

MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT & CO-OP BOARD ELECTION BALLOT

*IT'S YOUR CO-OP*







Tam

## Board President's Report 2018

Well, so much has happened here at our Co-op during the past twelve months that it's hard to know where to begin. But for starters, we all pulled together and successfully completed an ambitious and complex store expansion project, adding many new and important features and capacities that will serve us well for decades. As with most aspects of our Co-op, it was people who made the difference. For example, Andrea Murray and Ashar Nelson of Vermont Integrated Architecture designed and oversaw countless solutions and efficiencies that are already paying off. Our general contractor, Naylor & Breen, was terrific to work with; hard-working, resourceful and creative. Owner's representative, Jeffry Glassberg, had the uncanny ability of being able to keep all phases of the project running on time and within budget. (When logistics seemed overwhelming, a few minutes with Jeff usually made things right with the world.)

Your Management team, including new Operations Manager, Greg Prescott, and all the store Staff were impressive in their focus, patience and good cheer throughout the months of racket and chaos. (To recognize the Staff's hard work, Board members prepared a lunch each month throughout the project and served it in the break room. There were soups, salads, savory crockpots and tons of chocolate, and we all sat around the big table and ate together. It was such a blast that the Board is going to continue Staff appreciation events in some form or other for the foreseeable future.)

It also goes without saying that our General Manager, Glenn Lower, raised the bar yet again on his performance as leader, problem-solver, communicator and friend. True to form, Glenn often seemed to be everywhere at once; outside in a hard hat, working in the deli, running meetings, and bagging at check-out. The range of Co-op tasks that

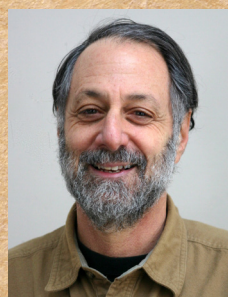


give meaning to his job is inspiring, and we are lucky to have him at the helm.

For its part, the Co-op's Board of Directors worked closely with the Management team throughout the project as your elected trustees and fiduciaries, providing yet another layer of oversight and support. Treasurer Lynn Dunton was especially helpful in contributing her professional financial expertise.

Now that the project is mostly behind us, and partly in response to current socio-economic and political conditions, the Board is working on strategies to extend our Co-op's benefits further and more broadly into our greater community in order to engage and serve a more broadly diverse constituency. Everyone has the right to healthy food and a seat at the table, and we want all people within our reach to hear the message stated in our orientation handbook: Regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status, national origin or ancestry, place of birth, disability, and genetic information, you are welcome at the Co-op. As this initiative rolls out, we will keep you closely informed because this is a perfect example of work that is stronger when done together.

I also want to express our special thanks to Jay Leshinsky, who will be stepping down from the Board after more than ten years of service. A master gardener by trade, Jay has been part of our Co-op since the train station days. He joined the Board in 2007 and worked as its president for five years. Having served as Jay's vice-president before reluctantly becoming chair, I can



Jay

say that he is an exceptionally skilled mentor and kind-hearted man who has been crucial to getting us to where we are today. (When he announced his intention to step down as president, I asked him to remain on the Board for another three years to ensure the best transition, and he



agreed. That's really going the distance for us all, and we won't forget it.)

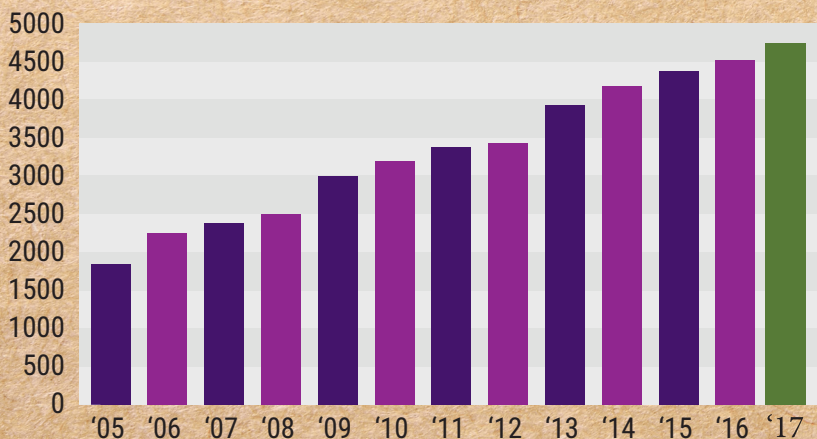
Another MNFC icon who will be retiring from Co-op work is Reiner Winkler. Department manager, newsletter editor and dedicated, pony-tailed, beret-sporting cooperator for twenty-six years, it will be hard to not see him striding through the aisles radiating his inimitable sense of purpose. Thank you, Reiner.



Reiner

Most importantly though, thank you, each and every member-owner. You stood by the Co-op for the past twelve months so faithfully that sales remained positive the entire time, which speaks volumes about the loyalty, trust and resilience we have here. It also points to a strong future in which we will continue to nourish our community in vital ways for many years to come. Hope to see you at the Annual Meeting. –Tam

## Member-Owner Count







Glenn

## General Managers Report 2018

Dear Member Owners,

Our expanded store was our major accomplishment over the past year. We began construction in the spring of 2017. Eight months later, we finished on time and within budget before the holiday season began. The culmination of three years of work, this expansion was a major effort from all our stakeholders, including YOU, the member-owners. We couldn't have done it without you, our hard working staff, and the wonderful team of *Naylor & Breen*, and *Vermont Integrated Architecture*.

Members and customers continue to tell us how much they are enjoying the new store with all the new offerings and the added space. We've been experiencing double digit sales growth for many of the fresh departments: produce, dairy, cheese, meat, bread and deli ... also wellness. These areas received the greatest increase in space and new equipment.



**Our Deli** team is excited with the start of our new hot bar program, which they've rolled out slowly at first, open Mon-Fri for lunch. We hope to expand the hot bar to more hours and days of the week sometime this year. Great job to the deli team for managing all the changes and challenges of relocating to a much bigger department.



**Dairy** gained five additional doors in an expanded walk-in cooler. That team has been working hard to keep up with demand and bringing in requested new products.



**Bread** - thank you customers for your patience as we worked to find the right home for our bread. Since moving bread to the back corner, customers have stopped asking, "where's the bread?" We take that as a good sign that we got it right this time.





**Meat** has been a new adventure. Brian is our first meat coordinator, cutting meat and seafood in the new prep room. In just a few months, he has re-developed this department producing a 25-30% sales increase.



**Bulk** is bucking the national trend of declining sales of bulk in co-ops all across the country. We are seeing a positive growth of 6%. Last month, we celebrated **Reiner Winkler**, our beloved manager of **Bulk/Cheese/Dairy** departments, who is retiring May 1st after 26 years. Reiner was also editor of the newsletter for most of that time. We look forward to serving him as a customer for years to come, especially if he brings his grandchildren with him!



The packaged **Grocery** footprint stayed the same from the old store to the new store. **Frozen** has the same 15 doors we had before. We actually shrunk the foot print of **Beer/Wine**, but made them easier to shop (all in one place). Making each aisle one-foot wider and other changes in the layout have dramatically helped us meet customer needs.



**Produce** gained more open space making it easier to shop. Staff are working hard to keep up with the growing demand for fresh local and organic fruits and veggies.



**Wellness** is happy with their new layout and attractive new shelving, and wider aisles.



The **Cashier Team** has grown by two more checkout lanes and a customer service desk that is still a work in progress. Stay tuned.



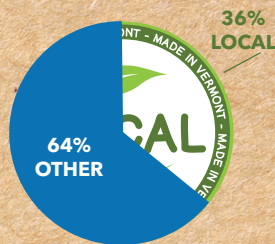
**The Board** - I was privileged to spend an entire day in March with your Board of Directors as we thought about the future. I came away totally in awe of these elected leaders who have devoted so much of their time to represent the almost 4,924 households, mostly in Addison County that own this community store. Their question is what more can the Co-op be doing to better serve our community?



**Jay Leshinsky** is retiring this June from the Board after serving for 11 years, five of those years as board president. Thank you Jay for your outstanding leadership and hard work to make the Co-op as great as it is today.



Total store sales have grown to almost \$15 million, or 5% over last year. Sales of **LOCAL** continue to grow from almost 250 Vermont producers who deliver to us directly from their farms or production facilities. Staff are proud that LOCAL sales have hit a new high of 36% of total sales, up from 34% last year. During this year we've focused on providing better value through our sales programs: the **Weekly Sale** of six products advertised in the *Addy Indy*, the **Member Deals** where each week members get 20% off



products from a producer that embraces our Co-op values; **Co+op Basics** ... look for the purple signs to find everyday low prices.



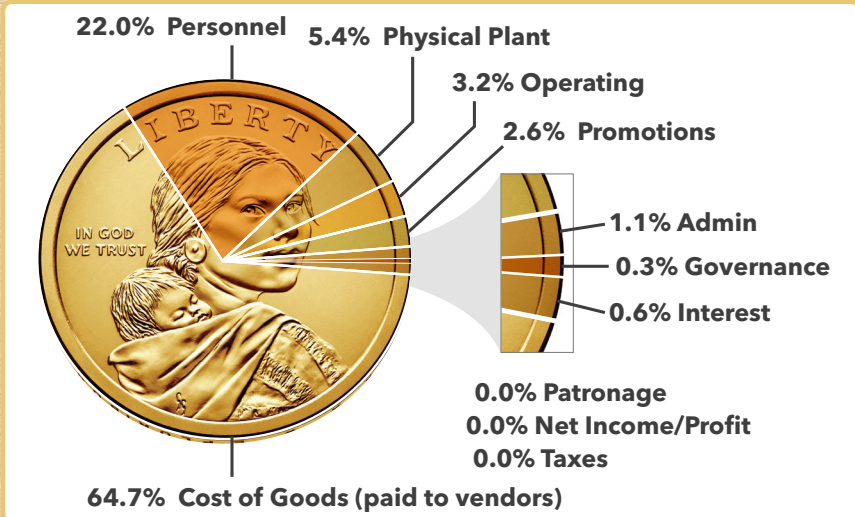
Each quarter we've sponsored a **Rally for Change** that allows customers to round-up their purchase to the nearest dollar, with all proceeds going to programs in Addison County that serve "at-risk" populations.

You are invited to our 42nd **Annual Meeting** at *American Flatbread* on Wednesday, June 6th at 5:30pm. I look forward to talking to you about the Co-op's past, present and future.

Thank you,



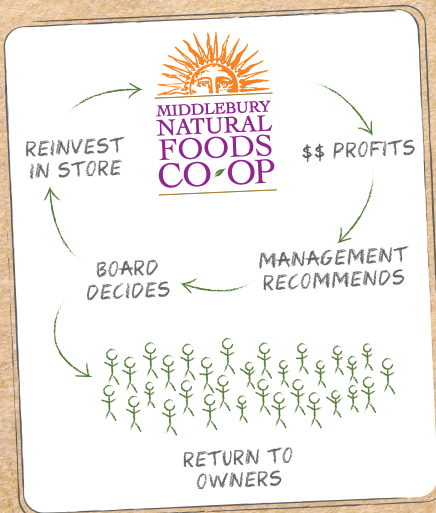
# Here is a representation of how each \$1.00 you spend at the Co-op is typically used



*\*Estimated data. As of writing this report, our accountants have not yet completed closing our year end financial tally.*

*Absolute financial information will be available by the annual meeting in May.*

## 2018 Patronage Refund Update



Patronage refunds are the cooperative way of sharing our profits with member-owners. Because we had some big expenses related to expansion this year, our financial plan predicted that there would be no profit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018. If there is no profit, there can't be any profits to share, and thus no patronage refund checks mailed out this July.

We are working hard in our newly expanded Co-op and expect to be back to making a profit in the new fiscal year April 2018 - March 2019. Profitability is healthy for the business, so we want to get back there as soon as possible.

**Your support is critical to that success.**



When planning our most recent expansion, one of our biggest considerations was how to expand and still increase energy efficiency. In February, we got some great news from Efficiency Vermont about the effectiveness of that planning - and some cash back, too! We thought we'd share their letter with you:



www.efficiencyvermont.com  
888-921-5990 | 802-860-4095

February 12, 2018

Glenn Lower  
Middlebury Natural Foods Coop  
9 Washington St  
Middlebury VT 05753

Re: Middlebury Natural Foods Coop - Renovation and Addition, Efficiency Vermont Project # 6014-BL54

Dear Mr. Lower:

We commend Middlebury Natural Foods Coop's focus on improving the energy efficiency with your building expansion project. Based on the information you provided, we estimate that the Efficiency Improvements at your Facility will save you approximately \$15,100 per year at current energy rates (see table below). In addition, we estimate the Efficiency Improvements will reduce statewide energy consumption, and improve our environment by saving an estimated 105,000 kWh of electricity, and 117,000 pounds of carbon emissions per year.

Efficiency Vermont is pleased to provide a cash incentive of \$22,531 for completion of Middlebury Natural Foods Coop's efficiency improvements as further described in the attached "Scope of Efficiency Improvements."

Project Economics

Estimated Cost of Efficiency Improvements	\$66,355
Efficiency Vermont Incentive	\$22,531
Your Net Cost After Incentives	\$43,824
Estimated First-Year Energy Savings	\$15,118
Estimated Simple Payback Period	2.9 years
Estimated Average Lifetime of Efficiency Improvements	12 years
Estimated Rate of Return on Your Investment (pretax)	34 %

Please review and sign the enclosed Incentive Agreement, Scope of Efficiency Improvements and Terms and Conditions of the Efficiency Vermont Incentive Agreement. This Incentive Agreement must be signed by you and returned to Efficiency Vermont within thirty (30) days from Efficiency Vermont's signature below and will only become effective when signed by both parties. It's been a pleasure working with you and your business. If you have any questions about the Incentive Agreement, or want to discuss any aspect of this project, please contact me at 802-540-7607.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Carpenter".

Charlie Carpenter  
Energy Consultant



## **The MNFC Board of Directors**

The Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors that is elected by its member-owners. The Board is directly accountable to member-owners for all of the activities and accomplishments of the Co-op, including the store. However, the Board does not “micro-manage” the Co-op or its General Manager, but sets policies by which the Co-op (and the Board) are run.

### **The MNFC Board is responsible for:**

Developing, monitoring, and revising policies that guide the store to achieve outcomes that are consistent with the members’ values and vision.

Ensuring (through consistent monitoring) that management achieves goals set by the Board and that the Board operates according to its established processes. Acting as a representative for all of the Co-op’s member-owners.

**Board members hold their positions for three-year terms, and elections are held every Spring.**



*The MNFC Co-op Board*

### **How Do I Bring An Issue Before the Board?**

We encourage members to be active in their participation.

**Contact the Board: [board@middlebury.coop](mailto:board@middlebury.coop)**



## 2018 BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATES

This year there are four(4) available seats on the Board of Directors.

Voting will happen in May, votes must be received to your co-op by Saturday May 26th, 2018 - before 7:00pm.

Election results will be announced at the annual meeting Wednesday June 6th at American Flatbread, Middlebury

### Candidates were asked to answer the following questions:

- 1. Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?*
- 2. Briefly describe any experience you have had with cooperatives or not for-profit organizations*
- 3. What has been your experience working with groups and what is your approach to group dynamics?*
- 4. Is there anything else you would like the membership to know about you?*





## Tasha Ball



Tasha

I have been a member-owner of the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op since my family moved to Vermont in 1991. I have memories of shopping in the original store as a child— perusing the bulk bins, waiting while my mom talked with friends, and hoping for a chocolate Earth ball or fruit leather for the ride home. After working at the co-op for three years, I ventured far and wide, seeing the world and gaining a degree in Human Ecology. Now at 33, I've chosen to settle in this community. I live in Bristol with my nine-month-old son, husband, and our dog. Our lives are built around community and food. We love to eat and we take great care in choosing and preparing food for friends and family.

When I think of The Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op, I think of integrity— integrity for the planet, for our relationships with each other, and for ourselves. Co-op members show this through our actions and choices. By shopping at the Co-op, we know the food meets strict buying criteria, and that it is being sold to us by an organization that is fair and honest in their practices.

I am running for the board because I would like to use my skills to support the Co-op's important work within our community. I currently work as the Administrative Director for the Willowell Foundation, a local non-profit. In this position I organize events, write grants, create new programming, oversee existing programs, and report to our Board of Directors. In college, I served on my school's governance committees. I have had many opportunities, both professionally and volunteering, to work in groups of all sizes. I am able to seamlessly navigate relationships with people of all ages and walks of life. As a board member I have much to offer in the way of communication, strategic planning, and community engagement. I hope to learn from this experience while sharing my expertise. I see joining the Co-op board as a way to contribute to the future of our local community and the world my son will grow up in.



## Nadine Barnicle (INCUMBENT)



Nadine

I could never have imagined three years ago when I first ran for the Co-op board what three years would change. Not personally, not professionally, certainly not politically at the national or state level, AND lastly, not as a Co-op board member. While the Co-op staff and board have responded beautifully to the needs, wishes and responsibilities of us, the member-owners - the rest of our lives including work, family, community service, politics have also been transitioning. Is it any wonder we all need the Co-op more than ever to nourish our bodies and souls? Every dollar we member-owners spend at the Co-op is attached to values that I count on to get me out of bed in the morning. My husband and I are nearly empty nesters and my life's work continues to evolve in the most luscious ways.

I am proud to have been a tiny part of the Co-op's evolution these last three years as a member of the Board of Directors. We - the staff and board - have lived and thrived through an amazing expansion. The staff has fully established its social media presence and has transitioned its monthly print newsletter into a quarterly full size full color print newsletter - and, launched monthly e-newsletters! As the Communications Committee chair I have worked to establish the board's presence in these publications with monthly stories and quarterly articles.

As a member of Glenn's Expansion Committee, I helped spirit the planning process for the expansion, ultimately helping select the best designers to develop our new spaces. I then got to step back a little to watch the expansion project emerge from and through the dust. We've adjusted our energy impact, expanded food choices and our community reach while remaining competitive in a somewhat volatile grocery store market.

The Board works at a policy and visionary level and stays out of the weeds while working with and for Glenn and you, as a member-owner. I'd like to remain on the board for a second term to continue to help fulfill our mission of bringing together a healthy local economy and healthy food choices.



## Lynn Dunton (INCUMBENT)



Lynn

I have served on the Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative Board of Directors in the role of Treasurer for the past three years. I came onto the Board as the Community Conversations were wrapping up and plans for the Expansion Project were unfolding. For me, it was an exciting time to join the Board! I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the Expansion Project from inception to completion. It was amazing to witness the collaborative/collective efforts of staff, members, visitors, and the construction team throughout the project. A friend recently shared the following quote with me "A community is a group of people who agree to grow together." For me, this quote exemplifies why the Expansion Project was so successful.

For me, the Middlebury Co-op is more than a grocery store. I feel a deep sense of community, connection, and belonging because of my interactions with Staff, the Board, and Middlebury Co-op members. As I think about a second term and life beyond the expansion, my interest moves to how we make the Co-op a more inclusive community. A place where everyone truly feels welcome! The Co-op is committed to exploring, understanding and figuring out what it can do better to support cooperative values of inclusion and accessibility. I want to participate in these important conversations.

Being a member of the Board has been a gratifying experience. I have learned much about the issues, concerns, and inner workings of food cooperatives from fellow Board members, Glenn, and the Staff. It has truly been a privilege to be a part of this wonderful organization. I am just hitting my stride and feel that I have more to learn and contribute to the Middlebury Food Co-op. For this reason, I would like very much to continue serving on the Board. I hope you will consider supporting my candidacy in the upcoming election.



## Alice Eckles



Alice

I love my co-op and I'm ready to serve. With steadfast heart and flexible outside of the box thinking I would work to help create policy to keep the co-op true to the values codified in the ends: healthy foods, vibrant local economy, environmentally sustainable practices, and cooperative democratic ownership. Food accessibility is another important value that is close to my heart, especially when it comes to healthy food for children and families. Now more than ever we need to be vigilant about the health of our bodies, our democracy, and our finances. Working with others on strengthening the coop's ability to help and serve member owners would give me great satisfaction because this work is important to the resilience of our community.

I work as the chef at College Street Children's Center in Middlebury, until recently a nonprofit. When I took the job I initiated changes in where we buy our food so that we could incorporate more local and organic food by setting up accounts at the MNFC, Elmer Farm, and Black River, and Monument Farms. I'm also a shiitake grower producing fresh log grown mushrooms for MNFC. Years ago Montpelier's Hunger Mountain Co-op was my first wholesale account for my fortune cookie business helping Alice's Arts get its start. My involvement with co-ops began in 1986 as a new mother I was a member worker of the Brattleboro food Co-op, next I was a member worker at Hunger Mountain co-op, and still later I was a member worker at Burlington's Onion River/City Market co-op. The ability of co-ops like MNFC to incubate local businesses and entrepreneurs is a treasure to be preserved and utilized.

I've worked with others in various groups, political groups, writing groups, book groups, staff groups, hiking/bird watching groups etc. I've observed that sometimes groups work well or less well depending on if everyone's voice is heard and valued, basic needs for the duration of the meeting are met for everyone present, meetings are time efficient and involve a practice of joy and purpose.



## Sophie Esser Calvi



*Sophie*

Food is a medium for cultivating wellbeing in people, place and the planet. I have dedicated my life to this work. My last name is Esser, which literally means "eater" in German. My whole life has revolved around food on a local to global scale. Being a first generation German American, with close ties to Europe, I bring a varied perspective about food systems on a personal and professional level. I grew up in a northern CA agricultural community and have a BA from Middlebury College in International Studies/ Women Gender studies. I helped start the College garden while I was a student. My masters degree is "Food Culture and Communications" from UNISG in Italy. I also have a background in international sales and marketing in the wine and food world, which I did prior to my current work directing the global food and farm programs at Middlebury College. I continue to be impressed by the evolution and impact of MNFC. I want to be part of this and think that my experience from sitting on the ACORN board, Slow Food Yolo and Farm to School in Davis, CA, can enrich the discussion. I am a team player and believe that strength lies in continuously building community. My approach in groups is to listen to all perspectives and debate respectfully. My strengths lie in seeing the big picture and connecting the dots. I have a creative imagination that allows me to think outside the box. I also consider myself an encourager that brings good energy to the table. The future of food depends on us and our willingness to work hard and dream. My love for the Co-op began when I was in college in the 2000s and was a garden intern for Jay Leshinsky, who is a dear friend and mentor. With him retiring, it would be an honor to fill his spot. I have been a member since 2011 when I moved back to Vermont with my husband and children.



## Chelsea Sage Griggs



*Chelsea & Daughter*

I am interested in serving on the board of directors because I want to help my community continue to benefit from healthy food and local economy. I would like the opportunity to be a part of a team that is educating our community with the values of the Co-op. Locally sourced products, local jobs, and money that stays in our community is truly important to me.

Currently I am co-chair of the Social Committee for the Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Association. It is my committee's primary focus to make our community aware of the association's missions and goals to preserve our wonderful Lake. We bring together members of the association through interactive socials and educational workshops. In addition, I spent eight wonderful years working at a not-for-profit healthcare facility. During my time there I established and revised many policies and procedures while educating the community on our growth and improvements.

I have worked with large groups in both educational settings and healthcare facilities. I feel it is important to know your team and tackle any problems quickly. Definitive roles and responsibilities based on the group's mission and objectives along with a focus on communication are the heart of good team dynamics.

I have a background in accounting with over 10 years working in administrative capacities. I am extremely organized, detail oriented and motivated to be a team member.

## Todd Leftkoe



Todd

that we have all come to love and to rely on.

I view board membership as a natural extension of my community role as a rehabilitation physician who is focused on maintaining the function and quality of life of my neighbors in the greater Middlebury area. Nothing is more important to maintain our health than the food that we eat. Having access to whole foods that are produced via ecologically responsible principles helps to sustain us as it sustains the community in which we live.

The first 16 years of my medical career were spent in the non-profit arena, working in both academic and community hospital settings. During that time, I served on the advisory boards of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Association. These board positions provided me with invaluable experience in monitoring, revising and creating policies for the entities that I served.

My specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation is interdisciplinary in philosophy and scope. I have expertise in leading a diverse team of professionals and am equally adept at being a good team player. I have learned that empathy, mutual respect and commitment to a common mission are critical to the creation of a highly functioning team.

I am passionate about nutrition, personal fitness and positive aging. I try to remain true to these principles in my personal life and my medical practice. You can find me at the Co-op almost any day of the week picking produce, browsing the vitamin and supplement aisle or indulging my passion for wine and wine education. It would be my honor and privilege to serve you, the member-owners of this Co-op.



## Jack Northrup



Jack

I would like to see some changes in how the co-op is run. Worker-membership is actively discouraged; bulk food purchase opportunities are dwarfed by alcohol and cosmetics. I do not believe that management is responsive to members.

Let me give an example: I wanted to make a suggestion. I went to the suggestion box.

The pen did not work. I borrowed a pen and my suggestion was "fix the pen". Two weeks later, I wanted to write my original suggestion. I go to the box and the pen still doesn't work - same pen. I am not sure what more of an example one needs to get the feeling that management does not care what the owners think.

I believe the co-op should be serving the community. For instance, migrant workers are charged a fee to cash a check at Hannaford's or Shaw's. It was suggested that the co-op cash checks for free, giving the workers education and membership. This was shot down. The reasons were inane. I do not know where the co-op banks, but I assure you that the co-op could use its financial muscle to get that bank or credit union to cash those payroll checks for free.

I have been a member of the co-op for many years. I have worked with nonprofits, for profits and co-ops my entire professional life. I was an original incorporator of the Vermont Community Loan Fund and the Burlington Community Land Trust. I have started and run electric co-ops, nonprofit banks and cooperative housing organizations. My resume can be found at [nemarketresearch.com](http://nemarketresearch.com)

I have taught adults at the college level. My approach to group dynamics is constructive engagement; respect the opinion of others.

If I am elected to the board, I can promise to work for 4 things:

- The suggestion box will be read every day.
- Bags will be banned or charged for.
- There will be a bin for bulk laundry detergent. I don't care if we have to put it outside.
- I will work tirelessly to bring in low income community members.

Thank you for your consideration.

## Ian Ross



*Ian & Family*

I have worked at MNFC for nearly twelve years, and our relationship spans over two decades.

As an MNFC employee I have continuously learned about and tried new foods and recipes. I always try to be healthier, even with my less healthy choices. The co-op community has aided me greatly in my journey. Now it's time for me to give back to the community. I

hope to help future generations on their journeys with healthy foods. My experiences in food service, as a Co-op employee, and living in a low-income household could prove to be very valuable for the board in the coming years.

In addition to volunteering at and being employed by MNFC, I have been a member of Vermont Federal Credit Union for two decades. I have also worked with Habitat for Humanity Affiliates in several states as an AmeriCorps member, donor, being a volunteer and a paid intern. A year ago we even became a Habitat family. No and low-incomes affect food security and access to safe housing in a big way, which can lead to poor health, among other issues.

I have consistently looked at employment as working on a team with coworkers to accomplish a shared goal. In high school I was on extracurricular sports teams. I also became involved with the Vermont Teen Leadership Safety Program where I worked with other students from all over Vermont to encourage others to make safe decisions. We motivated Vermont lawmakers to adopt a graduated license system for our youth. We also put on an annual conference to inspire other students. We met every couple of weeks for several months to plan this conference. Decisions included picking out workshops. When working in a group, I like to hear and see all points of view before coming to a conclusion. If I feel strongly about something, I will speak up in a respectful way.

I am the proud father of three spirited and talented young ladies who I wish to see grow up and live their lives in the healthiest way possible. We all greatly enjoy being amateur gardeners.



## Louise Vojtisek (INCUMBENT)



Louise

After filling in a vacancy and then completing a three year term, I remain as excited as ever about the accomplishments and future of our cooperative. The energy, generosity, and thoughtful commitment of this Board is simply remarkable. I continue to learn about different aspects of food systems and the challenges of access and distribution. I believe I have something yet to contribute toward making our store the best it can be. We have accomplished the expansion and now look toward the future. My particular areas of interest are promoting optimal nutrition and health by always starting with "real food", and continually working to make our wonderful store welcoming, affordable, and accessible to everyone.

In addition to being a loyal Co-op customer since 1979, I am also involved with the Middlebury Community Players and Town Hall Theater, and maintain membership in state and national organizations in the field of school psychology.

After many years in public education, and currently as a training consultant for an assessment company, working with groups has been a mainstay in my life. I enjoy environments that welcome and promote diversity of opinion and believe that, as a group, we can be more effective, creative, and productive than each of us individually.

I am confident that committed groups who strive to develop collective wisdom to address social issues and contribute to the common good are essential to contemporary life. I have read that Charles Darwin in later life noted that "survival of the fittest" also means "survival of the most cooperative". This represents the core values of the MNFC Board and is why I value continued engagement with this group and its positive impact on our community.



*Thank you Reiner!*







Thank you  
Jay!

