

Medford Food Co-op

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fresh press

Fall 2017 Issue
Quarterly Newsletter

The Café

by Lara McCormick - Food Blogger [@laras_kitchen_stories](#) & MFC Owner

“Fine food comes from fine ingredients.” Says Chris Bradbeer, chef and manager of The Café, the Medford Food Co-op’s new restaurant. The Café recently opened in the building adjacent to the north side of the Co-op parking lot with the aim of providing fresh and wholesome meals for people with busy schedules. When I visited I was greeted by the familiar faces of the friendly co-op staff. The space is bright with cheerful yellow walls, exposed beams and open seating. From the front counter I had a clear view into the tidy and clean kitchen where dishes and utensils were stacked and hung at the ready.



The goal of Chris and his sous chef, Benjamin O’Neill, is to combine the fresh, organic ingredients that the Medford Food Co-op has already been offering its owners and customers with the techniques and skills they’ve acquired from 42 years of combined experience in the restaurant industry to create something amazing. In sampling some of the menu items I found this to be true. My food was much more than the sum of its parts. The grilled chicken breast in my Rogue Sandwich was juicy and bright with hints of lemon and dill. The soft French roll had been buttered and griddled on its inner surface to achieve a light toast. Along with slices of grilled pear and crumbled blue cheese it



Rogue Sandwich - Photo by Lara McCormick

From the General Manager:

2016 Patronage Dividend

by Anne Carter - General Manager

2016 was a good year for the Medford Food Co-op. It was a year of growth, environmental stewardship, and community outreach. It was also the most profitable year in our co-op’s history. As a cooperative business, profits are invested back into the business and/or shared with our owners. The Board of Directors determined there was sufficient profit in 2016 to offer our owners our first-ever patronage dividend. 80% of the dividend was retained to provide equity for the co-op and 20% was distributed to owners in the form of a patronage dividend. The patronage dividend is based on each owner’s annual “patronage” or total annual purchases.

All current owners in good standing were eligible to receive a dividend based on their purchases in 2016. To maintain our convenient and environmentally friendly practice of paperless owner benefits, we implemented a paperless patronage dividend. Owners who received a 2016 patronage dividend were contacted in early September via email (or physical mail if no email address was available). The dividends were made available to be used as a store credit at checkout. Owners could also choose to receive their dividend as a paper check. If you are unsure whether or not you received a dividend based on your 2016 purchases, ask your cashier about the dividend the next time you’re at checkout. Dividends must be redeemed no later than December 31, 2017.

I was also impressed with the selection of salads. I found the Forbidden Rice Salad to be very balanced in its composition with just the right amount of rice and a respectable amount of vegetables with crunchy carrot, edamame, and green onion on a bed of fresh spinach. The Kale and Quinoa Salad was also not overpowered by too much grain but was loaded with massaged kale. It had a crisp, bright flavor from mustard and lemon zest and was accentuated by creamy, salty feta cheese and crunchy almonds.



Forbidden Rice Salad (top), Kale and Quinoa Salad (bottom) - Photos by Lara McCormick

Along with sandwiches and salads, The Café also serves rotating housemade soups, a selection of hot entrees, sides, and a build your own salad bar. You're encouraged to come in and sit a while with bottomless drip coffee to stay. Espresso, tea, chai, and hot cocoa are also served, as well as a variety of bottled, chilled beverages.

The Café's dedication to using local, seasonal ingredients whenever possible means a changing menu, one that café manager Chris hopes to change at least three times a year in order to utilize ingredients at their peak of freshness and flavor. They aim to produce allergen aware dishes as well as create tasty vegan and vegetarian dishes that will appeal to everyone. The Café helps fill a gap and is a much needed addition to the casual dining choices in Medford. It's a place where you can get a healthy meal made with local, organic, and sustainable ingredients. Eating the health conscious offerings at The Café will make you feel good and is a choice that you can feel good about.

From the Board:

Cooperative Principles #5 & #6

by Debi Boen - Board Member & Board Secretary

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. These "[seven basic international principles serve as guidelines to provide a democratic structure for co-ops around the world.](#)" Let's continue our discussion of the seven cooperative principles by addressing principles #5 and #6.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

Since our inception, education has been part of the Medford Food Co-op's mission. Last year, the Board of Directors formalized Medford Food Co-op's "[10 Year Vision.](#)"

P5: education, training and information

Our ten year vision positions Medford Food Co-op as a community leader in the local food system, cooperative enterprise, nutrition and health education, and employment. We envision continued support and growth of local farms and food producers; an expanded local food distribution system to make affordable local, organic food readily available to all residents of the Rogue Valley; and a strong community donation/grant program to encourage and promote businesses and organizations with compatible goals and ends.

Not only are "nutrition and health education" part of this vision narrative - one can convincingly make the argument that most other parts of the narrative are dependent upon the success of that education. We must educate consumers regarding the importance and widespread availability of local farms and food producers, if we hope to foster continued support and growth in that area. We must educate consumers regarding the health benefits of organic food options. To be able to effectively encourage and promote our vision, we must educate everyone --- first, ourselves, and then, our ownership base -- about area businesses and organizations with compatible goals and ends.

General Manager Anne Carter is active in the [Rogue Valley Food System Network](#), and attends and offers to speak at meetings for such groups as local rotaries, Women Entrepreneurs of Southern Oregon, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now, the City of Medford's Employee Health Fair, and others. She offers store tours to groups (such as Scout groups), gives healthy snack presentations at local elementary schools, and participates in the "Great Start, Eat Smart" meetings and presentations.

MFC's educational efforts are not all aimed outward. MFC enjoys robust staff training opportunities, and for each of the last three years your Board of Directors has participated in both local and offsite trainings offered by CDS Consulting Co-op, which specializes in providing training and solutions for cooperatives like ours. The introduction of CDS provides a natural segue to the next cooperative principle.

6th Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Staff Spotlight

Get to know the staff!

Chris Bradbeer

How long have you been cooperating?

I have been shopping on and off at co-ops since the mid-eighties. We were regular shoppers at our hometown co-op in San Luis Obispo and then also in Santa Barbara and Boise.

What do you do at the co-op?

My role at the co-op will be as the Café Manager, where my primary responsibility will be for food quality and production. I will manage the operation on all levels, but I am first and foremost a cook.

What brought you to the co-op?

I was drawn to the co-op because I knew that the quality of ingredients would be unparalleled. The better your components are the better your end product will be, taste and health benefits can be paramount.

What do you like best about your job?

The best part of my job is being involved at the beginning of a new project. Developing recipes, menus, and facility design are my favorite parts of food service work.

Tell us your co-op favorites:

The fresh, local bread is outstanding. We have a few bakeries that produce some of the best bread I have ever tasted.

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

Having only been on board for three months, there has been little impact to date. But I have definitely been re-inspired to create exceptional food from organic ingredients.

Tell us something we don't know!

My first cooking experiences were making food with my grandmother, Kathryn Garcia. We made tortillas and tamales in her basement kitchen from the time I was eight until now, and into the future.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Working in the kitchen drives you to crave fresh air and silence. I love to garden and work with plants; and I have always been an avid hiker, camper, and anything else in the woods.

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

I grew up in San Luis Obispo county, living in six different small towns until I graduated high school. I moved to Santa Barbara to attend college. After which, I spent three years in Yosemite National Park. Idaho was my home for thirteen years, mostly in McCall, with two winters spent in Big Sky, Montana. And then fleeing the snow, I landed in Ashland.



Chris and café staff (left to right):
Chris, Lois, Denise, Caleb, Beth, and Vinny

Beginning Friday,
December 1st, purchase

**\$100 gift cards
for just \$90!**

Co-op gift cards are the perfect gift for the difficult-to-shop-for or for your favorite foodie! Offer expires December 31, 2017. Gift cards cannot be used to purchase gift cards.

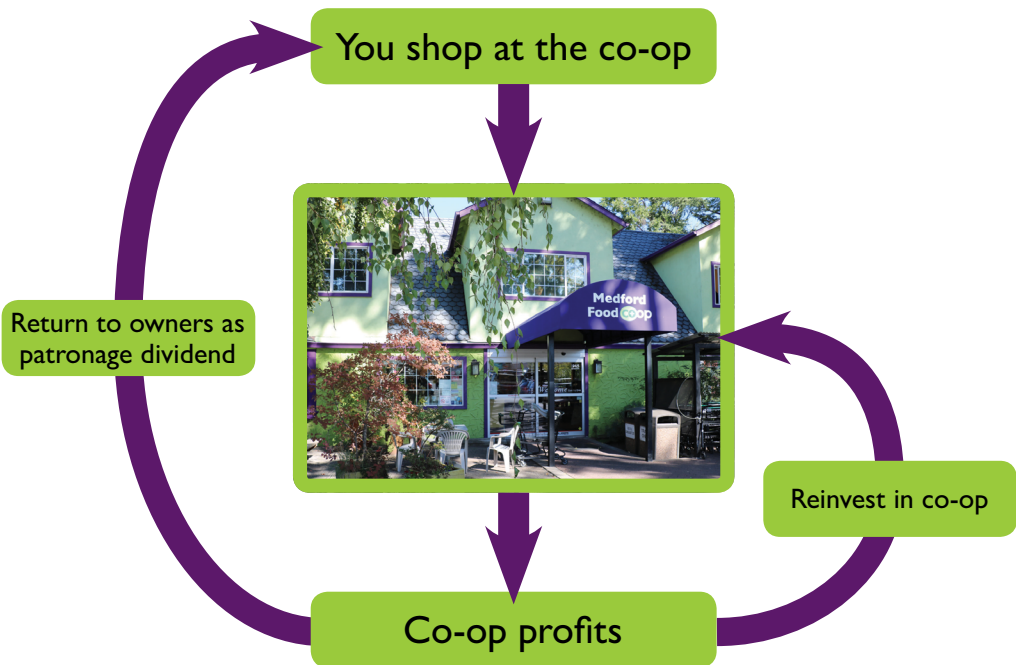
From the GM continued from page 1:

Will we be able to offer a patronage dividend every year? Because dividends are tied to our profits and growth, we simply do not know. The ability to offer dividends and the amount of future dividends will vary each year based on how much profit the co-op makes and our pending projects. We honestly did not expect to offer a dividend for 2016 because we expected to spend our profits on the construction of the café. However, the delay of the project pushed all of the expenses into 2017. While we are happy to share last year's surplus with our owners, we expect most of the 2017 profit to be used to complete the café.

As a co-op owner and shopper, we would like to thank you for directly contributing to the economic growth, sustainability, and prosperity of the Medford Food Co-op and the Rogue Valley!



Owner Purchases & Co-op Profits



Important Dates

Holiday Hours & Closures

- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve - Close early at 6pm
- Dec. 25 - Christmas Day - CLOSED
- Dec. 31 - New Years Eve - Open regular hours
- Jan. 1 - New Years Day - Open regular hours

New Year, New You Jubilee

Join us for our New Year, New You Jubilee to be held in The Café at Medford Food Co-op on Friday, January 5, 2018. Ring in the new year with a day of lip-smacking samples from The Café menu, co-op branded giveaways, and chances to win prizes throughout the day!

Recipe to Market Kick-Off Event

Join us for a free introduction to the Recipe to Market Workshop Series and hear success stories from local food producers. To be held at The Café at Medford Food Co-op on January 10, 2018 from 5:30-7:30pm.

Recipe to Market Workshop Series

This four-part series offered in January and February 2018 will help you transform your passion for food into an artisan and value-added food business. This series is a collaboration of OSU Extension, RCC Small Business Development, and Medford Food Co-op. For more information: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/SF-classes>

Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month 5:30pm-7:30pm 225 West Main Street. Please check our online calendar for any location and/or time changes. If you are an owner planning to attend a meeting and would like a specific topic to be addressed, please email the General Manager: gm@medfordfood.coop

From the Board continued from page 2:

CDS Consulting is itself a cooperative; and MFC is also a member of [National Co+op Grocers \(NCG\)](#), a group comprised of independent food co-ops working together. MFC has received assistance from other co-ops, especially during our start-up – and we are pleased to now be in a position to be of assistance to other co-ops. We have received invaluable advice and resources from our connection to both NCG and CDS.

P6: cooperation among cooperatives

Locally, MFC is active with the [Rogue Co-ops](#), comprised of MFC, Ashland Food Co-op, Grange Co-op, and Rogue Credit Union. Ashland Food Co-op has been of tremendous assistance to us over the years, and Rogue Credit Union and Grange Co-op illustrate the reality that not all cooperatives focus on food. While not all co-ops are the same, all cooperatives can work together, support each other, and promote the local economy – because we truly are stronger together.