



## ***Financials Show Increasing Improvement*** **Member support is key**

Many Cambridge Food Co-operators were happy to see 2017 go, at least with regards to the Co-op’s financial health. It was a year of big changes, tough decisions, difficult departures, and tremendous uncertainty as the Board and staff, with member support, cut the budget to bare bones in an effort to improve the Co-op’s financial position. It now appears as though those efforts are bearing fruit.

At the most recent Board of Advisor’s meeting on February 28, Board Treasurer Charlie Reiss reported on the completed 2017 financials, which contained some good news. “Total sales from 2017 were

up, and total cost of goods sold was down,” explained Reiss. “This means that gross profit was up, and that’s a good thing, as all other Co-op expenses are paid out of that.” In addition, added Reiss, “we are continuing to pay our vendors on time, a major commitment we made to ourselves and our community in the final months of 2017.”

Gross retail profit is only a part of the overall picture, however. Expenses for personnel went up as expected, as staff was added after the departure of Manager Cory McMillan and in anticipation of the departure of Shift Supervisor Rebeca Torres Rose. In addition, the Co-op has grown the role of Administrative Coordinator Jessica Jones who is developing more sophisticated financial, human resource, and building management tools to help forestall any future financial crisis at the Co-op.

Even with the increase in expenses, the retail side appears to be holding its own. “This may be an anomaly,” explained Reiss, referring to possible reasons for the improvement. “But there’s no way it would be possible without the changes in the way we are doing things.”

Some of these changes included reducing the number of open hours, ordering less product overall and more prod-

uct that will sell, and adjusting prices to ensure consistent profit. The reduced discount and the increased membership fee are also having a tremendous impact. Other changes, more difficult to measure, no doubt helped as well. According to staff, some shoppers passed on claiming their member discount, creating an additional financial benefit for the Co-op.

***“It is too soon to celebrate, and we still have a long way to go. But this definitely represents a change in the right direction.”***

***-Board Treasurer Charlie Reiss***

Board President Jayne Stokes was quick to credit the member-owners for their part in the improvement. “Without the overwhelming support of our member-owners we would not be in our current, much more stable position. Their willingness to approve the discount reduction and dues increase as well as participating in the 40th anniversary picnic and choosing

to spend their grocery dollars at the Co-op whenever possible has made an incredible difference.” she said.

While Reiss is pleased with the 2017 numbers, he cautioned the Board “against euphoria. It is too soon to celebrate, and we still have a long way to go,” he explained. “But this definitely represents a change in the right direction.”

*2017 Financials are posted on the bulletin board of the Co-op and are available in the member-owners’ section of the [www.cambridgefoodcoop.com](http://www.cambridgefoodcoop.com) website.*

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## SAVE THE DATE!!

The Cambridge Food Co-op’s Annual Picnic is scheduled for **Sunday, August 19, 2018** on the green. If you are interested in volunteering to help with picnic planning, please contact Board of Advisors member and Picnic Planning Chair Aila West at [ailabwest@gmail.com](mailto:ailabwest@gmail.com).



Enjoying the Co-op Picnic, 2017

### Board of Advisors Elects Officers

At the most recent Board of Advisors meeting, the Board elected the following slate of officers to one year terms:

**Jayne Stokes**, President

**Kathleen Quinn**, Vice President

**Janet Britt**, Secretary

**Charlie Reiss**, Treasurer

Stepping down from her position as Board Co-Chair is Betsy Shiland, who will remain on the Board of Advisors. Charlie was elected to the Treasurer position after serving in that position on an interim basis since mid-2017.

## To Your Health!

“To Your Health!” is an occasional feature highlighting Co-op products which can help shoppers maintain good health and wellness. This month’s feature is written by Aila West.

March is a sneaky month when it comes to our expectations for spring. We think warm weather is around the corner, we see signs of it in the soil, and we begin to hear the return of bird calls. Then we’re suddenly hit with a snowstorm or—even worse—a stretch of rainy days with temperatures hovering just above freezing. For many of us, this is the prime time to catch a cold or flu, and so it’s extra important this time of year to maintain a healthy winter program. The Co-op can help! Bold, asterisked items are in stock at the Co-op, or available by special order.

- Eat warm, nourishing meals; lots of **root vegetables, hearty greens, and citrus\***
- Drink bone broth daily with **garlic, ginger, and cayenne\*** (add in **miso\*** on occasion)
- Exercise daily; go for walks outside whenever possible; if cooped up inside due to bad weather, open the window a little to let in fresh air
- Take **Vitamin D\*** daily during these low-light months
- Take a tablespoon of **fire cider\*** daily to warm the system and clear out congestion (recipes to make your own coming soon!)
- When dramatic temperature fluctuations are in the forecast, be extra attentive to drinking **immune support teas, tonics, or tinctures\***, as well as taking a teaspoon of **elderberry syrup\*** daily (delicious and extra impactful when added to hot water with fresh **ginger and lemon\***)
- Take saunas whenever possible,



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# THE CAMBRIDGE FOOD CO-OP

Wholesome, affordable foods in a spirit of respect for each other and our world

## Co-op Member Spotlight

By Shannon Woodcock

Most Co-op shoppers will know Susan Alanraig by her blue and gray fuzzy dolphin hat that she wears backwards, and her friendly, eager-to-help attitude. I couldn't help but ask her about the origins of her hat, to which she stated that she can't remember where she initially got it, but as soon as she did it became her "Co-op hat" and now she doesn't wear it for anything else.

Alanraig was born in California. She jumped back and forth from West to East Coast, and then back again, several times, before settling in Cambridge in 1987. She calls Cambridge "her version of paradise" and has been a member of the Co-op ever since settling here. She likes that the Co-op offers a "sense of community" and the member-owners own the store. She expounds that "we are all in this together...to make it work and stay". At one point Alanraig served as the Coordinator for the Co-op for two years, back when there were only two part-time employees.

Curious about her life outside of the Co-op I asked her about her jobs and interests. When she was just in seventh grade, Alanraig became a Junior Docent at the Los Angeles Zoo, where she worked with the animals. Her favorites were the baby dromedary camels, baby rhinos, and baby Maned Wolves. Presently, she can be found roaming the stacks at the John G. McCullough Free Library in North Bennington, playing in the dirt with the Dirt Divas, or behind the hood of her 4x5 view camera (that's the old-fashioned kind on a tripod) shooting black and white portraits.

Fun fact: There are no other Alanraigs. Her father invented



Longtime member Susan Alanraig working the register

the name. (Ask her to elaborate when you see her, it is a great story!)

Towards the end of our interview, I asked Alanraig if she had any advice to impart on the Co-op. She stated that over the years she has witnessed lots of upheaval and would like the Co-op to become more member-oriented again. She said we should be proud of the fact that we still have a working-membership and a Co-op in this small town. She would like us to remember as we move forward that "bigger is not necessarily better...and the more we can make the Co-op a community, the better."

If you would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight, please contact Shannon Woodcock at [villcoop@gmail.com](mailto:villcoop@gmail.com)

*(Health, continued from page 2)*

moving from hot to cold air to increase blood circulation; try cold water bathing when saunas are not available (wrap up warmly afterward)

- Dress warmly; cover head, hands, feet, abdomen, and neck when going outside in the cold—even though 45 degrees can feel downright balmy after months of 20 degrees, it's still not T-shirt weather
- Have **Emergen-C\*** packets on hand to take if cold symptoms begin to arise; take **echinacea tincture\*** or drink **echinacea tea\*** three to four times daily

However you decide to beat out colds and flu, the Co-op can help. Stop in today!



## Membership Committee Reforms, Sets 2018 Agenda

The Cambridge Food Co-op’s Membership Committee is back in business, and now ready to tackle some of the “big picture” issues the Co-op faces—notably, the question of the Co-op’s identity, direction, and role in the community.

“Our Co-op’s mission statement has served the Co-op well over the years, but the member-ownership and the environment in which the Co-op operates has changed,” explained Membership Committee Chair Kathleen Quinn. “Now is a good time to bring the member-owners together to decide what we want the Co-op to be going forward, to examine the current mission and consider revising the mission statement so that it will help guide staff and Board decision-making in the future.”

The most recent efforts to examine the Co-op’s member engagement and by-laws were sidelined by the more pressing financial difficulties the Co-op found itself in beginning in 2016. As the financial health of the organization has improved, the Board is now better able to staff committees and do the other important work that the Co-op needs done. “We still have all the information and feedback generated when we last looked at these issues,” said Committee member Betsy Shiland. “We will be looking at it as part of this process, so all that past effort will not be wasted.”

To start the process, the Committee will ask member-owners to fill out a short survey, either online or in the store. Responses to the survey will help drive the agenda of the first of at least two member meetings. Meetings will involve small and large group discussions, and if successful will ultimately result in a revised mission for the Co-op, stronger connections among member-owners, and a clear understanding of the role the Co-op’s member-owners would like it to fulfill in the community.

For this process to work, Co-op member-owners will have to participate in large numbers and make their voices heard. “The results of this process will form the basis of all Co-op decision making for the foreseeable future,” said Committee member Susan Sullivan. “It’s absolutely critical to have as much member participation as possible.”

*To join in this work, please fill out the 2 question survey [here](#), or next time you are in the Co-op. Also, take a look at this timely [article](#) from Civil Eats on the future of food co-ops. If you hit a paywall, contact [newsletter@cambridgefoodcoop.com](mailto:newsletter@cambridgefoodcoop.com) and we will send you a copy.*



## Calling All Gardeners—All Experience Levels Welcome!

Let’s get together this spring and summer and help Bliss McIntosh cultivate the garden beds planted by the Cambridge elementary school children in the Cambridge Community Garden. Produce from the plot could be harvested to contribute to the August 19<sup>th</sup> picnic and if there is the interest and energy we could plant an additional plot to grow flowers or produce to benefit the coop.

Interested? Please email Janet Britt [jebritt56@gmail.com](mailto:jebritt56@gmail.com)

## Help Students Plant Seeds for the Community Garden

Volunteers are needed to help Co-op member Bliss McIntosh work with 3rd-5th graders at Cambridge Elementary School planting seeds. Seedlings will eventually be planted in school’s plot at the Community Garden. Help is needed Thursday morning May 3rd from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. To volunteer, please contact Bliss at [mcinbass@gmail.com](mailto:mcinbass@gmail.com).

