

# **FOOD** *for* **THOUGHT**

**Marquette Food Co-op**  
Newsletter

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Spring 2015



# FOOD *for* THOUGHT



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## Food for Thought

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## Marquette Food Co-op

906-225-0671 • open daily, 8am to 9pm  
info@marquettefood.coop  
www.marquettefood.coop

## Board of Directors

Tom McKenzie PRESIDENT  
Brian Brady VICE PRESIDENT  
Barbara Krause TREASURER  
Phil Britton SECRETARY  
Cori Ann Noordyk  
Mike Potts  
Janna Lies  
Emily Wright  
Bradley Jackson  
Matt Gougeon GENERAL MANAGER

Everyone is welcome to attend Board Meetings, held the third Tuesday monthly at 6pm in the Co-op's Community Classroom. For board member contact info: [www.marquettefood.coop](http://www.marquettefood.coop)

## Disclaimer

The views within this publication are as diverse as the 3,800+ households sharing ownership of our Co-op, and thus do not represent the store, its Board of Directors, or staff. The Co-op does not prescribe health treatments or products. We offer the extensive knowledge of our staff, and encourage you to prescribe for yourself—every individual's right.

## About Us

### Food for Thought

This newsletter is published in-house four times per year for owners and friends of the Marquette Food Co-op.

## Our Mission

### Marquette Food Co-op exists so that:

Our owners, customers, and community have access to organic and wholesome products, and the benefits of a healthy, diverse, educated, and sustainable community.

Local producers and growers of organic, wholesome goods are supported as part of a strong and vibrant local food network.

Owners, customers, and community members are educated about food and related issues.

Owners and customers will benefit from access to local, organic, wholesome, and fairly-traded food and products.

## Our Values

### The cooperative principles

Voluntary and open ownership.

Democratic owner control.

Owners' economic participation.

Autonomy and independence.

Education, training, and information.

Cooperation among co-ops.

Concern for the community.



# Calendar

## Board of Directors' Meetings

March 17

April 21

May 31

*(tues) 6pm*

## Wellness Days

March 29

April 26

May 22

*(sun) 5% off all body care items, bulk herbs, teas & spices, general merchandise*

## Getting To Know Your Co-op

March 9

April 13

May 11

*(mon) 6pm*

*rsvp 225-0671 x724*

## Acoustic Brunch at The Co-op

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

April 5, 12, 19, 26

May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

*(sun) Noon - 2pm*

*Every Sunday the Co-op Kitchen will feature hot breakfast food, tea, and coffee. Listen to musicians perform in the café while you dine*

## Easter

April 5 (sun) Co-op open all day

## Cooking Classes

March 21 or March 31: Bento Boxes

April 7 or April 14: 1 Chicken, 3 Meals

April 28 or May 5: South Indian Cuisine: Idlis, Dosas, & Utapoms

6pm in the Co-op Classroom

*register @ [www.marquettefood.coop](http://www.marquettefood.coop)*

*or call 225-0671 x723*

## DIY Hoop Houses

April 22

*(wed) 6pm at the NMU Hoop House*

*rsvp 225-0671 x723*

## Memorial Day

May 25 (mon) Co-op open all day

Visit [www.marquettefood.coop](http://www.marquettefood.coop) for full event details.



# From the GM



Spring must be near if this issue of Food for Thought is partially devoted to Board of Director elections and the Annual Meeting! I particularly like the business portion of the Annual Meeting, as it is a time for me to talk with members, usually share a laugh, and give a “state of the Co-op” address. The Co-op has evolved over the last twelve years, and particularly so in the last year. It seems we’ve grown up fast lately. Selling preferred stock to members, automating our inventory tracking and some product ordering, designing energy efficiency into our building and seeing it pay off, and just being downtown Marquette’s largest employer has changed our perspective. All this hasn’t come without its pains, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to fulfilling the Ends of the organization and thus serving our members.

The Board of Directors also senses that things are a little different at the good old MFC these days. Now that the new store is running well, the board has been having deeper discussions

about the shape and direction the future of the Co-op will take. Simply being a larger employer has changed our approach to doing business. So has adding new departments and serving a couple hundred more people per day! What does the new Co-op workplace look like? What might staff expect? Has the relationship with members changed? The Board is addressing these questions.

**In contrast to the global model, we are small, vibrant, people centric, and health forward. We are stronger together.**

It’s not just the Co-op that has changed, though. The competitive landscape in our area has also changed. The following fact alone puts pressure on our place in our community: Organic and natural foods are no longer “alternative” and we can find them on the shelves of almost any store in town. This puts pressure on supply as, nationally, the demand from growth of corporate competitors outstrips natural foods manufacturers and organic farm output. Fortunately, the cooperative business model is uniquely designed to weather some competition and to remain relevant to the ownership community that benefits from Co-op’s existence. Buying goods within a



non-exploitive value chain, learning how to be well, participating in offered services, and building community through common cause are ways that we mean more—and mean well—in the community. Individual member investment is another important way we overcome a competitive advance. If you didn't invest in the expansion first time, this year will be your chance! In response to many member requests, look for another preferred share offering to begin later this year.

Even our relationships with local suppliers evolve. We deepen ties with them through collaboration on developing food safety certification and education about safer practices through Group GAP (See pages 10-11). We're also developing new markets (institutions and a nascent Farm to School program) with the Online Marketplace to help build small farm capacity throughout the U.P. These innovations provide opportunities for small U.P. farms to grow at a reasonable pace and bring increased stability to a fledgling regional food system that is outgrowing direct sales from farm to consumer. We've even collaborated on creating educational material with regional and local planning officials to educate municipal governments about the pitfalls and opportunities surrounding local

food policy.

Given all that has changed in the last years, I'm optimistic for our cooperative's future. After our time of outward growth through the expansion of our store and operations, a new focus on strengthening our relationships with members, employees, suppliers, and community prepares this cooperative for inner growth. Deliberate decision making from the Board of Directors as they assess organizational Ends will resonate relevancy to a wider set of stakeholders. The inner growth of this cooperative will manifest in both growth in membership, and growth in member investment. Together we will have built an economic engine for the age. In contrast to the global model, we are small, vibrant, people centric, and health forward. We are stronger together.

**Matt Gougeon**  
**General Manager**

906-225-0671 x710 / gm@marquettefood.coop

# Board Elections & Annual Meeting



**G**reetings from your local Marquette Food Co-op Board Cheerleader! For those who attended the Harvest Potluck, you know what I'm talking about. As a board member I am passionate about the work the MFC Board does. I write this sitting in the MFC Café, where I can feel the energy in the building, the sun shining on my shoulders, and I can see the happiness and joy in the faces of the owners, community members, and employees around me. MFC is an oasis of health, wellbeing, and positivity in our community. When I was young I was so intrigued about how the Co-op worked and knew someday I wanted to be involved. At that time I had no idea what a board did, or why it was important, but I felt the calling to be a part of something bigger than myself. Some years later I find myself writing for you, a fellow owner.

I know that you too have felt the longing to be a part of something bigger than yourself, because you are an owner in our Co-op. There was something that happened when you walked through our doors that told you this place had value. You wanted to join in on the adventure that is a local natural foods store. Have you taken a minute to revel in what has been accomplished in the last five

years? You are the reason we have made it this far, and you will continue to be the reason we grow and become what our community wants and needs. As an owner of the Co-op, you have the right and responsibility to be involved and the opportunity to help make choices about our future. Coming up in February and March are two fun and easy ways to exercise those rights.

Starting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, voting will open for our open board seats. Please take the time to read through candidate information and vote for who you would like to represent your Co-op. You'll find all the information you need about the candidates in this newsletter or online at [www.marquettefood.coop](http://www.marquettefood.coop). Voting ends on March 6<sup>th</sup> and must be done on the website.

The other opportunity is our Annual Meeting, to be held at The Great Lakes Room at Northern Michigan University on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. You will get the opportunity to learn more about the Co-op, have your questions answered by board members, and learn more about where MFC is headed now that our recent expansion is complete.

**Cori Ann Noordyk**  
Board Member

marquette food co-op  
**ANNUAL  
MEETING**  
— & SOCIAL —

2015

*Come join us for an evening of good food, good friends, and an update on our store provided by Co-op management, board, and staff members!*

**Friday, March 13**

**Great Lakes Rooms**  
**NMU University Center**

**5:30 - 8:30 PM**

*7:00 "State of Our Co-op" Meeting*

**\$5 for Adults**  
**Kids under 12 FREE**

Meet & greet of newly elected Co-op Board members

Heavy Hors d'oeuvres  
*(something for everyone, including gluten-free & vegan)*

Coffee, Tea & Flavored Water

Live Music by **Eclettico**

Cash Bar *(featuring Michigan beers & wines)*

Incredible door prizes!  
*including a \$300 Co-op Gift Card Grand Prize*

# Candidates



## Phil Britton

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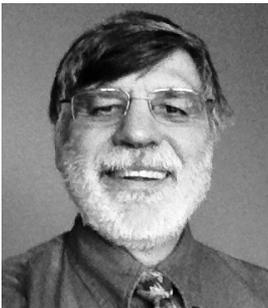
Hi there! My family and I have been Marquette residents for over 10 years. I've served on the MFC Board of Directors for the past two years during the transition to the new store. It's been a wild ride so far, and it's one that I wish to continue for another term. In my current term I've served as Secretary for the Board, as well as the QMS Lead for the UP Food Exchange, helping get Michigan's first Group GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) program up and running right here in the UP. In another term, I hope to make further use of my systems experience to help our co-op settle in to its new location; but at the end of the day my desire is just to give back to the organization that is serving our community so well.



## Barbara Krause

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I graduated from NMU with a Bachelors in Accounting and French. I began my career as an auditor where I became licensed as a CPA in the State of Michigan. After almost five years in both external and internal audit, I was hired as the Accounting Manager at Northern Initiatives in 2010. For the past two years I have been serving as Treasurer on the Board of Directors at the Marquette Food Co-op. I believe my background as a CPA has proved to be very helpful in this role and provided some insight to my peers as well. I have found this experience rewarding and would like the opportunity to do my part in helping ensure the Co-op is around for generations to come. I welcome the opportunity to continue to give back to our local community.



## Richard Kochis

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I served on the MFC Board from 2006-2013 and am excited to be able to hopefully serve the members/owners once again. A board member's job, I believe, is to understand the need and desires of members and owners and ensure that management act responsibly to implement the desires of the members.

marquette food co-op

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# Annual *Board of Directors* Elections

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*February 23<sup>rd</sup> - March 6<sup>th</sup>*

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**Vote Online**

— at —

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

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# GroupGAP



**T**he U.P. Food Exchange (UPFE), a partnership between the Marquette Food Co-op and Michigan State University Extension with support from the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department, was selected to partner with the USDA to be a part of a pilot study exploring new ways to address small farm food safety certification. Due to changing federal regulations related to the Food Safety Modernization Act as well as pressure from buyers and insurance companies, it appears that, in the near future, any farm (regardless of size) may at least need a farm food safety plan to sell to certain markets. This study investigates group certification as a scale-neutral (no matter what size operation) way to make food safety certification attainable and more cost effective for even the smallest of farms. The pilot study “group” is comprised of pioneering small-scale ( $\frac{1}{4}$  – 5 acres) Upper Peninsula farms.

## **Why was The U.P. Food Exchange Selected to Participate?**

The Marquette Food Co-op was already helping to prepare U.P. farms for accessing the wholesale institutional market by actively offering food safety training, developing a Quality Management System (QMS), and recruiting farms for a food safety pilot project.

This work was noticed by the Wallace Center and USDA. The U.P. is known for its hay and potato production as well as dairy farming. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of diversified vegetable farms coming on the scene—young farmers starting out and retired people starting a second career. The direct to consumer market has, up until this point, been the primary market for these farms. This is changing as institutional demand for local food increases and these farmers see the value in selling beyond direct to consumer. To gain entry to the wholesale institutional market, these small-scale, diversified farms must address issues like food safety that can be a barrier to them accessing this growing market.

## **What is Group GAP?**

Group GAP is a group of partners working together to achieve a collective Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. These partners can be farmers, buyers, distributors, food hubs, local non-profits, etc. The concept is that a group provides internal verification that members are meeting GAP standards by performing internal inspections. These activities are managed through a Quality Management System (QMS). The USDA then audits a statistical sample of the members and the group’s QMS. If the sample is good and the

system is good, that provides the USDA enough confidence to issue a group certification.

### **Why Group GAP?**

Most things in life are better when done as a collaborative effort. Only a sample of members go through a USDA audit, and the cost burden is shared by the group, so this method certainly has the potential to be more cost-effective than an individual certification. The real benefit, however, comes from the interactions within the group, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and the technical assistance available to each member by their participation. Rather than striving to comply with a baseline standard, the members of the group can learn from each other and continuously improve their practices.

### **What Is Meant By Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)?**

#### ***Protecting Water & Soil***

- Performing a water risk assessment that includes testing water (irrigation and processing and drinking)
- Performing a soil risk assessment that includes testing soil

#### ***Separating Animals and Crops***

- Keeping wild and domestic animals from contaminating crops
- Having an effective pest control program for rodents and other identified pests

#### ***Maintaining Clean Equipment***

- Using clean harvesting containers
- Properly storing harvesting and packing materials
- Using clean harvesting equipment/ implements
- Using clean transport vehicles
- Routinely cleaning wash/pack and storage areas

#### ***Having A Plan To Address Potential Contaminating Products & Situations***

- Properly storing and applying manure
- Storing “chemicals” properly & away from crop production & processing areas
- Having a plan to address potential

contamination issues from things like field sanitation/bathroom

- Having a plan to address worker injuries, especially those that pose a risk to produce from blood

#### ***Keeping A Healthy Workforce***

- Don't pick when you are sick: practicing good worker health and hygiene

#### ***Following Recommended Handling Practices***

- Maintaining the cold chain (storing and transporting produce at appropriate temps)

#### ***Proving Compliance With Food Safety Practices***

- Having an effective traceability program
- Providing appropriate staff training
- Having a food safety plan for your farm
- Documenting that you have done the above by keeping current records and logs

### **Upper Peninsula Farms Participating in the Group GAP Pilot Study**

#### **Eastern Region:**

Ski Country Farm (*Sault St. Marie*)

#### **Central Region:**

Blueberry Pier (*Menominee*), Hannah's Garden (*Marquette*), Reh-Morr Farm (*Eben Junction*), Rock River Perennial Garden & Greenhouse (*Chatham*), Slagle's Family Farm (*Felch*), Sleepy Hollow Farm (*Munising*), Treasa's Treasures (*Munising*)

#### **Western Region:**

Anya Farms (*Chassell*), Wintergreen Farms (*Ontonagon*)

#### **Agency/Business Partners**

The following agency/business partners designated staff to serve as internal inspectors for the project.

- ***Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District***
- ***Keweenaw Co-op***
- ***Marquette Food Co-op***
- ***Michigan State University Extension***
- ***Western U.P. Health Department***

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