



From the Board:

Who Owns Your Grocery Store?

by Kellie Hill – Board President

As the pandemic has shown, grocery stores are essential. But not just for the reasons stated by our Governor. The Medford Food Co-op is more than just a grocery store, we are a place where people construct a life based on their highest values.

Unlike regular grocery stores, the [Cooperative Principles](#) guide the Medford Food Co-op. Beyond the day-to-day operations that directly affect our local economy is the very nature of the ownership structure and our relationship to profit.

Medford Food Co-op is the only Medford grocery store that is owned by its membership, which is open to the entire community. Our “parent company” is the community in which we serve. We are one of only two grocery stores headquartered right here in Medford, Oregon; the other eleven headquarters are 30-3,000 miles away. If you need us, we’re right here at the store. We aren’t publicly traded, we don’t have private investors, and we don’t line the pockets of just one family. We are cooperatively owned by our membership, so our profit remains here in Medford and with our owners. And to say it again – any community member can [become a Co-op owner](#).



We recognize that you have many choices when it comes to where to spend your hard-earned dollars, and when you spend those dollars you are investing in that store. Each store earns profits from your purchases. Where the profits go – how that money is invested or spent, depends on the store.

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From the GM:

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

by Anne Carter – General Manager

The protests that swept through our cities in response to the killing of George Floyd have subsided but left us with sadness and unrest in the face of the racial injustice that permeates our society.



It is overwhelming to consider the scale of the problem and know that there are no simple answers. Where do we start?

The cooperative movement has been committed to social justice since its inception 176 years ago during the Industrial Revolution in England. There is a rich history of communities of color using the cooperative model to empower themselves in the struggle for justice and equity. In modern times, cooperatives in developing countries are in resurgence as communities organize to meet their needs through cooperative action. In this same vein, Medford Food Co-op was created to develop a stronger, healthier, more diverse food system that is open to all residents.

Our [bylaws](#) explicitly state that “The Co-op will foster a diverse and sustainable community while upholding the seven cooperative principles” and “The Co-op shall not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation or other arbitrary basis.” In fact, we celebrate diversity and welcome all genders, ethnicities, religions, abilities, orientations, and ages. Our vision for the

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So, I ask you to consider:

- Who owns your grocery store?
- What company or what family do you choose to invest in?
- How far away are you sending your dollars?
- Where are the most important decisions affecting the future of your store being made?

Let's take a look at a few Medford grocery stores.

Store	Parent Company	Headquarters	# of Locations	Ownership	Key People & Wealth
Medford Food Co-op	community members	Medford, Oregon	1	Cooperatively owned	Community owned Patronage dividends to owners
Market of Choice	Market of Choice, Inc.	Eugene, Oregon	12	Private	Wright Family
Natural Grocers	Vitamin Cottage, Inc.	Lakewood, Colorado	148	Public/Investors	\$320 million*
Cartwright's Market		Grants Pass, Oregon	2	Private	Cartwright Family
Trader Joe's	Aldi Group - Germany	Essen, Germany	2,500 - Aldi	Private	Albrecht Family \$53.5 billion**
Sherm's Food 4 Less	Thunderbird Sperm's Market, Inc.	Medford, Oregon	4	Private	Olsrud Family
Fred Meyer	Kroger	Cincinnati, Ohio	2,800 - Kroger	Public/Investors	\$25.9 billion*
Costco	Costco	Issaquah, Washington	785	Public/Investors	\$87.9 billion***
WinCo	WinCo Holdings	Boise, Idaho	128	Private	Majority employee owned \$7.2 billion^
Albertsons	Albertsons	Boise, Idaho	2,260 - Albertsons	Public/Investors	\$60.5 billion^
Safeway	Albertsons	Boise, Idaho	900 - Safeway	Public/Investors	\$60.5 billion^
Target	Target	Minneapolis, Minnesota	1,844	Public/Investors	\$62.6 billion*
Walmart	Walmart	Bentonville, Arkansas	4,756 - USA 11,501 - World	Public/Investors	\$514.4 billion*

*NYSE Market Summary 5/22/2020 **Forbes 9/10/2019 ***NASDAQ Market Summary 5/22/2020 ^Forbes 12/17/2019

When you choose to spend your valuable dollars at Medford Food Co-op you are helping to construct, not only a life, but a community, based on your highest values. And our community thanks you for your patronage. ■

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future includes making local, organic food affordable and readily available to all residents of the Rogue Valley.

While these statements and goals lay a foundation of commitment to social justice, we still have much work to do. We recognize that nothing our organization has done or said is enough in terms of the work it will take to end systemic racism and violence. Building an organization that values and celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion is an ongoing process that requires constant examination, reflection, and adaptation. The Co-op has a lot of work to do, but we're willing to do the work, and committed to being part of the solution.

In the short term, we commit to conversations throughout our organization at the board and operational levels to identify practices and policies that need improvement so that everyone is truly welcome at the Co-op. We commit to working with other individuals and organizations within our local [Rogue Valley Food System Network](#) to identify opportunities for developing a more just and equitable food system. Good food is a basic human need. As the Rogue Valley Food System Network's mission states, "We believe good food has the power to foster healthy and happy lives, unify our community and even change the world." We begin by changing ourselves. ■



Staff Spotlight

Get to know the staff!

Kathy Damas

How long have you been cooperating?

My work with MFC began in January of 2020.

What do you do at the Co-op?

I'm the Board Administrative Assistant. In this relatively new position, I report to the General Manager while my behind-the-scenes job is to support the [Board of Directors](#). I do this through tasks such as taking meeting minutes, maintaining calendars and documents, and doing research.

Kudos to MFC's long-term Board Secretary Debi Boen, who did all of these tasks for years while simultaneously serving on the Board.

What brought you to the Co-op?

My diverse experiences and luck! In addition to a life-long interest in health, I've held many administrative roles over the years and I also have a degree in environmental biology. As a National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach in private practice, I'm acutely aware of the role that quality food plays in a healthy lifestyle. This position allows me to support the organization while fulfilling my values and allowing me to be of service with like-minded people on a mission.

What do you like best about your job?

I'm enjoying getting to know the inner-workings of the organization. Gradually, I'm becoming more familiar with the staff and Board members, which I value. My job suits my introverted-extrovert nature. I'm looking forward to more in-person interactions as the pandemic safety conditions allow.

Tell us your Co-op favorites:

The golden beet salad from [The Café](#) is amazing! I'm also currently addicted to our local radish kimchi from Cindy Yi, Whistling Duck's fresh spinach, and the dark chocolate-covered ginger from the Bulk area.

How has working at the Co-op affected your life?

Learning about the Co-op through my work here has amplified my commitment to supporting local food growers, producers, and sellers. I'm also really interested in supporting ways to provide all people with healthy, whole food and the skills to prepare it economically and deliciously.

Tell us something we don't know!

I've been to all 50 states (Georgia counts, I promise!) and on many amazing international travels. One of my first creative loves was calligraphy, which I've dabbled in for years; I even had my own business for awhile. And, my husband and I landed in the Rogue Valley after an extended road-trip adventure.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Walk, hike, run, create meals, play games, connect with friends near and far, dance in the kitchen, and generally enjoy hanging out with my husband of 30+ years. Anytime I can spend on the Oregon coast feeds my soul.

Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I'm a native of Boulder, Colorado and spent my formative years and much of my adulthood in that area (I can't say I've "grown up" with a straight face!). I've also lived in Alaska, Nebraska, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and now Oregon since 2013. I love living here - it feels like home. ■



Join the Board for a Bylaw Revision



on July 14th at 7pm
or July 22nd at 10am

Important Dates

Bylaw Revision Q&A with the Board

[Tuesday, July 14th at 7pm](#) -or- [Wednesday, July 22nd at 10am](#) via Zoom. Revisions to the bylaws will be on the ballot for the 2020 annual election. Join the Board for a question & answer session and learn about the reasoning behind the changes. RSVP: board@medfordfood.coop.

Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market

The [Growers Markets](#) provide access to fresh, healthy food and offer growers a venue to feed the community. You can support their efforts by maintaining social distancing guidelines and shopping at the local markets:

Medford Thursday Market in Hawthorne Park
Ashland Tuesday Market at the Ashland Armory
Ashland Saturday Market on Oak Street

The Oregon Wine Experience

Friday, August 14th – Saturday, August 22nd Bigham Knoll, Jacksonville. This annual fundraiser for the Asante Foundation and Children's Miracle Network features extraordinary Oregon wines, culinary creations, and one-of-a-kind experiences. Tickets and information at: theoregonwineexperience.com.

Bear Creek Stewardship Day

Saturday, September 26th Bear Creek Greenway. Volunteer to clean-up along the Bear Creek Greenway for Public Lands Day! Registration and information at: bearcreekstewards.org.

Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month from 5:30pm – 7:30pm. Due to the pandemic, the meetings will be held online until further notice. If you are an owner who would like to participate in an online Board meeting, please email Board President Kellie Hill for an invitation to the online meeting: board@medfordfood.coop.

From the Board:

Bylaw Revisions

by Verne Underwood – Board Member

Leading up to this year's annual meeting of owners, we will be voting on a comprehensive revision to the Medford Food Co-op's bylaws. The original bylaws were largely copied from the Ashland Food Co-op and have not been updated to reflect our Co-op's growth or changes over the years. Additionally, in 2014, the Board instituted a process of policy governance, which was a fundamental redesign of Board oversight of the Co-op. All of this necessitated a revision of our bylaws.

We have followed the guidance of Columinate - a national consulting cooperative - in many of these changes, and the ultimate goal was a shorter, more readable set of bylaws. We also had an attorney read through our proposed revisions and have made the changes he recommended. A copy of our [original bylaws](#) as well as the [proposed new bylaws](#) are available on the Medford Food Co-op website, as well as a [document which details the changes in each section and explains our rationale](#) behind them. We decided against a Track Changes approach, and you will understand this when you see the two sets of bylaws and the number of changes we've made.

Most of these changes were an attempt to remove repetition and overall wordiness. In addition, we deleted a great deal of language about state and federal laws since a) we are required to follow state and federal laws, so it's unnecessary to call this out in our bylaws, and b) these laws change, and we want to avoid having to amend our bylaws every time a law or regulation changes.

Other changes were driven by practical matters: for example, having an owner share tied to the individual whose name appears on the signed application for ownership. This is not meant to limit a household's use of that membership; however, households sometimes break up and we felt it's not the Co-op's responsibility to decide who retains the share when this happens. A number of other changes around patronage dividends and transferability of shares were made to avoid a complicated accounting process where we have to keep dollar amounts on the books for years.

We will be hosting [Q & A sessions on Zoom](#) prior to our annual meeting to answer any questions you may have or concerns that may arise. ■