

Prairie Newsletter

Cooperative Building is a Team Effort General Managers' Report



Every year Yelm Food Cooperative (YFC) has two particular days that hold a special place for the store. The first day is our birthday which happens on April 27th. The other one involves our Annual General Meeting. We usually have activities and special promotions for our birthday celebration. The Annual General Meeting (AGM), however, contains more of an atmosphere for reflecting on our past while looking forward to the future. Unfortunately, attendance for most grocery cooperative AGMs usually equal only about 1% of their entire member base. YFC's AGM attendance is similar to this trend with usually less than 50 members attending. This makes sense considering that most shoppers simply want a grocery cooperative to shop at. On the other hand, YFC will need volunteer support for years to come. To that end, we strongly encourage our members to attend the AGM in an effort to become more involved in the store. For example, even though we have a caring and committed board of directors, we also have key directors who plan to leave their position as early as this October. Moreover, if we had more folk expressing interest in joining our board of directors, we could have more diversity with potential board members.

And the future of YFC faces numerous challenges and even potential threats to our survival. The Amazon/Whole Foods merger got approved much faster than what I originally expected, and now Google and Wal-Mart have begun to partner together in response to Amazon. This dynamic has brought new meaning to, "The High Cost of Low Prices." Certainly, both Amazon and Wal-Mart will start the race by lowering prices on key products during the short term while they squeeze as many companies as they can out of the industry. After that, the normal tendency by these big box retailers involves increasing prices when there is no other competition around that may threaten their virtual monopoly. Moreover, many warehouses, manufacturers, local producers, and farmers end up shouldering the actual loss of revenue caused by lower retail prices. In the end, it is the suppliers that end-up bankrupt due to this price leveraging.

Many people around the country have discovered the failure caused by racing to the lowest price while (Continued on page 2)



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All Group Meeting

Tom Dewell—Board President

It's that time again for the members of the **Yelm Food Cooperative** to get together at the Annual General Meeting and review how our store has been doing and where it's going in the future.

We will meet this year at The Yelm Community Center, 301 2nd Street (Yelm City Park) on **Saturday, Sept 23, 2017.**

You'll get updates on the store's finances, membership and future plans like food service expansion.

You'll have a chance to talk to your General Manager and your Board of Directors one-on-one and get questions you may have answered straight from the horses' mouth

Annual General Meeting



Also, if you are a paid up member*, you'll be eligible to vote for the Directors who are standing for election:

Debbie Lusk – the Board Treasurer

Judy Scott – the newest member of the Board appointed this year

Afterwards, as always, you'll get to sample a great selection of goodies from the Co-op put together by Florence Vincent and her team.

This is a chance to make your voice heard – **it's your Co-op!**
We look forward to seeing you there.

their choices – both in regards to where they can shop and what they can afford to buy – diminish rapidly. In fact, these same people have found an alternative for years by forming grocery cooperatives. Countless hours of volunteered time get committed to each and every grocery cooperative campaign, and some of them fail to create a storefront. Other stores eventually close due to numerous factors. Nonetheless, the effort to make access to healthy, natural foods in local communities around the country appeals to enough people that a movement resulted.

YFC has very high standards for the products that we carry. We may not have the cheapest products compared to everyone else. Also, our ability to provide a complete service line, including prepared deli or delivery service, has not fully transpired yet. However, we still aspire to improve our customers' shopping experiences. Eventually, we believe that we can make our neighborhood cooperative the central place in Yelm that provides the proper balance of good food and community involvement!

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
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— Anne Marsh
Virtuose de Vin

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