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Moscow Food Cooperative  
**Newsletter**

August 1988 • 15th Anniversary



# Moscow Food Cooperative Newsletter

August 1988

Published by Moscow Food Co-op

314 S. Washington  
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## FIFTEENTH ANIVERSARY CHANGES

by Mary Jo Knowles

It has been a busy month. Sales are good; summer is no longer a "make it" or "break it" time of year.

The new spice shelves are in and being filled up -- many thanks to Bill Moore of One of a Kind Furniture for making the new shelves. They look sharp and give us more room.

We took a big step this week -- we found a new home for the compressors that sat on top of the dairy case. They now reside in the back hallway. No more noise; no more heat. It was an expensive lesson to learn but we now know never to keep compressors in the store.

We now have central air-conditioning. Our landlord kindly fixed the air conditioner that cools both Art Frames and the Co-op. We are still working out the bugs but it seems to be a very positive step.

The computer is in and getting ready to work for us. Candace has been spending many hours putting in all our information.

There have been several employee changes this last month. Rose Marie has resigned her position. We are now hiring a new Produce and Herb Coordinator. We will miss her. Truman leaves the middle of August to go back to school so we are also hiring cashiers and a janitor. Also, next month - new faces.

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## MEMBERSHIP AND MAILING LIST

by Candace Cloud

Since the Co-op has acquired the computer, we have been working on putting together a mailing list. As we struggle to learn how the computer wants us to enter all the names of the members so they can be printed on labels, we realize that many of the addresses in the rolo-dex by the cash register are not current. It would be helpful if everyone would check to make sure their address is correct.

Also, we will be printing the date of membership expiration on each mailing label. Every time we mail something to our members there will be an automatic reminder that renewal time may be approaching.

## HOW THE CO-OP IS DOING NOW

by Candace Cloud

Things are going pretty well at the Co-op these days. Since the beginning of the year we have purchased the produce cooler, the display freezer, the coffee grinder, the coffee and spice shelves, and the computer. All the new equipment has been paid in full and we are still looking for ways to improve the Co-op.

Financially things have been looking better for at least a couple of years. I looked through some of the balance sheets for 1986 and 1987 and found that in January of 1987 the gross profit had increased by \$1,281.49 from the year before. Assets had increased by \$31,104.08!

When comparing the month of July 1986 to July of 1987, the gross profit increased by \$757.59 and assets had increased by \$3,402.35.

There was a decrease in the gross profit in January of this year from the previous year. The decrease was \$271.39. However, the assets increased by \$5,248.84.

By May, the gross profit had increased again by \$697.65 over 1987. The assets increased by \$16,797.84.

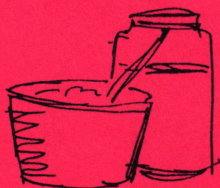
As for daily business, we have been steadily increasing the amount of business we do each day. In January of this year we were averaging \$500.00 worth of business a day and by June we were averaging \$700.00 a day. By the 20th of July we were averaging \$775.00 per day.

It is good to know that the Co-op is thriving in its fifteenth year. It is cause for celebration!

HEY! During the week of  
AUGUST 22 thru 26  
celebrate the anniversary with  
in-store bargains, blue light  
specials and everyday sales  
and specials. New members  
get a 15% discount too!

Don't  
forget  
the  
street  
dance!  
AUG 26  
8PM





## FIRST MANAGER by Edie Koenig



I was the first "manager" (my job title) of the Mosocw Food Co-op. The Co-op had begun as a private business. When it became a co-op, one of the former owners, Jim Eagan, a friend of mine asked me to be the manager of the new co-op. (Presumably he asked the other two owners). There was also a Board of Directors newly formed. I don't remember being interviewed for the job by anyone. I had been a frequent volunteer clerk so I suppose that it why they thought of me.

When I first walked into the privately owned "Good Food Store" in the fall of 1973, there were six items for sale plus perhaps eggs now and then. By the time I was manager four months in spring and summer of 1974, the inventory had grown to perhaps three to four dozen grains, cereals, nuts, herbs, and the like in used five gallon peanut-butter tubs. Peanut butter was also obviously available and there was honey in big barrel. There were spices from Celestial Seasonings -- perhaps one-third of what there are now and cheese (four or five kinds from Pend Oreille), the biggest seller. The cheapest, Monterey Jack sold for about \$1.30 per pound. Flour came from Barron's at 19 cents a pound whole sale, if my memory serves me.

The store at that time was on Second street. It was a narrow little store. There was no back room or cooler. Extra goods were stored in a large floor-to-ceiling cupboard. I could barely drag 100 pounds into it then (no more!) There was an old wooden cooler. The health inspector questioned its ability to keep cheese cool enough. The inspector also insisted on a screen door -- nicely made by a volunteer, and a bathroom for which I was unable to find anyone to install in my tenure.

More trouble from the authorities: food stamps. I received a call from the local district office of such things and was told that they suspected we were giving money for food stamps because we were turning in such a huge volume of stamps in porportion to sales. I told the man that our store existed to sell food cheaply to low-income people and that naturally low-income people had food stamps. I don't remember any further trouble. And, by the way, giving money for food stamps was not done, to my knowledge.

The Co-op was started with about twelve or so members. There were fifty by the summer of 1974. Others bought at a larger mark-up. The basic mark-up was 16 2/3%, plus a few pennies a pound for shipping. Working members got their food wholesale.

Finding enough wokring members to mind the counter was difficult. I often found myself waiting counter. I was the only paid employee and I must have earned under \$400.00 per month.

During the hot days of summer we closed in the early afternoon because the store was so hot. I spent the closed time at home doing books and ordering while my daughter napped and closed up at 8 p.m. Usually I got home for dinner in between.

Other assorted memories: people usually brought their own bags. New bags cost a few cents each. People wishing to be helpful sometimes brought bags for others to use. Sometimes they were filthy. I have a lifelong distaste for cleaning peanut-butter containers because, while manager, I took home empty peanut-butter tubs and cleaned them in my bathtub to use them for grains, etc.



We figured transactions on an old adding machine and had a cash box. Spices were weighed by the gram (or ounce?) on a little scale and the prices were figured by hand. This could lead to long lines at the check-out stand and inward groans when someone walked up with a dozen spice bags. There was a large old scale with a lighted gauge for other things. Needless to say, checking out was slow! Sales were small, however, \$150.00 in sales was a good day in the summer of 1974.

One more memory -- I bought a bag of home-grown wheat from some local person, unsprayed, right? Within hours I received a call from someone at WSU who warned me that the wheat had not been tested for ergot and was unfit for human use. (I did not tell him some customers might not mind!) The upshot was I sold it to someone who was willing to change it as chicken feed for ten cents per pound.



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## JUST THE BEGINNING By David Cook



Turn the clock back to the summer of 1973, fifteen years ago. Inflation was just being introduced into the everyday vocabulary by OPEC. Watergate was big news, gas was 45 cents per gallon and, chances are, most of us had never heard of Moscow, Idaho. After the growth of ecological awareness in the 1960s and the appearance of books like Diet for a Small Planet and Silent Spring, a small but significant number of people were beginning to take a greater interest in what was in the food they ate in terms of nutrition and pollution. The skyrocketing food prices were of great concern to many and there were those who shared a concern about the growing domination of major corporations in all aspects of our lives.

It was amid these sorts of forces that friends and neighbors in thousands of communities across America got together to form small food-buying cooperatives. Moscow, Idaho was no exception. Rod David, Jim Eagan, and David and Katie Mosel got together and formed a little coop store in Moscow. They got a tax number from the state, visited some of the coops on the coast and hunted around for sources of good quality food. Back in those days, the government was more interested in the plight of low-income people and a low-interest loan was secured from the Snake River Community Development Council in Lewiston to provide \$500 in start-up capital for the "Good Food Store."

The store opened its doors in August of 1973 at 112 E. Second Street in part of what is now Seth's Sewing Machine Center. The inventory consisted of peas and lentils (of course), cheeses, spices, and a few other miscellaneous items. It was entirely a volunteer operation aiming to provide good quality food at reasonable prices. To save on costs, reduce waste, and for shoppers' convenience, all items were sold in bulk. Sales the first month totalled \$126.88; the next month sales were over \$1,000.00. Moscow was apparently ready and waiting for the Good Food Store.

After a number of months of running the store, it was clear that there was a need for this type of a service in Moscow. It was also clear that a good deal more capital would be needed for the store to become self-supporting with a paid manager (which the volunteers saw a need for). The founders drew up Articles of Incorporation and filed with the State of Idaho as a non-profit cooperative association on April 25, 1974. The Co-op had 25 members each of whom had put in a small amount of money and a good deal of time to keep their Co-op going.

The board of directors decided to apply to the Community Action Agency (CAA) in Lewiston for a grant to help the Co-op become a self-sustaining entity. A proposal was written for funds to do promotion, expand the inventory (now grown to about \$1,500), purchase a truck for hauling food, get more equipment, and to hire a UYA worker for a year. CAA provided grants to help several other Idaho cooperatives get started around the same time. Over the course of the next year, we were to receive \$11,000 in three installments. The Northwest Food Coop in Lewiston received a larger grant but it lasted only a little over a year. The Good Food Store managed to survive this difficult early stage; in fact, its growth forced it to move to larger quarters in the fall of 1975. The new store was at 610 S. Main across from the



Moscow Fire Department and the name was then changed to Moscow Food Co-op.

The following summer the Co-op organized a farmers' market which was held in the parking lot behind the Old Post Office Building. The Co-ops' goals included supporting local producers, providing access to good quality food, and acting in the consumers' interest. Even though it meant some loss of business the Co-ops' board felt a farmers' market was in line with our ideals and would be of benefit to the community. The farmers' market gained more momentum each year. It moved across Jefferson St. to another parking lot and then down to its present location on Fourth Street by the Moscow Hotel. The Co-op has since turned over administration of the farmers' market to the city.

The Co-op has also participated in community gardening projects over the years first at the southeast corner of Washington and A (now covered by the Ambassador Condominiums) in 1976 and then at First and Jefferson until the library addition covered it up.

Also in the summer of 1976 Co-op members participated in a regional co-op gathering held on a farm near Fairfield, Washington. One of the issues there was the need for a coop wholesaler to serve the needs of organic farmers and coop stores. A group of volunteer organizers formed the Equinox Food Exchange Cooperative Association in December, 1976 and the Moscow Co-op joined together with the Spokane, Colville, and Pullman coops to support this venture as members of the wholesale coop.

In the spring of 1978 we began our participation in the Moscow Renaissance Fair. (That was the year the fair was held indoors at the Moscow Jr. High fieldhouse). In the fall of that year we moved to yet a larger store, our present location at 314 S. Washington. Sales were up to a monthly average of \$12,400.00 that year.

The Co-op newsletter got up quite a bit of momentum in early 1980 and in April the board decided to put the Co-ops' newsletter crew and budget behind Wellspring -- a journal of regional cooperation to be published by Cumulus Press. Wellspring was distributed region-wide by Equinox with a circulation of 6,000. After eighteen months of publication Wellspring fell prey to volunteer burnout and advertising competition from the new Moscow Magazine.

Survival became a watchword for the Co-op in the early 1980s with supermarket chains discovering there was a buck to be made in the natural food business and then the severe recession in 1982-83. Managers were sent to coop business seminars. The board got more involved in planning. More structure and training were introduced into the volunteer systems. Budgets and financial statements were seriously studied. A significant effort was begun to make the Co-op inviting to a broader cross-section of the community.

Nothing seems to happen overnight at the Co-op, but the declining sales and membership trends of 1981 and 1982 turned around in mid-1983 and continue to look good.

The Co-op has made it through thick and thin primarily due to the support of its members and its dedicated staff. Everyone's support is needed and appreciated on all levels -- your patronage, your membership contributions, your time, and your good will. If we continue to work together to build and improve our Co-op then fifteen years from now we will be just as pleased with our progress as we can be today.

NOTE: David Cook was Co-Op manager co-ordinator, bookkeeper, and more from 1978 until 1985 when he resigned to return to college with his family. He recently moved to Boulder, Colorado.



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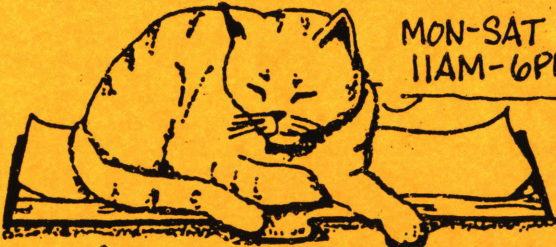


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**GOODBYE FOR NOW, ANYWAY...**  
by Truman Woodruff

I am going to be leaving the Moscow area very soon. One of those inevitable changes has come my way. My association with the Board of Directors, the staff, and the members of the Co-op has been a highlight for me. I satisfied a share of my personal desire to be part of a cooperative adventure and I have gotten to know many wonderful people. The town of Moscow and all of Northern Idaho will always be a pleasant memory. Hopefully I can return to this area after a few more inevitable changes.



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## THE NEW COMPUTER by Candace Cloud

You have probably noticed the changes in the Co-op this summer -- a new coffee grinder, the new shelves, things have been moved around. One of the changes that is not as noticeable from the storefront is the new computer in the office. We bought it in the middle of June and are still training ourselves to use it to its full capacity.

The computer is a Cactus AT (hard disk drive with turbo setting), a Samsung monochrome monitor and a Star-micron multi-font printer. We bought the Peachtree accounting software (complete II version) and PC Write shareware. I hope all the jargon is in the right place for people who are computers experts. If anyone out there has installed an accounting program before and wants to feel useful, we welcome helpful hints and advice.

Mary Jo is enrolled in a class to learn computer basics and I am struggling to learn accounting and applying this new (to me) information to the accounting modules. Also, I'm learning how the computer wants the information entered and how it distributes the amounts I enter.

Peter Linderman has wrestled with the word-processor and made us an easy-to-follow set of instructions for the mailing list. We have a few volunteers lined up to enter the names, addresses of each member and we could use more. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering. We have been using the word processor to write letters and newsletter articles.

Also, many thanks to board member Steve Dodson who did a lot of the research before we bought the computer and did the negotiating while we were in the process of buying it. Steve also set it up and formatted the disks and provided lots of support during the first few weeks of use.

**ROCKPEOPLES**

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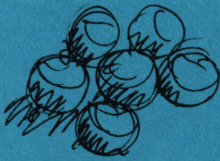
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### Huckleberry Buckle



Preheat oven to 350 degrees farenheit. First, grease an 8X8 inch pan. Next cream together:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 egg
- a pinch of salt

Next add:

- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup yogurt

Spread this into your greased pan and cover with 2 cups of Huckleberries (fresh or frozen). Now mix together in a separate bowl:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/3 cup whole wheat pastry flour

Spread this mixture over the huckleberries. Bake for 40 minutes. Cool and cut into squares.

### Huckleberry Pancake Syrup

You will need:

- a blender, pan, and small bowl
- 2 cups huckleberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons corn strach
- 1/4 cup water
- a pinch of salt

place huckleberries in the bowl of the blender. Add lemon juice and peel. Blend at medium speed until the berries are chopped but not mushy. Place in a small sauce pan and add honey. Stir over low heat to just below boiling. Mix cornstarch, salt, and water and add to berries. Cook slowly, about seven minutes until thick, dark, and smooth. Cool, place in jar, and refridgerate.

Quaranteed to satisfy!

Hint: You can usually use any blueberry recipe just by substituting huckleberries. Yum -- Enjoy!

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on 4th street next to the Co-op, Free birthday cake, Co-op open for refreshment purchase, children welcome... GREAT FUN!!

Dance to "THE SENDERS" 50s & 60s Rock 'N ROLL!