

NORTHWIND NEWS

Fall 2002 Edition

Northwind Natural Foods Co-op

ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING !!

Saturday, September 21, 2002

9:00 a.m.

Ironwood Senior Citizens Center

at 104 S. Lowell Street

*Please don't miss this meeting if you care about the
future of your co-op!*

WE NEED BOARD MEMBERS !!

The current board of directors consists of Zona Wick, Judy Bennett, Larry Sands and Arlyn Aronson.

The terms of all of these members EXCEPT Arlyn will expire at the end of our fiscal year (or at the General Membership Meeting on September 21). Arlyn cannot run the store solo, so, PLEASE consider becoming a board member. (For more on this see page 7)

NEW EMPLOYEES

In the past few months we have been fortunate enough to welcome to our staff two new employees who are both doing an excellent job. Following are short "bios" they have put together for us.

KATHY RIDGLEY: Hi, my name is Kathy Ridgley. I moved here from lower Michigan seven years ago. I have two teenage sons, and we all take pleasure from living in the "Northwoods", it's a wonderful place to be. I started at Northwind in April of this year and really enjoy working here. I have learned alot about natural healing with herbal supplements and vitamins, and love being able to assist someone in finding what they need for a specific issue. I have also learned (to the amusement of my children) better and healthier eating habits. I look forward to meeting and helping everyone that comes to Northwind, to the best of my abilities!

EVA SMITH: My name is Eva Smith and I moved to Ironwood from Chicago last December. I started working at the co-op the last week of July and hope to contribute to make the co-op stronger than ever.

I have been studying herbs since I was eight years old and I owe my interest in them to my grandmother Maria with whom I gathered my first peppermint, dried my first sage and prepared various decoctions. My love for herbs have never wavered and I'll be glad to share it with you.

On the personal front, I'm married and have one son, whom I homeschool. I'm also a doula. For those of you not familiar with the term, a doula is a labor support person for women who are giving birth. It is very rewarding to be able to ease a woman through the transition to motherhood and share her burden during labor.

My other hobbies include reading, writing, tending my garden, photography, knitting ugly sweaters and history.

My husband and I are very glad to be away from the big city and in a real community where clean air and water are plentiful and we have a back yard that is daily visited by bunnies, deer and about 10 varieties of birds.

Thanks for the opportunity to tell you a bit about myself. I'll see you at the co-op!

Treasurer's Report, Larry Sands
Reports of Our Co-op's Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated!

The patient is surviving and actually growing stronger but a full recovery will take time.

At May's General Membership Meeting (GMM) a Finance Committee was formed of Jody DeCarlo-Schneider and myself to take a close look at all the co-op's finances, to develop strategies for financial recovery, and to make recommendations to the Board regarding courses of action. Tim Feldt, Carol Zinsmaster, and Nancy Ramsay also participated in some of the meetings and work projects of this committee. (Thank you for your good help!)

Our President, Zona Wick on July 18, appointed me to fill the vacant Treasurer's position. Jody and I share the duties of the treasurer's job but since I'm on the Board and she isn't I get to write these groovy reports.

We'll be able to review the important financial numbers at the GMM but this brief report can show us the positive direction we are now headed. As of this writing the month of August is not yet finished but the figures show that sales of \$470.00 dollars per day are a bit ahead of our breakeven point and are steadily increasing from previous recent months! (Average daily sales for August are actually over

\$50.00 per day more than they were for the first nine months of the whole year!) This is great news. And so is the fact that to date August income is a couple hundred dollars ahead of our expenses paid out for the same period, and that a significant amount of those expenses paid were to pay down back debt. This means that we are gaining ground on our indebtedness while keeping up with current expenses and increasing our store inventory at the same time. These are not huge gains but they are significant, steady steps toward a brighter future. One thing I've learned in the months since becoming actively involved with the finances of the co-op at the May GMM is that we absolutely can and will survive. If you had any thoughts or fears to the otherwise forget them right now!

We now have a firm understanding of just what our outstanding indebtedness actually is; we've structured a multi layered payment schedule for all of our suppliers, and are gradually paying down these outstanding debts. Jody and I have organized and streamlined our primary financial records' systems and are regularly meeting with the store staff to coordinate all of our financial efforts. Our

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

inventory is slowly, but steadily increasing and customer traffic and sales are inching upward as well. Plus we were just taken off "credit hold" by our major grocery supplier, hurray!

The most critical thing the co-op needs at this point for survival and prosperity is **increased sales**. Next time you shop take an even closer look at our fine product selection and put a few more items on the checkout counter. Tell a neighbor or co-worker about some of our healthy alternatives and the relaxing, helpful atmosphere we offer. Become just a little bit more excited about what a fine resource we offer to the community and that you personally are a member/owner. Do this and all will go well.

Store Inventory Set for Saturday, September 28, 4:00 pm

Our end-of-the-year store inventory is a very critical view of our financial picture because it shows us a number of important trends and is especially important during this crucial period of financial recovery. Taking the inventory is a real easy, and painless work. A job that is merely counting the dollar value of every item in the store. If only one person was doing it the process would go on for some days. But if a good-sized group of us jump right in there

the whole thing will be completed in a few short hours. Plus it's always a fun group with most everyone leaving happier than they arrived.

If you make it try to bring a calculator (ones with large keys really speed things up) if you can. If you can't start right at 4:00 pm, come when you can.

"You Can't Keep a Good Store Down."

Just when you thought it was safe to sit back and be complacent about this fine little store rumors started flying that our co-op was in serious financial straights. We've been here for over 23 years and it's real easy to just assume it'll always be here for us. Well, our recent financial crisis should serve as a loud wake-up call that we cannot take this healthy resource for granted. It needs our small but vigilant attention. Please consider donating a small amount of your time on a periodic basis to help with some aspect of our work need. There are many behind-the-scenes projects that most shoppers never realize need to be done to keep Northwind rolling along. Your talents and skills can very easily make a big difference in the long-term viability of this store.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

It is anticipated that the Board may announce lifting restrictions on discounts at the GMM, September 21. If discounts are restored to their previous levels, Working Members (those volunteer members who donate six hours or more a month in work time) will again receive a full 10% off the regular shelf price of everything we stock! ***Don't be shy; give it a try!***

October is Co-op Month, Worldwide!

And to celebrate, we urge you to renew your membership as of October 1.

Northwind has one of the lowest membership fees of any food co-op around and membership does indeed have its benefits. The most obvious benefit is that your membership contribution helps to keep this healthy resource operational for the whole community.

Nowhere else in our area can you readily find the array of specialty, natural foods and related goods. Nowhere else can you special order hard to find items from a wide variety of alternative suppliers. Only members receive discounts on case lot bulk orders and only members can special order goods without a 50% down payment. Plus all members receive discounted pricing (the current discount moratorium is a rare exception) on everything in the store and working members receive an even

greater discount.

Only members have a voice in the operation of the co-op through the GMM's and by attending Board meetings. And only members receive the Newsletter by mail. There are other rewards of membership at Northwind that you just can't put a price on. And if you can afford it, this year consider adding an additional amount as a donation to help increase our advertising budget and our inventory, and to repair and upgrade some store equipment.

By Laws Changes to be Considered at GMM, September 21

The Board of Directors is presenting the following proposed changes to our By Laws for consideration by the Membership at the GMM.

Article IV Membership

Section 2: The fee to join the cooperative is \$15.00 per membership. (The next sentence stays the same.)

Section 3: The annual membership renewal fee is \$25.00 (The preceding sentence remains the same.)

Article VIII Board of Directors

Section 4 Meetings

a) A minimum of ten (10) monthly board meetings per fiscal year shall be held.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Section 5 Powers & Duties

d) The board is responsible for the hiring and firing of all employees.

ARTICLE XI Amendments

Section 2 Delete word "all" in first and last sentence.

Section 3 (new section) Proposed by-law changes not previously published as in Section 2 above may be considered at any general membership meeting called to consider by-law changes, only if the members present wish to give those proposals a hearing.

"Note Taker" Needed

The Board of Directors is seeding a member to serve as Note Taker to write the minutes of the Board meetings. This is an important position since it is very difficult for the Board Secretary to take the minutes of the meeting and still be an active participant in the meeting agenda and the work of the Board. This position, of course, serves toward Working Member Credits for a greater discount. Please contact any Board member and come to the General Membership Meeting, on September 21, if you can



make it.

Building Report, by Arlyn Aronson

Big thanks to all who've helped out with the Northwind Natural foods co-op building.

We especially thank Larry Sands and Felicia Santini (and American Building Services) who donated the labor to clean and buff the wood floor, plus clean and wax the hard tile floors. Larry also installed the new tile floor in the bathroom. Other volunteers include Steve Garske who's working on painting the front of the store and Nancy Ramsay for painting other areas. I can't mention everyone but many dedicated members have been working hard to maintain our store.

But more needs to be done. For example:

Our display cooler is constantly leaking water on the floor for an unknown reason. This needs to be inspected and the problem located and fixed. The coils also need cleaning.

The exterior motion detector light over the rear door needs replacement. This should be fixed for our security needs.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

We need someone to do a complete cleaning of the bathroom once a week.

We need a someone to program the scale or by the end of the year the State could shut us down.

We desperately need a volunteer coordinator. This person would check in to the coop manager weekly to learn what tasks need to be done, then call volunteers to do these tasks. The membership list needs to be updated and from this a volunteer list developed. The volunteer coordinator wouldn't need to do this but could find others to help out. If you want to help the coop and are outgoing and have some time to give, please consider this challenging position.
thanks

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One more plea for board members in case you missed the one on the front.

We need dedicated, capable people to serve on the Board of Directors of the co-op. This does require a commitment of time for the monthly meetings, occasional Special Board meetings and Workshops, and other work as a Board member or officer beyond the meetings themselves. This job is not for the faint of heart or the social circle set. Serving on the board definitely has it's challenges and there is no monetary reimbursement but it can be very personally enriching and rewarding as well! This position is the nuts and bolts of running a business and should be approached with a determined diligence for success. Interested? Call any Board member for more information and come to the General Membership meeting on September 21. Join us in the challenge to have this community resource survive and prosper.



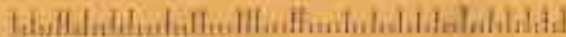


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Nancy & Steve Garske
P.O. Box 42
Marenisco, MI 49947

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NORTHWIND NATURAL FOODS COOPERATIVE
is a member-owned and operated grocer specializing in natural, organic and unprocessed foods.

Visit us at:

**116 S. Suffolk Street
Ironwood, Michigan
906-932-3547**

Store hours:

**9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday**