



Your Member-Owner Newsletter

November / December 2012

Join us at our upcoming fall events!

19th Annual FREE Food and Wellness Expo

November 3rd, 2012
10:30am-3pm
Montpelier City Hall

Try new artisan cheeses, locally baked breads, sauces, jams and more!
Learn about Reiki, massage, acupuncture and other healing modalities!
Free kids pumpkin painting!
Learn about food and wellness resources in our community!

Annual Meeting and Brunch!

November 4th, 2012
11:15am-2:00pm
Montpelier City Hall

Help shape the direction of our Coop!
Let your voice be heard!
Meet other Member-Owners and share ideas.
Enjoy a brunch buffet provided by the Hunger Mountain Coop Deli!



Hunger Mountain Coop is a Member-Owned, community-based natural market committed to building a dynamic community of healthy individuals, sustainable local food systems and thriving co-operative commerce.

open 7 days/week

8am to 8pm

Café closes at 7:30pm

802.223.8000

The Full Scoop

is a publication distributed to over 6,500 Member-Owners and shoppers, and is available online at hungermountain.coop. Those with comments, suggestions or contributions are welcome to contact Krissy Leigh Ruddy at 223.8000 x 217

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Granite City Co-op: a new co-op is born

In honor of the International Year of the Cooperative, our Coop has been featuring a different area co-op in each issue of the Full Scoop. We conclude our series with a focus on the newest co-op in Central Vermont: the Granite City Co-op (Granite City Grocery). Board Chair Emily Kaminsky answered these questions.

What is the name of your co-op, when did you incorporate, and where are you located?

Granite City Co-op, Inc., incorporated on July 31st, 2012, is located in Barre City. We just finalized a dba - Granite City Grocery. We added this trade name to reflect community sentiment for a "grocery" store. Many people in Barre, while supportive of the co-operative business model, thought that "co-op" in the name means that we will be providing exclusively organic or natural foods. On the contrary, we will be offering a mix of conventional and organic foods, local and not local, etc.

What was the impetus for starting your co-op?

From what seems like the beginning of time, Barre City has always had a downtown grocery store providing fresh meats, produce, and affordable packaged goods. Post-World War II, it was the A&P and then the Grand Union. But, in the early 2000s, the Grand Union closed due to reasons unrelated to market (its former manager cites the store as being the most profitable in the region). Its closure left a noticeable gap in the availability of quality, fresh and packaged foods available at affordable prices. While corner stores, community markets, and convenience stores exist in and around the downtown, they offer a limited choice of items in small packaging priced for convenience, not value.

Barre lacks the community anchor that grocery stores often provide. At the same time, residents and daytime workers in downtown Barre miss the convenience of

shopping at a full-service grocery in the downtown. Since the Grand Union closed, residents have consistently pointed out the need for a grocery store in the downtown. In addition to wanting access to food, residents want a center for community life and a hub for social activity – a role that a downtown market has historically provided in most downtown communities.

The community's desire for a grocery store bubbled to the surface in a 2004 market study, commissioned by a downtown Barre merchants' association known as The Barre Partnership. Results of a community survey pointed to the desire for a downtown store. The report highlighted this sentiment and confirmed that grocery stores located in the downtown do indeed contribute to a vibrant community center.

Since the market study, only one effort to fill the gap has been attempted. Between 2006 and 2011, L.A.C.E. (Local Agricultural

Employee Profile: Nessa Rabin

Position:

Bakery Coordinator

At The Coop since: 2011

What do you like best about working at Hunger Mountain Coop?

I like my coworkers. It's nice to come to a job that's stable and made stronger by customer interactions.

What was your first position at The Coop?

Production Cook.

How has The Coop changed since you first started working here?

The Deli is new and improved and there are more house-made baked goods!

What is an interesting fact that people may not know about you?

I love to sing.

What's a favorite recipe you like to make at home?

Crêpes for breakfast – my son Julian's favorite.

Where is a treasured vacation spot?

Beautiful, exotic Central Vermont.

Great Coop products that you love?

I love Patrick's Dark Chocolate Cherry Pretzels (Green Mountain Twisters) and the choices in our fabulous Bulk Department.



Co-op. continued from page 1

Community Exchange) provided a selection of local produce, packaged Vermont-made foods, and a café/deli. Though it met the demands of some for local and fresh foods, many perceived it to be a specialty store with prices out of reach and a limited selection of affordable, basic necessities. L.A.C.E. closed in 2011.

With a major Main Street construction and overhaul planned for 2011-2012 (Barre's "Big Dig"), the City began identifying redevelopment opportunities to support its Master Plan. In 2009, thanks to a Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Grant, the City of Barre took ownership of a dilapidated building in the heart of downtown (formerly housing Brooks Drugstore and Coins/Hobbies) and razed it with the goal of building City Place, a community center of commerce and social life with State of Vermont employees on its top floors and retail businesses, including a grocery store, on the first and second floors. Now, three years later, City Place is more than a concept; it is close to becoming a reality. A private developer (D.E.W.) was selected in 2012. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2012 and finish by fall 2013.



Despite best efforts by the City, economic development agencies, and the private developer (backed by a market study completed by Associated Grocers of New England), no private grocery store operators followed through on the opportunity to locate a store at City Place.

In summer 2012, D.E.W. and the City of Barre invited Montpelier's Hunger Mountain Coop to open a second store in Barre. However, Hunger Mountain Coop turned down the opportunity based on a market study that suggested a store dedicated to primarily organic foods (Hunger Mountain Coop's niche by virtue of its membership's values) would be too high-risk, and the potential return on investment too low. In addition, Hunger Mountain Coop recognized that Barre needs a diverse array of products – both conventional/mainstream and organic – and that they would be unable to meet that need given their commitment to mostly organic foods.

Barre residents decided to explore the option of creating a cooperatively-owned grocery store. With no private grocery store operator able to pull together a workable plan for a downtown store, a core group of Barre residents came together in July 2012 to start a cooperatively-owned food market with the goal of meeting Barre's diverse need for affordable, convenient, local, and healthy food.

And, with that, the Granite City Co-op, Inc. (dba Granite City Grocery) was born! Recognizing that no one is going to come in and meet our needs possibly better than we can, we stepped up to the plate. We incorporated as Granite City Co-op, Inc. on July 31st to take advantage of some key food co-op seed grants. Now that we have received those grants and seated a founding board, we are in the process of exploring, researching, and organizing with an ever-growing group of supporters and future members. We are not bound to any particular downtown location. While we are looking at several sites, we are also focusing our efforts primarily on crafting the vision and building the foundation for a cooperative of people committed to creating affordable food options in the downtown. We added the trade name Granite City Grocery on September 30th to reflect the community's input.

Can you briefly describe your vision for your co-op and the impact it could have on Barre?

By organizing cooperatively to bring fresh, quality food to the downtown at reasonable prices, we hope to contribute to a stronger, healthier, more vibrant community and downtown.

What stage of organizing are you in?

We are working hard on two tracks: raising funds to support our startup and feasibility assessment expenses, and developing support and commitment from the community for our vision through one-on-one meetings, house parties, public events, and listening sessions all of which are feeding into our Founding Member Pledge Drive. We have 100 people interested in membership and hope to achieve 300 by the end of December and 600 by May 2013.

What are the biggest obstacles to starting a food co-op?

The biggest obstacle seems to be timing, though we seem to have it on our side. To try to build community support and engagement all the while working on a potential site and the business development aspect of the cooperative is hard to juggle.

How can people help the Granite City Co-op?

Please consider contributing to our Startup and Feasibility Fund. In return, we will thank you with some fun rewards contributed by Barre merchants and supporters! Donate online at www.granitecitygrocery.coop or mail a check to Granite City Grocery, PO Box 1225, Barre, VT 05641.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your co-op?

Barre is a special place inhabited by a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds. This initiative is an opportunity to unite and rebuild pride in our community.

Herbs. continued from page 4

If you look around, you might see that this very traditional practice is missing from our modern lives. Yet it seems so important, and so easy! When we cannot visit a garden for renewal, perhaps we can relearn to cultivate our own inner gardens with the sweet-scented nervine plants. In doing so we will see tension melt away, relieve the weight of worry, and inspire a depressed spirit. Rest will come more easily, and creativity will be enhanced. Our stress might then become a challenge to meet and overcome with grace and joy – and all this using safe, aromatic, nourishing herbs that have been a part of the human experience for thousands of years. Aromatic nervines are still a delicious, refreshing cure for our modern malaise.

Guido Masé is a clinical herbalist, herbal educator, and garden steward specializing in holistic Western herbalism.

This article is brought to you by Urban Moonshine, makers of Joy Tonic, an aromatic blend for calm and inspiration! #joytonic