

# VIRCOQUA FOOD COOP

## PEA SOUP

AUTUMN 2016



THE 100 MILE MEAL

VFC Mission, page 8

## AUTUMN 2016

The Pea Soup is published quarterly and printed on recycled paper.

### Viroqua Food Co-op

609 N Main St

Viroqua, WI 54665

[www.viroquafood.coop](http://www.viroquafood.coop)

**OPEN DAILY 7am-9pm**

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### Download the Pea Soup at: [viroquafood.coop](http://viroquafood.coop)

To receive an email reminder when each new download is available, sign up on our website. To be removed from the Pea Soup mailing list, email: [marketing@viroquafood.coop](mailto:marketing@viroquafood.coop)

### Owner Classifieds are FREE for VFC Owners!

To place a classified ad in the Winter Pea Soup Newsletter, email: [marketing@viroquafood.coop](mailto:marketing@viroquafood.coop)  
Information is due by **October 27**.  
Please limit ad(s) to 30 words or less.

### Advertisements:

Ad space is limited and available on a first come first served basis. Ad sizes and prices are as follows:

1/8 page: 3.5" w x 2" h – \$30

1/4 page: 3.5" w x 5" h – \$65

Email your Winter Pea Soup ad by **October 27** to:

[marketing@viroquafood.coop](mailto:marketing@viroquafood.coop)

*Pea Soup is intended as a vehicle for communication among Co-op owners and shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice.*

*Ads printed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by Viroqua Food Co-op.*

## BOARD'S EYE VIEW

Hopefully you are staying cool and enjoying the abundance of summer we find in our gardens, farmers markets and shelves of the VFC. My first full year as a Board member has been a rewarding and learning experience. I am impressed with the level of focus and awareness of our Board and the leadership of our General Manager Jan Rasikas, as we chart our path forward. We need your participation to insure we stay true to our mission and address the needs of our membership and greater community. The Board members are elected to represent the membership and function as stewards of the Cooperative; we greatly value your input and I encourage you to reach out directly to us, or with the multiple opportunities for your voice to be heard.

On page 12, you will see the results of our Owner Survey, and learn more about our expansion planning on page 10-11. Over the past few months the activities pursued by Jan and the Board have insured that the VFC will remain in the downtown for years to come. Our strategic moves to purchase the adjacent property, and petition the city to allow a variance to close Center Avenue, allows us the ability to expand to accommodate the needs of our

membership and growth as a business.

Learn about our support of the P6 Cooperative Trade Movement on page 4, which continues

to grow as a significant part of our sales supporting small, local and cooperative farmers and businesses. You will also learn more about how the Co-op Community Development Fund supports our local community to stimulate development, which supports our mission, on page 9.

In keeping with my theme of participation, please do **save the date** so you can attend our Annual Owners Meeting on **October 5th** and vote for our new Board members. If you cannot attend, there are ample opportunities to vote online. Participation is key to democracy, and I encourage you to consider service on our Board if you are inclined. It's gratifying work!

In cooperation,

**Eric Newman,**  
**VFC Board of Directors**



**The Board of Directors wants to express appreciation to the VFC Staff for going the extra mile during the organizational changes that are taking place in preparation for expansion; most recently the implementation of a new cash register system. Thank you VFC Staff!**

## VFC Board of Directors

The next Board meeting is at VFC's offsite office #2 on Wednesday, September 21 at 6:30pm. Any changes are posted in the VFC Owner Services area. To make a presentation or ask questions at the meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance.

Contact the Board at:

[vfcbod@viroquafood.coop](mailto:vfcbod@viroquafood.coop)



VFC Board of Directors (L-to-R): Luke Zigovits (Treas.), Peter Bergquist (Sec.), Curt Brye (Pres.), Michael Link (V.Pres.), Eric Newman, Leslie Kruempel & Larry Homstad.



# October is CO-OP MONTH

**Like all cooperatives, Viroqua Food Co-op operates under the seven International Cooperative Principles:**

## **1. Voluntary and Open Membership**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

## **2. Democratic Member Control**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

## **3. Members' Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.

## **4. Autonomy and Independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

## **5. 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 about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

## **6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**

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

## **7. Concern for Community**

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

What makes a co-op unique is that it is owned by the membership. Regardless of how much equity a member contributes, each member has only one vote and equal say. Although a co-op needs to remain profitable to remain in business, the business also exists to serve the community, not solely to make a profit for its shareholders.

The Viroqua Food Cooperative is a consumer co-op. Customers become owners by purchasing shares in the Co-op. They exercise their ownership primarily by electing their fellow members to the Board of Directors, which guides the General Manager. The Management and Staff handle daily operations. The Board and Management report to the owners on the state of the business at the Annual Owners Meeting every October.

It is important to remember that the value of being a VFC Owner is in the use of services. In other words, there are businesses that you could invest in, never use and yet still make money on your investment. ***Shopping here makes the business profitable, supports local farmers and employs your neighbors.***

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Dinner\* & Business  
with the VFC Board**

# ANNUAL OWNERS MEETING

**Wednesday, October 5**

**5:30-8:00pm**

**Rooted Spoon,  
219 S Main St, Viroqua**

**\*Dinner is free, but  
please RSVP online at:  
<http://s.coop/24ft2>**

Limited seating for dinner.  
For adult owners only.

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Principle Six (P6) is a national labeling program that promotes local, cooperative and small farmers/producers. The P6 label shows you the products that embody our highest values.

### Principle Six Criteria:

If a farmer/producer meets at least two of the three following criteria, their products receive the P6 label:

- **LOCAL**

A product grown or produced within 100 miles of the VFC, or having value added within that radius.

- **CO-OP/NPO**

Cooperative ownership of the business, nonprofit status or the business sources the majority of their products' ingredients from cooperatives or nonprofits.

- **SMALL PRODUCER**

Independently owned and operated, and selling direct to VFC or through a regional distributor.

Look for P6 labels like this on the shelf

#### B & E's Trees



Eric Weninger & Bree Breckel  
Cashton, WI

B&E's Trees is owned by Bree Breckel and Eric Weninger. They produce certified organic maple syrup on 64 acres outside of Cashton, WI. They age their syrup in bourbon barrels for a year to make the most delicious treat you must try: bourbon barrel-aged maple syrup!

- ☒ Local
- ☐ Co-op
- ☒ Small Producer



## P6 PRODUCER PROFILE: B & E's TREES

Bourbon barrel aged maple syrup? That's a thing? Yes, it is. Thanks to **Bree Breckel and Eric Weninger of B&E's Trees**. They produce delicious certified organic maple syrup on their maple farm just south of Cashton, Wisconsin and age it in charred oak bourbon barrels for a year at the Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua. This past winter, we began carrying their bourbon barrel aged maple syrup at VFC. Since this product has a much larger story than can fit on their bottle, we thought it would be a perfect time to shed some light on this wonderful new local producer.

Bree and Eric met at the 2010 Earth Day in La Crosse. The duo soon grew close over their shared love of riding and fixing motorcycles, going on adventures, and dreaming of starting a farm. In October 2011, their collective dream became a reality when they purchased a chunk of mature maple forest south of Cashton, Wisconsin.

The first few years of farming were a crash course in maple production. Bree and Eric installed maple collection lines and tanks on 64 acres and sold their bulk syrup to a local bottler, Maple Valley Cooperative. The couple dreamed of adding value to their maple syrup in some way and selling it direct to customers and retail locations.

B&E had a big break when a friend struck up a conversation about maple syrup with Paul Graham, owner of Central Waters Brewing Company, at the 2013 MREA Energy Fair in Custer, Wisconsin. Together they cooked

up a plan for Central Waters to loan B&E bourbon barrels to age maple syrup in. Once the syrup came out of the barrels, Central Waters got them back and

filled them with an imperial stout. Over the course of the next two years, B&E's and Central Waters unique and tasty partnership germinated and took root. In the fall on 2015, B&E's released their first bourbon barrel aged maple syrup, and Central Waters plans to release their Maple Barrel Stout (aged in the maple soaked bourbon barrels) sometime in late 2016.

B&E's Trees Bourbon Barrel Aged maple syrup is truly intoxicating culinary concoction (although it contains no alcohol). It is a delicious mix of bourbon, smoky vanilla and delicious maple syrup. It is fantastic on pancakes, mixed drinks, or by itself. It makes a perfect gift for a birthday or the holidays for any foodie in your life.

The future is bright for Bree and Eric. They are looking forward to adding acreage to their maple syrup operation this coming fall and winter in hopes of being able to age even more maple syrup in bourbon barrels so that customers around the Midwest can enjoy.

Have you had B&E's Trees Bourbon Barrel Aged Maple Syrup? Stop by the VFC and pick some up today. When you purchase Bree and Eric's bourbon barrel aged maple syrup, you are supporting first generation farmers who are committed to sustainable and organic farming. We sell their maple syrup in two sizes: 8oz and 1.7oz tasters. Learn more about them and find recipes at: [www.bandestrees.com](http://www.bandestrees.com)





# OWNER DISCOUNT DAYS

## SEPTEMBER 20-22

Tuesday thru Thursday

**15% off**

**local pears &  
local apples\***



## OCTOBER 4-6

Tuesday thru Thursday

**15% off**

**All VFC Brand  
vitamins & probiotics\***



## NOVEMBER 13-23

Ten Day Sale!

**\$3.00 off**

**any purchase of whole  
turkey PLUS  
one free pint  
of cranberries\***

See *Turkey Talk* on page 14 for delivery details!

*\*while supplies last*



We will offer special owner discounts and weekly coupons through email very soon – so be sure we have yours!  
**To ensure you are on the list to SAVE MONEY as a VFC Owner**, send us an email with your name and owner number to [owner.email@viroquafood.coop](mailto:owner.email@viroquafood.coop) with “subscribe” in the subject line. We’ll take care of the rest!

# 2016 VFC BOARD Candidates

**VFC Board Election takes place September 5 - October 5**

Introducing the **four** candidates running for the **three** open **3-year terms** on the VFC Board of Directors.

## Eric Snowdeal



### **Why are you interesting in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?**

I love co-ops! Twenty years ago, I joined my first food co-op, the Olympia Food Co-op in Olympia Washington, because I believed passionately in the cooperative mission and supporting the local and organic food movements. I'm glad VFC is just a few blocks away because it took us over an hour to get to the

Oly Co-op via public transportation! My wife and I have been members of food co-ops continuously ever since and voting with our dollars all along the way. VFC was one of the reasons my family moved to Viroqua 10 years ago. We knew if a small town could support such an incredible co-op it must be a special place. I would love the opportunity to join the VFC Board and support its role of providing leadership, vision, and guidance for our Cooperative.

### **What skills and experiences would you bring to this job?**

I have worked at Organic Valley for 10 years and for nearly all that time have been a brand manager with oversight of OV's milk and cream product lines. A brand manager is basically a "business owner" with responsibility of understanding consumers, the ever-changing competitive and retail landscapes, the financials of the business and translating that knowledge into strategies for profitable growth. Over the past 10 years I have developed a deep understanding of the organic and natural foods consumer and the grocery retail business. It's been an honor and a privilege to have played a role in supporting the growth of CROPP Cooperative (as

part of a great team). I believe my experience and knowledge could be a benefit to the VFC as the grocery retail business undergoes rapid change in the very near future (yes, even in a small town).

### **What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Co-op in the next two years?**

The biggest challenge the Co-op faces in the next 2 years (and beyond) is becoming complacent based on past success. Ten years ago, the VFC was the only place to find a broad selection of local and organic products. Today that is no longer the case and the trend will continue to accelerate. Milk and eggs are responsible for 20% of trips to the grocery store which is why it's no surprise a local gas station and convenience store has started offering organic milk and eggs at a very affordable price! Other local retailers will continue to expand their ever-growing selection of natural and organic products and sooner rather than later Viroqua residents will be able to order same day home delivery of many of the items found in the Co-op at a competitive price. To compete in the future, the VFC will need to make right investments in the right areas to continue to surprise and delight customers in ways other retailers cannot and to get the message out about what makes the Co-op unique. Getting bigger is only a part of the answer to address the challenges posed by the changing retail landscape. If elected I would bring a unique skill-set to the Board to help guide the Co-op through the challenges.

### **What's your favorite thing to buy at the VFC?**

I really enjoy the quality and selection of the produce and bulk products.

Eric's complete candidate profile is online at: [viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election](http://viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election)

## Nora Roughen-Schmidt



### **Why are you interesting in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?**

When my husband and I moved to the area in 2006, the Viroqua Food Co-op was one of the first places we visited and we have been loyal members and advocates ever since. Our community is growing and the Viroqua Food Co-op is responding to that

growth in ways that are very exciting. As Executive Director of the Viroqua Chamber Main Street, I have watched how that growth is impacting our community and find it to be exhilarating. It would be a wonderful opportunity to bring my skills and expertise to the Board of Directors, and I am eager to learn and assist with the expansion process.

### **What skills and experiences would you bring to this job?**

I have 15 years of experience in marketing and public relations. In my current position as Executive Director of the Viroqua Chamber Main Street, I have experience working with all groups in the community, fundraising, economic development, and grant writing.

I bring to the table numerous community connections, a positive attitude and strong work ethic. I am proud to say that in the last two years in my role as Executive Director our organization has grown tremendously. We are an organization that businesses want to be a part of and are actively seeking out affiliation. Our Annual Bash this year was the most successful in the history of our organization (since 1989).

### **What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Co-op in the next two years?**

Change is always a challenge as community members and Co-op members will process the change differently. It will be the task of the Board to listen and create positive messaging around the change. Growth is also challenging, but very exciting and if done well and phased well, will be received well. The community member owners and patrons are passionate about their community and the Co-op.

### **What's your favorite thing to buy at the VFC?**

I am fairly addicted to the Thai coconut hummus right now.



# VOTE ONLINE

VFC Owners with a current email address on file will receive a link to the online ballot via email by September 5. All other owners will receive a postcard with a link to the voting site. The ballot includes a photo and brief description of the candidates. Full candidate profiles are online at: [viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election](http://viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election)

## Karen Mischel



### *Why are you interesting in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?*

The Co-op has been a favorite location of mine since I returned to Viroqua 4 years ago. The impact it has on local farmers, families and the community as a whole is something I think should be celebrated and supported. There are so many great things coming up in the near future for our Co-op and I want to contribute in any way I can to help make them happen.

### *What skills and experiences would you bring to this job?*

First and foremost, my biggest asset is a passion for supporting local, organic, and cooperative food systems. I recently entered the organics industry by embarking on a career as a certification specialist/staff inspector at Nature's International Certification Services. In June, I joined the Vernon County Board of Supervisors and have been an active member of the Vernon Women's Alliance for over a year now. Prior to that I spent 14 years as a Chief Steward in the United States Merchant Marines where I was responsible for the entire steward department on commercial vessels around the world. Maintaining a strict budget was an integral part of my job. I believe growing up in a dairy farming family, having years of experience in management, strong community involvement, and a passion for supporting the P6 principles would be very helpful to the Board.

### *What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Co-op in the next two years?*

The most obvious answer to this question is the expansion. How exciting!! With that of course comes the many challenges of continuing the hard work the existing Board has already put forth on this project. In addition to completing a successful expansion, it is important to continue to grow as a business that is a leader in the community in supporting local, sustainable, and charitable practices.

### *What's your favorite thing to buy at the VFC?*

COFFEE! OK, I'll admit I buy more than just coffee. I really can't narrow it down to even a small list of things. I'm there almost every day and it's all good.

## Larry Homstad



### *Why are you interesting in serving on the VFC's Board of Directors?*

Having been involved with the planning stages of the expansion, I would like to see the project through to realization. I would hope, if elected, to see at the end of my term another plan for the follow-on to the expansion – whatever that may be.

### *What skills and experiences would you bring to this job?*

I have 36 six years of commercial real estate ownership and management, along with 35 years of small business ownership. I have served on the VFC Board for three years.

### *What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Co-op in the next two years?*

Making and managing the commitments required for the expansion. Hopefully enabling it to succeed without jeopardizing the wonderful feeling and success of the present facility.

### *What's your favorite thing to buy at the VFC?*

Deep Rooted Cherry Tomatoes! Kickapoo Coffee. Local cheeses.

All Candidate profiles are online at: [viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election](http://viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-election)

## Co-op Principle 2: Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

## ONLINE VOTING

The online ballot includes a short candidate profile and photo.

All VFC Owners will receive an email or a postcard with voting instructions, and a link to the online ballot by September 6. Paper ballots will be made available in the store by request only.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Dinner\* & Business  
with the VFC Board**

## ANNUAL OWNERS MEETING

**Wednesday, October 5  
5:30-8:00pm**

**Rooted Spoon,  
219 S Main St, Viroqua**

**\*Dinner is free, but  
please RSVP online at:  
<http://s.coop/24ft2>**

Limited seating for dinner.  
For adult owners only. Reservations not  
required for the business meeting only.

## VFC's 1% Wednesdays

On the second Wednesday of every month, we donate 1% of the Co-op's gross sales to a local nonprofit organization selected by VFC Owners.

Here are the recipients from the last three months:



Outreach Coordinator Bjorn Bergman presents a donation of \$349 to Trina Erikson of the McIntosh Memorial Library.



Marketing Mgr. Charlene Elderkin presents a donation of \$340 to Heather Gage of the Vernon County Humane Society.



Charlene Elderkin presents a donation of \$363 to Kevin Whited-Ford of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

## The VFC Mission

*The Viroqua Food Cooperative combines a commitment to natural foods, superior customer service and the building of a cooperatively run business. We emphasize selling organic and local foods and products to promote the long-term health of individuals and the environment. As owners and as a center for community, we offer the opportunity to create together a work of enduring value.*

- VFC assisted with organizing, promoting and riding in FairShare CSA Coalition's *Bike the Barns Driftless*.
- VFC hosted a scavenger hunt and fruit and vegetable tasting for 20 children from Viroqua Library's Summer Reading program.
- VFC, Luke Zahm of Driftless Café, Dani Lind of Rooted Spoon Culinary and Driftless Folk School partnered to put on the *100 Mile Meal*, a collaborative, local foods dinner in Viroqua. The event was a fundraiser for the Driftless Folk School. (cover photo)



**FairShare  
CSA  
Coalition's  
Bike the  
Barns  
Driftless**

**Driftless  
Folk  
School's  
100  
Mile  
Meal**



## Co-op Principle Five: Education, Training & Information

**Educational Opportunities and Trainings attended by VFC staff:**

- Erin Murdock, Wellness Buyer, attended the *Midwest Women's Herbal Conference* in Almond, Wisconsin.
- Bjorn Bergman, Outreach Coordinator, attended *NCG's Marketing Matters* in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
- Purchasing Manager Sally Colacino, Grocery Manager Jonah Curley, and Erin Murdock attended *NCG Convergence* in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Erin Murdock toured Herb Pharm in Williams, Oregon as a reward for VFC winning a National Herb Pharm sales competition.



## Co-op Principle Six: Cooperation among Cooperatives

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

Besides serving our Owners, the Viroqua Food Co-op participates in the cooperative movement at large. General Manager Jan Rasikas serves on the Board of Directors of the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) and as an Advisory Member of the Fifth Season Cooperative. Outreach Coordinator Bjorn Bergman serves on the National P6 Board of Directors and represents VFC in the Vernon County Cooperative Association. Here are other activities showing our commitment to the sixth principle from the last three months:

VFC Celebrated National **P6 Month** in August! P6 stands for *Principle Six: Cooperative Trade Movement* (see sidebar page 4). Throughout August P6 products were sampled and customers were encouraged to enter weekly drawings of P6 Prize Bags.

VFC hosted a Summer P6 Tailgate Party in the parking lot on August 27! Ten P6 Producers attended and sampled their foods and products to many VFC Owners and customers.



*P6 Giveaway; all products donated by our generous P6 Producers!*

## Co-op Principle Seven: Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

- Bjorn Bergman, VFC Outreach Coordinator, serves on the Board of Directors of Viroqua Chamber Main Street (VCMS).
- VFC was a sponsor of the VCMS Movie in the Park screening of *Back to the Future* at Eckhart Park, Viroqua.
- VFC was a sponsor of the *4th Annual Driftless Music Festival* in Eckhart Park, Viroqua. (photo below)
- VFC was a sponsor of the *Aloha Bike Tour*, raising money for the Viroqua High School Cross Country Team.



### VFC Co-op Community Fund Update

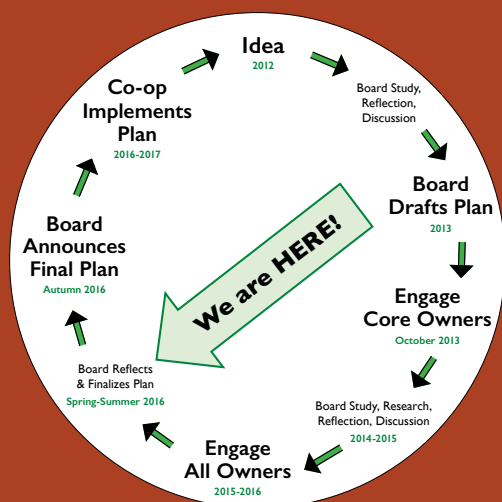
In the Winter 2015-16 Pea Soup, we announced the creation of Viroqua Food Co-op's Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) through the Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation. We thought this would be a perfect time for an update!

This past spring, VFC Owners donated \$41.94 of their FY14-15 Patronage Refunds. Thank you VFC Owners for your generosity! As a way to continue growing our CCF, we've reserved a 1% Wednesday donation day for it. On Wednesday, October 12 of this year, 1% of VFC sales go to our Co-op Community Fund. Be sure to shop that day to support our CCF! Customers can also donate to our Fund throughout the month at the containers located at the registers.

At this time, we are in a holding period to build our Co-op Community Fund and may continue to for a number of years. When the Fund grows large enough, we plan to use the yearly interest generated to offer small grants to community organizations that provide food, nutrition, and gardening education within our community, which is in line with our mission. We'll keep you posted on our progress and when we plan on awarding grants from our CCF.

If you are interested in donating money to VFC's Cooperative Community Fund or have any other questions, please email Bjorn Bergman at: [outreach@viroquafood.coop](mailto:outreach@viroquafood.coop)

## Expansion Process



## Our Shared Vision for Expansion

In 2013 our Board of Directors committed to expanding the Co-op. After study, reflection and engagement with owners, our Shared Vision for Expansion emerged.

***When we, Co-op owners and community shoppers, engage in the VFC experience, we contribute to building a vibrant local economy that transforms our community.***

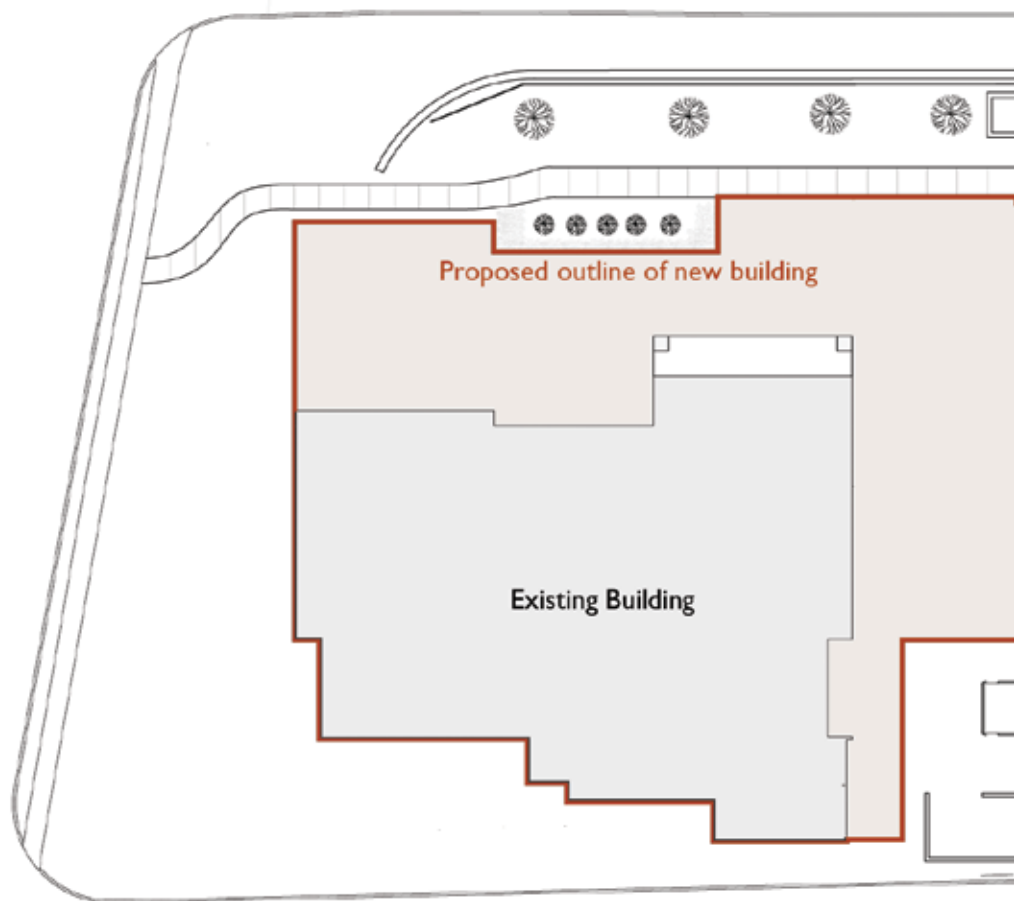
- The VFC experience includes increased access to fresh, local, organic foods with more space to shop and work. More services like meat and seafood, more deli choices, increased seating area inside and out.
- Building a vibrant economy creates a dynamic local food system, supporting local growers, creating more jobs.
- Transforming our community through strong partnerships, opportunities for co-op democracy, and more knowledge of nutrition, health and environmental stewardship.

# Building a Vibrant Co-op Community

**Jan Rasikas,**  
**General Manager**

What will the expanded VFC look like? Fresh! Exciting! Delicious! Our expanded store will be a reflection of our Co-op Community. As we plan and prepare for the new space, we are inspired by our current store as well as co-ops across the country and get expert support and guidance from the Development Co-op (DC) Consulting Team. What do you want to see from your Co-op? Pop over to our website and leave a comment on the Board of Directors' page!

We are on track to begin the parking lots across Center Avenue in early September 2016. This part of the project is essential to complete before any work on the building begins. More convenient parking benefits the Co-op now and will create safety during construction that is slated for spring of 2017. All three sites – the store, the south parking lot, and the Sidie Lawn Care lot – will blend together when Center Avenue becomes a part of the VFC site.



This is a preliminary drawing; final plans are subject to change.



## VFC Expansion

Store plans are underway! Construction is expected to begin spring 2017 and will offer:

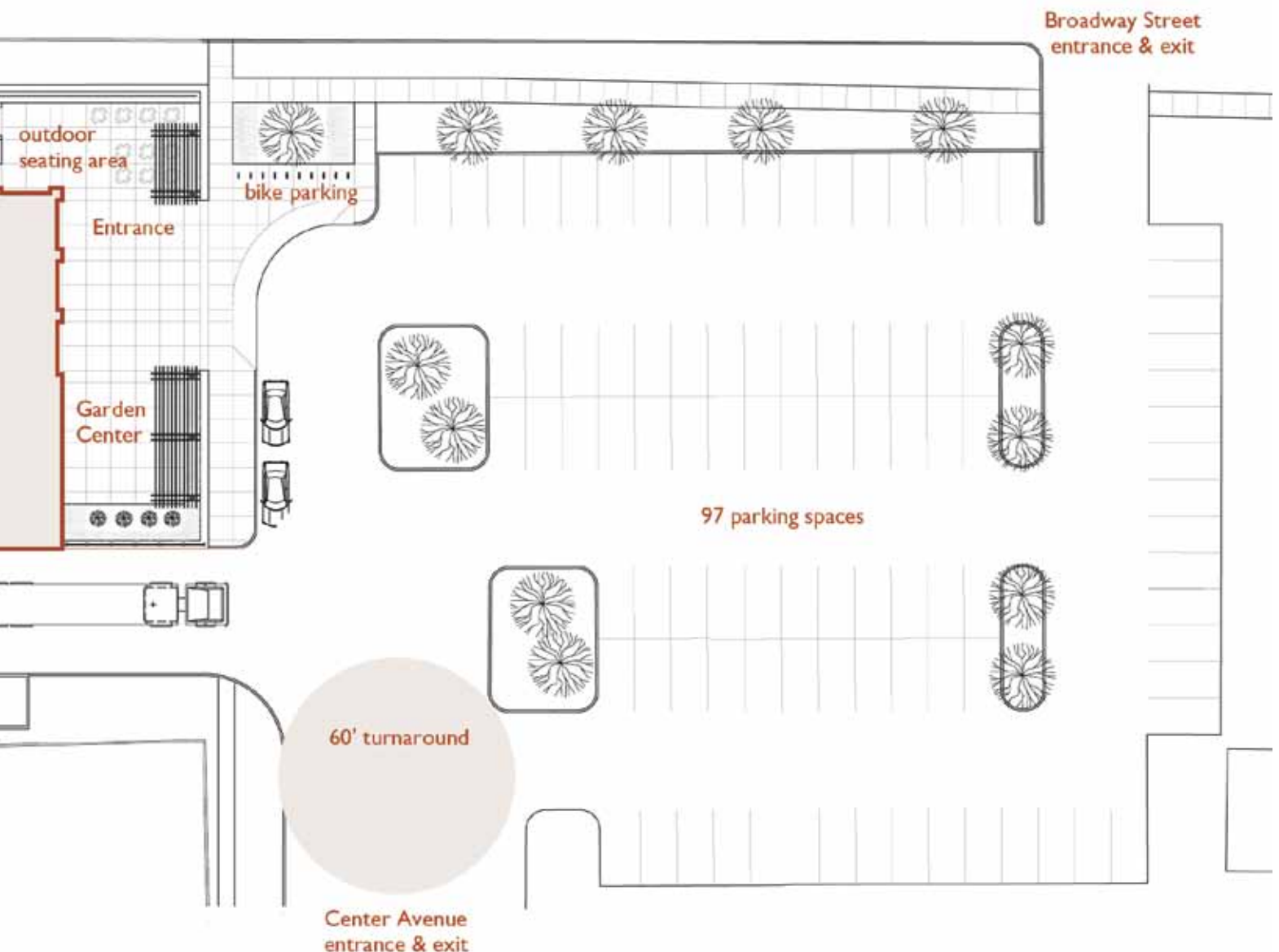
- Double the retail space
- More prepared foods
- Larger produce department
- Service meat and seafood counter
- Indoor and outdoor seating
- More registers
- Greatly increased parking
- More Co-op Economy!
- More support to local growers and food producers

## We are committed to the following set of criteria:

- Continue the transparent, participatory process to ensure support from our Owners
- Have benefits that outweigh the risks assumed; we will be bold but not risky
- Allow us to achieve our mission and shared vision
- Put the Co-op in a strong position to thrive in an increasingly competitive market, and that the community will support our plans

- Leverage financing for success at affordable rates
- Create a space that allows for efficient, effective service
- Ensure the Co-op has the necessary skills, knowledge, leadership and capacity for success; we must be internally ready

We welcome your ideas and encourage you to send thoughts on what you find exciting about the plans so far and any concerns you may have. Check the website for expansion updates. Join our owner email list to receive updates and participate in expansion-related surveys.



## STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

### OVER 10 YEARS

Mary Kehoe - 19 yrs - 9/1

Jan Rasikas - 17 yrs - 10/6

Greg Cheesebro - 16 yrs - 11/3

### 6-10 YEARS

Bridget Niemyjski - 10 yrs - 11/28

Robert Lambert - 10 yrs - 11/28

David Beutler - 9 yrs - 9/11

Alycann Taylor - 9 yrs - 10/03

Linda Eddy - 7 yrs - 9/02

### 1-5 YEARS

Bjorn Bergman - 5 yrs - 11/9

Corey Hobbs - 4 yrs - 9/28

Mark Nevsimal - 3 yrs - 9/1

Cathy Sis - 3 yrs - 9/17

Jess Murdock - 3 yrs - 10/12

Christopher Goldman - 2 yrs - 9/8

Daniel Kouba - 2 yrs - 10/10

Rhiannon Cottrell - 1 yr - 10/29

## owner classifieds

### Lake Superior Getaway:

Rent a two bedroom house on Lake Superior near the Porcupine Mountains; sandy beach; April thru October; sleeps six max; sauna; Finnhouse-on-Superior; call (608) 624-5613 or e-mail [byers@mwt.net](mailto:byers@mwt.net)

# VFC Owners Speak

This past spring 2016, VFC conducted an online survey of Co-op Owners. The survey response rate was the highest we've ever had. It is an extremely important process for the VFC Board and Management to see how we are doing at meeting your needs and find opportunities to improve the Co-op as we go through the expansion process.

### We wanted to take a moment to share some of the exciting results with you!

Of VFC Owners, 88% indicated that overall they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the VFC. Along the same lines, 91% of owners said they were extremely-likely or likely to recommend VFC to a friend or a colleague.

Of VFC Owners, 56% said that VFC is their primary source of groceries. When comparing this with 37 other food co-ops in the national database, **VFC ranks 1st!**

VFC Owners were asked to rank the three factors which, if implemented, would cause them to spend more of their grocery dollars at the Co-op. By a considerable margin, lower prices is the most important factor. VFC is actively addressing pricing throughout the store, and with the help of the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG), has greatly expanded the number

of products in our Basics Program.

### Support for Expansion

Owners were asked about the degree to which they support growing the Co-op during the next 1-5 years. To which **75%** of survey respondents either strongly or weakly favored growing the Co-op in the next 1-5 years. The top five design features VFC Owners wanted in an expanded VFC were: expanded indoor seating area (21%), green technologies and building practices (18%), additional parking (16%), classroom and/or meeting space (9%), and outdoor seating (9%).

Here are a few comments shared with us about expansion:

*"Expansion is absolutely needed and we support it! Thanks to our Board of Directors and management for a great Co-op."*

*"We need a full service meat, seafood and deli counter, and more prepared foods with higher quality and still have value items for low income."*

*"A customer service desk would be helpful for us customers looking for quick answers or reduce the length of the check-out lines when needing to return items."*

*"More indoor seating would greatly enhance deli use. Things are packed tightly enough that it can be difficult to find space for carts to pass each other in the aisles. A less crowded situation would likely bring in more customers from the local community as well."*

*"Improve the Deli by adding space and people. Viroqua has only one good quality healthy restaurant option and the Co-op should think of itself as a restaurant and food store. Of course all this means you will need to improve the parking options as well."*

Your responses are invaluable when it comes to planning for the future of the VFC. You can check out the complete Owner Survey results online at: [www.viroquafood.coop/you-own-it](http://www.viroquafood.coop/you-own-it)

In cooperation,

**Bjorn Bergman**  
Outreach Coordinator





# VFC STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Alycann Whalen Taylor, Human Resources Manager

When customers walk into the Viroqua Food Co-op, they are met and served by a very impressive group of employees. These very skilled people are educated and dedicated to the work that they perform here at VFC.

As Human Resources Manager, I am charged with staff services. To ensure we are meeting the needs of our employees, every 2-3 years, we utilize CDC Consulting Co-op to conduct a confidential, comprehensive Staff Engagement Survey. Our most recent survey was conducted in Feb. 2015. All employees (except the General Manager) participated in the survey, and 17 were randomly selected for face-to-face interviews with CDS consultant Melanie Reid. Below is a summary of the survey.

## PURPOSE

The employee survey was conducted to:

- Gather accurate, comprehensive, non-anecdotal data on employee engagement.
- Identify the co-op's strengths and weaknesses as an employer through the eyes of the employees.
- Provide information to show compliance with the Board policies regarding treatment of staff.
- Provide comparison to the surveys conducted at the VFC in 2011 and 2013 and other co-ops nationally.
- Provide a benchmark for future improvements in workplace culture.

## SURVEY THEMES

Employee engagement remains very high!

A lot of changes occurred since the 2013 survey including the addition of a Store Manager, implementation of Open Book Management, the introduction of the P6 Program, and a physical addition to the back room. The staff grew from 53 in 2013 to 63 in 2015. Even amidst all the changes, workplace culture and employee engagement remains a priority for management.

We love working at our Co-op because:



*Pictured L to R: Donna Karasek, Laura Burnham, Andrew Anderson, Alycann Taylor, Kat Lemmer, Mary Kehoe & Linda Eddy*

## We like and respect each other

This is a tightly knit, supportive team. We treat each other with respect and this a great place to work! **Nearly half of employees, 29 out of 63, have been working here for 3 years or more.** The relationships here run deep, and the pride for one's work, and one's workplace, are evident in the survey.

## Management Cares

Building a positive and productive workplace culture takes hard work and dedication. The VFC Management Team maintains a strong commitment to the staff, to direct communication, to listening and being responsive to employee needs, and to providing a workplace that people enjoy being a part of.

## We have a voice

Survey scores and comments indicate that employees feel they are given opportunities to offer input, share ideas and take part in decision-making.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

### Open Book Management

The educational aspects of Open Book Management (OBM) are well received and appreciated. The survey illustrates that employees find value in the transparency and the conversations that occur when using OBM. It also suggests that it is time to revisit our current model and make changes to build on the positive aspects and keep employees engaged.

## Be Mindful of Change

The prospect of growth and expansion is awesome and exciting to the staff. Space is a real concern for employees and under our current space constraints, aspects of work can be challenging. The survey illustrates that while employees welcome expansion, they want to ensure that we maintain the positive *VFC Experience* throughout the changes.

## Compensation

Employees recognize that the VFC offers a highly competitive compensation/benefits package for the area in which we live. This is appreciated and well received, but the desire to do better than the norm is evident in our survey. With growth and change, there is a need for a comprehensive review of our compensation structure to ensure that our pay structure is keeping pace with job expectations. (Please look to the upcoming Winter Pea Soup for a detailed report regarding our compensation structure.)

In conclusion, this last Staff Engagement Survey illustrated that our employees feel very positive about their workplace experience.

There is a commitment by all to strive toward continuous improvement through direct communication and listening to employee feedback that results in change. These are key reasons why the VFC is a workplace that employees love.

# TURKEY TALK

This year we have local and organic turkeys from **Organic Valley**. They are raised by family farmers who are serious about the health of the land and their animals. The birds roam freely and have access to plenty of fresh sunshine and air. They are fed 100% certified organic feeds! They are sold frozen at \$3.99/lb. Come get them in time to thaw and serve your family a delicious, organic thanksgiving meal, starting first week of November.

We also have **Ferndale Market turkeys**. They are free-range, antibiotic-free and raised in Cannon Falls, MN. They are sold frozen at \$2.29/lb or fresh at \$2.79/lb.

**All frozen turkeys come the first week of November and fresh turkeys come the week of Thanksgiving.**

Call ahead if you would like to reserve a specific size of turkey. Closer to Thanksgiving Day, these may only be available in limited sizes and quantities.

Owners can **SAVE** in November due to **OWNER DISCOUNT DAYS**. On top of \$3 OFF per each turkey purchased, we are giving away a free pint of fresh, local cranberries with each purchase of a whole turkey (while supplies last). This Owner Discount runs for 10 days (11/13-11/23); discounts are automatically redeemed at cash registers when the Front End Staff enters your owner number.

**Melissa Stussy,  
Meat Buyer**

# CO-OP COOKS

recipes by Carlos Candelaria, **Deli Cook**

Although you may have not already met Carlos Candelaria, one of our VFC Cooks, you may already know a little something about him if you've eaten at our hot bar in the past couple years.

He has been a cook for over 30 years all over the United States, and beyond. His history of working for many multi-culturally-diverse chefs in different regions of the country have given him his knack for cooking ethnic cuisine.

With each new restaurant Carlos works at, he starts a new recipe journal. Depending on seasonal menu modifications, he anticipates filling at least two to three journals every year – and has now amassed somewhere around 100 total journals. Each page mimics a grocery list of ingredient quantities – with close to no instructions.

With this in mind, we weren't sure what we'd get when we asked him for an easy-to-cook holiday meat recipe. Funny enough, Carlos worked with chef Michael Chiarello 10 years ago. Chiarello had posted this same recipe online, along with an accompanying video tutorial, *which is a total lifesaver for you turkey-cooking novices.* (see link below)



While Carlos “doesn’t do repeat recipes,” by special request from his friends and family, this Fennel Spiced Turkey and Gravy will make an appearance at the holiday table for a third year now.

Use your senses and smarts and Carlos’ tips to cook this year’s holiday turkey. You will have plenty to be thankful for while creating a “must-repeat” recipe, and an all-around gorgeous bird!

## FENNEL SPICE RUB

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup fennel seeds
- 3 Tbsp coriander seeds
- 2 Tbsp white peppercorns
- 3 Tbsp kosher salt

### DIRECTIONS

- Put fennel, coriander & peppercorns in heavy pan over medium heat. Stir frequently to toast seeds evenly.
- When light brown & fragrant, pour seeds onto plate to cool completely.
- After cooled, pour seeds in blender & add salt. Blend to fine powder, shaking blender to occasionally redistribute seeds.
- Store in tightly-sealed glass jar in cool place for up to 1 month; up to 6 months in refrigerator; up to 12 months in freezer.

Watch this short video before deciding which recipe you will go with this holiday season. Even beginners can follow this delicious, but super easy recipe:

[www.foodnetwork.com/videos/spiced-rubbed-turkey-94248.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/videos/spiced-rubbed-turkey-94248.html)



## TIPS FROM CARLOS BEFORE STARTING

- Instead of one big bird, consider purchasing 2 smaller birds. They offer more meat and take less time to cook in the oven!
- Make the Fennel Spice Rub in advance. Then gather all your ingredients and start the turkey directions. While turkey starts cooking, you can then start working on the gravy. After the turkey comes out of the oven, you can then finish off the gravy with the leftover pan juices if you want your gravy to have a slight-liquorice taste (due to the fennel spice rub)!
- Consider utilizing short-rimmed baking pan to properly heat turkey (*see image below; watch video for instructions*).
- IMPORTANT: remove turkeys from pans & let rest for 15mins. before carving, as this allows juices to relax into meat.

### TURKEY INGREDIENTS

- 2 x 8-10 pound whole turkeys
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup fennel spice rub
- 8 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 lemons, halved
- 4 large carrots, halved lengthwise
- 8 celery stalks

### TURKEY DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425°F.
- Remove neck & giblets from turkey, then put into large saucepan to start gravy.
- Wash turkeys inside & out, then dry well. Coat inside & out with half of olive oil. Season outside of each turkey generously with spice rub, pressing to adhere. Place 4 rosemary sprigs & 2 halved lemons inside the cavity of each turkey.
- Arrange 4 halved carrots & 4 celery stalks on each of 2 half-sheet pans or baking sheets (*see image below; watch video for instructions*). Position each turkey on top of carrots & celery so turkey does not rest directly on bottom of pan. Drizzle turkeys with remaining olive oil.
- Once oven has been held at 425°F for 10-20mins., insert turkeys. Roast until meat thermometer reads 165°F (insert deep into thigh, but away from bone) & juices run clear when pierced with fork (~2-2.5hrs; begin checking at 2hrs). Remove from pans & let rest for 15mins. before carving.

### GRAVY INGREDIENTS

- 1 Qt. chicken stock
- 2 small white onions, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour (or flour of choice)
- ¾ cup butter
- Salt & pepper, to taste

### GRAVY DIRECTIONS

- Add neck & giblets from turkey, chicken stock, onions, carrots & celery to start broth-stock to be added to roux. Simmer on med-low heat for ~20mins.
- In separate pan, melt butter. Once it stops foaming, add flour & cook 2-3 minutes, whisking vigorously to eliminate clumps. This creates blonde roux.
- Once roux is completed, whisk in strained stock. Bring to boil, reduce to simmer (8-10mins. until thickened; longer if preference is thicker). Reduce down to ~2 cups. Add salt & pepper to taste.
- Cover & hold to temperature while turkey rests. Transfer to gravy boat & serve.



# P6 THINGS WE LOVE



## Nesalla Kombucha(s)

Out of all the drinks in this cooler, the seasonal Nesalla Kombuchas are the only ones I buy regularly! I can't decide which flavor is the best. Which one is your favorite? (An adoring Nesalla fan/customer walking by agreed that with such delicious flavors, it's too hard to pick just one!)

**-Sally (+Agreeing Customer)**

## Hook's 7 Year Aged Cheddar

It's super rich, but it's creamy. If it's cold it crumbles nice. But it melts nice, too. What more could you ask for?! It's like cheese currency.

Try some today – I guarantee you'll get *hooked*!

**-Daniel**



## Garlic Lover's Pasta

Love cheese?

Love garlic?

Do yourself a favor and try our housemade Garlic Lover's Pasta.

**-India**



## Sparkle - by Wisco Pop!

It's the newest drink from Wisco Pop!, which is cool.

It doesn't have any added sugar, just lemons and sparkling water made locally over at the VEDA Building here in Viroqua.

Watch out LaCroix flavored waters, here comes some Sparkle!

**-Rhannon**



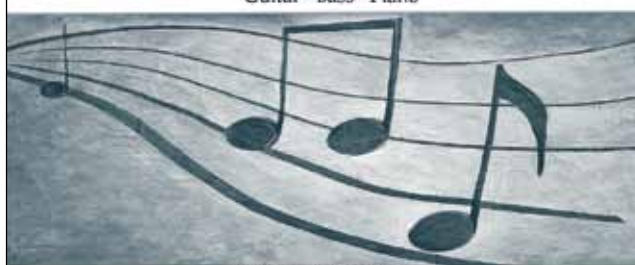
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# VFC Board Update

**Curt Brye, VFC Board President**

At each monthly meeting, the VFC Board acknowledges and reads the VFC Mission Statement and Ends Policies. The full Board Meeting minutes are located online at [www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-minutes](http://www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-minutes). You may also contact the Board directly via the VFC website.

## Board Meeting – May 25, 2016

Reviewed and discussed Co-op expansion-related learning documents – Expansion Reporting Guide and Capital Campaign Workbook and April conference call with CDS consultant.

Monitored L.4.9 FY15-16 Q3 Financial Conditions and Activities for compliance with Policy Governance.

Mike Link and Larry Homstad will develop and maintain a customized timeline for VFC expansion. Leslie Kruempel becomes the Board's communication liaison with Owners.

Annual Owners Meeting scheduled for Oct. 5, 2016 and Board Retreat with CDS consultant set for Oct. 29, 2016.

Board President Brye and Secretary Bergquist signed documents for By-Laws/Articles registration with State of Wisconsin from 2015 ballot results.

GM provided monthly update of operations and expansion with Board discussion.

Completed annual GM evaluation and approved compensation package for FY 2016-17.

## Board Meeting – June 15, 2016

Reviewed and discussed May teleconference with CDS consultant focusing on Capital Campaign and Expansion Timeline.

Mike Link and Larry Homstad introduced Expansion Process Timeline with dates of major decision points and projections for future major decision points for Board process.

Discussed topics to be covered at the Annual Board Retreat on Oct. 29, 2016.

Reviewed L.3 Financial Planning and Budgeting; L.7 Compensation and Benefits; and M.5 GM Personnel Policies for compliance with Policy Governance.

Reviewed annual budget for FY 2016-17. GM provided monthly update of VFC operations and expansion with Board discussion.

Discussed status of nominations for Board election at Annual Owners Meeting. Deadline for candidates to submit application package is July 31st.

Reviewed and discussed 2016 Owner Survey results and analysis.

Board President and Secretary will assume additional administrative responsibilities beginning with July 2016 meeting.

Eric Newman writes Board's Eye View article for Fall 2016 issue of Pea Soup.

## Board Meeting – July 18, 2016

Reviewed and discussed topics from June teleconference with CDS consultant with focus on Annual Retreat topics and Board Self-Evaluation.

Reviewed a CDS video on Board Self-Evaluation and an article on Clarifying Board and GM roles in co-op expansion.

GM provided monthly update of VFC operations and expansion activity with Board discussion.

Board Self-Evaluation scheduled for completion in August 2016.

Discussed possible attendance at CBLD 101 workshop in Minneapolis on September 24th for new Board members.

Mike and Betty Link hosted Annual Board Summer Picnic. Thank you!

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**Cindy Ericksen**  
*Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist*

## welcome NEW OWNERS!

Welcome to the following new owners who joined the Co-op from May 1 to August 9, 2016:

Mari Moore	Christine Arnson
Tracy Joholski	Joyce Campbell
Monica Oettinger	Gail Doesken
Robert Oettinger	Nicolas Enjalbert
Gerald Anderson III	Veronica Hoiland
Ann Kurth	Amy Tomky
James A Fortney	Colin Wiegman
Steve Schulte	Lindsey Wiegman
Linda Schulte	Joyce Frith
Hannah Voehl	Hillary Hoiland Hoban
Julie Stafslie	Colleen Devaney
Mark Williams	John Berg
Kimberly Frederickson	Taran Green
Rhonda Miller	Bobbi Griffin
Melissa Brophy	Nora McLaughlin
Dennis Oloughlin	Akram Abed
Harmonie Oloughlin	Leslee Timm
Betsy Johnson	John Berg
Jennifer Chrisinger	Bobbi Griffin
Tyler Chrisinger	Nora McLaughlin
Matt Emslie	Akram Abed
Julie Emslie	Taran Green
Allison Starn	Joshua Green
Eli Gay	Courtney
Daniel Dumler	Wubbenhorst
Selma Wright	Tracy Lampman
Christina Amberson	Cathi Skolos
Trisha Gronemus	Karein Strenski
Mary Haugrud	Tamera Price
Toni Lyn Melby	Sondra Naxi
Jonah Glanzer	Raine Nourigat
Rita Peterson	Eddy Nix
Ronda Schmidt	James Fuller
Maria Tubbin	Kathy Mcgranahan
Matt Tubbin	Peter Victora
Justina Manspeaker	Leslie A. Gulliford
Andrew Manspeaker	David Krier
Jacob Fitzwater	Mary Broderick
Kathryn Rice	Kate Plachetka
Allissa Corrow	Amy Kotek
Julie Greenland	Lamar Janes
Le Suong Cina	Lynda Schaller
Christopher Cina	Mike Moon
James Lawless	Eva Schulte
Lindsey Lawless	Elisabeth Matthews
Sarah Dopson	Ryan Matthews
Brandon Dopson	Anna Kimm
John Nelson	Ryan Kimm
James Cisneros	Frank Spilker
Thomas C. Coleman	Kate Theilacker
Michael Karasek	Matt Theilacker
Cassidy York	

## VOTING REQUIREMENTS FOR WISCONSIN ELECTIONS

Co-ops are economic democracy in action. We encourage our owners to participate in the democratic process locally and nationally. With recent changes to Wisconsin law regarding voter registration and ID, we're providing the following information.

### Registration

You can register to vote on Election Day but it is advised to register before then so you have time to acquire the needed documents. You can find out your registration status by going to [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov)

### Early Voting dates are:

**October 24 - November 4**

### Acceptable forms of ID

- A Wisconsin DOT-issued driver license, even if driving privileges are revoked or suspended. (An out-of-state drivers license is NOT an acceptable form of ID for voting in Wisconsin).

- A Wisconsin DOT-issued identification card
- A Wisconsin DOT-issued identification card or driver license without a photo issued under the religious exemption
- Military ID card issued by a U.S. uniformed service
- A U.S. passport
- An identification card issued by a federally recognized Indian tribe in Wisconsin (May be used even if expired before the most recent general election.)

Go to [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) to find out: the current status of your registration; where and how to register before Election Day; the location of your polling place; what is on the ballot; other forms of acceptable ID including student ID.

### YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Make sure your voice gets heard at the ballot box!

**VFC IS OPEN  
THANKSGIVING  
DAY**  
**7am - 1pm**

It's the morning of Thanksgiving, you are in the middle of intense preparations for your holiday meal. Then – Oh No! You discover you forgot to buy whipping cream when you shopped, just yesterday, at the Co-op.

We know that many of you have driven to the VFC on Thanksgiving morning or called, hoping that you would find us open for business.

We'll have no fear, this year the VFC will be open for limited hours for your convenience. We open at 7am with coffee, breakfast sandwiches and bakery service (no hot bar or salad bar). The store will close promptly at 1pm so our staff can be home in time for dinner. We're happy to serve you.



## Viroqua Nutrition Counseling



**Laura Poe, RD, LD  
Holistic Dietitian**

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Laura is a registered dietitian focusing on traditional, whole food diets & an integrative approach to healing.

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## Annual Owners Meeting

**Wednesday, October 5**  
**5:30-8:30pm**

RSVP at <http://ls.coop/24ft2>  
*details on page 3*

**OPEN THANKSGIVING DAY**  
**7am-1pm**



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**Drs. Paul and Paula Grenier**

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A vertical advertisement for the Rising Sun Animal Wellness Center. The background is a warm, orange-toned image of autumn leaves. At the top, the text "RISING SUN" is arched over a silhouette of various animals (a cow, a horse, a dog, and a cat) and a medical symbol. Below this, the text "ANIMAL WELLNESS CENTER" is written. The main heading is "Conventional & Holistic Animal Medicine" in bold. Below that, a list of services is provided: "Veterinary Spinal Manipulation", "Acupuncture", "Herbal/Chinese Medicine", and "Routine Veterinary Services". The names of the practitioners, "Marta W. Engel, D.V.M.", "Janna Kottke, D.V.M.", and "Laura Buss, D.V.M.", are listed. A black cat is perched on a large orange pumpkin in the foreground. At the bottom, the contact information is given: "(608) 637-2227", "315 E. Decker St., Viroqua", and the website "www.risingsunvet.com". A tagline at the very bottom reads "Helping you solve your animal health problems... naturally".

**RISING SUN**  
**ANIMAL WELLNESS CENTER**

**Conventional & Holistic  
Animal Medicine**

**Veterinary Spinal Manipulation  
Acupuncture  
Herbal/Chinese Medicine  
Routine Veterinary Services**

Marta W. Engel, D.V.M.  
Janna Kottke, D.V.M.  
Laura Buss, D.V.M.

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