



THE Co-op News

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

DECEMBER 2012 / JANUARY 2013

2012: Closing out the International Year of Cooperatives

By **Maureen Tobin**, Staff Member,
and strongertogether.coop

When we heard that the United Nations designated 2012 to be the International Year of Cooperatives, the Board and staff felt immediate excitement. Finally, co-ops would get some well-earned recognition as a business model that works! And we asked ourselves, how can we best participate, both for our own education and to further our goal of supporting the cooperative movement?

If you have followed the Co-op News over the last year, you have seen some of the ways we chose to celebrate and explore this year. Our biggest investment was our exchange with Cecosesola in Venezuela, when we sent two of our staff members there for one month and were lucky enough to have a delegation from Cecosesola join our part of the world for six weeks. The exchange was incred-

ibly inspiring for our staff collective and offered us many new ways to think about consensus and cooperative development. If you never got a chance to check out the blog that our staff members Emily and Alejandra kept while in Venezuela, you can find it here: ofccocosola.blogspot.com.

Staff at the Co-op are proud to be part of a movement that proves respecting people is good for business. Millions of consumers around the world have joined cooperatives for many reasons, including finding that they fill a need for housing, electricity, food, insurance and financial services...the list is endless. In the United States, 30,000 co-ops provide two million jobs, and one of every four people is a member of a cooperative.

Cooperative values connect us as people and also transcend co-op size. It doesn't matter whether your cooperative is so large that it employs thousands of people,



A heart-shaped handful of Carnival treats made a fitting end to OFC's inspiring exchange with Cecosesola in Venezuela *photo by Alejandra Abreu*

or so small you can fit everyone involved in a single room; co-op values remain the same.

The food co-ops that make up the National Cooperative Grocers Association (the organization we are part of that gathered most of this information) have over 1.3 million members across a "virtual chain" of over 120 retail food co-ops nationwide. Collectively, food co-ops have a strong social and economic impact. They work

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Co-ops + Theo Chocolate: Stronger Together



Find these and other great Theo chocolates at both stores *photo by Pat Maley*

By strongertogether.coop

It's the International Year of Cooperatives and to celebrate, food co-ops across the country have partnered with Theo Chocolate to create two decadent, limited-edition chocolate bars: a smooth and rich 85% ultimate dark chocolate and a rich and creamy 45% milk chocolate.

These scrumptious confections are organic, fair trade certified, and make delicious gifts—for yourself or others. Your purchase helps support cocoa farmers by ensuring living wages, promotes the health of our planet through organic growing practices, and creates artisan food manufacturing jobs in the U.S. And 50¢ of your purchase goes directly to support the cooperatives that provide the cacao for our bars: Fortaleza del Valle in Ecuador, and CEPICAFE in Peru. Co-ops aim to raise more than \$40K for the cacao growers



Sorting cacao beans *photo by Aiden Duffy*

by the end of 2012. It's just another way that food co-ops and our shoppers and owners are helping to build a better world!

Hurry in before they're gone. Happy International Year of Cooperatives!

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Co-op News

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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 olycoopnews@yahoo.com or 360-789-7313 to discuss your article idea or advertising inquiry. You may also leave messages in the newsletter box at either Co-op or mail them to either store, Attention: Co-op News.

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

<http://www.olympiafood.coop>

Cover photo by Gary Wessels Galbreath

There's No Place Like Home

By **Jayne Kaszynski**, Staff Member

On a misty day in October, your intrepid Expansion Team piled into a minivan with our clipboards and cameras and headed out on an exciting field trip... to a warehouse in Tumwater. It may not set your heart aflutter, but in our search for information in pursuit of the Co-op's expansion project, it made us a little giddy.

The warehouse dwarfed our little group. Inside, two stories of offices shared space with a massive maintenance bay. We gazed up at workers standing on two-story high scaffolding who were fixing a large boat. It was far, far larger than anything the Co-op would need; in fact, at 15,000 square feet, the warehouse had a footprint roughly six times larger than the Co-op is considering. The side walls were 24 feet high, with a peak that added even more space. They could have put a small Ferris wheel under it.

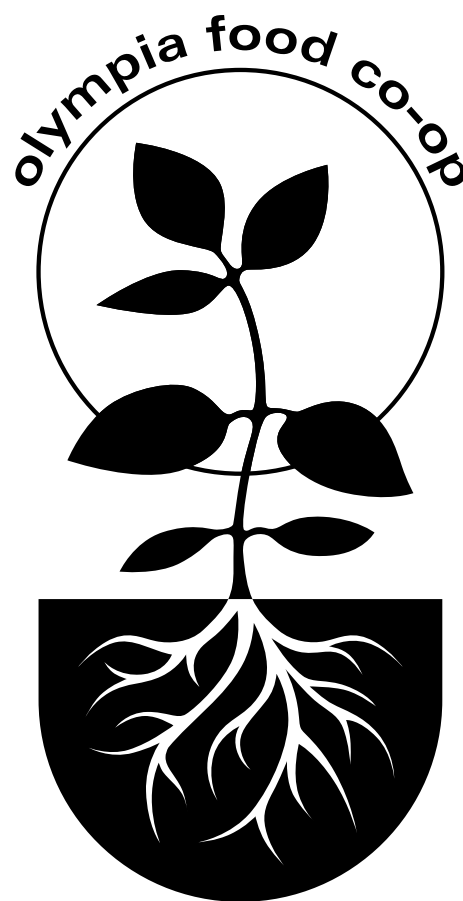
Standing inside the warehouse, we discussed the metal and stone walls, considered the ventilation system, and toured the interior offices. And everywhere we looked, we saw possibilities. Classrooms, a deli kitchen, office space, room to grow a regional food hub... a warehouse could provide it all, and at a reasonable price. The enormous warehouse we toured was built seven years ago for under \$1.5 million. Compared to earlier estimates of \$6-\$9 million to purchase and renovate a downtown store, this price range looked like a steal. As our excitement built, I real-

ized that a warehouse is basically an adult's version of a sandbox: it's a really big play area that opens up the imagination and provides room for building. Who knew a warehouse could be so fun?

A week before our tour, we had cleared the first hurdle in realizing our Eastside dreams; a contractor (in fact, the same one leading us on a tour of this warehouse) had examined the Eastside building and assured us that it was in fine shape, and should remain so for many years to come. Furthermore, he pointed out options for interior remodeling that would make it more retail-friendly. For instance, he suggested that some of the central poles could be removed to open up additional space without harming the overall structural integrity of the building.

Imagine us as cartoon characters with hearts in our eyes and you wouldn't be too far off of the truth. Using the building we have is the cheapest and greenest option available. With an interior remodel – including the addition of roughly 2,000 square feet when we convert the current warehouse into retail—we can have a beautiful, welcoming store and still have money available to pursue other plans (like that food hub idea).

Our next step will be finding out what we can and can't do with our space. Right now, the contractor's engineer is working on parsing city requirements to determine what our options are once setbacks



Expansion UPDATE

and zoning requirements are factored in. Once we have that information, we'll be able to consider what size we need, what exactly we want (and can afford) to put in it, and what steps we need to take to get there. Our very tentative timeline is to remodel the Little House and Westside store in 2013, and break ground on the Eastside warehouse project in 2014, with the possibility of finishing up the Eastside remodel in 2015.

As we get further immersed in architectural renderings, financial plans, and city permitting, we'll get a clearer picture of what the future will hold. But for now, to quote the Magic 8-ball: "outlook good."

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Live music got the meeting moving!

photo by ??

Annual Membership Meeting Explores a New Format

By **Maureen Tobin**, Staff Member

The Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, November 10 at the Olympia Center and was a great success! There were over 100 members present and lots of Board and staff as well, making it a well attended, entertaining and informative afternoon that felt a bit different from the business meetings of the past.

This year we explored a new format for the meeting, moving away from our previous tradition of having lots of different speeches and reports taking up the majority of the time. In place of those staff reports, different areas of Co-op committees and work had a table set up with information and staff present to help answer questions and talk about our different projects. In addition, we still had the Board candidates offer a short speech sharing their motivations to run for the Board and visions for the future of the Co-op.

A lovely spread of food was provided by Nineveh, as well as some great Co-op favorites like local apples, and the last part of the meeting was spent tapping toes and dancing to the exciting music of Erev Rav. We also had some fun games like Co-op question bingo (find a member who visits the Co-op more than once per day, for example) and a raffle with prizes like gift cards and chocolate bars. Everyone seemed to go home happy. The annual meeting is always held during our elections cycle, from October 15-November 15, so if you weren't able to attend this year, we hope to see you next time. Thanks to all who participated and remembered to vote and help elect the next Board!



One of our beautiful event banners showcasing the new OFC logo



Great food is always a staple of the Annual Membership Meeting



Erev Rav's Tom Russell

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Thurston Union of Low Income People Credit Union

Thanks to your assistance, TULIP Credit Union is helping reduce poverty by moving low-income people from debt to asset building. We're building community assets by helping individuals build assets. TULIP does this through education, services, and access to capital at fair rates.

By **Bruce Cramer**, CEO of TULIP

Helping the Low-Income Gain Wealth

People move from poverty to sustainability not by simply managing their income, but by accumulating assets. Savings, investments, and ownership are the factors that can lead people to financial self-sufficiency.

Low-income TULIP member Eden put it this way, "I couldn't get a loan. I couldn't get a credit card. Not only was TULIP concerned about my life on paper, but TULIP was concerned with my life off paper - in reality - and what my dreams were."

TULIP offers small personal loans to the underserved, and is a financially healthy alterna-

tive to predatory lenders such as pay day loan stores, check cashers, rent-to-own stores and title lenders.

TULIP's tier process allows members to establish a solid relationship by starting with a \$250 loan, and then progress to larger amounts in a step-by-step process. This approach helps members and has resulted in TULIP's delinquency/loan loss numbers running less than 1%, at or below those of similarly sized credit unions.

Chartered in 2003 with the help of the Olympia Food Coop, TULIP stands for Thurston Union of Low Income People. TULIP balances what's right for members with what's sustainable for the credit union; this way we can help those in our com-

munity for generations to come.

How You Can Help: Move Your Car Loan to TULIP

Every \$1,000 you borrow from TULIP helps us to serve four low-income members. We offer competitive loan interest rates and encourage you to move your current auto loan to TULIP or finance your next auto with us.

Moving Your Car Loan – It's basically a refinance. First, complete a loan application. Find one on our website (www.tulip-cu.coop), at our office located at the OFC east Olympia location, or by calling 360.570.2292. TULIP will contact your current lender and handle things from there.

A New Loan for a New/Used Car – If you are buying a new or used car and the dealer is handling the financing, all you have to do is request the loan be sold to TULIP CU. All the paper work will be handled at the dealership and we will end up with the loan. You need to be a TULIP member first.


More Ways You Can Help

Be our partner in this collaborative effort to help low-income people build assets and be self-sustaining. You can join the credit union if you are an OFC member.

- Be a member - \$5 opens your account
- Use Tulip for your loan needs
- Use Tulip for savings/deposits/CD's
- Join our Board or Supervisory Committee
- Invite us to your neighborhood association or service club meeting

To participate in any of the ways above, contact TULIP Operations Manager Johna LaRue at 360.570.2292 or johna@tulipcu.coop.

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No, we don't put our name on tall towers. This is Olympia, not Texas after all.

But we do shop at the Co-op, walk and bike to work, dig the Procession of the Species, and as a business donate 10% of our income to local and international non-profits.

This is Olympia, after all!

And we are Compass Rose. Come visit us on 416 Capitol Way S, downtown.



www.compassroseolympia.com

Theo continued from page 1

About Fortaleza del Valle

Fortaleza del Valle specializes in producing high quality Nacional cacao, a varietal known for its floral notes and clean finish. Established in 2005 to help small scale cocoa farmers organize and increase their production capacity, Fortaleza has helped farmers increase their incomes and improve their quality of life through centralized bean fermenting and drying, providing access to premium cocoa markets, credit and training on best farming practices and land rehabilitation.

About CEPICAFE

CEPICAFE cooperative works with approximately 500 farmers in the Piura and Amazonas regions of Peru. The farmers there are organized into small regional groups of 30-40 members that have centralized the fermenting and drying of their cocoa beans, bringing greater consistency and quality to their product. CEPICAFE focuses on educating producer members to ensure they understand the world market and the way in which their product fits into the international cocoa supply chain. This education is uncommon and extremely valuable for farmers. When cocoa farmers know how cocoa is graded and purchased globally, it's an important step towards their understanding of how to produce higher quality beans, with increased market value, that will ultimately deliver greater returns on their hard work and dedication to the land they steward.



Producers and co-op members of Fortalez Del Valle in Ecuador, and Cepicafe in Peru



Shiitakes at their best

photos by Jennifer Crain

Shiitakes from Alpine Mushroom Company: Year-Round and Local

By **Jennifer Crain**, Co-op Member

Terry Bunce lives on a five-acre plot of land situated near his childhood home, a stone's throw from where he used to go "tromping through Capitol Forest with my grandparents looking for chanterelles."

After studying botany at the University of Washington and spending four years as a field botanist and forest firefighter with the U. S. Forest Service, Bunce became enamored of the nutritional and culinary qualities of mushrooms, particularly shiitakes, which are prized for their rich flavor and versatility in the kitchen. He circled back to his geographic roots – and to his mushroom-centered memories – and began cultivating mushrooms at home.

For the last decade his business, Alpine Mushroom Company, has supplied Olympia market-goers and, more recently, Co-op shoppers, with local, pesticide-free mushrooms. During a typical week he'll turn out between 60 and 70 pounds of them, every one spoken for and delivered

within a few days of harvest.

Bunce primarily grows shiitakes, though a limited number of mistakes also find their way into his incubating room. The latter are deceptively sturdy mushrooms that look like the fungal equivalent of coral sculptures.

His land already had a suitable location for mushroom growing, a structure about the size of a four-car garage. Bunce retrofitted it to grow fungi, sealing off gaps to prevent outside humidity, installing waterproof lights and fans, and taking measures to control overall moisture and temperature.

His process is similar to that of other commercial growers in the U.S. Mycelium; the branching structure that colonizes a mushroom's host is introduced into a mixture made from sawdust (Bunce sources it from a local mill) and organic baker's bran. Bags of the concoction are then left to colonize in an incubation room for 10 to 12 weeks. By then the bags of mixture have become solid blocks which are moved into a cool environment, the fruiting room, where lower

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Winter Mushrooms at the Co-op

The Co-op will also carry white button mushrooms (Eastside only), criminis, and portobellos through the winter, all sourced from British Columbia and Oregon. According to produce manager Erin Majors, there will be periodic availability of golden and pink oyster mushrooms from Third Kingdom Mushrooms, another local provider.

And keep your fingers crossed for treasures from local wildcrafters such as chanterelles, porcinis, and morels. Don't hold your breath, though. Erin says a dry fall followed by cold temperatures and torrential rains could mean a slim year for foraged fungi.



The prized porcini!

Shift Your Shopping to 10% more locally owned businesses!

From a study conducted in Portland, Maine (Dec. 2011~Maine Center for Economic Policy), it was found that, if residents of the region were to shift 10 percent of their spending from chains to locally owned businesses, it would generate \$127 million in additional local economic activity and 874 new jobs.

www.ilsr.org

Increase since 2002 in the number of small specialty food stores: 1,414

Increase since 2002 in the number of small farms: 111,839

Number of farmers markets active in 2010: 6,132

Average percentage of shoppers at a large supermarket who have a conversation with another customer: 9

Average percentage of shoppers at a farmers market who have a conversation with another customer: 63

Average amount of local wages paid for every \$100 spent at a full-service chain restaurant: \$18.68

Average amount of local wages paid for every \$100 spent at a full-service locally owned restaurant: \$28.46


Minimum amount having a grocery store, bookstore, coffee shop and restaurant within half a mile of a house increases its value: \$21,000

*Sources: Institute for Local Self-Reliance; U.S. Economic Census; United States Department of Agriculture, National Directory of Farmers Markets; Robert Sommer, John Herrick, and Ted R. Sommer, "The Behavioural Ecology of Supermarkets and Farmers' Markets," Journal of Environmental Psychology, 1981.

**Sources: Institute for Local Self-Reliance; U.S. Economic Census; Civic Economics, Thinking Outside the Box, September 2009; Civic Economics, Local Works! Examining the Impact of Local Business on the West Michigan Economy, Sept. 2008; CEOs for Cities, Walking the Walk, August 2009.


A local living economy is one where local business owners make up the majority of the local economy, where today's innovations in sustainable agriculture, in green building, in renewable energy and energy efficiency, in community capital, in green jobs, in local manufacturing are all tied together within the context of a place, so that you have an economy that is community-based, green, and fair. - Michelle Long, Director of Business Alliance of Local Living Economies

THE ADVENTURES OF JANE AND HER LOCAL DOLLAR



Meet Jane.
The proud owner of a salon in our community.

One night, after a great day at work, Jane went to her favorite pizza parlor, owned by her friend Marcelo...




Jane bought a slice of pizza, a bubbly kombucha & a T-shirt.

Marcelo's pizzeria is locally owned and cycles 79% of every dollar back into our community.

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MARIA
Carl & Leona's Yoga Instructor

ARTHUR
Owner of a Popular Local Bookstore

LEONA
Mario & Arthur's Local Banker

PETER
Local Office Supply Retailer


DIANA
Owner of Jade & Leona's Favorite Boutique



Maria is a regular client at Jane's salon, so a part of Jane's local dollar returns!

Jane's local dollar is **MIGHTY!!**

To learn more about the benefits of buying local, go to:
www.sustainablesouthsound.org



What is the purpose of the **Local Farms, Food, and Products Committee?**

1. To help strengthen ties between the Olympia Food Co-op and local/regional food and product producers as per the Co-op's mission statement.
2. To create a communication forum for local/regional farms and food and product producers and the Co-op.
3. To support and promote the viability of local/regional farms, food and product producers by
 - envisioning and implementing projects that promote the sale of locally/regionally produced food and products at the Co-op.
 - identifying, evaluating and supporting opportunities for increased and sustained local/regional food and product production.
 - encouraging the development of an ecologically and economically healthy local/regional food system.
4. To increase the Co-op membership's awareness about the benefits and availability of locally/regionally produced food and products and to be a conduit for membership support for local production.
5. To serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and staff in policy development and implementation.

What area does the Co-op consider "local"?

Grown or produced within Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Pierce, and Gray's Harbor Counties.

What area does the Co-op consider "regional"?

Grown or produced within Washington, Oregon or British Columbia

How can I sell the produce I grow on my farm to the Co-op?

You can contact Erin Majors or Eric Miller at localfarms@olympiafood.coop, and we will send you information about how to participate in the Co-op's local farm program.

What if I have something else I'd like to sell (cheese, body care products etc.)?

You can send an inquiry to the above address, and we will make sure it gets forwarded to the right department buyer.

I have ideas about projects I think the Local Farms, Food and Products Committee should work on. Who should I send these ideas to?

Again, send your ideas to localfarms@olympiafood.coop. We would love to hear from the members about ways we can better support and promote local producers, and we'd be happy to share your ideas with the committee.

Some of the Projects that this committee is currently working on:

"Ask What's Local Today": Did you know that the Co-op sends out a weekly email list of produce that local farms have available to 30 business/organizations that purchase food? The "Ask What's Local Today" project aims to provide restaurants that purchase local food with window decals and other advertising materials that will let their customers know that they are supporting the local food economy. We hope that this will encourage people dining out to request local food and support businesses who prioritize purchasing it. If you know of a restaurant or other business who'd like to receive this weekly list, please have them email Erin at localfarms@olympiafood.coop.

Creating a Volunteer position to demo local products: Our committee thinks that by providing samples of local products, we can help our shoppers to appreciate the high quality and deliciousness of locally produced foods. By having volunteers do this work, we can also help producers who do not have the time to demo their products gain exposure for their products. If you are interested in hearing more about this position once it is developed, please contact Michelle at michelle@olympiafood.coop

Creating a list of local products for shoppers to use while they shop: Wouldn't you love to be able to look at a list and see what local products we have available? We think that would be awesome too, and hope to have this project completed soon!

Working with our sign coordinator to create better branding for the Co-op's local products: As part of the Co-op's rebranding, we are looking forward to having clearer and more visible signage for our local produce and products.

Producing a calendar that includes a seasonal recipe for each month and a picture of /information about the farm that provided it: Imagine the delight of having a Co-op produced seasonal calendar on your wall!

Past Projects Our Committee Has Worked On:

- Profile books of the produce farms we buy from
- Maps of the produce farms for both stores
- Researched Agricultural Justice Standards and what is involved in getting farms certified, and had a discussion with the farms in our local produce program about this

Buy Local - Buy Direct
Strengthen the economic base of our community!

Shiitakes continued from page 7

high humidity stimulate mushroom growth. The first flush of mushrooms emerges from the blocks in about three weeks. Blocks fruit up to three times.

As precise as his manipulations may be, Bunce says more ideal conditions for mushroom growing would be difficult to find.

"We live in an ideal environment for growing mushrooms," he says. "The environment doesn't need to be modified, other than a couple of months in summer and a couple of months in the winter. Otherwise, it's perfect."

Bunce's business, like any agricultural endeavor, is anything but new. Growing mushrooms is an intentional return to an ancient exercise, a calculated and celebratory practice. Shiitakes, named for the evergreen tree in Japan (Shii) whose dead logs act as host to the fungus, are native to East Asia where they have been cultivated for thousands of years.

With a resonant flavor and deep aroma, shiitakes are also nutritionally brag-worthy. They're high in potassium and other nutrients, and there's evidence that compounds in shiitakes

contribute to enhanced immune function, aid cardiovascular health, and fight cancer.

But mushroom lovers won't need nutritional arm-twisting to bring home a bagful of Bunce's mushrooms. He chooses varieties that are slow growing, full-flavored, and storable.

Sumptuous and undemanding, shiitakes are equally good under the broiler, dehydrated, dry sautéed, or marinated. Be aware if you consume uncooked shiitakes: lentinan, the compound responsible for some of the mushrooms' medicinal qualities can also act as a toxin, causing a fierce rash in one out of 50 people who consume them raw (cooking destroys this effect).

Bunce says he tops pizzas with lightly marinated shiitakes before sliding them into his wood-fired oven. Sometimes he lets a bunch of them rest on the counter for a few days until they're leathery. He'll cook up a pot of risotto then slice and add the mushrooms, stirring them in as the dish finishes cooking.

"The flavor," he says, trailing off. Well, it's difficult to compare with anything.



Warm Kale Salad with Marinated Shiitakes

by Chie Okazaki

[from *The Plum Palate*]

<http://theplumpalate.com/2012/02/09/warm-kale-salad-with-marinated-shiitakes/>

This salad was inspired by Joseph at Wobbly Cart Farming Collective. He reminded me of blanching greens to make a simple, almost creamy, dish.

½ pound shiitake mushrooms

1 bunch kale

sea salt

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons tamari

2-4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1-3 tablespoons ginger, peeled and grated

1 tablespoon raw honey

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add a small handful of salt.

Meanwhile whisk together the olive oil, tamari, vinegar, ginger and honey. Stem and slice the mushrooms and add to the dressing. Set aside to marinate.

Wash, stem, and chop the kale. Drop into the boiling salted water and blanch for a minute or so, just to wilt the greens. Drain well.

Toss with the marinated mushrooms. Adjust for seasonings and serve warm.

2012 Board Election Results

After a thorough and lengthy count (and re-count), we are pleased to announce our new 2013 Board members!



John Regan
(182 votes)



Erin Genia
(168 votes)



Dani Madrone
(159 votes)



Teresa Young
(150 votes)



Niki Bilodeau
(125 votes)

Congratulations to our new Board members and thanks to all who voted!

Volunteer Profile: Mohamed El-Sokkary

By **Desdra Dawning**, Volunteer Member

As we sat comfortably in the Little House living room, across the parking lot from the Westside Co-op, munching on a huge Blue Heron ginger cookie, I had a feeling that an interesting story was about to unfold. I was not wrong. When asked what brought him to Olympia, Mohamed told me that he had to go back to 1977 when he was seven and living with his family in Cairo, Egypt. His sister, who was three at the time, was part of a mass polio immunization that, because it was a "bad batch," left her and many other children unable to use their limbs. A family friend living in the Bay Area of California told Mohamed's father about a hospital at Stanford that could help her walk again, so he brought her to America for a year of surgery and treatment that helped her to ditch her metal braces. By the end of the year, he had established work in his field in Silicon Valley, was sold on living here, and sent for the rest of his family. "It changed all of our lives," Mohamed told me.

So Mohamed grew up in the Bay Area, attended Cal State Bakersfield, and settled into life in America. By 1993, Mohamed was ready to try out some new territory and decided to move to Olympia, aiming at a transfer to The Evergreen State College to complete his college education. With a slight detour of five years to work, meet and marry his wife Gabrielle, and start their own well-loved family (Nigel, now a high school freshman, and Amira a 6th grader), Mohamed eventually finished his BA in counseling and education from Evergreen. Living near the campus and surrounded by such a diverse, progressive and non-discriminatory student population, Mohamed's fears about acceptance of his Arab/Muslim background were quickly set to rest.

Attracted to working with disadvantaged youth, Mohamed got a job at Garfield Elementary School, directing their Before and After School Program. "I often took the students off grounds to do community work," he said, "with helpful things like cleaning up the Garfield Nature Trail." This led to Special Education work at local high schools in Tumwater and Olympia, working still with disadvantaged students. At Olympia High School he took on a project called Bicycles for Education. Used bikes were donated to the students who refurbished them in class, prepared them for shipping, then sent them off to Togo, Africa, so that students there would have reliable transportation both to school and to work, helping greatly in the reduction of their drop-out rate. Wanting to help his students become aware of the needs of their community, and to encourage their "spirit of volunteering," Mohamed also introduced them to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity.

Laid off of work during the 2011 school year, Mohamed found himself with extra time on his hands. He had been a Co-op member since shortly after his arrival in Olympia and was encouraged by staff-member friends to volunteer. You can find him Wednesday and Thursday mornings either stocking produce or helping with the Free Store--his two main volunteer



Mohamed El-Sokkary photo by Desdra Dawning

activities--although he admits that he likes to just "go in and see what needs to be done in the store. I like to try on different hats," he says. I asked him what he likes about the Co-op and he was quick to reply, "I like the idea of volunteering because it is part of the spirit and roots of the Co-op. It feels good that we support local farmers, and that it is run by staff and volunteers. I appreciate what the Co-op stands for and the sense of belonging I have here. I don't feel like I'm alone--I'm with a group of people who are committed to supporting each other, the store, and the mission of the Co-op." And then he adds, "It is a very positive atmosphere."

I asked how he was doing being out of work, and discovered his entrepreneurial spirit. "Gabrielle and I have had a business for some time making stone markers for deceased pets." Their business, Say It In Stones, works with local veterinarians to help pet owners whose pets have died, by offering memorial stones for people to remember their loved ones. Sand blasted messages appear on river rocks, sandstone and granite, and can also be seen in the etched base of the Motherhood Statue at Percival Landing, the WWII Memorial near the Capitol, the Time Capsule Bench at Heritage Park, and the Evergreen Memorial Bench--donated in response to 911.

His next project springs both from his unemployment and his Co-op connection. "Since being out of work," he adds, "I have been making gluten-free cookies for my family." Friends who love his cookies have recently been encouraging him to go public with them, so now Mohamed is in the process of finding an oven and negotiating with our local Peace Love and Raw company to share their commercially certified kitchen.

Thank you, Mohamed, for your big-hearted embracing, not only of our Co-op community, but the larger community of Olympia! May your family's life here blossom with successful business adventures, good company, and loving appreciation of who you are!

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The Bookie Nook: November 2012

By **Harry Levine**, Staff Member and Bookkeeper

So far, I've typed six intros to the Bookie Nook to try to make it enticing and exciting. Nothing has worked yet, so let's just dive into the numbers...

First...a few words about inventory. All retail stores must do inventory at least once per year so that an accurate calculation can be made about the cost of goods. That information allows a business to provide accurate income statements for tax purposes and compute the margin. Margin is what we make on what we sell...so for instance...we pay \$1.50 for a 1lb block of tofu and we sell it for \$2, we make .50 margin on that sale. We use our margin to pay our operating expenses.

For most of our 35 years, we have done inventory on a quarterly basis. This year, we decided to try a couple of new things: 1) Doing inventory twice per year; 2) Hiring an Inventory service to process much of the inventory. Guess what? We love it! You should see those professional inventories....their fingers flying over their calculators like a Firebird on the Wind! It's extremely accurate (we audited a number of shelving units), it saves time and it saves money. What could be better?

And, with no inventory at the end of September, we bookies are able to close our books quicker which is a long winded introduction for saying that....this Co-op News has financial information that includes reporting for the first 3 quarters of 2012!

The report you see is for both stores combined. First, the good news. Sales are strong and we are \$185K over budget. You might also observe a big difference in the Other Revenue actual. This is \$53K over budget because of the insurance settlement we received for loss of business during the 4 day power outage at the west side store in January. In reality, if we had

been open those 4 days, our sales would have been even stronger! At the end of the 3rd Q, our net revenue is \$45K over budget.

The not so good news is that you can see that expenses year to date are over budget as well. Our Staffing costs are overspent nearly \$90K for 2 reasons: 1) We switched our payroll system from semi monthly to bi-weekly in July. Due to the calendar, we actually had one more payroll period in the first 9 months than we budgeted for; 2) We had higher than projected health care expense.

We also are nearly \$80K overspent on Operations. A lot of this is due to a hot summer and struggling to keep all of our

refrigeration working. Our maintenance costs ran significantly over budget.

All of these numbers lead to a bottom line of profit of \$20K for the first 9 months of 2012. That is of course, better than no profit at all or losses. However, is about \$80K short of the profit we budgeted for.

As you might have experienced in your life, budgeting is an inexact science. We are finishing up our budgeting process for 2013 in November of 2012. We have done pretty well over the years as our expenses are usually within a couple of percentage points of budgeted amounts and this year to date, we are about 4.5% over. We are hoping that the fourth quarter will even this out and we will get closer to our goals.

As always, we welcome your questions, thoughts and feedback. Feel free to contact your finance team (Corey, Kerry, and Harry) at our bookkeeping office. Our number is 357-1106, ext 12.

Olympia Food Co-op 3rd Quarter YTD Budget Report - For The Year Ending September 30, 2012 -

	2012 Actuals	2012 Budget	\$ over Budget
Revenue:			
Sales	11,205,483.87	11,020,014.45	185,469.42
Discounts	(630,704.56)	(605,529.56)	(25,175.00)
Purchases	(7,469,687.06)	(7,301,047.81)	(168,639.25)
Gross Sales Revenue	3,105,092.25	3,113,437.08	(8,344.83)
Other Revenue	77,637.60	23,912.50	53,725.10
Total Net Revenue:	3,182,729.85	3,137,349.58	45,380.27
Expenses:			
Community & Marketing	93,816.63	119,543.75	(25,727.12)
Staffing	2,473,970.81	2,384,935.70	89,035.11
Operations	558,452.67	479,085.46	79,367.21
Depreciation	39,128.57	44,924.25	(5,795.68)
Interest	8,253.94	8,100.00	153.94
Corporate Income Tax	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses:	3,173,622.62	3,036,589.16	137,033.46
Other Income & Expenses:	10,818.38	0.00	10,818.38
Total Net Income:	19,925.61	100,760.42	(80,834.81)

The accompanying chart to the Finance Report in the Oct./Nov. issue was incorrect. We apologize for this oversight; it was the mistake of the Co-op News and not the bookies. If you would like to see the correct chart, please contact Corey or Harry at 357-1106, ext 12.



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Upcoming Volunteer Program Orientations

Be a weekly Volunteer in the store!

Come tour the store and learn about volunteer opportunities (including cashiering, stocking, and more) at the Co-op. If you are interested in volunteering, please attend this 2-hour orientation.

Westside:

Wednesday December 12.....6-8pm
Saturday January 12.....10am-12pm
Wednesday January 23.....6-8pm

Eastside:

Sunday December 2.....11am-1pm
Monday December 3.....5:30-7:30pm
Sunday January 6.....11am-1pm
Monday January 7.....5:30-7:30pm

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

Year of the Co-op

continued from page 1

with an average of 157 local farmers and producers (compared with 65 for conventional grocers). They contribute to the community with high levels of charitable giving, an average of 13% (compared to 4% for conventional grocers). Plus food co-ops generate more money for their local economy—1.5 times more than conventional grocers. So whether you are supporting the Olympia Food Co-op or another, know that your purchases do make a difference!

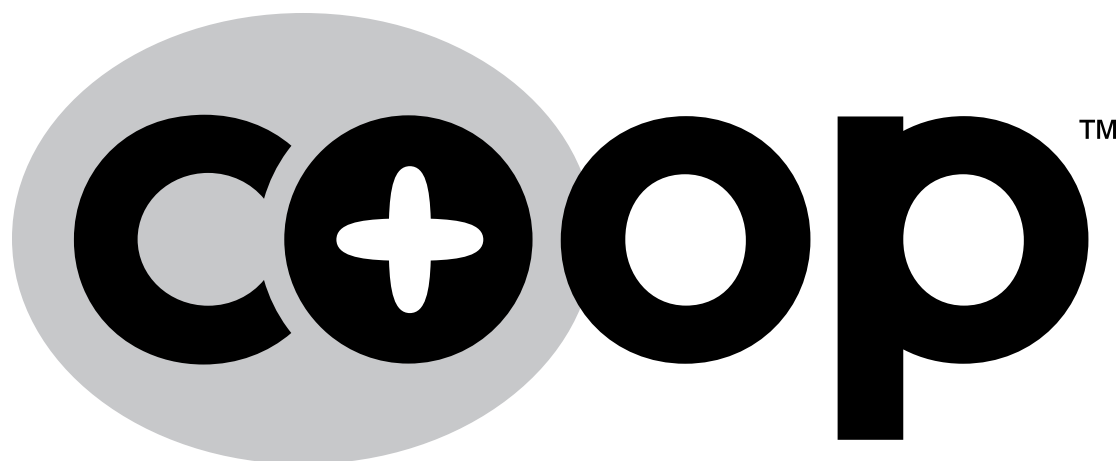
Co-ops demonstrate their commitment to ethics by

extending them in an ever widening circle. When a co-op makes a profit, you can be assured it was gained through fair business practices, and in most cases, any surplus is reinvested in the co-op or shared equitably among member-owners.

I have personally enjoyed learning more this year about the many types of cooperative businesses in this country and others over the last year. For example, Whatcom County now has a worker-owned health care co-op started about four years ago called the Circle of Life Care-giver Co-op. Their co-op is dedicated to excellent home

care for the elderly and disabled. In an industry rife with low-pay and apathy towards clients, Circle of Life offers a refreshing alternative, where self-help provides everyone with more options.

We know none of the great things co-ops accomplish would be possible without the people worldwide who use co-ops to meet their needs. This year, celebrating with the millions of others who love co-ops, we are thrilled by the international recognition of co-ops' fundamental values: that making people and communities our top priority is good business.



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2012-13 Winter Community Classes

The cooler weather is a great backdrop for getting together and cozying up with your community. OFC Community Classes are an excellent way to cultivate connections and gain some skills as well. We've got a jam-packed lineup this season and a short turn-around before the first few classes—so don't delay checking out this excellent winter schedule and register today! All classes are an amazing deal of only \$5 each unless otherwise noted--a few of them are even free!

Check out the schedule at
www.olympiafood.coop/classes/





DECEMBER 2012 / JANUARY 2013



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What is it?

Last "What is it?" was:
Jalepenos

Congrats to last issue's winner:
Atalanta 9, River 7, Denali 9, Imani 10, Liam 5, Ruby 8, Mia 8, Ben 9, Dean 6, Easton 7, Fiona 9, Kate 10, Zachary 9, Lucy 8

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

What is it?

Deadline: January 1st, 2013

Name _____

Age _____

Guess _____

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

The Olympia Food Co-op will be

CLOSED

January 1

New Year's Day

Both stores will close at 9 pm on Dec 31, close on Tuesday, Jan 1 for inventory, and reopen at 8 am on Jan 2. Happy New Year!



The Wonder of Winter

The Year of Co-operatives in Review

Savoring Shiitakes

Board Election Results

Expansion Update