MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Hello fellow Co-op members.

Welcome to 2020! Hopefully your holidays were filled with good food and even better friends. With the holidays now behind us, quieter times are most likely ahead. We are allowed to once again get lost in thought and to contemplate and try out changes that we believe will be of benefit to our lives. If those changes are dietary, the Co-op is here to help! Not only is our food good for you, but usually, it's better for the environment and ethically sourced. For example, Equal Exchange coffee strives to support farmers in growing their coffee beans as sustainably as possible as well as make sure they earn a living wage. The Co-op also takes into consideration the distance of where our produce comes from as well as trying to reduce packaging of said produce. Another change you may be considering is getting more involved in our wonderful committees. Look no further than Co-op delivery days or joining a committee.

Speaking of changes, the Co-op is rebranding! No more confusing sprout in cupped hands. Meetings occur weekly on Sundays, 12:15 pm at the library. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. We are so excited and can’t wait to reveal our new brand at the March annual meeting.

Additionally, our "Co-op Cares" program has been so popular that we have decided to now have 3 recipients. A survey was sent out and the three recipients will be: the Sitka Homeless Coalition, the Cloud (teen center), and Brave Heart Volunteers.

Happy 2020 and may this year bring us good luck and fortune (or at least be better than 2019).

Cooperatively yours,

Ariane Goudeau - Board Chair
MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Greetings Fellow Co-op-ers;

While everyone is looking forward to what the New Year will bring, my days are currently being spent looking back over the past year. For me, it's a time to crunch numbers, generate reports, and compare how well this past year did in relation to 2018. As I go through the various vendor reports, lists of items purchased, payments made, membership levels and (of course) income generated, I'm finding some very interesting statistics and trends. Most, if not all, of this data will eventually be presented as an Annual Report at our Annual Meeting in March... but I can tell you this... I am pleasantly surprised at how well we did this year.

For most of the year I was concerned for several reasons. Mainly, we weren't growing as much as we had anticipated and budgeted for. Members were leaving town either due to the high cost of living here, the need to be with family somewhere else, or were just "rotating" out of town (as many members of the Coast Guard did). Another concern was that the costs of running the Co-op were slowing inching up as well. There's a lot that goes on behind the scenes to running a business (and we are a business), and it was a struggle to keep expenses down as shipping rates and food prices went up. Many a time, as I made my reports to the Board, I had to revise our original projections for the year downward. Then... grrrr!... in June... AML sent one of our UNFI orders/shipments to Juneau and we lost the sales (and profits) from that order for that month.

But... even though I had some concerns... there were many positive things happening as well. New members were joining every month... produce sales were picking up.... we really started taking advantage of our relationship with various "brand brokers" as well as being part of the ION Marketing purchasing group... and... we received a minor grant from the Alaska Cooperative Development Center and a major grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

As I write this, I'm still crunching numbers and generating various reports and comparative charts... but I can tell you all this: While we didn't grow (either in sales or memberships) in 2019, we still did well. Even if I discount the grants we received, the Co-op ended well into the "black" for the year. That is... we brought in well over 65 tons of food for the year... fed hundreds of households every month... created one new part-time position... increased the hours and wages for two others (neither mine)... donated over $4,100 to local organizations... paid all our bills... and added to our savings.

So... while everyone else is saying: "Happy New Year!" I am pleased to announce: "Happy Past Year!

Cooperatively Yours;

Keith Nyitray

VOLUNTEER WITH THE SITKA FOOD CO-OP!

Sign-up to volunteer for at least 3-4 hours on delivery days and receive a 10% discount on your order! Check out www.sitkafoodcoop.org/membership/volunteer for upcoming opportunities, we are Thankful for YOU, our amazing volunteers!!
What's New For 2020?

A new year always brings new opportunities and options. For 2020 here are some of the things we are looking at, and what members can look forward to:

- Our Annual Meeting - to be held in March at a place and time yet to be determined. Reports made, elections to be held, Bylaws to be changed, logo to be presented, and more!
- The opportunity for one dedicated member to attend (all expenses paid) the March 5th -8th "Up & Coming" conference for co-ops that is being held in Madison, WI. (Interested members should contact Keith)
- An expanded "Co-op Cares" program! This year three recipients were selected by our membership. These being: Brave Heart Volunteers, The Cloud (teen center), and the Sitka Homeless Coalition.
- A new logo! The "Rebranding Committee" has held several meetings these past two months and has come up with two potential basic designs that will replace the "seedling in cupped hands." Stay tuned!
- New ways of helping the Co-op "Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle" materials on delivery days.
- A "Website Tutorial" on how to order through "Foodclub." (long overdue!)
- A "marriage" with the Sitka Kitch. Members of the Co-op who take one of their classes will get a $10 discount on any/every class they participate in!
- A "Membership Fee Waiver" program for those in our community in financial distress, but could still benefit from being a part of our cooperative.
- A summer-time "Member Appreciation" event (think food, music, bonfire, etc.).
- **PLUS**... whatever else the Board, staff, and members (like you) will suggest and come up with!
Do you love cheese but are concerned about the effect that the dairy industry has on the environment? Do you love cheese, but your health care provider says to cut back on it as your cholesterol, LDL and triglyceride levels are rising like the tide?

Maybe you have tried some vegan cheeses but think they are too oily, taste funny, or are not melty enough. If so, then maybe it's time to try some vegan artisan cheese from Miyoko’s Creamery!

Miyoko Schinner was raised in Tokyo as a vegetarian, and calls herself a “cheese-a-holic” but became conflicted about her love for cheese and her compassion for animals. That conflict ended up in her choosing a vegan lifestyle and luckily for us, encouraged her to create delicious plant-based cheeses and butters!

Her mission statement is Phenomenally Vegan. “It’s the new gold standard for the future of food that emphasizes artistry, integrity, ethics and conviviality.”

Miyoko promises that her cheeses and butters are made using age-old cheese making techniques & modern technology, are always made with pure, organic and natural ingredients, and that no animals are used in the making of her products.

Why not check out some choice Miyoko Creamery products with your next order from the Sitka Food Co-op? A few are even on sale this month!

Learn more about Miyoko's Creamery at: www.miyokos.com

Vendor Spotlight: Miyoko's Creamery

Homemade Ginger Switchel

This super easy and simple Ginger Switchel recipe creates a benefit-rich vinegar based beverage perfect for replacing electrolytes and reducing inflammation. Switch it up by using honey instead of maple syrup or by adding fresh herbs (like mint) and fruit (like blueberries)!

**Ingredients:**
- 4 cups water
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 cup raw apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh ginger
- 4 Tablespoons Molasses (optional)

**Directions:**
Combine all ingredients in a large jug or carafe. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 12 hours to overnight. Pour through a fine-mesh sieve to separate the ginger chunks out of the switchel.

Refrigerate until ready to drink!