

COOP

This newsletter is the first in a series of many to be published on a monthly basis by the Moscow Food CO-op. It is a means of opening communication among the membership and keeping the community informed about what's happening with the co-op. It should function as a resource for co-op users. The newsletter is also an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information on issues of interest to the co-op community. We solicit individual contributions. The newsletter has no editorial board, and articles printed do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Moscow Food Co-op as a whole. If you have a contribution to the newsletter - ideas, opinions, information to share, recipes or energy to help with the monthly organization - contact a coordinator or call Mary at 882-9028. And, watch the bulletin board for information on deadlines and meeting times. Help the co-op have a good newsletter and earn yourself some work credit.

Carrying

Knots in a net.
How well we tie
determines what we hold
and what we may give away.
Good baskets are woven with family jokes;
the staves souls; the fabric, the effort
of growing up
The youngest child leaves it turned upsidedown
in the garden
to hold the earth beneath in place.

-Terry Lawhead

Attend the next

MOSCOW FOOD CO-OP MEMBERS MEETING

Sunday, August 12th, 5 P. M.

314 South Washington

Find out what's going on with the co-op, and participate in the decisions effecting your co-op. The co-op needs input from all members.

Some things to be covered at this meeting:

Election of Board Members

Financial up date

Proposals

to establish a coordinating committee
to have mandatory orientation for all
new members

Discussion of the present By-Laws and

Articles of Incorporation and establishment of a study group to work on recommendations for changes within these papers.

Report on status of committees proposed at last members meeting.

If you have additions to the agenda, please add them to the poster in the store or bring them with you to the next meeting August 12th.



CO-OP PHILOSOPHY

After several years of fast growth, the coop is collectively reexamining its structure and operations as related to its philosophy. Results hopefully will be clearer guidelines for coordinators on priorities, more vital involvement by the membership, and a more effective system of participation in board, coordinator and working-member functions. Operating the coop in a "cooperative" spirit is no easy task with 800 members.

In June members interested in coop philosophy met to discuss who the Moscow Food Coop is, what its priorities should be, and whether present operations and direction fit with our purpose. The group did come to a consensus in the following areas:

1. The cooperative is member-owned and basic policies are established by the membership.
2. The decision-making process is by consensus.
3. The cooperative is to provide wholesome, economical food and other goods as determined by the membership.
4. The cooperative represents an alternative to competitive retailing - "food for people, not for profit".
5. The cooperative is to establish outreach and serve an educational function to both members and the community at large in areas of nutrition, food preparation, and other related areas.
6. We should support other non-exploitive businesses and organizations, particularly the cooperative movement.

While more input and clarification is needed before a written philosophy can be stated, areas were designated for study and proposals to better align our operations with our philosophy.

At the July Members Meeting a number of these areas were presented and discussed. A proposal for clarifying the decision-making system was presented. The model will be posted at the coop for more feedback and will be presented at the August meeting for final approval. Basically it places policy-making powers only with the members. Due to our size and number of decisions, it was felt basic proposals with background facts and recommendations would be presented at members meetings to facilitate informed discussion. Proposals would be presented discussed, modified, and then posted or presented in the newsletter for more input. Final decisions would be made at the next meeting, or at a later date, by consensus. The board function would be to facilitate, help plan or develop proposals with coordinators, members or other board members. Decisions would be put into operation by the coordinators and working members.

Other areas presented included outreach, modifications of the store to improve environment, orientation, a realignment of coordinators roles to increase outreach. These areas were submitted to committees for proposal development or follow-through. Committees are posted on the bulletin board.



AT THE LAST MEMBERS MEETING

Several decisions were made, the results of which may be seen in the co-op now or in the near future.

It was decided that, due to a concern about the healthfulness of flourescent lighting, the co-op would change over to incandescent lighting.

At the urging of the health department, we now have new bins in the coop. These bins were designed and built by Bill Moore. They are gravity fed and dispense food without individuals having to put their hands into the bin. They should be in use soon, dispensing nuts and grains.

There was discussion of creating a "tea corner" in the store. This would be an area where individuals could sit, have a cup of tea and visit with other shoppers. It was decided to designate the back right corner of the store (where the overstock herbs are now) for this purpose. Once the herbs are moved to another storage space we can follow through on this decision. We would also like to build new bookshelves and move the books to the tea area allowing for a better display. An herb file, listing common uses and information about the herbs that we carry is also in the making to be located in the tea corner.

The go ahead was given to purchase a digital scale. We have one on order from Vail's office supplies in Lewiston and hope to have it in the store within the next couple of weeks. This scale will help tremendously with accuracy in weigh'ing and ease of check out.

We are looking into the possibility of an awning for the front window to help cut down on afternoon heat and sun damage to products located in the front of the store.

Several committees are currently active or have been initiated to follow through on suggestions or decisions from the last members meeting. Your participation is welcome. See the bulletin board for committee lists and who to contact.

Inventory committee - to help with monthly inventory on an ongoing basis.

Newsletter committee - writing, layout, editing, graphics, paste-up and printing, distribution, and more...

Herb file - listing common uses and information about herbs.

Orientation - to work with outreach worker (Mary) to establish ongoing program for new or interested old members in order to familiarize them with philosophy, workings of coop and function as a contributing member.

Educational Outreach - to sponsor panel discussions covering issues as organic farming vs. non-organic; education of community outside as well as inside the coop in areas of nutrition, food preparation and cooking, social awareness and more. Share knowledge and food we carry with the community at large.

NEW FACES

Have you noticed that the coop has two new coordinators?

Kate, who has been coordinating since mid-March, is leaving Moscow for Arcata, California. In her place we have hired JoAnn Johnson, better known as "J.J.". Maureen Masson has been hired as a temporary coordinator to fill Karen's place while she is on a leave of absence until October.

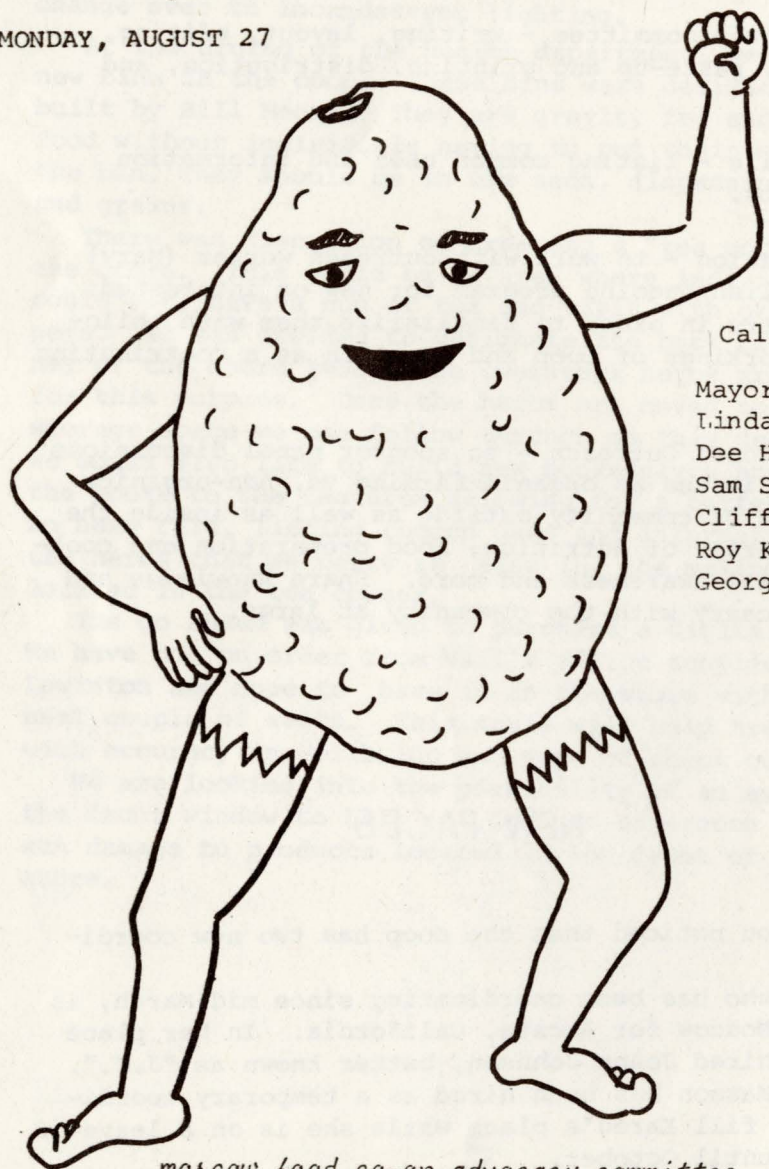
organic
ADVOCATO sez ... "transportation for PEOPLE not PROFIT"

SUPPORT MOSCOW BICYCLE ROUTES

CALL YOUR CITY COUNCIL PERSON NOW!
and ask them to implement the bike route plan NOW not "LATER"

ATTEND THE CITY BUDGET MEETING,

MONDAY, AUGUST 27



Call these people:

Mayor Don Mackin	882-2832
Linda Pall	882-1280
Dee Hager	882-4554
Sam Scriptor	885-6216
Cliff Lathen	882-1678
Roy Krause	882-2815
George Russel	885-6479

ORGANIZE

IN A SURVEY TAKEN IN MOSCOW THIS SPRING, 200 FAMILIES REPLIED, REPRESENTING OVER 500 CYCLISTS! OVER HALF REPORTED ACCIDENTS WITH CARS OR UNSAFE SURFACES!!!

MOST PEOPLE AVERAGE 3 MILES TO A TRIP, AND USE THEIR BICYCLE FOR MORE THAN JUST RECREATION. ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY WERE REPRESENTED IN THE SURVEY - PROFESSORS, STUDENTS, WORKERS, CHILDREN AND SENIOR CITIZENS.

bike routes are cheaper than accidents

In just the last 50 years, more than 3 times as many Americans have been killed by autos than have died in all the wars we have ever fought.

Los Angeles uses 62% of its land surface for cars.

25 million auto accidents a year kill 50,000 people and injure 5 million more. Up to 40% of cars currently produced will cause someone injury or death.

The automotive transit system causes 60% of the nation's air pollution, and over 80% of the noise pollution.

Automotive transit amounts to 1/5 of our national energy consumption, and almost 1/2 our oil consumption - nearly 10 times the energy produced by all U.S. nuclear power plants.

1% - cut the fat - not essential services - 1%

moscow food co-op advocacy committee

A HISTORY OF THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Ron Yankey

The following article is the first in a series tracing the history of the co-op movement in the United States. Through the series I hope to deepen my own knowledge and share information with other concerned co-op members. I believe that an understanding of the roots of the movement is a necessary prerequisite to any discussion of the nature of the Moscow Food Co-op, its directions and goals.

A fellow co-op user once told me that the co-op movement in the U.S. started in Wichita, Kansas, in 1964 when local people who were tired of paying high prices for adulterated foods in the supermarkets formed a club to buy their food in purer form direct from wholesalers. The two principles, good pure food and low prices, were so popular that soon every major town, especially those towns that had colleges, had its own food coop - including Moscow, Idaho.

I knew at the time that this history was extremely simplistic. As a boy growing up in southern Idaho I often went shopping at the Consumers Supply Co-op, which sold farm supplies and paid its members a dividend each year; and had for years watched a big red and silver truck with the words "DAIRY COOPERATIVE" painted on its doors pick milk from our dairy. Also, having recently spent several months living in Minnesota where I could buy gas at a co-op gas station, buy clothes in a co-op clothing store, household supplies in a co-op hardware store, find books in a co-op bookstore and buy all my grocery needs in a food co-op that was supplied by a cheese coop, a produce co-op, a co-op bakery and even a tofu co-op - I began to feel a need to find out more about cooperatives, why they were started, who started them, what made them successful, and why some failed.

As I have begun trying to trace a history of coops I have discovered that my simplistic friend had really fallen victim to one of the most pervasive myths of our society, the myth that humans are born competitors - that the history of humans is one of strong conquering weak and thus being the most "fit" to survive - that our

basic nature is one of war, genocide, and murder.

This myth is easy to trace down historically. It starts in the period immediately following the Civil War and represents an explanation for the consolidation of the capitalist trusts and the destruction of a more rural folk-oriented society. The main propagandists of the myth were the public relations people of the Rockefellers, Morgans, DuPonts, etc. who were consolidating vast fortunes by crushing small local businesses. The myth probably made it easier for John D. Rockefeller to sleep nights and might have provided some solace to some small business people who had after all been ruined by someone fulfilling his human destiny.

I choose to agree, however, with Herbert Myrick who in 1891 wrote in his book, How to Cooperate, A Manual for Cooperatives, "It is cooperation which is ancient; it is competition which is new." More modern anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, Ashley Montagu and Richard Leakey confirm Myrick's belief that the history of humanity is one of cooperation. The early history of the American cooperative movement provides much further evidence that humans can, will, and often do join together to achieve common goals.

The first coop in the United States was organized in 1845 by the "New England Association of Mechanics and Workingmen", a union formed to agitate for the political goal of a 10 hour day. A member of the Association noticing that their meetings were very poorly attended decided that more members might come if they could see plainly that it was in their interest to come. His idea was for every member of the association to contribute a small sum each week which could then be pooled to provide enough money to buy items in bulk at a savings. The first purchase of the Association was a box of soap and one-half box of tea.

No one recorded how many members came to the next meeting but the idea caught on so rapidly that by 1850 there were 106 stores located through-out New England with a membership exceeding 5000 and sales of over \$600,000.00.

The principles upon which these coops were founded were simple. The founders declared at the beginning

that "their main objective was the elevation of the laboring classes." As the number of stores increased they formed a federation that was open to anyone who did not drink intoxicating beverages. Local stores were allowed to manage themselves with the federation providing the advantage of centralized buying and distribution. The federation adopted as part of its constitution the principle that "The business...shall be conducted on the cash principle. No credit shall in any case be given." To benefit the cooperative members goods were to be sold as near cost as possible.

These early cooperatives reached their period of greatest success around 1858 with the federation reporting sales of over \$1,000,000. Many of the stores had by then forgotten their original purpose of helping the workers. The success of the stores created profits and dividends. With the stores managed and run by "professional" employees and little provision for input by ordinary members the number of people who belonged to the coop dropped as the profits went up. In the economic turmoil of the Civil War the cooperative stores collapsed.

Writing of the collapse, a secretary of the federation listed as the main causes of the failure as problems of the central organization, departure from the cash principle, poorly qualified employees and "the sharp competition which sprang up between the union stores and the retail dealers, which materially reduced the standard of profits." Those people whose only attachment to the cooperatives was for immediate gain, lower prices, and high dividends, left when prices went up and dividends down.

The Cooperative Pyramid Builder, a 1920's to 1930's publication of the Cooperative Central Exchange of Superior, Wisconsin, summarized the failure of the first coops, "The cooperative cannot live and prosper if it is only a store...When the early cooperatives abandoned their close connections with the workers, when instead of continuing to help in the workers struggle for better conditions, they relied purely on 'business' profits and 'cheaper goods', they were defeated by the private retails.

To be continued

GOOD THINGS

OAT BISCUIT-MUFFINS

adapted from The Low Blood Sugar Cookbook

1 egg, slightly beaten
1/2 cup milk
2 tablespoons oil or melted butter
1 cup oat flour
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
bits of fruit or nuts may be added

Preheat oven to 350°F

Mix the dry ingredients

Combine the egg, milk and fat and mix well.

Add the liquid to the dry ingredients and stir until smooth. Pour the batter into greased muffin tins, 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick.

Bake in 350° F. oven for 30 minutes or until lightly browned.

Makes 8 biscuits.



EVERYBODY'S EDITORIAL PAGE

Co-op members attending their first members' meeting are often just a little confused when they find that the meetings are not conducted in the "usual" way. There is no "chairperson". Instead there is a facilitator. No one makes motions on agenda items. The issues are talked about at great length and in what seems to be minute detail. Everyone seems to be trying to convince everyone else of the rightness of his or her own opinion. Finally no vote is taken at the end of the discussion. Instead, people are asked if they will block consensus.

Most of us are used to going to meetings that are conducted in a rigid, hierarchical manner. There is a chairperson. There is an unvarying agenda. There are committees, and committee chairpeople and committee reports. One must be either totally for or totally against an issue. Issues are decided by counting up the for and the against. Decisions are final.

This is the regular form of decision making. It makes everyone into adversaries. It is competitive. It is a form of decisions making that began with the industrial revolution in the 18th century. It is the "new" way of making decisions.

Coop meetings are now conducted by a method called "consensus" decision making. Consensus means that everyone agrees to a decision. Consensus is the method that primitive and not-so-primitive peoples have always used to reach decisions. The American Indians made their decisions by consensus. The New England town meeting is a bridge between consensus and competitive decision making.

Consensus is not an easy way of making decisions. It requires participants to cooperate. Consensus presupposes respect for individual differences. Consensus requires us to be open and honest and to express our doubts. Consensus rejects the building of elaborate compromises, the formation of power alliances, and the creation of "winners" and "losers".

Participants in consensus decision-making assume great responsibilities. They must have the sensitivity not to dominate discussion and the courage to confront others who try to dominate. They must have enough faith in their convictions to block consensus even when everyone else agrees and the intellectual courage to honestly review their convictions when consensus is blocked. They must actively seek a resolution of the question and resist vacillation and "going with the flow".

When men and women who sincerely wish to cooperate come together to conduct their business by consensus the process is both simple and profound. A question or issue is introduced. Each person states how he or she feels. Everyone looks for areas of agreement. Those who doubt express their doubts. Those who agree, seek to convince the doubters. Sometimes immediately, more often gradually, the areas of agreement shift and then broaden until, like a flower blooming in the spring, the consensus emerges transforming individuals into a unity of common purpose.

Ron Yankey

This newsletter was brought to you by:
THE MOSCOW FOOD CO-OP
ANDY, BRENDA, KAREN, MARY, RAMONA, RON