

Selene Whole Foods Co-op

Newsletter



January 2010

Supporting a Local, Sustainable Economy

From the Storefront

By Carol Sciarra

As we move through January, shopping at the Co-op should be easier for all our customers with the newly implemented pricing system. All products in the Co-op will now be marked with one price, the retail or non-member price. Discounts for members and working members will be deducted when they check out.

We did a comparison with other regional cooperatives to determine exactly where we stand with our member discounts. We found that Selene gives the highest discounts of any cooperative (11% for members and 21% for working members), including Weavers Way (no member discount), Newark Natural (2% member, 7% working), Swarthmore Co-op (no member discount) and Mariposa (only on bulk purchases). We decided, as part of our efforts to meet overhead costs, to move forward with decreasing member and working-member discounts. We are committed to members' discounts, though, and so new discounts will be 5% for members and 10% for working members. While in the past, produce, LeBus products and certain packaged items were not discounted, now all purchases will receive the discounts.

As we move forward and sales revenue increases, the goal is to contract our pricing scheme on both ends, that of the working member and of the non-member. In this way, we hope to ensure the economic survival of our Co-op and develop more competitive prices at all levels of shopping.

Please don't forget to make and follow through on your commitment to spend at least \$20.00 per week here at Selene. A big thank you to all of you who have joined or renewed for 2010! Your membership dollars greatly add to our revenue base.

We are now offering LeBus bagel sandwiches ready to go! These yummy sandwich delights consist of creamy goat cheese, Fair Trade avocado slices and red onion. On Friday we also have organic green salads for take out!
Again, thank you all for shopping at Selene!

From the Board



§ Selene wishes to thank *Paper Crane Press's Matt Horwitz, a long time member and supporter of the Co-op*, for his generosity in printing and folding 2000 additional brochures.

§ The **2010 General Membership Meeting**: Date: Sunday, March 28; Location: Store; Time: 4:00 PM. Come early and shop.

§ **Carol Sciarra** wants to thank member *Mary DeWitt* for donating money to buy a new toaster oven—you go, girls!

Aiming for 450!

In January 2009, we had 111 members. By the end of 2009, we had about 300. This January, we already have 121 members at mid-month, and that number will keep growing. So we'll aim for 450 members for 2010. That will provide all the stability we need, and more!!! Please pass the word to your friends, neighbors, & family!

Let's Save the Co-op Once and For All!

By Noah Gress

Noah Gress is a local grower of produce and wonderful honey. He sent this impassioned letter to Selene Co-op:

“The Selene Whole Foods Co-Operative is a keystone to any transition the town of Media hopes to make. That is, it embodies and acts on principles paralleling the direction in which Media would like to head. Media has a strong sense of community, collective social awareness, and economic accountability. It's an exciting time to live in the Media area. There is a “cultural glue” that's kept “Main Street” intact....The ideas of cultural awareness, environmental preservation, conscious consumer spending, and healthy food, water and soil are recurring themes among Media's various focus groups, ideas shared by contemporary authors and journalists who offer solutions to problems we all face locally and globally. In Media, we've made advances toward a town that's humane, nonviolent and diverse. Today, concepts that seemed to be dying fads 20 years ago are the tools we've chosen to shape the future.

Selene Whole Foods Co-op

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Selene represents the collective work and ideas of many individuals over the decades. Founded in a time when the earth seemed a little larger, when organics “will never be able to feed people on a large scale,” when vegetarianism was the subject of many jokes, the Co-op has remained steadfast to ideals of lifestyle and community that today are considered the perfect shade of green. The Co-op and its members are a solid ideological foundation on which the community can build. We help keep the town together—for instance, many people who worked to make Media the first Fair Trade Town are members of the Co-op.

The infrastructure within the Co-op, relationships with local vendors, and community involvement make it a very useful tool for timely implementation of new ideas.

Another useful tool the Co-op offers is the ability to sustain itself financially. While in its present state this point can be argued, the platform exists, beyond membership dues, for the Co-op to operate with no other donations. A ballpark calculation shows that *if each of the 121 current members spent \$35/week, we would be very close to covering basic operating costs. With the projected membership base of 450 dues paying members spending \$20/week there would be enough capital to flourish.* Fortunately, there are about 500,000 people within 20 miles of the store who are **welcome** to shop here.

Selene Co-op also demonstrates effective, socially responsible investing, not only because it fits the criteria of “green” business, but also because it is intimately tied to the social/cultural elements of our area. This relation unites consumer spending and social investing; e.g., money spent on produce and local items at the Co-op directly returns capital back to the local community.

From a small, local grower 's view, the Co-op offers retail space available to the public seven days a week and accessible to a demographically diverse customer base. A grower/Co-op relationship creates a market niche where prices reflect the true cost of production and proper land stewardship.

Just as important, *the Co-op's goal is not maximum profit.* It offers local foods at prices affordable for much of the population. Some local growers support the Co-op by offering products on consignment or donating surplus produce. This strong partnership between the Co-op and local producers can be utilized by local organizations looking to promote sustainable initiatives, as well as some of the town businesses seeking to buy from local farmers. [From the editor: [Why aren't Media restaurants accessing local produce and other local, organic products? Why do we have to go to other towns for such restaurant fare?](#)]

A cooperative with direct relationships to growers and producers offers a level of food safety and accessibility that is invaluable to the consumer. Remember the E. coli outbreak on spinach? We have to ask: Did my store pull this product off the shelf “just to be safe,” ignorant of the

product's origin? Or did my store, confident in the origin and integrity of produce/producer, leave the spinach on the shelf? A co-op allows its members to develop real relationships with their food growers. This creates a food web which nurtures a safe food supply, and an economic system based on community values.

The health and preservation of our Co-op matches our belief systems, mission statements, and fair economic business plans. *As the Co-op is in the marketplace, the most direct way to ensure its vitality is to shop there! Until we start shopping there, the Co-op will not be able to restock its shelves or expand its selection of offerings. It needs purchasing power born of our initiative.*

I am reminded of an old saying, “If you want to fish, you have to cut bait.” It's time to get our hands dirty and actively engage in our future. *I believe in the Co-op and feel confident that if we line up alongside Carol Sciarra, we can ensure the health of the Co-op and make positive changes in Media.* Imagine when the Co-op is plentiful enough that we do not need fundraisers to keep us going; when we are, in fact, actually in the position to host benefits for other social investments in the community. I am grateful to live in a town that has a food cooperative. I thank all the folks who have weathered the storm, steering toward a bright spot on the horizon. All their perseverance has made Media a better place. *At the end of the day, there either is a co-op in this town or there is not. I know I sleep better at night knowing that there is!*

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Questions, concerns, comments, criticisms can be sent to paparudaproduce@yahoo.com.

Sincerely, Noah Gress

Healthy & Sustainable Food—Seasonal Guide for the Mid-Atlantic Region



Harvard Medical School provides a guide to what's in season in the mid-Atlantic region from month to month. *Remember that eating locally also entails*

eating seasonally! The chart ([click here](#)) indicates in red the fruits & veggies that are in season, while green indicates those available from winter storage. By clicking on any veg or fruit, you get nutritional info, storage tips, recipes!

Another great site for food storage and cooking techniques is [National Center for Home Food Preservation—see here](#).