



Co-op News

Food for Thought

Fall 2019

Mountain Community Co-op
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www.mountaincommunitycoop.coop



Mountain Community Co-op Annual Meeting

On Saturday September 14th we will have our Annual General Meeting starting at 10:00 AM located at the Methodist Church next to the Co-op store, 185 Mashell Ave N. Everyone is welcome to attend and get to know the members of the Board. This is a great time to learn more about the Co-op and all that it encompasses from the store, to the Garden, and community outreach just to name a few. Current Co-op members will have the opportunity to vote for new Board members and we are currently seeking new Board members so if you are enthusiastic, community oriented, and believe in co-ops now is the time to become a Board member. See page 5 for more details!

This year we will be giving away 4 tickets to Northwest Trek, and there will be wine tasting after the meeting located on the patio of the Co-op store featuring new wines. In addition we will have a suggestion box with the theme "if you were president for a day, what would you do?"

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President's Message: 2019 Year in Review

by Beth Neuhalfen

2019's Annual Membership meeting is just around the corner on Saturday, September 14th at 10 am. Your input and support are vital to the success of Mountain Community Co-op (MCC).

Working Member Owners donated an average of 400 hours each month in 2019. Your time and skills keep this Co-op running. Thank you!

Since our last membership meeting, your Mountain Community Co-op Board of Directors provided oversight for this organization that now includes our store with two employees in the Carter Street building, the Washington Street building rentals and a variety of community events.

In March, we said thank you to Patricia Brown for skillfully managing the Co-op store and transitioned to our current employees, Michelle and Teri. Since March, this dynamic duo continues to grow our business of providing the very best

Please see *President's message* on page 5

Community Garden

By Barbara Samora



It's been another busy year at the Community Garden. The greenhouse donated by Kathy Wolf was moved during the 2018 National Day of Service and new automatic windows and a rain barrel are being installed this season thanks to a grant from the Pierce County Master Gardeners. Several varieties of berries and herbs were planted as well as some perennial vegetables. Our fundraising efforts included seed and plant sales in the store and the spring rummage, plant and bake sale. This year we have had four volunteer groups help in the Garden including Club Pierce, Eatonville Elementary students, Mount Rainier Institute staff, and National Day of Service volunteers. In addition to our gardeners who lease individual plots we have had several other volunteers help in the Garden this year. Special thanks to Lisa Wagner and Amy Smith who don't have individual plots but have contributed much to keeping the Garden thriving!

To date, we have grown over 600 lbs of food donated to our local Eatonville Family Agency (EFA) food bank. The August EFA Community Dinner featured over 100 lbs of produce from the Garden. We supported two food bank client plots this year. Our first educational session on seed saving was held in late August and a few more sessions are scheduled. On ***September 11 we will learn about Permaculture in the Garden.*** We would love for you to join us on ***September 18 for Tea and Tomato Tasting in the Garden.*** There are still many days left in the gardening season so stop by the Garden to see what's growing. If you have items such as usable patio or outdoor chairs, a patio table, or gardening tools that you would like to donate, please let us know. Special thanks to all our donors this year and especially to Irene and Toby Bensinger and Chris Cimino for their generous donations to keep the Garden running! If you are interested in sharing your knowledge, donating, or joining the Community Garden, you can find more information on our website at www.mountaincommunitygarden.org or contact us at mtcommunitygarden@gmail.com.

Dollar\$ and Cent\$

By Beth Neuhalfen

"We experienced an income increase of 2% and decrease in expenses of 15%. This is due in large part to the generous donations of time and money from our membership."

Mountain Community Co-op financials through September 4, 2019 are improved compared with one year ago. Our net income is \$17,363.53. We experienced an income increase of 2% and decrease in expenses of 15%. This is due in large part to the generous donations of time and money from our membership. Multiple events throughout the year support the Co-op and increase awareness in the community. In addition to events, our members support the Co-op with over 400 hours per month including activities to assist with the operation of the store, rentals, Community Garden and community outreach programs.

The Board of Directors implemented reserves called set asides for liabilities such as taxes, insurance and employee expenses in the past. A recent review by the Board of Directors show these funds will cover our predictable liabilities.

Store operations continue to challenge us with increasing cost of goods while maintaining affordable high quality organic and natural products. Our store management team consists of Board of Director members and employees who continue to refine store operations and efficiency. The store employee costs year to date decreased by 8% compared to last year.

The Washington Avenue building continues to be fully rented. Our current mortgage balance as of September 4, 2019 is approximately \$14,000 in principal. At a rate of \$800 per month, this debt will be paid off in about one and half years. Our challenge remains the aging of our two buildings, (the Carter Street building/store and the Washington Avenue/rentals) and equipment. Uninterrupted operation of the facilities and equipment are critical and unfortunately not always predictable.

When we work together, Mountain Community Co-op will be able to continue our mission in the community. Learn more about the offerings at Mountain Community Co-op and how you can be a vital part of our future by attending the Annual Meeting on September 14. The opportunities are abundant and election for the next Board of Directors will take place at this meeting.

Focus on Stewart Organics

By Barbara Samora



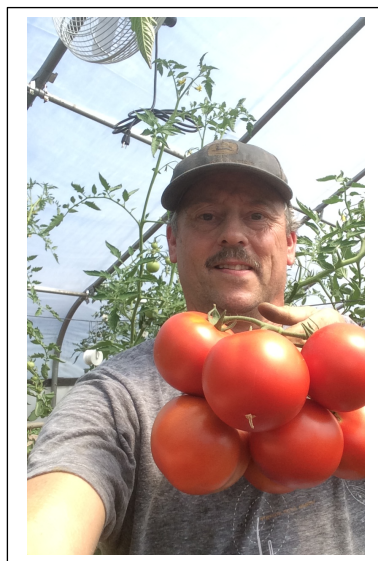
Terry Stewart, owner of Stewart Organics, was our first Eatonville farmer to supply us with organically grown produce. He started Stewart Organics because he believes that we need to grow healthier, locally grown food for our communities. Stewart Organics is a USDA Certified organic produce farm using 100% organic materials and sustainable resources. His vision is to be a small sustainable biodiverse certified organic produce farm to feed, educate, and perform agriculture research that benefit our local communities.

Terry has been involved in growing produce since he was 8 years old when he began growing strawberries in his family garden. His grandfather introduced him to organic gardening and during those years he learned much that he continues to utilize today and hopes to pass on to his sons. He continued gardening for many years and in 2012 had the opportunity to try it out on a larger scale and that was the beginning of Stewart Organics.

Stewart Organics grows a variety of vegetables, especially tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, eggplant, spinach, cabbage, cucumbers, summer squash, winter squash, pumpkins, and carrots. He also provides us with those lovely and fragrant Meyer Lemons during the winter!

Terry's goal is to have a fully sustainable and teaching farm that co-exists with nature. by not harming the soil or wildlife. He is also interested in developing a display showing how farming practices have transitioned over the years. We hope we can help Stewart Organics achieve his goals of providing high quality local produce to our community!

"My goal is to have a fully sustainable and teaching farm that co-exists with nature."
(Terry Stewart, Stewart Organics)



*Stewart
Organics
Farm,
Eatonville*

A Farewell to Clare

By Ginnine Wenisch

We would like to take this time to thank Clare Duncan McCahill past president and Board member. She retired from the Board the end of August. Clare has been a major part of the growth of the Co-op, both in the store and as a member the Board.

Clare and her husband Pete moved across the country to a little town called Elbe. They found some land where their intention was to grow some good organic food that they could eat. Her realtor told her about this little food co-op in Eatonville and she decided to check it out. What she found was more than just a store. It was a community, a place to come together with the same ideas.....good healthy food, community outreach, and giving back.

She took the initiative to reach out about volunteering and immediately jumped in. She became a cashier in the store and was soon helping with the ordering for the store, Buyers Club, and Produce Shares. This led to becoming more interested in the desire to bring more local farmers into our group.

After about a year, Clare went to a Board meeting to see what went on and what it was like. Somewhere around a month later, there were elections for new Board members. At that time, she not only became a Board member but became the Board President. She served for two years bringing many positive changes including a closer partnership with local farmers, which increased the quality and sustainability of our produce. Part of her legacy was helping to grow the Store, increase community outreach, and bring on new Board members with her amazing infectious enthusiasm.

After her time as President, she remained on the Board of Directors and continued to work with the produce ordering team and the farmers as well as reigning in the runaway vegetables as Farmer Clare in the parades. She also recruited new Board members with her homemade vegan cheese. I am one of those.

Clare and Pete's visions have grown and so has their farm. It comes time for her to focus on her business plan and yoga. I asked Clare for a message she could leave for us. These are her words "A co-op takes a village. It cannot be run without a team with the same enthusiasm and love. It's a small group of people with fire in their bellies, using their minds and energy for a common goal"

Although she is no longer a working member, she is still part of our family and we are truly the better for having met and worked with her.



"A co-op takes a village. It cannot be run without a team with the same enthusiasm and love. It's a small group of people with fire in their bellies, using their minds and energy for a common goal" (Clare McCahill Duncan)

President's Message continued from Pg 1

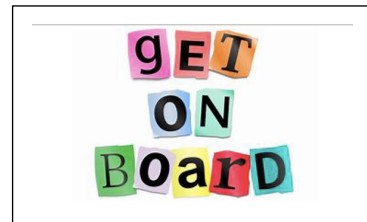
organic and natural products with expertise and a welcoming smile. We have a new selection of wines also. Join us for a wine tasting event at noon following the annual meeting.

The Washington Street building remains fully rented with the expertise of Rick Brown, Vice President of the MCC Board of Directors.

Mountain Community Co-op works with the Eatonville Family Agency in multiple ways, including joint support of the taco and ice cream booth at the July 3rd Fireworks initiated by Linda Rapozo. Our Community Garden continues with an education series and bountiful produce donations to the Eatonville Family Agency Food Bank (*see page 2 for more details on the Garden*).

Did you see those rowdy fruits and vegetables in the July 4th parade? Farmer Clare got them all rounded up and safely back to the Co-op with lots of laughter and shenanigans.

These are just a few of the long list of happenings at the Co-op. Join us for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 14th at 10 am to learn more about Mountain Community Co-op, meet the current Board of Directors and give us your input to make this Co-op even better in the year ahead. The continued success of Mountain Community Co-op depends on all of us working together.



Join the Board of Directors

Open seats will be nominated and voted in at the meeting.

Benefits:

Represent member-owners, listen to their voices

Co-create a vision of the Co-op's future by developing and implementing our Strategic Plan

Help guide all Co-op operations

Support your community by helping lead the Coop in providing:

- *Access to affordable, natural food and healthy products
- *Information, education, and services related to our mission
- *Public service opportunities
- *Cultural and community activities
- *Developing and sustaining a market and economy for locally produced goods and services
- *Individual growth and self-determination

Board Responsibilities:

Participate in monthly board meetings (3-4 hrs.), the annual retreat and occasional special meetings.

Lead subcommittees to address specific Co-op issues

Engage in policy governance and administrative, financial, and operational decision-making

Serve your Co-op for at least a two-year term and no more than three consecutive two-year terms.

Why are Volunteers so Important to the Co-op

By Ginnine Wenisch

To understand this question, you must first understand what a co-op is.

Cooperative has two definitions, but both apply to our co-op:

Noun: a farm, business, or other organization which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits

Adjective: involving mutual assistance in working toward a common goal

Being Part of a Like-Minded Community

A co-op is a like-minded group that cares about sustainable agriculture and supporting local food systems, as well as a business philosophy that values more than the bottom line. Co-ops are part of an economic network that prioritizes the fair treatment of workers at every step of the supply chain, from laborers who toil in the fields, to line workers who wash and process the harvest, to the truck drivers who deliver food throughout the country, to the employees you see at the co-op.

Supporting Local, Small-Scale Agriculture

Though most co-ops work with national organic food distributors, they also forge relationships with local, small-scale producers. When you buy locally grown or produced items at your Co-op, you're supporting your area's farmers and agricultural businesses.

Mountain Community Co-op is more than just a grocery store. It is a community of like-minded people which also contributes to our Eatonville community as a whole. Our Co-op donates time and money by doing events and outreach. It also holds community classes and we even have a Community Garden that supplies food to the Eatonville family agency.

Who are the amazing people running the Co-op? You are. It takes volunteers to give their time, their energy, their ideas, and their talents to make it all happen.

We all have special skills to contribute. Perhaps you are a social being and can work in the store talking to people and helping them find what

they need. Or maybe you are a "handyman" and can paint, fix and repair our building. If you love playing in the dirt, maybe the Community Garden is your thing. You may be a bookkeeper and have some time to spare to help in our finance department. If you like to cook, we do events for the community such as the chili feed and community dinner. Some people are able to give monetarily which helps the Co-op to grow and maintain. The list is endless, but it can't be done without all of these special people to make it happen.

Thanks to all of our WMO (working member owners) and volunteers who helped this past year - here's just some of the events they contributed to:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| *Annual Chili feed | *Christmas parade |
| *Christmas community dinner | |
| *July 3 rd spectacular | *4 th of July parade |
| *BBQ sit-down dinner | |
| *Multiple rummage sales | *Annual meeting |
| *Produce share team | *Buyers club team |
| *Community Garden | *Store cashiers and stockers |
| *Building Management | *Bake sales |
| *Yard care | |
| *Board of directors | |
| *Event planning | *Farm visits |
| *IT maintenance and security | |
| *Education classes | *Store Inventory |
| *Bookkeeping | *Newsletter |
| *Social Media communication | |
| ...and so much more. | |

We always need plenty of help and appreciate anything you can contribute, even if it is just continuing to shop in the store.

For more information on how you can help, please send a message to board@mountaincommunitycoop.coop

