

THE FRESH FEED

THE MARQUETTE FOOD CO-OP NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025



IF ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE, THEN THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



Matt Gougeon
General Manager

I recently wrote a message to everyone that was posted to social media about what we currently know about the impact of tariffs on the Co-op. Though getting a little stale by now, most of the information is as current as we can have it. You can read it here if you missed it. (marquettefood.coop/april-23-2025-a-message-from-the-gm) In the time since I put that message together, it has been interesting to see how the retail world has been reacting to the coming impact of tariffs.

As reported in the news, the heads of WalMart, Target, and Home Depot have projected that quite soon, shoppers will see empty shelves in their stores due to shipments from China being halted. If those three companies are saying this, there can be no doubt about tariffs causing a four alarm fire in the marketplace. Whether it was true or not, Amazon was also in the news for suggesting they were going to publish the tariff cost as a line item on prices at their Amazon Haul store, which intends to compete with sellers like Shein and Temu. While I think this would be a valuable public service in transparency, identifying the real consumer cost of tariffs, Amazon instead suffered a harsh rebuke from the federal government for attempting to inform customers. Amazon quickly back pedaled the notion. Large retailers have few options regarding tariffs. Small retailers have none.

More pertinent to the grocery world, Albertsons, one of the largest grocers in the country, has written a letter to its suppliers simply saying they will not accept any cost increases from them, meaning the supplier would have to eat the entire cost of the tariff and Albertsons would not raise their shelf prices. Gosh, they sound like tough guys, eh? It seems to me that this would only result in empty shelves at Albertsons. But this tactic is typical of large corporate grocers and retailers. They demand low costs because of their volume of purchasing. The supplier then must make up the difference of the money they lose by charging smaller customers and independent grocers a higher price, and fees, for the same product. This is why there are so few, and dwindling all the time, independent grocery stores.

This is also why there are food deserts which contribute to the development of low income, low access neighborhoods and communities. These exist in both urban and rural areas. Small businesses and better paying jobs get pushed out of the market by large corporate retailers. Plain and simple. It has been documented that wherever a WalMart moves into, overall unemployment increases by three percent in that community. We sure get jerked around by the prospect of low prices. Everyone's desire for cheap prices only contributes to our own impoverishment at the hand of corporate profits. I realize it's human nature to want

inexpensive food and everyone loves a deal, but we must ask ourselves, “At what cost?” But our collective desire for inexpensive food is certainly not the main reason big box grocers have proliferated. It is also the result of government policy and indirect impact.

During the last presidential election, I thought it was a mistake that both parties campaigned on lowering the price of food. Food prices are complex, and the government can only indirectly affect prices through policy, oversight, and enforcement and, over time, impact will occur. Unless, of course, the government decides to drop indiscriminate tariff bombs everywhere. But what are the chances of that happening?! Plus, neither party sounded like they had any idea of what they were talking about. And one party still doesn't!

There are many direct variables that determine the cost of food from the supply side, but that's a different article. But to this case in point, it was the Reagan administration in the 80s that decided it would no longer enforce the Robinson Patman Act of 1936. This act made it illegal for a supplier to sell products for a lesser cost to one purchaser over another. This was done to curb the opportunities for, and efforts of, corporations to form monopolies and force competitors out of the marketplace during the depression. Namely, the Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company; A&P! The Reagan administration thought this law stifled American business and so stopped enforcement of it. Voila! WalMart, Costco, Target, Home Depot, etc. (name your giant retailer!) all exploded in the 80s, driving out small independent businesses that had survived for generations and drove down real wages in communities.

By 1985, here in Marquette County, there was such an explosion of “warehouse” grocery retailers that all the old independent and family-owned grocers began to go out of business. You must be an old timer to remember all the local grocers dotted all over the county like Red Owl (regional corporate), Russo's, Hanson's Foods, Joseph's, and in our current location Angeli's and Dick's Family Foods. But the non-enforcement of the Robinson Patman Act created an uneven, and illegal, playing field whereby only the large prosper. That is, of course, unless you're different.

Your Marquette Food Co-op is one such different company. We are different in how we are organized, capitalized, governed, and held accountable. The application of the cooperative model helps us in our purchasing through National Cooperative Grocers. And it helps serve our community through shared benefits and self-reliance. The fact that we sell local food is also different. Large grocers would never accept the tight margin on local food, nor would they devote the labor to bringing it to their shelves. In other words, they can't, and wouldn't ever, do it — except to extend their definition of local to include a five-state region and only products from companies large enough to be in the conventional supply chains. It makes one appreciate just how far your Co-op extends itself to help build our local economy. These are not just empty words when you consider that we are Marquette County's oldest thriving grocery store at 54 years old. Let that sink in. All the things we are is proof that where you spend your dollars truly makes a difference.

Once again, we will do our best to help everyone through the rough times ahead. And for the record, I hope I'm wrong. I could be. But it seems there's more that could go wrong than will go right at this point. Your Co-op is here for you, guided by the principles of openness, democracy, economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, cooperation, and concern for community. Stay strong and...

Feel good. Shop the Co-op.



LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Learn more about the businesses that supply your favorite local products to the MFC



GRAND-BEES HONEY

DAN & LEE GRANDY

More than 20 years of caring for his hives has taught Dan Grandy, owner of Grand-Bees Honey, the importance of slowing down, steady focus, and keen observation.

"Working with bees, it takes lots of patience – you have to be able to troubleshoot," said Dan. Understanding bee health and behavioral patterns (and the ability to adapt to changing conditions), is key, and is a skill that takes years to hone. "I like to just watch them – it's one of my favorite things to do. You can tell by their actions if something is off and I need to investigate further."

Grand-Bees uses 14 different fields in the L'Anse area, with the bees collecting pollen and nectar from local wildflowers, trefoil, clover, etc., giving it a flavor unique to our Midwestern region. Dan manages 250 hives, which can build up to 80,000 bees each if strong and healthy. He visits each one about

once a week throughout the summer months, observing the bees' behavior and adjusting care accordingly. The outdoor work in the sun is calming, fulfilling and freeing, said Dan. "I don't have to punch a clock and be somewhere specific. It's just me and the bees," he said, stressing the importance of working properly and slowly to ensure the safety of everyone. Respect, not fear, is paramount in beekeeping.

Dan harvests honey in the fall, storing it in 55-gallon barrels at a facility in Pelkie. He processes it from there, which involves thawing, filtering, jarring, and distributing to retail locations throughout the UP. "What makes my honey so unique is that I'm constantly in touch with it, I'm picky," he said. "All summer long, I'm breaking out pieces of comb and tasting it. If it doesn't have that perfect, sweet taste, I'm moving it to another field and making adjustments."

It's not without challenges, said Dan, as factors such as cold winters and disease can wipe out an entire hive. The last two years, his entire colony took flight after harvest, a phenomenon that has affected beekeepers across the country. There are several theories on why, but no concrete answers. "They just up and left," Dan said. "I went out to the hives one day and they were gone. It was a big hit, as I have to completely start over." Dan is preparing for new bees from California and Georgia, hoping for a strong 2025.

The Co-op carries Grand-Bees Honey in various sizes, as well as creamed honey and honey sticks. Dan's favorite way to eat it is right out of the jar, and his wife and co-owner, Lee, loves it in tea. "There are so many benefits of consuming honey," said Dan. "I use it to boost immunity, heal cuts and burns, soothe a sore throat, and as a replacement for sugar."

10% OFF ALL GRAND-BEES HONEY IN THE MONTH OF MAY

FROM MYANMAR TO MARQUETTE,

AUNG'S STORY



You've likely seen Aung Moe behind the Ace Sushi counter at the Co-op, happily rolling fresh ingredients to make the bright display we fawn over during the lunchtime rush. Maybe you've heard his alluring call — "SUSHI!" — from another aisle while grabbing the makings for dinner. Hopefully, by now, you've tried his food and are a repeat customer. But if not, here's your introduction.

For Aung, sushi is more than a job. It's an art, an act of resilience, an anchor providing stability after an escape from a dangerous past.

Born and raised in Myanmar in Southeast Asia, Aung witnessed firsthand the turbulence of his country's political landscape, especially under the military regime that took power in 1988. "I watched people go to jail and die," he said. "Thankfully, we got out."

In 2001, Aung said he and his family were able to flee but were separated for several years in the process. He went through Thailand and Guam before he finally arrived in America safely.

In New York, Aung worked hard to build a new life. He trained for six months under a sushi chef, learning and honing his skills as a professional. From there, he traveled and made sushi in various places — New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Kentucky — before making his way to Marquette with the Ace Sushi franchise in May 2021. He came here alone for work, while his family remains in New York state.

"I like it — it's very interesting," said Aung.

Aung's day starts early. He arrives at 5 am to ensure the sushi counter is fully stocked and ready when the store opens at 8 am. From longtime lovers of sushi to first-timers, he said he loves interacting with his customers — helping them find something they like or just chatting as they watch him roll the sushi.

"They start with something like a California roll, then work up to the raw stuff," he said. "It's great seeing their love for sushi evolve."

Shoppers often linger, fascinated by his precision and mastery. Aung remembers that fascination himself — when he was training, he said watching chefs make sushi with such ease is what drew him in. Now, more than 20 year later, he's offering the same show in a place where good sushi is a rare commodity. "People love watching it," Aung says. "It's nice to share that."

His favorites are the rolls with heat. "I like spicy — the spicy salmon roll."

When asked more about himself and his life, Aung shrugged. "Sushi is such a big part of me," he said. "I don't really know what else to talk about."

In March, shortly after we talked with Aung for this feature, a massive 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, causing extensive damage and loss of life. Estimates indicate more than 5,000 people were killed, and thousands more were injured. According to the World Food Program, the country is facing a severe hunger crisis in the aftermath, with 15 million people not knowing where their next meal will come from. If you're interested in donating to fund emergency food rations to survivors in Myanmar, visit [donate.wfpusa.org](https://www.donate.wfpusa.org).

HAPPY

Mother's Day

MOTHER'S DAY MASSAGES

SUNDAY, MAY 11 • 11AM-2PM

15-minute chair massages will be available in the store

FREE FOR MOTHERS!

For all others, massages are available for \$1 per minute.

MASSAGES PROVIDED BY:





DUTCH BABY

Recipe from *The Farmer's Table*
Serves 4-6

An easy and beautiful recipe that kids will love to help prepare and the whole family will love to eat.

- **3 T butter**
- **1 C flour**
- **1 C milk**
- **6 eggs, room temperature**
- **2 T sugar**
- **Salt, pinch**
- **¼ t ground nutmeg**
- **1 t cinnamon**
- **1 t vanilla**
- **Optional toppings: fruit, powdered sugar, maple syrup, whipped cream, chocolate drizzle, etc.**

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Once oven is preheated, place butter in 9x13 baking dish or a 12-inch cast iron pan. Put it in the oven until the butter melts. While the butter is melting, combine the remaining ingredients in a blender and blend until fully incorporated.

Remove hot pan from oven once butter is fully melted. Pour batter in (it will be thin).

Return to oven for 17-20 minutes. Pancake is done when it has begun puffing up and browning a bit on top.

Once cooled, top with desired toppings (we boiled frozen peaches, raspberries and a bit of maple syrup), slice and serve.

MOTHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE



- 1** Glam & Grace Nontoxic Nail Polish \$9.99
- 2** Danica Studio Crossbody Bag \$26.99
- 3** Coffee Mug \$11.99
- 4** Danica Studio Tea Infuser \$26.99
- 5** Big Dipper Wax Works Floral Pillar \$22.79
- 6** Inesscents CBD Botanically Infused Bath Salts \$23.39

MOTHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE

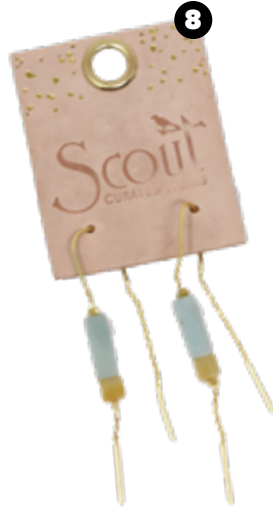
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7

Madre Tierra Card
Nicole Revy/Prints by the Bay
\$5.49

8



8

Scout
Earrings - price varies by style
\$16.99

9

The Wheel of the Year
Fiona Cook & Jessica Roux
\$19.99

10

Bird Collective
Chickadee Corduroy Hat
\$34.99

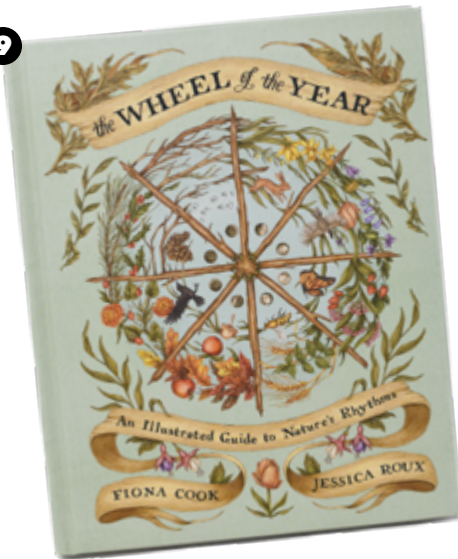
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Danica Studio
embroidered pouch
\$23.99

12

Denik Classic
Layflat journal
\$11.99

9



10



11



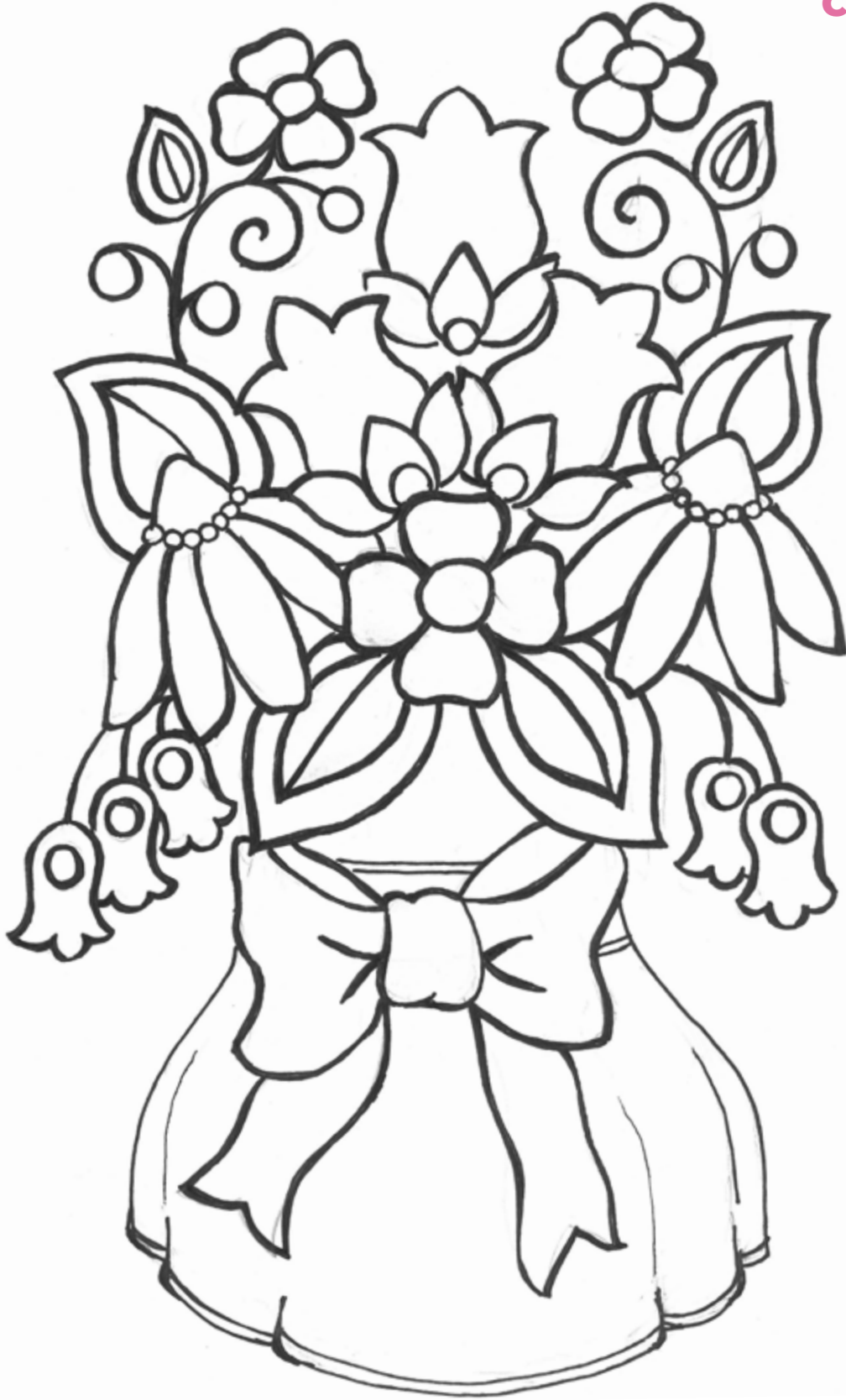
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TO:

CO-OP KIDS

FROM:



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

Illustration by Community Services Coordinator Pamela Valdez - enjoy coloring!

FOOD AS MEDICINE

RECIPE DEMONSTRATIONS



The Marquette Food Co-op is excited to present a Food as Medicine monthly food demo series. Every third Tuesday of the month, you will find our Registered Dietitian Amanda Latvala cooking up something healthy and delicious in the store.

The recipes will highlight ways to boost overall nutrition. They will be easy to prepare, have affordable ingredients, and are adaptable for any food allergies or picky eaters.

Stop by and say hi to Amanda as she demos delicious, fresh recipes right on the store floor. Enjoy a sample and take the recipe with you!

ALL FOOD DEMOS WILL BE 11AM-1PM

MAY 20 - POWERFUL PROTEIN FOR EVERY DIET

JUNE 17 - THE BENEFITS OF PHYTOCHEMICALS

JULY 15 - EATING FOR BETTER BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL

AUGUST 19 - HEART HEALTHY EATING

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2025

Mother's Day Raffle

May 9-12
In-store

Mother's Day Chair Massages

May 11 | 11am - 2pm
In-store
Details on page 6

Market Demo TOPIC

May 17 | 9am - 1pm
Downtown Marquette
Farmers Market

Food as Medicine: Powerful Protein for Every Diet

May 20 | 11 am - 1pm
In-store
Details on page 11

MFC Board of Directors Meeting

May 20 | 6 - 8pm
Co-op Classroom

THE FRESH FEED

This newsletter is digitally published monthly for owners and friends of the Marquette Food Co-op.

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Everyone is welcome to attend Board Meetings, held the third Tuesday monthly at 6pm in the Co-op Classroom. For more info: www.marquettefood.coop

Disclaimer

The views within this publication are as diverse as the 5,000+ 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.

The Marquette Food Co-op provides the region it serves with access to food, products, services, and education that foster a thriving, equitable, and resilient community by:

PRIORITIZING
LOCAL AND
ORGANIC FOOD
SYSTEMS

PROMOTING
COOPERATIVE
GROWTH
OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING
AN EQUITABLE
SHOPPING
EXPERIENCE

FOCUSING ON
SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENTAL
OUTCOMES