



From the GM:

MFC's Cooperative Community Fund

by Anne Carter – General Manager

In 2017, we created the [Medford Food Co-op Cooperative Community Fund](#) as a permanent endowment within the Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation. Money contributed to our fund by our Co-op, our suppliers, and our owners will grow the fund. As the fund earns interest annually, the Co-op will donate the earned interest to local non-profits.

We decided to link our Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) donations to our existing [Positive Change](#) program, because the Positive Change program already has an application and selection process that involves both staff and owners. The Board of Directors will select one Positive Change recipient each year to receive an additional donation from the CCF. This allows us to designate worthy recipients without setting up an additional application and screening process.

Since its creation in 2017, our CCF earned \$624 in interest. The Board selected UNETE's Immigrant Fire Relief Fund to receive the first donation from our CCF.

Despite the crises of 2020, we decided to make an end-of-the-year contribution to our CCF by linking it to the \$100 gift card for \$90 promotion throughout the holiday season. Co-op shoppers purchased a total of 394 \$100 gift cards! The Co-op will match the \$10 savings per gift card and contribute \$3,940 to our CCF. Thank you to all of the owners and shoppers who participated in this promotion.



CCF continues on page 4.

The Perseverance of Local Food

by Halle Riddlebarger – Outreach Manager

Despite the many challenges of 2020, our local farmers, ranchers, and food producers continue to creatively overcome a myriad of obstacles to produce food for the community and beyond. From restaurant closures to worker safety issues to climate-related crop issues, new problems lurk around every corner and threaten their livelihoods – and local sources for good food.

This past year has been devastating for some, and has pushed others to find creative solutions. At the onset of the pandemic last spring, many of the day-to-day interactions and annual events that provide opportunities to interact with our local food system were suddenly disrupted or cancelled. Here at the Co-op, we were devastated to have to cancel the annual Farm Tour in July, but worked with our partners at Ashland Food Co-op (AFC) and the Rogue Valley Food System Network (RVFSN) to try to find alternate ways to support our local growers.

In July 2018, the first annual Rogue Valley Farm Tour welcomed community members to visit 24 farms and ranches scattered throughout the Rogue Valley and Applegate Valley. Despite heavy wildfire smoke, over a thousand people braved the conditions to meet local farmers and ranchers and discover the roots of good food. The event continued to gain traction in 2019 with clear skies, more participating farms, and even more attendees. When we were forced to cancel the event this past summer, the planning team pivoted to figure out how to bring the farm tours to the people via a virtual experience. Throughout the summer, the Farm Tour team (including staff from MFC, AFC, and RVFSN)



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Perseverance continues on page 4.

From the Board:

YOU: Making a Difference!

by Sarah Calhoun – Board Secretary

Last year's challenges are still with us, but we hope to see them receding as 2021 progresses. We are still distancing and masking and watching the COVID wave break, and many are still facing tenuous economic times from the ravages of fire and pandemic business closures. The one thing that 2020 showed us, through all that, was the value and power of community. Co-op owners and shoppers kept on showing up, and kept on supporting the community, with their purchasing power and shopping choices.



Thank you to former Board Secretary Debi Boen for many years of dedicated service.



Welcome to new Board members Barry Robino (above) and Matt Dorris (below).



In previous newsletter articles we've reviewed all the things the Co-op did and still does, to support the community, other local businesses and makers, first responders, and store staff, and to improve the environment. But our Co-op [Board of Directors](#) has also been at work during this last year, in both visible efforts and in taking steps that are so far not so well known.

- We said farewell with gratitude and appreciation to our long-time Board secretary, Debi Boen, who was with the Co-op since its inception.
- We welcomed two new Board members with solid experience in local co-op operations and strong roots in the community.
- We supported the redesign of the Café, currently open for take-out, much improving the noise issues it had and providing a more streamlined purchasing process.
- One of the most involved tasks the Board undertook this past year was revising the Bylaws, to eliminate inconsistencies and to update the ownership and shareholding options for the Co-op. Owners overwhelmingly passed these revisions and set the stage for our new effort that is currently taking shape: Expanding the Co-op!
- At our joint Board and CORE staff retreat in October, we envisioned the future for the Co-op, in terms of what would best serve the ownership and the community, and how to begin moving forward with our Co-op values and long-term goals in mind. This is not to say that a new store in a new location is imminent. There are many decisions ahead, and options to explore, but movement is beginning to develop toward being able to support a larger store with more product offerings and departments.



The newly remodeled Café.

We are very excited about this direction for our work in the coming years. We look forward to serving your needs and welcome your participation. Every year several board seats are up for election. Any owner who is supportive of the Co-op and interested in its continued success is eligible. Effective directors enjoy working in groups, are open to new ideas, and carefully evaluate information before making a decision. Contact us at board@medfordfood.coop to learn more about becoming a board member.

Once again, we have occasion to be grateful to our shoppers and owners for their choices and their support. We hope that 2021 leaves all of us in less personal peril and with always stronger community connections! ■



Staff Spotlight

Get to know the staff!

Jennifer Green

How long have you been cooperating?

1 year 8 months. I have experience in natural foods and higher-end grocery stores.

What do you do at the Co-op?

My main job is as a cook in the [Café](#) but I started off as a cashier. I've also had the opportunity to work in the bulk department, grocery, and also work in the front end of the store.

What brought you to the Co-op?

First thing that caught my eye was the local and organic products being sold. I have a passion for healthy eating after losing over 100 lbs and keeping it off for many years by focusing on what I put into my body and I'm excited to share that with other people.

What do you like best about your job?

My coworkers! The Café is a busy, multi-dimensional entity that requires a strong team and thanks to Andrea we finally have that team. The owners and customers make it really easy to want to come to work and give my all in making them happy. I feel valued and respected based on what I have accomplished.

Tell us your Co-op favorites:

Chocolate Avocado Mousse!! Blue Monkey Sparkling Watermelon Juice. And the Chocolove Dark Chocolate Almond Butter Cups.

How has working at the Co-op affected your life?

It has made me a happier and more positive person overall. I have found better ways of communicating and have a healthier outlook on life.

Tell us something we don't know!

I used to travel with the carnival, setting up, tearing down, and operating carnival rides. I got injured during set up in Texas and haven't been able to wear cute boots since. I can also make and work with fondant and gum paste. I taught myself cake decorating when I was a stay-at-home mom.

What do you like to do outside of work?

I have a lot of creative projects lying around. I love coloring! but strive for realism... haven't gotten there yet. I just started hand embroidery. I also enjoy wood carving and have made a few walking sticks. I really love cooking for my family and friends.

Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I was born in San Diego and spent most of my adolescence in foster care moving from home to home. My adult life started in Los Angeles, when I turned 21 I started traveling on my own using Greyhound. Decided to join the carnival one summer when I was in Colorado because I had nothing better to do. Went to Arizona, got pregnant and stayed for 10 years. Traveling bug got me so packed up hubby and kiddo and hit the road. After a couple of false starts we found ourselves living in a van in California. Came to Oregon to care for my terminally ill mother and learned a lot about myself during that time. ■



Our CCF is not only a permanent endowment that will allow us to support local organizations; the funds are pooled together with the Cooperative Community Funds of 44 food co-ops across the United States into a family of funds managed by the [Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation](#) (TPCF). In their 2019 Annual Report, TPCF reported combined assets of over \$4 million invested in the development of cooperatives. These investments leveraged \$48 million for co-op development nationwide.



We are proud to be a part of this larger cooperative effort that has a positive impact on our local community and the national cooperative movement. It's another way we carry out two of our core values, Cooperative Principle #6 - Cooperation among Cooperatives and Cooperative Principle #7 - Concern for Community. ■

coordinated tours of several local farms and ranches to collect the stories of their land and the ways they give to it and it gives back. For the last several months, we've been editing photos and videos, and putting together virtual tours of the some of the local food producers for you to visit at your leisure on the brand new [Rogue Valley Farm Tour website](#). Visit the newly launched [roguevalleyfarmtour.com](#) website to start exploring!



Cows at By George Farm.

We're looking forward to (hopefully) seeing you all again out on the farm this July.

The food system never sleeps. On top of pivoting to meet the ever-changing needs of the past year, local and regional folks have been participating in a Southwest Oregon Food Hub Feasibility Study since March of 2020. Conducted by NeighborWorks Umpqua and the Blue Zones Project Umpqua, and with the input of over a hundred farmers, buyers, and food system leaders (including MFC staff), the study included detailed assessments of markets, farmers and production capacity, infrastructure assets and needs, and other issues across the five counties of Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine, and Jackson. The consultant on the study, Anthony Flaccavento, recently shared his final recommendations. [Umpqua Valley Farm to School provides a succinct summary of the two-year assessment on their website](#), and working groups are forming based on Flaccavento's recommendations. Community members who have experience or interest in farming, food production, or food systems work are highly encouraged to join a working group. If you're interested, [please complete the sign-up form hosted online by RVFSN to sign-up](#) for a working group.

We encourage everyone to continue to support the local food system in any of the ways that you can given the current limitations and your personal situation. Support your local farmers by joining their CSA program or visiting their farm stand or store (some even offer delivery). Check out the [Rogue Flavor Guide](#), the [Rogue](#)

Important Dates

SOCAN's Master Climate Protector Course- A Primer for Action

Sign up for Southern Oregon Climate Action Now's virtual 10-week 30-hour course and become a Certified Master Climate Protector. The course begins on February 8, 2021 and sessions are from 6:00pm - 9:00pm. Limited to 20 participants. Scholarships are available. Learn more and register at <https://socanmcp.eco>.

Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market

The Winter Market is currently PAUSED due to the pandemic. [Outdoor markets](#) will resume in March:

Medford Thursday Market at Hawthorne Park
Ashland Tuesday Market at the Ashland Armory
Ashland Saturday Market on Oak Street

Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month from 5:30pm - 7:30pm. Due to the pandemic, the meetings will be held online until further notice. If you are an owner who would like to participate in an online Board meeting, please email Board President Kellie Hill for an invitation to the online meeting: board@medfordfood.coop.



Rogue Valley
FOOD TRAIL

[Valley Food Trail](#), and the new [Rogue Valley Farm Tour](#) website to explore the local bounty and plan safe explorations of local food and farms. And don't forget to look for the LOCAL signs when you shop the Co-op. We wish everyone a happy new year full of opportunities to explore new local flavors. ■