

Prairie Newsletter

Opportunities Abound for Grocery Co-Ops!

Barnaby Urich-Rintz

First of all, thank you to everyone who has told me that they enjoy reading my articles. It has come to my attention that I have a somewhat negative tone in my communications on occasion, and my last article about the fate of the natural foods industry contained some notes of concern to be sure. But it has sounded like the content of the article possessed some real substance that many folks enjoyed. Keeping this in mind, I could also start to mention some of the potential positive opportunities that exist in the natural foods industry, both nationally and around Yelm.

Although threats to a brick and mortar store like ours coming from well-funded online services like Amazon may grab our attention, the reality is that the growth of online food sales still struggles to make a profit for just about every company out there except for Amazon. In addition, Amazon still has failed to create a platform that can adequately distribute highly perishable items like fresh produce and dairy. This might reveal a critical reason why Amazon made the bid for Whole Foods.

Right now, the merger currently faces a significant regulatory delay (go to http://mashable.com/2017/07/24/amazon-delay-whole-foods-deal/#d42ux11_FQq7 for more information). Nonetheless, online food sales will eventually play a major role in the overall natural foods market in my opinion. This means that cooperatives have to prepare themselves to win their customers over in the ether.

Cooperatives have historically struggled with mergers and unification due to their need to prioritize the customers in their neighborhoods: The ones who made these stores happen in the first place. On the other hand, websites like ebay, AbeBooks.com and Amazon have demonstrated that an online platform can service more than one company under the same website. What we actually need is a site that we can all use without requiring company mergers.

On the other hand, if we could get most all of the grocery cooperatives in The United States under the same parent organization, our buying power could be much greater than the volume discounts that cooperatives receive via suppliers or brokering agencies like National Cooperative Grocers. As a result, a merger between a small store like ours and a much larger cooperative could benefit our shoppers with a combination of a greater selection and lower wholesale pricing. On the other hand, we know what happened with Tacoma Food Cooperative (If you have not

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Yelm's Only Natural & Organic Market
Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Sunday 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
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E-mail: yelmfoodcoop@gmail.com
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Sunscreen Facts

Florence Vincent

In 2007, the scientists at the Environmental Working Group (EWG) published their first Sunscreen Guide. Since then there are more safe products on the market and more regulation crackdowns on some of the worst marketing claims. In 2007 there were no legal requirements that sunscreens had to shield against lower energy UVA rays. In 2011 the FDA required that "broad spectrum" sunscreens had to pass a test. Today nearly all sunscreens include an ingredient that filters UVA rays. In 2011 the FDA stopped false claims of 'waterproof' and 'sweatproof', but not 'prevents cancer'. Skin cancer melanoma



rates have tripled in the past 30 years. FDA "Broad Spectrum" rules are too lax, while 100% will pass U.S tests, 50% would fail the stricter European tests.

EWG's first suggestion is don't rely on SPF to keep you from harm. Cover yourself with long sleeves and a hat as a first line of defense.

People pick products by their SPF, or Sunburn Protection Factor, mistakenly believing that bigger numbers are better.

In reality, higher SPF ratings don't necessarily offer greater protection from UV-related skin damage and may lead users to spend too much time in the sun. The FDA suggests joining other countries by capping values at 50+ but U.S. industry isn't listening.

Sunscreen sprays are popular, but EWG and the FDA raise concerns of inhalation risk and not providing a thick and even coating on the skin. Without more data the FDA may even consider banning them.

At YFC we carry a couple of sunscreen products that rate very well at the EWG website. Terra Sport and Aqua Sport by All Terrain, and new to YFC is Goddess Garden Organics, Kids Sport and Facial.

learned about that story, go to <http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article90896272.html> in order to find our more).

The other important aspect of the industry right now involves the fact that only remodeled and new stores account for the growth in the industry. Same store year-to-year sales have declined starting in 2014 until the present. In regards to Tacoma Food Cooperative, Yelm Food Co-operative continues to lend support to reopening a store that is independent of their former parent company, Central Cooperative in Seattle. At the same time, Central Co-op has a location that they will expand into Tacoma with. The location of Central's store is about three miles from the area that our Tacoma supporters are interested in, so I have limited concern about direct competition from Central. And In the end, maybe we can all just get along.

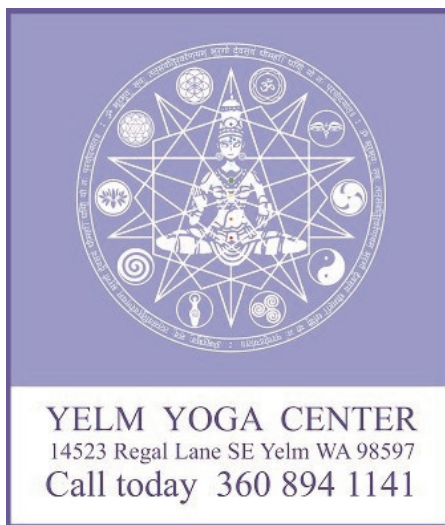
Board meetings!

Board meetings are open to all members. Ten minutes is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for comments and suggestions.

The Board meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month at Olympia Federal Savings, 907 W Yelm Ave SE, Yelm, Wa 98597.



Join Anne
every Friday 2p-7p
"Taste often. Drink what you like."
— Anne Marsh
Virtuose de Vin



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