

# THE FRESH FEED

The Marquette Food Co-op Newsletter

October 2024



CELEBRATING  
**10 YEARS**  
AT 502



# HAPPY EXPANNIVERSARY, BABY!

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**Matt Gougeon**  
General Manager

October is National Co-op Month. This year, we are combining this annual, month-long celebration with a recognition of our first ten years on Washington Street in downtown Marquette. There's a lot of reminiscing in this issue of the Fresh Feed from a variety of people involved in building this store and moving into it from Baraga Street, including myself! Building the store required the work of many people, so many that I'll refrain from naming everyone and simply use the term "We" when describing that fraught and wonderful time of expanding our Co-op. But be certain that members of the board of directors, management and staff, member/owners, attorneys, lenders, consultants, architects, engineers, contractors, vendors, and suppliers all played important roles at every turn.

A project like the store expansion is really a long series of overcoming challenges and obstacles over a period of years. If you live through it, you find it's a beautiful thing! That is, of course, a hyperbolic jest, but as with all humor, there is some truth.

When I became the GM of the Co-op back in 2009, I declared in one of my first staff meetings that we'd be building a new store in the coming years. The growth our store experienced made the current space on Baraga Avenue untenable. In 2010, we commissioned a feasibility study that confirmed a new store was a viable prospect. The study named 502 W. Washington St. the best location for a new store. Enter the first obstacle: that particular building was not for sale.

Under advisement from our attorney, I wrote the owners a letter suggesting that the Co-op would be interested in purchasing the building should they ever decide to sell. To my surprise, they responded right away and divulged that while it wasn't for sale, they had another offer on the table from a company in Dearborn, Mich. that intended to

put a liquor superstore in the space! However, the owners indicated they'd much rather sell to us if our offer matched their needs. Long story short, we purchased the building in February of 2012.

The next challenges came at once. Store design and financing included managing a whirlwind of traditional lending, a USDA loan guarantee, a preferred share offering, and a Michigan Economic Development Corporation grant. Not to put too fine a point on it, but the story of financing the project is one worth telling in some detail for its sheer breadth of effort.

Part and parcel to a financing package for the construction project was a preferred share offering. Except there was one problem: we weren't allowed by law to sell shares to many people who weren't accredited investors. An accredited investor is someone earning more than \$200,000 a year and possessing \$1 million in assets. Not many of those folks counted among the Co-op member rolls!

After a long back and forth with Lansing, I finally met up with two attorneys helping us and the director of the State Office of Finance and Insurance. I hoped for a "Hail Mary" attempt at getting permission to sell stock to our members. Funnily enough, the director didn't want to talk to the attorneys but only to me. When she asked what it was I wanted, I told her we needed to raise a million dollars from the sale of shares. She laughed and asked, "Is that all?"

She liked vacationing in Marquette and was familiar with our store, shopping there when in town and that she'd be happy to help us with an exemption to the rules of investing! She asked how soon we needed it. I said, "Yesterday."

She said, "How about Monday?"

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In the end, we didn't get the exemption, but they allowed us to use an old, out of date method for unaccredited investors to invest small amounts into a manufacturing business! We had a heck of a time squeezing the round peg of the Co-op into that square hole of a process. But finally, after creating 142 pages of documentation, we did, and in doing so, we broke new ground for all Co-op's in the state of Michigan.

Traditional financing was straightforward enough once I convinced our loan officer at Range Bank that our projections for the new store were reasonable. We worked locally with Northern Initiatives for some funds, and I felt we were a shoo-in for the MEDC grant. Combine all of this with our projected sales of preferred shares to members, and things tied up neatly. One reason it was "easy" was that the United States Department of Agriculture and Rural Development guaranteed our loan to the bank. However, the government shut down in the fall of 2012. In the havoc that followed, our guarantee went away.

That made Range Bank more cautious, and we had to start our financing process over. Fortunately, we were able to bring in Shared Capital Cooperative, a community development financing initiative just like Northern Initiatives, but primarily loaning to cooperatives. They bridged us enough money to make the new financing package work, yet all of it depended on the MEDC grant and the final amounts of preferred shares sold. Those amounts wouldn't be known for some time. Construction needed to start before winter.

In October, Northern Initiatives came through with enough funding to complete all the underground work on the project before the ground froze. We were off! The financing dominoes began to fall shortly after the groundbreaking. We never received word that we won the MEDC grant nor received the funds until after the store was opened! Such was the trust we had built among all the lenders in the project.

After financing the new store, designing it was analogous with creating a Christmas wish list and trying to be satisfied

with what you get instead. The architects and engineers had a more straightforward task than us once the store design was finished. That was until our store designer jumped firms in the middle of our project. We got lost in the shuffle for weeks. I was grateful for our construction manager, a long time Co-op member, builder and former board member, who stepped in often to demystify many technical details and work with the architects, engineers, and contractors to move things forward.

The store was built over the winter of 2014. If you remember, that was the polar vortex winter. There were many weeks in a row of sub-zero temperatures that complicated construction or simply broke our spirits. But spring eventually came. With it, the opening of the new store.

On the day it opened, May 14, 2014, we hosted a member walk from the now vacant, old store on Baraga Avenue through the downtown to the front doors of our new store. A few dozen people made that journey, and instead of a ribbon cutting ceremony, we commemorated the store opening by breaking a loaf of bread and sharing it with everyone. The first one hundred customers received a commemorative orange coffee mug. Do you still have yours? Ah, heady times indeed.

This store has far surpassed all expectations. It has served the members well through the ups and downs of growing pains. It has become a significant employer where more than several careers have launched or been built. It has allowed us to expand upon all our values tied to local food and healthy eating. It has upheld our promise of cooperation to our community and an entire region. It was an anchor we clung to during the pandemic, and it has continued to be a beacon of hope as an inclusive crossroads for community. Nowhere else do people come together more easily than over food.

Happy Expanniversary, everyone.

***Feel good. Shop the Co-op.***



# REFLECTING ON THE PAST

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS AT 502



***“A key concern was maintaining liquidity during the construction period and importantly, for the next few years as the new store ramped up sales and managed new levels of inventory and staff. The BOD, along with the General Manager, spent many, many hours reviewing and honing cash flow projections and building the expansion policies to manage risk and best ensure financial stability and success.”***

**KATHY LEONE**

*Board Member during expansion*







***“I’m most proud of the fact that throughout the entire process, the sole focus was on serving the members of the co-op. That continued focus is what makes the co-op such a valued cornerstone of our community.”***

**PHIL BRITTON**

*Board Member during Expansion*



***“The new floors didn’t bend and buckle, there was a new refrigeration system that didn’t need round the clock care when the weather was over 80 degrees, wider aisles, cafe seating, and a fresh start. Oh, and don’t forget the awesome new lighting that made us all look and feel 10% more attractive!”***

**MARY MOE**

*Operations Manager during Expansion*

***“I was a new cook in the deli and was really excited about the coop having a deli. It was so much fun being with the deli from the start and all the experimenting with recipes that went on. That was the most challenging part as well, trying to build a deli from scratch. I think I am proudest of the deli and how far it has come. We’ve gone from not knowing how to run a deli to being old pros at it!”***

**HEIDI SAND**

*Prepared Foods, Meat & Seafood Manager*



***“Once the building was finished and we had all the equipment, we had to get everything up and running very quickly, and lots of things weren’t working. I spent plenty of late days reconfiguring the lanes to find the magic settings to bring them all to life, and it was a huge relief when everything worked in time!”***

**EVAN ZIMMERMANN**

*IT Director*







***"I am most proud that our Co-op's outreach efforts have continued to thrive and grow, especially those efforts focused on healthy food affordable for all, support of local farmers, and food as medicine. I am also proud of the steps we took from the beginning to ensure that our physical store is as energy-efficient and environmentally-minded as possible."***

**NATASHA LANTZ**

*Outreach Director during expansion*



**CELEBRATING  
10 YEARS  
AT 502**

*Call for  
Candidates*

# FOR THE MFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Interested in contributing  
to your Co-op?**

**You can help by sharing in the  
governance of our organization.**

You can apply or encourage someone you  
know who could be an asset to apply.

Watch for information on a Board Meet & Greet  
to learn more about the work of the board,  
our elections, and the Co-op.

**Applications open  
OCTOBER 15 - JANUARY 15**

Learn more and apply at [www.marquettefood.coop/board/join](http://www.marquettefood.coop/board/join)

**Have questions now that the website didn't answer?**  
Send your question to [board@marquettefood.org](mailto:board@marquettefood.org) or call 906-273-2287

Scan the QR code to learn more today





# MFC APPLE PIE CONTEST

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5  
AT THE MARQUETTE FOOD CO-OP**

**PIE DROP-OFF: 8-10AM**

**JUDGING: 10-10:30AM • TASTING BEGINS: 10:30 AM**

WINNERS ANNOUNCED SHORTLY AFTER

Bring in your best apple pie for a chance to win a gift card to the Marquette Food Co-op and have your recipe featured in our newsletter and on social media.

Apple pies will be judged by a panel that considers the crust and filling, its taste, appearance, and recipe creativity. After the judging, join us for a tasting of all the pies!

All contestants will receive a \$5 gift card to say thank you for entering. Pies must come with a recipe, or they will not be considered. Pie tins should be labeled on the bottom with name and phone number. Pies must be recognizable as an apple pie – no cheesecakes etc. Pies that are gluten-free or vegan should be labeled as such on the recipe, which will be displayed with the pie.

Winners in the category of vegan, gluten-free, and general entry will all receive a \$50 gift card with the best pie over all receiving a \$100 gift card!

For more information please contact Sarah at [smonte@marquettefood.coop](mailto:smonte@marquettefood.coop) or at 906-225-0671 x 711

Thanks to our friends at  
Peace Pie Company for  
help with judging.



# CO-OP MONTH 2024

CELEBRATING  
**10 YEARS**  
AT 502

Co-op Month is the national celebration of the cooperative model. This year is special because it also marks 10 years since the expansion of the Marquette Food Co-operative. To our owners, shoppers, employees, and board members – thank you for your support over the years.

## THIS MONTH

**OWNERS RECEIVE 10% OFF A SHOPPING TRIP OF THEIR CHOICE\***

**THE FIRST FIFTY NEW OWNERS RECEIVE A SPECIAL NEW OWNER BAG**

**RECEIVE A \$10 GIFT CARD FOR SIGNING UP WITH THE FULL EQUITY PLAN**

**REFER A FRIEND AND RECEIVE A \$10 GIFT CARD**

**SPECIAL EVENTS, SAMPLING, AND WEEKLY RAFFLES**

**LEARN MORE AT [MARQUETTEFOOD.COOP/CO-OP-MONTH](https://marquettefood.coop/co-op-month)**

\*excludes items already on sale and ACE Sushi.



ASK ABOUT OUR

# OWNER REFERRAL PROGRAM



RECEIVE A  
**\$10**  
GIFT CARD FOR  
SIGNING UP WITH THE  
FULL EQUITY PLAN



RECEIVE A  
**\$10**  
GIFT CARD IF YOU  
REFER A FRIEND

# Bubbling U.P.



**Lu Cook**  
Marketing Assistant

**From Taiwan to California to the U.P., boba tea sprawls out a large tapestry forming a unique, growing community.**

Originating in Taiwan in the 1980s, boba tea spread quickly across trade and immigration in China and the U.S. Its success lay in its novelty; the blend of rich milk tea with springy tapioca pearls created a contrast that is simple yet irreplicable. Boba tea now rakes in billions as a beverage powerhouse. Culturally, boba shakes everything everywhere up.

In her piece, “Boba Diplomacy,” Valerie Wu finds boba tea has influence deeply ingrained itself overtime in Asian American life. “The drink is often discussed in the popular Facebook group ‘Subtle Asian Traits’ as a cultural symbol and has spurred many critical discussions about identity and belonging,” Wu writes.

Its escalating popularity expanded into politics, too, with the Taiwan New Power Party featuring a boba tea design during a 2020 passport redesigning competition. The unique beverage grew into an undeniable icon, one which is a mark of Taiwanese pride and identity.

Boba tea’s mark on broader U.S. culture is unsurprising with the death of the third place, a phenomenon closely associated with late-stage capitalism and the reduction of spots built for socialization. While boba tea is a commodity, boba shops exist as a similar communal spot to homey pubs and laid-back bars. For Blossom Bird, it’s no different.

Nestled by Snowbound Books and Washington Street, Blossom Bird carves out a lush spot for itself on Third Street.

“My whole adult life, I’ve always had in the back of my head, ‘If I never find out what I want to do careerwise, I want to open a boba shop,’” said Daniel

Ball, co-owner of Blossom Bird. “Kaila’s the one who made it all happen. I’m afraid to chances and risks big time, but she made it happen.”

“I think COVID played a played a big role into it, too,” Blossom Bird’s other owner, Kaila Ball, said. “I lost my job during COVID, so I had all this extra time. It kinda made ya realize you really want to do what you want to do in life.”

Along with its warm macarons, snacks, and copious amounts of boba flavors, it is often populated with people, collectible “little guys,” and verdant plants creeping across the walls. “When we were planning what the shop was gonna look like,” said Daniel, “we basically wanted to make it a spot ourselves would want to hang out in.”

With Blossom Bird being the only dedicated boba shop in the U.P., it occupies a unique place in the web of community boba shops offer. For Kaila and Daniel, security and acceptance are core to contributing to that global and local conversation. “I think we’re a safe place for a lot of different people, and they resonate with a lot of what we’re doing here,” said Kaila. “It’s a very accepting place, and that brings a lot of people in.”

“In the very beginning,” said Daniel, “I had on the ‘About Us’ section of our website a blurb saying we wanted to stitch our own thread in the fabric of the community. I feel like we are succeeding at that. I don’t want to say we succeeded, cause we’re not done. We’re still going.”

“The most rewarding thing about running this business is seeing the community resonate with everything we’re doing,” Daniel added. “Bringing joy to people. That is the most important thing.”



Maybe you want boba all day, before sunrise and late into the night. But uh-oh, the one hot stop for boba isn't open. Well, for the folks who can't get enough of it, the Marquette Food Co-op has several boba brands you can enjoy at home whenever you want.



## BOBA ORIGINAL MILK TEA

*Jenji Pure*

Jelly and popping boba pearls are favorites among boba fans, but chewy, sweet tapioca pearls are still a classic. Unfortunately, these pearls struggle to hold their bouncy form over time. Looking for a tapioca replacement with a similar texture, Jenji created their original Coco Jelly Boba, a shelf-stable boba with less carbs to boot.



## BOBA TEA BROWN SUGAR SACHETS

*Pinky Up*

Love the flavor of fresh boba tea but not a fan of its complex texture? Pinky Up is here for you. Their wide variety of tea sachets blend fresh tea leaves with tapioca pearls sealed up in each sachet. While you'll still get that hint of tapioca pearl taste, there's no worries about extra chewiness in your tea!



## MATCHA SOY LATTE BUBBLE TEA

*BubLuv*

After revolutionizing cauliflower rice and cauliflower pizza, Diana Ark Chen set her sights on a guilty pleasure: boba tea. Seeking a low-calorie, low-sugar alternative to her favorite treat, Chen took her decade of culinary experience to task, designing over 120 boba tea recipes. After 2 years, three flavors of BubLuv were born, each achieving Chen's dream of creating a healthier boba tea.

# LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

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



## WILLIS FAMILY MAPLE FARM

The Willis Family Maple Farm produces 100% pure, certified organic maple products from their family farm in Iron River, Michigan.

THROUGH OCTOBER, ALL WILLIS FAMILY MAPLE FARM PRODUCTS ARE 10% OFF!



## THE MARQUETTE FOOD CO-OP OWNER COUPON PROGRAM

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*Every month, the Marquette Food Co-op will be offering owners digital coupons for popular items in the store. These coupons are automatically added to your account – no need to bring in a coupon or try to scan something from your phone. All you need to do is ask to use your coupon when purchasing your groceries.*

### OCTOBER OWNER COUPONS

*Valid until October 31, 2024*

**Owners take**

**10% OFF**

***all items on a shopping  
trip of their choice\****

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***\*Excludes Ace Sushi.***



# NEW ITEMS

October 2024



## Kitchari Spice Mix

Pure Indian Foods

Blending together nutty, floral, and citrusy spices, the Ayurvedic dish, kitchari, packs itself full of flavor and nutrients. The spice list may be intimidating for new cooks coming to Indian cuisine, but don't fear! Pure Indian Foods' Kitchari Spice Mix brings all the spices you need together in an organic, well-balanced seasoning.



## Interstellar Cheddar Space Balls

Lesser Evil

Cheesy. Puffy. Guilty? Nah. Lesser Evil uses plant-based ingredients with heart-healthy avocado oil, avoiding anything overly processed while keeping things delish.



## Kids Chewable 100mg Vitamin C

Marquette Food Co-op

Autumn brings us the relief of a cool breeze, the beauty of kaleidoscopic leaves, and, unfortunately, cold, flu, and Covid season. Boost your kiddo's immune system this season with the MFC's own chewable 100mg Vitamin C tablets!



## Lemon Garlic Green Olives

Freestyle

For how perfect a snack olives seem, they are often preserved in a brine that brings with it a load of sodium. Thankfully, each snack-sized serving of Freestyle's Lemon Garlic Green Olives is only 10% of your daily value. Pair it with some goat cheese, roasted nuts, and pinot grigio for a delightful, sodium-conscious charcuterie.

All your favorite brands

# Fantastic Fall Savings!

Look for more than 70 coupons throughout the store.

save  
over \$105



Present one coupon per two items purchased. Limit of 20 coupons per shopping trip. Expires 10/31/24.

save with **coop deals**

**\$2.00 off 2**  
**Choice organics**  
Any two 16 ct. bagged tea



Present one coupon per item purchased. Limit of six coupons per shopping trip. Expires 10/31/24.

save with **coop deals**

**\$1.00 off**  
**Nature's Bakery**  
Any 6-10 ct. item



Present one coupon per item purchased. Limit of one coupon per shopping trip. Expires 10/31/24.

save with **coop deals**

**\$1.00 off**  
**Eat Meati**  
Any item

save with **coop deals**

**\$2.00 off 2**  
**Beyond Good**  
Any two 2.64 oz. bars

save with **coop deals**

**\$3.00 off**  
**Simply Tera's**  
protein powder

**Rosh Hashanah**  
Oct. 2 - 4

**Pie Contest**  
Oct. 5  
Drop-off: 8 - 10am  
Judging: 10 - 10:30am

**Tzom Gedaliah**  
Oct. 5

**MFC Culinary Class:  
Savoring São Paulo**  
Oct. 8 • 5:30 - 8pm  
*Registration required*

**Yom Kippur**  
Oct. 11 - 12

**Dussehra**  
Oct. 12

**Indigenous Peoples' Day**  
Oct. 14

**MFC Board of  
Directors Meeting**  
Oct. 15 • 6 - 8pm

**Sukkot**  
Oct. 16 - 23

**502 Location  
Anniversary Party**  
Oct. 18  
11am - 1pm

**Shemini Atzeret**  
Oct. 23 - 25

**Simchat Torah**  
Oct. 24 - 25

**Halloween**  
Oct. 31

## THE FRESH FEED

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

### Content & Editing

Lu Cook  
[lcook@marquettefood.coop](mailto:lcook@marquettefood.coop)

### Design & Layout

Travis Gerhart  
[tgerhart@marquettefood.coop](mailto:tgerhart@marquettefood.coop)

### Board of Directors

Michelle Augustyn PRESIDENT  
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Ashley McGrath  
Olivia Kingery

Matt Gougeon GENERAL MANAGER

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](http://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

