

River Valley Market

6th Annual Member-Owners Meeting

Thursday, November 18, 2004
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Florence Civic Center

AGENDA

- 6:30 - 7:30Potluck & Social Hour
- 7:30 - 7:35Welcome, Agenda Review
and Call for Ballots
- 7:35 - 7:40Approve Minutes
- 7:40 - 8:15President's Report, Treasurer's Report
and Manager's Report
- 8:15 - 8:55Open Forum Q & A
- 8:55 - 9:00Announce Board Election Results
- 9:00Adjourn Meeting

Directions From Northampton:

- Take Route 9 West to Florence Center
- Go through Maple Street intersection
- Take a left onto Cosmian Avenue and
another left into the parking lot.

For Potluck (6:30-7:30 p.m.):

Please bring food to share based
on the first letter of your last name:

- A - G** side dish or salad
- H - P** dessert
- Q - Z** main dish

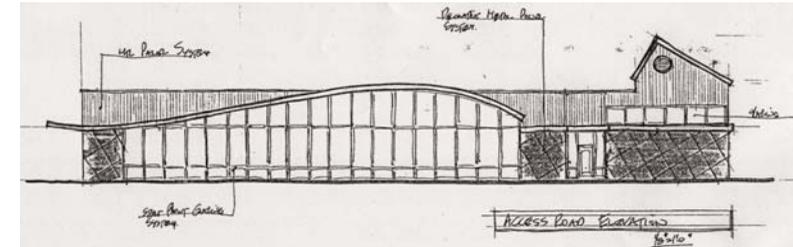
- Please provide a serving utensil
and a card that lists all the ingredients
in your dish.
- Also, please bring your own plate,
cup and utensils.
- Beverages will be provided!

Stay In Touch! Give us a call at
(800) 392-3862

River Valley Market

A LOCALLY GROWN COMMUNITY FOOD CO-OP

2004 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBER-OWNERS



*The future is not some place we are going to,
but one we are creating.*

*The paths are not to be found, but made,
and the activity of making them,
changes both the maker and the destination.*

John Schaar

River Valley Market

A LOCALLY GROWN COMMUNITY FOOD CO-OP
P.O. Box 1245, Northampton, MA 01061

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President's Report

Betsy Powell

We've come through the challenges of this last year to a brighter horizon and new possibilities for the realization of our collective goal. Once again we're poised to follow our plan for a new Northampton cooperative market through to completion. After 6+ years questing toward this goal, I think many of us are a bit amazed that we're still here. Many thanks are in order for all who continue to work toward opening the doors of River Valley Market!

Over the past year the Board and General Manager Rochelle Prunty reviewed the Location Policy we use to guide our efforts to find a suitable site for the store. We continued to work toward the original goal of leasing a single store located in a well established retail zone in Northampton, and we also expanded our thinking to include potential sites outside of Northampton, multiple store plans, purchasing options vs. leasing options, and merging with another co-op to name a few. Rochelle worked with old real estate contacts and new real estate consultants in this search, and oversaw the completion of a new market study in July.

It's exciting that these efforts proved fruitful; we secured a highly recommended site, and are now able to work toward opening our store at the Old Quarry site on North King Street. Securing a site is a step toward the goal of creating a just marketplace as outlined in our Ends Policies.

Ed Maltby's Treasurer's Report details our financial condition. High points include: re-hiring Rochelle Prunty as General Manager, receipt of a \$100,000 member loan to help fund the site search from our sister cooperatives in the northeast, development of

a promising relationship with the National Cooperative Bank (NCB), and receipt of a \$50,000 business planning advance from NCB's Development Corporation. Rochelle and Lynn Benander from Cooperative Development Institute worked to keep our green grant (\$406,222 for green building design) viable as we shifted our site location, and we expect an update on its status by November.

Our Outreach Committee has kept members updated with regular news postings on the website and via e-mail. Outreach also organized and hosted a plant sale in April and a garden tour/member picnic in July. These were great events that provided an opportunity for community building and for members to learn more about our progress.

Rochelle and Board members continued to network with regional cooperatives, and Rochelle has also

Good things are worth the wait!

I await the grand opening of the our cooperative some time in 2005! I envision a market that represents all of the diversity and richness of our wonderful community. I see the shelves stocked with all of the tasty, nourishing foods and other products from our beautiful river valley. I look forward to greeting all of my friends, neighbors and other community members as I wander the aisles and feel I've finally come home.

Gary L. Schaefer, Member-owner
River Valley Market

worked to broaden support for our project with co-ops around the country. These connections have helped strengthen us financially, and have buoyed us in spirit. Last fall Board members participated in conference workshops on Policy Governance (the system the Board uses to manage the organization) and we plan to attend another regional cooperatives conference this November.

(Continued on page 10)

Treasurer's Report For Fiscal Year 2003-2004



Ed Maltby

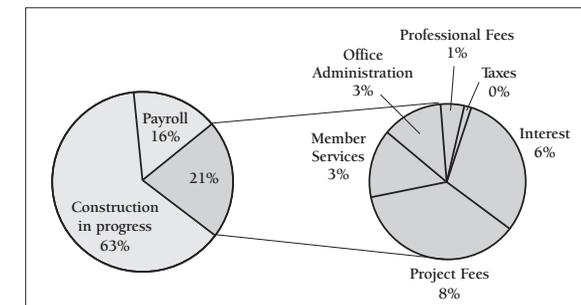
The fiscal year ending June 30th, 2004 has been one of conserving our resources and harnessing the support of our wider community of sister cooperatives. We are into our sixth year of operations as we recover from two false starts in the search for a site in a highly competitive marketplace. The fiscal year started with our progress on hold while we investigated and then negotiated the release of the restriction that Stop & Shop maintains on the Pot Pouri Mall. With only limited cash reserves, we continued to ask Rochelle to volunteer her services through January 2004. It wasn't until the latter part of the fiscal year that we were able to increase our activities, thanks largely to Rochelle's work with the national organizations of consumer cooperatives. In February we re-hired Rochelle as a part-time employee and moved into a period of heavier activity, which has been partly financed by a \$50,000 unsecured business-planning advance from the National Cooperative Bank.

We contracted with Joe Wolkowicz, CPA, of Boisselle, Morton & Associates, LLP, to complete a review of our accounts for the year ending June 30th, 2004. The reviewed financial statements, which include expenses since inception, are included in this report (see pages 6-9). Our thanks to Dorothea of Green Fields Market, who has been doing our monthly bookkeeping so efficiently.

Income for 2004 was \$3,688, mostly interest on our member loans. We spent a total of \$42,981 on our operations and, on the advice of our accountant, we wrote off \$72,657 of construction in progress assets which were based on previous years site development expenses. This is 63% of our reported expenditure for this year. This balance

sheet write-off increased our expenses for the year to \$115,638. Our expenses also included 16% on payroll, 8% on project fees, 3% on member services and marketing of membership, 6% on interest, and 3% on office and administrative expenses.

2004 Fiscal Year Operating Expenses



For the first half of the fiscal year we reduced monthly operating expenses as we started researching our different options, existing on the investments that other individual consumer cooperatives have made in our future.

In early 2004 a meeting was held between neighboring consumer cooperative Boards of Directors which resulted in a commitment to help River Valley Market move forward with its plans. In February 2004, Rochelle set up meetings with existing consumer cooperatives in New England who are members of Cooperative Grocers Association of the Northeast (CGANE), to investigate their willingness to invest in our future. The number of members we have and our dedication/stubbornness/perseverance impressed them. After discussions between key leaders of CGANE, Rochelle and our Board finance committee, the board of CGANE approved a \$100,000 member loan for working capital. This has allowed us to leverage a business planning grant of \$50,000 and a line of credit for \$100,000 from the National Cooperative Bank. Money begets money and our cooperative is in the forefront of leveraging community assets.

(Continued on page 10)

Manager's Report

Rochelle Prunty



I'm very happy to be here as your employee, to report to you again this year, and to have some good news.

Site Search

The primary focus of the past year has been on the site search, which was ongoing since learning of the deed restriction on our previous site in the Spring of 2003. I'm pleased to report we have succeeded in securing a long term land lease agreement on a 3-acre site on North King Street in Northampton! (The location is north of the Big Y Plaza on the west side of the road marked by a "For Lease" sign.) The land lease arrangement enables the co-op to be its own developer. This allows us to control the site development to meet

our needs, reflecting the values of our membership. We have found no deed restrictions prohibiting the sales of groceries or otherwise limiting our activities here. Pete Davis, our market research specialist, gives the North King Street site high scores for accessibility, overall market appeal, and short and long-term sales potential.

Developing the site and building our own facility makes this a

different project than what we've looked at before in several key ways. The rent expense will be a fraction of the rent expenses we were anticipating previous-

ly because it includes just the land. On the flip side the upfront site and building expenses will be higher. Interestingly, a mortgage to build a new building is considered more secure for financing purposes than a business loan to make improvements on a building owned by a landlord. Another good thing about a mortgage is that it will eventually be paid off while lease rates continue to increase each year. Additionally, we have an option to purchase the property itself at the end of the lease enabling us to secure our site for the foreseeable future, if we so choose.

Securing this site concludes the site search phase of our project. Each of the potential sites we explored had its own unique issues. We used creative approaches to consider a wide variety of formats/locations as potential sites. In the end, the site that we secured is well suited for the basic format we've planned from the beginning. Now... on to getting it open!

We wouldn't be looking forward right now if it hadn't been for the support of our membership, volunteers, board of directors, sister co-ops, and professional advisors over the past year. Thank you all for your support through this time of uncertainty.

Next Steps

The next key steps in the project include:

1) **Zoning:** This site is not currently zoned for commercial purposes. We've begun discussions with the planning department about rezoning the site from residential to highway business (currently the highway business zone ends across the street from our site). We are working in partnership with the city to identify and address any issues related to this change and are optimistic about a positive outcome. This is a key first step in the process which we hope to resolve by the end of the year. We are soliciting feedback from neighbors, city planners, and members. This information will help us to prepare plans that best meet the needs and address the concerns of all involved.

2) **Site Planning and Permitting:** We will complete our site and store planning over the winter. We are hopeful that our green building design grant will be approved for this new site so that we can include all the energy efficiency, solar power, and educational elements from our former site in our new plans. We are targeting the summer months for construction, so are working toward permitting approval in late spring/early summer.

3) **Fundraising:** Fundraising is a key issue needing membership support. Other food co-ops from our region have provided the capital needed to continue our site search process, and we will need our membership to match these funds to complete the site and building plans. Additionally we will need member loans, as planned, to fund a portion of the construction/development expenses not covered by bank financing. Our final member fundraising process will begin in earnest upon the rezoning approval. We will need to meet member equity and member loan goals to close on bank financing. We expect to launch our fundraising campaigns concurrently with the site and store design process over the winter and spring of 2005.

4) **Financing:** We are in discussions with lenders now but need the complete store design and final construction bids before closing on financing. We expect to close on the financing concurrently with finalizing the permitting process in the late spring/early summer months.

5) **Construction:** Construction can begin once the planning, fundraising, financing, and permitting have been completed. We anticipate a 4-month construction period beginning by July 2005.

6) **Preparing for opening:** Hiring the staff, installing equipment, and stocking the shelves comes next. We expect to be open for business in the fall of 2005.

Outreach Committee

A core group of volunteers remained active last year to support our communication needs and they were ready to gear back up again when our progress required more activity. They organized last year's Annual Member Meeting and Potluck, the Spring Plant Sale and Gardening Event in April, the

We are thrilled to hear River Valley Market has found a location and is on their way to adding a another cooperative to the valley. It will be a great day when every city & town has a co-op to meet the needs of its community! We look forward to continue working together to build a sustainable cooperative economy.

*Suzette Snow-Cobb, Co-General Manager
Green Fields Market*

Member Picnic and Garden Tour in July, and are now working on the upcoming Annual Membership Meeting. I want to give special thanks to: Outreach Co-Chair and member e-mail coordinator Marci Linker, Co-Chair Jade Barker, Deb Chandler, Susan Kimball, Larry Kuttner, Fran Schneid, and Trevor for their leadership keeping the Outreach Committee involved and active over the past year.

Supporting Sister Cooperatives

Many of you remember that in 2003 our sister co-ops from the region and across the country helped fund our efforts with member-equity investments totaling over \$30,000. Those funds made it possible for us to keep going when our previous site fell through. This year, upon learning of our \$300,000 in sunk project costs the 23 supporting sister cooperatives from our regional Cooperative Grocers Association came through with \$100,000 to fund our site search.

(Continued on page 11)



NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE MARKET, INC.

(A Development Stage Company)

Statement of Operations

Year Ended June 30, 2004, and the Period from July 6, 1999 (Date of Inception),
to June 30, 2004

	Year Ended June 30, 2004	July 6, 1999 (Inception) to June 30, 2004
Revenue		
Grants		\$ 25,600
Donations income	\$ 50	24,506
Truck load sale income		20,121
Newsletter income		4,444
Other income		145
Interest income	3,638	9,558
Total revenue	<u>3,688</u>	<u>84,374</u>
Expenses		
Payroll and related	18,249	88,757
Grocery purchases		15,581
Office administration	3,143	18,063
Professional fees	1,250	3,994
Member services administration	3,563	12,963
Board of Directors		2,432
Marketing and membership		30,230
Interest	7,462	21,388
Income taxes	456	3,053
Bad debt expense		293
Construction in progress on previous site	72,657	72,657
Project consulting expense	4,317	11,894
Project legal expense	2,041	13,057
Project design expense	2,500	15,419
Total expenses	<u>115,638</u>	<u>309,781</u>
Net loss	<u>\$ (111,950)</u>	<u>\$ (225,407)</u>

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE MARKET, INC.

(A Development Stage Company)

Statement of Members' Equity

Period from July 6, 1999 (Date of Inception), to June 30, 2004

Common stock, \$1 par value, 50,000 authorized,	
3 issued and outstanding for the period ended December 31, 1999	\$ 3
184 issued and outstanding for the year ended December 31, 2000	184
808 issued and outstanding for the year ended December 31, 2001	808
272 issued and outstanding for the six months ended June 30, 2002	272
298 issued and outstanding for the year ended June 30, 2003	298
21 issued and outstanding for the year ended June 30, 2004	21
Total common stock, 1,586 issued and outstanding	<u>1,586</u>
Additional paid-in capital:	
For the period ended December 31, 1999	447
For the year ended December 31, 2000	29,342
For the year ended December 31, 2001	96,236
For the six months ended June 30, 2002	49,375
For the year ended June 30, 2003	68,420
For the year ended June 30, 2004	3,909
Total additional paid-in capital	<u>247,729</u>
Stock issuance costs	<u>(29,839)</u>
Development stage income (loss):	
For the period ended December 31, 1999	(448)
For the year ended December 31, 2000	2,563
For the year ended December 31, 2001	(4,855)
For the six months ended June 30, 2002	(12,483)
For the year ended June 30, 2003	(98,234)
For the year ended June 30, 2004	(111,950)
Total deficit accumulated during developmental stage	<u>(225,407)</u>
Total members' equity	<u>\$ (5,931)</u>

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE MARKET, INC.

(A Development Stage Company)

Balance Sheet

June 30, 2004

Assets

Current assets		
Cash	\$	<u>301,388</u>
Total current assets		<u>301,388</u>
Other assets		
Liquor license		17,009
Investment in National Cooperative Bank		<u>1,000</u>
Total other assets		<u>18,009</u>
Total Assets	\$	<u><u>319,397</u></u>

Liabilities and Members' Equity

Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$	941
Accrued interest		<u>20,387</u>
Total current liabilities		<u>21,328</u>
Long-term liabilities		
Member loans		<u>304,000</u>
Members' equity, net of deficit accumulated during the development stage of \$225,951		<u>(5,931)</u>
Total Liabilities and Members' Equity	\$	<u><u>319,397</u></u>

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE MARKET, INC.

(A Development Stage Company)

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended June 30, 2004, and the Period from July 6, 1999 (Date of Inception), to June 30, 2004

	Year Ended June 30, 2004	July 6, 1999 (Inception) to June 30, 2004
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net loss	\$ (111,950)	\$ (225,407)
Investment devaluation		100
Expensing of construction in progress	72,657	72,657
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
Liquor license		(17,009)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(4,315)	941
Accrued interest	<u>5,196</u>	<u>20,387</u>
Net cash used by operating activities	<u>(38,412)</u>	<u>(148,331)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Construction in progress		(72,657)
Investment in Northeast Cooperative		(100)
Investment in National Cooperative Bank	(1,000)	(1,000)
Members loans received	<u>107,500</u>	<u>304,000</u>
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>106,500</u>	<u>230,243</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Issuance of common stock (net of stock issuance costs from inception of \$29,839)	<u>3,930</u>	<u>219,476</u>
Net cash provided by financing activities	<u>3,930</u>	<u>219,476</u>
Net increase in cash	72,018	301,388
Cash - beginning of period	<u>229,370</u>	<u> </u>
Cash - end of period	<u>\$ 301,388</u>	<u>\$ 301,388</u>

(President's Report, continued from page 2)

Throughout the year we have been sustained by member-owner commitment to our co-op and by the tremendous generosity of our sister cooperatives in the northeast. There are lots of people to thank: our members who have shared their ideas, concerns, and insights with us; individual cooperatives including Brattleboro, Hanover, and Whole Foods Co-op in Erie, PA who have provided us with additional financial support; Cooperative Development Services, Stephen Wheelock (our new highly creative real estate consultant), the Cooperative Development Institute and Green Fields Market all who continue to work on our behalf; and, finally, the Outreach Committee, Rochelle, Board members, and our Board assistant have kept things moving forward and have put us in the position we find ourselves today. Our gratitude also goes to outgoing Board members Roe Schmidt and Tom Duffy. And a special thank you to last year's president Amy Martyn who led us through a challenging year with humor, poise, and aplomb.

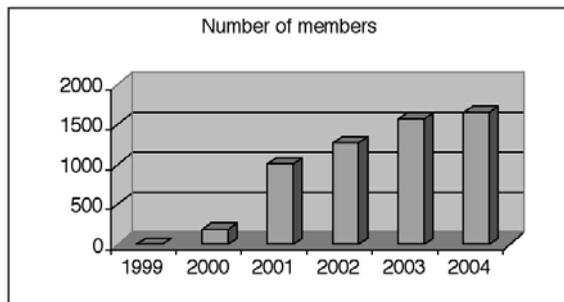
Please stay connected and keep in touch! We'll need your help over the coming months as we progress through the steps required to develop our new site. Join me and members of the Board in working positively and creatively to make River Valley Market a reality. ■

(Treasurer's Report, continued from page 3)

Membership growth has slowed without a site, due to our necessary lack of activity. Membership now stands at 1,591 and member loans grew from \$196,500 to \$304,000, thanks to the hard work of Rochelle and our member-owners. The original member loans have not been used and remain in a separate escrow account. The new member loans were made to fund our current activities, with \$100,000 held by the National Co-op Bank to secure our line of credit.

The prolonged search for a suitable site is not uncommon in the retail industry, especially in New England, and we are even more challenged because we are a start-up enterprise with few cash assets. The rapid escalation in the value of good retail sites in Northampton, plus the courting of national chains by developers, has caused the board of Northampton Community Cooperative Market to continually re-examine its strategy in our site search. In the last fiscal year, the board, working with Rochelle, has fully utilized its strength in the community and its ability to budget realistically within its resources. Owners of small businesses usually invest sweat equity in their business at start-up as well as their own money. The last six years have seen our community invest long hours of blood, sweat and some tears as we search for a site that will be economically successful in the long term and that will also serve the needs of the community while returning the profits back to the community.

We enter 2005 in a very strong position with significant member loans already in hand; a liquor license; a green grant (pending approval); a strong



(Treasurer's Report, continued from previous page)

business plan supported by recommendations of national industry experts; excellent relationships with the City of Northampton; a fully experienced and nationally recognized leader in the development of consumer cooperatives as a general manager and, finally, a dedicated and committed membership. With these assets and your continued support through our next stage of development, we will have a store under construction by July 1st, 2005, the start of our 2006 fiscal year. ■

The future of the U.S.

food co-op movement is embodied in the efforts of River Valley Market. Access to democratic control of food sources and a strong community will that defies conventional business means and models is what many U.S. cooperators and the members of RVM have embraced. Many traditional corporations would have given up with the kind of obstacles your cooperative has faced. That you did not give up illustrates the power of consumer cooperation, the importance of localized business models, and the role that democratic community organizations will play in the future of a sustainable society.

Robynn Schrader
National Cooperative Grocers Association

(Manager's Report, continued from page 5)

Several co-ops have provided additional funding: \$2,500 from Whole Foods Co-op in Erie PA., \$5,000 from the Brattleboro Food Co-op, and \$5,000 from Hanover Food Co-op in Hanover New Hampshire. Terry Appleby, Hanover Food Co-op General Manager said,

"In my opinion the most important work we are doing right now is the development of new cooperatives and opening new markets. Bringing the benefits of democratic local control and ownership to more and more people is vital to a more sustainable economy. The Hanover Co-op is proud to play a small part in the beginnings of the River Valley Market!"

With the help of these sister co-op funds, we have leveraged a \$50,000 Business Planning Advance and \$100,000 line of credit from the National Cooperative Bank Development Corporation — we are now using these funds to fund our site planning process.

Green Buildings Grant

We were given an extension on our \$406,222 green buildings grant to secure a site and submit a revised proposal. Thanks to Lynn Benander and the team at The Cooperative Development Institute in Greenfield, as well as Lynn DiTullio and Apple Ahearn from our membership Green Team, we submitted the revised proposal in time to meet the deadlines for consideration. We are waiting to hear if our new site will be approved for the grant.

Board of Directors

I want to thank the Board of Directors for rehiring me in February and for providing strong leadership to help us focus on reaching our goals. I am truly honored to participate in this entity that so many people have come together to create. Thank you for your ongoing support. ■

94 Independent Natural Food Co-ops Form One National Organization

New structure consolidates resources of regional associations

IOWA CITY, IOWA (April 26, 2004)—Responding to a rapidly changing food industry, and to leverage their \$626 million a year retail sales clout by speaking with one voice, 94 independent natural food co-ops with 111 retail locations among them coast-to-coast have voted to restructure the National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA) as a direct-membership cooperative.

“Thirty years ago when this industry was just getting started, co-ops gave birth to and nurtured the natural foods market, using creative and innovative ways to bring organic and sustainable foods to the consumer’s table,” said Robynn Shrader, executive director of NCGA. “But as business has grown and larger players looked for bigger sales, single-store independents lost their clout. The NCGA reorganization restores and enhances this power for food co-ops.”

“Our same-store volume continues to grow at a rate that exceeds our competitors,” said Holly Jarvis, president of the NCGA board of directors. “Our move to a reorganized NCGA will provide us the necessary tools to continue our rates of growth for our existing and new members and aid in the development of new cooperatives.”

A reorganized NCGA can achieve these benefits because together, NCGA co-ops represent more than 400,000 member owners and millions of consumers with vast potential impact from increased synergy. A single association of food co-ops speaks volumes publicly and internally about a commitment to the future of food cooperatives and to each co-op’s success. And, one national organization will

provide more benefit per dollar invested than multiple regional organizations splitting a similar amount of money. A greater concentration of resources will allow more extensive and cost effective programs to be developed and launched. The direct membership model will retain the peer support and innovation of the regional groups.

For more than a decade, food co-ops have been collaborating to establish best practices, create management development programs, financial benchmarking, joint purchasing, marketing activities and peer support. These local co-ops formed 11 regional cooperative grocers associations and alliances, which will now merge into NCGA. Retail co-ops will have direct membership in the national association, which will provide business services, operational and peer support systems.

For ten months NCGA has engaged member co-ops of these regional organizations in a process of discussion, debate, and proposal development. A detailed proposal was presented to members in January 2004, and voting began by mailed ballot in early March. Voting results were announced Friday, April 23, with 89 of 91 ballots cast in support of the reorganization.

The reorganization’s purpose is not to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to the sector’s development, but to tap into its collective power to ultimately benefit the consumer. “All of our stores have something unique to offer, and we will cooperate to leverage our combined strength in our similar business activities, allowing our member stores greater opportunity to focus on their commitment to their local members and communities. As we protect our relevance in a changing food industry, we can promote better consumer understanding of the points of distinction of cooperatives,” said Robynn Shrader. ■

(Note: Rochelle serves on NCGA’s board of directors)

Board Seat Appointment Requires Membership Approval

This September the board appointed Loran Diehl Saito to fill the open board seat left by the departure of Tom Duffy. Loran has spent the last year as our board assistant, taking meeting minutes, writing member updates, and editing other communications. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to River Valley Market and we are particularly fortunate to have such a gifted technical writer join the board.

The board recommends that the membership ratify the appointment of Loran Diehl Saito to the River Valley Market board of directors to complete the term of departing Director Tom Duffy. This term will last for one year and will end in November 2005. Please note that this vote is included on your board election ballot.



Loran Diehl Saito

For the past year I have been assisting the RVM board by participating in meetings, keeping minutes, and drafting communications. I am impressed with the commitment of this board, and look

forward to investing more deeply in its work as a board member.

As an assistant to the board, I have had a special opportunity to watch this group in action. I am so impressed with the way they have dealt with repeated obstacles, but continued to focus on the end goal of opening the co-op with unwavering determination. I believe this determination – and their impressive skills – will bring the co-op great success. A food cooperative is so right for our community, and the board hears that message and will make it a reality.

Loran Diehl Saito, Board Assistant
River Valley Market

In my professional life, I manage publications for the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance, as well as working as a freelance writer and graphic designer and homeschooling four young children. My work background is in the non-profit sector, education, and community development. I’m a returned Peace

Corps volunteer (Namibia), and have degrees in French, International/Intercultural Management, and English/Technical Writing. Our family is looking forward to the co-op’s further development, and I am enthusiastic about this opportunity to serve our community. ■

Board Candidate Statements



Andrea Ayvazian

I am very excited about River Valley Market and have been since Russell Powell came to my office several years ago, told me about the co-op and asked me to join. I joined that day and have been involved, on the periphery, ever since (mainly through my involvement on the Advisory Board). I am a big supporter of co-ops, having joined my first food co-op in 1975 in Chapel Hill, NC when I was in graduate school.

I am a 53 year-old woman, mother, community activist, and ordained minister (in the United Church of Christ). I have lived in the Pioneer Valley since 1980 and I love this community dearly. My partner, Michael Klare, and I have one son, Sasha, who has been educated in the Northampton public school system. He is 16. I have taught at Hampshire College and at the Smith College School for Social Work and, for the last eight years, have been at Mount Holyoke College (as Dean of Religious Life and Protestant Chaplain). Over the years, I have served on many local Boards of Directors including the United Way, the Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue Committee, Casa Latina, National Priorities Project, and the DA's Civil Rights Advisory Board.

I am a strong co-op supporter because I believe that co-ops strengthen community. Besides offering healthy food at a fair price, co-ops foster community involvement and pride. I know that River Valley Market will thrive in Northampton. I envision it as both a place to buy good products and food and (less formally) a meeting place where friends will see one another and leave with warm feelings and strong connections.

I would bring to the board of directors a long history of grassroots fundraising (I was the Director of Training at the Peace Development Fund in Amherst in the 1980s), experience serving on boards of directors, strong energy, a love of community, and decent organizational skills. I was radicalized in the early 1970s through the women's movement while at Oberlin College and believe sincerely that even small personal decisions are political in nature. My guiding philosophy (which dovetails nicely with my theology) is that individuals can be powerful agents of change and that we are "called" to the Jewish practice of "ikun olum" – to mend, repair and heal the world.

I know the River Valley Market is entering an important stage in its growth and development. I would be honored to help guide it along the way.



David Gowler (Incumbent)

It was the summer of '97 when I first began to plan for a storefront co-op and early '98 when I met with a larger group in Northampton to focus efforts here. I have served on the Board since that time and as Board

President for three years. My work with pre-order co-ops began in the mid '70s when I was in high school in St. Louis, Mo. I moved to Northampton in 1982, immediately joining the (then existing storefront co-op) Northampton Food Co-op, primarily working as a cashier. After the demise of the storefront I worked with Northampton's largest pre-order, Meadow City, for many years.

Besides my work with cooperatives, I have a long history of social service and social justice work. I have worked with the homeless, developmentally disabled and elderly populations. I have worked for Peace, Environmental and Social Justice issues with such organizations as The Clamshell Alliance, The

Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft, the American Friends Service Committee, Nipponzan Myohoji (Peace Pagoda) and folks from the Catholic Worker movement. As a Bahai, I believe in and work with my community towards core issues such as the equality of men and women, the eradication of racism and the advent of economic justice for all.

I currently serve as a member and program producer for WMUA in Amherst and work with their Student Advisor on updating their Constitution and Bylaws. I also am on the board of directors for Valley Free Radio, the new Low Power FM community radio station for the Northampton area, now in the development stage.

I am excited to continue working with our wonderful General Manager, Rochelle and our talented and tenacious Board to carry the River Valley Market through the development phase into the operational phase we have so long been awaiting.



Larry Kuttner

I love co-ops. Whenever I travel, I make it a point to stop in at natural food co-ops along the way, and have visited ten different co-ops in Vermont. I have been impressed by and enjoyed working with all the talented

people involved in our co-op. I would like to contribute more of my time and energy to making the co-op a reality, and thus am running for a seat on the board.

I have been a member of River Valley Market since 2001, working on the Outreach Committee, and helping with events such as the Market Day Celebration. I am one of the editors of the River Valley Market website, and designer of the online payment and member bulletin board features.

Since 2001, I have also been one of the organizers of the annual Earth Day Festival on the Amherst Common. I am a founding member of Save the Watershed Action Network (SWAN), a New Jersey environmental group that has been successful in stopping the development of hundreds of acres of woodlands surrounding area reservoirs through legal, legislative, and public awareness campaigns. I am currently a member of the board of directors, and was a Co-Director of the organization from 1991 to 1999.

I work at National Evaluation Systems as a Network Administrator, maintaining computer and telephone systems for the locally headquartered educational testing company. Prior to that, I worked for AT&T Wireless Services, and before that I owned and operated a company that developed, and marketed specialized software to radio stations. Earlier jobs included work as a radio announcer, photographer, journalist, film producer, carpenter, and electrician.

I often work on projects that require a great deal of advance planning. Whether the project was a film shoot, a festival, or a software rollout, the planning process is often similar. I believe that my experience would be a benefit to the co-op during our upcoming store development stage.



Ed Maltby (Incumbent)

When we started meeting in restaurants, the library and the fire station, at the start of this adventure in 1998, there were times when I questioned whether we could ever fulfill this bold quest for a community owned store. Our search has mirrored life with peaks

and troughs, changes for good and bad but an overwhelming strength from the support of the community. It has been my privilege to be part of this community effort which started just after I resigned

(Continued on next page)

(Board Candidates, continued from previous page)

as manager for the Smith Vocational and Agricultural School farm and continued through the five years spent establishing Bramble Hill Farm as a viable farm using sustainable and organic practices. Nora and I are now working on a variety of projects to ensure a strong and economically sustainable agricultural community for western Massachusetts that will provide a wide variety of products for our community market. As we move into the fundraising and construction stage of the project (WOW!!!), I believe my experience will be a valuable asset to the Board.



Amy Martyn
(Incumbent)

I first joined a food co-op at age 18 in Minneapolis, when there was a small co-op in every neighborhood of the city. Since then I've lived in southeastern Vermont and Florence, working as a whole grains baker, co-op cashier,

manager of a hospice, a social justice funding organization, and the local Planned Parenthood. I also served on the Board of the battered women's shelter in Brattleboro, VT for many years. I have sung with the Brattleboro Women's Chorus since 1997.

Until I moved to Northampton, I was always an active member-owner in the co-op closest to my home and I'm ready to have one close by again! I'm also a strong supporter of farmers markets, CSAs, and all ways of making locally grown and produced and organic foods widely available. My own food production is now limited to a small herb and vegetable garden and the yearly spring rite of tapping the maple tree in my mother's back yard to make a gallon of syrup.

I joined the River Valley Market Board in February of 2000, and have served as vice-president, president and am currently the clerk of the Board. I have

I have really enjoyed working with River Valley Market.

It's an honor to participate in a development project where people are committed to the highest good for their community. The members, board, and manager of River Valley Market have already created the cooperative. The new cooperative is already making a contribution to our community, bringing people together, learning about things that matter, and making important decisions together. A vibrant store will just be a natural outcome of such a vibrant community.

Lynn Benander
Cooperative Development Institute

also been a member and chair of the Outreach Committee. I am deeply committed to creating an organization that provides both member-owners and the wider community with wholesome products in an environment that is healthy, accessible, and supportive of employees.

Throughout the co-op's development process, I have worked to gather reliable data and consider all of the perspectives of the people and organizations involved in order to find practical, achievable and humane solutions to the complex challenges we have faced. I am an astute listener and ask questions that lead to shared understanding and agreement.

While we've faced a longer than expected process to open River Valley Market, the vision we share remains vital and important. The co-op has already served a community building role – only foreshadowing our tremendous potential as a positive economic force in the Valley. I would be honored to serve on the Board of the co-op for another term.



Betsy Powell
(Incumbent)

I am currently working for Northampton Community Rowing coaching the high school boys team and masters team. I also coordinate student teaching for the Outdoor Leadership Program at

Greenfield Community College. This year my partner and I experienced foster parenthood for the first time and learned a multitude about six-year old Kaitlyn and ourselves!

Over the years I have been privileged to be a member of a number of highly functional community groups including Northampton's 350th Neighborhood Committee (the block party folks), non-profit rowing clubs in Oak Ridge, TN and Northampton, and our own River Valley Market. Coupled with my work as a staff member and working member at food co-ops in Syracuse, NY and Knoxville, TN these experiences have taught me the importance of staying organized, listening to others, and maintaining balanced perspectives while in pursuit of organizational goals.

I am energized by participation in community-building efforts of all types, and I am specifically committed to helping River Valley Market open its doors and maintain its status as a vibrant and visionary locally-owned business. I hope to be re-elected as a member of the co-op board, and plan to focus on strengthening member-owner connection and participation in the co-op, to continue to work positively and creatively with our General Manager and members of the Board, and to help develop and maintain functional policies that will serve us well as we open for business. ■

Congratulations to the members of River Valley Market!

Your vision, hard work, and equity will soon be rewarded with a wonderful community-owned store! Recently we have seen an upsurge in communities all around the country that want to have more control over their food choices and are willing to work together to meet their common needs. RVM has been a role model and leader for new co-op development.

Co-ops recycle a high percentage of their income in the local community. Local farmers and food producers will benefit from the fair trade practices of co-ops. Ownership does matter. With democratic, cooperative ownership, we enrich our communities rather than lining the pockets of out-of-state investors. More food cooperatives will mean stronger communities, more sustainable local agriculture and a renewed spirit of people working together for their mutual benefit. Cooperatives are based in values including self-help, self-responsibility, honesty and democracy.

We can always use more of that in the world!

Marilyn Scholl
Cooperative Development Services

Heartfelt Co-op Thanks!



Thank you to co-op member-owner **Marci Linker** who is a long time leader on the Outreach and Member Loan Committees. Marci is also known to many as "**Linklet**" which is her e-mail address. Marci works hard to keep our cooperative database of member e-mail addresses up-to-date and coordinates our e-mail communications. We appreciate all the time and energy she has generously given to the co-op.



Thank you to **Sharon Rudnitzky** who oversees the production of newsletters, annual reports, and other publications, manages the membership database, and serves on the board of directors and Fundraising Committee.



Thank you to member-owner **Deb Chandler** who has been part of the Outreach Committee since its inception. She volunteers her graphic design skills for our newsletters, member mailings and other outreach materials. We're grateful that, even though Deb lives in Lexington, MA these days, she continues to believe in the success of our project and wants to stay involved.

And thanks to all these other dedicated folks of our Outreach Committee who have generously volunteered their time and energy over the past year. We couldn't have come this far without you!

Jade Barker
Susan Kimball
Larry Kuttner
Rebecca Neimark
Fran Schneid
Trevor



Susan Kimball



Jade Barker

Stay In Touch!

E-mail is the fastest and most economical communication tool we have. If you haven't been getting e-mails from the co-op, please send Marci your e-mail address and set your spam filter to accept e-mails from linklet@rivervalleymarket.coop. We want to be able to stay in touch with you as our project develops. And always feel free to call us at (800) 392-3862

We Appreciate Your Support!



Trevor, aka The Games Man

Plant Sale

Back in April, we had a fun and successful Plant Sale event at the Florence Civic Center. Thanks go out to the gardening pros that made it such a success!

Plant Vendors:

Hickory Dell Farms
Intervale Farm
Jayne Tausher's Perennials
Twin Oaks Farm
Whitehouse Farm

Workshop Presenters:

David Lovler, Composting Specialist
John Omasta of Hickory Dell Farm
Ryan Voiland of Red Fire Farm

And thanks also to **Java Hut Roasters** for supplying us with plenty of their fairly traded coffees.



Board member Timo McNerney, taking a break during the garden tour

Garden Tour

And on July 18th we hosted an area member-owner Garden Tour which we couldn't have pulled off without the beautiful gardens of our gracious garden hosts and hostesses:



Jim Weed's beautiful daylily garden

Beth Duryea
Sarah Grant
Melinda McCall
Scott Prior
Joanna Varadi & Stan Pollack
Jim Weed
Northampton's Community Gardens

After the garden tour, we had a **Member-Owner Picnic**, where we ate, schmoozed and got the latest co-op news. We'd like to thank **Ron Freshly** for his groovin' sax tunes and Gary Schaeffer and Barbara Fingold for bringing plenty of their delicious **Bart's Ice Cream** for the crowd.

And to everyone else who has been so supportive...THANK YOU and we look forward to opening our doors to all of you!

Stay up-to-date at www.RiverValleyMarket.coop!