



BLUFF COUNTRY CUIZINE

FOOD NEWS, EVENTS & SALES FOR THE BLUFF COUNTRY CO-OP COMMUNITY



Calendar

MARCH

All events are open to the public

Sun., Mar. 1st - Fri., Mar. 20th

Easter Ham Pre-Order

Reserve your ham for your Easter festivities! BCC will be ordering ham from Hidden Stream Farm, based locally out of Elgin, MN. Choose from a range of cuts, sizes, and bone-in or boneless.

Sat., Mar. 14th • 11:00-12:00pm

DIY Face Masks

Our Wellbody crew will show you how to make refreshing and revitalizing face masks using locally grown tea.

BCC Owners: \$5. Non-owners: \$7.

Space is limited.

Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.



Tue., Mar. 3rd • 10:30-11:30am

Tasty Tuesdays

Held on the 1st Tuesday of every month
Set forth on a delicious adventure with your youngster! The first Tuesday of every month is Tasty Tuesday, where children ages 2 to 5 will experience new foods and flavors. Join us as we explore fruits, vegetables and other tasty whole foods. Free, but space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

Fri., Mar. 6th • 5:00-6:30pm

Lacto-Fermentation 101

In this class, Faith Anacker, owner of Fizzleology Foods, will reveal the wise tradition and craft of basic vegetable lacto-fermentation and demystify the science and nutrition behind it. This hands-on experience will teach you how to prepare delicious, live cultured vegetables in a variety of ways. Plus you'll go home with a jar of your own artisanal creation! BCC Owners: \$20.

Non-owners: \$25. Space is limited.

Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

Tue., Mar. 17th • 12:05-12:55pm

Gentle Yoga

Held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month
Make a lunch date with your yoga mat at the Co-op! In this partnership with Infinity Wellness, we're excited to offer a free yoga class in the Co-op's Community Room on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Mollee Sheehan will lead this gentle, all-levels 45-minute sequence.

Please bring your yoga mat if you have one. Free, but space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

Sat., Mar. 21st • 10:30-11:30am

Kids Cook!

Held on the 3rd Saturday of every month
Kids ages 6-12 will have a scrumptious time in this interactive introduction to cooking basics. Free, but space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.



Fri., Mar. 27th • 5:00-6:30pm

Growing Local Herbs

Join Tony DiMaggio, the person behind Sacred Blossom Tea, and learn how herbs are grown at Sacred Blossom Farm and how you can do it at home. The class will include information on his favorite herbs to grow in this region, how to start plants

and beat the weeds, and tips for growing more medicinally potent herbs. Bring questions, because Tony loves when attendees help direct discussion. Free herb seeds available to class attendees. BCC Owners: \$12. Non-owners: \$15. Space is limited.

Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

APRIL

All events are open to the public



Sat., Apr. 4th • 8:00am-8:00pm

Kitchen Appliance Exchange

Have a blender that's just collecting dust? Or a food dehydrator that you never use? Drop off working kitchen appliances Wed., April 1st - Fri., April 3rd. We will set them up in our Community Room on Sat., April 4th, and folks can "shop" appliances. No money will be exchanged. Good working appliances will be considered donations and people can take what they want on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tue., Apr. 7th • 10:30am-11:30pm

Tasty Tuesdays

See description in March calendar.



RSVP for any class by calling (507) 452-1815
or emailing Mitch at mitchell@bluff.coop

APRIL

 Continued

Fri., Apr. 10th • 5:00-7:00pm

Emulsions:

The Science Behind Aioli, Vinaigrettes, & Sauces

Local chef and Co-op Kitchen employee Mike Neil will teach you the “why” behind that garlic aioli from your favorite restaurant. Join Mike and learn how to make the flavor of all of your salads, sides and mains pop with homemade aioli, vinaigrette, and more! BCC Owners: \$12. Non-owners: \$15. Space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.



Sun., Apr. 12th

Co-op Closed

Happy Easter!

Sat., Apr. 18th • 10:30-11:30am

Kids Cook!

Held on the 3rd Saturday of every month
See description in March calendar.

Tue., Apr. 21st • 12:05-12:55pm

Gentle Yoga

Held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month
See description in March calendar.

Happy Earth Day!

Did You Know?
Our EV station
is now open 24/7!

MAY

All events are open to the public

Tue., May 5th • 10:30-11:30am

Tasty Tuesdays

Held on the 1st Tuesday of every month
See description on March calendar.

Tue., May 19th • 12:05-12:55pm

Gentle Yoga

See description in March calendar.

Mon., May 25th

Co-op Closed

Happy Memorial Day!

Tue., May 12th • 5:00-6:45pm

Panel Discussion:

Sustainability in Winona

Curious about how Winona is working to become a more sustainable place? Come to our panel discussion and learn about past, current and future sustainability initiatives in the Winona area. A panel of local experts will be available to explain their efforts and answer attendees' questions. A free, light soup dinner will follow. Free, but space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

Sat., May 16th • 10:30-11:30am

Kids Cook!

Held on the 3rd Saturday of every month
See description in March calendar.

Fri., May 22nd • 5:00-7:00pm

Managing Mushrooms

With spring weather comes the smell of lilacs and, of course, savory, foraged mushrooms! Local chef Kate Foerster will be giving a tutorial on how to prepare these prized forest foods. BCC Owners: \$12. Non-owner: \$15. Space is limited. Please RSVP at 507-452-1815.

Take Ownership of Your Co-op!

Sit in on a Board Meeting!

*Held on the 2nd Monday of every month from 6-8pm
in the BCC Community Room. Free Dinner!*





GM Report

BY DAWN SCHREIBER, GENERAL MANAGER



Hello Cooperators!

First thing, in late January, we welcomed Rosie Bielefeldt to our Co-op staff as our new Kitchen Manager. We are all very excited to have Rosie on board. She has a positive attitude and an appreciation for great food. I hope you will help us welcome Rosie by saying hi when you see her in the store and letting her know what you love about our Co-op Kitchen!

Second, I wanted to share with you some of the highlights from our bi-annual shopper survey conducted in October 2019, which I am sure many of you participated in. The survey was conducted by Winona State University Sociology students led by professor, and board member, Aurea Osgood. Once again the survey shows that overall our shoppers are happy with our Co-op.

• 93% of owners reported that being an owner of our co-op impacts their shopping experience. **The top three benefits of ownership according to the survey are owner discounts, case deals, and patronage dividends.** Owners also reported that our co-op is doing a good job of meeting their needs. 100% of respondents reported our co-op meets their needs on product selection and 99% reported our co-op is meeting their needs on community involvement.

• One question asked for direction on where our sustainability focus should be in the coming years. Plastic reduction was number one, followed by reducing food waste, and improving staff wages and benefits. **Reducing plastic and food waste are also high on the staff list** and we will continue to improve options and look for sustainable ways to reduce our footprint. I'm happy to report that we added a Simple IRA plan to our benefit package in January.

• **Word of mouth is far and away the way most folks hear about us** - so keep bragging about the great products you are getting at our co-op to your friends and coworkers! 97% reported they have recommended our co-op to others.

• A couple opportunities for further study or improvement include expanding into deli meat and cheese, more family-sized packaging options, and more general merchandise/non-food options.

Thank you for your feedback! The word cloud above was created from survey responses to the question: What three words would you use to describe our co-op?

Happy Spring!

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gm@bluff.coop

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Board Report

BY JENN BAECHLE, BOARD VICE PRESIDENT

Jenn reduces waste by shopping in bulk!

Perhaps like many of you, I see Spring as a time to restart or regrow my own practices and intentions. One of the practices I have been working hard on is adopting more sustainable habits. By “sustainable,” I mean habits that are good for the environment and even our local economy.

One of my biggest changes is shopping the bulk section at BCC. I bring my jars and containers from home and fill up as much or as little as I need. I used to get so annoyed with myself if I forgot a container and had to use a new plastic bag. I am delighted that the Co-op started providing previously used containers that have been washed and sanitized. Now when I forget my own, I can still reuse a container. I want to give a big thanks to all the staff who make this possible.

Another great addition that’s helping build my habits is our new compostable bags in the produce department. I have bought countless reusable produce bags (ok, maybe just six), but they always seem to be in the one bag I didn’t bring with me. I can get by with juggling my apples and potatoes, but since I seem to pick lettuce or cilantro right after it’s been sprayed, I like to put those items in a bag. Now I can save the rest of my groceries from water damage and feed my compost pile at the same time.

While my next habit isn’t monumental, I believe the little things are still worth mentioning. Did you know you can have your receipts emailed to you? No more sorting long pieces of paper or opening your bags to find the bottom filled with last month’s receipts. Just let the cashier know when you check out.

And to help sustain our local economy, don’t forget about our Community Fund. Last year we were able to deposit \$5,464 into our Fund through a combination of Round-Up at the Register (we rounded up \$1,070!); abandoned equity (\$3,052); member donations of their preferred share interest (\$242); and \$1,100 in matching donations from Frontier Co-op, Home Federal Bank, Hoch Orchard, The Darning Group, jorjastone, and David Thompson, President of Twin Pines Co-operative Foundation. This brings our fund balance to \$17,438. We will be donating the 2019 interest earnings to a Winona nonprofit in the summer. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the fund, you can do so any day by rounding up at the registers or by donating any amount you choose at the registers. Preferred share holders can also donate their earned interest from their BCC shares.

We hear A LOT about sustainability in pretty much every facet of our lives these days. If one of your goals is to adopt more sustainable habits, remember that BCC is here to help!

Jenn Baechle
jenn@bluff.coop



Growing Green

BY MELISSA GORDON, MARKETING MANAGER

Things are happening at your Co-op. You may have noticed the reusable bags hanging near the registers. Perhaps you've used the customer-donated reusable containers in our bulk area. Maybe you've enjoyed coffee out of our reusable coffee mugs. The common theme here is "reusable," and it's the driving force behind our new sustainability coordinator, Anna Hanesworth.

"My number one priority is to reduce waste at the Co-op," says Anna. Such an enormously ambitious priority, which impacts every department's operations as well as the customer's experience, is daunting, but by laying out a waste-reduction plan and starting with some simple rearranging, Anna's work has already had an impact.

"Customers were donating their reusable bags, but the bags were kept in our seating area, away from where customers bag their groceries," says Anna. "Moving the bags nearer to the registers made more sense." Since the bags have moved, the amount of money donated to our Beans for Bags program, a program that incentivizes reusing bags by donating five cents per reused bag to a local organization, has increased. Similarly, Anna noticed lots of customers using disposable containers for soup and coffee, even though they were dining in. By simply moving the reusable bowls to a more prominent location near the soup and offering reusable coffee mugs at the coffee counter, Anna has made it easier for customers to make sustainable choices.



A slightly more involved change has been to allow customers to donate their reusable containers for others to use in the Co-op's bulk section. Although this was the Co-op's practice a number of years ago, it ended for a variety of reasons. After researching the options from a food safety perspective, Anna was able to reimplement the practice. All donated containers are inspected, washed and sanitized in-house before being stocked for customer use. The program has been immensely popular and is helping to promote a culture of reduction and reuse.

Anna also helped the produce department switch to new bags that can be composted in a backyard compost. Initially, only one of the bag racks in the department contained the compostable bags, but since they've been such a hit with customers, the department will soon switch all their bags to compostable bags. "It's exciting to see so



many positive responses from customers and staff,” says Anna, who strives to make the sustainable choice the easy choice.

With some of the “low-hanging fruit” having been plucked, Anna has now focused her attention on diverting the Co-op’s food waste from the landfill, a project that requires lots of logistical planning, as well as changing some Co-op policies and developing relationships with outside groups. A clearer, more streamlined approach to donating food to Winona Volunteer Services, for example, has led to more of the Co-op’s food being directed to the local food shelf, while new relationships with local land-owners has filled a gap in the Co-op’s pre-consumer compost pick-up. Anna is currently looking for ways to address the Co-op’s post-consumer compost, but so far she can’t find any licensed post-consumer compost facilities in the area. Any suggestions from the community would be welcome.

In addition to solving the post-consumer compost problem, Anna’s next goals are to research reusable, returnable containers for the hot bar and no-bag days at the Co-op. “None of this would be possible without the support and encouragement I have received from the Bluff Country community. Every day I am inspired by the actions of both staff and customers, and it reminds me that a sustainable future is only possible if we all come together.”

If you have ideas for how the Co-op can be more sustainable, feel free to email Anna at: Anna@bluff.coop



Green Tip: Ordering a case of frequently used products can reduce food miles and save money!

**Order a Case,
Save a Bundle!**

**Co-op
Owners**
receive

15% OFF
most case purchases

Co-op History, Part 2: From Famine Foods to Bluff Country Co-op

In our winter newsletter we shared a brief history of consumer cooperatives. In this issue we'll look at Bluff Country Co-op's history, and in our summer issue we'll highlight some of the exciting work being done by other types of co-ops around the world.

**I CAME,
I SAW,
I CO-OPERATED ...**

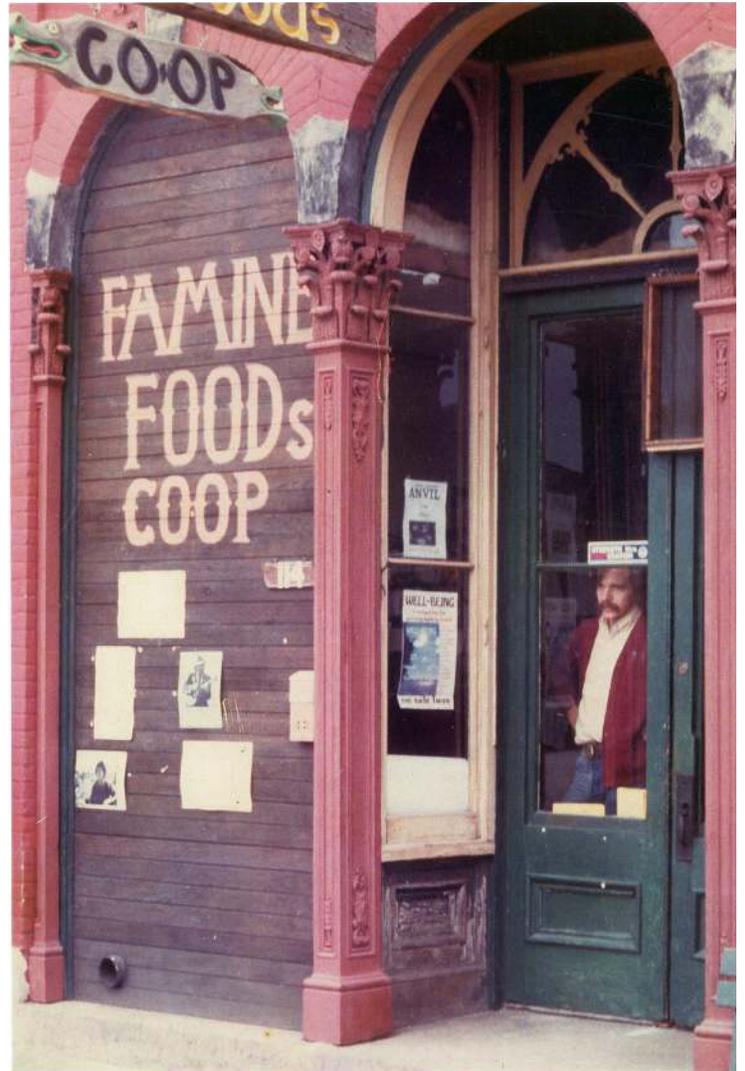
A Quick Look at BCC History

*By Former Board Member John Chernega and
Marketing Manager Melissa Gordon*

Whether you remember it as the year that Sammy Davis Jr. and Mao Zedong invented Pong in the Watergate Hotel or simply as the year that Ben Affleck was born, there was something special about 1972. Here in Winona, on October 4, 1972, our co-op officially opened in its Second Street location.

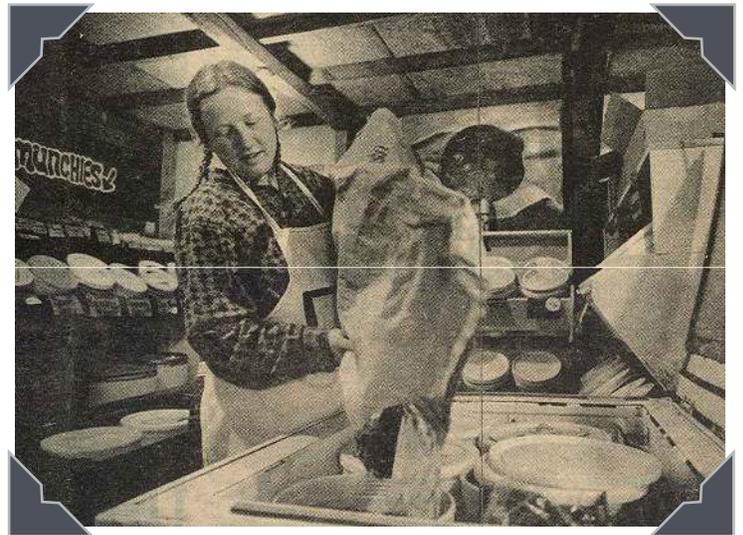
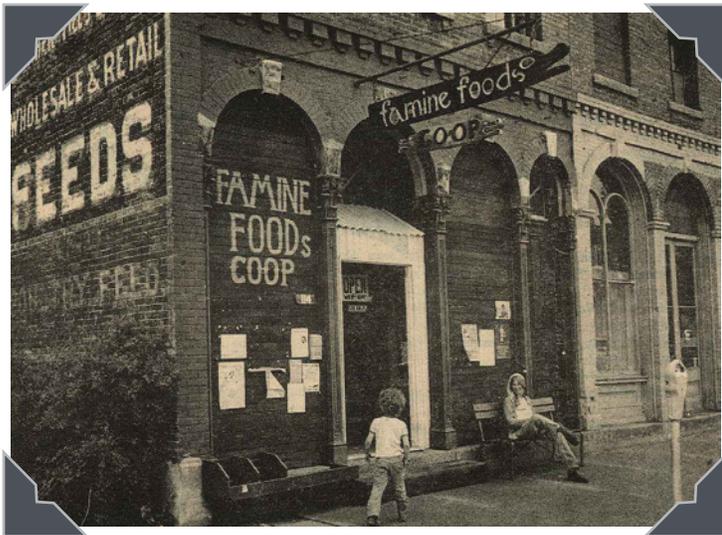
The buzzing energy of the individuals who formed our Co-op, and the sense of community and spirit that was its first year of operations, is wonderfully described in the article "First Year of Famine Foods," written by Roger Lacher, one of our Co-op's founding members. (You can read the article on page 10.)

During those early days, the co-op had yet to acquire many of the most basic necessities needed to run a successful grocery store: cash registers, telephones, regular store hours, employees. The store was only open when members could volunteer for a shift. Rather than a cash register, Famine Foods used a yellow tackle box to store cash for transactions. Savvy members and shoppers knew that the tackle box was hidden in the peanut bin and the store key was hidden at the police station. Even heating and lighting were in short supply: "The donated pot-belly stove was going full-tilt, and yet everyone was wearing their scarves and parkas inside. The store was dimly lit. Its inventory included little more than the basics...however, people were cheerful and enthusiastic" ("Reflections on the Origins," by Michael Doyle).



This cheer and enthusiasm, coupled with passion and dedication, launched our Co-op. One member "spent a couple days just driving around Wisconsin and Minnesota looking for cheese sources," while other members "who had vans or trucks and happened to be going to the Cities" served as delivery drivers.

In addition to a food co-op, other kinds of organizations with similar goals and ideals were being planned: The Garden of Eden Bakery, the Land & Buildings Co-op, a women's center/people's clinic, a restaurant, and an



Open Door Bookstore. The newsletter you're now reading was originally called "We-Know-Now" and was intended to cover updates on all those organizations.

Quite a few things have changed at our co-op over the last forty years. When there were no longer enough volunteers to run the store, Famine Foods hired its first full-time employee, Michael Doyle, who established a system for bookkeeping and inventory and ensured regular store hours were maintained. From there, our store moved from mostly volunteers to mostly employees. Today, we are run completely by paid employees. These changes didn't come without some turbulence. Doyle writes:

"Because a need was felt for a detailed record of each sales transaction, it was decided to obtain a cash register. This single act seemed to be the most apparent symbol of our changes. The fishing tackle box till was no longer needed; now additional skill was necessary to check out a customer, which caused some dismay among our more anarchistic members. It came in the winter. At about the same time, some working members advocated installing a phone in the store. The opposition stated their case: The co-op was uncomfortably beginning to resemble every other capitalistic business operation."

It may be hard to believe the many changes that transformed the co-op from a renegade wholesaler kept afloat by dedicated volunteers to a cherished institution, a community-owned business that offers a wide range of local, organic and specialty groceries. But in the age of DoorDash and Amazon Prime, it's inspiring and humbling to imagine that people so badly wanted access to local, healthy foods, and that they so much

wanted to know where their food came from, that they volunteered their time to go looking for it, and to bring it back for others. Indeed, each stage in our Co-op's development became a reality only when owners and supporters were there to help guide us through the transition and offer the support needed to make it happen. Today, Bluff Country and its 2,000+ owners continue to serve our community. We strive to honor our co-op's story by providing high quality, local products as well as education about the benefits of healthful food and sustainable, local agriculture.

■

Food-buying co-op will organize here

Famine Foods, a group of Winona persons interested in a cooperative food-buying, will hold an organizational meeting at Lake Park Lodge at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday.

According to Roger Lacker, member of the group, topics of interest will include natural foods, low-cost nutrition, barter gardening, and foods of the Winona area.

Homemade bread will be served.

■

Article in the WINONA DAILY NEWS, March, 1972. Meeting held on March 15.

History of ...

PART 2

FIRST YEAR OF FAMINE FOODS

By Roger Lacher

BACK IN THE OLDEN DAYS when I was young, 1971, there was no food co-op in Winona. The first rumors started over coffee in Winona State's "Smog" during the winter of '71-72. Larry Hiel from the big city told us about North Country Co-op in Minneapolis, and a small group started to talk it up around Winona. Our motives were rather vague and mostly political — there had to be a way to circumvent the Super Piggly Owl tendency forcing out the "mom & pop" corner grocery, a way to skirt the trend toward monopoly and monoculture with its attendant overmechanization and unnecessary middlemen (and middlewomen), a way to sell food with the grower's price in sight. Not until later did we become aware of some of the other factors implicit in the idea of "food co-op;" indeed, if you think about it, Famine Foods relates directly to the entire social fabric of this era — agricultural, esthetic, economic, medical, political, spiritual, ecological, etc.

So in the beginning we had no idea of the holistic impact the co-op would eventually have. We entered into the project as whole wheat weaklings and tamari dilettantes. Our empirical foundation was shaky -- what we had was that feeling of "knowing" that it was right common to survivors of the late 60s. We could barely bake, hadn't practiced hefting sacks, were suspicious of words like "inventory," and failed to impress family and friends with our soggy unseasoned brown rice. Obviously with beginnings like that the co-op had to succeed — we lacked enough business sense to know when to quit — so we didn't.

Organizational meetings were held at Antic Arts theater and later, when we went big-time, the Lake Park Lodge. We sold memberships and "food coupons" (short-term loans repaid with food) to raise funds for initial purchases — a \$30 scale, \$25 bins, \$100 first food run to warehouse in Mpls. So by the spring of '72 a co-op of sorts existed, a movable feast since the six bulging bins were trucked from place to place or stayed stuck in the truck. Then our big foot

came to get a chance in the door of the New Way School. We dragged the bins upstairs to a back room and started business in the dust, unkempt and furtive. Customer relations were at the "help yourself" stage in the truest sense, since the food and scale were simply left in a house frequented by all sorts of people 16 hours a day. All summer the food dwindled, change accumulated, and cryptic IOUs were left on the window sill (in the wind!): "I picked up \$17.42 worth food for Jane's cousin's brother's wife, John." But we came out close enough to even replenish stocks and keep searching for a real storefront. After many disappointments, that good man, Jim Mullen, discovered our present Second Street location. We met Ernie Kupietz, shoveled out a few hundred pounds of onion sets, and set out to make \$30 by the end of the month (Oct.) for rent.

Making the storefront presentable was hot, dirty, and from our perspective, expensive. Finally, the old flooring was scraped off, glass replaced and new paint dry. For our first inspection by the health department, we placed a table leg in strategic position to cover a mouse hole in the floor. The original group by this time was fairly exhausted after a year of strictly volunteer work, so it was a relief when other folks started "discovering" the co-op and donating time and energy.

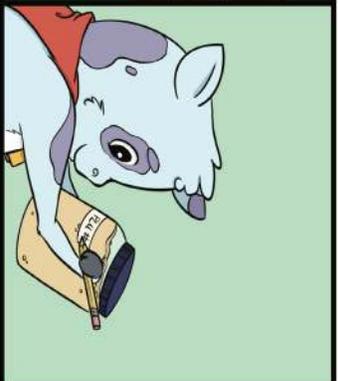


ONE IDEA FOR A LOGO, '73

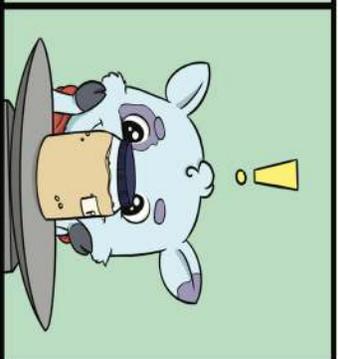
ADVENTURES IN BULK



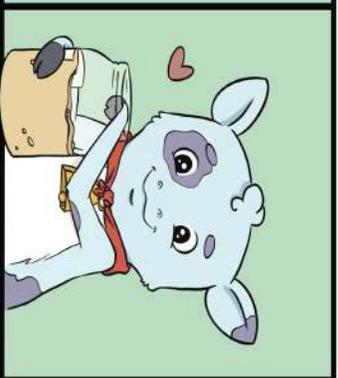
STEP 1: FILL IT!



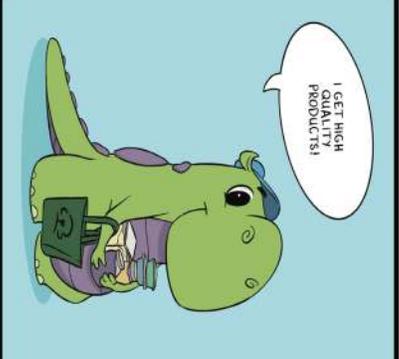
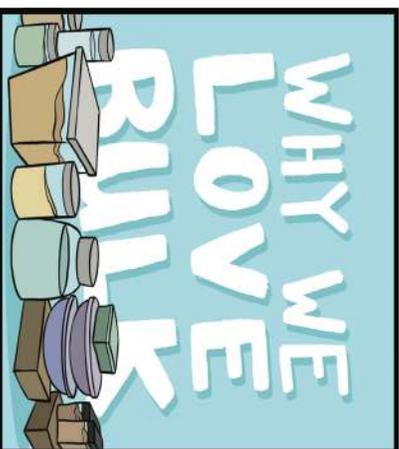
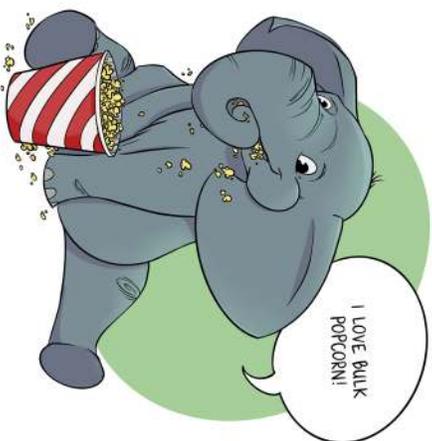
STEP 2: TAG IT!



STEP 3: BUY IT!



STEP 4: ENJOY IT!





Bluff Country Co-op

We know good Food.

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info@bluff.coop

GOOD FOOD DAILY
8am - 8pm



Be the First to **SAVE!**

Our 1-page e-CuiZine gives a first look at big sales, new products, and the latest store happenings.

To sign up,
email Melissa@bluff.coop