensive, and nutritious powerhousees perfect for a balanced diet. Diversifying your diet is also a good ecological idea because supporting the production of grains like amaranth and millet promotes more responsible water usage and biodiversity in parts of the world that need productive, sustainable agriculture.

Millet

Millet is one of the oldest foods in the archaeological record, possibly even the first cereal grain to be domesticated. It has been used in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East for at least 4,000 years and today sustains one-third of the world’s population. Millet grows well in hot, dry climates that are not conducive to growing other grains that need irrigation and fertilization. It is a tall, erect, annual grass that grows to about 6 feet in height and is quite hardy. The seeds are small and round, with a light brown color. Millet is a staple food in many parts of the world, and is used in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as a staple food. It is also used as a rice substitute or stuffing. Higher amounts of water should be used to make a cereal or bread ingredient, although uncooked millet can be added to muffin or bread recipes to add a nice crunch. Some recipes suggest cooking millet with juice instead of water—try apple or orange for a breakfast cereal. Millet can also be popped like corn for an interesting snack, or sprouted for use in salads and sandwiches. Millet flour can also be added to muffin or bread recipes to add a nice crunch. Some recipes suggest cooking millet with juice instead of water—try apple or orange for a breakfast cereal. Millet can also be popped like corn for an interesting snack, or sprouted for use in salads and sandwiches. Millet flour can be used in baking, usually as 30% of the mixture for yeast bread, or alone to make unleavened breads and pancakes.

Amaranth

Amaranth is one of the oldest crops of the Americas, its use dating back about 7,000 years. It was a staple as prevalent as maize before the Spanish disruption of the Inca and Maya civilizations, which revered its power and incorporated it into religious ceremonies. The Spanish church tried to eliminate the use of amaranth, hoping the ceremonies associated with it would end as well. Fortunately, its cultivation continued in a few remote areas so that the crop is widely used again today. Amaranth is an attractive plant with striking color ranging from red to white. Each plant produces as many as 100,000 seeds and is among the easiest of plants to grow, resistant to heat, drought, and disease. Unlike many other cultivated plants, the entire plant can be and is used, from seed to leaf to stem. Amaranth is sometimes known as Chinese Spinach or Yin Choy, as several species are eaten as greens in southern Asia, often cooked with a little mint. Peruvians use fermented amaranth seed to make chicha or beer. There the flowers are used to treat fevers and toothaches and as a colorant for food or decoration. Flowers are used in Ecuador to create a rum drink known to help regulate menstrual cycles.

In Mexico, the seeds are popped and mixed with sugar to make a treat called alegría, similar to an Indian confection called jaleo. A traditional Mexican drink called atole is made from milled and roasted seeds.

Recipes

Millet Salad or Stuffing

1 cup millet
2 cups water
1 large onion, chopped
1 large tomato
Garlic cloves, to taste
2 cups black beans, cooked or from can
1½ cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen
1 green chili, seeded and minced
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon salt
Dash of cinnamon
2 teaspoons cumin
½ cup almonds
1½ tsp vanilla
½ cup amaranth grain

Combine in large saucepan, adding cooked millet. Bring to boil, cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat, simmer for 15 minutes. Pour pudding into bowl, steam it, make cereals, soups, and dense bread called chapatti. In India and Africa, it is also used to make bread, baby food, and breakfast porridge. In Eastern Europe, millet has been used to make fermented beverages, cereals, and stuffings for cabbage rolls. In the U.S., millet is primarily grown and used for bird and cattle feed, but the acreage could be feeding millions.

It is easy to find conflicting information about cooking millet. Recipes vary on liquid amounts from 1 cup to 3½ cups water or stock per cup of millet. The less water added, the fluffier and drier the grain will be, which is better as a rice substitute or stuffing. Higher amounts of water should be used to make a cereal or bread ingredient, although uncooked millet can be added to muffin or bread recipes to add a nice crunch. Some recipes suggest cooking millet with juice instead of water—try apple or orange for a breakfast cereal. Millet has a mild, delicate, nutty flavor that does not seem soft enough. It is considered to be one of the least expensive, and nutritional powerhouses perfect for a balanced diet. Diversifying your diet is also a good ecological idea because supporting the production of grains like amaranth and millet promotes more responsible water usage and biodiversity in parts of the world that need productive, sustainable agriculture.

Amaranth Pudding

2 cups amaranth grain, cooked in 5 cups water about 20 minutes, covered
1 cup apple juice
1 cup raisins
1 cup almonds
½ tsp vanilla
Juice of ½ lemon
Grated rind of one lemon
Dash of cinnamon
Combine in large saucepan, cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat, simmer for 15 minutes. Pour pudding into individual bowls. Top with fresh fruit and chili. Recipe courtesy Dan Jason, The Whole Organic Food Book

Recipes continued on page 8
Meets the Staff

Eion McReady

by Jennifer Shafer, Editor

behind the singong voice and friendly greeting is Eion McReady, a Staff Member with the Co-op for over ten years. Currently a Cheese Manager on the Westside and the brave soul who administers the Co-op's substitute/temporary schedule (known as SASSY... “shifts and scheduling surprises for you”), Eion has been in all departments of the Co-op. When asked, he listed his various tenures as a working member coordinator, deli manager, grocery manager, and merchandiser manager ranging from 2-4 years at each post. Eion’s favorite role at the Co-op however, is working front-end shifts, where he is able to engage with the public. His exuberant personality, patience, and years of customer service make him an obvious and adept candidate for this position.

Prior to working at the Co-op, Eion spent many years in management positions within food service beginning with Domino’s in Centralia to the Deli at The Evergreen State College. While at Evergreen, he also coordinated food service with Conference Services and did some catering with them as well. It also where he learned to fold napkins! When the new store opened on the Eastside, Grace (Co-op Staff member) encouraged him to apply. Besides a trial run at living for an hour, have an experience at the parking lot sea, we could come as groups or neighborhoods in car, bus, or bike. He cited as an example the folks from Panorama City and the actual garden builds, which take place March through June. For more information, please see our website www.goodgrub.org.

Meet the Staff

Kim Langston

by Jennifer Shafer, Editor

It’s only been two years since Kim Langston has been on the Staff, but her positive impact on the Co-op is evident. A producer manager at the Eastside, Kim is active in helping the Co-op form partnerships with local farms in order to carry more of their products in our departments. This vision is in keeping with her education and past work experience in community development, social work, and participatory research.

She also recently, and with great excitement, joined the Co-op’s Growth Outreach Committee, which is working on solutions and visions for our growth. She feels that she will be able to apply her previous training and experience into her current work beyond the retail aspects of the Co-op. Some of her past work includes assisting low-income people in Tacoma with housing renovations, helping rural, Southern communities gain access to basic technology such as telephones, and working as an HIV case manager in Connecticut. She also lived in Washington, D.C. and worked on the People for Better TV campaigns, which advocated that PBS devote 5 minutes of programming to community use as well as other programming improvements. Currently, she is a teacher’s aide with Michi Thacker’s third grade class at Lincoln Elementary, and a counselor at a private summer camp.

When asked, Kim said her favorite thing about the Co-op is the people, particularly the working members. They help her to remember that the work is fun! She also loves working with the farmers. She enjoys being a friendly resource to the membership and the producers and wants people to feel well-treated at the Co-op.

She feels that by working at the Co-op she is in “60 relationships,” which require work and care. For Kim, success in these relationships relies on open and honest communication no matter how difficult a situation may be. At the same time, learning about her personal boundaries has been crucial to her continued well-being as a Staff person.

She has come to see that the Staff and membership need more mutual understanding of their experiences at the Co-op. She has come to understand that many of the members are not working members and are surprised to realize the Co-op is not a regular grocery store. Similarly, she thinks the Staff does not always understand the membership’s shopping experience in the stores. Kim believes making the Co-op “a more humane working environment” would improve many of the frustrations we all share. She adds, “this Co-op is very special, and when I return from being away, I feel like I breathe a bit easier.”

Kim hopes the future of the Co-op includes more participation of local farms, with inclusion of other locally produced foods as well as produce. She would like to see the Co-op situated within a stronger community context, to offer more to the community such as classrooms, a community kitchen, etc. She also feels that the Staff would have a stronger retention if the Co-op were able to utilize the Staff’s other skills and talents. We spoke by telephone.

Kim is evident. A produce manager ranging from 2-4 years tenures as a working member coordinator, Co-op. When asked, she listed her various responsibilities as a Staff person.

Eion said his life is “spiritually driven”, and it makes our Co-op unlike any other. As the Co-op grows, Eion hopes we keep our sense grassroots, what makes us interesting and unique, while keeping up with necessary changes. This is well-said from someone who continues to keep alive the qualities that do make our Co-op unlike any other.

Interesting Tidbits:

Hometown: Centralia, WA (born in Tacoma)
Number of Siblings: Two older sisters
Age upon moving to Olympia: 25
Favorite Foods: Fried chicken, chocolate pudding, mashed potatoes, green salad
Favorite Music: He listens to everything!
Favorite Movie: It’s a Pop to Japanese opera… the only exceptions are televangelist and gospel

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Garden-Raised Bounty’s Kitchen Garden Garden Project

G Rub (Garden-Raised Bounty) is gearing up for another busy season. The Kitchen Garden Project will be building over eighty gardens for low/no-income families in Thurston and Mason Counties this spring! One of the best ways to support this project is through the purchase of a garden for you. Would you like to grow your own vegetables in your own backyard this year? When you purchase a garden with G Rub, all of the proceeds go towards a matching garden for a local family in need. A G Rub Garden includes a site design, fertile soil, a diversity of seeds and starts, and a growing guide. G Rub will build you a healthy raised-bed garden that can grow up to 565 pounds of fresh organic produce each year! If you already have gardening experience, please consider volunteering as a Garden Mentor and help a neighbor get familiar with their new garden. G Rub is offering Garden Mentor Training on March 4th for all those interested in contributing to our community in this way. We also have many other volunteer opportunities including our Seed Sorting Party on Feb. 18th and the actual garden builds, which take place March through June. For more information about these opportunities with G Rub please visit our website www.goodgrub.org or give us a call at 753-5522. Here’s to a bountiful 2006!
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**Recipes**

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**Amaranth “Grits”**

1 cup amaranth
1 clove garlic, chopped or pressed
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 cups water or vegetable stock
Salt or soy sauce to taste

Combine the amaranth, garlic, onion, and stock in a saucepan. Boil, reduce heat, and simmer, covered, until most of the liquid has been absorbed, about 20 minutes. Stir well if the mixture is too thin or the amaranth not quite tender (it should be crunchy, but not gritty-hard), boil gently while stirring constantly until thickened, about 30 seconds. Add salt or soy sauce to taste.

In a few drops of hot sauce and garnish with chopped tomatoes. Recipe courtesy of Karen Raley

**White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**

by Peggy McIntosh

This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School and is available online at www.freesistance.org.

Through work to bring materials from women’s studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men’s unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women’s status in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can’t or won’t support the idea of lessening men’s. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women’s disadvantages. These denial protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there is most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of finding new curricular materials that testify to conditions that I think in my case attach to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I say they will work to improve women’s status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can’t or won’t support the idea of lessening men’s. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women’s disadvantages. These denial protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

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I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special advantages.

In other ways, I have often noticed men’s unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women’s status in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can’t or won’t support the idea of lessening men’s. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women’s disadvantages. These denial protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there is most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special advantages that I can count on in any situation. I can go into a music shop and count on being able to find what I want. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race.

continued on page 10
2005 is complete. The Earth has made one more trip around the sun. February 2006 is complete. The Earth has made one more trip around the sun. This year saw its inception with the new moon. It’s the place of the dark seed where all things become possible from the chaos of our imaginative dreaming.

As the Co-op works on what direction to steer all the energy that sales and membership growth is providing us, I want to note a shift in some business models: cooperation among businesses. Contrast this with survival of the fittest and mutual success. Competition between businesses is often a function of fear, which leaves us with solutions that have winners and losers, whereas the striving for mutual success comes from empathy and relatedness to one another and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. It has been rewarding having this understanding.

Thanks to Gail Sullivan and Cary Retlin for their generous efforts on the Board for the last two years. It has been rewarding having their unique viewpoints and their problem-solving skills. Gail kept the goal to increase empathy and relatedness to one another and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit. This is the aim of consensus, and is likely to result in holistic solutions where all benefit.

Also in the last elections, we saw the Bylaws proposals and to vote. Now for 2006, it is time to wade through these significant recommendations, and it took the Board another year to reach consensus on the plan for the elections. Thanks to all who took the time to wade through these significant Bylaws proposals and to vote. Now for 2006, the Board will be working on implementing these changes. One element of this will be our first Member Handbook, which will include the process for Member Initiatives. Finally, we will have a consolidated and usable source of information on all elements of Member involvement at the Co-op.

This last year was marked by booming growth. Some years, our projections for growth are outstripped by actual sales. When we do see a profit, some of that money is distributed through bonuses to the staff and to various charities. This year, we were able to give over $10,000 to 21 different organizations. I’m proud of being part of an organization whose goals aren’t maximizing profits but are about making the world a better place.

We also hired six new Staff members, who have begun their training. They were hired using our new streamlined hiring system. Our goal with this system is to be able to hire excellent staff quickly when we need them. This is a wonderful development after years of chronic under-staffing. This should help ensure adequate cashier stations, stocked shelves, and the energy we need to restructure the Staff system and take on the research needed to make the best decision of what to do about our growth. The Co-op now has a new office on Columbia St, right across from Olympia Supply. The walls were painted with natural paints, and local professionals did the carpentry. We are sharing the space with the Free School, which is in step with our desire to provide support for local resources that share similar values.

The Growth Response Oversight Committee (GROC) has begun meeting. The question they are considering is: what to do about the growth of the Co-op? Their goal is to have a variety of options thoroughly explored using Member feedback and Staff research. Keep an eye out for ways to give input, and always feel free to put an idea in the comment boxes located inside the stores.

The new Ecological Planning Committee is planning how to conduct an energy audit of the Co-op so that we have a base line for measuring the success of changes we make and to prioritize areas to work on. See Marie Poland if you’re interested in joining this committee. It is an exciting committee to be on as the Co-op considers renovations and new store locations.

As always, Members are welcome to attend all Board meetings. The Board of Directors meets at 7:00 pm on the 4th Thursday of each month at the Free School / Co-op Meeting Space at 610 Columbia St SW.
Elusive and fugitive

I repeatedly forget each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, obnoxious, arrogant, and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege. A pattern of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turn, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was making that was passed on to me as a cultural outsider. I can be sure that if I need legal help my race will not be denied to me. I can take a job with an affirmative action program. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, picture books, greeting cards, and, in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people prop up those in power and serve to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and, I imagine, for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden system of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189 White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies (1988), by Peggy McIntosh, available for $4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges.

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TULIP’s Success of 2005 Promises More for Our Members

by Darlene Morales, TULIP Staff

Well, it is hard to believe, but TULIP Cooperative Credit Union—your Credit Union—has turned two! After two years of operation, TULIP now has over 700 members, with $500,000 on deposit and $524,000 in loans. TULIP also has sound operational processes in place, which help to protect it and you from unnecessary losses. This is all good news as we embark on a very important year for TULIP! This year is all about growing the membership and the business.

In 2005, TULIP added several new products and partnerships to benefit you:

• Mortgages—TULIP is now partnering with One Washington Financial, a credit union service organization. This affiliation allows us to offer our members competitive rates and fees, a high level of service, and a full range of first mortgage products.

• GAP Insurance—This insurance will help you pay off your full loan balance in the event that you experience a total loss on your vehicle. With car prices what they are today, and financing options that can stretch out seven years or more, many people can owe more on their auto loan than what the vehicle is actually worth. If you have moved or plan to move your loan to TULIP, we can determine your risk and help you protect yourself. Another big plus: the price you pay at TULIP for this insurance product is an average of $520 less than what you’ll pay at a dealership.

• Warranty Insurance—TULIP now offers warranty insurance that you can purchase on your vehicle—regardless of its age or mileage! So old or new, you can protect yourself from costly auto repairs. And again, our cost is far less than you will pay at a dealership.

In the upcoming weeks of 2006, we will be adding two more services:

• Q-Cash—This is a short-term loan product. This product has a reasonable fee, a two-pay-period payback time, no additional add-on fees, and we help you establish a savings plan that will help you with future emergencies.

• International Money Wiring—This is a service that will allow you to wire money to international destinations at a much lower cost than other wiring services. While we are excited to begin this New Year, we are anxious to express to you, the Co-op members (some of you already members of TULIP, some of you not yet) just how important your business is to us. We know there is plenty of competition for your business from the many fine financial institutions in Thurston County. However, we ask you to consider doing some of your business with TULIP. The more business you do, the stronger we become and the more we, along with you, are able to continue to achieve our mission to provide affordable financial services to low-income people.

The Co-op News Needs Your Help!

We are seeking help with the distribution of the Co-op News. Distribution would happen bi-monthly and would entail bringing the News to various businesses and organizations in the local area. Please call Kitty at the Westside store at 754-7665 for more information.
Kids Corner

What is it?

Deadline: March 1st, 2006

Name__________________________
Age___________________________
Guess__________________________

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

If you’re 10 or under, write your name and your guess on this form and put it in the What is It? box in the Co-op office at either store. 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 March 1st. A winners list will be at both Co-ops where you can ask a staff person for your coupon. Print neatly!

Last Issue’s What Is It was: Lentils!

Congratulations: Emily J., age 5 • Yvari, age 7 • Sophie, age 7.