



Greens and Grains

An educational and informative publication of the Valley Food Co-op

Spring, 2010

ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 25TH, 4 PM

**AT THE ALAMOSA SENIOR CENTER FOR THE BEST
POTLUCK IN THE VALLEY**

**AND DISCUSSION OF MEMBER FEES AND THE
LOCATION OF THE CO-OP**

30 Years of Good Foods Naturally!!!!

The Co-op will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Saturday, March 27th. The doors to the Co-op first opened on March 22, 1980. Thanks to the solid foundation built by Loretta Mitson, the first Co-op manager, and all of the first board members the Co-op continues to be a viable business today.

Come by the store to celebrate 30 years of promoting food with integrity, quality supplements and personal care items, and unique gifts. Members will receive an extra 5% off all in stock items that Saturday. Renewing and new members will receive a free Co-op logo chico shopping bag. Come by for a free piece of gluten-free cake and in store samples. Enjoy the Art Walk in downtown Alamosa on that day and then come by to shop at the Co-op.

PLEASE VOTE FOR BOARD MEMBERS

BALLOT AND SUMMARIES INSIDE

Member appreciation days: April 15th May 15th June 15th

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Published quarterly by The Valley Food Co-op
Store hours: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday

3211 Main St., Suite G, in the Villa Mall
Editor: 719-657-0543

Alamosa, CO 81101 719-589-5727
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Valley Food Co-op Board Members

Jay Young, President
Steve Smilack

Carrie Payne

Lucy Adams, Secretary/Treasurer
Larry Sveum
Vicente Valdez

Marketing 101.1 - Using the Internet

From Co-op Webmaster Linda Falkenthal

Running a retail store can be challenging especially in today's marketplace. I believe marketing is the foundation for this challenge. How do you tell everyone about the Valley Food Co-op's benefits, services and goods? The first thing that comes to mind is traditional advertising—telephone books, newspapers, radio, newsletters, and signs. Each one has its strengths, challenges and expenses.

However, in the mid '90's a new way to communicate emerged publicly—cyber-space, more commonly known as the internet. Actually the internet has been around for a long time, maybe as long as television. It actually uses some of the same technologies. It was hidden in colleges, government offices and, yes, some geek's basement. Behold, one of those geeks had the idea of using this technology to disseminate information to the public. What perplexes this geek is why one generation embraces it; another generation shuns it; OK, the individual.



Marketing the Valley Food Co-op using the internet make sense, because the Co-op doesn't just serve the Alamosa area but the entire Valley. This includes a website, social networking (FACEBOOK) and search engines (BING, GOOGLE, YAHOO).

Let's talk about our website, www.valleyfoodcoop.com. Did you know the website has been in existence for years? It was fashionable for businesses to have an appearance on the internet and not really understand its purpose. Unlike the other forms of marketing, the internet can be unlimited, economical and traceable. Here at the Valley Food Co-op, I see it as a depository of information which the new design reflects. Will the website make money? Yes and no; it depends if the website will ever be developed for e-commerce. One big issue is that a website can prematurely die if it is not continually changing, evolving and maturing, just like us.



Social Networking is a new internet buzzword. Follow me on TWITTER. Become a fan on FACEBOOK, GOOGLE GROUP. Businesses are now recognizing the free marketing potential of social networks. Especially getting information out to the public, which was once limited to the confines of store walls, newspaper stands and mail boxes.

What is the big deal about search engines? My friend, search engines are the brain child of other college geeks and are the masters of the internet. If it was not for search engines, we could not easily find anything in this mammoth amount of information. BING, GOOGLE AND YAHOO are

synonymous to search engines. From a marketing perspective, the goal was to display your website first based on the key words or search criteria entered. Like most things on the internet, this concept is evolving for merchandising, and now we have to contend with ad campaigning. On GOOGLE, those are the listings on the right side of the results page.

I hope that I have piqued your interest in learning more about the Valley Food Co-op's usage of the internet. The store will have a PC shortly in the membership area for those individuals without computers. Take a peek; you might be surprised. Or better yet, have something to contribute.

From Carrie Payne (newest board member)

Are there things at the Co-op you can't buy elsewhere in Alamosa? Can't drive to Pueblo or Taos? Let's save the Co-op from teetering on extinction. Bervig's True Value Hardware is willing to sell us our current store, plus the store in front of us. We can rent the front store to the new Common Grounds Cafe, giving us an income and time to plan and save money for expansion. Opportunity often comes once.

Dear members, staff and board:

I ask you to excuse the cliché term, but the world is changing and we are changing with it. Radical things are happening everywhere and we have the exciting position of being a part of them.

As many of you know, we have been discussing the possibility of either expanding or moving our location for almost two years now. Obviously neither has happened and that is because none of us can agree on what our primary goals are. Many people want us to go completely green and build an energy efficient building using solar, wind and water power. Others would like to see us move forward into the old Kristi Mountain space and create a storefront thus solidifying our presence in the Villa Mall. Still others would like to see us move to a more central location to help the revitalization of downtown Alamosa, and yet others do not have an opinion as to what we need to do but know that there needs to be a change.

Unfortunately, for all of us, this has been left almost entirely up to the board of directors and there has been little discussion between all of us, as a Co-op, as to what we should do or where we should go. Steve Smilack pointed out in his piece in the last newsletter that our business plan needs to be refitted and a new board of directors instated for any of this to happen—and I agree with him, which makes me wonder why he has decided that because no one else is stepping up to the plate he has to run for another term on the board. It also makes me wonder why no one else wants to be on the board to bring a brighter future to our beloved Co-op.

That is why I entreat our entire membership—staff, board and all to renew their interest and not just their memberships in our Co-op. We are on the cusp of thirty wonderful years of a presence in this Valley and that is an amazing accomplishment that I would like to see doubled in the face of big business industry. If we do not begin to act soon, the community we have built could perish and everything we have worked for become only a memory.

We do not need martyrs, nor do we need someone to step in and be superman/woman and fix all our problems for us. What we need is for everyone to take an interest and for one or two people who feel they have the courage to become leaders for this community to step up and take on the mantle of responsibility that is being a board member.

I ask the excuse of another cliché term, but Gandhi said "Be the change you wish to see in the world." And in my time as a staff member at the Co-op I have seen some wonderful things, and would like to see more. We have something special here that is more than just discounts and member fees—we have a community based on love and that is one of the best things in this world. Let's let our love shine and make our community the best it can be.

In love and light,
Bonnie Stone, staff member

Thanks to all of our Co-op Volunteers!

Co-op volunteers provide a range of valuable services in addition to earning a working member discount of 10% on products purchased. From faithfully bagging bread to laundry to recycling cardboard to getting our website functioning to staffing the Farmer's Market Booth, working members make it possible for the Co-op to thrive.

Joel Kauffman, Marcia Darnell, Elaine Regan, Mackie Wesley, Kerry Rockcastle, Linda Falkenthal and Karen Henderson have truly helped our Co-op thrive and survive.

We need to especially thank all of our present and former board members for committing hours of hard work setting policy.

The last 3 years have been difficult. Facing the big decisions concerning the co-op's location, size and product line is not an easy process. Please share your ideas with your board members. The board members need your input to make good decisions on your behalf. You can keep up with the board's decision making process by attending board meetings and reading board meeting minutes. [Board meeting minutes are posted at the Co-op and will soon be posted on the website.](#)

Current board members include Lucy Adams, Carrie Payne, Steve Smilack, Larry Sveum, Vicente Valdez, and Jay Young.

Diana Jones, Manager

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