

# **WEAVERS WAY COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION**

## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Minutes**

### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2002**

Sylvia Carter, Vice-President, called the meeting of the Weavers Way Co-op General Membership to order at 7:35 p.m. on the evening of Thursday, November 7, 2002 at the Church of the Annunciation, Lincoln Drive and Carpenter Lane. Sylvia announced that a quorum was met and thanked everyone for attending. 52 people attended.

**AGENDA REVIEW:** Sylvia reviewed the agenda and introduced the Board members.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** The minutes from the June 2, 2002 General Membership Meeting were approved.

**CREDIT UNION:** John Tuffy

John informed the membership of the Delaware Valley Federal Credit Union's variety of services, which include: hours 9-12 Saturdays at Weavers Way, 9-4 Monday through Friday at the office in Elkins Park at Broad and Cheltenham. They also offer low interest loans for cars and homes. New members get a \$10 coupon towards their purchases at the store. He offered literature, which detailed their services and loan rates.

**LEADERSHIP AWARDS:** Sylvia Carter

The Leadership Committee developed two new awards to honor co-op members who are contributing in significant ways to the co-op and the community. They are meant to honor two outstanding deceased members of the co-op, Mort Brooks and Vince Pieri, for their years of service and guidance to the co-op. The Mort Brooks Member Service Award, designated to specifically honor members who have given outstanding service to the Co-op, was awarded to Raisa Williams and presented to her by Mort's wife, Norma Brooks. Raisa was selected for her hard work on the Weavers Way Organic Farm, where she dedicates her time and energy to promoting it, culling volunteers to work there and working there herself. The second award, The Vince Pieri Community Service Award, was presented by his wife Ruth Pieri to Carl Sigmund. Carl's activism in the peace movement, involvement in the community, and his help with returning the mailbox to the corner of Carpenter Lane and Greene Streets were examples given to support his selection. Both members were thanked and awarded with a framed certificate and \$25 gift certificate for the store.

**SERVICE AWARDS:** Ed McGann

Ed displayed a plaque for Jon McGoran who has preformed a variety of roles as staff member at the co-op for 20 years. Jon was not in attendance. Ed also announced that the co-op won in 3 categories in the Mt Airy Express Best of Northwest contest, for best Pet Store, Grocery Store and Produce Store. Bonnie showed an award that the Environment Committee received for their good work.

**WHERE OUR FOOD COMES FROM—PRODUCE:** Norman Koerner, Chris Petersheim and Ben Beiler

Norman introduced Chris and Ben from Paradise Organics, the Lancaster farm where the bulk of our organic produce is grown. Chris said their mission is to provide the best quality and freshest organic produce possible, which is why most is picked the day before it arrives at the co-op. He has been

involved in growing organic produce since 1975 when there was very little support for organics. Their farm has been supplying Weavers Way for about 12 years. He addressed the new USDA organic standards and expressed his support of the stronger standards. He says that they do use pesticides at his farm—hot pepper and garlic spray. Paradise was thanked for their informative and very interesting presentation.

#### PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS: Bob Noble

Bob said that there are exciting, scary, perplexing and inspiring developments in the co-op world and at Weavers Way. Exciting are the new store expansion and the growth of CGANE (Cooperative Grocers Association of the Northeast). It is, though, scary that the new store means new debt to the co-op. Also, of concern are the bankruptcies in the co-op wholesale industry. Perplexing are the ‘grow or die’ economics. Bob said he is inspired by the policy work being done at the Board level, informing the membership that policies completed to date are on the website. He invited members to the board meetings and to speak to him directly about their thoughts.

#### GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT: Ed McGann

Ed pointed out his report in the meeting packet and said that as of September we were showing about 3% growth. This is below our budget goals but grocery competition in the Delaware Valley is showing slow or no growth. There has been a slowdown in the sales of luxury items at the co-op (2<sup>nd</sup> floor items) in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

Ed pointed out that after the mergers taking place there are only two co-op wholesalers left in the country, in the southeast. GCANE is becoming a powerful negotiator in the talks with United Natural Foods (the company Northeast Cooperatives is merging with).

#### PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES: Shannon Dewith McCormick

In December 2000 the membership approved a change of domicile for our articles of incorporation from DC to PA. The following changes will bring our By-Laws up to date with regard to our new articles of incorporation.

1. THE CORPORATE DOMICILE: Page One. Delete “The District of Columbia Cooperative Association Act.” Replace with, “The Pennsylvania Cooperative Corporation Law of 1988.”
2. ARTICLE VIII-MISCELLANEOUS, SECTION 5 FISCAL YEAR: Delete current paragraph and replace with the following:

Starting in the year 2003, the Coop shall change its fiscal year. In 2003 only, the Co-op will have a short fiscal year that begins on or about April 1 and ends on or about June 30. The ending of this fiscal year shall coincide with the beginning of the next fiscal year. Thereafter, starting in 2003 and for all years thereafter, the fiscal year of the Co-op shall begin within 10 days of July 1, of each year and shall end within 10 days of July 1 of the following year. The actual dates that begin and end the fiscal year shall be announced by the General Manager on or before the Spring annual membership meeting.

3. ARTICLE IX- DISPOSITION OF NET SAVINGS, SECTION 3 PATRONAGE REFUND OF NET SAVINGS: Delete all of Section 3, which is based on the District of Columbia Cooperative Association Act and replace with the following, which is based on the Pennsylvania Cooperative Corporation Law of

1988: "The Co-op may make patronage rebates or other distributions to its members or patrons in conformity with the purposes for which it is incorporated. A patronage rebate or dividend that is, or is equivalent to, a reduction in the charge made by the Co-op to a member for goods or services shall not constitute a dividend or distribution within the meaning of the Cooperative Corporation Law of 1988 or as amended."

4. ARTICLE IX- DISPOSITION OF NET SAVINGS, SECTION 4 WRITTEN NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Delete the first paragraph of the current Section 4 and replace with the following: "In the event the Board of Directors adopts a plan for patronage refunds or membership distributions, the Board of Directors shall cause a written notice to be distributed to each member in good standing within eight months after the end of the fiscal year stating:"

**MOTION:** Adopt these by-law changes

**MEMBER ACTION:** Motion passes

**WELCOMING AMBASSADOR:** Ed McGann

A new cooperator position has been developed. For four Sundays in December, a member/Welcoming Ambassador will be available to assist the shoppers in the store with customer service and other duties. See the handout for details and to sign up for the orientation.

**EXPANSION UPDATE:** Ed McGann

Ed presented a drawn plan of the layout of 610/608 Carpenter Lane. The building permits have been approved and a contract signed with member Phil King for the construction work. The Co-op Bank loan closed this week and Monday November 18<sup>th</sup> construction will start with an official opening by May 1. Ed said that to save on expenses, skilled members are being sought. A member will be working on the interior and exterior painting. A member asked if the café would have the same hours as the co-op store and Ed said he is interested in earlier open hours. Another member asked if this café will be open to the public. Bob said that would need to be approved by the members and that the Property Acquisition Committee is exploring that possibility. Members were asked to consider the pros and cons of opening to the public for future discussion

**RAFFLE:**

Prizes given away.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Weltman, Secretary