

FRESH PRESS

FRESH PRESS IS A PUBLICATION OF ORYANA COMMUNITY CO-OP

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FRESH PRESS

**A quarterly publication of
Oryana Community Cooperative**

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OUR STORES

ORYANA TENTH ST.

260 E. 10th St.
Traverse City MI, 49684
Phone 231.947.0191

ORYANA WEST

3587 Marketplace Circle
Traverse City, MI 49684
Phone 231.486.2491

Michigan Bridge Card accepted
Bay Bucks Local currency accepted
Double Up Foodbucks location

The purpose of Oryana Community
Cooperative is to provide high quality
food produced in ecologically sound
ways at fair value to owners and the
community. Oryana owners and staff
are committed to enhancing their
community through the practice of
cooperative economics and education
about the relationship of food to
health.

Our Board of Directors

Colleen Valko, President
Kaitlyn Burns, Vice President
Cy Agley, Treasurer
Holly Jo Sparks, Secretary
Kathy Baylis Monteith, Director
Chris Miller, Director
Chuck Mueller, Director
Marty Heller, Director
Tricia Phelps, Director

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On the cover: A harvest banquet staff and volunteer crew from the early
1980s, most likely at TBA Career Tech Center on Parsons Rd.



May is
OWNER APPRECIATION MONTH!
You pick the day
TO SAVE 10%!

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

By Steve Nance

The State of the Co-op & 2022 Year End Report



As Oryana looks ahead and makes plans, the foundations and assumptions that existed during our business planning in 2019 have all changed. Our future business goals are informed by some basic assumptions that did not exist at the end of 2019 including the addition of Oryana West, a 26,000 square foot store two miles from our 10th Street location. Other changes included altered shopper behavior brought on by the pandemic, social, political, and economic unrest and turmoil, and natural and ecological disasters due to global climate change. All were the steady drumbeats of 2020 and 2021, and they set the stage for 2022 that also brought inflation, economic uncertainty, global conflict, and supply and staffing shortages.

Our forecast was 8% growth for 2022 but inflation, the Ukraine war, and continued staffing challenges resulted in about half that growth. Our 2022 revenue forecast was over \$33 million for both stores, which we did achieve because at the end of 2022 Oryana saw a return of growth and we had a record week in December of almost \$900,000. (Fun fact: This is about what sales were yearly when Oryana moved to 10th Street in 1997.) Staffing was forecast for 190 and we hit 205. Local product sales increased to about \$6 million, and with Oryana culinary made-in-house foods, we exceeded \$9 million.

Profitability - Not the best news

For the first time since I have been GM, Oryana was in the red, meaning the co-op had negative net profit after taxes of \$318,517 (or 0.96% of sales.) This was due to the skyrocketing costs of most food as well as overhead. We did not want to, but ultimately we had to react and increase prices. The co-op did enact programs to help shoppers with the stress of grocery prices by having buy one/get one (BOGO) deals through our Co-op Basics Programs. We also launched a program we call Core Sets that reduces prices every day on popular items. Oryana has long accepted lower margins on local farmers' and producers' goods so they get more of every dollar. We also continue to offer far more discounts than just about any co-op, at an expense of \$1,081,657 in 2022. As I say, grocery is a very thin margin business and co-op grocery even slimmer!

Financial Health

Despite the lack of net profit after taxes, Oryana continues to be one of the stronger co-ops in the country and our financial position and health is very good. Oryana did invest over \$800,000 in capital projects in 2022 including new equipment to strengthen our culinary departments, as well as building and energy-saving improvements in both stores. We also gave back to staff, to the community, and of course, the owners, with various discounts. With the addition of our long-term lease at West, our assets increased to over \$13 million.

Putting It In Perspective

- Total Sales - \$33,166,630. That's \$15,752,022 at 10th and \$17,407,910 at West
- Increase in revenue 4% for 2022 but off from forecast budget of \$34,553,671
- Negative net profit (\$318,517)
- Positive net cash from operations of \$160,075
- Positive \$556,162 (+1.68%) earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA)
- Increase in assets \$13,761,197 (with inclusion of long term lease) vs \$10,080,883 in 12/21/21

Oryana was also honored in 2022 to receive the local Chamber of Commerce Scale Up North Award, in addition to a national award, The Cooperative Excellence Award.

I look forward to another exciting year at Oryana, but as the board and the leadership team know, I will be retiring at the end of 2023. The board will be communicating more soon, but I am proud of their efforts as they have been working hard on the GM Search process. I am also very proud of the Oryana team and the cooperative they have helped build. My wife Robin started serving as a board member around 1997 after the co-op moved to 10th Street. I followed on the board after her term and eventually took the GM role in 2010. I guess I can now steal Jerry Garcia's quote, "What a long strange trip it's been."

INCOME STATEMENT	Year End 2022	% of Sales	Year End 2021	% of Sales
Net Revenues	\$33,170,416	100.00%	\$31,935,586	100.00%
COGS	\$21,544,061	64.95%	\$20,391,002	63.85%
Gross/Profit	\$11,626,355	35.05%	\$11,544,585	36.15%
Labor/Benefits	\$7,275,531	21.93%	\$6,763,890	21.8%
Operating Expenses	\$4,459,328	13.44%	\$4,099,827	12.84%
Operating Income	\$-133,580	-0.40%	\$680,868	2.13%
Other Income (taxes)	\$452,096	1.36%	\$565,193	1.77%
NET INCOME	\$-318,517	-0.96%	\$1,246,061	3.90%

BALANCE SHEET	Q4 2022	Q4 2021
Current Assets	\$4,942,288.33	\$5,565,536.48
Prop & Equipment	\$4,537,655.83	\$4,027,221.65
Other Assets	\$4,281,283.32	\$488,124.08
Current Liabilities	\$1,495,553.09	\$1,427,405.25
Long Term Liabilities	\$4,838,392.56	\$718,267.51
Total Liabilities	\$6,333,945.65	\$2,145,672.76
Owner Equity	\$7,427,281.83	\$7,935,209.45
Total Liability & Owner Equity	\$13,761,227.48	\$10,080,882.21



Board of Directors' Report

By Colleen Valko, Board President

In an area ripe with fruit farms, it's impossible to ignore the wisdom that farming offers us in everyday life. The proverb and old farmer adage, 'Plant pears for your heirs,' has been running through my head as we celebrate Oryana's 50th anniversary and as the board focuses on tending to the orchards our predecessors planted while planning for the many seasons to come. Pear trees have a reputation of taking many years to bear fruit, just as Oryana has grown over many years to become the flourishing cooperative it is today thanks to the thoughtful planning of others over time.

Fruit trees have a surprisingly long lifespan but eventually the fruit produced isn't as desirable in the changing market. Kroger, Wegmans, and Safeway, among other grocers, have been in business for over 100 years while continuing to grow and innovate to meet changing needs. Oryana is halfway there and we regularly make plans for a future we can only dream about. The job of the Oryana Board of Directors is to

represent owners by directing and inspiring through policy and ensuring organizational performance. The policies we craft and monitor are intended to give guide rails to the General Manager and team members to help make those dreams for the future come to life.

A wise farmer doesn't wait for the first harvest to plant again and would instead recommend you plant trees every year. Similarly, the work of the board is never done. We're not only tending to the trees just planted, the most fragile of all, but we're tending to the plans that have been in place for many years and the regular maintenance required to keep things moving forward. Each winter, the Oryana board takes a full weekend for discussion on strategic topics that can't fit into our monthly two hour board meeting. This January, at our first full in-person retreat since 2020, we spent time exploring the bylaws

revision project, policy governance principles, and General Manager succession planning. We all left feeling reenergized to tackle the work ahead.

Meanwhile, an election is around the corner and three of the candidates will be elected and seated on the board this May. Some people around the table at January's retreat may not be on the board when the impacts of their work come to fruition but, as Cicero said, "The diligent farmer plants trees of which he himself will never see the fruit." The same goes for the board member.

As farmers and Oryana owners know, the whirlwind seasons of spring and summer are just around the corner. As the snow melts and buds break, our winter planning and hibernation comes to an end. This year will be especially busy as we have the best reason to get together and celebrate - Oryana's golden anniversary! I hope you'll join us for some of the events planned and perhaps we'll run into each other standing on Oryana's fertile ground.

**"The diligent farmer plants trees of which he himself will never see the fruit."
~Cicero**

Customer Comments

Your feedback, suggestions, and questions are welcome! Email us at info@oryana.coop or fill out a comment form at Customer Service.

C: Is there a better way to ask if someone ‘qualifies for the senior discount?’ I just turned 40 and I find it insulting when I am asked.

A: We apologize for getting it wrong. It's quite a challenge to correctly guess people's ages. When we ask the question we are not assuming someone is over 55, we are simply doing our due diligence in making sure that everyone who qualifies is aware of the discount they are entitled to. Internally we have raised the question of 'how best to ask without upsetting anyone.' Turns out posting it at the lanes so folks can ask about the discount themselves hasn't worked because we hear more feedback from shoppers when they DON'T get reminded about the discount. Therefore, we have landed on what you typically hear, "Do you qualify for today's discount?" Our cashiers do their best to be diplomatic and some have even created their own unique ways of asking. The main intention with this question is to be sure everyone gets the discount they deserve and have come to expect. We will continue to do our best in being sensitive when asking this question.

C: It would be great to have cooking instructions in the bulk foods area.

A: We have our handy dandy bean and grain cooking guide brochure available in the bulk foods section but it may not have been plainly visible, so we deployed a few more brochure holders to make sure everyone can see them. Thanks for the suggestion!

Q: Maple City & Empire have lost their grocery stores. Cedar's Bunting Market does not have much to offer. It's a long trip to alternative grocery stores and we have many elderly residents. Would it be possible to consider an Oryana food truck that visits remote rural towns? You could carry staples and take orders from residents for specific items. Veggies would be prime out here. You could maybe tour once a week. This would be an interesting community outreach, though making it sustainable will be key. Thanks for the consideration.

A: In our 10 year vision we call 'Oryana, Imagined: 2030', which is guided by our mission and overall goals, we envisioned additional stores (which we now have!), and perhaps smaller outposts in surrounding rural areas like Frankfort or Maple City. They could be permanently deployed or perhaps they could be seasonal.

We also envisioned starting Oryana kiosks in places like Munson Medical Center or NMC. A mobile pop-up store is also a possibility. All these ideas are still on our

radar but are not in our strategic plan for the next year or so. Thank you for suggesting this as it's a great idea. We'll keep you posted on developments like this.

C: I would like to see the bakery items NOT wrapped in plastic. I hesitate to buy them because of that.

A: Many of our deli items are packaged in compostable containers, but as far as the wrapping on the bakery items, such as the muffins, this keeps them fresher longer. We have found that we have less waste when we wrap the bakery items, as they tend to dry out quickly. Even though the plastic wrap is not recyclable, we feel it's an important trade off to maintain the freshness of our high quality baked goods by wrapping them.

C: My husband and I loved Ali Lopez's recent recipe in the last newsletter, Healing Lentil Soup. I think it's the best lentil soup I ever made! It's a great mix of flavors, has an excellent texture with the coconut milk, is easy, and, of course, so healthy. Keep up the good work!

A: We're so glad you liked Ali's soup recipe! Thanks for sharing your positive experience.

Q: What does "owner sales YTD" and "owner sales give" mean on my receipt?

A: Your Oryana receipt is a wealth of information about your investment in the local food economy, your ownership expiration date, and even your elusive owner number.

The portion directly below the subtotal contains important information about your spending so far that year. "Owner sales given" represents how many dollars you spent on your latest transaction, "points to start" represents how many dollars you've spent at Oryana prior to your last transaction, and the "owner sales YTD" is the total number of dollars you've spent so far this year. Your "owner sales YTD" helps us calculate your patronage (aka your "return on investment" for a financially successful year at the co-op) at the end of the year. The more you spend, the bigger your return on investment!

There are a couple of other helpful tidbits found on your receipt. One of them is your co-op ownership expiration date. You can find that in the top left corner. You can also see how much of your grand total was spent on local products on the bottom half of your receipt in the "locally produced" line item. Last, if you ever need to find your owner number, look in the top right corner of your receipt for the numbers following the last zero.

EVENTS



General Ownership Dinner & Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 5:30 pm
TC Central High School Cafeteria

Gather around the table! We invite you to attend our annual get-together for a community meal and business meeting. The meeting is a chance for owners to engage with the co-op board of directors, hear about the State of the Co-op from the GM, reflect on the past year, and look ahead to the future.

Around the Table - Live Stories of Food & Cooperation

Thursday, May 4, 7pm
City Opera House

Oryana Community Co-op and Expand Storytelling are proud to present a live storytelling event at the City Opera House to celebrate 50 years of rich Oryana history. A diverse lineup of local storytellers will take the stage to share their personal stories of adventure, struggle, and creativity on the themes of natural food and cooperation. Hosted by Chelsea Bay Dennis with a special music performance by Seth Bernard. Tickets are available at the City Opera House and at both Oryana locations. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Northwest Food Coalition.

Gather Film Screening

Monday, May 15, 7pm
The State Theatre, TC

Oryana is proud to present a screening of the film *Gather: the Fight to Revitalize Our Native Foodways*. *Gather* is an intimate portrait of the growing movement among Native Americans to reclaim their spiritual, political and cultural identities through food sovereignty while battling the trauma of centuries of genocide. Join us for a panel discussion following the movie.

Smart Commute Breakfast

Friday, June 9, 7 - 9am
TART trailhead, Oryana 10th St.

Smart Commute Week is an annual celebration to promote alternative forms of transportation. Friday is the final breakfast and ceremony. Anyone arriving via bike, foot, carpool, etc. may enjoy a free breakfast, compliments of Oryana.

TADL Summer Library Reading Challenge

Saturday, June 10, 10am - 12pm, Oryana West

Children and grown-ups can sign up for the summer reading challenge at the Traverse Area District Library bookmobile. Kids can also enjoy storytime!

Traverse Connect Ribbon Cutting

Friday, June 16 - Oryana Tenth Street

The public is invited to come together for a ribbon cutting with Traverse Connect at our 10th St. location. Celebrate 50 years of knowing your local farmers by name, bumping into your neighbor in the bulk aisle, and owning your local food co-op. Join us for light refreshments as we reflect on the past 50 years of cooperation and look forward to the next 50 years.

Mawby Vineyard Tours

Sunday, August 13, 10 am & 2 pm
Mawby Vineyards & Winery

Join us as Oryana and Mawby both celebrate 50 years of doing business in northern Michigan. We have teamed up with Mawby to create a signature 50th anniversary Oryana wine, and we're celebrating with a tour and tasting at the beautiful Mawby Vineyard in Suttons Bay. Tickets available later this summer.

Slow Roll & Bike Fuel with TART & Oryana

Wednesday, June 21, 5-6pm
Wednesday, July 12, 5-6pm
Wednesday, August 30, 5-6pm

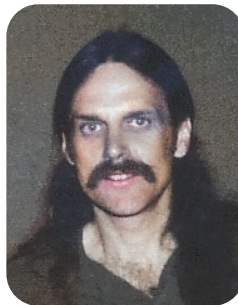
Roll around the new Boardman Lake Loop and stop for snacks at Oryana. All are welcome.



Co-op Memories



In the window facing Front Street I painted a rainbow capped with letters O-R-Y-A-N-A above and Food Co-op below, hoping that a symbol of an inclusive new beginning above Front Street might beckon people to trek up the Oryana stairs. It seemed to work.
~David Poinsett



Oryana bought the tofu business from the Grain Train in Petoskey in 1980. They used a plywood box with a lightbulb and every batch of tempeh had to be "tempeh-sat," meaning that someone stayed with the tempeh for the 24 hour period needed for the culture to form. They had to keep the batch between 90 and 105 degrees for the entire period or you would lose that batch. I remember sleeping with the box checking it all through the night to keep it at the right temperature.
~Kerry Krcek

My mother Mary Shipman was one of 4 or 5 ladies who bought whole wheat berries from Oryana in the 70s. They owned a grinder together and passed it around to grind the wheat for bread making.
~Dawn Abraham

I was there in the beginning and I'm still here with Oryana. I baked 6 loaves of freshly ground 100% whole wheat bread each month as part of my membership duties. I had just moved to TC in 1975 and my sister-in-law saw the window sign for Oryana. I went upstairs, met Mike Williams, and the rest is history. I helped Oryana move to Randolph Street.
~Lindy Barnes



My volunteer status evolved as I presented a concept to the board and staff to have Oryana grow sprouts and with approval I got hired on! I was given the go ahead to build a sprout farm in the basement, made from a framework of galvanized pipe, pvc plumbing hooked to a lawn irrigation system as a watering device, and screens to hold seeds on top of a 2 x 4 "egg crate." I was the 4th or 5th actual employee at the time. My job responsibilities grew into being a store clerk and eventually taking over the produce department.
~Rob Serbin

I was a founding member. I remember discussions on the name and the first food delivery going to an empty building at what had been a veterinarian office on 16th St. at (then) Rennie St. (now Veterans Drive). We bagged our own food orders from bulk bags on the floor. This was in the spring of '74.
~Deborah Lardie

I remember going there way back when and seeing the bins of bulk flours. I'm so happy to have shopped at Oryana all these years. When the kids were little, we went to the store on Randolph, and they brought one of their friends whose mom never shopped at health food stores. He went home and told his mom, "Susie took us to a really strange grocery store."
~Susie Alexander Collins



I made cookies to sell at Oryana for our working membership discount as a kid. My mom was a board member later. The tofu and tempeh they made were world class.
~Matthew Goike

It felt so luxurious to go upstairs at the Front St. store and be able to get a few pounds of PB and smaller amounts of this 'n' that than the usual 25-50 lb buckets and bags that we ordered through Lakeland buying club in Benzie county. And if a truck happened to be there when we were, we helped carry the goods upstairs to Oryana's starter-home.
~Barbie Stowe

"Susie took us to a really strange grocery store."



EARLY 90s

Oryana looks for a new location, tofu production is up to 240 lbs a week, co-op starts charging a 15% surcharge to non-members.



LATE

The co-
facility
\$1 millio
\$9/sing

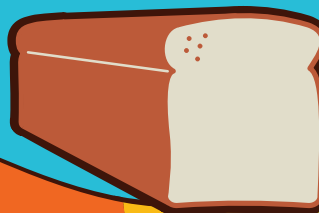
EARLY 80s

Oryana moves to Randolph St., soy & sprout production begin, Oryana gets its logo, has its first harvest banquet. Oryana pizzas become famous at Wheatland Festival, sales are up to \$370,000. First computer purchased.



LATE 70s

Oryana gets deliveries from People's Warehouse, sales are up to \$44,000/year, cost of membership is \$5 with a one hour per month volunteer commitment.



Mid 1970s

Oryana's first home is on East Front St, begins to receive trucks, contracts Oleson's to make honey wheat bread for 99¢ a loaf.



1973

Locals establish a buying club, transform it into a cooperative, co-op is named "Oryana."





LATE 90s

Co-op moves to 10th St. location, \$1.5 million in sales, membership climbs to over 3500. 500 community members served at a harvest banquet.

EARLY 2000s

Sales climb to \$2 million. Oryana becomes the first Certified Organic co-op retailer in the country, gets its first website, automatic doors installed. Non-member surcharge eliminated.

LATE 80s

Co-op builds a food service facility on Cherry Bend Rd. and reaches \$1 million in sales. Membership is \$10/single and \$12/couple.

LATE 2000s

Oryana launches Everyday Value program, expands the store and doubles in size. Lake St. cafe opens an espresso bar. Sales up to \$7 million.



2010s

Oryana installs solar panels on the roof and wins the Downtown T.C. chili cook-off. The *What's For Dinner?* tasting and recipe program launches. Oryana wins the Hagerty Small Business of the Year award and holds its first powwow.

2020s

Oryana acquires a second store, wins the Scale Up North & CCMA Cooperative Excellence awards. Oryana employs more than 200 staff and has more than 10,000 owners. Store sales at \$33,000,000.



2023

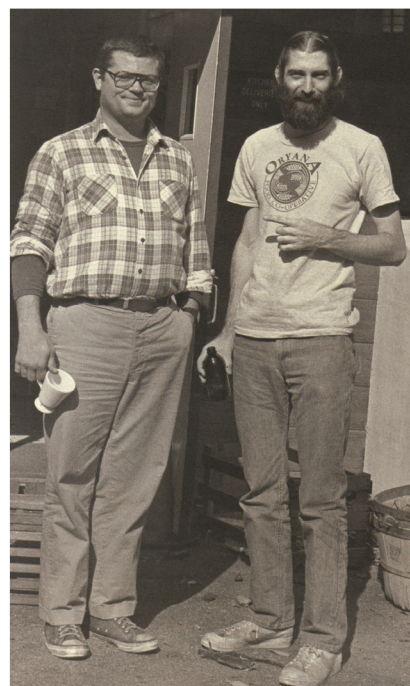
Reminiscing with Mike

A retrospective from our first general manager

By Michael Williams



L to R: Tom Vinette, Deborah Trowbridge, Mike Williams, Rebecca Mang, Rob Serbin, Maggie Zimmerman, Joan Radant (Costly), Pamela Fay, Tom Slater, Darcy Cunningham at Randolph St. store



Bob Purvis & Mike Williams



An old friend sent me the most recent Oryana newsletter with its reminiscence of the early years of the co-op and the transition from buying club to retail store on Front St. I had often wondered about that phase of the co-op's existence. That article helped to paint in some

of the details, such as carrying 50lb bags of flour, rice, and oatmeal up those stairs. This narrative picks up where the previous newsletter left off, with Oryana as a walk-up retail outlet with one cooler (thank you, Linda), an ancient NCR cash register, and an equally ancient scale.

It was a dark and stormy night back in early 1979. The weather wasn't too bad, but there was certainly a storm raging inside, as a handful of co-op members had gathered in a room at NMC to debate an issue with all the vigor they could muster, which, as usual with co-ops, was considerable. The question under consideration was the pricing of Gallagher Farm milk, which Oryana had just begun carrying. Up until that point, all items carried a 30% markup. Most of them came from the Michigan Federation of Food Co-ops warehouse in Ann Arbor and were in bulk quantities: the aforementioned 50 lb bags of rice, flour, and oatmeal, 25 lb bags of beans, 40 lb blocks of cheese, 5 gallon tins of tamari, buckets of safflower oil, buckets of peanut butter, their recycled sturdy plastic providing the containers for all

the bulk products on wooden risers in the room facing Front Street in the walk-up storefront. But the milk was different. Pricing it with the standard markup would make it more expensive than it could be found elsewhere, something which was decidedly not true of the rest of the co-op's offerings. What to do? Eventually the meeting voted that the markup for the milk would be different.

It may seem strange to start a recollection of those years where so much happened—the new location, the soy business, the kitchen, the banquets, and the festival activity, to mention a few mileposts—with an obscure, poorly attended meeting. In retrospect, however, I can see that the meeting laid the foundation for what was to come during my time at Oryana.

The first and most immediate change was in governance. We took the milk pricing decision as a committee of the whole, i.e. whoever showed up voted. ("Decisions are made by those who stay 'til the end of meetings" was a favorite co-op adage at the time.) But it was obvious, once the 30% across the board markup was abandoned, that we couldn't

Oryana was first and foremost a community enterprise undertaken by all of us.

be holding a membership meeting to decide on pricing with every new product. If this circumstance by default gave staff more control over pricing, it was accompanied by its necessary adjunct, the establishment of a governance structure.

I do not remember any board of directors in the young Oryana when I started working. Surely pricing levels in terms of overall margin goals is properly a decision for a board elected by the membership. There being no such organizational voice at the meeting, and shortly thereafter we established a board of directors to set policy and monitor management. Although not a direct result of the pricing policy (no one left the meeting saying, "Hey, we've got to have a board"), it seems clear in retrospect that establishing a board was a necessary evolution of the co-op once the one-size-fits-all pricing structure was altered.

Second, the meeting brought the recognition, however halting, that the co-op existed within a wider retail environment. Up until that time, if one wanted organic whole wheat flour or organic pinto beans, there was the co-op and...and...that's about it. In this circumstance, location and shopping conditions were not determining factors, since, where else you gonna go? But the growth of the business, doubling, and then doubling again, was creating an imperative of its own, resulting in the move to Randolph Street.

The move was made possible by an earlier board decision to change the \$5 annual membership fee to an annual contribution of \$7.50 - \$12.50, depending on the size of the household, the down payment being funded largely by many families prepaying five years of contribution. Steve Davis was hired as the lead carpenter, and a small army of volunteers went about creating something that showed their pride of ownership, from Gary Kennedy's wooden cooler doors to the Bill Allen metal sculpture frog lights above the door. The Randolph Street Oryana was a clean, airy, well-lit space. It is hard to describe how radical a change the new location was from the typical dimly lit, poorly capitalized stores that comprised the co-op retail presence across the state at the time.

So, we had a pretty store, a welcoming environment, and good food. But pricing continued to play a prominent part in our success. The most important board decision in this regard was the adoption of what we termed our "grocery basket" policy. We would take the formula we were given—good food at inexpensive prices—and drive the vision forward. The grocery basket policy kept the basics of the natural food diet at the 30% mark-up, providing the best deal we could to the members on these core items. It was, after all, a member organization, so the first and foremost obligation had to be to serve the needs of the membership. We were still, however, a capital hungry enterprise. The opportunity came

to purchase the tofu equipment: \$3,000 please. Want to carry produce? Appears you'll need another cooler. Several more thousand dollars. Electronic cash registers. Digital scales and Hobart labelers. New dispensing bins. How to go about raising the capital necessary to fulfill "our mission from God," as the late Phil Thiel constantly termed our activities?

Eventually we started working on improving our margins without increasing prices to members. We stopped ordering trail mixes from outside suppliers and starting making our own (Mel Famey, anyone?). Changes we worked to effect at the central warehouse level led to pallet and half-pallet pricing breaks on items we could order in that quantity. More importantly for cash generation, we developed a series of activities that went beyond the storefront, natural food banquets and our festival presence foremost among them. These outreach activities, especially our Wheatland food booth, were very cash flow

positive for Oryana. They involved extensive use of volunteer labor around a staff core. Look at the picture of the banquet crew in the last newsletter; I count around 45 heads. That's a lot of working discounts being earned, but more to the point, that's a lot of people having fun doing something together that they believed in. In manager-speak, we were leveraging our human capital (the talents and energies of our members) to achieve financial results that were central to the organization achieving its wider goals. In hippy-speak, we did stuff to make money that allowed to us to carry the ball forward, and had a blast doing it.

You will note that I use the word 'we' a lot here. This is not an editorial 'we,' but the genuine first person plural. Oryana was first and foremost a community enterprise undertaken by all of us. We succeeded during that time because we had a lot of shoulders to the wheel—strong, capable, talented shoulders. Second, I mentioned few names. I would invariably, given the fog of years and age, miss many important contributions. And they came from all over. For instance, Kevin Porter, a co-op member and baker at Oleson's Garfield store, was the one who suggested the whole wheat loaf that became an Oryana staple. Dennis Candela was the person who brought forth the idea of a natural food banquet. Pat Curley introduced us to tempeh. And so on.

Finally, I will never be able to repay the debt I owe to my fellow staff members, especially those of the first few years. Much of the reason Oryana was able to succeed was because we had a dedicated, hard-working, productive staff. Debra Trowbridge, Rebecca Mang (in charge of our wonderful volunteer program), Rob "Sir Bean" Serbin, Joan Radant, the crew of the early years. Pam and Tom, the early kitchen and soy crew. Thank you all, and thank you to the many great members that made Oryana such a vibrant place during my time there.



Mike Williams, far right, and Oryana staff

Michael Williams worked at Oryana from 1978 - 1986. He is a retired gentleman gardener, still trying to do the right things the right way. (Still crazy after all these years.)



Back row, L to R: Kerry Krcek, Bob Russell, Tim Johnson, Eric Bartell, Mike Jarvis
Front Row, L to R: Liz Berger, Alice Mummy, Stephanie Mills



Oryana on Randolph St.



Inside Randolph St.

Making the Road by Walking

Stephanie Mills reflects on 50 years of co-op adventures



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In a half century Oryana has accumulated quite an archive. Recently I got to wander down that memory lane. There were mimeographed newsletters and the menus, complete with as many as 26 (!) recipes, for the lavish natural foods banquets of yore, years of the co-op's tabloids, and much else. One item particularly caught my eye: a photo of a staff member at the 10th Street store holding up a big blackboard framed with the heading: "I own my co-op because..." and "I work for a better world" chalked in the space beneath.

The 1970s, when Oryana began, was a time of questioning the givens and envisioning a fairer, freer, kinder, greener world. Movements for peace, ecology, feminism, Black, Red, and Gay rights were afoot. Intentional communities sprang up across the land. Northwest lower Michigan had a counterculture with communes, head shops, a new age book store, a natural foods store, and a food co-op, attesting that the appetite for new freedoms and responsibilities wasn't just a coastal fad.

Nonviolent direct resistance was conceptual news in the 60s and 70s. Vegetarianism, a form of nonviolence, had been around for millennia, but Frances Moore Lappe's revolutionary *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971) and *Food First* (1977) provided us with a theory and practice of meatless eating along with a stirring argument for greater economic justice in food and farming. (In 2003 Oryana hosted Lappe in Traverse City to speak on her [then] latest book, *Hope's Edge*.)

Organic gardening and farming weren't novel. J.I. Rodale had been carrying that message to magazine racks since 1947, fostering household food production through research and readers experimenting with non-toxic, topsoil-building food growing approaches across the country. *Mother Earth News*, launched in 1970, remains an important publication for the homesteading counterculture, reviving practices of putting food by, savvy market gardening, and experiencing "living on less." The back-to-the-land movement was alive and well. Frugality, or "living poor with style" was the way to go.

By 1984, when I moved here from San Francisco, Oryana—and the counterculture—had evolved from back porch buying club to the Randolph Street cooperative grocery store. Though I missed all the fun of several relocations, I did get to be friends with the pioneering folks who did every kind of work from tempeh-sitting, to newsletter-editing, food hauling, aisle-sweeping, and banquet organizing. I lived in an Oryana household with Phil Thiel, my intended. Phil was a co-op diehard. He'd served on the board of the Michigan Federation of Food Cooperatives, was Oryana's board president in '82, a Lake Street tofu maker, tempeh evangelist, and in the aughts, proprietor of his own natural foods and booze store in Cedar.

Our housemates were Rob Serbin and Darcy Cunningham. I lucked into a ready-made community of co-op stalwarts like Kerry Krcek, Pam Fay, David Poinsett and Debra Trowbridge, Sally Van Vleck and Bob Russell, to name only a very few. They weren't "Living the Dream", they were "Walking the Talk": living simply (off the grid in Krcek's case), gardening, entrepreneuring, and environmental organizing. Beginning right where we lived, they worked for a better world in direct and practical ways.

The Oryana gossip grapevine took me aback at first. Community can mean minding one another's business, and not just grocery business. When Phil and I were hospitalized after a horrendous car accident I learned to appreciate

this keenly. Bulletins about his condition, which was critical, were chalked daily on the notice board at Randolph St. Good vittles brought by caring friends supplemented the dreary hospital fare and sped the healing.

In the early 90s, a turbulent time for Oryana, I served as board president. That's long enough ago that my memory's sketchy. Others will recall it differently, and the minutes can supply the facts. The crux was the need for a different general manager. That heartbreak made way for expansion and the search for a better location. The winds of change blew through three more general managers before landing the co-op at the former Brown Lumber yard. That rocky process unfolded in full view of the members, whose oversight led to important course corrections.

The Oryana community has grown organically, as it were, from a bunch of homesteading authority questioners to a potent market segment. Where other small businesses might have gone under, Oryana has survived its share of crises in its half century, perhaps by virtue of being a cooperative with a quotient of committed, attentive members. Democracy is the open secret.

"The co-op is a great way to have a political say in your community and influence others with your values," wrote Kerry Krcek in a '95 newsletter.

Now there are thousands of stakeholders—member/owners—in this co-op. OK Boomers and up-and-coming hipsters, foodies and elders, cyclists and hobblers, dreamers and cranks. We belong for myriad reasons, from the need to eat special diets to wanting to raise healthy kids, to being vegan gourmets to, in my case, enjoying the geriatric reunion that happens on senior discount days.

Today Oryana carries an array of products from faraway and nearby, via Fair Trade, local organic growers, and co-ops of suppliers. It's a multimillion-dollar business now, and has to be profitable and practical enough to continue to serve its members, but profit and pragmatism are not the co-op's prime reason for being. Although Oryana is unavoidably part of a global system that runs on oil and wraps in plastic, there's still ethical consideration and debate about what the store carries.

Perhaps recent experience with shaky supply chains and [partially] climate-driven food price increases is reawakening us to the urgency of local production for local needs, and the necessity for an economics of sufficiency and stability, one that builds the soil and fosters skillful means.

Oryana's youth wasn't a Golden Age, but I'd be a liar if I didn't confess to nostalgia for it (and mine). It had a certain funky goodness, promise, and spark. Of course, today's 20- and 30-somethings have their own versions of all those qualities, and ways of working for a better world. Among those ways remains economic cooperation, a movement that's over a century and a half old, and still, as George Powell, an 80s board member wrote, "The best hope for regaining control of our lives."

Vintage Oryana Recipes



During our decades of food service featuring healthy ingredients, we created plenty of great dishes and many favorites that we still make today, including the rainbow pasta salad. We perused some old newsletters and our first cookbook, *Live Food*, published in 1991, and found a few recipes to share. Here's to many more years of feeding our community the whole foods, organic way!

Rainbow Pasta Salad

1/2 lb spiral rainbow pasta
1/2 lb firm tofu, cubed
1/4 cup tamari
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
1 cup shredded carrot
2 stalks celery, chopped
1/2 medium red onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, diced small

Dressing:

1 cup Veganaise
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dill weed
1 tablespoon umeboshi plum paste

1. Cook pasta according to package directions, until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water.
2. While pasta is cooking, whisk together the tamari and mustard. Spread tofu on a rimmed baking sheet and pour the tamari mixture over tofu; stir to coat well and bake at 350° for 15 minutes. Let cool.
3. Mix together the dressing ingredients in a large bowl. Add the chopped veggies, tofu cubes, and pasta. Toss to combine. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve. Serves 6.

Friendship Cookies

Slightly adapted from Oryana News, 1988

This is a dense, hearty, chewy cookie, perfect for breakfast or an afternoon snack. Makes 2 dozen.

1 ripe banana, mashed
3/4 cup honey, heated slightly
3/4 cup neutral vegetable oil
4 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 1/2 cups rolled oats
1 1/4 cups wheat germ
3/4 cup powdered milk
3/4 cup coconut flakes
2/3 cup chopped walnuts
2/3 cups raisins
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon sea salt

1. Heat oven to 350°F and grease 2 cookie sheets.
2. Beat together the banana, eggs, honey, vanilla, and oil in a bowl until smooth. Mix the remaining ingredients in another large bowl. Pour the egg mixture into the dry mix and stir well to coat everything evenly. Let dough sit for 30 minutes.
3. Portion out in 1/4 cup scoops on the prepared sheet pans. Gently flatten the cookies to about 1/2 inch thick rounds and smooth out the edges. Bake for 15 minutes until golden brown. Share with friends!

Cream Cheese Lemon Flan

from Live Food

Crust:

1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/3 cup maple sugar
1/3 cup butter, softened
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour

Filling:

4 large eggs
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup heavy cream
4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
grated zest from 1 lemon
8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
4 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon nutmeg

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Mix crust ingredients together in a bowl. Remove 1/2 cup of the mixture and set aside. Press the remainder into a 10-inch springform pan, making sure to press some up the sides. Bake for 8 minutes until firm. Allow to cool.
2. Increase oven temp to 425°F. Blend filling together until smooth and pour into crust. Bake for 10 minutes. Decrease oven temp to 400°F, crumble the reserved topping on the tart, and bake another 10-15 minutes. Don't overbake. Let cool completely before cutting.





Spring Classes



Making Marvelous Mocktails

Tuesday, April 25, 6 - 8:30 pm
Instructor: Jack Lankford

Learn how to whip up festive and impressive drinks without spirits for friends and family. In this class you will learn everything you need to know to create your own delicious mocktails (cocktails without alcohol.) Join master mocktail maker Jack Lankford, who will show you how to make flavorful syrups from scratch as well as delicious fresh infusions which will form the base of your mocktail creations. You'll learn about flavor pairings, herbs & spices, and you'll also make two savory snacks to go with your four mocktails.

Honoring Indigenous Foods

Thursday, May 11, 6 - 8:30 pm
Instructor: Darylin Berryman

Immerse yourself in the richness of some of the varied cuisine of original American cultures in this informative class with Chef Berryman. Darylin, who is a Certified Native Food for Life instructor, and who also grows her own traditional native foods, will focus on some of the true foods of North America. Together you will make No-Fry Bread, Wild Rice Soup, Boston Baked Beans, and a refreshing Apple Pecan Raisin Salad.

Pizza From Scratch

Thursday, May 18, 6 - 8:30 pm
Instructor: Robert Young

Making your own pizza from scratch is fun and rewarding! Follow along with master pizza maker Robert and learn everything you need to know to make delicious pizza at home. You will learn tips and tricks for making dough that will yield a crispy crust, as well as a few easy and fresh sauces for topping your pizza. You'll probably want to start a weekly pizza night after this!

Seafood Dinner Party

Tuesday, May 23, 6 - 8:30 pm
Instructor: Rose Hollander

If you feel intimidated about serving seafood at a dinner party, you can relax because Rose will show you how easy and delicious it can be. A warm weather-inspired menu featuring fresh seafood will be a highlight for your guests this summer. Together you will learn how to shuck and serve fresh oysters and serve them with Mignonette Sauce. You'll also make Smoked Trout Mousse, Fennel Crusted Tuna, Fish Poached in Coconut Milk with Lemongrass and Tomatoes, and a bright Sorrel Aioli. Your guests will swoon!

Indian Cuisine

Saturday, May 20, 11 - 1:30 pm
Instructor: Tom Sisco

Dive into a world of Indian spices as Tom, who trained with renowned Indian chef Julie Sahni in NYC, introduces you to several iconic dishes redolent with warm spices. You will learn all about bold (but not necessarily hot) spicing of food. Together you will make a classic Red Lentil Dal with Spinach, Cumin Potatoes, Lemon Ginger Rice, Chicken Braised in Spiced Yogurt Curry, Chickpeas with Spiced Vegetables, and Aasaan Chapati.

Gardening 101

Monday, April 24, 6 - 7:30 pm
Wednesday, May 3, 6 - 7:30 pm
Instructor: Cathy Fenlon, Proscaped Design

Gardening season is here! If you're new to gardening or want to brush up on basics, join landscape & nursery expert Cathy Fenlon for an information packed session on all things Michigan garden-related. Cathy will cover topics such as sun vs. shade conditions in your space, garden layouts, annuals and perennials, trees and shrubs, soils, mulching, to till or not, hardscaping, and container gardening.

CLASS LOCATION:
Oryana West Community
Room & Kitchen

COST
Cooking classes:
\$40 for Oryana owners
\$45 for non-owners
Gardening 101: \$15

REGISTRATION
Register for classes on our
website or on eventbrite.com



Grow Benzie

**There's something terrific happening in Benzie County.
Learn all about what Grow Benzie is accomplishing.**

By Josh Stoltz, Grow Benzie Executive Director

Act I

If you haven't visited us, Grow Benzie is a non-profit community center located in Benzonia, Michigan. Back in 2006, a bunch of Benzoids were celebrating Marley Demers' high school graduation at Llama Meadow Farms (owned by Marty and Betty Demers-Jablonski, Oryana members since 1984) and had the idea of starting a community garden to teach kids where food comes from. Within 90 days, Grow Benzie was formed and an abandoned commercial plant nursery was purchased to incubate ideas in a "Community Greenspace." The groundswell of support for the initiative was staggering. Not only were there dozens of residents helping out, both year-round and summer folks, four local investors signed their name to the mortgage- committing themselves to the success of the organization.

As most readers can attest, starting a nonprofit is not easy business. Revitalizing four buildings totaling 20,000 ft. on a 4 acre campus seemed herculean. Roofs needed to be repaired. The entry driveway needed to be completely reengineered with a new entrance. Electrical, accessibility, carpet. All of this with a volunteer board of directors and community of do-gooders. The mission was to foster self-reliance through education in agriculture, nutrition, job training, and life skills. Back then we had three distinct areas of focus: raising healthy children by giving them a chance to realize their own potential, reenergizing people by teaching

new skills, thus gaining confidence and independence, and becoming a center of excellence designed to support and change lives in our evolving economy.

From these efforts, several success stories added to our momentum and the impact we were making in the community. One was with the Groundwork Center, installing a hoop house at Platte River Elementary and leading gardening workshops at local schools. Another was the start of the Grow Benzie Farmers Market, which was one of the first in Northern Michigan to offer food assistance programs. Plus, our community garden had 25 plots with 4 dedicated to local food pantries.

One of our most significant accomplishments, however, was the creation of Grow Benzie's incubator kitchen. After converting the former retail space into a 3,000 sq ft event



The Benzie Area Bee Guild at a get-together

center, the Board decided to renovate the adjacent 1,500 sq ft room into a kitchen where food entrepreneurs could scale their production to sell at local stores while local caterers and food trucks used the kitchen as a commissary. We're so grateful for the financial support that helped us achieve those early capital upgrades, including a \$6,000 grant from Oryana.

Act II

In 2015, Grow Benzie initiated a fresh strategic plan with a newly hired executive director, yours truly. With a redefined mission to focus less on education (leaning into existing partners such as Oryana and MSU Extension), our focus was being a community connector to healthful foods, jobs, life skills, and each other while using the campus to help support our work. The objectives included maximizing the use of our facilities and offering programs based on need.



Make & Take sauerkraut workshop in Grow Benzie's commercial kitchen

With support from Crosshatch Center, Grow Benzie helped incubate several community guilds including bee, fermentation, seed, and compost. In the kitchen, we saw many food entrepreneurs and innovators thrive. Others had a safe place to realize it wasn't the investment of time or money they wanted to make. We shifted from relying on grants for teaching food preservation and horticulture in the

hoop houses, to changing the model entirely and becoming an incubator farm, providing a low risk opportunity to new farmers hoping to try their hand at growing food.

Throughout this whole process, it became clear that there was a great demand for support services and collaborative leadership; for existing organizations, that need was not being met. Just as a farmer or artist may not have experience or interest in marketing and bookkeeping, we recognized a similar pattern within local nonprofits.

Act III

By 2018, we were ready to start supporting our community in a different way, inspired by Rotary Charities shift to engaging "systems change." While other organizations around the region were focused on specific sectors, such as health, food and homelessness, our board of directors studied collaborative models and created a systems map to improve the effectiveness of local collaboration.

In 2019, I was the recipient of two different fellowships to study systems change. First was a Rotary Charities Changemaker Fellowship after being accepted into Forum for the Future, the international leader in systems change education based in London, England. In addition to my time there, I was selected to participate in a rural project in Northern Russia and later in Mozambique to study food systems, as the recipient of the Mandela Washington Reciprocal Fellowship Exchange Program. With these developments, Grow Benzie initiated a new planning process in 2020, compiling 70 existing strategic plans (including municipalities and local, regional non-profits) to identify where the biggest gaps of services were in Benzie County.

In 2021, we reviewed the results with 150 folks in a dozen different focus groups and the feedback was clear: yes, we need local coordination for grassroots collaboration, as well as support services for existing non-profits and community initiatives.

NEXT CHAPTER

Throughout this process, we continued to get work done with our partners: 3,000 cloth facemasks were made and delivered to Benzie County residents from our sewing studio, food entrepreneurs like Mel & Fell and Roll Model excelled during the pandemic with delivery and pickup service, and the local collaboratives we anchor grew in relevance and necessity, coordinating cross-sector efforts in education, social services, youth mental health, and early childhood.

In October of 2021, Grow Benzie hired its second full-time employee, Gaia Pampu, as our Systems Resource Manager responsible for campus, volunteers, and our growing portfolio of partners, affectionately called our "Hive." Pampu previously worked at Arrowhead Incubator after receiving her Masters Degree as a Rotary International Peace Fellow from the University of Bradford.

In November of 2022, after three years of research and community input, Grow Benzie was formalized as a Rural Prosperity Incubator. We provide essential, safe community space for new ideas to take root. We are dedicated to serving projects, non-profits, community initiatives, and food and farming entrepreneurs. Grow Benzie works to support grassroots innovation from the ground up, and as it was 15 years ago, our boots are still on the ground. And we're ready to grow.



The Grow Benzie food truck visits Oryana

Come celebrate with us!

Oryana's Annual General Ownership Meeting!

50 YEARS OF COOPERATION

Thursday, April 20, 5:30 p.m.
Traverse City Central High School Cafeteria



GOM 2011

The Board of Directors invites you to the co-op's annual owners meeting on April 20 at Traverse City Central High School. We are thrilled to meet in person after two years of virtual meetings and can't wait to gather around good food and chat face to face. Enjoy a delicious dinner prepared in our own kitchens. Get to know current and prospective board members, our GM, and other co-op owners. Hear a brief summary about Oryana's past year from our GM and learn more about what we're up to. This is a final chance to cast your ballot for board candidates. Everyone is welcome to attend—families, kids, everyone! See you there!



GOM 2013

Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. sharp
Business meeting starts at 6 p.m.

TC Central High School
1150 Milliken Drive, Traverse City

GET TO KNOW THE BOARD CANDIDATES!

Read the candidate guide at the end of this newsletter (p. 20). Vote in the store, online, or at the meeting.

I begin this story with a confession...

I was among the 91% of Oryana member-owners who did not vote in the last board election.

In the three decades in which I've been an Oryana member, voting has never been easier than it is now. We don't have to go to a meeting or even pick up an absentee ballot at the store. We can click a link from an email we'll receive about a month prior to the election and be done in seconds, or minutes if we're more deliberative.

In previous years, even with young children in tow, I participated in Oryana elections when it entailed going to the General Membership Meeting and waiting for 50 people to show up so we could have a quorum, then listening to speeches and reports for about three hours. Last year all I needed to do was click that link, and yet I didn't.

In 2022, 891 out of 10,126 Oryana owners voted for board members. That's actually a decent voter participation rate for a cooperative (8.8%). We can compare this to Cherryland Electric Cooperative, which managed to increase its voting rate to about 10% after offering an online portal.

For sure, most Oryana owners just want their groceries. Low participation in board elections could be interpreted as satisfaction with the management rather than apathy.

Maybe your reason for not voting was similar to mine. I skimmed through the candidate statements in the news-

letter, and they all seemed like community-minded people wanting to give back to the co-op they value. I knew of no reason any of them shouldn't be on the board, so I decided to let others decide. Perhaps that's a by-product of our national democracy, where we are often voting against rather than for someone. When the choice isn't a lesser of two evils but a greater of many goods, it's tempting to take a pass.

But that behavior has risks. When participation is low, an organized bloc of voters could sway an election to push an agenda. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, I'll note that other co-ops have experienced such turmoil. Imagine a scenario in which a local producer persuades friends to run for the board to enact policies to keep rival products out of the store. Or worse: perhaps a competitor could sabotage the co-op by taking over the board. Or maybe some billionaire...

Never mind. We don't need imaginations fueled by reading too many mysteries to make a case for voting in this year's board election. The primary responsibility of Oryana's board of directors is the hiring and oversight of the General Manager, and this year, for the first time since 2010, the board is tasked with hiring a GM to fill the mighty big shoes of Steve Nance, who is retiring.

I'm confident that, once again, our board candidates will all be deserving, and choosing amongst them will not be easy. Still, I'll be clicking that link this year, and I hope you'll join me.

DEMOCRACY at the Co-op

By Sharon Flesher



I voted!

VOTE!

2023 co-op elections

Oryana has a nine-member board of directors, elected by the co-op ownership. Every year three board seats are up for election for a three-year term. Your vote in the board of directors election is important democratic participation that supports the governance of our community-owned co-op. By participating, you are helping to ensure our board is made up of people who share

your perspective. The privilege of choosing your board leaders is what sets co-ops apart from other stores in the community. The Oryana board steers the direction of the co-op by creating the policies that the General Manager interprets. Board members are owners just like you and represent *you*! So take some time to learn about the candidates and vote!

Voting Details

Information about the candidates are posted in both stores, on our website, and on the following pages of this newsletter, for owners to review. This information is also included in with electronic ballots. Please take time to review each candidate's statement and vote in your co-op's election.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual ownership meeting will take place on April 20 at T.C. Central High School. All votes will be counted at the meeting and the winners announced immediately.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

You are eligible to vote if you were an active owner of Oryana as of 30 days before the General Ownership meeting (March 21). No one else may vote on your behalf.

VOTE ONLINE

If we have your updated email address we will send:

1. A secure link to the voting website
2. Your Elector ID (which is also your Owner #)
3. Your unique password

Simply follow the link and the instructions on the page to vote in Oryana's 2023 election.

VOTE IN-STORE

Pick up a ballot with your unique password at the Customer Service desk at either store. Fill out and place in the ballot box.

VOTE AT THE MEETING

Pick up a ballot with your unique password at the general ownership meeting. Fill out and place in the ballot box.

MEET YOUR 2023 BOARD CANDIDATES

It's time once again to elect your representatives for our co-op's board of directors. We have three open seats on the Oryana board and online and in-store voting is available now through April 20.

Candidate statements and videos are posted on our website and in the store. Votes will be counted at the general ownership meeting and the winners announced by the end of the meeting.

We gave each candidate the same set of questions:

1. Why are you interested in serving on the board of Oryana?
2. How do your values align with those of Oryana?
3. What strengths would you bring to your role as a director on the board?
4. What are some of the most significant challenges and opportunities you see facing Oryana?
5. How would you represent the owners as a director of the board?



Cy Agley

Up for re-election

What a first term it has been! Embattled with the pandemic, my first three years was anything but ordinary; from being elected in the first virtual GOM to a fully digital onboarding and not meeting any

of my fellow board members in person until the start of my second year. I took my first two years to be a sponge and absorb as much as I could about policy governance, board dynamics, and what it truly means to be a servant leader. My third year, I quickly jumped at the leadership opportunity to join the Executive Committee as Treasurer. Our work is simply just getting started and I'm eager to apply the lessons of my first term as we begin to embark on a journey fueled by incoming challenges and opportunities.

If there's anything that the pandemic taught us, it is that one should expect the unexpected and remain fluid while navigating what's ahead. As we investigate the near and far future, we're faced with many upcoming changes, whether it be known or unknown, global, or specific to our co-op. While we must remain vigilant and flexible to shift with the challenges, we must also never forget our true north and continue to perpetuate the vision and values of Oryana and our many passionate owners.

My background and passion in developing and implementing business and go-to market strategies will continue to serve Oryana and our almost 11,000 owners. As our Oryana family continues to grow, the repercussions and benefits of the decisions and strategies we put in place are only amplified with profound lasting effects. As a father of three beautiful children, I only want to perpetuate the good in this world for them; and Oryana, with its values, is one of those goods!



Emily Arbut

As a mother, doula, yoga instructor, and avid vegan cook, I have always been extremely grateful for the physical and spiritual nourishment that a trip to Oryana provides. I live within a short walking distance and perceive it as a home-away-from-home, an essential community space that I want to

nurture and support as it continues to grow in positive ways relevant to the members that it serves.

Just as Oryana does, I place the utmost importance on the source and purity of the food that I serve to my family, friends, and clients. I believe, as Oryana does, that we are better when we grow as a village, supporting local farmers and producers. Just as Oryana does, I help the families that I serve by empowering them through education to make healthier choices for them to grow and thrive.

As a member of the board, I would bring my strengths in self-less service, intuitive listening, and community building. I would also make every trip to Oryana an opportunity to connect with staff and patrons alike to learn from their Oryana experience and understand how the community can best be supported moving forward.

With the continued rising cost of food and products, it remains more important than ever that Oryana places education at the forefront, reminding members and the community at large that quality is most important in the food that we put in our bodies, the products that we use in our household, and the goods that promote and provide for overall wellness. This is a challenge, but also an opportunity to remind consumers that the most important aspect of a household budget is the optimal nourishment of those within its walls.



Kaitlyn Burns

Up for re-election

Since 2011, I have represented Oryana's owners. In that time, my passion has strengthened with each year served as an elected board representative. I believe that Oryana embodies a socially conscious culture that is so often the best version of what our

Northern Michigan community can be. The co-op is a true democracy where I intentionally go to vote with my dollar. In return, Oryana invests in our community, environment, and local economy—all at the intersection of food and health!

With 11 years of Oryana board experience, including 6 as an Executive Committee member, I am well up to speed on what cooperative board leadership looks like as well as the roles and responsibilities of such. During my tenure on the board, I was a part of the process in preparing for expansion – both with the rescinded Acme location, and then the successful acquisition of Oryana West during a global pandemic.

As we approach the co-op's 50th Anniversary, there is much to celebrate. There is also much work to be done! The future can be difficult to predict, and there will be a number of challenges that arise. In preparation, it's the board's responsibility to govern – to steer the organization towards success and ensure accountability that Oryana is indeed achieving the Ends which we have defined and committed to.

Currently, we as a board have been focused on reflecting and monitoring our board policies and processes. Additionally, we have formed a GM succession committee to ensure a successful future leadership transition. I am a member of this committee, and care deeply for the healthy perpetuation of Oryana's leadership. I look forward to being a part of the continuation of this foundational work so that we can celebrate another 50+ years of cooperation together.



Parker Jones

Co-ops are a force for good. It empowers a whole community to act collectively towards a more equitable world. Oryana's

mission is one that brings people together and places ethics above profit. I'd be honored to support these ends by serving on the Oryana board. Plus, what a fun place and community to be in! Oryana, unlike chain

stores, actually smells like food. I love the bulk section. The dried mango is divine.

My values solidified while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal. Food there became a much more personal thing. Mangos became a dull thud, falling off the tree. Peanuts were a gift from your neighbor to be cooked together. Through all of it were relationships. I left with a deep appreciation for people power. My community was able to plant over 6,000 trees and crowd-fund a new women's garden by working together.

I'd bring expertise in food systems to the Oryana board. My job with Michigan State University Extension is to assist 70 food and agriculture entrepreneurs to meet their business goals. I apply my MBA to developing sustainable food business models in Northern Michigan and the U.P.

At the systems level, I've tripled meat processing capacity and aided the launch of the first kitchen incubators in the U.P. I'm co-manager of a Regional Food System Partnership grant to create a more equitable and resilient food system across Michigan.

Oryana's biggest challenge is the balance of mission and financial sustainability. Grocery has faced many challenges in recent years. Inflation, labor, product shortages, and a possible recession, to name a few. Oryana needs to continue to be a resilient business. At the same time, the mission is what brought us all together. It's important to me that Oryana be a values-based community resource, accessible to everyone.



Shea O'Brien

Since I was young, I have always had a strong connection to the community of Traverse City. That connection has become more robust after joining our wonderful co-op. I feel it is time for me to give back to my community by joining the Oryana board of directors.

During 10 collective years in the food service industry, I have learned the value of healthy food, sustainable food systems, and cooking with fresh ingredients. Oryana has echoed these values by always providing quality fresh ingredients, supporting local farms, allowing customers to responsibly buy in bulk, and having one of the best multi-cultural grocery sections in our community.

I currently serve as the volunteer coordinator for the Traverse Heights Community Garden, a board member of the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and the Vice Chair of the Sara Hardy Farmers Market Advisory board. In these positions I listen to others and offer pragmatic advice when required. I believe these qualities are important in any leadership

position. Leadership is about creating guiding principles and making broader decisions that give others the opportunity to fulfill the mission and vision of the organization.

I think a significant challenge facing Oryana is the same challenge facing the greater community – housing. I am privileged to live a short bike ride, bus ride or walk from the co-op. I like to believe that many of Oryana’s owners would like to share in this ability. Reducing individual carbon footprints, staying healthy, and strengthening our connection to the community are all tied to biking, walking, other types of transit, and housing. I believe Oryana can play a more supportive role in housing development by sharing support with leaders and organizations that are already tackling the housing issue, or taking a more proactive and creative approach to the issue.



Robert Sainz

I’m interested in serving on the Oryana board in order to bring a new set of eyes to the decision making body of an enterprise committed to keeping people healthy through the foods they eat and the choices they make. My passion is to provide the best food and

best healthy options available to the greatest number of people.

My values align with those of Oryana in that I come from a health career background. It has always been my drive to provide the best health options for people to choose from when they need help. Individual health leads to community health.

One of my strengths is communication and mediation. I have been the editor of my University and Chiropractic College newspapers. I hosted a cable television show on healthcare for three years. I’ve been involved in the health food scene since 1974. I have a rapport with people in my age group concerning health, both those whom have embraced it for decades, and those who are just now discovering the benefits of good food and healthy choices. I also am an administrator in a large (seed) sprouting group.

Looking ahead at the various challenges and opportunities facing Oryana in the next decade, an important one is educating young students about the long range benefits of organic health food. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Oryana Community. The challenge is to find a way to get the attention of children in their formative years to develop an appreciation for wholesome foods. The opportunity lies in educating young people who will become a solid future customer base committed to healthy personal outcomes and the success of Oryana.



Kennard Weaver

I have been an Oryana member for about 30 years, and I believe that the greater Traverse area needs the foods that Oryana provides, and the support Oryana gives to local producers. I can contribute to Oryana continuing to fulfill its mission.

I know that fresh, natural food is more nutritious and tastier. I believe that Oryana’s leadership in our community supports better growing methods, and leads other food retailers and producers to improve their food practices and products. I have supported conservation and other organizations engaging in creating social capital for many decades, including Inland Seas, the Traverse Symphony Orchestra, Northwestern Michigan College, Boy Scouts, the Land Information Access Association, the Peninsula Township Fire Board, WNIT (public television station), and others.

My education and experience in finance, as a lawyer, and on multiple boards of directors, including manufacturing, business, non-profit, and governmental boards, will guide my contribution to the Oryana board. In the 1980s, policy board governance became the norm for business and industry boards, so I have considerable experience with it. I have a BA in accounting and a JD from Harvard Law School, and was a senior partner in an international law firm now known as Faegre Drinker Biddle Reath.

Oryana faces a test of endurance, during which there will be periods of growth and periods of retrenchment. Employee attraction and retention require constant attention, and the needs are especially urgent now. At some point there will be a larger competitive entity, perhaps Whole Foods or Trader Joe’s, entering the market. Oryana now occupies the space once housing the first of these chain competitors, but the challenge has not gone away. Planning now to meet all of these challenges will be the key to survival.

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO CONNECT WITH ORYANA?

Co-op e-newsletter

Sign up on our website to receive weekly emails that include events, recipes, sales, articles, etc.

Events Calendar

Find out what's happening at the co-op by visiting the events calendar on our website.

Oryana Blog & Recipes

Our blog and recipe pages are great places to visit for cooking inspiration and other food-related topics.

Social Media

Join us on Facebook and Instagram for fun stuff and the most current updates about all things Oryana.

Board

The Oryana board of directors meets once per month and all are welcome at the meetings, which take place on the third Thursday of each month.

Ownership

Is your ownership current? Keep it up to date to continue receiving this publication and other relevant mailings. Not an owner yet? Join today!



Oryana Community Cooperative

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Organic vegetable and herb transplants will be available starting in mid-May, from Forest Garden Organic Farm in Maple City.