

STORE HOURS

8:00 am - 8:00 pm

Every Day

RESISTING CHRISTMAS IN JULY Presence, Community, and Co-op Values in a Fast-Forward World *Patty Smith*

One thing I still haven't gotten used to after all my years working in retail grocery is that we are constantly forced to live several months in the future. We have to place our pre-orders for Halloween candy in April, for example. In May,

we're deciding how many Thanksgiving turkeys we think we will sell. Who wants to be thinking about Thanksgiving when the dogwoods are blooming?

Right now, I feel like summer has just gotten going, and all I see around me—in stores and online—are Back-to-School sales. Any day now, the Christmas decorations will be strewn across

the shelves of every department and dollar store. It's disorienting. It's weird. It's all about making money. This Western, capitalistic ethos really challenges my attempts to live in the "now," to be fully present in each moment—something that's become key to my mental and spiritual health.

The Co-op, despite its roots in resistance to the traditional practices of profit-hungry and extractive capitalism, nevertheless operates within this now-globalized system and is not immune to its forces. The recent cyberattack and subsequent supply disruption at United Natural Foods (UNFI), our primary supplier of packaged grocery items, was a painful reminder of that. However, we still exist at the margins of the system, and we still resist.

We resist the concentration of wealth at the top by redistributing resources more equitably—continuously improving wages, benefits, and job quality for employees; distributing profit ("surplus" is a more cooperative term) to members in the form of discounts; donating funds from our earnings and pass-through donations at the register (the Round Up) to community nonprofits; and doing as much business as possible with local producers and service providers, even if it sometimes costs a little more.

continued on page 12



Co-op staff event at the River Room with Chris Beaudry

CONTENTS

Resisting.....	1
Garden Update.....	2
Board Doings.....	3
Staff Spotlight.....	4
Hey Members!.....	5
Write Your Roots.....	6
Summer Reviews.....	8
Expansion Update.....	12

WILLIMANTIC FOOD CO-OP

General Manager

Patricia Smith

Management Team

Kara Croce

Wellness Manager

Corry Elm

Rebecca Figueroa

Assistant Front-end Managers

Wendy Jakoboski

Produce Manager

Kathy Leddy

Financial Manager

Marissa Ocegueda

Front-end Manager

Matthew Woodward

Grocery Manager

Staff

Michelle Aguayo Castro

Kate Abbateamarco

Jessie Bance

Gabi Lopez Barreto

Shydel Boyd

Maxwell Calverly

James Cashmore-Everton

Susan Chasin

Olivia Martinez Chavez

Willow Cordy

Ailin Cuevas Gonzales

Chad Dunnack

Kathe Gable

Mark Giangrave

GG Gonzales Aleluya

Catherine Hahn

Bob Jennette

Brandon Johnson Nickson

Andy Kish

Christine Klaben

Kasia Korwek

Brianna Lopez Garcia

Richard Mann

Nancy McMerriman

Sarah Medeiros

Gabrielle Nedweden

Karla Negron-Rodriguez

Vanessa Ortiz

Levi Quakenbush

Melissa Robichaux

Steve Scanlon

Ninoshka Robles Solano

Christopher Swift

Julio Velez

Board of Directors

Brock Alosky

Matthew Coolbeth

Kathe Gable (*staff director*)

Katherine Gavin

Tomasyn Goode

Peter W. Kirk

Hannah Moore

Stephanie White

Manager Representative

Patricia Smith

Newsletter

Amy Kalisher

Patricia Smith



GARDEN UPDATE: Midsummer Blooms & New Additions

Roman Pawluk

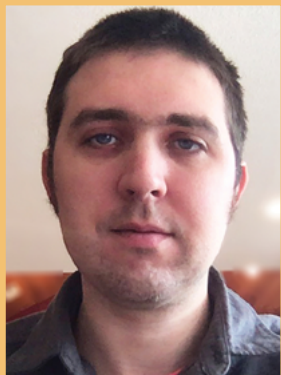
Here's an update on what's happening in the garden. Midsummer brings out many members of the large Asteraceae family—often called the Aster or Daisy family—known for their familiar round, composite ray flowers. Several are already blooming (think yellow—sunflower, threadleaf coreopsis, brown-eyed Susan, tall tickseed), and more are on the way, including true asters—the namesake of this remarkable group.

We currently have three plants of native New England Aster growing in the lupine bed. Keep an eye out for their striking purple flowers with yellow centers, which should appear soon. These late-season blooms are an important food source for Monarch butterflies as they prepare for migration.

The asters, now 2–3 feet tall, were started from seed by Alice Rubin—just like the gorgeous lupines and many other long-standing favorites in the garden. Many of these plants are biennials or short-lived perennials

continued on page 10





Board Doings

Matthew Coolbeth, Board Chair

This year's Annual Meeting ushered in a big change for our Board. We said goodbye to some of our longest-standing directors, who have been cornerstones of leadership at the Co-op for years. We are also pleased and excited to

welcome our three newly elected member Directors—Katherine, Tomasyn, and Stephanie. We also recently welcomed our new staff Director, Kathe Gable, who has probably rung you out at the register once or twice. They are quickly coming up to speed on the duties of a director and are already actively contributing to the governance of the Co-op.

With all of this turnover, we have been taking time to repopulate our Board committees—including reviving our recently dormant DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) Committee—and to take stock, as a new Board, of the Co-op's business development plans.

Over the last few months, we've also continued to keep up with our policy monitoring schedule. This past quarter, the Board has monitored the General Manager's compliance with:

- B.6 Emergency Management Succession
- B.7 Customer Service & Value
- B.3 Financial Condition & Activities Q4 2024
- B.1 Staff Treatment & Compensation

The Board has also evaluated its own compliance with:

- D.7 Board Committee Principles
- D.5 Director's Code of Conduct
- C.4 Monitoring Manager Performance
- D.1 Governing Style

These are just a few items from our Policy Manual, which is a centerpiece of the Co-op's governance model. It sets out our mission and provides a framework for evaluating our performance in fulfilling that mission. If you are interested in learning more about the Co-op's stated goals and model of governance, you can find the latest version

of this document on the Board page (willimanticfood.coop/about-the-co-op/our-board/) of the Co-op's website.

As always, if you are interested in the Board's work, please feel free to attend a meeting or reach out with questions or feedback. Use the "Contact Us" link on the website, or leave your name and contact info at the store, and we will be in touch!

Board Meetings:

First Thursdays, 7–9 p.m.

at WorkMode,

109 Valley St., Willimantic. 🌱

Storybook Pet Portraits
by Helen Scanlon

A unique and beautiful pet portrait that tells your beloved's story

For more information, please visit
www.helenscanlon.com
Contact Helen with commission inquiries at
soundthebuglestudio@charter.net

redtwig
garden design llc

Dede Delaney

860-455-3612

CT NOFA certified landscaper professional • Ecological Landscape Association
www.redtwiggarden.com • email: redtwigCT@gmail.com

*** amyKstudio ***

EXPAND YOUR REACH

branding • strategy • websites • printed materials

401-359-2231 • amy@amykstudio.com



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Bright Futures and Big Smiles at the Co-op

This summer, we're shining a spotlight on two of our fantastic young staff members, Nino and Brianna. Both recent high school graduates, they're bringing positive energy, hard work, and future-focused ambition to the Co-op community. From favorite products and post-grad plans to dream lunches and go-to songs, we caught up with them for a fun Q&A. Read on to learn more about the people behind the registers and the produce bins—you might just discover a new favorite cinnamon roll or soup flavor while you're at it!

What is one of your favorite memories from high school?

Nino: Being able to be with my best friends. I never had a big friend group, so being able to establish some good close friends was very meaningful.

Brianna: Winning my CTC Championship for soccer!

Now that you've graduated, what are you looking forward to?

Nino: I'm excited to go to Six Flags with my friends! We're also renting a cabin by a lake—that will be really fun and my first trip with just friends!”

Brianna: I'm looking forward to going to college for business and accounting.

What's your favorite thing about working at the Co-op?

Nino: My favorite thing about working at the Co-op is being with the amazing staff.

Brianna: My favorite thing about working at the Co-op is that it's always a positive environment. I love interacting with customers and building bonds with co-workers.

If you could have lunch at the Co-op with anyone, who would it be?

Nino: I would have a special lunch with my good friend that I haven't seen in a long time.

Brianna: I would have lunch with my grandparents and enjoy some of our hot soup—either clam chowder or the mac and cheese!

MEET: Nino & Brianna



What's your favorite Co-op item?

Nino: I absolutely love the fresh local vegetables and fruits, our coffee, and of course, the local honey!”

Brianna: The Bake Shoppe cinnamon rolls are too good!

If you weren't working at the Co-op, what would you be doing?

Nino: Nothing! It's summer! I'd be relaxing and getting to sleep in, since I mostly work closing shifts.”

Brianna: I'd probably be working at another store until I finish college.

What are your plans now that high school is over?

Nino: Summer fun! I'll be going to UConn to study accounting.”

Brianna: I'll be getting ready for college at Three Rivers Community College to study business and accounting. I'm also thinking about planning a trip to Italy again... the homemade gnocchi is too good there!

If you could choose one song to play every time you walked into a room, what would it be?

Nino: Welcome to the Jungle by Guns N' Roses.

Brianna: Stereo Love by Edward Maya & Vika Jigulina. 🌱



interviewed by Melissa Robichaux

Hey Members!

Kathy Leddy & Steve Murphy

We don't like to be nosy. Mom always said, "Don't stick your nose where it—WHOSE dishes are these in the sink?!" But as a member of the Co-op, we do need to send you notices that are required by our bylaws.

Some of our members have lived in the same place for decades—they're as rooted as a *Boscia albitrunca* (wikipedia.org/wiki/Boscia_albitrunca). Others have changed names, mailing addresses, phone numbers, or emails over the years. As much as we don't want to get into your personal business, we do need your updated contact information in order to keep all members informed.

Even if you last moved during the Clinton administration or only changed your email right after the Y2K brouhaha settled down, you might not have remembered to update the Co-op. Updating your address, phone number, email—even your name—would be enormously helpful to us.

What We Need:

Update Your Email Address:

Email is both a miraculous modern tool and a cursed bane of our existence. It allows the Co-op to instantly communicate important member information in the most cost-effective way.

As of this writing, the Co-op has 7,419 active members. We are missing email addresses for over 1,800 of them. This means that, in order to comply with our bylaws, we must send 1,800 pieces of paper mail every time we notify members about the Annual Meeting. How great would it be if we could send those notices by email instead?



116 Annual Meeting 2025 notices
returned to the Co-op as "undeliverable"

Having a current email address on file also allows you to vote using our new online voting system—which saves the Co-op time, money, and paper.

Update Your Mailing Address:

We promise we won't be dropping in unexpectedly for tea (although we'd probably accept an invitation!). If we can't reach you by email, we'll send important member info by mail. Having your current mailing address

helps prevent undeliverable mail from being returned to us—again saving the Co-op time, money, and paper.

Update Your Phone Number:

We rarely use your phone number, but it's a useful last resort. It's also helpful at the register for confirming your account.

Did you know we have **109 members with the last name Johnson**? An updated phone number ensures that our cashiers credit the right account—so you never miss out on member discounts.

How to Update Your Info:

- Scan the QR code in this article to fill out a quick online form.
- Scan the QR code at the register to do the same.
- Visit this page on our website: <https://www.willimanticfood.coop/contact-info-updater/>
- Let the cashier know you'd like to update your info, and they can give you a simple paper form to fill out.
- Or, just ask the cashier to look up your information so you can confirm it's correct.

We appreciate any help you can give us in keeping our records up to date. Thanks so much! 🥕





WRITE YOUR ROOTS

Eating to Heal Performs at ECSU

Sarah Moon

On July 26 and 27, *Write Your Roots: Eating to Heal*, co-directed by Alycia Bright-Holland and myself, was performed at the Delmonte Bernstein Studio Theater

at Eastern Connecticut State University's (ECSU) Fine Arts Complex. The event was sponsored by the ECSU Department of Communication, Film and Theatre and the Willimantic Food Co-op.

Six original monologues, written by area residents, explored individual journeys of changing one's diet to improve a medical condition—sometimes through self-directed trial and error, sometimes through doctor's orders. All of the pieces emphasized the empowering process of taking charge of one's health and discerning the link between diet and well-being by listening to one's body.

Four of the pieces were performed by the monologue writers themselves: Aaron Burch, Phoebe Godfrey, James Holland, and Shomriel Sherman. Two additional pieces were performed by actors: Bryon Parker's monologue was performed by Anthony Solano and I performed Ginny Frazier's piece. These stories explored dietary changes driven by health issues including seizures, reflux disease, facial cysts, ovarian growths, gout, food allergies and Hypermobile Ehler's Danlos Syndrome.

The performances were followed by talkbacks, during which Melissa Robichaux and Patty Smith of the Co-op



WRITE YOUR ROOTS: Eating to Heal

a Community Writing and Performance Project

SATURDAY 7/26 | 7 PM
SUNDAY 7/27 | 2 PM

Delmonte Bernstein Studio Theater
Fine Arts Instructional Complex
Eastern CT State University

SUGGESTED DONATION of \$10 to the Willimantic Food Co-op Solidarity Fund

**6 ORIGINAL MONOLOGUES BY LOCAL WRITERS
FOLLOWED BY TALKBACK AFTER SHOW:**
Aaron Burch, James Holland, Ginny Frazier,
Phoebe Godfrey, Bryon Parker, Shomriel Sherman

SPONSORED BY THE WILLIMANTIC FOOD CO-OP AND THE ECSU DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, FILM AND THEATRE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.WRITEYOURROOTS.WORDPRESS.COM/WRITE-YOUR-ROOTS-2025/



continued on page 7



Actors performing in Write Your Roots at ECSU

continued on page 7

Write Your Roots *continued from page 6*

shared information about the new Go Ask Alice Solidarity Fund (willimanticfood.coop/go-ask-alice/), which raises money to cover membership costs and offset grocery bills for low-income community members. The talkback also gave audience members an opportunity to ask questions about the writers' stories and experiences, and to share their own connections to the theme of "eating to heal."

This performance marked the culmination of work that began on May 18, when writers, writing coaches, and project facilitators met for the first time. The project supported writers through a three-week drafting process with weekly Zoom meetings guided by a writing coach. On June 24, the group gathered again for a potluck and read-through of the finished drafts. The following week, rehearsals began, first at Moulton Lava Gallery and later at ECSU, led by myself and Alycia Bright-Holland, who also served as the ECSU site liaison and tech director. Props and costumes were added during the final week of rehearsal, along with technical elements like lighting and music.

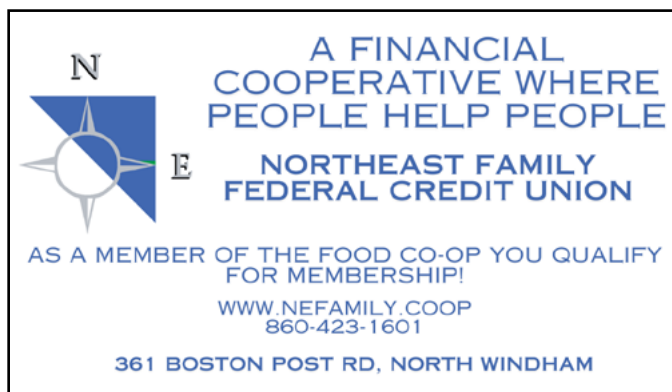
Write Your Roots: Eating to Heal is the third iteration of the ongoing, food-themed community writing and performance project Write Your Roots, which I began in 2016 as the focal point of my doctoral dissertation on the personal and communal effects of writing for performance. For the inaugural project, I partnered with CLiCK, and our group presented nine original pieces at CLiCK and Windham Town Hall in June 2017. A second iteration took place in Providence in 2020 and was scheduled to be performed at Etnias Global Theater in Pawtucket in March 2020, but was canceled due to the

COVID-19 pandemic. That "uprooted" experience in 2020 made the culmination of the 2025 performance all the more meaningful.

Each iteration of Write Your Roots has been an adventure and a powerful bonding experience for participants. The project often serves as a springboard for writers looking to pursue longer writing endeavors. It also offers the community a chance to witness the shared, profound meaning of food in our lives—and to consider how we can honor food growth, production, and consumption, while working together to improve access to nourishing, healthy food.

I look forward to future opportunities to facilitate this creative channel to support personal expression, spark conversations about food and inspire collective action in our wider community.

This year's Write Your Roots: Eating to Heal was video recorded and will be linked on the project's website: writeyourroots.wordpress.com. 🥕



Post-performance "talk-back" with audience



Summer Reviews

Helen Scanlon

Ah yes, summer—some of us love the season, some of us... well, not so much.

I fall into the “not so much” camp because I am not a fan of heat, humidity, and ticks (blech). However—dear “summer not-so-muchers”—I reviewed some

wonderful, amazing items that will make your summer—dare I say it—enjoyable. And if you are a full-on fan of summer, these products will make you absolutely, and at times annoyingly, gleeful.

Okay, enough of the buildup—let’s make like Monty Python and get on with it!

1. Nantucket Spider Insect and Tick Repellent

(The Co-op carries several varieties—regular, extra-strength tick, summer camp for kids, and for dogs)

Ah yes, summer. Everything gets green and lush. And then the farmers’ markets! Gardens! Fresh local produce! Flowers! Swimming! Hiking!

Bugs. Yuck. TICKS. Double yuck. Refuse to let these little so-and-sos ruin your summer! Read on...

I’ve reviewed Nantucket Spider before, and I’m doing it again because I LOVE THEIR PRODUCTS! Can you repel disgusting, disease-carrying nasties with all-natural essential oils like rosemary, geranium, cedarwood, peppermint, spearmint, lemongrass, clove, cinnamon, and citronella? The answer is: heck yes. You try being a tick and see if you want to bite into a cedarwood-cinnamon-spearmint-lemongrass-coated human. It ain’t happening.

Also? Mosquitoes hate Nantucket Spider. Buzzy and annoying little mayflies stay away. Even the super-duper-ultra maddening deer flies are all, “No way, man,” when they get a whiff of this stuff. They still try, though! But your chances of getting one of their epically

Editor’s note: *This issue is coming out several weeks late; it was meant to come out in early summer, when Helen’s reviews were written. Although we’re now nearing the end of summer, we think you’ll enjoy reading about these products all the same.*

painful bites decreases exponentially because the oils in Nantucket Spider are repulsive to them. Good. Get outta here with your mandibles, you bunch of show-offs. But I digress.

Now, let us delve into the world of ticks.

Ticks are small. Their bites are itchy and painful. They carry diseases with highly unpleasant symptoms. **Ticks are everywhere.**

Steve and I live in the woods, and we are avid hikers: rain, snow, cold—it doesn’t matter. We are out there. We use Nantucket Spider exclusively—and we’ve returned from hikes with not even one teeny-tiny vile disease vector attached to us.

Here are my tips to keep the ticks off you:

1. Treat your clothes and skin with Nantucket Spider Extra-Strength Tick Repellent. Apply liberally—don’t be shy. Carry a travel-size bottle and reapply often.

2. Tuck your pants into white socks—ticks can’t find their way to you, and white makes them easier to see. Spray those socks, too!

3. Stick to the trails—don’t go off ‘em! Bushwhacking is a surefire way to get covered in ticks.

4. As soon as you get home: strip off near the washer and plop your hiking clothes directly in the machine. Cover them with laundry powder if you’re not washing right away. No washer? Use a plastic bin with a lid. Keep a bathrobe nearby if you like. **The point is: get those clothes off before you traipse through your home.** Want a tick in your bed or easy chair? Didn’t think so.

5. Shower right away and use a scrubby with LOTS of soap—it gets the ticks down the drain before they can bite and attach. Also a perfect time to do a tick check—legs, groin, ears, armpits. Don’t forget your belly button! (my god, Helen! Do they



continued on page 9

Helen's Reviews *continued from page 8*

really get in there? Yup! Yuck!) Use lots of shampoo and give your scalp a good scrub. Shower within two hours of getting home.

6. Use a lint roller on your clothes and skin—yes, really. They pick up those buggers like a champ!

Don't let a tickborne illness derail your summer. Fight back!

Get hiking—and don't forget your snacks and water. The Co-op has Klean Kanteens for hydration, plus beef jerky and Bobo's Bars!

Find out more: nantuck-spider.com

2. Arethusa Farm Sweet Cream Chocolate Chip Ice Cream

Made in Litchfield, Connecticut

Summer isn't summer without ice cream! Arethusa Farm, known for their award-winning cheese, also makes ice cream—so start screaming for it!

No wait, stop screaming and just pick some up from the Co-op's freezer. It's a lovely little treat—so delicious. Chocolate chip is my go-to flavor, and Arethusa Farm's version is downright scrumptious. Keep your freezer stocked on these wicked hot days.

Support family farms!

Learn more (and see some beautiful doe-eyed Jersey cows): arethusafarm.com

3. Kitchen Garden Farm Giardiniera

Made in the heart of the Pioneer Valley—Sunderland, Massachusetts

Check out these simple and amazing ingredients:

Organic cauliflower, carrots, celery, peppers, distilled white vinegar, sunflower or canola oil, garlic, sea salt, oregano—all organic.

Handcrafted with vegetables grown on the family farm.

Oh WOW, is this stuff good! What a fantastic new item on the Co-op's shelves—get on this!

I kept it simple for my first tasting: dipped some Stacy's Everything Bagel chips right into the jar and helped myself. Then straight off a spoon. My tastebuds woke up and said, "Oh boy, it just got real in here."

Spicy. Savory. Perfectly pickled.

My next thought: this giardiniera can brighten up everything. Put it in hummus. In marinara. On sandwiches. On an over-easy egg. In soup or chili.

On a burger. Tossed with pasta—hot or cold. On pizza. Paired with crusty bread and Brie. Don't stop there—let your imagination lead you through the universe of this Italian pickled magic.

Perfect for summer cookouts. Yes, again—please support those family farms, my dearest Co-ops!

Kitchen Garden Farm Giardiniera is otherworldly.

Keep a jar in your fridge at all times.

Learn more: kitchengardenfarm.com

4. GROW Windham "Fuego de Rana" Hot Sauce (Frog Fire)

Made at the CLiCK Kitchen by Dragon's Blood Elixir—Windham, CT

The youth of the GROW Windham program and Dragon's Blood Elixir have created an utterly perfect hot sauce that has earned a permanent spot in my

kitchen. It's a masterful recipe using all GROW Windham ingredients: jalapeño and serrano peppers, green chiles, and roasted garlic. All that goodness is blended with apple cider vinegar, apple cider syrup, apple purée, cilantro, chives, salt, and an assortment of herbs and spices.

Another summer cookout fave!

Put Fuego de Rana on a burger or hot dog. I slathered it on a fried egg and enjoyed the heck out of it. And of course—it belongs on nachos and wings.

I'm a big fan of hot sauce that packs flavor and just enough heat to make things interesting—and Fuego de Rana delivers. It's not just a hot sauce; it's an artistic creation. Well done!

"GROW Windham was founded in 2011 as a collaboration between the Willimantic Food Co-op and the Town of Windham to support the development of school and community vegetable gardens in the Windham region."

www.growwindham.org

For more on Dragon's Blood Elixir: dragonsbloodelixir.com

Until next time—stay cool, stay tick-free, and have lots of ice cream!

Helen 



Garden update *continued from page 2*



that have found their niche and return year after year, dazzling us with their persistence and beauty.

I am learning to cultivate this group which includes many Native species. It is both easier and more difficult than caring for perennials or planting annuals. Easier because there is little to do – harder, at least for me, because one must show patience and surrender more to the plants and their logic. But as always, the more one knows of the ways of our Mother Earth the easier it is to cultivate anything. Therein is the great joy of gardening - for me.

The far side (Church St) of the Coop garden had some stumps ground out, trees & shrubs pruned hard and a new bed cut that turns along Valley street, punctuated at the end by a Knockout rose borrowed from our robust collection. The new plantings are just beginning to settle in, but there's already an eclectic mix of interesting species to discover (right now find 'Lucifer' in brilliant red). No doubt they will soon do their best to support the garden mission and divert the hurried shopper from their utilitarian errand.

Also a special debut of the sunflower bed in front of the tall holly which we hope will brighten up passers-by with over-the-top swaying blooms. It's a bit behind schedule (so much was going on this spring) but in the meantime Alice's *Tithonia* plants (Mexican Torch or Mexican Sunflower) in the same bed are blazing more and more bright neon-orange blossoms every day. The little tiny emerging seedlings around Serviceberry tree is newly seeded white clover, an option to lawn grass.

Lastly, if the beauty has stirred you but now the brain wants in, we have started adding staked labels for many species directly beneath the plant. Common name and variety should be easy to read in white on black. If you are curious for the scientific name you can pull label up and read it on the back. We have a ways to go as our current listing has 44 blooming species! One of the great attributes of this diligently gathered community of plant species that have developed together here over time- is the uncanny way there is *always* some cool plant phenomena to see, special blossom to find - requires only to look for a minute. Free joy. Thank you to those people, especially Coop staff, providing an extra effort removing garden litter. 🌱



Expansion & Business Development Update

Patty Smith

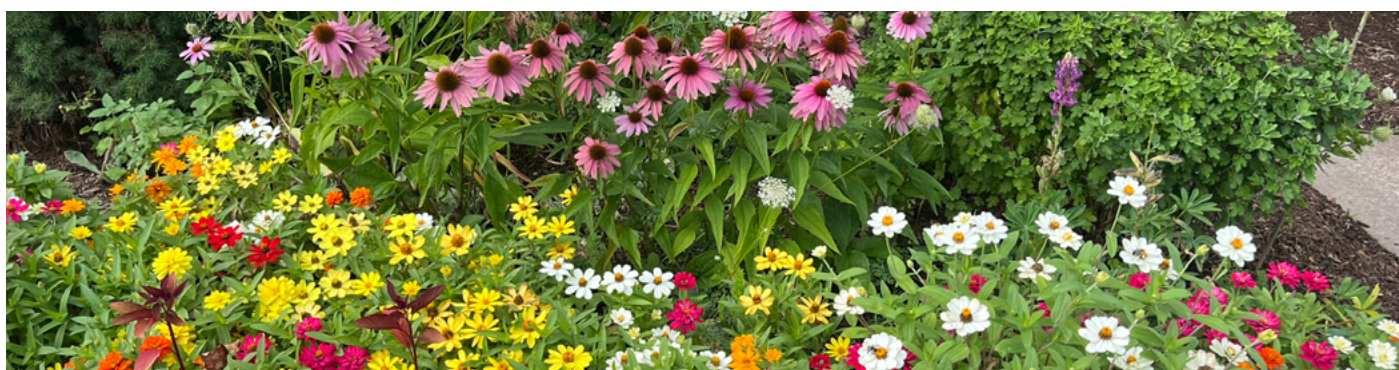
I wish I had more to report at this time, but these things move very slowly—especially during the summer. I can tell you that feasibility work and due diligence are ongoing, with the goal of finding the best size, shape, and location to expand and develop our store.

You may remember that:

- Our goal is to improve the level of service to our members and the broader community.
- Our focus is on member, employee, and community needs while growing our business responsibly.
- Our plan is to build capacity to welcome our growing and diverse customer base.
- Our desire is to strengthen partnerships with local organizations to build a strong food network for all.

We are currently exploring our options for increasing the square footage of both our retail and back-of-house space. Last year, we ruled out building a kitchen and office annex facility at 87 Church St., based on market study data and unfavorable financial projections. Instead, we are actively working on short- and long-term solutions for that property—decisions that are necessarily intertwined with what will happen on this side of the street.

It's a complicated puzzle, but we are working on it. Thank you for your patience! 🥕





*“Find the balance
within the chaos”*

—Melissa Robichaux



THE CORNERSTONE TO WELLNESS

Scan to
go to
website



- Holistic Health Coaching
- Reiki Energy & Sound Healing
- FREE Online Membership
- Community Events

www.thecornerstonetowellness.com

The Compost



Oak Grove Montessori School



A school for learners ages 2.9-12 years
Preschool - 6th Grade

Nurture the child. Empower the student.
Unleash the potential.

at
Oak Grove Montessori School

(860)-456-1031 office@ogms.org
www.ogms.org



Co-op staff enjoying eats from Jayy's Little Red Trailer

Surplus that is not distributed is kept in reserve for when we need it, much of it in the form of member equity, which is redeemable. It is not paid out to distant shareholders, nor is it paid out as bonuses to wealthy executives; it is kept in local banks and credit unions and reinvested in our collectively owned grocery store as needed.





PETER LEEDS
Century 21 AllPoints Realty
(860) 377-4433
pcleeds54@gmail.com

Not Your Everyday Realtor

Local agent in northeastern CT

Experienced in residential, land, multi-family, and manufactured home sales

CENTURY 21 AllPoints Realty

Our Co-op is lucky enough to be thriving despite our insistence on doing things differently. Operating a food co-op in Willimantic is a blessing. Not all co-ops are so lucky—many are struggling to survive in markets dominated by huge competitors, some in areas where there is a corporate grocery retailer on every corner competing for market share. Here in Willimantic, we are largely insulated from that. We have the advantage of being unique in our market, even as many conventional grocers have added more natural, organic, and “local” items to their shelves at loss-leader prices.

In addition to our favorable market position, it's great to be part of a business community in downtown Willimantic that has an “it takes a village” mentality. There is a sense

of camaraderie, collaboration, and mutual support among the businesses and organizations of Willimantic that makes being a part of the economic development of this town joyful and gratifying; it is also inherently cooperative.

A great example is our recent staff event, which was a combination of staff meeting and staff party. We closed the store early (sorry for the inconvenience!) and collaborated with several local businesses to make our event successful and fun. The River Room hosted our event, and we had catering by Jayy's Little Red Trailer (out of CLiCK), Willi Scoops, Trigo, and Reframe. Special thanks to Daniela from Spiral Arts for keeping the karaoke pumping, too!

In a world that often feels like it's rushing ahead at full speed—where Halloween haunts us in spring and Christmas sneaks into summer—it's grounding to be part of something that values presence, relationships, and community over profit alone. At the Willimantic Food Co-op, we may not be immune to the pressures of modern capitalism, but we continue to resist in all the ways we can—by prioritizing people, equity, and local resilience.

Every dollar spent here helps support not just a grocery store, but a network of neighbors, creators, and collaborators working toward a more just and sustainable way of doing business. So even as the seasons blur and the shelves shift too fast, we remain rooted in the here and now, grateful for this community and all we build together. 🌱



Patty Smith