

tpss

Co-operative Effort News



Food for People, not for Profit Since 1981

SPECIAL ISSUE – JUNE 2004

Attention TPSS Co-op Members! Mark Your Calendars for the Upcoming **MEMBERSHIP MEETING** June 27th, 2004, from 6pm to 9pm

MEETING AGENDA:

- General Manager's report
- President's report
- Treasurer's report, including presentation of next year's budget
- Nominations Committee update on the fall board elections

🍴 *Food and beverages will be available!* 🍴

Co-op members who attend the meeting will receive 20% off Sangha merchandise!

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN YOUR CO-OP!

AT THE SANGHA
CAFÉ AND
MARKETPLACE

7014 WESTMORELAND
AVENUE IN
TAKOMA PARK

TPSS Co-op Launches New Membership Drive Help Spread the Word About Your Co-op!

By Lisa Ripkin

how can we better serve you? That is the basic question that I want to put out there to our members and to the community at large. Both stores need member support and input. As the Co-op's membership coordinator, I will do my best to help make positive changes happen!

The Co-op Board mandates that the Co-op have at least one membership drive per year. However, we encourage cashiers and staff to have their own "membership drives" every day! And members are invit-

ed to help out by raising interest and awareness in the Co-op with friends and family.

Starting in May, the Takoma Park store launched its membership drive. The March membership drive at the Silver Spring Co-op brought in 51 new members! But the Silver Spring store still needs more members and shopping support. Any members who can help get the word out about the store, I encourage you to do so. Also, suggestions about what folks might want to see at the Silver store, or ideas to help it improve, are always welcome.

I welcome members and shoppers to contact me:

E-mail: libarip@yahoo.com

Phone: (301) 891-1050

Mail: Lisa Ripkin
c/o Takoma Park Co-op
201 Ethan Allen Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Or you can leave a note for me at the Takoma Park store. Thanks! I look forward to working with you all to continue to improve our membership services. ●



Takoma Park • Silver Spring Co-op
...a supermarket you can own
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8309 Grubb Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20911

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- 4 NCGA Reorganization Update

The Takoma Park Fourth of July Parade Needs YOU! Volunteer to be Part of a Fun Tradition!

By Lisa Ripkin

The 115th annual Takoma Park Independence Day parade will be held on Monday, July 5th, from 10-12pm. The theme for this year's parade, which (like previous years) will be organized by the Takoma July Fourth Committee, is "Building Community." In the wake of the exciting news that Takoma Park's application to the Main Street USA program has been accepted, the theme couldn't be more apropos.

The parade is scheduled to begin at Carroll & Ethan Allen Avenues at 10 am, following the lineup of participants (be there by 9 am if you're going to

be in the parade!). The parade route will follow Carroll Avenue towards DC, cross over to Maple Avenue along Carroll Street, and then return along Maple Avenue.

The TPSS Co-op is looking for volunteers and anyone who is interested in organizing a float or parade idea for the Co-op. This will be the fourth year in a row that the Co-op will be participating with a theme-related float. We are also looking for volunteers to help us clean up after the parade. Contact me, Lisa, by email (libarip@yahoo.com) or by phone ((301) 891-1050) if you are interested.

We'll be providing free water and a T-shirt to attendees, and you can receive credit for volunteer time by helping us make our float. After the parade, stop by the Co-op for food on and off the grill, and for plenty of face painting. We will also be selling water and spritzers outside before and during the event. And watermelon slices... at least I hope on the watermelon slices!!!

The day's festivities continue in the evening, with a program at the Takoma Park Middle School, 7611 Piney Branch Road, starting at 7:30 pm. Parade winners will be announced, and following a

welcoming address by Mayor Kathy Porter the Takoma Park Community Band will perform. After the concert, there will be a drawing for prizes! Fireworks will begin at 9:30, courtesy of Zambelli Fireworks Internationale (rain date: first clear evening).

For more information about the parade, visit the Takoma Park Independence Day Committee, Inc. website at <http://www.takomapark4th.org/> or write them at 109 Sheridan Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Hope to see you there! ●



TPSS Co-operative Effort News is published bimonthly by the Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op

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TPSS Co-op, Inc., is a not-for-profit cooperative natural food store. Submissions to the newsletter and letters-to-the-editor are welcome. Please provide your name and contact information, and note that submissions may be copyedited or reduced for space purposes. Classified ads (up to 50 words) are free for TPSS owners and \$10 for non-owners. Email all copy and ads to Paul Lagasse at editor@tpss.coop (for hard copy delivery of copy and ads, please email the editor for mailing information).

The content of this newsletter represents the views of individual writers and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of TPSS Co-op, Inc.

Next Issue:

August/September, 2004
Editorial Deadline: July 9, 2004

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Old Town Earns Main Street Designation

City Given Access to Assistance to Boost Business

By Sean Sands, Gazette Staff Writer Originally printed in the Gazette May 5, 2004, page A-1

After a year of work by the area's business community, merchants in Old Town Takoma Park last week officially got the word they were waiting for: Carroll Avenue is now Main Street.

Maryland officials bestowed the title of "Main Street Maryland community" on Old Town Friday, welcoming Takoma Park to a prestigious group of cities and towns in the state known for their historic downtowns and commitments to economic revitalization.

"I think it's going to make us very proud to be a Main Street," said Jan Schwartz, owner of Finewares on Carroll Avenue and vice president of the Old Takoma Business Association, which represents the business communities on both sides of the Maryland/Washington, D.C., border. "This is going to be a good boost, and I think it will bring some pride to the area and spark some interest."

Main Street Maryland is a technical assistance program created to balance economic revitalization in the state's traditional main street areas with the need for historic preservation. The program is somewhat rigid in its requirements, but in return, local business leaders are given access to professional and educational resources in order to strengthen historic downtowns and the surrounding residential communities.

The resources include visits from experts in revitalization and preservation, specialized education, on-site design assistance and ongoing training for each community's Main Street program manager.

Stan Ruchlewicz worked as Westminster's Main Street Maryland program manager after that city, similar in size to Takoma Park, received its designation in 1999. He has since become the city's economic development manager.

"There's a lot more cooperation and communication between businesses," Ruchlewicz said. "We've seen some significant things go on in town" since the Main

Street designation, including a net gain of 27 businesses, 78 full-time and 18 part-time jobs in the city's downtown area.

Since its designation, downtown Westminster, which runs along an actual Main Street, also has seen about \$4 in private sector investments for every \$1 of public money spent, including the \$4 million, four-story Westminster Square mixed-use project and the rehabilitation of the historic Old Stone Building into an Irish pub.

"When you start looking at all of that, we're seeing the private sector investment in the downtown the way it should be happening," he said.

The one thing the Main Street program is not is a handout: Ruchlewicz said the program places the onus of revitalization on the local business community. The more energy owners and operators are willing to put into the program, the more benefit they'll get.

So far, businesses in Westminster have put in 3,200 hours of volunteer time, he said.

In Takoma Park, business leaders are hiring a full-time program manager, required by Main Street Maryland. The new manager will guide merchants through Main Street's four-point approach to economic development.

First on that four-point list is organization, and Old Takoma Business Association members have worked for a year to reorganize in order to meet Main Street criteria. The association had to file as a non-profit entity and adopt formal bylaws and operating procedures.

The Main Street program manager also will help Old Town business owners in properly promoting the area while at the same time working on architectural guidelines.

Another Main Street approach is economic restructuring, in this case equipping Old Town to compete in a retail market where an economically surging downtown Silver Spring is located fewer than two

miles away. Old Town's Main Street manager will have to develop an economic development strategy, working with merchants to find the right retail mix while helping existing shops and services.

It's not an easy approach, but it is one that will eventually pay off, Westminster's Ruchlewicz said. "The fact is that you're going to have bumps in the road, and if they look at it they way they should, that everything's incremental and as long as they keep getting small things done so that people can see improvements and changes, that's a good thing."

Business community leaders have worked on gaining membership in Maryland's Main Street club for some time now, said Old Takoma Business Association executive board member Bobbi Kittner, principal of Kittner Design on Carroll Avenue. She praised both Bob Atwood, president of the association, and Sara Daines, the city's community development director, for their work.

But she also recognized that the most difficult part – actually putting the Main Street program to work – lies ahead. "One of the biggest hurdles that we're going to have to overcome is getting people involved in [the program's] committees and keeping these committees going," Kittner said.

Another priority is getting the District's Takoma neighborhood designated as a Main Street community by the D.C. government.

"It's absolutely imperative that we do it – I mean, we are one Takoma, even though we've got Takoma Park, Md., and Takoma, D.C.," Kittner said. "We need to carry over all of the work from the Maryland side, we need to bring it over to the D.C. side. It's very important that it's seamless."

The push to extend Old Takoma's Main Street program into Washington will have to wait for now. John McGaw, commercial revitalization coordinator for the D.C. government, said the District's Main Street

Main Street, continued on page 3

Tell the Post Office: We Want Our Newsletter On Time!

Many of you received the last issue of the *TPSS Co-operative Effort News* weeks late. As a result, you missed the timely and important story explaining the decision to carry meat at the Takoma Park store.

We apologize for this major annoyance. The delay was caused by the Silver Spring Post Office. Basically, we've been told that the newsletter is delivered whenever the mail carrier feels like carrying them!

When did "Neither Rain, nor Snow, nor Dark of Night..." become "Whenever We Feel Like It?"

Please take a minute to [call the Silver Spring Post Office at (800) 275-8777 and insist on getting your *TPSS Co-operative Effort News* ON TIME! (Note: this is a general number for the whole USPS. Choose Option #7 and ask to speak to someone about late mail deliveries.)

In the meantime, you can always find the latest issue online, as soon as it goes to press, at the TPSS Co-op website at: <http://www.tpss.coop>. ●

TPSS Board Report for June 2004

By Larry Haller, Board President

The TPSS Co-op's Board of Representatives continues to change and evolve. We continue our efforts to more fully implement a governing philosophy known as Policy Governance. Policy governance is a way for a board to run a business or organization that clearly delineates the roles of the board and the staff. Under policy governance, the board's role is to set the Co-op's goals (policies) and the staff's role is to determine what it feels is the best way to achieve those goals. The board communicates its goals solely to the General Manager (the board's only employee). The GM is responsible for working with the staff to formulate plans that will reach the goals.

Policy governance provides ways of spec-

ifying how the board should communicate its priorities to the general manager—by setting Ends (goals)—and lets the GM come up with appropriate ways to reach them. Instead of telling the GM how to reach the goals, the board specifies only the ways that it feels are not appropriate—by setting Limitations. An example of a limitation is that the board requires the GM to pay all bills on time. Finally, the board checks to see that the co-op's goals are being met and the limitations it has established are being followed through monitoring reports.

We are reviewing our current policies to see that they don't conflict with the Co-op's bylaws. We are also reviewing the bylaws to ensure that they allow us to operate in accordance with policy governance principles, and to see if the bylaws require the Co-

op to carry out actions not currently governed by the policies.

We are also in the process of finalizing plans to hold additional board training in July. As of this time, we are trying to plan the training so that we can hold it jointly with the board of our sister co-op in Frederick, Maryland. This will both allow us to increase our cooperation with other cooperatives, one of the co-op principles, and to save money on training.

In April, one of our board members, Elizabeth Barnes, resigned because of several changes in her personal life. Because of Elizabeth's resignation, there are now six people on our board. The bylaws allow us to have as many as nine board members. If you are interested in helping to run your co-op

or are interested in finding out more, please come to the June membership meeting (see details elsewhere in the newsletter) or contact me or anyone else on the board. We'll be happy to tell you what's involved. ●

Larry Haller

The 2004 TPSS Board of Representatives:

- Adam Frank, *Treasurer*
- Larry Haller, *President*
- Janiece Kennedy
- Joseph Klockner, *Vice president*
- Nessa Richman, *Secretary*
- Rima Shaffer

- Do you have something to say?
- Do you like to tell stories?
- Do you have news to share with the Co-op community?
- Would you like to earn a **\$25 Co-op gift certificate** for your writing?

☺ Then why not write for the *TPSS Co-operative Effort News*?

The *TPSS Co-operative Effort News* aspires to be the voice of the Co-op community. But we can only reach this goal with YOUR HELP! The more voices that are heard in the *News*, the better the *News* can represent the wide variety of views, insights, and experiences of the Co-op membership.

Contact Editor Paul Lagasse at editor@tpss.coop.



The TPSS Co-op is looking for a few good candidates!

Help shape the future of the TPSS Co-op: Run for the Board of Directors!

WHO CAN SERVE?

Any member of the TPSS Co-op in good standing. This includes both the Takoma Park and Silver Spring store locations.

WHAT DO BOARD MEMBERS DO?

Represent all members' interests through developing and implementing a long-term strategy to fulfill the TPSS Co-op vision and mission.

WHEN DOES THE BOARD MEET?

Usually every month on the third Sunday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Board members work an average of 6 hours per month.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A BOARD MEMBER?

This is a volunteer position. In appreciation for their work, Board members get a 20% discount on all purchases at both store

locations for the duration of their term.

INTERESTED?

☺ Attend the TPSS Co-op Membership meeting on June 27th at 6:00 p.m. at Sangha Café!

☺ E-mail the Board at board@tpss.coop and a current Board member will contact you!

☺ Look for Nomination packets in the Co-op in early September! Elections will be held this fall!

Main Street, continued from page 2

program could possibly accept applications later this year for new community designations in 2005. Until then, he said, a technical assistance and matching grant program is available for the city's neighborhood business districts, including Takoma.

Though the names of Carroll, Laurel and Ethan Allen avenues on the Maryland side of Old Takoma won't actually change, residents and shoppers may hear a lot of talk about Takoma Park's new Main Street designation. And that talk, along with a renewed interest in supporting Old Town, is exactly what local business owners want to hear.

"There's a lot of new blood in Takoma Park now," Finewares' Schwartz said, "and the optimism is that the Main Street program will bring a lot of the newcomers into the city life – you know, get to know what's here and have a response to what they want to see here.

"...I'm really happy that all of the efforts we put forth to make Old Town a Main Street community paid off, and I think there will only be bigger and better things from here." ●

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A dedicated volunteer who is:

- Detail-oriented
- A stickler for grammar
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☺ ☺ ☺ You can earn a **20% EVERYDAY DISCOUNT** as the Editor of the *TPSS Co-operative Effort News*! ☺ ☺ ☺

The *News* is published every two months, and requires about 10 hours of work a month. Through news, feature stories, and photos, the *News* helps connect the Co-op and its members.

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Ninety-four Independent Natural Food Co-ops Form One National Organization

New Structure Consolidates Resources of Regional Associations

Reprinted by permission of the National Cooperative Grocers Association

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. ●

The original press release can be found on the NCGA website at http://www.ncga.coop/news_announce.html

MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAYS

Mark your calendar with these important dates! To thank you for your support of the TPSS Co-op, one day a month is set aside as **MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAY**.

Shop at the Co-op and receive a 5% discount on your purchases! Just our way of saying thanks!

(Discount does not apply to special orders)

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAYS:

2004

May 20

June 25

(Future dates to be determined)

Remember:

Members must present their membership cards or provide their membership numbers when making purchases.

Please remember to bring your card or remember your membership number when shopping at the Co-op!!

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE *TPSS CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT NEWS* WAS SHORTER THAN USUAL SO THAT WE COULD GET THE IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING TO YOU SOONER. THE NEXT ISSUE WILL RETURN TO THE USUAL SIZE AND FORMAT.