

SPRING 2017

Table

A Quarterly Publication of the Olympia Food Co-op • www.olympiafood.coop

**EVERYTHING
POTATOES!**

Bowls are Beautiful

MICHELLE NOEL
Cheese Professional



Table

published by

OLYMPIA FOOD CO-OP

WEST

921 ROGERS ST NW • OLYMPIA, WA 98502

(360) 754-7666

open daily 8AM-9PM

GARDEN CENTER daily 10AM-7PM seasonal (hours/days vary)

EAST

3111 PACIFIC AVE SE • OLYMPIA, WA 98501

(360) 956-3870

open daily 8AM-9PM

Both Co-ops are open every day except for New Years Day due to inventory

BUSINESS OFFICE

608 COLUMBIA ST SW • OLYMPIA, WA 98501

(360) 357-1106

www.olympiafood.coop

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Opinions expressed in the **Co-op Table** 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.

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cover photo by Whitney Bard,

back cover photo by Joel Kluger

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2017 HOURS

WESTSIDE LOCATION

FEBRUARY: Fri-Mon, 10am-6pm

MARCH: Everyday, 10am-6pm

APRIL-JUNE: Everyday, 10am-7pm

JULY/AUGUST: Everyday, 10am-6pm

SEPTEMBER: Everyday, 10am-4pm

OCTOBER: Fri-Mon, 10am-4pm

NOVEMBER: Sat/Sun, 10am-4pm

DECEMBER: 2-3, 9-10, 16-24,

10am-4pm

EASTSIDE LOCATION*

open everyday, 8am-8pm

*in front of main store

We invite you to join us!

BECOME A WORKING MEMBER

Active participation of members is the foundation of any cooperative. At the Olympia Food Co-op, working members have supported the operations of the Co-op since we opened in 1977, and are a valued part of our Co-op community.

As a working member, you can learn about your Co-op from the inside out, meet people, gain new skills, and receive discounts on your groceries. Join a long tradition of working members who have made the Olympia Food Co-op the successful, community-oriented organization it is today!

Sign up for an introduction tour at either store today!

WESTSIDE

MARCH

WEDNESDAY 8TH, 10AM-12PM

FRIDAY 10TH, 3-5PM

WEDNESDAY 15TH, 11AM-1PM

APRIL

WEDNESDAY 5TH, 1-3PM

THURSDAY 6TH, 4-6M

WEDNESDAY 12TH, 3-5PM

THURSDAY 20TH, 3-5PM

MAY

WEDNESDAY 3RD, 5-7PM

THURSDAY 4TH, 4-6M

TUESDAY 9TH, 5:30-7:30PM

THURSDAY 20TH, 3-5PM

EASTSIDE

MARCH

THURSDAY 2ND, 5:30-7:30PM

SUNDAY 5TH, 9:30-11:30AM

APRIL

THURSDAY 6TH, 5:30-7:30PM

SUNDAY 9TH, 9:30-11:30AM

MAY

THURSDAY 4TH, 5:30-7:30PM

SUNDAY 7TH, 9:30-11:30AM

JUNE

THURSDAY 8TH, 5:30-7:30PM

SUNDAY 11TH, 9:30-11:30AM

EVERYTHING POTATOES!

An Introduction to Quality Seed Potatos at the Co-op Garden Center Plus Growing Tips

By *Danielle Lazarus*

Garden Center Manager

OK, I'll admit it, I LOVE growing potatoes. From picking out seed, all the way to sticking my hands in the dirt and emerging with yellow, blue, red, pink gold nuggets. About the only think I don't like is squishing those darn Colorado potato beetles! I'll get to that later...

Since I first participated in this annual process, I have always gotten bumper crops with little to no disease. Why? The secret to great potato crops is excellent quality, disease-free seed potatoes.

What is a seed potato and why is it different from the potatoes you buy in the produce aisle? It's true, seed potatoes and regular potatoes look a lot alike. You can eat seed potatoes just like regular potatoes. But the reverse is not the healthiest option to get that delicious bumper crop, for your soil, or for continuous growing year-after-year. [Non-Organic supermarket potatoes are often sprayed with sprouting inhibitors at the producers or distributors to increase their shelf-life, so they will never be a good option, just FYI.]

Certified Organic Seed Potatoes are grown from a special type of tissue propagation in a sterile environment, then planted and grown like regular potatoes, but in an as disease-free environment as possible. To consider how important a disease-free environment is, have you ever heard of the great Irish Potato Famine? Two-thirds of Irish citizens in the mid-1800s depended on a single variety of potato, related to our modern Russet, as their main food staple. One million out of eight million people died from starvation when the mono-cropped potato was affected by a type of plant disease called a blight. One third to one half of the planted crop died in 1844, and when replanted in 1845, three quarters of the crop died, which had a ripple effect in Ireland, causing mass migration.

Now, the "disease-free" environment may sound like seed potato is grown in some sort of outdoor laboratory, but the reality is quite different. Everything Potatoes, our main grower of seed potato for sale at the Co-op starting in 2016, planted their 2016 seed potato crop right over the border in Idaho, in soil that had 60 years of fallow cover crop, in fields far isolated from other potato crops, with no additional inputs! And the worms and honey bees were more than happy to help the potatoes along.

SO WHO IS EVERYTHING POTATOES?

Everything Potatoes is a family business run by Sandy and Jeff Bragg. Jeff grew up in a potato growing family, and has over 40 years of experience in all aspects of potato development. As Jeff says, "analyzing Breeder trials to putting them directly into the mouth of consumers. This includes tissue culture, variety trait analysis, growing differences, and culinary applications." Jeff has worked in the conventional potato grower world, as well as with public agricultural research universities. As a meticulous "potato scientist," who has observed both sides of the story, Jeff has come to the conclusion that organic methods of growing are the best to obtain the highest quality seed potatoes out there. Sandy manages the business, and both are committed to this endeavor for education and quality more than for any other reason.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

"We are a full "Field to Fork" organic only potato variety development company. This means we are only working with varieties for suitability for producers-small or large! We want to make a commitment to zero disease so growers don't have to worry about introducing soil borne disease that most seed growers have because of short rotations and poor incoming seed stock. My father taught me to find the best seed to plant no matter what crop you were trying to grow!

We also believe we have to educate-this is the only way we can take care of Mother Earth and improve the society we live in.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIER:

As an added bonus, the Co-op is also rounding out the varieties available by carrying seed potatoes from Grand Teton Organic Potatoes. The farmer for this company is John Hoggan, who was an apprentice to Jeff Bragg years ago. With these quality producers, the Olympia Food Co-op is maintaining this level of high quality and experience for all your seed potatoes. ■





photo courtesy of Everything Potatoes



photo by Duncan Green

Be a Pedal Powered Planet Protector

Pedal in the 30th Annual BCC!

By Duncan Green, Co-op Member

It feels good to buy groceries at the Co-op, knowing we're supporting local and organic growers and producers. It is one way we can make a difference and promote sustainable, fair and environmentally responsible practices. We might go a little out of our way, or be willing to sometimes pay a little more, to support these values and to know where our food comes from. We know our choices have an impact.

Another choice that makes a big impact is how we choose to get around: to the Co-op or other errands, to work or school, or for entertainment and recreation. Fossil-fuel-powered transportation is a leading polluter and generator of carbon dioxide, not to mention its many other questionable impacts. Every time we leave the house we make a choice: do we start the car and drive alone, or do we walk, bike, bus, carpool, or vanpool? What impacts do our choices have? Do we know where our fuel comes from?

My favorite transportation choice is the bicycle. The only fuel required is the food you buy at the Co-op! Walking is also great, but a bicycle extends your range exponentially. Around town, riding a bike can often get you to your destination as soon as by driving a car (or you can slow down and enjoy the ride). When I choose the bike, I get exercise without having to go to the gym. I get fresh air and see nature and wildlife on my way. I save a LOT of money, and spend it locally and use it to support the causes I believe in.

I am awakened to the impacts of my transportation choices by the things I see and experience. On top of all that, riding my bike is exhilarating and fun, and it makes me feel good!

There can be some challenges to changing our transportation habits, just like changing our food-buying habits. It can be easier than you might think though, especially with the support of community. The annual Bicycle Commuter Challenge and Intercity Transit's other bike events encourage Thurston County residents of all ages and abilities to try bicycling as a means of transportation. Participating in the BCC is a great way to find the support you may need as a beginning "practical cyclist" or to join the fun and be counted if you are an old hand. The Bicycle Commuter Challenge office is open January through June, to help you find all the information you need to get started.

Contact Duncan Green at dgreen@intercitytransit.com, call 360-705-5874 or visit thurstonbcc.blogspot.com for more information or to register for the 30th Annual BCC.

This year's BCC events:

- Earth Day Market Ride on Saturday, April 22
- National Bike-to-Work Day on Friday, May 19 with "Bike Stations" around town.
- Info on all events at thurstonbcc.blogspot.com

Intercity Transit also provides award-winning public mobility including many bus routes,

Dial-a-Lift, and vanpools for those with longer commutes. www.intercitytransit.com ■

30th Annual Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge



~ Everyone Wins in the BCC! ~

Bike to Work, School or on Errands and Win Great Prizes

~ Participate Anytime in May ~

You could win a prize no matter how much or little you ride

~ Register Free at www.bccblog.com ~

Registration Opens April 1

Earth Day Market Ride ~ Sat. April 30
National Bike To Work Day ~ Fri. May 19

More info at:



bccblog.com
360-705-5874
intercitytransit.com

INTERcity
TRANSIT



Bowls are Beautiful

Deliciously Easy Meals

Recipes & Photos by Whitney Bard, Staff Member

Bowl style recipes are an easy, delicious and versatile way to curate a nutritiously complete meal for one or many people. They can be served immediately after cooking or packed for a meal on the go, the flavors changing and marrying over time. Bowls have long been enjoyed in Asian cuisine (think Korean Bibimbap, Vietnamese Bún, or Japanese Tekka Don). Bowl style meals easily accommodate different diets; they can be made carb or grain free, vegan or vegetarian, etc., and are the perfect place to include a fermented food in your daily routine. The bowl is constructed of basic building blocks: protein, fresh vegetables, cooked vegetables and a carbohydrate. When setting up your bowl, play around and experiment with flavors and textures using one of each of the building blocks. Each food should taste good as a single bite, but will become mixed up and so should complement the flavor profile as a whole. Try including stronger flavors as garnishes, like quick pickles, fresh grated ginger or hot peppers, or fresh aromatic herbs. Here are some recipes for a few of our favorite bowls. Each recipe is for one bowl but can be easily expanded for however many you will be serving. Enjoy!

Continued on page 8

MAPLE MISO SALMON

BOWL

Small salmon fillet
1 pinch salt
1/2 tsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. miso paste
2 tbsp. maple syrup
1/2 small purple daikon radish
2 tbsp. brown rice vinegar
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. fresh ginger, grated
1 handful sliced mushrooms (beech, shitake, maitake)
1 tbsp. olive oil
2 tbsp. sherry vinegar
Pinch black pepper
Pinch salt
1 handful chopped napa cabbage
1 cup mache, mesclun or other baby green

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a small glass or ceramic baking dish with aluminum foil or baking parchment, enough to fold over the salmon fillet, and drizzle olive oil and sprinkle a pinch of salt; lay the salmon skin side down in the foil/parchment paper. In a small bowl, whisk together miso paste and maple syrup and pour over the salmon. Fold the salmon into the foil/parchment paper so that air does not escape. Depending on the size of the fillet, bake for 15-25 minutes; the thickest part should be cooked through but moist and tender.

2. While the salmon is baking, chop the daikon into 1/4 inch thick triangles or rounds and combine in a small bowl with the salt, ginger and brown rice vinegar; toss so the dressing is evenly distributed. Refrigerate.

3. Place the baby greens in the serving/eating bowl.

4. Heat a frying pan to medium, add the oil, then the mushrooms, salt and black pepper, allowing them to sizzle for about one minute, then pour the sherry vinegar over and cover the pan and allow to cook, stirring once or twice until the mushrooms are tender, about 3 minutes. Add the chopped napa cabbage, cover and allowing the steam to cook the cabbage until the leaves are translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Pour this mixture on top of the baby greens which have been set aside in a bowl.

5. When the salmon is cooked, unwrap and place the fillet on top of the mushroom/cabbage mixture. Garnish with the daikon. Enjoy.

PRESERVED MEYER LEMON LAMB BOWL

1 small lamb blade steak
1 tsp. ghee or vegetable oil
1 jar preserved lemons
1/4 tsp. cardamom
1 tsp. sumac
1 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. sea salt
2 tbsp. minced parsley
2-3 leaves purple kale
2-3 leaves mustard greens
Chevoo or Manouri cheese
Divina Sour Cherry Jam

1. Wash and de-stem 2-3 leaves of both the kale and mustard greens. Tear into bite sized pieces and reserve.

2. Place the baby greens in the serving/eating bowl.

3. Heat a cast iron pan on high, add the ghee or vegetable oil and cardamom. Pat the lamb steak dry as the pan heats, then sear it on both sides for 2-3 minutes until it is a deep, caramelized brown. When the second side has seared, pour about 3 tbs of the liquid in the preserved lemon jar and allow to cook off. While it steams in the lemon water, sprinkle the steak with sumac, black pepper, salt and parsley. Slice into the thickest part of the meat to gauge how well done the meat is, and cook to your preference. Remove the steak from the pan, place on a cutting board, and cut against the grain into thin slices.

4. In the lamb pan, with drippings retained, sauté the kale and mustard greens until just wilted, adding a splash of preserved lemon juice at the beginning to create steam, and scrape them from the pan evenly over the baby greens.

5. Place the lamb on top, garnish with a few thin slices of the preserved lemon, a sprinkling of Chevoo or Manouri cheese, and a generous spoonful of Divina Sour Cherry Jam (found in the cheese case at our eastside location).

CAST IRON CHICKEN THIGH BOWL

1 chicken thigh, skin on
1 tsp. sea salt
1/2 fuji apple
1 cup shredded savoy cabbage
1 cup mache, mesclun or other baby green
1/2 carrot, sliced in thin rounds
2 tbsp. toasted pumpkin seeds
1/4 cup OlyKraut or other sauerkraut

1. Rub salt on both sides of the chicken thigh and roast in an oiled cast iron pan, skin down for 25 minutes at 420 degrees, until golden brown.

2. Chop apple in 1/2 inch cubes, reserve. Shred cabbage, reserve. Slice 1/2 carrot into thin rounds and reserve.

3. When the chicken is cooked, remove the pan from the oven. Carefully pull the chicken thigh away from the hot pan and reserve.

4. Depending on how much schmaltz (chicken fat) has cooked off into the cast iron pan, discard enough to leave about 1 tbsp. Move the hot pan onto the stovetop, with the burner turned to medium hot. Immediately add the cabbage to the pan, followed by the apples and a generous pinch of salt. Pour the apple cider over the sizzling mixture and cover quickly to trap the steam. Removing the lid to stir once quickly, allow to cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat when the apples are tender, but not falling apart.

5. Place baby greens in a serving/eating bowl. Using a rubber spatula, scrape the mixture from the pan evenly over the bowl of baby greens. Top with the chicken thigh, carrots, sauerkraut and pumpkin seeds. ■



CO-OP LOCAL

What Does That Mean?

By Hathor Vergotis, Staff Member

Walking into the Olympia Food Co-op is like walking into a community center - Elders chat in the cashier lines, neighbors wave hello, and friends who have been meaning to touch base block the produce aisle, catching up. Our stores are the living, pumping, sometimes hectic heart of our community. The Olympia Food Co-op epitomizes local, not just because it is the place where everybody runs into each other, but because local is the blood that keeps it alive. Policies supporting local food producers are part of The Co-op's mission statement and purchasing guidelines, and are implemented through our Local Farms program, the workings of the Local Products Committee, and day-to-day buying decisions of department managers on the floor. All of this work has a tremendously strengthening effect on our local producers, helping them grow and change to meet the needs of our community, and giving them a dependable market for their products. In turn, our community benefits from having a flexible, viable local food production infrastructure, and increased employment opportunities. In such uncertain times, the stability a strong community brings is invaluable.

So, first off, how does our Co-op define a local food producer? With so many grocery chains bandying about the term "local" for marketing purposes these days, it's hard to see what sets the Olympia Food Co-op's commitment to buying local apart. Here at the Co-op we define local as a food producer (farms included) located within Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Pierce, and Grays Harbor counties, that sells its products directly to us, without the use of a third party wholesaler. This means person-to-person interaction, we know our producers by name and face, and they bring their products directly through our warehouse doors.

Part of our mission statement outlines our purpose to contribute to the health and

wellbeing of people by providing wholesome foods through a locally-driven cooperative organization, which supports local production. We carry this out in a number of ways. The Local Products Committee of our Board, with membership made up of community members, food producers, and staff workers, serves our mission by strengthening ties between the Co-op and local producers. This group hosts the annual Local Eats celebration, and brings demos of outstanding local products into the stores monthly. We have our Local Farms Committee, which meets with all of our local farmers in the winter months to plan out the entire next year's growing season. This group is the reason why we are the only grocery store in town selling local carrots clear into January, and why our produce department boasts over 20% local during the growing season; who else can say that? Our managers on the floor follow product selection guidelines that favor buying directly from local vendors, as part of a long-range plan to increase support for local businesses and organizations. Westside dairy manager Josh Elliott talks about his commitment to carrying local products: "I strive to have as many locally produced products as I can for a few reasons - locally produced food keeps money in our community. The less distance food has to travel to get to our membership, the smaller impact on the ecosystems. And, the more food that is being produced locally, then well, the more food our community has access to."

This year, as part of celebrating The Olympia Food Co-op's 40th year bringing great food to the Olympia community, we are kicking off a campaign called "40 Years of Co-op Local", highlighting our outstanding local food producers with spotlight posters in the stores, more demos, and videos on our website. We intend to spread awareness to all our shoppers and the community-at-large about specific local producers and what makes them

so vital to us all, and how we at the Co-op serve to strengthen our community through work on the local level.

The effect of this work is palpable. Every department in our store highlights locally produced foods, our dairy cases fairly burst with local options for milk, yogurt, kraut, and kombucha. As a shopper, I love the fact that I can find all these great local products in one store. In Josh's experience, the relationship often gives local producers a needed entrance into the marketplace. "Often times, we are the first place folks (local producers) get their stuff on the shelf. In dairy West, about one third of our selection is local and direct. It makes me really happy when a relationship with a local vendor takes off and we start to see their product in other stores."

Local businesses, especially those just starting out, benefit significantly from the Co-op's directed efforts. Habib Serhan, whose company Exquisite N Traditional has been doing business with the Co-op since 2011, is responsible for the wonderful Hummus and Rawmus that graces our "Grab and Go" coolers, as well as Baba Ghannouj, Tiramisu, Baklava, and a host of other lovingly crafted foods. "Initially we started our business partnership with the Co-op with the baklava product. Over the years, trust has grown, and, through various demos we held, our product line has grown to include over 15 products." He went on to say, "...the support

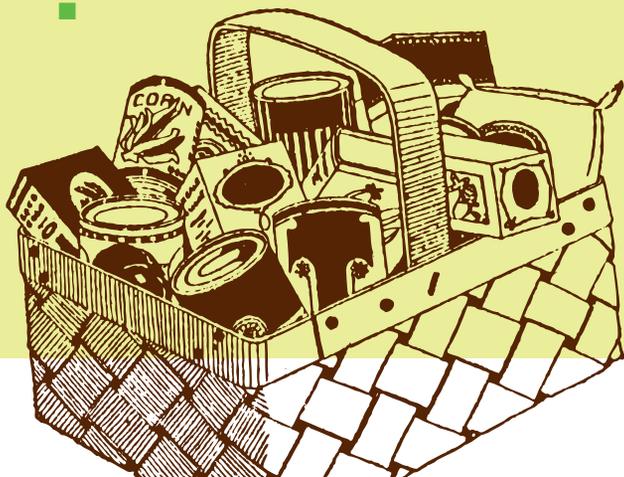


has given us a continuous boost of energy that is keeping us motivated to handcraft additional exquisite delicacies.”

Black Hills Microgreens, a local farm that grows nutritionally powerful and delicately beautiful pea shoots, sunflower shoots, and a number of brassica shoots including red cabbage, toscano kale and diakon radish, delivers to the produce department of both stores twice weekly. Karl Schaffner, farmer/owner of Black Hills Microgreens, said this, when asked about his relationship with the Co-op, “Oly Food Co-op was our first steady account and in that, very important in our development. Our relationship has definitely grown - I feel we have an excellent connection and you guys understand the intricacies of our production, while I understand your process and needs.”

Our commitment to local food producers goes deeper than just buying food to fill our shelves. When local Kombucha maker Magic Kombucha suffered a devastating warehouse fire, staff workers quickly stepped in to create a round-up button in our point-of-sale system, so customers can easily donate to the rebuilding fund when checking-out. And you can be sure, when Magic starts bottling again, it will have a big space in our coolers.

Through the enactment of carefully crafted policies grown from grass-roots ideals, the Olympia Food Co-op is community in action. The money flows thru us and keeps circulating here, many of our food producers are our shoppers as well. It's a common sight, to see a local vendor step out of the warehouse and onto the floor after delivering their products, to get a little shopping done. We provide local producers with a dependable market for their wares, a viable income, and our shoppers get easy access to a myriad of lovely local gems. Together we build a strong local food network, a stronger community, and fill our bellies with nutritious, delicious food. 40 years committed to local, and going strong!



Anti-oppression Work At the Co-op

By Josh Elliott and Ben Sittingbull, Staff Members

Hello from the Anti-oppression Coordination Action Team (CAT). The Olympia Food Co-op Staff collective self-organized a committee to work on confronting systems of oppression within the work place, within the broader organization, and within our community. This took place shortly after the opening of the eastside store in 1994, when the Staff collective size doubled and saw a rapid increase in the diversity of staff. With growth came growing pains, and the realization that more Staff training was needed and implemented.

Originally, and within the context of the mid-nineties, the work was focused on ‘diversity’. Some Staff were appointed as the ‘diversity coordinators’ and they held trainings for the rest of Staff. This, of course, opened up dialogue and debate about the usefulness of a grocery store staff taking time and resources to focus on ‘diversity’. And that debate continues to this day. Over the years the work has changed and eventually has become the Anti-oppression CAT. The anti-oppression coordination team, in all its manifestations, has always made sure that there are trainings for the new hires and resources for current staff. The trainings and continued work with anti-oppression has ebbed and flowed. Inevitably, this work dredges up difficult feelings and tenuous situations, but the work always picks back up and continues due to the ongoing commitment of the collective to keep it evolving.

Our current work follows a framework put forth by Dr. Leticia Nieto, professor at St. Martin’s University and author of *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment*. In the last few years we have hired Liz Goodwin to come down from Seattle to give our newly hired Staff an introduction to anti-oppression training. When we have the opportunity we also will collaborate with a group called AORTA (anti-oppression resource and training alliance), to further our training in anti-oppression work and to further our work as a collective. AORTA is a worker-owned cooperative devoted to strengthening movements for social justice and a solidarity economy. They work as consultants and facilitators to expand the capacity of cooperative, collective, and community-based projects through education, training, and planning.

“In growing my personal practice of living in this world socially, and attempting to be responsible for all the things that I am as a person in this world, my job at the Co-op has given me a practice of Anti -Oppression for several years now. Both as a long term interest in our community and now as an employment development responsibility.” Ben Sittingbull, anti-oppression CAT co-coordinator.

Being in a collective can be hard work, and when we are constantly trying to dissect the various ways that systems of oppression seep into our workplace, it can be very challenging. Tensions can run high, and relationships can become intense. However, in the long run it is super important for us to do this work as it allows us to create a workplace that centers on struggling against oppression. Systems of oppression are often used to keep people apart, separated, making workplaces alienating. We strive for something different here at the Olympia Food Co-op.

Here’s a quote from Anne Braden: “as long as people of color can be written off as expendable, and therefore acceptable victims of the most extreme inequities, none of the basic injustices of our society will be addressed; they will only get worse.” ■

2016 Financial Report

By Max Crabapple, Staff Member

The Olympia Food Co-op was born in a garage, a community effort between neighbors seeking whole foods at the best price. To this day, we seek to deliver the healthiest food at the best price to our community, our member-owners. The best price includes a respect for the farmers and workers whose labor shines on our stores' shelves, as well as a living wage with ample health benefits for all of our staff.

Financial transparency is one way we show our place in the local economy. If you are a member of the Olympia Food Co-op, these are your stores, literally! You are helping to grow the local economy, and what follows is a review of how your stores are doing.

Overall, 2016 was a year of modest growth for both stores. Our all-store growth targets fell a little short, and we compensated with reduced expenses on goods, operating costs, and staffing costs. Our total revenue came in -2.6% of our 2016 budgeted goals, and our expenses were in turn reduced by 1.7%. After all of our expenses (cost of goods, cost of operating the stores, paying wages, benefits, business taxes, etc.), we ended the year with an extra \$30,000 rather than the \$60,000 we predicted. We need to save as much as possible to be able to grow the Co-op, as opening a third store will be a considerable financial undertaking; any "extra" money will be well spent in growing our local food economy.

We saw a nice bump in center-store sales on the Westside (packaged

goods that don't need refrigeration), and growth in the Deli and Wellness/Health Aids departments at both stores. Bulk departments at both stores have seen slowed sales, in line with national trends. We've also seen a slow decline in our all-organic produce departments, particularly at the Westside store, where managers are trying out weekly and daily sales, and focusing on the freshest, most affordable options in an effort to boost sales. The Produce departments at both stores have launched a free-fruit for kids program, Co-op Explorers, so if you're shopping with little ones, check out the fruit baskets at Customer Service at either store!

One of the 'expenses' that we celebrate is our discount programming that enables low-income, senior, and disability members to purchase everything at reduced prices. We gave back over \$750,000 to our shoppers through our combined discount programs in 2016, exceeding our plans by more than \$20,000. Our discount programs will be going strong in 2017 with a new, streamlined sign-up for everyone who faces financial barriers to buying good food. To learn more about the Discount Task Force and its work, check out staff member Tamara's article in this issue!

2017 will see the Co-op's continued efforts to sustainably grow, with the possible expansion to a third store, and a make-over of the East-side store to allow for easier shopping. We welcome any comments or questions; you can often find our bookkeepers Harry and Corey at our business office, 360-357-1106 ext. 12. ■

Olympia Food Co-op 2016 Pre-tax YTD Budget Report

For The Year Ending December 31, 2016

*Best numbers as of February 6, 2017. Tax liability, depreciation, and other final totals will have final adjustments after publication date, and are expected to affect these totals minimally.

As of January 15, the Olympia Food Co-op community donated \$14,867 to Standing Rock

	2016 ACTUALS	2016 BUDGET	\$ OVER BUDGET
Revenue:			
Sales	17,317,875.54	17,727,054.25	(409,178.71)
Cost of Goods Sold	11,362,788.94	11,605,207.21	(242,418.27)
Gross Sales Revenue:	5,955,086.60	6,121,847.04	(166,760.44)
Other Revenue:	29,084.44	26,838.00	2,246.44
Total Net Revenue:	5,984,171.04	6,148,685.04	(164,514.00)
Expenses:			
Community & Marketing	129,600.54	141,190.00	(11,589.46)
Staffing	4,157,692.11	4,266,121.71	(108,429.60)
Member Discounts	757,861.67	736,546.05	21,315.62
Operations	834,060.00	834,806.88	(746.88)
Depreciation	81,994.97	83,782.75	(1,787.78)
Interest	10,148.15	13,700.00	(3,551.85)
Total Expenses:	5,971,357.44	6,076,147.39	(104,789.95)
Other Income and Expenses:	(16,812.44)	12,239.90	(29,052.34)
Total Net Income:	29,626.04	60,297.75	(30,671.71)



Changes Coming to our Discount Memberships

By **Tamara Linder, Staff Member**

At the Co-op, we're proud of the fact that our membership is affordable and accessible to anyone who wants to join us. Almost 20 years ago, the Co-op began offering a free annual membership, including a 10% discount, to anyone who identified as low-income. In addition, we've offered free membership and a 10% discount to anyone with a disability or over the age of 62.

Over the years, these memberships have been extremely popular, and we're pleased to report that the Co-op has provided thousands of members with millions of dollars in discounts on their purchases. But as the years have gone by, the proportion of discount usage has been steadily creeping up. In 2016, 10% discounts amounted to more than \$750,000. In order to ensure the Co-op's sustainability, we decided to research some options for modifying our discount memberships.

A Discount Task Force convened in June of 2015, comprised of Staff and Board members. They set out to look at OFC's current discount systems and propose possible modifications to the staff and Board. The goals of the Discount Task Force were to:

- Establish an advisory council comprised of discount members and community service providers. The staff task force members created a system for selecting organizations and individuals to serve on this council.
- Develop a work plan that included various ways to solicit member and community input.
- Produce a report including options for modifying the discount structure for the Board and staff to review, with the Board having final consent on an option.

Our Co-op Advisory Council consisted of four Co-op members-at-large. Together with the Task Force, council members actively participated in conducting membership surveys and focus group discussions, and the results led the Task Force to create some recommendations for how to proceed. At the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting, the Task Force presented those recommendations and collected comment cards from members attending. The recommendations are:

1. We are adding a new way to determine eligibility for annual Cooperative Access Program Memberships. When we created the Low-income membership, we decided that we wanted members to decide for themselves whether or not they qualified. So we created a list of criteria that prospective members could reference to help determine whether or not they would be considered

low-income. The criteria included issues of employment, homelessness, temporary disability, and dependent support. We are now adding the use of a more measurable method for determining qualification, the WA state self-sufficiency calculator, offered by the Workforce Development Councils of Washington State.

2. Senior and Disability memberships will no longer include a 10% discount. We conducted surveys of over 1000 members and came to the conclusion that many members who qualify for these memberships do not financially need the accompanying discount. We believe that this is the best way to accomplish the Co-op's goal to "Make good food accessible to more people." The changes to these membership types will be implemented in stages, beginning April 15 for new members, and July 3 for existing members. Any member who qualifies is encouraged to switch to an annual CAP membership (formerly Low-income membership), and receive the included 10% discount. This is an annual membership, and will need to be renewed.

The Board of Directors approved these recommendations at their November Meeting, and we're working toward implementing these changes starting April 15, 2017 for new members joining these membership types, and continuing through July 3, 2017, for existing members with senior or disability memberships.

The Co-op will continue to offer free memberships with no dues payments to anyone over 62 or with a disability.

We also continue to offer free annual memberships for anyone who qualifies for the Cooperative Access Program (formerly known as "Low-Income Membership"). The purpose of the program is to make Co-op membership available to anyone whose access to the Co-op is limited due to financial hardship. The membership is good for one year, and includes a 10% discount on purchases.

COOPERATIVE ACCESS PROGRAM

The Cooperative Access Program offers a free annual membership, with no dues and a 10% discount. The membership is available to anyone whose income falls below self-sufficiency, as described below. Purchases must be for use by the qualifying individual and their financial dependents – this does not include friends, housemates, etc.

Criteria:

- The Coop recognizes the WA state self sufficiency calculator to determine income or monthly budget eligibility. If you fall below the self sufficiency standard you qualify for this annual membership. If you need help accessing the calculator, please ask us. Here is the website to access the calculator. <http://www.thecalculator.org/calculator.php>
- Underemployed (hours, pay, or income is too low to reasonably cover expenses, and not by choice)
- Unemployed (not by choice) and without familial support and/or other financial resources
- Unable to make a reasonable living due to physical or mental challenges
- Supporting dependents without adequate resources
- Homeless ■

An Interview with Michelle Noel
DEDICATED STAFF CHEESE EXPERT
American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professional



Michelle Noel, Olympia Food Co-op Cheese Manager
Interviewed by Co-op Staff Member Whitney Bard

WB: How long have you worked at the Co-op/been a manager of the cheese department?

MN: As a staff member since 2001 and as an Eastside cheese department manager since 2003.

WB: You just got this fancy certification from the American Cheese Society.

ACS is a North American grassroots association of cheesemakers, dairy scientists and academics, distributors, cheese retailers, cheese enthusiasts and others that formed in the 1980's to provide educational resources, peer review and networking opportunities. ACS hosts an annual conference, judging and competition and prestigious awards ceremony for the cheesemakers. They also function as an advocacy organization, a unified voice for artisan cheesemakers concerns, who interface with the FDA, representing the cheese industry by developing and promoting best practices, quality and food safety standards and sustainability. They aim to ensure that the legislation and policies the FDA creates around cheese is science based. Congratulations on your cheese certification. Can you explain to us what it is?

MN: Yes! As of October, 2016, I am an American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professional or ACS CCP. Being certified means a person has a thorough understanding of the cheese industry and could work in any area of it, from cheesemaking, to importing and distribution, to retail. CCPs commit to continually learning about cheese, growing professionally, and maintaining the high standards developed by the American Cheese Society in our work.

I obtained this certification through passing a rigorous exam, for which applicants must first meet certain qualifications. To be selected to take the exam, one has to have at least 4000 hours in the last six years of hands-on experience working with cheese and participating in educational opportunities. I have, together with my co-managers, shepherded the cheese department's growth over the last 14 years, and it is now my full-time work at the Co-op, so it was easy to meet the hours requirement. I have also participated in numerous classes, conferences and cheese festivals over the years, which helped me to qualify.

WB: Why did you want to obtain the certification?

MN: I want to make sure that I have a solid foundation in cheese knowledge and that I am providing accurate information about cheese for our membership, caring for the cheeses in our store appropriately and representing the cheesemakers in the best way that I can. I want to better be of service to our Co-op community. This was a way to reflect on the knowledge and skills I have gained over the years and to challenge myself professionally.

Part of why the certification exists is to help make cheesemongering a viable and respectable career option, not just a job title that inspires giggles (but I do encourage the giggling, too). This certification helps retain advocates for artisanal cheese who have accumulated knowledge and skill which in turn, supports sustainable agricultural and dairy farming practices, traditional small scale cheesemaking,

healthier local economies and food systems and biodiversity.

WB: How long did you study for it?

MN: Well, basically since 2003, when I started working with cheese at the Co-op, eating as many that were new to me as I could find, and devouring books, magazines and videos about it regularly.

I began to study in a focused way specifically for the exam in February, 2016, when my application to take the exam was accepted and I continued up to the end of July when I took the exam at the American Cheese Society Conference, which was held in Des Moines, IA last summer.

WB: How many people have the certification in the state?

MN: There are 740 in the world who hold the certification so far. In the Olympia area, I am the only Certified Cheese Professional, but in Washington State we actually have a high number (42) proportionally compared to other states; in the Seattle area there are about 30 Certified Cheese Professionals. In the United States, there are only three entry points for imported cheese (where cheese comes in and is inspected and approved throughout the country). The Port of Seattle is one such entry point and distribution hub, and because of this, there are several cheese distributors and many places to buy a wide variety of cheese in the Seattle area. We also have a lot of lush land for dairy producing animals, and a community of artisan cheesemakers that has been growing very rapidly over the last decade or so. This climate creates a demand for many workers with a high level of knowledge and skill. This is my guess at why we have so many CCPs in Western Washington.

WB: How has obtaining the CCP changed your career?

MN: So far it has mainly changed my level of joy and confidence while helping Co-op members at the cheese case. Through my studies and week at the ACS conference, I have met new friends and mentors around the country who share my nerdiness and passion for cheese. I've had the opportunity to share some things I've learned with newer cheesemakers, which felt so cool. It has helped me feel more useful in the world.

Studying for the exam entailed attending classes on dairy animals and farming practices, cheesemaking and cheese science, food safety and best practices, marketing, nutrition, federal regulation and more. On the final day before the exam, there was an all day class taught by cheesemakers who came from all over the country to help us. These were people for whom I have a tremendous amount of reverence, I've been reading about them and working with their cheeses for years. These farmers and cheesemakers put such labor and care into every aspect of their craft. The general vibe of this community is incredible humble and inclusive but at the same time deeply passionate; it was kind of an emotional experience to meet these people in person. Then, incredibly, they expressed gratitude to all of us about to take the exam for our effort and dedication to being their advocates and supporting their lives' work. It was a tremendous honor to be thanked by our cheese heroes!

WB: How has the cheese market changed?

MN: I have seen Co-op members become more adventurous with their tastes. We used to only be able to sell cheese from larger

producers (because the economy of scale makes them cheaper), mainly cow's milk cheese and mostly the most common types. Folks are now becoming more used to the idea of seasonality, of cheeses wrapped in leaves, of wrinkly, stinky, or moldy cheeses made from milk from a variety of animals, as well as the staple cheeses they grew up eating. People seem to value cheese more. I notice an increased acceptance of higher prices on the cheeses that are made by hand, on a small scale, using the best agricultural practices. People seem to better understand the amount of work involved and the expense of the quality milk that is required to make non-commodity cheese. The low-fat craze seems to be a bit less ubiquitous and cheese slowly is reclaiming its role as a nutritious everyday food in American rather than something "fancy" for a party.

WB: What was your relationship to cheese growing up? Tell us your favorite childhood cheese memory/what role has cheese played in your life?

MN: I've always been a fiend for dairy! The very first time I remember getting in trouble, I was three years old. When my Mom was asleep I pulled a chair up to the kitchen counter. She was alarmed to find me well into a cube of butter when she woke up! The cheese that I ate growing up was shelf stable parmesan from a can, velveeta—an exciting treat was cheese whiz, or jarred, shelf stable cheese spread with bacon bits in it; essentially, I mostly remember eating processed cheese. That's what was affordable and common in the stores we shopped in when I was a kid, and that's what cheese was to me. I loved it. My favorite meal growing up was macaroni and cheese, and it basically still is!

WB: Do you remember the first time you realized you loved cheese? What cheese was it, or what were the circumstances?

MN: My magic "Aha!" moment where I knew I wanted to learn everything I could about cheese was at my first trade show. It was all amazing; there was more cheese than I had ever seen. I saw a glass case of soft French cheeses with multi-colored molds, inches tall, growing out of them! But there was one booth that had a particular draw: it was the Fine Cheese Company from Bath, England. The woman had a bunch of traditional English cheeses beautifully displayed on shelves behind her. She gave me samples of each one and told me about them with her British accent. There was one fantastic hard sheep's milk cheese, called Berkswell, that looked like a UFO because it's formed in a colander. It was the first time I had seen a whole cheese with a natural rind that came from overseas...the rind was very rustic looking, and it was delicious but I was mostly struck feeling a deep sense of the place from where it had come. I understood in that moment that that cheese is sacred in that it represents the land, the animals, the people...cheesemaking is some kind of alchemy where milk draws together place, culture, history and craft into this magical, wonderful nutrient-dense food. I went back to that booth so many times over the course of the day to awkwardly stare and ask lots of silly questions. Berkswell and a couple others from that booth were some of the first cheeses I brought into the department.

WB: How did you think/feel about cheese when you began working in the cheese department, and how do you think/feel about it now?

MN: When I first began, I found it endlessly fascinating! I had an insatiable desire to explore, a reverence for it and a passion to learn everything I could. I started devouring books about cheese and eating

whatever new cheeses I could get my hands on. I feel the same way now, after fourteen years... you could spend lifetimes learning about cheese and there will always be more to learn and experience.

WB: Our cheese department is very carefully curated. Can you tell us a little bit about how you and your co-managers go about finding, testing, selecting the cheeses we sell?

MN: I'm constantly reading about cheese! I have two shelves full of cheese books at my house, I have a subscription to Culture Magazine—essential reading for anyone who wants to learn about cheese. Whenever I travel, I visit other co-ops, farmers markets or small cheese and specialty food shops in search of cheeses I've never tried. My co-managers and I attend trade shows for each of our distributors where we meet cheesemakers and vendors and try samples for our consideration. Another important way we learn of new cheeses is at the Washington Artisan Cheesemaker's Festival—which is an annual event in Seattle, open to the public. There are a lot of delicious cheeses represented... new cheesemakers show up to that event and it's a great place to get to know about new creameries that are popping up throughout the state. Also, we love it when cheesemakers stop in to the stores to introduce themselves and give us samples of what they are making. We read and taste as much as we can in order to stay current with what is happening in the cheese world and to build and maintain a foundation in the centuries old of cheeses of Europe, so that is reflected in our cheese case.

WB: What makes our cheese department exciting?

MN: We have an emphasis on bringing in and highlighting a lot of local producers, and have for many years. This is something that can be said of any reputable cheese store. It's something you're finding more and more in mainstream stores but is something that has been a part of the Co-op's values since the beginning. I'm proud that we have an organizational policy that instructs us to use a very low mark-up on all products purchased directly from the producer and that come from one of the surrounding counties. Making cheese by hand, on a small scale, using the highest quality milk from healthy, well cared for animals is expensive, unfortunately, so I'm grateful that we attempt to make these cheeses more financially accessible.

I feel excited about and hear excitement from shoppers about our continually rotating selection of cheeses, in addition to our staple items. There are thousands of cheeses being made around the world. It's exciting to think about where each precious cheese came from, who made it, how it was made, the history behind it and to taste of all the flavors of a given ecosystem. There's a French term 'terroir,' which describes the unique qualities of the land, the water, the plants, the weather, the animal species and even breed, the distinct microbiology of the region, and how these elements culminate in the taste of the cheese. We get to experience in a small way many parts of the world when we try new cheese. We get to have a connection with traditions, people and places we may never get to visit in person via our senses and a visit to our Co-op cheese department!

WB: If you could only eat one cheese for the rest of your life, which would it be?

MN: It would be Parmigiano Reggiano, the real deal Italian parmesan, AKA "the King of Cheeses", because I can't imagine life without pasta & alfredo sauce! Also, it's a very hard aged cheese, containing very little moisture, so it is nutritionally very dense and a little goes a long

way. It keeps well without refrigeration so it's great for camping or power outages. It's my number one staple at home. (By the way, our regular price on this cheese is astonishingly low!)

WB: Tell us about cheese rinds! Can you eat them?

MN: Some rinds are artificial, such as wax or plastic, and you don't want to eat those. Hopefully, inedible rinds will be obvious when you see them. Natural rinds are edible. The natural rind is like the skin of the cheese; it forms naturally and protects the cheese. It is made of the aged cheese curd, molds, bacteria and yeasts. Whether or not to eat the rind is a matter of personal preference. Someone might enjoy eating the rind of one cheese and not another, but they are all safe to eat. I tend to like all the bloomy rinds, which are the whitish ones on soft-ripened cheeses like Brie or Ancient Heritage's "Valentine" (a soft-ripened cheese from Oregon made of sheep's milk). There are occasionally rinds I personally find too gritty, but in general I like the variety of texture that they add. The flavor is usually more concentrated close to the rind. Just give it a nibble! Taste the paste and the rind together. Taste the parts separately. Experiment and see what you like.

WB: I learn so much from you when we work together, like that cheese tastes best at room temperature! Tell us why that is.. any other cheese secrets? Strange but delicious combinations?

MN: Any authoritative resource will tell you to serve cheese at room temperature. I don't have a scientific explanation of why the cheese tastes better when you do. The best answer I could find was from the book *The Science of Cheese*, by Michael Tunick. "Many volatile compounds responsible for flavor are not detectable under refrigeration." I do know from experience that the flavors, aromas and texture are best once the cheese comes to room temperature. The flavors open up, the aromas waft and the cheese becomes more supple or oozy, as the case may be. When serving cheese, it should be taken out of refrigeration for thirty minutes to one hour before eating. Only take out as much as you think you will eat in one setting. Leave it wrapped until just before serving to keep it from drying out. Go ahead, try it cold and then try it again in an hour. You'll be amazed by the transformation!

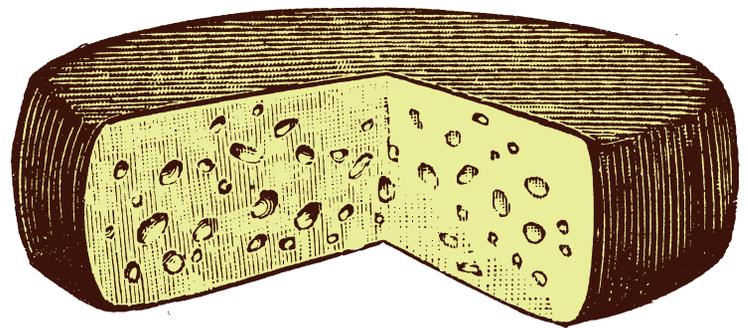
One of my favorite snacks is Jalisco corn chips dipped in Organic Valley cottage cheese. Is that really so strange, Whitney? I once attended a tasting where they paired nori and fresh chevre. Weirdly, that worked but I gravitate toward less unusual combinations.

I'm enamored with pairing honey and cheese. They work so well together, both being a similar kind of alchemy of plants and land by bee or ruminant. Both cheese and honey can have such unique colors, flavors, textures, based on what plants were in bloom at the time they were made. They both embody a place and a season.

I love a wonderful semi-soft Greek sheep's milk whey cheese that we carry, called Manouri, paired with Spanish orange blossom honey and toasted walnuts. Another nice pairing is local blackberry honey with Black Sheep Creamery's Fresh Cheese with Rosemary on a rice cracker but you can't have it any old time. The local fresh cheese is only available in late spring through the summer. People can be intimidated by cheese but it's really just a simple subsistence food, just preserved milk. Everyone has a unique palate, so I encourage people to try out different pairing combinations or just keep it simple with a well-made cheese and some crusty locally baked bread.

WB: What would you tell someone who hadn't explored the world of our cheese department...where should they start?

I would say, use your gut! What are you drawn to? What looks beautiful to you? I would also suggest that people start with our Local section or cheeses that have the green Buy Local sticker on the shelf tag. Also, look for the name-protected European cheeses. These are the traditional ones that have stood the test of time. Most have been around for hundreds of years, are made in a very particular way using heritage animal breeds and come only from a very particular region, for instance, Gruyère AOP from Switzerland, Roquefort AOC from France or Parmigiano Reggiano DOP from Italy. You can identify a name-protected cheese by looking for the letter designations PDO (or DOP), AOC or AOP after the cheese name. We love to tell you about what our current favorites are and make recommendations, so don't be afraid to ask! ■



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Community Classes

SPRING 2017 SCHEDULE

Pre-registration is required for all Co-op classes. Register online at www.olympiafood.coop anytime or in person at either store between the hours of 11am-6pm. Registration is not available over the phone. There is a \$7 non-refundable registration fee per class/per person unless otherwise noted.

Making Mozzarella Cheese

Sunday, March 5 10am-noon
Facilitator: Julie Kamin-Martin
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 20

Pollinators and Pollinator Gardens

Saturday, March 11 3-5pm
Facilitator: Glenn Buschman
LOCATION: Westside Co-op Garden Center
Enrollment: 15

Food Justice Book Group

Sunday, March 12 noon-2pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15. FREE EVENT

Chie's Savory Soups

Saturday, March 18 10am-noon
Facilitator: Chie Okazaki
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 15

Growing Medicinal Plants

Saturday, March 18 3-5pm
Facilitator: Sylvan Rook
LOCATION: Westside Co-op Garden Center
Enrollment: 15

Transitioning to Vegan

Wednesday, March 22 5pm-8pm
Facilitator: Lesli Baker
Location: Westside Olympia Food Co-op
Little House
Enrollment: 15

Read It and Eat: Food Book and Potluck Club:

Food Justice

Monday, March 27 3-5pm
Facilitator: Kelsey Smith
Location: Lacey Timberland Library
FREE EVENT

Food Justice Book Group

Tuesday, March 28 6:30pm-8:30pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15. FREE EVENT

Fun with Gelatin

Sunday, April 2 2-4pm
Facilitators: Diane Froelich & Elinor Jordan
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 12

Making Water Kefir

Sunday, April 9 10am-noon
Facilitator: Julie Kamin-Martin
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 20

Food Justice Book Group

Sunday, April 9 noon-2pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15. FREE EVENT

Milk Kefir for Pets

Sunday, April 23 10am-noon
Facilitator: Julie Kamin-Martin
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 20

Garden Specialty Tools: Using and Sharpening

Sunday, April 23 1-3pm
Facilitator: Rick Peters
LOCATION: Meet at Westside Garden Center
to walk to nearby location
Enrollment: 10

National Hemp Week: Cooking with Hemp

Sunday, April 23 1-4pm
Facilitator: Pat Rasmussen
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 15

Read It and Eat: Food Book and Potluck Club:

Native American Cuisine

Monday, April 24 3-5pm
Facilitator: Kelsey Smith
Location: Lacey Timberland Library
FREE EVENT

Food Justice Book Group

Tuesday, April 25 6:30pm-8:30pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15. FREE EVENT

Making Kombucha

Sunday, May 7 10am-noon
Facilitator: Julie Kamin-Martin
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 20

Farm Tour: Rising River Farm

Sunday, May 7 1-3pm
Facilitator: Jenn Belknap
Location: Rising River Farm, Rochester WA
Enrollment: 20

Chie's Savory Soups

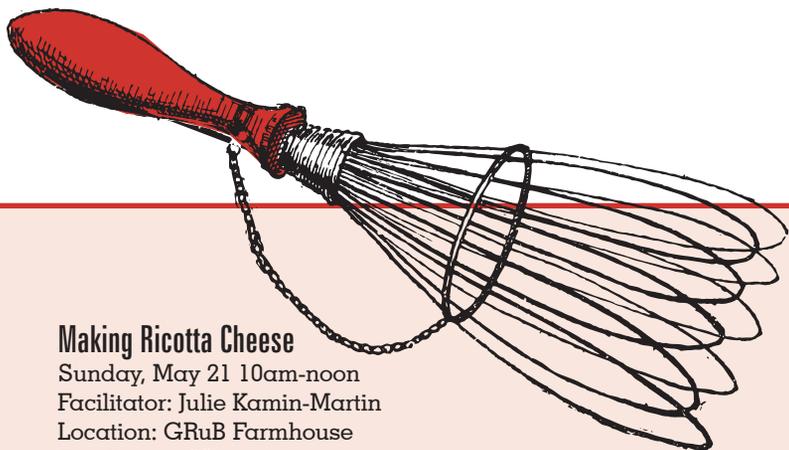
Saturday, May 13 10am-noon
Facilitator: Chie Okazaki
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 15

Plant Your Own Hanging Basket

Saturday, May 13 3-5pm
Facilitator Sylvan Rook
LOCATION: Westside Co-op Garden Center
Enrollment: 15
Class fee waived, supplies fee will vary.
Starting cost averaged at \$15.00.

Food Justice Book Group

Sunday, May 14 noon-2pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15. FREE EVENT



Making Ricotta Cheese

Sunday, May 21 10am-noon
Facilitator: Julie Kamin-Martin
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 20

Cooking with Greens

Sunday, May 21 1-3:30pm
Facilitator: Erin Majors
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 15

Read It and Eat: Food Book and Potluck Club:

The World of Spices

Monday, May 22 3-5pm
Facilitator: Kelsey Smith
Location: Lacey Timberland Library
FREE EVENT

Savvy Kids in the Kitchen:

Knife Skills for kids ages 6-9*

Saturday, May 27 10am-noon
Facilitators: Diane Froelich and Chie Okazaki
Location: GRuB Farmhouse
Enrollment: 8 Adults (+ 1 free child each)
**please include email when registering*

Food Justice Book Group

Tuesday, May 30 6:30pm-8:30pm
Facilitator: Jackson Daniels
Location: Co-op Downtown Office
Enrollment: 15
FREE EVENT

*What class participants
are saying:*

**"I'd like to thank the instructor,
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Director



Julianne Panagacos
Director



Jaime Rossman
Director



Jim Hutcheon
Director



Casey Hook
Director

Board photos by OlyHilary Photography olyhilary.smugmug.com

Attend a Board Meeting!

Board of Directors meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 6:30-9:30 pm at the Co-op's downtown business office, 610 Columbia Street SW Olympia, WA 98501 (unless otherwise noted). The Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors welcomes the attendance of active Co-op members at Board meetings. Board meetings may include an executive session, which is closed to members in order to discuss matters requiring confidentiality. For more information contact the Board of Directors at ofcboard@olympiafood.coop

Olympia Food Co-op Mission Statement

The purpose of the cooperative 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

Seven Cooperative Principles

- 1. Voluntary, Open Membership**
Open to all without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.
- 2. Democratic Member Control**
One member, one vote.
- 3. Member Economic Participation**
Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.
- 4. Autonomy And Independence**
Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.
- 5. Education, Training And Information**
Cooperatives provide education and training for members so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional, national and international structures.
- 7. Concern For The Community**
While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

Board Report

Written by Desdra Dawning, Board Member

Just as moving into spring is a time to revitalize our bodies, so too, it is a time for new life to bubble up at the OFC Board of Directors for 2017. With Board elections finalized in November, the new calendar year opened with our continuing BOD members: Julianne Panagacos, David Copley, Sam Green, Laura Kaszynski, and Michael Snow; one formerly appointed Board member, Desdra Dawning; and 4 newly-elected Board members: Brian Frisnia, Casey Hook, Jim Hutcheon and Jaime Rossman. Our first official Board meeting together was on January 19.

December saw the first Board Retreat in two years. Meeting at our Staff Representative and fellow BOD member Laura's comfortable home, we gathered together to share time outside of our regular monthly Board meetings, and to discuss what works and what needs renewal in 2017. Rain Crow, an excellent meeting facilitator from Portland, helped us move gracefully through our meeting time. And Twana Catering, the same folks who fed us their wonderful cuisine at the Annual Meeting, provided us with an amazing lunch. Our newly-elected members, who had not yet gone through their BOD training, were invited to attend the first part of the meeting so that we might all be introduced to each other. With committee reports, this also gave them a glimpse into what committees and task forces are up and running right now, so that they could ruminate on which ones might be of interest for them to join at our January meeting. This committee work is truly the life-blood of the Board and serves to keep our Staff Collective and Board members in continuing communication and cooperative work with each other. Committees and task forces are the bridges that bind us together. Members-at-large are also encouraged to join many of these committees as Working Members, further solidifying cooperative work in our community.

A short list of the BOD committees reporting at the retreat will give you a sense of the work the OFC BOD has been, and will be continuing

to be working on, this coming year. We invite Co-op Members to get involved with your Co-op by joining us as a Member-at-Large on any committees or task forces that draw your interest and have openings.

The main purpose of the retreat was to carve out long-term goals and begin to strategize in creating projects that will support getting that work done. Most of it is handled through the efforts of committees and task forces. Following is a brief summary of these groups and the work they do:

BOARD COMMITTEES

ADVOCACY— A new committee budgeted for 2017 to handle all requests from the community for Co-op participation and advocacy of their particular area of interest. Member-at-Large position available.

CO-SOUND— Has been deeply involved with Cecosesloa Cooperative in Venezuela. Works to create a local network of cooperative businesses. Currently involved: OFC, New Moon Cooperative Restaurant, Olympia Construction Cooperative and TESC's Flaming Eggplant Cafe.

ECO-PLANNING— Has been temporarily inactive, but is now budgeted for 2017. Will be using a new tool from National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) to research possible projects the Co-op can initiate that will support our mission of community sustainability and ecological nurturing. Member-at-Large position available.

STANDING HIRING— Serves the Staff Collective whenever a hiring cycle becomes necessary.

PERSONNEL— Deals with sensitive Personnel issues within the Staff Collective.

FINANCE— Reviews quarterly financial statements and overall budget process.

EXPANSION— A very active committee. Recent Feasibility Study concluded that the plan for development of the Eastside store was not financially feasible. Working now on a new plan. Created a subcommittee to investigate new opportunities. May have opening for Member-at-Large position.

MEMBER RELATIONS— Coordinates the Co-op Annual Meeting every year. Works with the Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) and others to fund-raise through our Round Up at the Register Program. Also handles BOD recruitment and elections and member complaints and concerns.

TASK FORCES

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH— Completed the Co-op Index Survey among the Staff Collective, overseen by the Northwest Cooperative Development Cooperative. Now working on the next steps from the compiled results. Possible opening for Member-at-Large position.

ELECTIONS TASK FORCE— Convenes every year prior to BOD elections for recruitment and election details.

All monthly BOD meetings are open to OFC members and the Staff Collective. We are always happy to see new faces and perspectives, so come join us some time! ■



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A diverse array of cheeses at the eastside Olympia Food Co-op.
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