

# Connect



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# Preparing for Success

By Matt Stanley/General Manager



We've been talking about expansion a lot over the last couple years. We received an overwhelmingly positive response from a shopper survey about expansion, created a Strategic Plan built around the idea that we'd expand and increase our impact in the community, and worked with the Board of Directors to design site-selection criteria that meet our needs. Since then we've been looking for the ideal piece of real estate. The next big step in our progress towards expansion is signing a lease for a location that aligns with the Board-created site selection criteria.

Real estate negotiations don't make the best news. We want to present our plan to the ownership when they are firm and in our best interests. In the meantime, I thought I'd use this opportunity to share some of the preparedness work we have accomplished or are currently working on. The goal of all this work is to give our new expanded store the best chance of success. It has enhanced our current operations too!

## Organizational Capacity

Last year we looked at an analysis of our current organizational structure and planned for how it will evolve as we continue to grow. Upon opening our new store, staff size is expected to grow considerably right out of the gate. Think 60-65 staff members compared to our current staff of 25. We now have a clear path toward what our organizational chart will look like, how roles will change, and where new positions will be needed. This provides staff awareness for those interested in further developing their skills and interests as the Co-op grows. We've already implemented a new position, Front End Manager, who oversees the cashiers. We hope you experience continued enhancements in customer service when you check out your groceries.

## HR Work

We've nearly completed a redrafting of our staff manual, complete with legal review. It will prepare us to manage and apply our policies fairly to a larger staff. It will also serve as an improved tool for staff to use in order to understand the relationship between themselves and their employer. The plan for the new store calls for a part time HR person.

## CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Angela Sidlo  
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- Dan Reef  
Board Member

Contact: board@astoria.coop  
Meetings calendar: www.astoria.coop

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

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- Charissa St. Clair  
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- Ryan Eccles  
Grocery Manager
- Danny Rasmussen  
Produce Manager
- Sarah Jaroszewski  
Wellness Manager
- Sam Seulean  
Deli Manager
- Lynne Day  
Front End Manager

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On the cover: "Salad Dressing" by Chris Fontilla of the Co-op deli and Board

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Open daily 8-8

Everyone can shop and everyone can save!

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We know this will improve the workplace because it will provide staff with a regular and accessible expert on the Co-op's benefits, policies, and the handling of sensitive situations in way that aligns with our cooperative values.

## Financial Management

Last year we voluntarily underwent a financial audit of fiscal years 2014-2015. We had no material weaknesses, meaning from the auditor's perspective there is no reason to believe that there has been any misstatement of the Co-op's financial accounting. We are currently completing an audit of 2016. Producing audited statements will give validity to the financial performance of the Co-op as we seek financing for our upcoming project. It also offers us parameters for improving internal controls and ensuring that the Co-op is following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for grocery retailers.

## Staff Development

We have focused and will continue to focus on developing the leadership capacity of our management team. This includes trainings, weekly review and practice of leadership tools and educational material, and more. We regularly read leadership-themed books as a team and meet for discussion. Our latest read was a book called *The Good Jobs Strategy*, a book that demonstrates that companies viewing their workforce as an asset to be maximized rather than a cost to be minimized have both happier workers and better business results. Of course, at the

Co-op we want happy, engaged workers because that translates to better service to our owners and shoppers. Better service means more folks support our Co-op and our impact on the community grows.

## Competition

We gained experience dealing with increased competition after Fred Meyer completed its remodel in 2014. We planned and minimized the impact from the increase in their offering of natural foods. We added fresh meat to the store, expanded our deli offering, and improved our prices. Now we have our eyes set on how a Walmart may impact the Co-op. The management team will be preparing a plan for how we'll maintain our momentum after Walmart opens early next year. Preparing for competition or shifts in the market for natural foods is a skill we'll want even after we open our new location. We know that our willingness and ability to support local producers sets

us apart from stores like Walmart and our capacity to sell more local products will only increase in our new store.

## A Strong Investment

All this work in combination with the nitty-gritty details of the expansion project (signing a lease) which we hope to soon share means that when it comes time to invest in the Co-op's preferred shares, you'll know we've done our homework, planned meticulously, and thereby minimized risk to our owner-investors and shoppers who depend on our store for their diets. It doesn't hurt that it improves the Co-op experience now too. We look forward to sharing more of our plans soon!

*"Upon opening our new store, staff size is expected to grow considerably right out of the gate. Think 60-65 staff members compared to our current staff of 25."*





### Balsamic Vinaigrette

Prep time: 10 min

- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup sunflower oil

1. Peel garlic and put the cloves in a blender. Add seasoning and blend until the garlic is all diced up.
2. Pour oil and vinegar into blender and blend until it's the consistency of mayonnaise (about 30 seconds).
3. Store in a glass jar with a lid in your refrigerator for about a week. Shake it up if it separates.



### Lemon-Cumin Dressing

Prep time: 10 min

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 teaspoons cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup sunflower oil

1. Peel garlic and put the cloves in a blender. Add seasoning and blend until the garlic is all diced up.
2. Pour oil and vinegar into blender and blend until it's the consistency of mayonnaise (about 30 seconds).
3. Store in a glass jar with a lid in your refrigerator for about a week. Shake it up if it separates.

# Salad Season: Co-op Dressing Recipes

Having a batch of good homemade dressing on hand can be just the ticket to convenience when it comes to whipping up a salad for lunch, dinner, or even breakfast! Our deli gets a lot of requests for our popular salad dressing recipes. So, we're sharing the how-to's of a few of our go-to concoctions. We aim to promote health and wellness and these simple dressings make healthy food extra delicious. They work for salads, wraps, and dips for veggies. We hope our recipes will help increase your consumption of salads this season. Enjoy!



# Our Source for Produce

By Danny Rasmussen/Produce Manager

**W**armer, sunnier weather is a welcome sight in the produce department. While we appreciate the extra Vitamin D, what really excites us about this time of year is the abundance of locally-grown produce coming into the store. Kales, strawberries, tomatoes and salad greens, among many other things, taste a little better when they are grown close to home. Whenever possible, we try and source our fruits and vegetables from farmers in our coastal community. The rest we supplement from the wonderful people at Organically Grown Company which includes farmers from Oregon and Washington. Read more ahead about where we get our produce.



*"In our produce department, a fruit or vegetable that has a local label has been delivered directly from one of our region's wonderful small farms."*



## Organically Grown Company

The Co-op's primary produce distributor, Organically Grown Company, is a farmer and employee owned company. Born in Eugene in 1978, OGC has expanded across the Pacific Northwest in recent decades. OGC is an industry leader in sustainability and employment practices, and they provide beautiful produce for the Co-op three times a week. If you are looking for a fruit or vegetable that the Co-op does not normally carry, let a produce member know and we can ask OGC if they have it.



## USDA Organic

The USDA organic seal accompanies products from farms that have been certified organic. Organic farms are committed to sustainable methods, biodiversity, and pest and weed control through natural processes. Organic certification takes three years to achieve, then must be renewed every year, which makes it a costly process. Many of our small local farms are committed to organic practices, but are not certified organic. Since the Co-op only sources fruit and vegetables from organic and local farms, you can be assured that your produce is contributing to a healthier agricultural system.



## GROW Bananas

Organically Grown Company sources bananas exclusively from Organics Unlimited, which operates "Giving Resources and Opportunities to Workers," also known as GROW. GROW contributes money to programs that provide education and healthcare for farm workers in Mexico and Ecuador. Since 2005, GROW has donated more than \$2 million to families in banana growing regions. Every time you buy a banana at the Co-op, that number grows!



## Local

Unlike organic, the word "local" does not have a standardized definition in the grocery world. In our produce department, a fruit or vegetable that has a local label has been delivered directly from one of our region's wonderful small farms. When you reach for that local bunch of kale or tomato plant start, you are helping create a thriving regional economy and supporting farmers who are, like many of you, Co-op owners.

## Staff Picks

By Chris Fontilla/Co-op Deli & Board

Chris prepares delicious foods for the Co-op deli, and he's the new staff representative on our Board of Directors. Check out his beautiful photography on the cover of this newsletter!



I started working for the Co-op this past December and was recently handed the torch of Staff Board Representative from Danny in the produce department. I moved up to Astoria from Oakland, California where I worked with beer, wine, spirits, chocolate and other seasonal/specialty foods.

I was born and raised in Rancho Cucamonga, a former wine town 50 miles inland from Los Angeles. I spent time studying fine art and photography in college while working various jobs such as photo lab technician and for a company called BevMo, an upscale beer, wine, and spirit store that catered to specialty buyers and folks hosting special events. The latter gave me the knowledge and experience to explore different avenues in the San Francisco Bay Area which helped me make my way up here. I moved to Astoria to be closer to nature. As the weather improves, I'll be exploring the area every chance I get.

I haven't exactly worked a whole lot with food in a professional sense over the years, but I am a big fan of kitchens preparing their own food as much as they can.

Here in the Co-op deli we do just that. Almost anything

that makes its way to the display case was crafted in our kitchen. The salads we put out are stunning in appearance and taste. We make all of the dressings from scratch! When it comes to meats, we only use the finest available: Smart Chicken for all of our chicken dishes, Beeler's for bacon and ham, Knee Deep for beef dishes, and local Buoy's Best Elegant Style Tuna. Our deli staff works hard to keep our grab-and-go case stocked as well as our meats and cheeses. I almost forgot about our soups! We make our own soups every day. I've been able to make some of my family soup recipes for our soup counter.

When it comes to my home kitchen, I try to make a little bit of everything. Whether it's dinner for two or entertaining guests, I like coming up with the main course as well as pairing sides and drinks. I'm a big fan of Italian cuisine, bright Asian flavors, Mexican food and all sorts of spice. Lately I've been cooking up pork chops with a fig jam/fresh pear glaze. I've been pairing that with softer cheeses and Burgundy-style wines. I'm looking to ferment tea leaves in the near future for a tea leaf salad. If you have any tips, please send them my way.

The good weather is coming, so I'll be outside as much as I can. I'll be heading out to baseball games, hiking, foraging, fishing, visiting wineries, and going on weekend road trips. I'll be working on getting back into photography (see cover). There is a lot of beauty to take in up here and I can't wait to dive into it.

# So good, you've gotta try 'em!



**St. Dalfour Royal Fig Spread** Whether I'm cooking in the kitchen or looking for the perfect pairing for a baguette and brie, this fig spread is always stocked in my home kitchen. No sugar added, no preservatives, and no artificial flavors or colors. This spread is just plain good!



**Jasper Hills Moses Sleeper** This is a newer cheese in our ever-evolving cheese display. This brie-style cheese is a great example of what American cheese makers can produce. This particular cheese pairs beautifully with my favorite wines and brews, not to mention it's an ideal keystone to a meat and cheese plate worth its salt.



**Buoy's Best Elegant Style Tuna** Whether it's in one of our famous tuna sandwiches, in our Astorian Salad, or in my cabinet at home, this tuna is seriously good and I snack on it any chance I get. It's a local delight and has been awarded 1st place in Pacific Coast tuna competitions. It's a true local gem!



**Logsdon Farmhouse Ales Seizon Brett** Try it with a baguette, brie cheese, and a fruit spread (fig is my favorite pairing). This is the kind of beer you must enjoy out of a glass. It's the kind of beer that dances close to wine sophistication while staying modest and approachable. It's also the perfect entry into the realm of saison/farmhouse beer. Cheers!



Left to Right: Randy Puseman, McLaren Innes, Stewart Bell, Josie Peper, Richard Hurley, Carol Newman, John Folk & Carol Folk

# Founding Mamas & Papas

The concept which grew into our present Co-op came from the Rainbow Family Gathering in 1972. A small group of people in Astoria formed a buying club, and collectively purchased foods in bulk. Our founders raised money by having rummage sales, provided free labor, and opened the Co-op's first storefront in 1974. It was a small 650 square foot space near the Columbian Cafe. It was called the "Community Store" and its slogan was "food for people, not for profit."

Back then there were few grocery shopping choices in our coastal region. It was the beginning of a movement toward bulk foods to keep away from packaging. There was less emphasis on organic; the focus was on simple, whole foods. There were bulk grains and beans, spices, cheese (cut by volunteers), raw milk in glass bottles, tofu and miso.

"We had a holistic approach to life and the Co-op was in large part what enabled us to live that lifestyle in Astoria," said Carol Folk, one of the Co-op's first board members.



Co-op Marketing Director, Zetty Nemlowill, invited some Co-op founders to lunch at the Blue Scorcher to reminisce about the early days of the store and writes about it. Happy Mothers and Fathers Day to all our Co-op's founding mamas and papas!

Folk remembers weekly board meetings at people's houses with "endless discussions" about the details of the bylaws. Forming the Co-op was a painstaking process, and there were many clashes throughout its history, but it was worth it, as its value reigned even greater than the unique food offerings; it was how locals in a rural community connected.

"The food brought us together but it was a platform for sharing a common view about life and politics, our culture and our world views," Folk said.

At first there were no distributors. Volunteers drove to Portland to pick up supplies. Everything was done by volunteers; even the store's first manager didn't receive a paycheck. Josie Peper was the first elected non-paid manager. She coordinated the volunteer workforce.

"The idea of hiring somebody to do carpentry or plumbing: no, we put it out there to the members to find out who could do it," Peper said.

She held benefits to offset the store's operating expenses including monthly square dances and potluck dinners with live music at the Netel Grange. Peper eventually took a hiatus from the Co-op to continue her education and others stepped in to run the store.

Some consequences of the Co-op relying only on volunteers started showing. The store was closed often and the shelves were randomly stocked. Throughout its history, the Co-op experimented with several management structures. The store began to function well again when the board hired its first paid manager, Stewart Bell, who earned 75-cents an hour in food credit. Bell recalls that the cost of living then was less, which made this possible.

The Co-op moved to a daily manager structure in which there was a different person each day overseeing the store. Carol Newman was one of them. She

says she did it out of goodwill because she wanted to see the Co-op happen.

"Everyone got 75-cents an hour of food credit and we were so democratic until somebody brought up, some of the people shopping in the store were earning 100 bucks an hour; lawyers, doctors, teachers, business people, whatever. There was talk of exploiting ourselves," Newman said.

Richard Hurley, a former Co-op manager helped form Community Workers Incorporated, a worker's collective which contracted with the Co-op to operate the store and for the first time, workers started getting paid above minimum wage.

"We definitely felt we were part of a larger movement. We were lighting little candles that would get brighter and spread toward a whole different way of the economy being run. I was enamored with the economic structure hence the worker's collective because there was always controversy over exploitation of workers," Hurley said.

The Co-op officially became a consumer-owned cooperative, filing with the state of Oregon in 2004. Before that it was technically a non-profit, but everyone referred to it as a co-op.

When asked what their hopes are for the Co-op as it matures, some founders offer critique including the store carries too much packaged food, and it's lost the participatory vibe that the Community Store once had. But Bell points out how the changes have been good, and there seems to be agreement among the founders.

"There is a high priority that the workers are paid well. What we got paid was a joke... having a store which can employ people and pay them a decent wage is a wonderful thing," Bell said.

Nowadays our co-op uses a

livable wage model. Starting pay is \$11.50 per hour and the average wage is nearly \$17 per hour plus benefits. With competitors now offering organic food, this would not be possible without a concerted effort to grow sales by broadening our shopper base and evolving to meet the needs of today's ownership.

The opportunities our Co-op has to provide good jobs, great food for the community, and a market for local farmers and producers is thanks to our founding mamas and papas for creating and nurturing the Co-op. This article only scratches the surface as there are so many people who contributed to the Co-op's founding in both big and little ways throughout our 43-year history. It seems more important than ever to reexamine our roots and give credit where it's due as we plan a future expansion.

*"The food brought us together but it was a platform for sharing a common view about life and politics, our culture and our world views."*



# New Products

The world of grocery is quickly adapting to food trends. The result? Tasty new products made with good ingredients.



## Boulder Canyon Coconut Oil Chips

Pure coconut oil and sea salt bring Boulder's original kettle chips to another level of snacking. With simple ingredients these chips are simply delicious.



## Tres Latin Foods Pupusas

Delicious Latin flavors made with real food and easy to prepare. Originating from El Salvador, a pupusa is stuffed corn masa filled with meat and cheese.



## Spice Cave Seasoning

It's the world's first certified paleo seasoning line! With high quality spice blends each tailored to different kinds of meat, these are great for any diet.



## Nocciolata Organic Hazelnut & Cocoa Spread

This spreadable cream of cocoa and hazelnuts is made with a short list of ingredients (all organic). Wonderful on toast and as a replacement for peanut butter.

# Get to Know a Board Member

By Zetty Nemlowill/Marketing Director

Dan Reef is a native Astorian. He brings decades of construction experience to the Co-op Board and a passion for organic food.



Co-op Board Member Dan Reef

Dan Reef could be proof we're no longer what some used to call "the hippy store." Born and raised in Astoria with a construction background and a job in public works, Dan is one of the city's iconic blue collar natives. He and his wife started shopping at the Co-op about 16 years ago when she replaced all their food with healthy organic food from our store.

"I came home and all of our food was on the counter and I wondered what was up with that. Everything was being changed out for organic food in our house," Reef said.

Reef says he noticed big improvements to his health, including losing 25 pounds in the first few months of eating strictly organic. He was a construction superintendent and raised some eyebrows at the job site with his new diet.

"When I showed them I wasn't eating bark and I was eating turkey sandwiches, hamburgers, tacos, hot dogs, potato salad—everything made organic—I think I opened some eyes to a healthier style of eating," Reef said.

Reef went from being a regular shopper to board member a few years ago. Co-op General Manager Matt Stanley approached him, with the idea that Reef's background could provide important expertise as the Co-op expands.

"It's been very interesting; not only on my end providing some construction experience, but it's been an eye-opener seeing how the grocery business runs," Reef said.

Since 2014 Reef has worked for the City of Astoria's public works department as the Senior Building Facility Tech. He handles maintenance of the city's buildings, pump stations, and assists in the mechanics of water quality. Prior to that he had decades of experience working for a commercial contractor building grocery stores, banks, schools, warehouses, apartments, police stations, and more. All this experience is helpful as the Board plans a new store.

"Just being able to see some of the problems that I've experienced helps and can save money," Reef said.

When Reef isn't busy making decisions on the Co-op board or trying to keep centuries-old infrastructure in the city working, you might find him shopping for healthy food. One of his favorite meals lately involves getting pizza dough from the Blue Scorcher and organic toppings from the Co-op.



# 10 Ways for Kids to Go Local

From Co-op Stronger Together

**E**at your veggies!" "Clean your plate!" "You don't know what's good for you!" When it comes to eating healthy foods, these might be some parents' daily mantras. At the peak of the local food season, there's no better time to engage your kids in enjoying good food.

Encouraging kids to get excited about local foods is a great way to increase their appetite for nutritious foods like tomatoes, broccoli, eggs and carrots as well as healthy grains, dairy and meats.

Check out these 10 tips for getting children interested in local foods from spring and summer to harvest:

1. Take your family on a farm tour. Encourage your kids to take pictures and make a photo book or poster about the farm to share with friends and classmates during show-and-tell or a similar time.

2. Let your kids play with their food. Make an art project out of local foods, such as seed art or veggie sculptures.

3. Planting a back yard garden or container garden? Don't just share in the duties. Designate one row or one type of vegetable or fruit that is your child's to plant, weed and harvest throughout the season.

4. Encourage your child to pick out an item at the farmers market or co-op; then prepare a meal with them using their chosen local food.

5. Make freezer jam out of their favorite berries. By making freezer jam, kids can learn about food preservation and enjoy their favorite fruit into the fall season. There's always room for jam!

6. Declare your food independence! On July 4th, make homemade ice cream featuring locally-sourced milk, cream, fruit and nuts.

7. Throw a local food pizza party. Devote a Saturday afternoon to baking a pizza with as many local foods as possible. Let your kids roll the dough while you chop and shred local ingredients that they can sprinkle on top.

8. Sip cider and jump in the hay at the local orchard. Pick apples with your kids and talk about the year-long work it takes to produce an array of apples.

9. Pick the perfect pumpkin for Halloween. Take your kids to a local pumpkin patch to enjoy the festivities. Then, bring home an extra pumpkin and make a holiday pie, and don't forget to roast the seeds.

10. Prepare a meal based on your heritage. Were your grandparents farmers? Prepare a meal based on the food they once grew. Is your ancestry Italian? German? West African? Make a meal based on their native foods with as many local ingredients as possible. Share stories about your family over the dinner table.

Food co-ops nationwide help nurture local food appreciation for people of all ages. Learn more about how co-ops celebrate local food.

*"Encourage your child to pick out an item at the farmers market or co-op; then prepare a meal with them using their chosen local food."*



Mrs. Nalley's third-grade class from Lewis & Clark Elementary School. Since our last newsletter, we took all of Astoria's third-graders and Knappa's first-graders on Co-op tours and taught them about local food. We look forward to having a bigger store so we can do more tours.



## Beans for Bags Update

You've been so good at remembering your reusable bags! Each bag earns a bean worth 5¢ which we donate to a local organization doing good things in our community. Beans for Bags, our reusable bag incentive program, began in May 2015. Since then we've counted 50,000 beans. That means together we've cut down on the use of that many paper bags while supporting worthy causes. Find more information about Beans for Bags at [www.astoria.coop](http://www.astoria.coop).

