

# *Northwinds*

*Newsletter of the Northwind Natural Foods Co-op*

*Winter 2007*



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## **2006 General Membership Meeting**

We had our 2006 annual meeting on Sunday, October 8. Twelve members attended. Minutes are posted at the co-op. Here are the highlights.

In the president's report, Steve Garske gave a talk about his experiences and support of good cooperatives. Remember that a co-op is about people taking control of their own food choices and thereby their lives!

In the manager's report Eva Smith-Furgason discussed the industrialization of organic/natural foods (see article in this newsletter!), membership, the need for a replacement bread freezer, the new store awning donated by the Chequamegon Food Co-op, and produce sales. Eva thanked all the volunteers that kept the co-op going in 2006.

The Treasure's Report from George Beck was good news. Sales for fiscal year 2006 were \$181,000, up five percent from 2005. He also talked about the new cash flow budget that allows the manager to spend 62% of the previous months sales. This has been a great tool for the Manager and store inventory. Our goal for 2007 is \$200,000!

Public comments and discussion included quarterly work bees, the hardwood floor, increasing sales on taxable goods, and the layout of the store. New business included a request and subsequent agreement to develop a policy on local produce. Albert's Organics provides our produce, and requires a minimum order each week. How can we offer more local produce? If we can't find an item both local and organic, should we favor non-organic local, or non-local organic? Please feel free to share your thoughts with the board or the manager!

We hope for better attendance for the 2007 GMM meeting, and will avoid holding the event on a Sunday.

## **Customer Survey Results**

Thank you to all the members and customers who participated in our customer survey! Thirty-two surveys were returned, including thirty from current or former members and two from non-members. If we assume this is an adequate sample, here is some information about average Co-op customers:

We shop at the co-op 2.6 times per month and spend \$65.70, or twenty-one percent of our total monthly grocery bill. We visit Super One 3.8 times per month and Copps 3.1 times per month. Twenty-eight out of thirty respondents think prices at the Co-op are fair. The items we purchase the most are bulk foods, organic produce, groceries, spices, and vitamins. The items we purchase the least are magazines, gluten-free foods, books, and pet food. Most people are satisfied with the special order process, but people thought the co-op needs better communication. Ninety-four percent of us find the employees courteous, helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly. We are generally satisfied with selection of products, prices, store hours, employee help, and store appearance. Of these, we are least satisfied (average 3.4 out of 5) with prices and store appearance. Thirty-five percent of us have never seen an advertisement for the Co-op.

The survey detailed what our customers like, don't like, and gave feedback on how things are going. There were also many helpful comments on improving the co-op. Here are some things we've changed in response to your comments:

- Reduced prices on staples
- Improved stocking consistency
- Volunteers have improved the window displays
- Tossing old produce sooner
- Brought back some popular items
- Changes to the store layout.
- Lower volume on the radio
- Keeping the radio tuned to more customer-friendly stations
- Fresh brewed coffee

Keep watching for even more changes!

### Update on staff

Welcome to new clerk LeeAnn Heikkila. LeeAnn has a BA in Journalism, is a photographer, and has previously worked at the Daily Globe and Wakefield News. She has recently returned to Iron County, Wisconsin. Welcome, LeeAnn!

### Thank You


Thanks to David Furgason for building a great new bookshelf from scratch. It holds the books for sale, and the old shelves are now our lending library. Grab a chair and check out the many great titles of interest.

Also thanks to Mary Waits, whose front window displays continue to delight. Also, Mary has requested some clean, empty boxes, bottles, or cans of Co-op groceries. When you finish an item, consider bringing the container back to help the front display.

### Advertisements

This edition of the newsletter includes the return of local advertisements. If you would like to have an ad in our next newsletter, call or e-mail the Co-op.

Help us come up with fresh, interesting ideas for future issues! If you'd like to help with future newsletters, please send an email to the Co-op's Secretary at [lilyrpalmer@yahoo.com](mailto:lilyrpalmer@yahoo.com) or let a Co-op employee know that you're interested!



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Dori Mattson, D.C.      520 E. Ayer Street  
(906) 932-4605 - Office      Ironwood, MI 49938

A chiropractic "checkup" with Dr. Mattson is the perfect vehicle to jumpstart a wellness-oriented lifestyle. Chiropractic can be the **first** step to gaining what chiropractors call "health-esteem". Call us **today** for an appointment!

### Fresh-brewed Coffee!

We now have fresh-brewed Arco coffee to take the chill out of winter! Arco is an independent seller of high-quality brews based in Superior, Wisconsin. The price is \$1.25 a cup, or bring your own cup for a 25 cent discount!

### Special Orders

Looking for something in particular? Please let us try to get it for you! Talk to us when you're in the store, call, or e-mail Eva at [evannfc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:evannfc@sbcglobal.net). Also, you get a discount on your favorite products if you order a whole case.

## Spaghetti Sauce and Corporate America

Earlier this winter, customers were asking what happened to the Seeds of Change spaghetti sauce. We did carry a nice selection of Seeds of Change sauce, but then they raised their wholesale prices and we would have had to charge \$7.00 a jar. Their corporate owner, M&M/Mars, decided to market their pasta sauces to more affluent, gourmet customers. Full-page color ads appeared in the Utne Reader. This is an example of what can happen when large corporations buy up small natural food companies. Unilever bought Ben & Jerry's. Kraft Foods (owned by Phillip Morris) purchased Boca Burgers. Colgate-Palmolive now owns 84% of Tom's of Maine. On the bright side, it is good to see more Americans wanting healthier, more natural food. When these small, socially responsible companies are acquired by the large multinationals, their products may remain the same, and their division within the larger company may continue to follow the principles and practices from when they were independent. But we don't think Ironwood is ready for a \$7.00 jar of spaghetti sauce. Instead we now carry pasta sauce from Muir Glen Organic, a division of General Mills.

One of the industry experts on this topic is Dr. Philip Howard, a professor at Michigan State University. Visit his homepage for more information at:  
<http://www.msu.edu/~howardp/>

Also see this Canadian web site:  
<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/services/corporate-ownership.html>

## Minutes

Curious what is being discussed at the monthly Co-op Board of Directors (BoD) meetings? After BoD approval, the previous month's minutes are now being posted on the Co-op bulletin board for your convenience. Check them out!

## How about some Indian Food?

Do you like Indian food but don't have time to cook or drive to the nearest restaurant in Duluth?

Try our selection of Jyoti Indian Cuisine. Selections include...

- Matar-Paneer (Peas & Indian Home Style Cheese)
- Delhi Saag (Spinach & Mustard Greens with Ginger and Peppers)
- Dal Makhani (Aromatic Lentils & Beans)
- Rogan Josh Sauce (Onion, Buttermilk & Spices)
- Kala Channa in Light Brine (Baby Dark Chickpeas)
- Madras Sambar (Lentils with fresh vegetables)
- Saffron Cream Sauce (Saffron, Fresh Cream, and Spices)
- Punjabi Chhole (Chickpeas with Potatoes and Onion)
- Jaipur Karhi (Organic Potato Dumplings in Spicy Buttermilk)

A great break from the ordinary!

## Heirloom Seeds!

We are again delighted to offer seeds from Seed Savers Exchange. Seed Savers is a member-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to rescuing and redistributing rare and heirloom varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs from around the world. They and their members maintain over 25,000 varieties, many grown organically on their 890-acre farm in Decorah, Iowa.

Check out the over 40 traditional seed varieties offered in the store, including Cherokee Purple Tomatoes, Sweet Chocolate Peppers, Double-Yield Cucumbers, Genovese basil, Grandma Einck's Dill, Plum Purple Radishes, Black Valentine Snap Beans, Lacinato Kale, Apollo Arugula, and lots more! This year they're only \$1.99 per packet!

## Help us write the history of the Co-op

Our spring newsletter will feature a brief history of the Northwind Natural Foods Co-op, which is celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. See the bulletin board in the store for a draft, and please make corrections and add information!

## **Northwind Natural Foods Co-op Mission Statement**

1. To provide a marketing and purchasing outlet for primarily natural, organic, unprocessed foods and related items at a minimum price, on a nonprofit basis.
2. To educate and promote to the community healthy lifestyles, wellness and a whole foods diet emphasizing natural, organic, and unprocessed foods.
3. To educate the community to the benefits and potentials of our cooperative and cooperatives in general and to cooperate with other cooperatives.

Northwind News is published by Northwind Natural Foods Cooperative for its members. Please notify us if your address has changed.

## **Co-op Board & Manager**

President: Steve Garske  
Vice-President: Ian Shackelford  
Secretary: Lily Palmer  
Treasurer: George Beck  
Other board members: Linda Beck

Manager: Eva Smith-Furgason

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