

NEIGHBORING FOOD CO-OP ASSOCIATION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

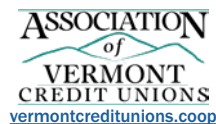


**LIVING OUR
CO-OPERATIVE
IDENTITY**

*march 19th, 2022
hosted online*

Thank You!

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS
FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION**



LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Look for these throughout the Annual Report for ways for your Co-op can
Live Our Co-operative Identity, now!



LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

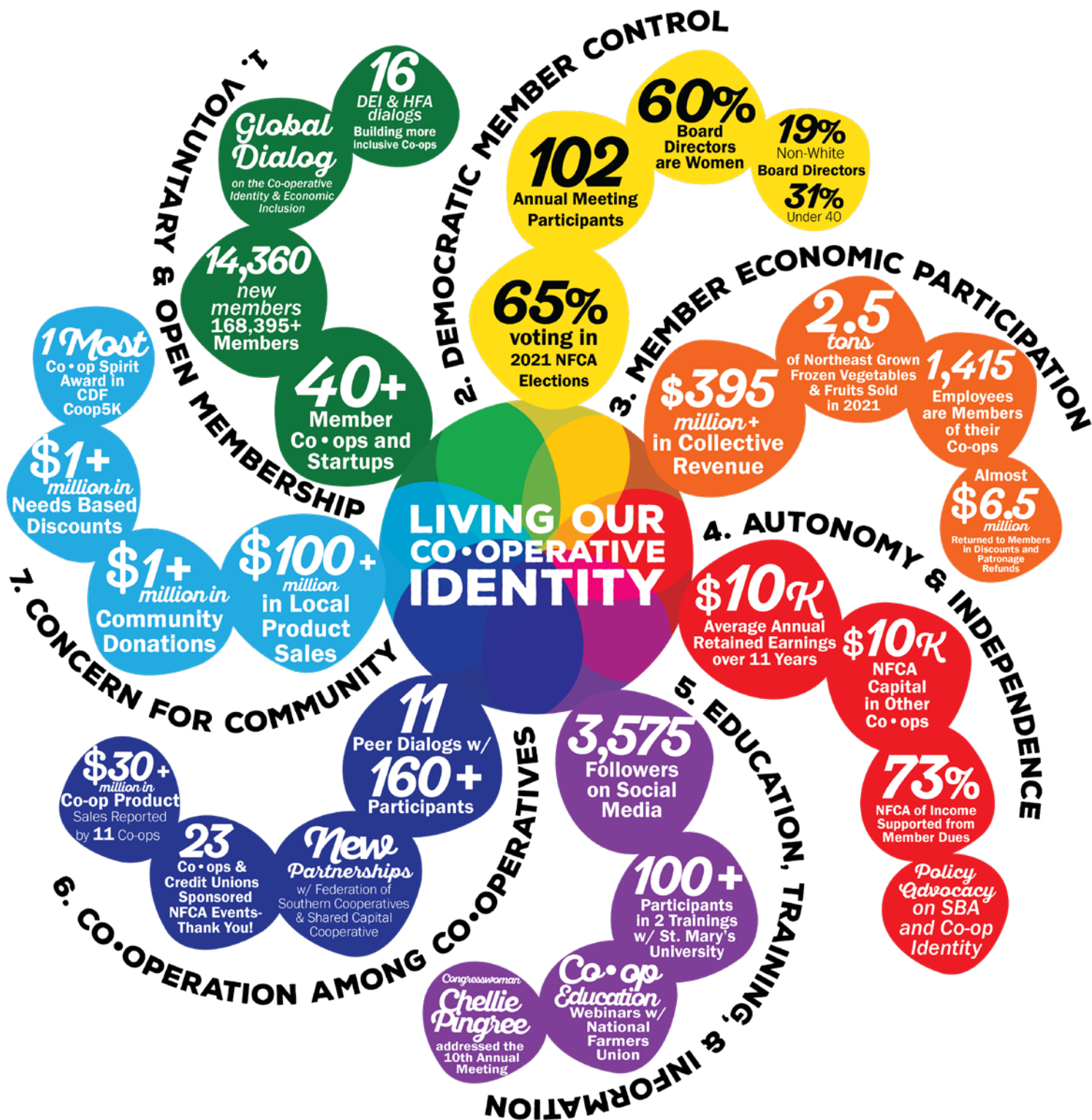
The Neighboring Food Co-op Association is a regional federation of food co-ops working together toward a shared vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system, and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.

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AGENDA <i>march 19th, 2022</i> <small>Annual Meeting Hosting Services Provided by NCBA CLUSA</small>	10:00 Welcome!	Suzette Snow-Cobb- NFCA • NCBA CLUSA Staff
	10:05 President's Greeting	Sue Miller, President & Co-General Manager, Upper Valley Co-op
	10:10 Living Our Co-op Identity	Martin Lowery- ICA Board & Chair, Co-operative Identity Committee • Alexandra Wilson- ICA Board & Chair, Co-operative Identity Advisory Group • Sue Miller, President • Erbin Crowell- Executive Director
	10:50 Board Reports	Sue Miller- President • Rachel Watrous- Treasurer
	11:00 Staff Report	Erbin Crowell- Executive Director • Bonnie Hudspeth- Co-operative Development • Suzette Snow-Cobb- Sourcing Coordinator • Alexis Alexander- Peer Collaboration & Technical Support
	11:10 INVITED REMARKS	Gary Hirshberg- Stonyfield Co-Founder & Chair, & Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership • Rob Larew- President, National Farmers Union
	11:15 BREAK	
	11:20 INVITED REMARKS	Cornelius Blanding- Executive Director Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
	11:25 Small Group Dialogs	Living Our Co-operative Identity
	12:05 Neighboring Co-operator Award	Glenn Lower- Outgoing General Manager, Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op • Presentation by Lynn Dunton- Treasurer, Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op
	12:20 Election Results & Appreciations	Faye Mack- Outgoing Board Member & Former Director, City Market/Onion River Co-op
	12:25 Closing Comments & Prizes	Doug O'Brien, NCBA CLUSA
	12:40 Post Meeting Networking	Open time to connect with fellow co-operators
	1:00 ADJOURN	

LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY



The Guidance Notes "are 'living' in that they are specifically intended to be kept up to date over time as societies change, environmental concerns evolve, and as commercial and financial regulation and demands ebb and flow. They allow co-operatives themselves to fully grasp just what it means to be a co-operative in the world in which they are now working. They also provide guidance to those who have the task of registering, regulating, or supervising co-operatives in the local, national, and regional economies of the world.

Forward, Co-operative Identity, 2015



MESSAGE FROM SUE MILLER PRESIDENT, NFCA

Dear Co-operators,

On behalf of your Board of Directors, I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to our 11th Annual Meeting! As always, we're grateful to get to connect with you all as we look back on the past year, reflect on how our co-ops have stepped up to support each other and our communities, and envision a brighter future, together.



Sue Miller
NFCA President
Co-General Manager
Upper Valley Food Co-op

As I look back over the past couple of years, I am so amazed by the resilience of our co-ops and their generosity in supporting one another and their communities. We know that we're all in this together – and it shows. We've not only adapted to rapidly changing conditions, we've also challenged ourselves to do more, and

reached out to one another to share ideas and strategies for how we can be successful in our efforts. As an association, we've demonstrated the wisdom behind the Principle of "Co-operation among Co-ops," that we are stronger, that we can serve our members and communities better, and that we can grow the next generation of food co-ops when we work together, when we share our resources, and when we contribute our collective experience.

Along these lines, I want to thank our staff for their resilience, commitment and optimism over the past year. Erbin, Bonnie, Suzette, and Alexis have been an inspiration to the Board, providing consistent support to our members over the last year, developing new opportunities for collaboration and innovation, and promoting our collective impact. In response to the challenges of the pandemic and isolation, they created new spaces for peer dialogs, communities of practice, and recruiting staff. New list serves have enabled stronger communication and the sharing of surplus equipment. And they've created new opportunities for co-operative learning, training and professional development. As a Board, we're always excited to read staff's monthly activities report and learn about all of the inspiring work that had been going on.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our

Board of Directors for their service over the past year. Even as all of our Directors have been engaged in the important work of their own co-ops, they have also contributed greatly to our association as we've worked to represent our members, support our staff, and envision the future. We have a great group of Directors, and I am always appreciative of their contributions, collaboration, and attention. I particularly want to extend my thanks to Faye Mack for her years of service on the NFCA Board, including her role as President, her contributions to the Board of Directors of City Market, Onion River Co-op (VT), and her contributions for our Healthy Food Access programming through her work with Hunger Free Vermont. Faye will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the best as she and her family enter a new stage in their lives. We do hope she will stay in touch!

As we look forward, I can't think of a more appropriate theme for our 11th Annual Meeting. "Living Our Co-operative Identity" speaks to the way that our shared values and principles offer a way for us to meet the challenges of our time, to tell our story and differentiate ourselves in the marketplace and provide a language for us to offer hope to our communities of a better future.

Please let us know how we can continue to grow and evolve as an Association, and how we can support your Co-op. I am eager to see what we can accomplish together over the next 10 years!

In Co-operation,

Sue Miller, President

Co-General Manager, Upper Valley Food Co-op

In order to ensure the sustainability of any co-operative enterprise, the skills set of all board members and senior managers must include a clear vision and understanding of the Co-operative Values and Principles...

ICA, Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles: Autonomy & Independence (2015:54)



GREETINGS FROM THE NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, CLUSA INTERNATIONAL

12 March 2022

Greetings from NCBA CLUSA International as you celebrate the Neighboring Food Co-op Association's 11th year of co-operation! Your theme, Living Our Co-operative Identity, could not be timelier as our global community is focused on how our shared values and principles can help build more resilient and inclusive economies.

First, I want to commend NFCA and its member co-ops for your work in continuing to support your communities during another challenging year. Through this shared experience, we have learned a great deal on how we can innovate and serve our members, staff and communities.



Doug O'Brien
President & CEO
National Cooperative
Business Association,
CLUSA International

NCBA CLUSA is also working with NFCA and our wider movement by focusing on what it means to be a co-operative in today's context. This work focused on the 125th

Anniversary World Cooperative Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance's (ICA) held in Seoul, South Korea in December last year with

the theme: "Deepening our Cooperative Identity." Throughout this global conversation, we are especially focused on ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are better understood

and express in our shared values and principles, and in documents such as the Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles. We are proud that your executive director, Erbin Crowell, was appointed to serve on ICA's Cooperative Identity Advisory Group, which will advise the ICA Board

on potential updates to the Statement on Cooperative Identity and other documents.

NCBA CLUSA is also proud to work with the NFCA on advocating for policy that enables co-ops to thrive and grow. For example, we worked together to ensure that our enterprises have access to critical COVID-19 relief programs as well as build support for the Capital for Cooperatives Act so that co-ops can access the Small Business Administration's affordable financing programs.

One thing is certain: For co-operatives to have the impact and influence demanded by today's challenges, we need to work together. That is why we continue to work across sectors this year to focus on the sixth principle of Co-operation among co-operatives. It is also why I want to thank the NFCA for your membership in NCBA CLUSA and remind member food co-ops that you can also join our national, cross-sector association at a special discount. Our work is complementary and mutually supportive, and your participation helps us to achieve our core mission to develop, advance and protect co-operative enterprise. Through membership in NCBA CLUSA, you can help us build a more inclusive economy, together. Thank you again for all you do for your co-ops and your communities, and I hope to see you at the Cooperative IMPACT conference in October!

Doug O'Brien

President & CEO
National Cooperative Business Association,
CLUSA International



Flatbush Food Co-op, Co-op Month Celebration, 2021



1775 I Street NW
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20006
240.608.6167
ncbaclusa.coop



STAFF REPORT

Dear Co-operators,

Thank you for joining us for our 11th Annual Meeting! We're looking forward to gathering and reflecting on our theme of Living Our Co-operative Identity as we consider the past year and look forward as we continue to support our shared success and advance our vision for a more just, sustainable, and inclusive food system and economy.

This will be the second year that we've shifted our Annual Meeting online as we work to keep people healthy and safe while taking advantage of new opportunities to gather. While it is disappointing not to get to see you all in person, we also recognize that getting together virtually has advantages in making this event more accessible to more members of our community. This increased participation has also been apparent in the numerous online dialogs that we've hosted over the past year as we've worked to provide more opportunities for our co-ops to connect, collaborate, and support one another.

There is no doubt that the past year has been deeply challenging. But the twelve months that have passed since we last met as an association has also been full of inspiring examples of the difference that our food co-ops make in our communities, and what we can accomplish together. Faced with a devastating pandemic, the urgency of climate change, and calls for racial and economic justice, our food co-ops have not only demonstrated resilience, but also optimism and innovation as we have worked to respond to this moment. We have continued to ensure access to healthy food, sustained good, local jobs, and provided a marketplace for our region's producers. We have worked to be more welcoming and inclusive of the whole community and we have grown so that we can engage more people and increase our impact at a time when people are looking for alternatives. We've been supporting one another, sharing our challenges, and creating solutions. And by working together, we've been able to help each other weather this storm and emerge stronger.

OUR SPEAKERS

In this context, we're very humbled and excited to welcome Martin Lowery, U.S. Representative

to the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), and Alexandra Wilson, member of the Board of Directors of the ICA and Chair of the Alliance's Co-operative Identity Advisory Group, who will engage with us in a discussion of the foundation of the Co-operative Principles, their evolution over time, and current dialogs on how to ensure that the Identity is relevant to the challenges and opportunities that we face today. This will be followed by small group dialogs on what our co-ops are doing now to live our shared Values and Principles and how we can work together to inspire and increase our impact for communities desperate for positive change.

Our speakers bring a passion and profound depth of knowledge to these conversations, and to the potential of cross sector collaboration. In addition to his service on the ICA board of directors, Martin is the current Chair of the ICA Co-operative Identity Committee and the Co-operative World Congress Task Force, and an inductee to the Co-op Hall of Fame. He is the past Chair of NCBA CLUSA, the apex organization of co-operatives in the U.S., and past Chair of the National Cooperative Bank, which was created by Congress to provide capital to co-ops and community-based organizations. Martin's career has been centered on electric co-operatives in the United States as the Executive Vice President



From left: Alexandra Wilson, ICA Board of Directors & Chair of the Co-operative Identity Advisory Group, and Martin Lowery, U.S. Representative to the ICA Board of Directors.

of the National Rural Electric Co-operative Association. He holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Duke University and believes that we have much to discuss regarding the relevance of co-operative principles and values to the future of mankind.

Alexandra discovered a passion for co-ops



Look for our survey on products sourced from Black farmers and their co-ops in the Southeast U.S. coming later this Spring

The first major initiative within our wider partnership with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund

[Learn More about the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund here](#)
nfca.coop/newsfebruary2022/

when, as a teenager, she led her neighbors in a successful fight to create the Bain Apartments Co-operative, putting a stop to the landlord's plans to evict 260 low-income households. Her involvement in saving her own home led to a career in the development, management, and provision of association services to housing co-operatives. After nine years with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto, five as managing director, and 15 years at the helm of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, she started up the Agency for Co-operative Housing, serving as CEO from 2005 until her retirement in 2021. Alexandra spent 22 years on the board of Co-operative Housing International and in 2017 was elected to the global board of the ICA. She is a member of the board and vice chair of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, the apex body of the Canadian co-operative movement; vice chair of the board of The Co-operators, a large co-operative insurer; a member of the board of the Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund; and a member of the board of the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa. A member of numerous co-ops in Canada and France, Alexandra has played multiple volunteer roles in the credit union sector and did a three-year stint in the 1980s in the international co-operative development field.

We are very appreciative of the generosity of our guests in taking the time to join us and hope this discussion will inspire our small group dialogs today and our work throughout the year. And as we reflect on some of the ways we're working together to make the Co-operative Identity real in our communities, we're also looking forward to hearing messages from guests including Cornelius Blanding, Executive Director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund, Gary Hirshberg, co-founder of Stonyfield and chair of the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership, and Doug O'Brien, President & CEO of NCBA CLUSA.

REPORT ON 2021 ACTIVITIES

As we prepared to celebrate our first decade as an association in 2021, we reached out to our Member Co-ops for their input. We asked how they were being impacted by COVID-19, the recession, and calls for racial and economic justice. While feedback showed that our Member Co-ops were experiencing these challenges

differently, we found them to be optimistic overall and inspired to work together through the NFCA to expand opportunities for peer collaboration, mutual support, and shared innovation. Below, we highlight some of the ways that we have worked to advance our vision over the past year.

In 2021, the focus of our **Public Engagement** activities was to build on our growing education and advocacy activities, communicating our collective impact and providing resources for education and action. As we celebrated our 10th Anniversary, we convened a panel of co-op leaders to tell the story of the NFCA and welcomed Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (ME) to address our Annual Meeting and learn more about the shared impact of food co-ops across our region. The creation of our new YouTube channel provided easy access to many of the resources we've developed over the years, as well as our new co-op education series developed in collaboration with the National Farmers Union (NFU). We worked with the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops to defend the Co-operative Identity from proposed legislation in Massachusetts that would have undermined state oversight and legal protection of the term "co-op," joined the New England Farmers Union in supporting national food system legislation, and collaborated with NCBA CLUSA to advocate for the inclusion of food co-ops in Small Business Administration (SBA) relief programs. We also helped spread the word about the important role of co-operatives in building a more inclusive economy in workshops at Northeast Organic Farming Association conferences, the NFU College Conference on Co-operatives, and Co-op Month events — including supporting the successful introduction of Co-op Month resolutions in the State of Vermont, the towns of Windham, CT, and Maynard, MA, and



The Co-op 5K

23-29 April 2022
(Remote). Run, walk or roll with your Neighboring Co-operators team as we raise funds for the Co-operative Development Foundation. E-mail info@nfca.coop for information on how to sign up!



Cornelius Blanding, Executive Director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund addressing our 10th Annual Meeting. See the full video on our YouTube Channel!

the Boston City Council. And we worked through NCBA CLUSA and other channels to advocate for a deeper understanding of how co-ops can leverage our Co-operative Identity for business success and a more inclusive economy.

In our **Co-operative Development** work, we worked with the International Centre for Co-operative Management (ICCM) at Saint Mary's University to offer online trainings including "Member-centric Governance & Management" and "Operationalizing the Co-operative Identity." We dramatically expanded opportunities for peer collaboration, including online dialogs for HR managers and Board Members, Bulk and Prepared Foods Departments, and collaboration on community engagement, accessibility, and inclusion. Healthy Food Access programming helped our co-ops respond to rising hunger and unemployment in their communities, including "Food For All" and "Membership For All" programs, and a "SNAP at Your Co-op" training in collaboration with Hunger Free Vermont. Building on the progress of our DEI Community of Practice, we created a webpage of resources on "Centering Social, Racial, and Economic Justice at Our Food Co-ops." With our partners at Food Co-op Initiative and Dorsey LLP, we supported our start-up co-ops throughout the year, providing technical assistance to start-ups including multistakeholder co-ops and organizing our 6th Annual Startup Day around the theme of "Focus & Forge Ahead: An Organizing Tune-up for Success." We also formalized a new General Manager Mentor Program for start-ups nearing operations, such as Assabet Co-op Market (MA), Dorchester Food Co-op (MA) and Kingston Food Co-op (NY). The future is bright in our region, thanks to mutual support and the investment by our members in the next generation of food co-ops!

In the area of **Food System Development**, our goal is to use our shared strength to advance our vision and strengthen the competitive advantage of member co-ops through innovative sourcing initiatives, branded products, and unique partnerships. Last year we held a special peer dialog in preparation for National Co-op Month which resulted in increased participation in our "Go

Co-op" program and interest in celebrating our Co-operative Identity by highlighting products from co-op producers. The impacts of the pandemic on our food system last year were profound, and our relationships with organizations such as Associated Buyers, Inc., and Provisions International have demonstrated the importance of regional distribution partnerships. Over the past 11 years, our co-ops have sold 30 tons of regional artisan cheeses through "Cave to Co-op," introducing thousands of shoppers to these producers at an affordable price. And in 2021 alone, member co-ops purchased 2.5 tons of Northeast Grown frozen fruits and



Pete Miller of Miller Farm in Vernon, VT, checking in at Putney Food Co-op with NFCA staff.

vegetables through our "Farm to Freezer" program. Unfortunately, we learned this fall that our processor for frozen products was ceasing operations and we have not found a viable replacement option. Together, we demonstrated the potential of our co-ops in working together to innovate and create change in the food system. Your willingness to experiment and offer feedback and ideas also enabled us to learn and grow as an association, and we will be reaching out to you as we embark on the next stage in our activities. For example, look for our survey coming soon on opportunities for sourcing products from African American farmers in the Southeast in partnership with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund.

As a co-operative association, our work together is funded primarily by and accountable to our members. For 2021, we budgeted for a loss of about \$10,000 as we



LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Sign up your Co-op as a retail partner of Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership

Help tell the story of our commitment to our communities and local producers and join NFCA in supporting 135 Northeast Organic Dairies that lost their contracts.

[Learn more about the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership here](https://www.saveorganicfamilyfarms.org)
[saveorganicfamilyfarms.org](https://www.saveorganicfamilyfarms.org)

invested in increased staffing and capacity for online collaboration while supporting member co-ops through continued dues reductions related primarily to multi-year expansion-related losses. While these reductions impact our bottom line and ability to achieve our mission, they also represent an investment of collective resources in the future success of member co-ops and our association as a whole. As shared in the Treasurer's Report, we closed the year at slightly better than budget. And we were particularly excited to welcome Belfast Co-op (ME) and High Falls Food Co-op (NY), as well as the start-up Charles River Food Co-op (MA), bringing us to more than 40-member food co-ops and associate members!

2022 PRIORITIES

As we enter 2022, we are focused on supporting our food co-ops in addressing the convergence of racism and inequality, climate change, and the post-pandemic economy and society. Coming out of our fall retreat, the board and staff resolved to continue to build our capacity to facilitate networking, collaboration, and innovation among our members. We are promoting our shared impact, engaging policymakers, and improving the regional food system. We are expanding our online resources, formalizing programs for mentorship and technical assistance, and exploring new sources of funding that can advance our work and strengthen our partnerships.

We are particularly excited about the progress we've already made in the first few months of this year, such as representing our co-ops as the first retailer organization to sign on to the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership in support of regional dairy farmers that have lost their contracts with large processors, formalizing our partnership with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund, and new projects in collaboration with the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) to expand our work with the Federation, support rural food co-ops, and develop educational resources on the Co-operative Identity. We are also thankful for our partnership with the International Center for Co-operative Management at Saint Mary's University to expand access to cross-sector co-op education, training, and collaboration and encourage our members to take advantage of the opportunities for engagement and participation

highlighted in the margins of this report.

As noted in the Treasurer's Report, we are budgeting for a loss this year as we expand our efforts to support our members at this critical time. Our intent is that by supporting the growth and success of our members we will also be able to grow our association and recruit new members. As always, we welcome your feedback on our priorities as we work toward our vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system.

THANK YOU!

Finally, we want to thank all of our sponsors, and especially CoBank, Cabot Creamery Co-op, Cooperative Development Foundation, Cooperative Fund of the Northeast, National Cooperative Bank, and Nationwide Mutual Insurance for their collaboration and generous support of our Annual Meeting and activities throughout the year.

Please also visit www.nfca.coop/calendar and save these dates for events coming up in 2022 and 2023:

- **Operationalizing the Co-operative Identity, 5-6 April 2022 (Online).** Join NFCA and the International Center for Co-operative Management at Saint Mary's University for this interactive learning opportunity focused on leveraging the Co-operative Identity for co-op success. For managers, staff, and board members of co-operative enterprises of all types. For more information and to register, visit <https://ManagementStudies.coop>
- **NFCA's 7th Annual Northeast Startup Day, Saturday 18 June 2022.** This will be our seventh year offering this event with Food Co-op Initiative to support the success of startup food co-ops across the Northeast.
- **CCMA 2022: Rooted: Renewing Our Co-operative Identity, 9-11 June 2022 (Hybrid).** Join us in-person or virtually for engaging keynotes, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities for those committed to creating more inclusive and sustainable co-operatives and communities.
- **NCBA CLUSA Impact Conference, 5-6 October 2022 (Hybrid).** IMPACT 2022 will bring together hundreds of co-operative leaders, developers, professionals,



LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Register Now for Operationalizing the Co-operative Identity an interactive training for managers and directors who want to explore strategies for our co-ops to live our values and principles every day. Online, 4-5 April 2022.

[Register Here:](https://bit.ly/3vTGuvC)
<https://bit.ly/3vTGuvC>



academics and policymakers around the theme, "Forward, Together."

- **NFCA Annual Meeting, Saturday 18 March 2023.** Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us for our 12th Annual Meeting!

Thank you again for all your support and collaboration over the past year. We remain inspired by the work of our member co-ops, thankful for our partners, and excited about the potential of our movement moving forward. We look forward to seeing you online and hopefully in-person before too long. In the meantime, please stay healthy and safe, and feel free to be in touch with any questions and feedback as we look forward to the next decade of shared success, collective impact, and innovation for a more just, sustainable, and inclusive food system!

Your LOCAL FOOD CO-OPS
Locally owned by 164,000 people like you!

NEIGHBORING Food CO-OPS

MAINE

- Belleville Co-op, Belfast
- Blue Hill Food Co-op, Blue Hill
- Portland Food Co-op, Portland

CONNECTICUT

- Fiddleheads Food Co-op, New London
- Mad River Co-op Market, Westford
- Willimantic Food Co-op, Willimantic

VERMONT

- Brattleboro Food Co-op, Brattleboro
- Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, Hardwick
- Caledonia Food Co-op, St. Johnsbury
- City Market, Onion River Co-op, Dummerston & South End, Burlington
- Co-op Food Stores, White River Junction
- Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier
- Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury
- Montpelier Food Co-op, Montpelier
- Planfield Food Co-op, Planfield
- Putney Food Co-op, Putney
- Rutland Area Food Co-op, Rutland
- Springfield Food Co-op, Springfield
- Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction

NEW YORK

- Cambridge Food Co-op, Cambridge
- Electric City Food Co-op, Schenectady
- Flatbush Food Co-op, Brooklyn
- GreenStar Co-op Markets, Ithaca
- High Falls Food Co-op, High Falls
- Kingston Food Co-op, Kingston
- Newburgh Food Co-op, Newburgh

MASSACHUSETTS

- Assabet Co-op Market, Maynard
- Common Share Food Co-op, Amherst
- Dorchester Food Co-op, Dorchester
- Green Fields Market, Franklin
- Community Co-op, Greenfield
- Levenet Village Food Co-op, Levenet
- McCook's Market, Franklin Community Co-op, Shelburne Falls
- Old Creamery Co-op, Cummington
- Quabbin Harvest Food Co-op, Orange
- River Valley Co-op, Easthampton
- River Valley Co-op, Northampton
- Wild Oats Co-op Market, Williamstown

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Androscoogun Food Co-op, Berlin
- Co-op Food Stores, Hanover & Lebanon
- Great River Food Co-op, Walpole
- Littleton Food Co-op, Littleton
- Monadnock Food Co-op, Keene
- Wolfeboro Food Co-op, Wolfeboro

RHODE ISLAND

- Urban Greens Co-op Market, Providence

FOOD CO-OP STARTUP FOOD CO-OP NEW LOCATION!

FIND A FOOD CO-OP NEAR YOU!

Working Together to Grow A More Healthy, Just & Sustainable Food System!

LEARN MORE AT WWW.NFCA.COOP

This NFCA Ad that appeared in the Spring 2022 Issue of *The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener*. The quarterly newsletter is considered to be one of the leading information sources on organic agriculture and sustainable living practices.

In Co-operation,

ERBIN CROWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

erbin@nfca.coop



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Belfast Co-op celebrating Co-op Month 2021

THE NEIGHBORING CO-OPERATOR AWARD

The “Neighboring Co-operator Award” acknowledges special contributions made to the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) and the advancement of our vision by a staff member, director or member of a Member Co-op or partner organization. In honor of the recipient, the NFCA makes a donation to the Cooperative Education Fund, which is hosted by the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) and supports the training and education of staff and board members of food co-operatives. The NFCA invites members of our community, including individuals, co-ops and other organization, to make additional contributions in the recipient’s honor (see below for more information). Honorees also receive a special co-op themed ceramic dish, hand thrown by Shelburne Falls, MA, potter Stephen Earp, in appreciation.

We are excited to announce that the recipient of the 2022 Neighboring Co-operator Award is Glenn Lower, General Manager at Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, who will be retiring at the end of March after twenty-eight years of service. Glenn was nominated by both his own Board of Directors and by Kari Bradley, General Manager at Hunger Mountain Co-op, and received enthusiastic support from the Board and Staff at NFCA.

As noted by those nominating him, Glenn is a humble person and extraordinary leader. Most notable is his complete commitment to co-operative values and to the people around him. He takes time to genuinely connect with members, staff, and directors at his own co-op as well as those at food co-ops across our region and the United States. An outstanding and compassionate listener, Glenn is never too busy to take time to make meaningful connections. He is able to navigate challenging conversations with grace and genuine interest in understanding the perspective of other people. An active mentor to managers in his own co-op, Glenn is always

ready to offer a helping hand to other co-ops and has been an advocate of start-ups and the next generation of co-operators.

Glenn was also a leader in the group of co-operators that would form the NFCA, serving on



the steering committee, the hiring committee for our first Executive Director, and later as President of the Board of Directors for six years. Even as he stepped down from that role, Glenn stayed actively involved in our collective work, from supporting member co-ops in challenging transitions to serving as a mentor for the General Manager of one of our startups working to open its doors this year. These are just a couple of examples of Glenn’s deep and enduring commitment to food co-operatives in his home community and beyond.

Glenn’s departure from Middlebury will leave a large gap at the co-op, as it will in our wider food co-op community. But we have no doubt that his presence will be felt in the contributions of so many people that he has supported over



The centrality of membership can be seen in all seven Co-operative Principles and it is one of the most powerful concepts.

In essence, membership means that there should be a special relationship between the co-operative and the people whose needs it is established to serve.

ICA, Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles (2015)



the years. And we are also reassured that he will find ways to continue to be involved in the activities of the NFCA as we work to support the shared success of our member co-ops and the advancement of our vision for a co-operative economy, rooted in a more healthy, just and sustainable food system.

Glenn joins a growing family of Neighboring Co-operators who have made extraordinary contributions to our work together, including Alex Gyori, former General Manager of Brattleboro Food Co-op and a founding NFCA Board Director; Terry Appleby, former General Manager of Co-op Food Stores, Hanover Consumer Co-operative

Society; Kay Litten, past Board Director of the NFCA and Co-op Food Stores, Hanover Consumer Co-operative Society; Roger Noonan, organic farmer and President of the New England Farmers Union; Patrice Lockert Anthony, past Board President of GreenStar Food Co-op; Joanne Todd, past NFCA Board Member and Director, Willimantic Food Co-op; and JQ Hannah, Assistant Director of Food Co-op Initiative (FCI).



CDF's Cooperative Education Fund supports the training and education of co-op staff and board members, offering the kind of assistance food co-ops need to open strong and stay competitive and providing over \$500,000 in grants since 1994.

The Fund:

- Assists with staff and board training and scholarships to attend professional conferences that allow them to network with peers and learn from industry experts
- Each year, the Fund offers 25 scholarships to CCMA, and provides over \$35,000 in grants.
- Supports participation in Up and Coming and Small and Strong Conferences

For more information and to make a donation to the Cooperative Education Fund in honor of Glenn Lower and all of our Neighboring Co-operators, please visit <https://www.cdf.coop/cooperative-education> and scroll down to the NFCA section of the page.



LIVING OUR CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Act Now for climate justice! This April, join NFCA co-ops across our region in the "Slash Your Trash" Challenge! Help your members and shoppers reduce waste while promoting our Co-ops' leadership in waste reduction and climate justice!

Learn more: www.nfca.coop/slashyourtrash



Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op celebrating Co-op Month 2021

TREASURER'S REPORT

Looking back on 2021, few of us knew what to expect. After two years, the economic and social impacts of the pandemic continue to be felt in our co-ops and communities, making our work together that much more important to the shared success of food co-ops across our region. As our co-ops have worked to support their customers, staff and local producers, we have been able to demonstrate our resilience and commitment to our communities, and the difference represented by our shared Co-operative Identity. By working together in solidarity, we have also been able to share ideas and innovations for overcoming our challenges, collaborate with partners in strengthening the regional food system, and work with organizations such as NCBA CLUSA and NCB to ensure that our co-ops were able to access pandemic relief from the Small Business Administration (SBA).



Rachel Watrous
NFCA Treasurer
Produce & Operations Manager
Fiddleheads Food Co-op

As mentioned in our Staff Report, we budgeted for a small loss of about \$10K in 2021 with the goal of continuing to build our capacity to serve our members at a challenging time while income was impacted by dues reductions primarily related to smaller co-ops and expansions. While dues abatement impacts our bottom line, we also consider it an investment in the future success of our member co-ops as well as that of our association as a whole. In this context, we are especially thankful for the support of our sponsors who helped us celebrate our 10th anniversary last year. We ended the year with a net loss of \$9,364, slightly better than budgeted.

Thanks to the contributions of our members and sound financial management over the past decade, our association has been able to build up sufficient reserves to be able to not only weather difficult times, but also dedicate resources to new initiatives as we've adapted to changing conditions. Annual retained earnings have averaged just above our goal of \$10,000 over the past decade, providing a strong foundation for organizational sustainability.

Looking toward 2022, we are projecting a loss of a little under \$15K as we utilize our reserves to continue to increase our staffing capacity and efforts to support and promote our co-ops as we work to recover from the impacts of the

pandemic. We are particularly excited to explore grant-funded projects in collaboration with the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) that will help us collaborate with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund, develop educational resources on the co-operative movement, and meet the needs of smaller, rural co-ops as we grow our association.

Thanks as always for support and contributions to this collective effort. We know that by working together and continuing to invest in our shared success, we can better serve our communities, develop strategies to address the dramatic changes around us, and emerge from the pandemic even stronger.

Rachel Watrous, Treasurer
Produce & Operations Manager, Fiddleheads Food Co-op



Support Fairness for Farmers!

As Congress begins negotiations on the next Farm Bill, now is an important time to strengthen the voice of Northeast producers and consumers. Sign up your food co-op as a member of the New England Farmers Union, and we'll send you 10 trial memberships to offer to your farmer-partners.

newenglandfarmersunion.org



Your Neighboring VERMONT FOOD CO-OPS
Locally owned by 49,330 people like you!

Last Year, Vermont Co-ops Sold Over \$46 Million in Local Products! THAT'S JUST PART OF THE STORY.
Food co-ops across the Northeast are working together to ensure access to healthy food, build good jobs and a just & sustainable food system for everyone!

VERMONT
 ○ Brattleboro Food Co-op, Brattleboro
 ○ Fiddleheads Food Co-op, Fiddleheads
 ○ Fiddleheads Food Co-op, St. Johnsbury
 ○ City Market, Union River Co-op
 ○ Downtown & South End, Burlington
 ○ Co-op Food Stores, White River Junction
 ○ Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier
 ○ Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, Middlebury
 ○ Montpelier Food Co-op, Montpelier
 ○ Plainfield Food Co-op, Plainfield
 ○ Putney Food Co-op, Putney
 ○ Rutland Area Food Co-op, Rutland
 ○ Springfield Food Co-op, Springfield
 ○ Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction

HUNGER MOUNTAIN FOOD CO-OP
celebrating 50 years deeply rooted in the community!

FIND A FOOD CO-OP NEAR YOU!

There's More to Your Local Food Co-op Than Great Food!
LEARN MORE AT WWW.NFCA.COOP

This NFCA Ad that appeared in 2022 NOFA-VT Winter Conference brochure. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) promotes organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.



River Valley Co-op celebrates Co-op Month 2021 with co-op producer Cabot Creamery Co-operative.

2021 FINANCIALS

BALANCE SHEET

	Dec 31, '21	Dec 31, '20
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking & Savings	\$192,786.58	\$189,844.09
Accounts Receivable	\$16,792.88	\$22,424.86
Other Current Assets	\$2,991.90	\$5,710.07
Fixed Assets	\$3,235.48	\$767.96
Other Assets		
Co-op Memberships	\$1,280.00	\$1,280.00
Loans & Investments	\$9,214.24	\$7,148.88
Total Assets	\$226,301.08	\$227,175.86
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	\$25,149.43	\$16,860.55
Long Term Liabilities	\$87,200.00	\$87,200.00
Total Liabilities	\$112,349.43	\$104,060.55
Equity		
Unallocated Reserve	\$600.00	\$600.00
Paid in Member Equity	\$3,000.00	\$2,800.00
Unallocated Earnings	\$119,715.31	\$76,391.69
Net Income	\$(9,363.66)	\$43,323.62
Total Equity	\$113,951.65	\$123,115.31
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$226,301.08	\$227,175.86



FCA Startup Member Dorchester Food Co-op in Dorchester, MA, is hiring a General Manager and planning to open their doors in 2022.



Springfield Food Co-op celebrates Co-op Month 2021.

PROFIT & LOSS

	Jan - Dec '21	Jan - Dec '20
INCOME		
Member Dues	\$201,170	\$176,972
Frozen Food Sales	\$13,808	\$18,208
Program Sponsorship	\$36,650	\$22,850
Consulting	\$10,173	\$17,336
Other Income	\$12,695	\$63,153
Total Income	\$274,496	\$298,519
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$(15,464)	\$(9,670)
Gross Income	\$259,032	\$288,849
EXPENSE		
Interest Expense	\$426	\$-
Board of Directors	\$205	\$-
Personnel	\$220,826	\$196,827
Activities	\$38,823	\$39,833
Other	\$8,115	\$8,865
Total Expense	\$268,395	\$245,525
Net Income	\$(9,364)	\$43,324



NFCA Startup Member Assabet Co-op Market (Maynard, MA) will open their doors in 2022! General Manager Sam McCormick is participating in our new NFCA GM Mentor Program, supporting start-ups as they near opening.

Rendering by Amanda Williams Galvin



Co-operatives are more than just an economic entity: they also encompass social and cultural needs and aspirations.

ICA (ICA), Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles: Member Economic Participation (2015:33)

NFCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*Sue Miller
NFCA President
Co-General Manager
Upper Valley Food Co-op
White River Junction, VT*

Sue Miller has been an employee of the Upper Valley Food Co-op since 2004 and the Co-General Manager for the past 10 years. Prior to joining UVFC, she spent time as an accountant and as the owner of a small herbal products business. Also, for the past 20 years, she has been a licensed acupuncturist and herbalist. When not at the UVFC or seeing patients, she loves to garden and work with the energies of nature. Sue is passionate about all things health- and food-related. She is particularly interested in helping to develop a safe, local food system in the Northeast region, as well as a distribution network to support a strong local economy that provides healthy food for all. Sue feels that being a Board Member of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association allows her to more actively use her skills and passion in the creation of a local food system.



*John Crane
NFCA Vice President
General Manager
Portland Food Co-op
Portland, ME*

John Crane began his career in the co-operative world in 2002, when he was hired as the supplement buyer for the Rising Tide Co-op in Damariscotta, Maine. During his nine-year tenure at Rising Tide, he served as Grocery Manager, Point of Sale Manager, and Assistant General Manager. In 2012, while working as the Information Services Manager for a Portland company, he joined the Portland Food Co-op buying club (the retail store had not yet opened). He served on both the business planning and space design committees during their start-up phase and also served on the Board of Directors. In 2015, John left the Board to become the co-op's General Manager.



*Rachel Watrous
NFCA Treasurer
Produce & Operations
Manager
Fiddleheads Food Co-op
New London, CT*

Rachel has served on the staff at Fiddleheads Food Co-op since 2014, beginning as a coordinator before moving into a leadership role in the Produce Department. After around 3 years, she was selected to become the Project Manager on a kitchen buildout and then in 2018 was promoted to oversee both the Prepared Foods and Produce Department as the Fresh Department

Manager and also serves as the designated Interim General Manager. She believes that it is essential for communities to influence and shape businesses and believes that co-ops are a key player in a thriving community. She values NFCA for our support and focus on a bigger picture. The NFCA is less prescriptive than some other organizations and instead holds space for member c-ops to brainstorm, hone best practices, and share information. She cares deeply about growing the co-op movement and empowering communities, and that it is important that we steward this NFCA to thrive in the future.

Michael has been an active participant in food co-ops since the early seventies. He's served on the Putney Food Co-op Board since 1990, is currently Board President, and is passionate about the co-operative business model. Michael has been a Putney representative to the NFCA since its inception and was elected to the Board in 2015. He feels that the NFCA is a unique and successful organization that is strengthening regional co-ops and our communities, leading the way toward a more integrated and effective Co-operative Economy. Michael is a retired building contractor.



*Michael Wells
NFCA Secretary
Board President
Putney Food Co-op
Putney, VT*

Katharine has been involved in co-ops since the early 70s and continues to have a commitment and passion toward furthering the Co-operative Movement and the mission of NFCA. She has been part of the Collective Management Team at Buffalo Mountain Co-op for over 15 years and was originally hired to open and manage their café. Currently, she is the Board-Staff liaison and the Development Manager.



*Katherine Arnold
NFCA Board Member
Marketing & Member
Relations/Director
Buffalo Mountain Co-op
Hardwick, VT*

Kathleen joined Willimantic Food Co-op in 1985 and has been serving on the Board of Directors for many years including over ten years as Board Chair. Living and working in the great Northeast has shaped her values and thinking as they relate to food access in rural areas, the co-operative model in our communities,



*Kathleen Krider
NFCA Board Member
President
Willimantic Food Co-op
Willimantic, CT*



and the relationship between food and the local economy. By day Kathleen is a mild mannered (never) Nonprofit Administrator, working to serve those living in poverty and by night she is an energized participant in many of the opportunities available to those living and loving it in Northeastern Connecticut.

she values working collaboratively to strengthen our co-operative economy and sustainable local food systems. She is especially proud to serve NFCA because it works to build collaborative partnerships to make healthy food more broadly available while simultaneously supporting our local producers. She believes the more we invest in our community, the stronger and more resilient we become.

Faye has served on the Board of Directors of City Market / Onion River Co-op in Burlington, VT since 2012 and has just wrapped up three years as the Board President. She has been an active member of the Co-op since moving to Burlington in 2008, hooked on the co-operative model since day one. Faye is the Advocacy and Education Director for Hunger

Free Vermont, a nonprofit dedicated to ending the injustice of hunger and malnutrition for all Vermonters through systems change. She has a background in policy, community development, economics, and organizational management.

Mary has worked at Hunger Mountain Co-op for 17 years and currently serves as Storekeeping Manager, overseeing Receiving, Facilities, the Managers on Duty, safety/security and is also the designated Interim General Manager. Her time at the co-op has provided her with a sound natural food/co-operative retail background

and further developed her project management and leadership skills. She particularly enjoys serving on the NFCA Board of Directors because

Before coming to the Co-op community in 2010, **Chris** had a diverse twenty-year background in the conventional grocery industry. During that time, he moved from Front End management to store management, as well as performing duties as a district auditor and inventory management trainer for ten New Hampshire and Vermont stores.

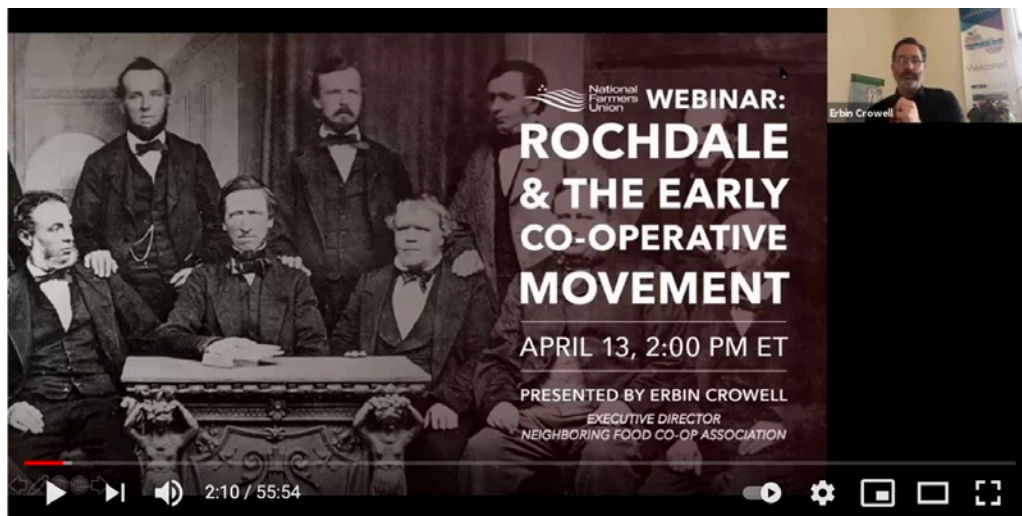
Arriving at the Littleton Food Co-op during its first year of business, he assisted in developing the procedures and structure for front-of-store operations, HR practices. As the store grew and expanded, he moved on to Store Operations management, helping coordinate the various departments with scheduling, ordering, and growth opportunities.

When not at the Co-op, **Chris** enjoys maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Hiking, biking, and skiing are just a few activities he fits in between work shifts. His small photography business works to bring awareness to environmental concerns and sustainability. Being part of the co-op family has brought his focus on the need for accessible

and affordable healthy food options for everyone. The support that we can lend to local growers and producers is immense, and in turn, this support will enrich our community and help promote the co-operative model.

In order to ensure the sustainability of any co-operative enterprise, the skills set of all board members and senior managers must include a clear vision and understanding of the Co-operative Values and Principles.

ICA, Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles (2015:54)



Rochdale & The Early Co-operative Movement, part of a National Farmer's Union co-op education webinar series presented by Erbin Crowell. Find all of the videos on our YouTube channel!

NFCA STAFF



Erbin Crowell
Executive Director

Erbin was hired as Executive Director in 2010 to guide the incorporation and development of the NFCA in keeping with the vision, goals and priorities established by its member co-ops. He brings more than 25 years of experience in co-operative enterprise, Fair Trade, and sustainable food

systems, including work with Equal Exchange, the Cooperative Fund of New England, the Cooperative Development Institute, and the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops, and as a consultant with organizations such as the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund. Erbin currently serves on the boards of directors of the National Cooperative Business Association, CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA), DotCooperation, LLC, the New England Farmers Union, and the Co-operative Management Education Co-operative (CMEC). He received his B.A. in Anthropology from Brown University and his Master of Management: Co-operatives & Credit Unions from Saint Mary's University in Nova Scotia and is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he has taught courses on the co-operative movement. A garlic enthusiast, Erbin grows and markets more than 15 heirloom varieties through his local food co-op, with much help from his family.



Bonnie Hudspeth
Co-operative
Development

Prior to joining the NFCA, **Bonnie** served as Project Manager for the start-up of Monadnock Food Co-op, creating the founding organizational structure and overseeing pre-operational development and fundraising to create a co-operatively owned grocery store in Keene, NH, that opened in April of 2013.

She serves as President on the Board of Trustees of the Cooperative Fund of the Northeast (CFNE), a community development loan fund that facilitates socially responsible investing in co-operatives, community-oriented non-profits, and worker-owned businesses in New England and adjacent communities in New York. Bonnie holds a master's degree in Sustainable Community Development through Antioch University New England.

Suzette has been involved with food co-ops continuously since the mid 80's, serving as volunteer, staff, and in board of directors capacities. Prior to joining the NFCA, she held the position of Co-General Manager at Franklin Community Co-op and served on the board of NFCA. Suzette is currently on the board of the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops as a Stakeholder Director and is a founding board member of the Valley Co-operative Business Association. Suzette holds a Master of Management: Co-operatives & Credit Unions from Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia.



Suzette Snow-Cobb
Food System
Development

Alexis Alexander joined the NFCA in early 2021. Prior to working in co-operatives, Alexis gained experience in business and retail management, training and development, and consumer marketing research, working predominately in the supermarket and consumer packaged goods industries. She was the Membership Manager at GreenStar Food Co-op for 11 years, helping to increase member engagement through enhanced programming and events, and improved membership systems, tracking, and reporting processes. She also developed the FLOWER healthy food access program and played an integral role in GreenStar's multifaceted approach to diversity, equity and inclusion, which successfully increased the diversity of both GreenStar staff and membership. Alexis serves on both the CCMA Planning Committee and Awards Committee. She holds a BS in Nutritional Sciences from Cornell University and an MBA from Michigan State University.



Alexis Alexander
Peer Collaboration &
Technical Support



The NFCA "Neighboring Co-operators" Team won the coveted "Most Co-op Spirit Award" at CDF's Co-op 5k in 2021, joining nearly 500 participants and 26 teams to support the Cooperative Development Foundation in raising over \$56,000 to support our co-operative movement! For more information on how to sign up for this year's Co-op 5K, 23-29 April 2022, e-mail info@nfca.coop!



NFCA MEMBER REGISTER 2021

MEMBER CO-OPERATIVES

1. **Belfast Co-op**, Belfast, ME (Joined 2021)
2. **Blue Hill Co-op**, Blue Hill, ME (2017)
3. **Brattleboro Food Co-op**, Brattleboro, VT (2011)
4. **Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op**, Hardwick, VT (2011)
5. **Cambridge Food Co-op**, Cambridge, NY (2019)
6. **City Market/Onion River Co-op**, Burlington, VT (2011)
7. **Fiddleheads Natural Foods Co-op**, New London, CT (2012)
8. **Flatbush Food Co-op**, Brooklyn, NY (2018)
9. **Franklin Community Co-op (Green Fields Co-op Market, Greenfield, MA, and McCusker's Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls, MA)** (2011)
10. **GreenStar Food Co-op**, Ithaca, NY (2016)
11. **Hanover Co-op Food Stores**, Hanover & Lebanon, NH, and White River Junction, VT (2011)
12. **High Falls Food Co-op**, High Falls, NY (2021)
13. **Hunger Mountain Co-op**, Montpelier, VT (2011)
14. **Leverett Village Co-op**, Leverett, MA (2011)
15. **Littleton Food Co-op**, Littleton, NH (2011)
16. **Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op**, Middlebury, VT (2011)
17. **Monadnock Food Co-op**, Keene, NH (Associate 2012, Opened 2013)
18. **Morrisville Food Co-op**, Morrisville, VT (Associate 2013, Opened 2017)
19. **Old Creamery Co-op**, Cummington, MA (2012)
20. **Plainfield Food Co-op**, Plainfield, VT (2011)
21. **Portland Food Co-op**, Portland, ME (2016)
22. **Putney Food Co-op**, Putney, VT (2011)
23. **Quabbin Harvest Co-op**, Orange, MA (2014)
24. **River Valley Co-op**, Northampton, MA (2011)
25. **Rutland Area Food Co-op**, Rutland, VT (2011)
26. **Springfield Food Co-op**, Springfield, VT (2012)
27. **Upper Valley Food Co-op**, White River Junction, VT (2011)
28. **Urban Greens Co-op Market**, Providence, RI (Associate 2012, Opened 2019)
29. **Wild Oats Co-op Market**, Williamstown, MA (2011)
30. **Willimantic Food Co-op**, Willimantic, CT (2011)
31. **Wolfeboro Food Co-op**, Wolfeboro, NH (2019)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1. **Androscoggin Food Co-op**, Berlin, NH (2018)
2. **Assabet Co-op Market**, Maynard, MA (2012)
3. **Caledonia Food Co-op**, St. Johnsbury, VT (2020)
4. **Charles River Food Co-op**, Watertown, MA (2021)
5. **Common Share Food Co-op**, Amherst, MA (2012)
6. **Dorchester Food Co-op**, Dorchester, MA (2012)
7. **Electric City Co-op**, Schenectady, NY (2018)
8. **Great River Co-op**, Walpole, NH (2012)
9. **Kingston Food Co-op**, NY (2020)
10. **Mad River Market Co-op**, Winsted, CT (2017)
11. **Newburgh Food Co-op**, Newburgh, NY (2020)



Larger, more established co-operatives or co-operative groups should take a close interest in inter-co-operative engagement and links with smaller co-operatives, newer co-operatives and those at different stages of development. This is of mutual benefit in sustaining the co-operative commonwealth and in demonstrating the diversity and adaptability of the co-operative approach to business.

ICA, Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles (2015:77)

Congratulations

TO OUR NEIGHBORING CO-OPS
CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES IN 2021!



The more members, employees, politicians, and general public know about the social, cultural and economic benefits co-operatives bring to the table of humanity, the better protected our autonomy, independence, and democratic rights will be.

ICA, Guidance notes to Co-operative Identity, 2015:55



STATEMENTS & RESOLUTIONS

From our beginnings, the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) has held the Co-operative Identity at the center of its work and vision. This is visible in some of the formal statements made over the years, which are provided here as resources to our members as we consider the importance of our shared Values and Principles today and in the future.

The Middlebury Manifesto

We, the Cooperators of the Connecticut River Valley and nearby regions of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont,

in order to further the ideals of democracy, cooperation, autonomy and education as enshrined in the International Cooperative Principles,

to pursue public as distinct from private happiness,

to reorient the economy from one primarily dedicated to maximizing individual wealth to one calculated to advance the common good,

to promote regional autonomy in food production and other goods essential to human existence,

to strengthen our individual cooperative organizations,

to develop new insights and promote enlightenment about how we might achieve our common purposes,

to act upon our shared concerns about the long-term viability of our region and Planet Earth in general as a beautiful and thriving habitat for humans and all other forms of life,

to cultivate the bonds of friendship and mutual respect,

do hereby ordain and establish the *Connecticut Valley Neighboring Co-ops*, an alliance that will

seek and implement opportunities for common commercial activities that would be beneficial to all but inefficient if conducted by individual cooperatives,

share operational and organizational insights that will allow all participating cooperatives to benefit from the work of individual cooperatives,

provide occasions for collective action to build a cooperative economy in our geographic region,

develop leadership and management capacity for our individual cooperatives,

advance the state of knowledge in the fields of economics, finance, the sciences, law, politics, governance, philosophy and the arts, to the extent these disciplines inform our work and shared purposes,

provide a forum for gatherings that will allow us to further our purposes and build human connections, and

engender joy, enthusiasm and optimism among all who come into contact with our organization,

and to further these purposes do mutually pledge that we will devote such resources of our cooperatives as are necessary to advance the values and secure the ends for which we have come together, and that we personally will dedicate ourselves resolutely to this alliance so that cooperation achieves its potential in our region as a transformative mode of human endeavor.

Jo Alexander *Le Brink* *James G. Allen*
Paula Harris *Glen Nilan* *Glen Lowry*
Alex Gyori *Rebecca Harris* *Walt Whit*
Carol Whitaker *Patti Waters* *Paula Perry*
Sharon L. Mueller *Paul Richmond* *Paul Perry*

"If we appear to seek the unattainable, it has been said, then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable."
—Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society, 1962

"Changing times make it critical to find new and renewed ways of understanding and expressing cooperative up practices to business and society. Such new and renewed understandings are best developed on the basis of a deep comprehension of past and present experience. At the same time, imagination is critical."
—Brett Burdick, Three Strategic Concepts for Cooperatives

"But as public happiness depends, in this country, at least, on the personal character of its inhabitants at large, so the promotion of public happiness must, in a great measure, rest on personal exertions. Men [and women] of every description, who wish the end accomplished, must unite to furnish the means."
—Timothy Dwight, "The True Means of Establishing Public Happiness," 1795

A viable community is made up of neighbors who cherish and protect what they have in common.
—Wendell Berry, The Idea of a Local Economy

"Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 29

We must design a system where doing good is like falling off a log, where the natural, everyday acts of work and life accumulate into a better world as a matter of course, not a matter of conscious altruism.

—Paul Hawken, Ecology of Commerce

RESOLUTION ON 2012: THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES

- Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/136 on Co-operatives in Social Development proclaims the year 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives;
- Whereas, The theme of the International Year is Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World;
- Whereas, The Resolution recognizes that co-operatives “in their various forms, promote the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of all people, including women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, are becoming a major factor of economic and social development and contribute to the eradication of poverty”;
- Whereas, The Resolution encourages all relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the International Year to promote co-ops, to raise public awareness of the contribution of co-operative enterprise to social and economic development and to promote the formation and growth of co-ops;
- Whereas, The National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), ICA (ICA) and other organizations are promoting the International Year and encouraging co-ops to participate in related activities;
- Whereas, The co-operative business model has empowered people around the world to improve their lives and communities through economic and social progress;
- Whereas, Co-ops have proven resilient during the recent global recession, sustaining lives, livelihoods and communities;
- Whereas, Millions of co-operatives operate in every nation of the world, owned and governed by more than 1 billion members and employing 100 million people worldwide;
- Whereas, More than 29,000 co-operatives operate in the United States, securing 2 million jobs, generating annual revenues of \$652 billion and possessing assets of \$3 trillion;
- Whereas, Co-operatives are the people’s business, and for more than a century have been a vital part of the economy, spanning the local and regional to the global;
- Whereas, Co-ops operate across the economy, finding a broad range of expression in areas including food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, employment, finance, housing, healthcare and the arts;
- Whereas, Food co-ops have been pioneers and innovators in the areas of healthy food, sustainable agriculture, Fair Trade and relocalization of economies; and
- Whereas, The vision of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association is of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise. Now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That the Neighboring Food Co-op Association commits to:
1. Join with the NCBA, ICA and other organizations in supporting and celebrating the year 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives;
 2. Recognize and promote the vital role of co-ops in the economic and social well-being of communities in our region, across the United States and around the world;
 3. Celebrate the International Year of Co-operatives by engaging in efforts to raise the profile of co-operative enterprise, to demonstrate the benefits of co-ops in building local ownership and wealth, and to apply the co-operative model to new challenges and opportunities in our communities; and
 4. Encourage its member food co-ops, other co-operatives and credit unions, and allied organizations to become involved in efforts to support, celebrate and promote the International Year of Co-operatives.

Adopted by the Neighboring Food Co-op Association Board of Directors, 12th May, 2011



RESOLUTION ON THE CO-OPERATIVE LEGAL IDENTITY

- Whereas, Since the founding of the first successful co-operatives more than 150 years ago, co-operative enterprise has been defined and guided by values and principles that are today represented by the ICA's Statement on the Co-operative Identity (1995),
- Whereas, The co-operative business model has empowered people around the world to improve their lives, reduce poverty and develop their communities through member-owned and governed enterprise,
- Whereas, Co-ops are relevant across the economy, including food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, employment, finance, insurance, housing, healthcare and the arts,
- Whereas, Generations of activists and organizations have worked to establish co-operative statutes in the United States, enabling people to use co-operative enterprise to meet their needs and achieve shared goals and aspirations,
- Whereas, The statutes of some of the United States have recognized the unique nature of co-operative enterprise and prohibit the use of the term "co-op" or "co-operative" by any entity not duly incorporated as a co-operative and/or operating in a co-operative manner,
- Whereas, Co-operative enterprise has received increased attention in recent years as a democratic, participatory and sustainable alternative that is relevant to contemporary social, economic and environmental issues,
- Whereas, The ICA's Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade (2013) recognizes that "the co-operative sector has a legitimate interest in seeking to protect the integrity of the 'co-operative' word so it is not misused,"
- Whereas, The *Blueprint* asserts that statutes "play a critical role in the viability and existence of co-operatives" and seeks to ensure supportive legal frameworks that protect the Co-operative Identity,
- Whereas, The International Labour Organization in its Promotion of Co-operatives Recommendation (2002) calls on governments to "adopt specific legislation and regulations on co-operatives, which are guided by the co-operative values and principles,"
- Whereas, The Co-operative Law & Regulation Initiative's report, Enabling Co-operative Development: Principles for Legal Reform (2006), identifies the following priorities in protecting and promoting the Co-operative Identity:
- Protect the democratic character of co-operatives, vesting control of the organization in its members;
 - Protect the autonomy and independence of co-operatives from the government, persons, or entities other than members of the co-operative;
 - Protect the voluntary nature of membership in co-operatives, permitting membership to be determined by the co-operative, not mandated by law or government order; and
 - Protect and promote the responsibilities of membership, including the duties to contribute equitably to and democratically control the capital of the co-operative,
- Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/136 on Co-operatives in Social Development proclaimed the year 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives, encouraging governments to promote co-operative enterprise and "keep under review, as appropriate, the legal and administrative provisions governing the activities of co-operatives in order to enhance the growth and sustainability of co-operatives in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment..."
- Whereas, Co-operative development in many States is limited by a lack of statutes enabling the full diversity of co-operative forms, sectors and industries, Fair Trade and relocalization of economies; and
- Whereas, The ability of the co-operative movement to measure and communicate its impact and protect its unique character is hindered by the fact that many co-ops are incorporated under statutes other than those specific to co-operative enterprise,
- Whereas, There have been introduced in some state legislatures in the United States proposed statutes using the word "co-operative" that many have interpreted as not reflecting the values and principles of the Co-operative Identity,
- Whereas, Observers have noted increasing examples of enterprises that are described or promoted as "co-ops"

but that are not incorporated as co-operatives and/or do not demonstrate the co-operative values and principles in their structure and operation, such as democratic member ownership and control, and autonomy and independence from external organizations, capital and other interests,

Whereas, The Neighboring Food Co-op Association has in recent years joined with other organizations such as the New England Farmers Union and the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops in defending the integrity of co-operative statutes in our region,

Whereas, The vision of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association is of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Neighboring Food Co-op Association

1. Supports efforts by the ICA to clarify and protect the Co-operative Identity and to encourage the development on a global level of statutes that conform to the co-operative values and principles while facilitating the full potential of co-operative forms,
2. Commits to supporting these efforts, to protecting the integrity of co-operative statutes, and to promoting adherence to the Co-operative Identity in co-operative structure and operation,
3. Encourages organizations such as the National Co-operative Business Association, state and regional co-operative associations, and co-operative development organizations to support these efforts and the use of appropriate co-operative statutes,
4. Discourages the use of the term “co-operative,” “cooperative,” “co-op,” or “coop” to describe, market or otherwise promote any organization that is not duly incorporated as a co-operative under an appropriate statute and/or does not operate in a co-operative manner reflective of the Co-operative Identity,
5. Encourages people and organizations establishing co-ops and/or supporting co-operative development to use co-operative statutes rather than other legislation, and to include reference to the Co-operative Identity, including co-operative principles and values, in their documents such as articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies and measures of success,
6. Encourages the development of appropriate co-operative statutes in States that do not yet have them in place, provided that they conform to the Co-operative Identity and to established standards such as democratic member control, allocation of surplus based on patronage, and limited return on capital, and
7. Encourages its member food co-ops, other co-operatives and credit unions, and allied organizations to become involved in efforts to protect and promote the Co-operative Identity, to ensure the integrity of statutes and use of the co-operative name, and to promote use of the co-operative business model as an effective tool for self-help, poverty reduction, human development, and economic and social sustainability.

Adopted by the Neighboring Food Co-op Association Board of Directors, 2 June 2014



STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & DEMOCRACY

For over 170 years, the Co-operative Movement has stood for ideals of democracy, empowerment and inclusion — ideals that are at the heart of America's journey as a nation, and that we continue to strive toward today. From our beginnings, co-ops have celebrated human diversity and worked to bring people together to meet our needs and achieve our aspirations. In short, we believe that we are better when we are welcoming, when we lift one another up, and when we work together to make life better for everyone.

In keeping with the Principles of the ICA, our food co-ops work to ensure that our doors are open to all persons, “without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.” As community-owned enterprises, we value respectful dialog, debate, and participation as expressions of economic democracy. As organizations of people who depend on a healthy planet to survive and thrive, we are committed to the development of policies and strategies that will sustain our communities over time.

Today, we are witnessing levels of political, social, and economic division that we believe do not reflect our ideals as a nation. While we honor differences of opinion, we are concerned that actions made by the current administration are fundamentally at odds with American Principles of democracy, diversity and inclusion, as well as the Co-operative Values of equality, solidarity, and caring for others. Specifically, we are seeing

initiatives that we believe undermine human rights, immigration policies that exclude people based on their origins and religious beliefs, and initiatives that undercut efforts to slow climate change.

In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to being not just welcoming businesses, but empowering community enterprises. We seek to be positive resources and influences, presenting opportunities for constructive dialogs and collective actions for change. And we will explore ways that we can reach beyond our walls, advocating for policies that will contribute to democracy and equality, advance human rights, and support environmental sustainability.

As a federation of community-owned food co-ops, we seek to empower people to enjoy healthier lives, build stronger local communities, and provide good jobs. We advocate for a deeper sense of corporate social responsibility that includes democratic ownership, the full expression of human diversity and the needs of future generations. In taking this stand, we acknowledge that we can always do better and must challenge ourselves to live up to our Values and Principles. By working together, we believe that we can help build stronger communities, a more inclusive nation, and a better world for everyone.

Adopted by the Neighboring Food Co-op Association Board of Directors & Staff, October 2017



Plainfield Food Co-op staff rocking a cool Neighboring Food Co-ops Co-op Month 2021 rainbow button!

“Co-operatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility.”

UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon, Guidance notes to Co-operative Identity, 2015:90



11TH ANNUAL MEETING CO-OP KNOWLEDGE CONTEST!

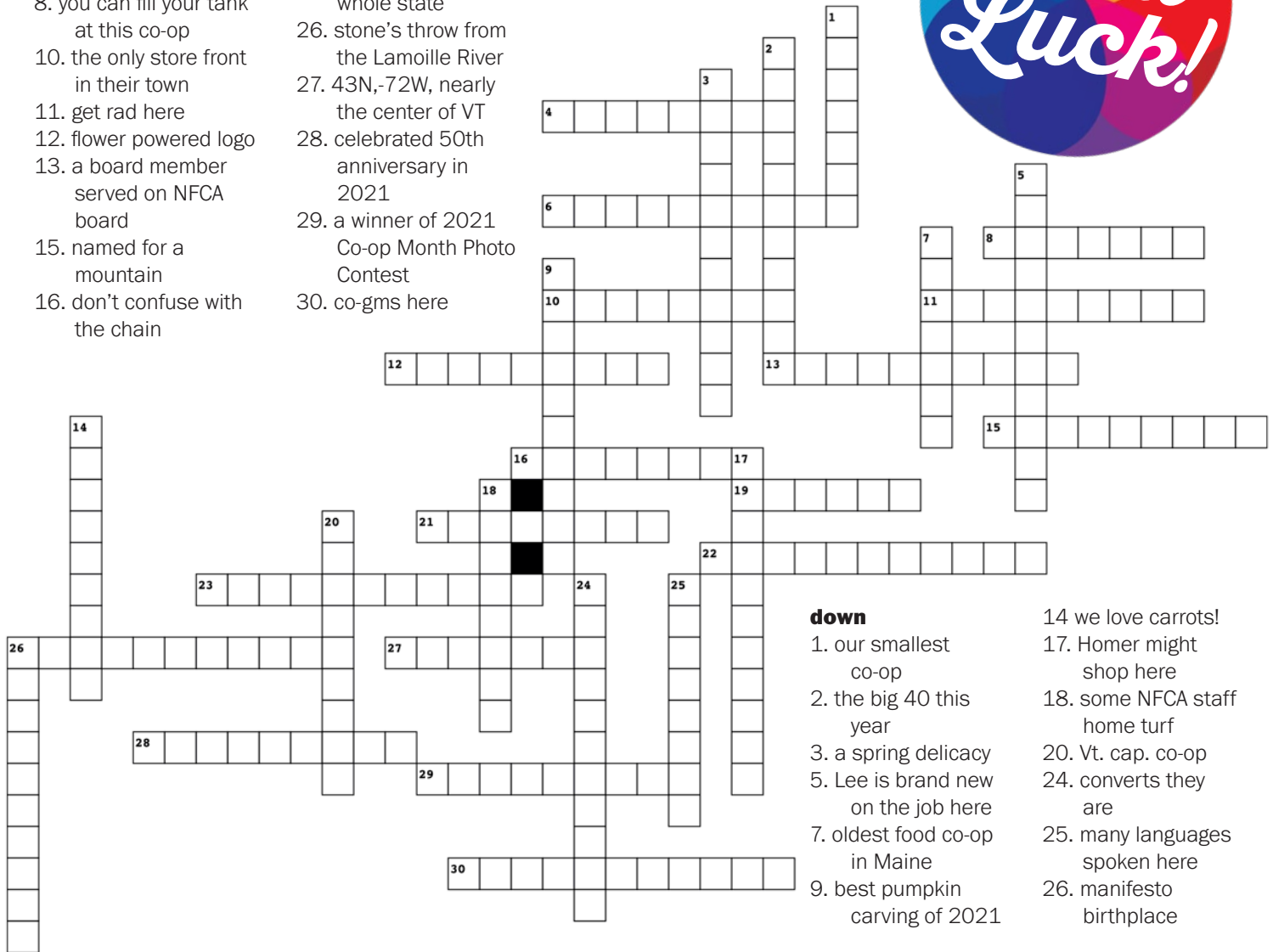
How well do you know your Neighboring Food Co-ops?

Annual Meeting attendees are invited to complete the #Neighborcoops crossword puzzle and be entered to win a \$500 CD credit toward the cost of educational programs with the International Centre for Co-operative Management at Saint Mary's University!

across

4. serving the peninsula since 1974
6. moving to new digs, abbr.
8. you can fill your tank at this co-op
10. the only store front in their town
11. get rad here
12. flower powered logo
13. a board member served on NFCA board
15. named for a mountain
16. don't confuse with the chain

19. first to join the NOFFP
21. blueberries logo
22. bears galore here!
23. represents the whole state
26. stone's throw from the Lamoille River
27. 43N,-72W, nearly the center of VT
28. celebrated 50th anniversary in 2021
29. a winner of 2021 Co-op Month Photo Contest
30. co-gms here



down

1. our smallest co-op
2. the big 40 this year
3. a spring delicacy
5. Lee is brand new on the job here
7. oldest food co-op in Maine
9. best pumpkin carving of 2021

- 14 we love carrots!
17. Homer might shop here
18. some NFCA staff home turf
20. Vt. cap. co-op
24. converts they are
25. many languages spoken here
26. manifesto birthplace

E-mail your entry, or text a photo of completed puzzle to Suzette@nfca.coop, 413.824.0232 by 3/25/2022 to be included in our drawing.

[You can also complete a digital version by clicking here: crosswordlabs.com/embed/2022-03-09-567](https://crosswordlabs.com/embed/2022-03-09-567)



**LIVING OUR
CO-OPERATIVE
IDENTITY**

march 19, 2022

