



Newsletter of the Franklin Community Cooperative

March/April 2017

by Sharin Alpert, member

As always, Franklin Community Co-op's March

5th Annual Meeting was a celebration of community and shared values. More than 100 co-op members filled the dining hall at GCC, visiting from table to table, discussing issues, figuring out which door prize to try for, and accepting samples from area food vendors including Bart's, Cabot Cheese, Clarkdale Fruit

Farms, Dean's Beans, Equal Exchange, Katalyst Kombucha, Real Pickles, Levinsky's Foods, and Maple Mama.

I asked a few folks why they were there. Most talked about community, economics or both. A few snippets:

- I believe the people in any organization should be making the decisions! Really, all aspects of our lives should be cooperative.

- Belonging to co-ops is one way we can shape a different economic model. I try to keep as much of my life as possible outside the mainstream business box.

- I'm here because we need a strong community. I can hear what's going on with my co-op and talk with my neighbors. Also, it's fun!

- This Annual Meeting is a great thing. In this internet age, I think face-to-face is vitally important to building community.

The meeting began as emcee/well-known clown Jack Golden took the floor, his brash humor keeping us attentive as he introduced speakers and facilitated comments.

The meeting began with reports from Board President George Touloumtzis, Treasurer Jeanne Douillard, and General Manager John Williams. The election to fill upcoming board vacancies followed; John returned to present our draft multi-year plan, with a goal, he said, of "clarifying our shared

vision." (All nominated for the board were elected. See Board of Director's list p. 2)

A couple of things struck me in the presentations.

The first was about growth. As we heard about the co-op's recent growth and plans for further growth, I was thinking, "What's wrong with stability?" Maybe John heard my thoughts, because he explained. "It's important," he said, "not to c o n f u s e

growth with extracting money from the community. For our organization, growth means strengthening our community. We're an agent for our community's sustainability."

He was also clear that the current board and management make decisions based on member input: "This is an iterative process," with lots of listening and collecting feedback, primarily via forums and surveys organized by the Member Participation Circle.

After reports—and later, once more after the multi-year plan presentation—time was set aside to talk with our table-mates about what we'd heard, and to formulate questions for the presenters. For me, this was one of the best parts. It turned out that each person at my table had concerns about some of the presenters' ideas and—with guidance from a member/facilitator—we were able to discuss and articulate questions we agreed needed further exploration. After the first session, the presenters addressed frequently-asked questions about the president's, treasurer's, and general manager's reports. Answers to questions about the multi-year plan will be posted on our website's Member Forum.

If you are a member of FCC and have not already signed up, see [www.franklincommunity.coop/co-ownership/forum](http://www.franklincommunity.coop/co-ownership/forum).



## President's Report

Hello! Great to see all of you at the Annual Meeting of our co-op, this very real embodiment of ideals we share. Such face-to-face gatherings are a vital aspect of our collective/communal process.

I also send greetings to member-owners who'll be reading this in *The New Beet* or on the website, whether by circumstance or by choice. It's important that every member's preferred style of engagement is honored and accommodated, and we on the Board hope that all feel a satisfying sense of inclusion and ownership.

It's delightful and humbling to recognize that this year marks the 40th anniversary of this precious and sometimes fragile cooperative adventure! As such, before we discuss how we're branching out into the future, I want to reflect on our roots.

I was lucky enough to meet Tom Tolg in the context of community issues not long after I moved to Greenfield in 2002, and was impressed by his supportive and progressive-minded outlook. A decade later I learned from Steve Alves' wonderful documentary "Food For Change" that Tom in fact "founded" our cooperative in 1977 [then called the Montague Community Co-op]. Talking with owners involved during the early years, I heard that "without him there would not be a co-op ... [Tom] should be honored and praised for his vision and hard work." As the first employee, Tom "got paid very little," probably making less than minimum wage. In recognition of his contributions, the Board of Directors years ago donated his member-owner equity.

Tom's not in attendance today, but in an excerpt from Steve's film, he describes how we got started:

*30-second clip:*

"We got a food and nutrition grant. And we had to write up a program for how we would spend the money, and having a food co-op was one of them. It was funded by a poverty program. A lot of low-income people were eating over-processed food at fairly high

*PRESIDENT continued on p. 7*

**Franklin Community Co-operative  
Board of Directors**

- Andy Grant '19
- Gary Seldon '19 (Clerk)
- Lynn Benander '18 (Vice President)
- Norm Hirschfeld '20
- Stephan Gordon '20
- Judy Draper '19
- George Touloumtzis '19 (President)
- Emma Morgan '20
- Jeanne Douillard '19 (Treasurer)
- Peter Garbus '18
- Sonia Cruz '20

The co-op board meets monthly, (generally 2nd Wed.) at 6:30 p.m. The agenda and minutes from previous meetings are posted in both stores and on our website. Meetings are open to all co-op members. Board mailboxes are at our Greenfield store where message can be left or via email: [bod@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:bod@franklincommunity.coop)

**Co-op Managers  
413.773.9567**

**General Manager**

John Williams x1009

**Marketing & Member Services**

Sarah Kanabay x1003

**Human Resources**

Gretchen Tucker x1004

**Information Services**

David Russell x1001

**Prepared Foods**

Chris Opalenick x1008

**Bakery**

Micheal Shersnow x1007

**Produce**

Victor Signore x1015

**Perishables (Meat, Cheese, Dairy, Frozen)**

Kim Nyiri x1020

**Green Fields Market Store Manager**

Pat Donohoe x1014

**Front-End/Cashiers (GFM)**

Jeremy Starpoli x1013

**McCusker's Store Manager**

Alec Goodwin x2001

**McCusker's Market**

413.625.9411

**New Beet Editors:**

Suzette Snow-Cobb, staff

Eveline MacDougall, member

[www.franklincommunity.coop](http://www.franklincommunity.coop)

**Illustrations:**

Jessica Larkin, member

**Masthead Art Work:**

Karen Gaudette

Dear Franklin Community Co-op Members,

We are reaching out to let you know that Suzette Snow-Cobb will be transitioning out of her role as Marketing and Membership Manager, after twenty years of dedicated service to our cooperative. We hope you'll join us in appreciating her for all of the connections she has forged and strengthened in our community, and for all that she has brought to her role as a connector of people, a champion of cooperatives, and as a member advocate.

Suzette's commitment to our cooperative has taken many forms throughout the length of her service—whether she was serving as a member of the three person general management team, or, jumping on a register when staffing was tight, we are deeply indebted to her willingness to lend her skills to all aspects of our daily operations. These skills include attaining a Master's Degree in the Management of Co-operatives and Credit Unions from St. Mary's University in Nova Scotia, and are clearly evident in the network of community outreach, dedicated member work, and food access advocacy that Suzette has built throughout her tenure as the Membership & Marketing Manager at FCC.

As of April 8th, Sarah Kanabay will continue in her role as our Outreach and Communications Manager, and looks forward to the new challenges and opportunities ahead as we plan for expansion, and, as of April 8th, will become the primary contact for the marketing department at FCC. While the structure of our marketing efforts grows and changes in response to our evolving environment, at its heart remains the core of our identity as a cooperative: community. In all that we do to make our Co-op the best that it can be, we keep that same sentiment at the forefront, and strive to deepen our commitment to one another through our member work, our outreach efforts, and our community programming.

Sincerely  
John Williams



For half of it's 40-year history, Suzette Snow-Cobb has been an integral part of Franklin Community Co-op. Starting as a cashier, she has demonstrated dedicated service and leadership in a variety of roles within our organization, including over a decade as part of the three-person General Management Team. During her years as Marketing & Member Services Manager, interacting with Suzette has been for many of us part of our first experience as FCC member-owners, and a lot of us had additional contact with her as she deftly coordinated the member-work program. Her devotion to this collective model has been even more broadly demonstrated by completing a Master's degree in Cooperative Management, as well as participating in regional and national cooperative organizations and events. Her signature on the Middlebury Manifesto -- the founding document of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association that links us with other food co-ops in New England -- speaks to the significance of Suzette's impact within FCC, and her service on the NFCA Board reflects the respect she has engendered in the larger co-op community. The Board of Directors offer our heartfelt appreciation for Suzette's enduring contributions to Franklin Community Co-op and sincere best wishes for the future.

Thank you Suzette!  
George Touloumtzis, Board President

**The New Beet is the newsletter published 6-7 times each year by Franklin Community Co-operative.**

Articles about health or nutrition are for informational purposes only. We recommend that you consult a health care professional for medical advice. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not necessarily the views or policies of FCC.

**The deadline for classified ads, letters, recipes or article submissions is the 15th of the month prior to publication.** All submissions must include author's name and phone number, and conform to the following guidelines:

**Recipes:** We welcome original recipes from members.

**Classifieds:** Members' classifieds are free (40 word limit) Drop off at the member/customer desk (typed

or very clearly written) or e-mail; we print as space allows. [suzette@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:suzette@franklincommunity.coop)

**Letters to the Editor:** We welcome letters; they must be signed and include a phone number for author verification. We will withhold name if requested. We reserve the right to edit for grammatical errors, clarity, and length. 300 words maximum.

**Via email:** [suzette@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:suzette@franklincommunity.coop)  
**Submissions on paper:** Typed and double-spaced. The editor may reject letters and articles that are illegible, too long, or inappropriate. We also welcome original poetry, photographs and drawings.

**Our Ends (What we are working toward):**

Global: The co-op will be an innovator and collaborator in the process of creating a regenerative and sustainable local community, economy,

and food system.

- Our community will be educated about our food, food systems, health and ecology.
- The co-op will supply healthy, reasonably-priced foods—and other goods and services—that benefit the lives of the members, community, and all those who worked to bring these goods to us.
- The co-op will provide a central place for the members and community to congregate and strengthen the social fabric of our community.
- The co-op will foster a positive working environment for all staff while providing a living wage, and excellent treatment of all workers.
- Customers will have a positive experience with each visit.
- The co-op will be an outstanding example of the Co-operative Principles and Values.



## Staff Vignettes

by Hazel Dawkins, member

"In my experience of working at Franklin Community Co-operative, I have a family there," **Devon deKorver** says. "Our co-op fosters an environment for humanity. I've never worked at a company that has been so supportive." Devon started as a cashier at FCC in mid-2014. New to Greenfield, she found it was where she could begin to rebuild her life.

"Half my time, I work at Green Fields Market; the other half, I volunteer and do advocacy work around addiction." Devon is currently working with a non-profit to raise funds for transitional housing options, yet she makes time to stay in touch with family members, who live outside of Massachusetts.

In June of 2016, Devon organized the annual Firebird 5k run (her 3rd) with the help of our local fire department. Sponsors included FCC, Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Valley Medical Group, ServiceNet, People's Pint, Baker's Office Supply, Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, the Carpenters Union, CleanSlate, Mesa Verde, Valley Tees and A-1 Enterprises. "Greenfield, as a town, gave me so much when I had nothing. I was hiking the Appalachian Trail in 2013 and I stopped in Dalton with only a backpack. I migrated here and am now a proud resident." This winter, Devon has plans for yet another activity, mountain climbing. She'll start with rock climbing.

"I've been involved in co-ops since 1997, when I was a college student in Connecticut," says **Victor Signore**, the Manager of the Green Fields Market produce department. "The co-op model is 'people first.' As a member, you can offer input and have some influence on how the store runs. Co-ops give



us a hand in shaping our community." Before Victor began as a produce clerk at GFM in 2008, he was an adjunct professor, teaching art at GCC and several CT colleges.

Victor is an artist (take one look at the beautiful array of veggies and you know this is true) and

works in various mediums, including sculpture, video, drawing and installations (see his website at [www.victorsignore.com](http://www.victorsignore.com)).

Victor is also a musician and plays in three bands, often with other FCC staff, including Jeremy Starpoli and Al Goodwin. He plays the saxophone in the band, "Vimana" (a word from Sanskrit epics that means among other things, "mythological flying palace"). He is involved in a composers' collective called GCCC, where compositions are written specifically for the players involved. In a newly formed band (yet to be named) that fuses African and Middle Eastern music into world punk, he plays sax and guitar.

These days, Victor and his partner, Meredith, live in Turners Falls, where they enjoy cooking and gardening.



## General Manager's Annual Meeting Report

[John Williams began by welcoming the crowd, and appreciating staff and BOD members.]

Now, perhaps more than ever, participation in organizations that make up our daily lives is a vital tool for connection and community.

Your participation makes our co-op an engaged, active community entity, and we appreciate your feedback and collaboration.

[To complement] more in-depth report and discussion about our Multi-Year Plan, I want to review the past year's growth and change, and highlight work that informs the plan itself.

We've built on energy that's gone into rebuilding internally, and have focused it outwards—placing an ever-stronger emphasis on expanding our role as social change agent, and a source of support for other organizations working to improve life in Franklin County.

As the result, more community members are supporting our co-op.

- Our membership grew from 2,562 FY15 to 2,784 FY16!

- We saw significant growth in our Food For All program, more than doubling numbers over two years from 91 to 191 (nearly all scholarship memberships). This program expands access of membership benefits to lower-income people in the form of increased member discount.

The program also supports SNAP, WIC, and SSI recipients to make healthier, more sustainable purchasing decisions.

- We created and strengthened partnerships with Just Roots and the Franklin County CDC, both of which support local agriculture.

- Approximately 25% of our sales are of locally produced items—within 100 miles. (This doesn't even include merchandise produced locally and distributed through major suppliers.)

We purchase from over 200 local suppliers and have over 2,000 local products.

Shopping at our co-op supports and sustains local farms and farmers and helps us continue to be a force of economic strength in our community.

- We worked with the Food Bank of Western MA and Just Roots to launch a Local Food Clinic, designed to expand access to, and education about, local food.

- We work with schools and Greenfield Community College to foster healthy food options and to develop curriculum options that address the future of regional, sustainable food.

- Food and Farm Systems students GCC ran

## Nature Notes



- **Spring** is a great time for new relationships to bloom! Find a tree to befriend, and continue to deepen and expand your relationship through all four seasons. Your tree may be in the woods or park, along a back road or in a yard; visit often to become intimately familiar, experiencing comfort and grounding when you are together. The buds are now swelling; notice flowers, leaves or cones as they emerge and how they change over weeks. What's the color, texture, smell of the bark? Do insects, birds and critters live there or come by to visit? Which plants grow nearby? There's so much to learn as you become closer to your tree. Perhaps you'll begin to talk with the tree, lean against its sturdy trunk and think about how it has stood here for many decades and weathered adversities. Imagine your roots also going down into the support of Mother Earth, nurturing you and

giving steadfast anchor. Maybe you will say

prayers here, offer gratitude, and honor the four directions. Now you're ready to face our uncertain world, bringing all the abundance, sanity, beauty and harmony of nature with you.

- **When snow melts** in early spring, the earth begins to provide food for all her creatures. As many old timers will tell you: the greens that emerge "after the starving time" are rich in vitamins and minerals—natural (and free) blood cleansers and tonics. Soon you'll find violet leaves, dandelion greens and tender roots, leaves of goutweed (an invasive), daylily shoots and rhizomes, peppermint, chickweed plant, and then wild leeks and fiddleheads (ostrich ferns)—just about the time male wood frogs start quacking their mating calls in vernal pools.



-Kathleen O'Rourke, Naturalist/herbalist

MANAGER continued on page 5

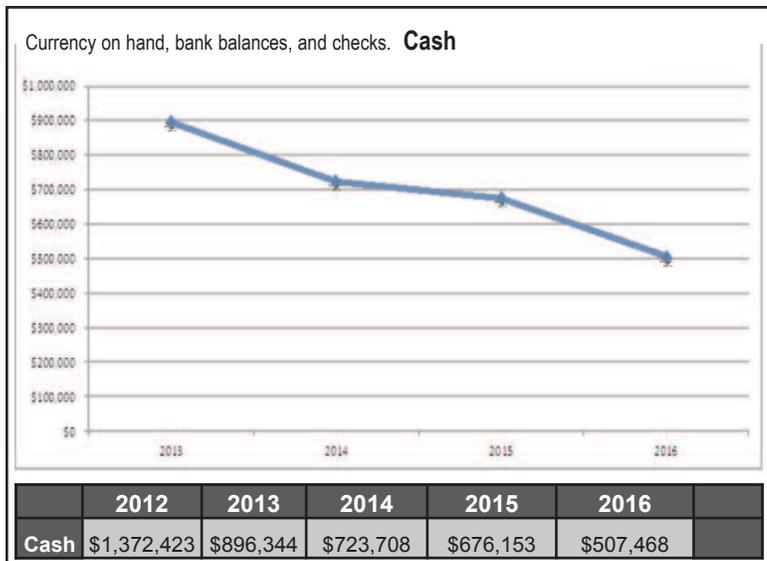
# Treasurer's Report

Good afternoon.

My name is Jeanne Douillard and I am the Board Treasurer. I want to start off by thanking the Finance Committee members, the co-op's Finance Manager, David Russel, and the General Manager, John Williams, for all their help and advice.

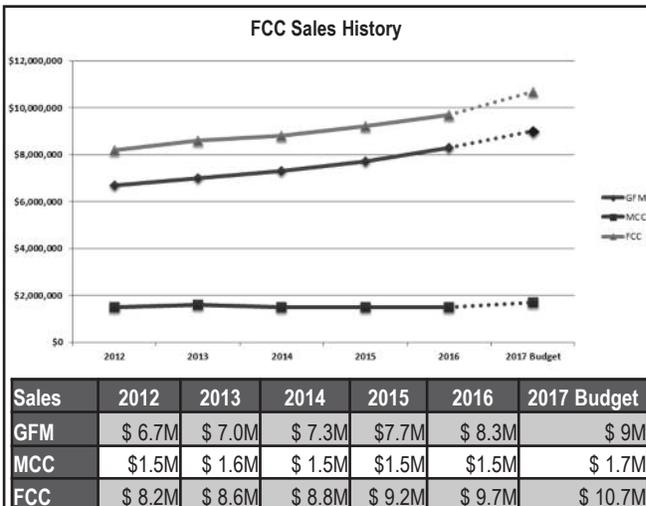
In this year's Treasurer's Report, we'll continue using the "graphs" format we used last year—with the five-year look-back as well as a look forward with our budget numbers. We also thought it might be helpful to provide you with the graphs; you should all have them [available at meeting].

We start by looking at our cash history:



**Slide 1: Cash:** The best way to look at this slide is to look at the chart below the graph. In 2010 our co-op had a little over \$1 million dollars in cash. By 2016 we have \$507, 468, \$168,685 less than at the end of last year's fiscal year. This figure reflects the flux in accounts payable and payroll.

**Slides 2: FCC Sales History:** this graph shows total sales trends over the last five years. The triangle line (top) indicates total co-op sales, the diamond (middle) line is for Green Fields Market, and the square (lower) line points to sales figures for McCusker's. The dotted lines point to budg-



et numbers for the current fiscal year. This

Slide 3	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 Budget
<b>Margin</b>	44.30%	42.54%	42.04%	40.27%	41.70%	41.32%

slide shows that our sales are still trending upward. We need to remember that MCC had a

major renovation; this occurred in this current fiscal year, so those sales are not reflected on this slide. This slide shows that Mc Cusker's sales have been trending at \$1.5M. Our goal is to increase sales to at least \$2M within the next 3-4 years.

**Slide 3: Margin** represents sales minus the cost to purchase or produce goods sold. Our margin decline has been due to changes in the co-op management structure and industry

trends. We have margin recovery in 2016 due to very strong growth in high-margin prepared foods and bakery. Based on industry trends, margin will continue to shrink as competition in the natural foods marketplace continues.

**Slide 4: Labor as % of Sales:** In this slide we see that labor costs are trending down. This is reflective of increased sales. This is a good thing.

**Slide 5: Net Income** is what's left after all costs are subtracted. We missed the budgeted net income projection (0.5% of sales) by a small amount. However, this slide shows a dramatic upward shift from the last few years. Let's applaud the hard work of staff and management! Our current income, however, doesn't support the capitalization of our organization. (opposite page)

**Slide 6:** This slide shows the combined total of discounts for the 2% Member Discount, the Working Member Discount and the Food For All. Our discounts are currently twelve times the net income. The very nature of the organization is to continue to re-invest; however we now need to acquire debt (\$250,000) in order to make much-needed capital improvements. If you look at the numbers below the graph, you'll note that the amount of our current debt equals the amount we gave out in discounts last year. The FC believes a discussion of discounts is a fiscally responsible conversation for the BOD and member owners to have this coming year. (opposite page)

In closing, I'd like to remind us that the present provides the starting point for where we want to go! We now have positive traction. Let's move forward together!

## Co-op & Community

### Shad Ladder Radio Hour

The Franklin Community Co-op, in partnership with West County Arts and Culture and the HATCH project, is pleased to announce its sponsorship of the Shad Ladder Radio Hour! The Radio Hour is a monthly, live-recorded event (in the vein of the perennial NPR favorite, *A Prairie Home Companion*) featuring the writing, acting, and musical talents of Franklin County. We invite you to join us as an audience member at one of our shows, where the Plaid Shad Players will entertain you with voice acting wizardry, local musical acts will serenade you, and we can celebrate the creative power of our hilltown communities! If you missed a live show, you can catch a podcast! Please visit our website to listen to past shows, and “like us” on Facebook to stay up to date on the show schedule, calls for submissions, and other local arts news!

If you'd like to submit writing or be featured as a local storyteller on the Radio Hour, please contact Sarah Kanabay: [sarah.kanabay@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:sarah.kanabay@franklincommunity.coop)

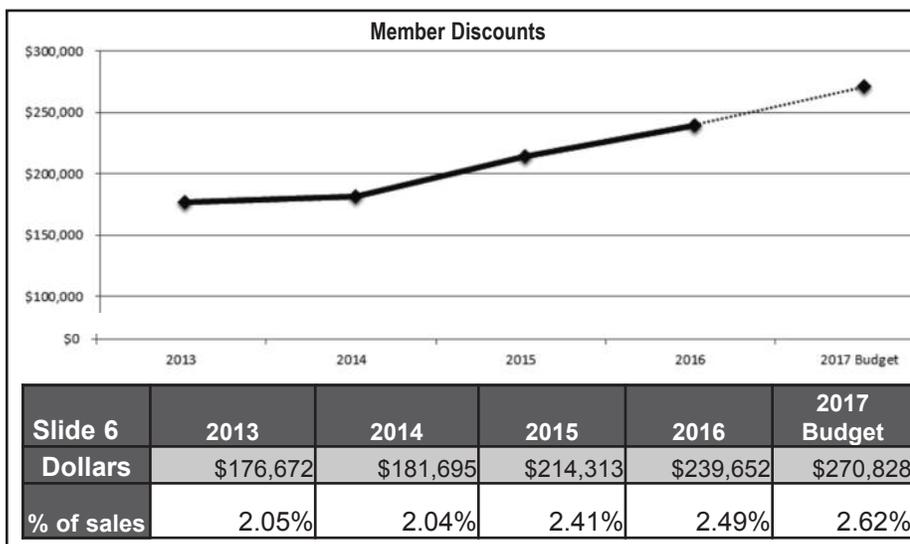
Would your business like to sponsor the radio hour and its artists? We'd love to craft an original creative sketch for you, to be featured on the show!

Website: <https://soundcloud.com/user-678487851>  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ShadLadderRadio/](http://www.facebook.com/ShadLadderRadio/)

### Tuesday Farmers' Market

The Greenfield Tuesday Market—a project begun last year by the Co-op in partnership with students from Greenfield Community College—is back for a second season, starting in May! This year's market will have a slightly different format, as market partner Just Roots' CSA distribution day has been moved to Tuesdays. Market shoppers will be able to pick up their farm share, purchase additional individual items from a rotating series of different weekly vendors, as well as from a select group of regular vendors. The monthly Local Food Clinic will now be held at the Tuesday Market as well—making the Tuesday Farmers' Market a one-stop shop for local food, food education outreach, samples, and fun! The hours will be 3-6:30, weekly, beginning the first Tuesday in May. Curious about becoming a vendor? Please contact Sarah Kanabay [sarah.kanabay@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:sarah.kanabay@franklincommunity.coop) or visit our website: <http://www.franklincommunity.coop/local/the-greenfield-tuesday-market/>

Net Income					
Slide 5	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 Budget
Dollars	(\$289,164)	(\$180,000)	(\$398,096)	\$19,569	\$89,911
% of sales	-3.46%	-2.15%	-3.56%	0.20%	0.87%



MANAGER continued from page 2

the first successful season of a weekly downtown farmers' market, and brought new vendors into the co-op.

- We work with other downtown businesses to form a non-profit partnership dedicated to enriching our business community.
- We expanded outreach efforts and volunteer opportunities; last year, 136 households did participate within our community for their member work hours.

As we anticipate growth and expansion, I hope our commitment to being the change we wish to see remains evident in the projects we champion, the communities we empower, and the hands we extend to help others.

Our Ends are more than just guidelines for decision-making—they're a living document that we work to embody with actions and choices.

I'm proud of the work we've done, the conversations we've had and the efforts we've made to better understand one another throughout our planning process.

But positive change is not a given—it needs to be actively defended by those who wish to see it thrive.

We've made strong steps towards financial stability, but that stability is still fragile. We must work together to ensure it continues.

We experienced a modest sales increase of 7.5% and a net profit of \$22K, in contrast with a loss of \$400K the previous year.

We ended the year with \$398k in cash

reserves. Our land, building, and equipment are worth \$736K, and we have \$175K in investments in Food, Energy, and Buying Co-ops.

This year, we're budgeting an 8% increase in revenue and an overall net profit of \$89K.

Given all this, what do we mean when we talk about growth? Growth refers to a positive change in size and/or maturity, often over a period of time.

Growth can be a scary word in a capitalist economy. It's important we don't confuse growth with what happens when a corporation extracts from communities, in contrast with organizations regenerating communities.

To us, growth means we can continue to strengthen community and the livelihood of our friends and neighbors, while serving the needs of members.

My introduction highlights—and the multi-year plan draft further illustrates—that our potential growth must be carefully cultivated from the soil of our Ends, so it can flourish as an expression of who we are as a cooperative.

If there's anything that the challenges of 2016 have taught us, it's that our differences pale in comparison to our collective determination to embody our shared commitment to making the world a better place for all. The sign that hangs above our doors—'Everyone Is Welcome'—is worth fighting for as we work to preserve and strengthen our ability to be agents for community sustainability.

-John Williams, General Manager

## Co-op Classified

**Positive dog training** creates better behavior! *At Your Service Dog Training* offers effective, fun clicker training for pet dog manners and service dog classes in Orange, or private training in your home. Certified Professional Dog Trainer. [Sharon@atyour servicedogtraining.com](mailto:Sharon@atyour servicedogtraining.com) / 978-544-8674 / [atyour servicedogtraining.com](http://atyour servicedogtraining.com).

**Jeff's Home Improvements** Outstanding workmanship & care for your home & property. Carpentry, home repairs, painting, masonry & tile, home organization, organic garden & landscaping services. I use mostly eco-friendly & non-toxic materials. 25 yrs experience. Excellent references. Free estimates. (413) 773-9597.

**Greenfield Zen** Mondays 7:15 – 8:45 PM Sitting & walking meditation. Cushions & chairs available. \$5 donation requested – not required. Initial instruction for beginners at 7 PM All welcome. Contact: Paul Sonier (413) 665-0278 or [prajna801@icloud.com](mailto:prajna801@icloud.com)

**Handcrafted Wind Chimes** Recycled silverware, hammered & strung together with fishing line hanging from cord ribbon, creating a unique musical sound. Display inside or a nice addition to any garden. [Cynthiasfinephotos@yahoo.com](mailto:Cynthiasfinephotos@yahoo.com) (413) 522-2406.

**Experienced Roofer.** Knowledgeable, trustworthy local roofer with 45 years experience. Slate expert. Repairs, ice dam removal, flashing, gutter cleaning, gutter & downspout installation. No job too small. Ask about activist discounts. (413)367-9352 [lionoak@gmail.com](mailto:lionoak@gmail.com)

**Holistic Women's Health & Wellness Practice** opens January in Greenfield. Addressing women's health concerns, holistic weight loss, and fertility through herbal medicine, nutrition and bodywork. Becca Sarich, CNM, RN, Women's Holistic Health Care Provider [www.beccasarich.com](http://www.beccasarich.com)

**Kathy Dean, Licensed Acupuncturist and Practitioner of Chinese Herbal Medicine** in Shelburne Falls, Mass. Chinese medicine is a gentle and natural approach to treating a wide variety of acute and chronic health conditions. Individualized treatment for pain relief, stress reduction, reproductive health care, immune system support or complementary treatment for cancer and other illnesses. (413) 625-2550.

**Her Wild Roots** offers nature-based programs for women who wish to cultivate a deeper connection with the natural world. See our 2017 program calendar and course descriptions at [www.herwildroots.com](http://www.herwildroots.com). Contact Jeannie Bergstrom or Kathy Dean at [herwildroots@herwildroots.com](mailto:herwildroots@herwildroots.com) to register.

**We seek walking companion,** French/English conversationalist, and/or piano duet partner for delightful & spry elder recently transplanted to W. MA. Céline loves to walk (fast!), discuss a wide range of topics, and laugh a lot. If you're interested in making a new friend for one or more of these activities, please contact C's daughter, Eveline MacDougall. [eveline@amandlachorus.org](mailto:eveline@amandlachorus.org).

**Piano Lessons:** Nourish your soul! Patient, experienced teacher. Accepting teens and adults for lessons at my beautiful home studio in Greenfield. Taubman Technique specialist: heal or prevent piano-playing injuries/limitations. [www.juliabady pianist.com](http://www.juliabady pianist.com) for more info, (413) 774-0102.

more classified p. 8

## Member Participation Circle This Year's Work



The Member Participation Circle will begin this year's work with a spring event for members focused on the standards we use to choose our food. **Organic, Non-GMO, Fair Trade:** what do they mean today? What complexities have developed over the years since standards were introduced? How useful are they now? How does **Local** fit in? [Date and place of event TBA.]

Our third annual **Candidates Forum** was buried by February snow. Look for it next year!

The group will also work to develop a proposal for a permanent **Co-op Vision Council**. The work of interacting with members to articulate a shared vision for the co-op is challenging. We're fortunate to have an experienced, talented and dedicated General Manager and a Board of Directors committed to working together at their job of overseeing the GM as representatives of our membership. They act with respect, intelligence, courage and integrity, exercising their authority with openness and responding creatively to the challenges of difference on numerous occasions. To return the co-op to profitability, the BOD directed GM John Williams to develop a multi-year plan and to engage members in its development.

The members of MPCircle are excited about the participatory planning process that's been carried out over the past year. We've observed that:

- It requires a substantial commitment of time and energy
- There must be sustained effort to reach significant numbers of members through a variety of means
- It involves ongoing learning for all involved
- It generates energy among those participating

• Repeated rounds of listening to member views on a specific list of key questions seems a viable way to identify priorities for the co-op's development supported by a majority of members

• Providing information in conjunction with listening—regarding the participatory planning process and the co-op's current situation—helped members understand the range of concerns and needs motivating our members and staff

MPCircle believes that developing a permanent Vision Council would build on these strengths and enlarge our capacity as members to govern. We think our co-op's current governance structure hasn't been able to support member participation in the work of interacting to articulate a shared vision. As the co-op grew, the BOD's job has grown. Gradually (since the move to Main Street) this work has been largely delegated to staff. We believe that by creating an elected Vision Council, an advisory partner to the BOD (modeled on the Social Council created at Mondragon), we could increase member involvement in this work. What members learn, in taking on this work, will expand our ability to use our values to guide co-op development. We create the co-op to meet our needs. The responsibility to agree together how we will act to make that so may be the most important good that a co-op can provide.

The Member Participation Circle meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Green Fields Market meeting room. We welcome visitors and new members interested in joining in the work we do. Questions: [mpcircle@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:mpcircle@franklincommunity.coop)



2017 Annual Meeting photo by Lindy Whitton

Many members noted in their meeting evaluations that participating in the small group discussions were a valuable and enjoyable component of the meeting.

*PRESIDENT continued from page 1*

prices. They didn't have much control over the quality, or much of anything else. And so we worked with those people to see if we could do some good. The idea was to get good food at low prices."

Let's pause for a moment to honor this noble and dedicated man. [Applause.]

In subsequent years, many others carried on expanding the cooperative vision that Tom started, some of whom are still actively involved, and [who] are here today.

With the Multi-Year Plan focusing on both a Board-level Merchandise Policy as well as increasing our commitment to Food Justice, we're coming full circle to Tom's basic idea: trying to actualize this aspiration of broad access to healthy food.

At the Annual Meeting last March, I reported that we'd been through a year of stabilization. This past year, by contrast, has been one of vigorous reflection on how we want to move ahead into our future (part of which was a recent remodel of McCusker's -- I urge you all to check it out, if you haven't already). The upcoming year is one of challenge and excitement as we work together to further implement the collective vision we've developed.

As a cooperative—a values-based organization—we're trying to do [many] things at the same time:

- Provide a living wage and good working conditions for our dedicated and talented employees!
- Provide fair reimbursement to our suppliers.
- Be alert to the conditions of workers, near and far, who labor to supply our goods.
- Provide healthy food.
- Be affordable.
- Be welcoming to everyone.
- Provide community gathering space.
- Be a responsible [part] of our communities

and region.

- Be responsible stewards of the planet and its ecosystem.
- And -- oh yeah -- maintain two stores where we owners, and other community members, can shop!

That's a lot of plates to keep spinning!

One purpose of this meeting is to collectively check how we're doing to meet these varied expectations. Another is to share and discuss how we're going to move forward—to understand and fine-tune the vision and the plan. The Multi-Year Plan John will present—which the Board has unanimously endorsed—is a pivotal opportunity to proceed in a way that's both sound and true to our values.

Looking back over our 40-year history also led me to reflect on the evolution of one of the seven cooperative principles -- Democratic Member Control -- and to consider the various forms of democratic involvement available to us as owners.

When the co-op moved from Turners Falls to Greenfield in 1987 (and took the name Franklin Community Co-op), there were fewer than a hundred members, 40 of whom participated in the meeting where the vote to move was taken. We now have over 2,800 member-owners, which necessitates a wider range of modes and opportunities to determine our collective will, in what I see as a mix of participatory and representative democracy.

- Per our bylaws, owners elect the Board to represent [us] and to vote on bylaw changes.

between member-owners and the cooperative business they own" and to "educate itself regarding the values held by the members."

• Owners can so educate the Board intermittently via in-person forums and surveys, as well as through individual communication [with] Board members.

• To [achieve] more steady involvement, owners can also join Board committees—a good way to expand readiness for Board service.

• Electronic options, in particular, offer ways to expand participation in the form of electronic voting [initiated this year], electronic information-sharing and gathering with owners who provide e-mail addresses, and a relatively new option on our website: the Member Forum [mentioned earlier]. I encourage you to check these out.

Bottom line: We want to make sure owners have multiple options and opportunities for meaningful participation and the exercise of democratic rights.

One role model for meaningful participation is David Paysnick. A former employee, David ran for and was elected to the Board four years ago. In his first two years, he served as Board President, and in that role he masterfully shepherded the Board and co-op through a pivotal phase of crisis and transition. After two more years of Board service, he's opted not to run for another term. But please note that he does plan to continue to participate as a member-owner on the Board's Policy & Bylaw Revision Committee.



*Pre-meeting sampling provided by vendors and co-op staff, music by Fire Pond and Co-op Jazz, kids activities with Trevor the Games Man and discussion group report outs (above right) all contributed to the success of the day!*



• Other votes can be taken by the full ownership, but for the most part, further decisions are made by the Board.

• One of our bylaws also allows other owners to have the option to participate and vote at Board meetings.

• The Board is required by policy to "act as the link

The arc of David's service is exceptional, but can serve as an inspiration for that spirit of democratic participation within each of you. Please join me in honoring David's service.

Lastly, many thanks also to long-time member-owners Steve Alves, Marilyn Andrews, Terry Plotkin, Suzy Polucci & Suzette Snow-Cobb for providing me with information about our co-op's birth and evolution. Such generous collaboration is one example of how we're stronger together. Go Co-op! Thank you.

# Co-op Classified Ads

**Amandla Chorus:** Two Spring Concerts Sun., April 2, Shea Theater. 4pm: kids/families. 7pm: adults/teens. Benefit Center for New Americans. Music from around the world, plus originals—rousing, inspiring, comforting. [www.amandlachorus.org](http://www.amandlachorus.org)

**Stand Up For Your Life** Free introductory session, Wed., March 15, 10-noon, Greenfield. Clarify your values—and increase the degree to which you live them—by increasing your ability to say no, to say yes 100% and to care less about what others think! Free Session will be followed by 6-wk optional workshop. Facilitated by Susan Hackney, MSW. [hackneys@juno.com](mailto:hackneys@juno.com).

**Commercial Space for rent**, downtown Shelburne Falls (on the river). Spaces rent from \$175-475. Michael, 625-8300.

**Rowe Camp** offers an alternative culture for young people where issues are challenged and society is redefined. Significant things transpire here. If you're 8-19 years old, join us this summer! [www.rowecenter.org](http://www.rowecenter.org)

**Come to Natural Roots** in Conway for delicious, nourishing, fresh vegetables, eggs & more, June-October. More flexible CSA options now available! Support a horse-powered farm & become connected to this beautiful land & community. [www.naturalroots.com](http://www.naturalroots.com) or 369-4269.

**Sat., March 25, 2:30 p.m. Valley Time Trade.** Free orientation required to become a member. No registration required, but please arrive on time. Bring laptop or tablet if you have one. Green Fields Market meeting room, 144 Main St., Greenfield. [www.valleytimetrade.org](http://www.valleytimetrade.org).

**Cleaning support** for your business/home. Reliable.

Within 30 mi. of Shelburne Falls. Iona (603) 631-5860.

**Abbott's Glen Naturist resort** in Halifax, VT, welcomes day guests who wish to enjoy a hot tub or Finnish sauna. Wednesdays are for women only. Snow shoe or cross country ski, 55 acres. 802-368-2525 / [www.abbottsglen.com](http://www.abbottsglen.com)

**Common Wealth CSA shares available.** Celebrate our 20th season of Franklin County Farmers working cooperatively to provide high quality produce to the community. Suzanne Carlson: (413) 325-8193 / [suzannec@crocker.com](mailto:suzannec@crocker.com)

**Spring Farm Shares from Red Fire Farm** start at the end of March! Organic vegetables, greens from our tunnels, first spring crops. Summer CSA Shares with Pick Your Own strawberries, flowers and more in Montague. (413) 467-7645 / [www.redfirefarm.com](http://www.redfirefarm.com).

**Retiring couple** w/ 2 peaceful cats need to rent or buy. 1st floor BR & full bath essential. 2-3 BR, 1.5+ baths. Safe, sunny, quiet location desired. Not near close/busy road. Garden space desired. Within 20 min. of Greenfield. Susan (413) 325-1655.

**Pet-Sitting: Happy Cats Happy Dogs** Cat, dog & small animal care in your home. Professional, affordable, kind. Serving Gfd area. Insured & bonded. Adriene Tilton (413) 824-8269 / [happycats.greenfield@yahoo.com](mailto:happycats.greenfield@yahoo.com) [www.facebook.com/HappyCatsGreenfield](http://www.facebook.com/HappyCatsGreenfield)

**Piti Theatre Full Service Arts:** accepting registrations for ages 7-12, April-June session of Piti's Shelburne Falls Youth Troupe. Also: all ages Soapstone Carving & Art'n'Nature. [ptco.org/classes](http://ptco.org/classes), [info@ptco.org](mailto:info@ptco.org).

**Farm Shares, Sweet Morning Farm.** Bountiful, delicious vegetables from a tiny farm in Leyden. We offer two sizes, flowers, and Pick-Your-Own garden. Ask about delivery to Greenfield/Leyden. (413) 773-8325 [sweetmorningfarm@gmail.com](mailto:sweetmorningfarm@gmail.com)

**Clay Workshops with Rhonda Wainshilbaum**, 46 River Rd., Leyden. April 23, 2-5 p.m. Make a clay duck or chicken garden ornament, \$50. May 7, 2-6 p.m.: textured hanging bells for porch or garden, \$45. No experience necessary. Materials included. \$5 off if you bring a new participant! 10% of proceeds go to The National Environmental Law Center. [Rhondawain@verizon.net](mailto:Rhondawain@verizon.net) / (413) 624-5175.

**Trusted Connection:** Introductory workshops on Intuitive Focusing. Listening deeply to self and to others. The Nacul Center, Amherst, March 18 or All Soul's Church, Greenfield, April 8. \$20-\$50 sliding scale. [www.daphnebye.com](http://www.daphnebye.com) / (413) 834-0597.

**Greenfield club of the Speaker Sisterhood**, a network of confidence-building speaking groups for up to 15 women... FREE INTRO with club leader Carlyn Saltman, Tuesday, April 18, 5:30-7:30. RSVP at [www.speakersisterhood.com](http://www.speakersisterhood.com) through EventBrite link. All women welcome!

**For rent:** sunny 2 BR 1st floor apartment; \$900/mo includes heat (& hot water & range cooking). Cable connection, washer and shared clothesline available. Half-mile north of Main St., Greenfield. Call John, 774-6730.

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Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, and the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. Cooperative Principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

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