



Co-op News

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

February / March 2006

Anti-oppression and the Co-op

by **monica villarreal**, Staff Member

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 may be 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 these things play out in blatant, subtle, and well-meant ways. The less we identify with these populations, the less we are able to see these things because our identity is connected with the dominant culture/population. Once we are made aware of oppression, not seeing these inequities is a choice that comes with privilege. The choice to remain ignorant and comfortable is one that anyone who identifies with the dominant culture in this society is able to

make everyday. The dominant culture is considered the "norm," and everything else is considered "other". The "norm" includes white, male, heterosexual, owning-class, american, christian, hard working, etc. The "other" is violent, scary, stupid, lazy, exotic, ethnic, fascinating, unattractive, attractive, too smart for its own good, needy, angry, unintelligible, really good at math, crazy, flaming, sinful, etc. You may be seeing the adjectives and descriptions connected to the "other" identity and recognize some of them as stereotypes. Maybe you feel that you have been identified as some of these things. Maybe you identify people you know this way. 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."

The Co-op has always supported peace efforts, local producers, fair trade, anti-globalization protests, and other social change activities. Many hours of Staff labor

and thought have gone into making the Co-op a more socially sustainable organization. Some examples of how this work has manifested are: the product selection and packaging guidelines, the boycott policy, support of the TULIP credit union, our low income, elder, and disability memberships and discounts, the assisted shopper program, and more.

A Brief History of the Staff Collective's Evolution

When the Co-op first became a storefront with paid workers, a very small group of people created the collective structure that the present staff still works under. That group of people decided to work collectively with a consensus decision-making structure. Consensus is a method of group decision-making that takes into account everyone's voice and where, ideally, everyone is heard equally. This structure is one of the backbones of the Co-op Staff collective. In its implicit inclusivity, consensus is a non-hierarchical method of decision-making. It is more work than voting or having a boss handing down their decisions to the workers, but the pay-off comes in the long run, and the Co-op is richer for that investment. Back to the history lesson.

So, as the Olympia Food Co-op grew over the years, the staff numbers grew as well. Originally the collective only numbered about 6 people. Before the Eastside store

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Co-op News

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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.

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Finance Report

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

By **Kitty Koppelman**, Staff Member

Back 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 20th 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% 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 \$9 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!



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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 hallway. 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 he’d found out about through one of the local papers. At the Westside store, Jim did just about everything; 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 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 fuss and

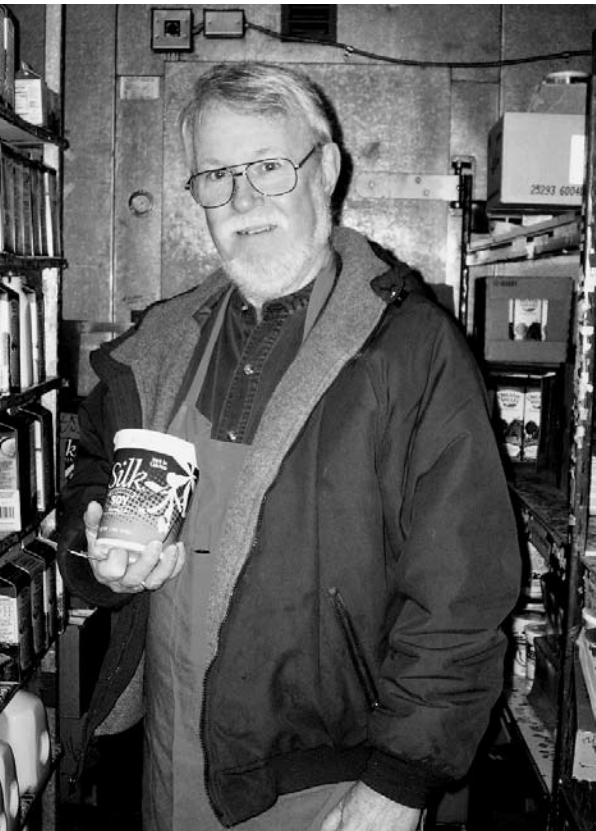
make it look neat. My house isn’t like that.” He enjoys the solitude and he feels a satisfaction in getting the job done at the end of his shift, “not like fighting a never-ending battle with the onions.”

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 from 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.”



When I asked Michael Lowsky, staff member and Dairy Queen (someone who orders and manages the dairy department) about Jim Morgan, he said, “Jim Morgan is indispensable. Dairy Queens all pray to the Jim Morgan G-d.”

- Facts about Jim Morgan:**
- Favorite items in the cooler to stock:** baby yogurts
 - Favorite items in the cooler to eat:** egg nog (once he froze it and then drank it a few months later and it was “pretty darn good”), peach kefir, cheese (dairy cheese, not fake)
 - Years he’s been volunteering:** 13

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 pro-

vided 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.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 January 8pm Westside Cleaning Party	30	31	1 February 6:30-8pm Westside VIT	2	3	4 1-2:30pm Eastside VIT
5	6	7	8	9 6-7:30pm Eastside VIT	10	11
12 6-7:30pm Westside VIT	13	14	15 6:30-8pm Westside VIT 8:30-11pm Eastside Bulk Clean	16 6-7:30pm Eastside VIT	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 6-7:30pm Eastside VIT	24	25
26 6-7:30pm Westside VIT	27	28	1 March 6:30-8pm Westside VIT	2	3	4 1-2:30pm Eastside VIT
5	6	7	8	9 6-7:30pm Eastside VIT	10	11
12 6-7:30pm Westside VIT	13	14	15 6:30-8pm Westside VIT 8:30-11pm Eastside Bulk Clean	16 6-7:30pm Eastside VIT	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 1-2:30pm Eastside VIT
26 6-7:30pm Westside VIT	27	28	29	30	31 7pm Eastside Inventory 7pm Westside Inventory	1 April

For more information about 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.

GROC

GROC is the Growth Response Oversight Committee, and the newest committee of the Co-op Board of Directors. It consists of 3 Board members, 4 staff members, and 6 members at large. We are currently in the process of detailing a work plan from the goals that were created at this past summer's Board Retreat regarding growth. At this point, we will be meeting two times a month to detail this plan. Stay tuned for ways to participate in our exploration to help answer the questions of: "If we grow- How? If not- Why?"

GROC Members include:

Samantha Chandler
(Board member / notetaker)

Jason Baghboudarian
(Board member)

Marie Poland (Staff member)

Kim Langston (Staff member)

Onyx Dixon (Staff member)

Harry Levine (Staff member /
Board member / facilitator),

Tom Bozeman
(Member-at-large)

Jackie Krzyzek
(Member-at-large)

Rueben Males
(Member-at-large)

Cathy Harding
(Member-at-large)

Larry Leveen
(Member-at-large)

Tara Perkins
(Member-at-large)

Anti-oppression continued from page 1

opened, there were 13 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, class, and race 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 by attending "diversity trainings".

One thing that became more and more clear was that there was a whole new dynamic afoot 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 works? So, as you may see, suddenly consensus seems a little idealistic. How can you hear everyone's voice equally if it is not the reality of the world? It seems many people may think, in this case, you can just create a place where, despite the realities of society, we will treat everyone the same and act as if there are no differences. Is that realistic? Is it sustainable? Is it even attainable? Do you think that we have accomplished that? Do we really want to?

Where the Staff is Going With This Work

From my experience of where we are at this time as an organization, we are just barely starting to see the reality of oppression, how it affects us, and what we can do about it. As it is, this organization 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.

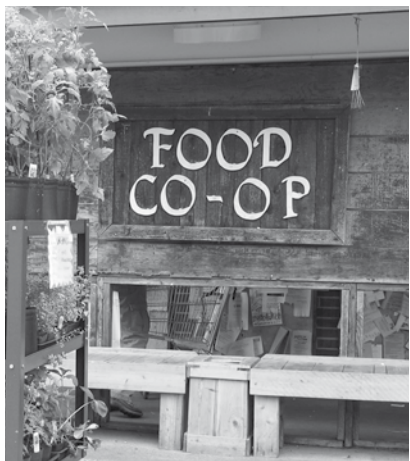
We are trying to get our organizational documents to reflect ideals of social change through anti-oppression. In the Staff's Collective Process and Consensus Decision Making Manual it states:

"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 expansion 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 we 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 same lens also.

Scratching the Surface

Beyond the ideals written into our documents, the actual expectations remain ambiguous. At this time, all 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 society disempowers, as well as hold accountable those with privilege. We are just beginning to scratch the surface of understanding. As we slowly evolve, we hope to share with our community 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.





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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 oppressive, 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 nuances of the situation. After the long silence, a dialogue begins. The talk is always about our values smacking up against the outside world. This is where the revolution continues in its own small way. It's called product selection.

Buyers and department managers meet with brokers and sometimes manufacturers who represent companies with new products. As buyers, we try to promote products made by groups that are usually unrepresented in the food industry. It takes a lot of money and infrastructure to break

into this business, which many cultures or groups do not have. We amaze other co-ops at conferences with our natural love of the different and unique vendor. We have at least 300 different regular vendors! Some brokers have told me, "If you can sell it to Oly, you can sell it to anyone." Our book-keepers are very patient with staff and vendors alike as the sellers begin to learn the in and outs of accounts payable. Small vendors make the Point of Sales Coordinators' (the people who enter product codes and PLUs) jobs more difficult. Yet we add more vendors every year to ensure product and vendor diversity.

Our small vendors range from the local (Tacoma) Hilltop Quickies with their delicious vegan sandwiches to the foreign (Togo) Alaffia Soaps, which are locally produced but whose ingredients are fair-traded directly from Western Africa. We often take a chance on a vendor who is beginning in the commercial world, has a great product, but is unlikely 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 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



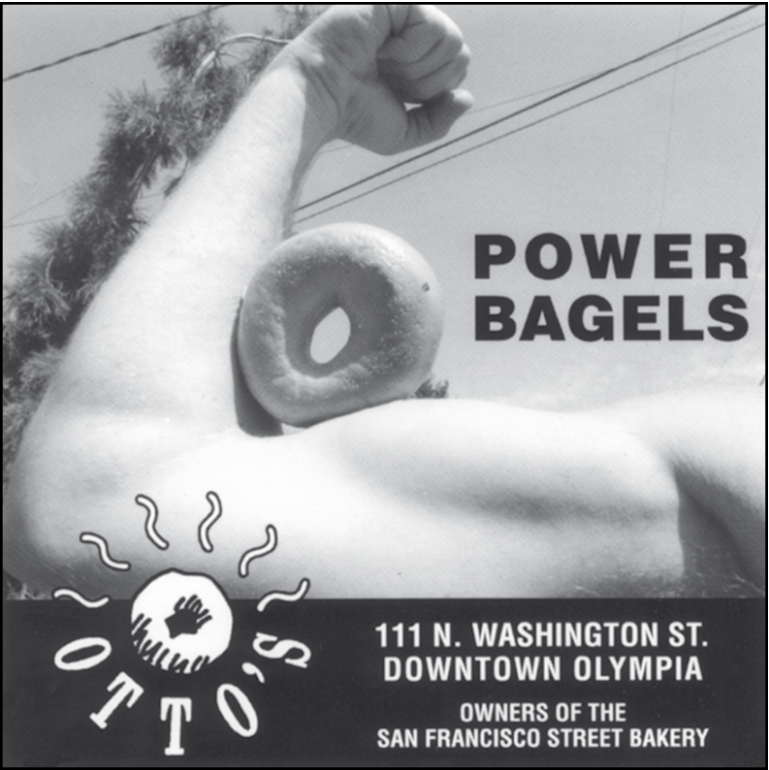
our needs and have bad labor practices? Are the manufacturers of a product stupid or oppressive? How do we know, and how can we prove it to the satisfaction of all? It's easy to say no to a diet product with a skinny, bouncy blonde woman on the label, but what about the new Blue Sky Soda packaging or the Bueno Tortillas? 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-nos." 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. Now 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 number 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



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
- Fresh cilantro
- vinaigrette dressing or vegetables to stuff, depending on use

Optional: Heat a skillet, with or without oil, and toast millet seeds about 2 minutes.

1. Add 2 cups water to millet, bring to boil, cover and reduce heat, simmer for 20 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Add a little more water at the end if millet does not seem soft enough.
2. In a large skillet, sauté onion, garlic, chili, and spices until soft. For a stuffing mixture or hot side dish, add corn, black bean, and tomato, cook about 5 minutes before adding cooked millet.
3. For a cold salad, mix corn, beans, tomato, cilantro, and cooled millet in a large bowl with a vinaigrette dressing. You may want to add other fresh vegetables, such as cucumbers and jicama.
4. Or stuff the millet mixture into bell peppers, tomatoes, or other vegetable and bake in a tightly covered dish with ½ cup vegetable broth 40-50 minutes at 350 degrees. Add cilantro after baking.

Adapted from Internet Chef

Amaranth Pudding

- 2 cups amaranth grain, cooked in 5 cups water about 20 minutes, covered
 - 1 cup apple juice
 - ½ cup raisins
 - ½ cup almonds
 - 1½ 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 chill.

Recipe courtesy Dan Jason, The Whole Organic Food Book
Recipes continued on page 8

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 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.

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, India, 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 looks similar to maize, though it is most closely related to sorghum. The plants mature in as little as 65 days, an important factor in places where food is desperately needed. There are many varieties of millet but only one is likely to be found in the U.S. for human consumption, a tiny, yellow seed called "pearl."

Containing the most protein of any true cereal grain, millet is highly nutritious and tasty. It is considered to be one of the least allergenic and most digestible grains around, being non-glutinous and non-acid forming. Millet has a mild, delicate, nutty flavor that may seem bland at first but mixes well with other foods. In addition to lots of protein, it offers high amounts of fiber, minerals like iron, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium, vitamin E, essential amino acids, and B-complex vitamins like thiamin and riboflavin. The seeds are also rich in phytochemicals, which are associated with reduced cancer risk.

Millet can be used in many ways and forms. In the Himalayan foothills, the Hunza people use millet as a staple, where they

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. Many recipes also suggest toasting the millet in a dry pan or in butter before adding liquid. Millet can be used in soups and casseroles, or mixed with other grains, like rice, for a nice side dish. 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, who 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 colors 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 *laddoos*. A traditional Mexican drink called *atole* is made from milled and roasted seeds.



Amaranth leaves are a common vegetable in parts of Central and South America, usually prepared boiled or fried. The seeds are well known in Nepal and India for making porridge or flour for flatbread.

Amaranth is not a true grain, but rather an annual herb most closely related to lamb's quarters or pigweed. The "grain" itself is not bigger than a poppy seed, but somehow packs in lots of nutrients. In addition to good amounts of soluble fiber, the seeds contain lots of the amino acid lysine, which is infrequently found in grains and boosts its usable protein higher than beans. Amaranth contains more calcium and magnesium than

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Meet the Staff

Eion McReady

by **Jennifer Shafer**, Editor

Behind the singsong 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 trained in all departments of the Co-op. When asked, he listed his various tenures as a working member coordinator, deli manager, grocery manager, and merchandise 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 in Seattle, Eion has been in Olympia and employed with the Co-op since 1994.

Eion said his life is "spiritually driven," and it may not be known or obvious to most people. One aspect of this is his use of divination tools, particularly Runes. He casts the stones for himself and for others free of charge and has always seen them to be useful and "right on" in their guidance. He is also learning to cast Ogham, which are divining sticks used by the ancient Irish/Gaelic people (from where his ancestry is). Eion feels "that his life really turned around when he explored his Irish heritage, and until then, he didn't feel like he had any heritage." Eion is able to

trace back both sides (save two people!) of his family to Ireland.

When asked what his favorite thing about the Co-op is, he answered, laughing, "the bulk spices." But he was serious; "I can buy spices in any amount, and in twenty years, I have never bought stale spices. It's what brought me into the Co-op in the first place." He added, "I love the diversity (of our community) I see while working."

His most important lesson learned at the Co-op has been the value of each individual's opinion. Eion said, "We are each other's best resource." He loves seeing the way people expand as they network and talk in the store, that doors open and opportunities are created through what we share with each other.

For the future, he hopes more people share transportation when shopping at the Co-op. Instead of being one person per one car in a 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 using a shared bus to come and do shopping for an hour, have an experience at the Co-op, and then go home together.

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(!) from pop to Japanese opera... the only exceptions are twangy guitar and

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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 produce 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 campaign, 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, art, 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 of the Staff being one of the most highly educated and talented retail staff around and how this could become more of a resource for the Co-op than is currently realized. Luckily for us, Kim is realizing how to incorporate her talents into her job and has plans to stick around.

Interesting Tidbits:

Hometown: Las Vegas, Nevada and Girard, Illinois

Number of Siblings: 3

Age upon moving to Olympia: 25

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Garden-Raised Bounty's Kitchen Garden Project

GRuB (Garden-Raised Bounty) is gearing up for another busy spring 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 GRuB, all of the proceeds go towards a matching garden for a local family in need. A GRuB Garden includes a site design, fertile soil, a diversity of seeds and starts, and a growing guide. GRuB will build you a healthy raised-bed garden that can grow up to \$675 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. GRuB 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 GRuB please visit our website www.goodgrub.org or give us a call at **753-5522**. Here's to a bountiful 2006!



Recipes

continued from page 6

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
- Hot sauce to taste
- Garnish: 2 plum tomatoes

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.

Stir in a few drops of hot sauce and garnish with chopped tomatoes.

Recipe courtesy of Karen Railey

Grains continued from page 6

milk and four times the iron of brown rice. Using amaranth in combination with wheat, corn, or brown rice results in a complete protein as high in food value as fish, red meat, or poultry. Anyone who tolerates spinach and beets will generally tolerate amaranth seeds and leaves.

Much like millet in its cooking versatility, amaranth can be cooked as a cereal, ground into flour, popped, sprouted, or toasted. The flour contains no gluten and can be mixed or baked alone for flatbreads and pastas. The general ratio for cooking seeds is 1 cup seed to 2½ cups liquid, but the amounts can vary based on the texture desired. Amaranth has a sticky texture and overcooking turns it very gummy (15-20 minutes is usually all that’s needed). Many recipes recommend using apple juice to cook the seed instead of water. The seeds are very good toasted and can be used to replace sesame seeds in recipes. Another way to try amaranth is to cook the grain and make wafers that you fry on each side for about 10 minutes—a surprisingly good treat!

There are about 60 species of amaranth, and there is no distinction between amaranth grown for the leaf or the seed, although some varieties are known only as ornamental plants. If you are interested in growing amaranth, there is a good article at motherearthnews.com in the 2005 April/May issue. The article goes into detail about varieties, growing tips, and the tricky nature of harvesting amaranth seeds for storage. For more recipe ideas, several of the Moosewood/Molly Katzen cookbooks have recipes including millet and other whole grains.

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.ftaaresistance.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 denials 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 like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that 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 provisions, maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women’s studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, “having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?”

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to un-

derstand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don’t see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow “them” to be more like “us.”

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than 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 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 renting or purchasing housing in an area that I can afford and in which I would want to live.
- 3 I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
- 4 I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- 5 I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- 6 When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- 7 I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- 8 If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
- 9 I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race

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Board Report

By **Shon Forsyth**, Board Member

2005 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 the Staff and Board are full of people who have 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 communication between the membership, the Board, and the Staff on the table. She directly worked on creating a very open website with our Bylaws, Board biographies, and the newsletter, among other elements. She also did the grunt work of organizing

all of the Co-op's important documents electronically. Thanks, Gail, for your organizational wizardry!

Cary bravely took on the Finance Committee and flourished with it. We've benefited from his desire to fully understand all the elements of proposals. He asked questions that were hiding in the shadows, with a goal of creating decisions we can all support 100%. We are likely to see Cary back in the aisle volunteer stocking or cashiering. You rock, Cary!

Replacing these Board members are Kathy Strauss and Jason Baghboudarian. They officially joined the Board in January and began their training at that time. I want to thank everyone who ran for the Board, and I want to start encouraging them and others to run again next year. I envision ten or more Board candidates and thousands of voters in our elections.

Also in the last elections, we saw the Bylaws revisions up for vote. The Bylaws Committee worked for a year putting together the initial 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,

Committee Meetings

February 2
Outreach and Education Committee

February 7
Growth Response Outreach Committee

February 15
Finance Committee

February 16
Standing Hiring Committee

February 21
Growth Response Outreach Committee

February 23
Board of Directors

March 3
Newsletter Committee

March 7
Growth Response Outreach Committee

March 9
Outreach and Education Committee

March 15
Finance Committee

March 16
Standing Hiring Committee

March 21
Growth Response Outreach Committee

March 23
Board of Directors

April 6
Outreach and Education Committee



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.

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Privilege continued from page 8

represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can deal with my hair.

10 Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

11 I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

12 I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

13 I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

14 I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

15 I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

16 I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color, who constitute the worlds' majority, without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17 I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

18 I can be sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge" I will be facing a person of my race.

19 If a traffic cop pulls me over, or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

20 I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

21 I can go home from most meetings or organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

22 I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

23 I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

24 I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my race will not work against me.

25 If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

26 I can chose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color that more or less matches my skin.

Elusive and fugitive

I repeatedly forgot 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; ones' 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, oblivious, 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 educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work systematically to overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

Earned strength, unearned power

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate.

But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally say as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who truly were distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the United States think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and angers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage that rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the members of the Combahee River Collective pointed out in their "Black Feminist Statement of 1977".

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant groups one is taught not

to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the system won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitude. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate but cannot end these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subject taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated 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 props up those in power and serves 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 \$200 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.



Eion *continued from page 7*

screaming vocals (heavy metal and bad country and western)
Hobbies: taking walks, writing (sci-fantasy, poetry, autobiography), knitting, embroidery, sewing, cooking, painting (as in decorating) and interior design

Zodiac Sign: Aries

Favorite Places in Olympia: the beach trail at Evergreen, the Farmer's Market, the boardwalk along the water, and a "secret" trail by the highway and a green belt near his house

Favorite places in the world: Vancouver, B.C., Pacific Northwest Beaches, Paris, France, Colorado Springs, CO

Kim *continued from page 7*

Favorite foods: anything raw—fruits and veggies—she is "obsessed" with brussels sprouts currently
Favorite music: Music made by/with friends, anything with ukulele or accordion excites her, "obsessed" with Neil Diamond (she'll own that!)

Hobbies: bird watching, making art—currently working with fabrics, often paints, learning her ukulele
Zodiac sign: Taurus
Favorite places in Olympia: LOTT, RR tracks on Budd Bay, McLane Creek, especially when the salmon are running and dying, being on her bike
Favorite places in the world: the south of France, the desert (the habitat she is most comfortable in), places where environmental degradation is apparent (it's what she studied!)

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 754-7666 for more information.

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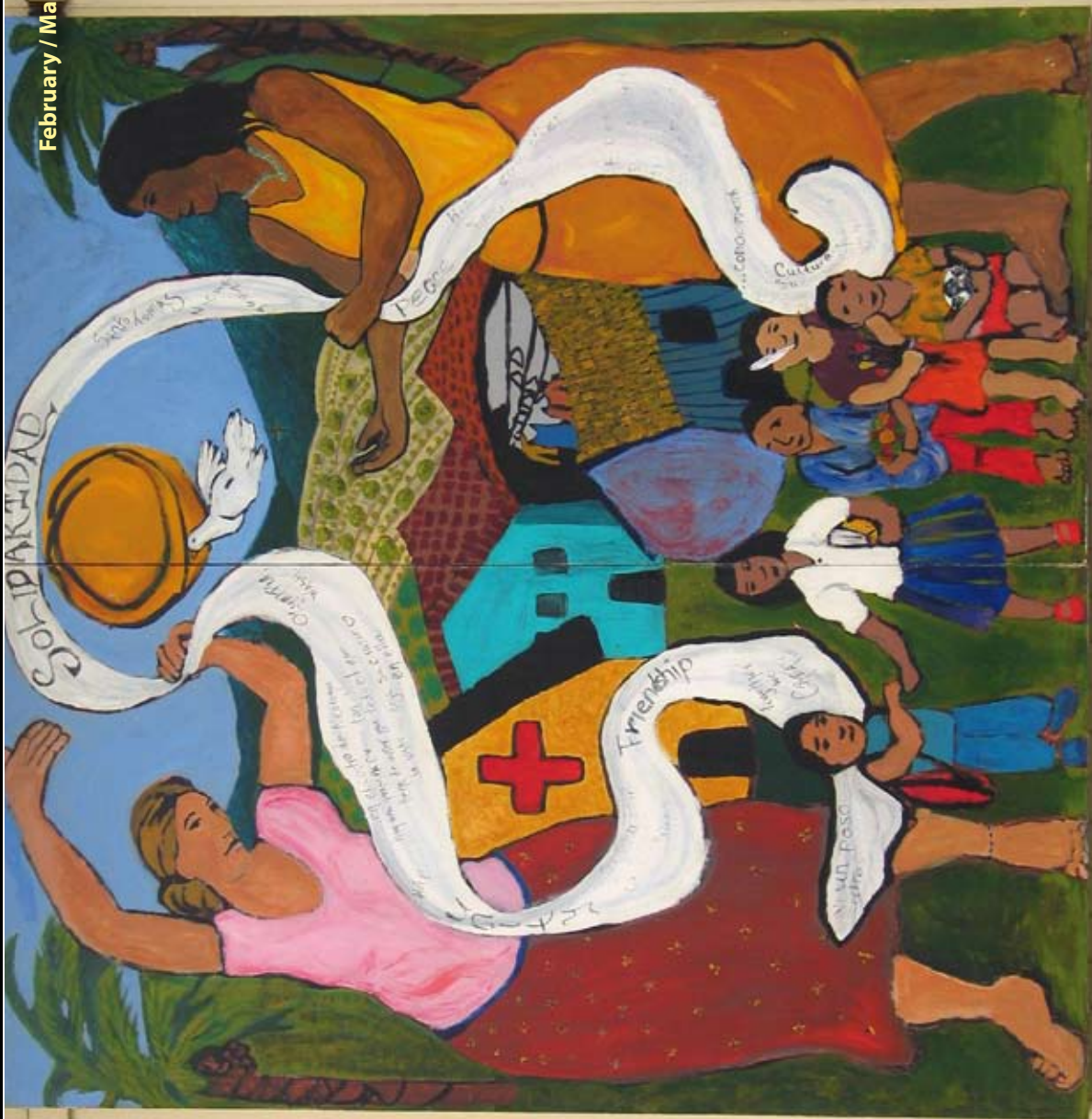
Submissions: Contact Jennifer Shafer at (360) 789-7313 or at olycoopnews@yahoo.com



Co-op News

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

February / March 2006



Anti-oppression and the Co-op

Putting Anti-oppression Ideals into Your Shopping Cart

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Kids Corner

What is it?



What is it?

Deadline: March 1st, 2006

Name _____

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Guess _____

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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.



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