

Keystone Development Center Newsletter

COOPERATING THROUGHOUT THE MID-ATLANTIC
2nd Quarter 2011

In This Issue

[View: Glen Bergman](#)

[Food Co-op Start-Up
Conference](#)

[Hall of Fame Dinner a Hit](#)

[Practitioner's Perspective
on Co-op Month](#)

[Check Out Cultivate.Coop](#)

Quick Links

www.kdc.coop



Dear Friends of KDC,

We have been very busy this Spring developing cooperatives and participating in other co-op development related activities.

For this issue KDC had the honor of interviewing **Glenn Bergman**, the General Manager of Weaver's Way Food Co-op in Philadelphia. We also have a report from the **MAFCA Food Co-op Start-up Conference** and the Cooperative Development Foundation activities held in Washington DC this past May. This includes the **Co-op Hall of Fame Dinner**. Practitioner's Perspective focuses on helping your co-op to prepare for **Co-op Month celebrations in October**. Finally, we want you all to know about a special new web site called **cultivate.coop**, a wiki site put together by cooperators in the North East especially for assisting in cooperative development.

Whether you are new to co-ops, a veteran cooperator or one of those crazy folks who are heading up a steering committee to start a co-op or a buying club, you will want to check out this issue of the KDC Newsletter, there is something in it for you.

→ View From My Doorstep: Glenn Bergman

Glenn Bergman spent his childhood in New York City and graduated from Temple University with a degree in Public Health. He has lived in Philadelphia since 1978. Glenn left a career in public health to take a job as a chef in the early '80s and never looked back. In the early '90s he moved to a corporate food position, but in 2004 the world changed and he gave up his suit for the position as General Manager of Weaver's Way Co-operative, his food co-op.

KDC: What brought you to Weaver's Way? Why did you decide to be the GM of a food co-op?

GB: I had been a manager in the corporate world and was a member here at Weaver's Way. I had been laid off from my management job due to an acquisition. One day when I came into the co-op they were looking for a GM. At first I said "no way," but I gave the job a second look and applied. The rest is history and it has been a great experience.

KDC: You've been GM of Weaver's Way since 2004 and you guys now have three locations, one in Mt. Airy, one in Chestnut Hill and one in Oak Lane. Can you tell me about planning the second and third locations and how the expansion is going so far?

GB: The Oak Lane project happened because of community organizations talking to the board. It is a small store and it's losing money. We most likely will have to close this store or hand it over to a non-profit in the neighborhood if we can't turn it around. We are in the third year of this project.

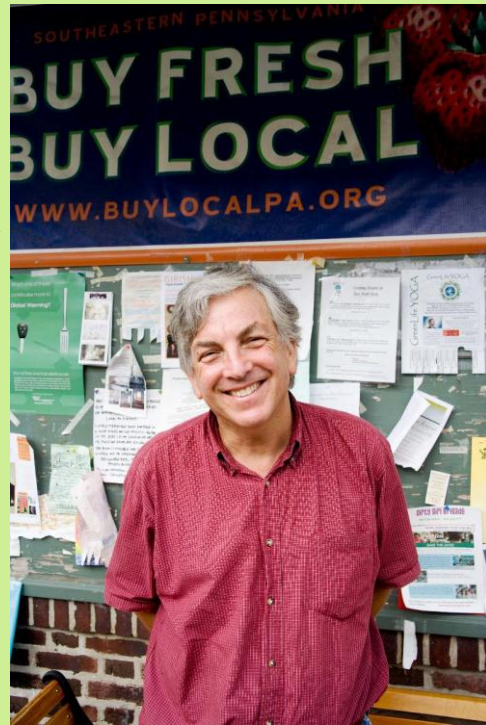
The Chestnut Hill expansion started three years ago. The site was selected based on a market study. We had a meeting of co-op General Managers to look at sites that we might expand, as well as many board meetings and community meetings. We raised money from members and from for-profit and non-profit lending agencies. The store opened May 15, 2010 and is just over one year into operations.

KDC: Weaver's Way also has a number of side projects. Can you tell me for starters about the energy cooperative?

GB: The project started a number of years ago with a member's buying club around fuel oil. A member drive enabled them to spin off from Weaver's Way before I got here. They have their own board. They started out in fuel oil and now also do electric purchasing.

KDC: Interesting. And Weaver's Way has spun off a lot more projects than that one. Can you say something about the Weaver's Way foundation?

GB: Well it's not really a foundation...you probably mean the Weaver's Way Community Programs. It's a nonprofit that enables us to get grants to do education programs. It began with members who started a small urban farm project for educational purposes. The farm is located at Awbury Arboretum and is about 2 miles from the store. We also run a Marketplace program in the local schools. The mission of the Marketplace Program is to sell healthy snacks while



learning about margin and how to get a small profit that is then donated. They could not continue to use Weaver's Way to run this enterprise, so they spun off a nonprofit. They now have three staff members.

KDC: Another cool project at Weaver's Way, you guys have a fairly unique co-op newsletter as well, do you not?

GB: Well, we used to distribute only to members as most co-ops do and not to the entire community. But now we distribute door to door in one zip code and throughout NW Philly our newsletter is available in the same way an entertainment weekly is available in other places. It does not take any political stand or editorialize as many weeklies do, but is meant to meet the mission of the co-op around the seven principles, the fifth principle (Education, Training and Information Sharing) in particular. So it has a lot of content that is important to food co-op members, but it also has other news and items of interest in the community.

KDC: And tell us about your urban farms.

GB: The farms started 10 years ago with volunteers. Spearheaded by one of our members, Norma Brooks, the farm at Awbury Arboretum is named after her husband, Mort Brooks, a long time co-op member. She was working with the public schools in a few areas. The farm was a quarter acre when she started and is two acres now. For a number of years she tried to get grants and would rent busses to get kids to the farm. The entire operation was run by volunteers. Finally, we had one of our staff members work on the project, Emily Neuman, who has a degree from the University of Iowa in Agricultural Sustainability. I had her work 10 hours per week to improve the farm program. After one season the farm looked great. At that point Weaver's Way started buying produce from the farm.

GB: Since then they have been farming full-scale and the farm breaks even. They cleared more land for farming and sold \$40,000 in product in the first year, then \$60,000 in year two. Today they are up to \$70,000 in sales off of this little farm. Every year they take on interns to learn urban farming. The first interns started a Community Supported Agricultural operation of their own. Their three acre farm has since grown to six acres.

GB: Another thing Weaver's Way has done in the past that has been a help to the community...for twelve years we ran a recycling program because the city did not recycle plastics, paper, or cardboard. The city now does recycle so we have discontinued that program, but it was one of the things we did for a long time. We would get paid per ton and donate the money back into community. The city had been doing paper and glass for years, but for some reason they didn't do cardboard or metal. Now they do cardboard, metal and plastic so we discontinued our program.

KDC: What else does Weaver's Way do to promote local food production and consumption?

GB: We give money to the Fair Food Initiative started by the White Dog Café Foundation. They are a nonprofit making connections between local farmers and retail users. They run a store in the Reading Market retailing local products. We also work with The Food Trust to support the Headhouse Square farmers' market, which was the site of one of the first Philadelphia farm markets back in 1700s. There has been a tremendous interest in recent years in seeing the revival of the Headhouse Square market. We signed on as co-sponsor. It is an open market-house with overhangs where the farmers put their goods.

KDC: And as if Weaver's Way isn't doing enough in the Philadelphia community already, can you tell me about the new Mid Atlantic Food Cooperative Alliance (MAFCA)?

GB: That came out of a need to bring people together who are starting new co-ops or running very small food co-ops. There is an association of cooperative grocers, the National Cooperative Grocer's Association, that is a great resource for many food co-ops, however most very small co-ops and start-ups are not members. MAFCA is meant to fill in some of those gaps. The members are making some attempt to do group purchasing and to help with assistance for start-ups. This regional food co-op alliance is a place for area folks who are interested in food co-ops to talk to each other and share information and services.

KDC: Are there any other cool projects that I missed? I hear you have a Bike Collective?

GB: The bike collective has five or six people right now. They are not competing with other area nonprofits promoting bikes and bike riding, but are rather focused on bicycle education and maintenance for local kids. They do great stuff in the local schools. They built a pedal-powered slurry machine which is always a hit with the kids.

GB: Also at one point there was talk about getting a regional meeting together with cooperatives of all sectors, housing co-ops, worker co-ops, food co-ops, home-visiting co-ops, credit unions, etc. The idea is to organize as an alliance of Philadelphia area co-ops. Bob Noble* is working on that.

KDC: What are Weaver's Ways plans for the International Year of Cooperatives?

GB: We don't have a plan yet. We have been talking about October Co-op Month activities. I am hoping we will have a celebration on the October 24th, which is also my birthday. At some point, perhaps in 2012, I would like to plan a co-op tour of Rochdale, England**.

KDC: Glenn, the title of this interview column is "View from My Doorstep." When you look out of your doorstep, it can be you your home or you office doorstep, what do you see?

GB: The reason I like my job is that it brings the community together in many ways. Our members know the profits from their store are not leaving the community. They know employees are being taken care of, that our people are paid decently, and have benefits. I feel the positive impact of our efforts every day in the community. When I step outside of my door, I see the community, on many different levels reacting as a community in many different ways. I see the co-op willing to support other entities and partners rather than competing with them, turning potential negatives into a positive living environment. I am trained in Public Health and I see a great public health benefit to the co-op.

**Bob Noble is a consultant for Keystone Development Center working in the Philadelphia area and is also a long time member of the Weaver's Way Board of Directors.*

***The significance of touring Rochdale England is that it is the birthplace of the modern consumer co-op movement and the home of origin of the cooperative principles which have been modified by the International Cooperative Alliance and adopted world-wide. For a link to the cooperative principles go to www.ica.coop.*

Philadelphia Network Hosts Food Co-op Start-up Conference

On April 16th a one-day conference focused on food co-ops was held in Philadelphia at the Brossman Center of the Lutheran Theological Seminary. The conference by all accounts was a terrific success with 17 workshops on a variety of topics ranging from a basic overview of the development process to accessing start-up capital. The workshops were attended by many including organizers from 18 food co-op start-up efforts. The people in attendance numbered 131 from 53 organizations in 12 states. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the conference rating a 4.6 out of 5 possible points in the evaluation survey.



The initial purpose of the conference, the first of its kind in the area, was to reduce the learning curve for groups in the Mid-Atlantic region who are forming food co-ops. Conference planners felt it would be helpful to pull together a regional conference for these groups regarding the organization, planning, and implementation stages of new food co-ops. Through publicity and networking many more organizations were represented at the conference. The conference's long-range goal of helping to realized new food cooperatives in the Mid-Atlantic region will be assisted in the future by technical assistance from Keystone Development Center, peer mentoring from MAFCA co-ops, and Food Co-ops Initiative and Cooperative Development Services Consulting Co-op.

Planning for the conference was done by the Mid Atlantic Food Cooperative Alliance, CDS Consulting, Food Co-ops Initiative and Weaver's Way Food Co-op. Workshops covered the food cooperative development process, the feasibility process, member drives and membership systems, technology for start-ups, various kinds of capitalization and case studies of different kinds of food co-ops.

A variety of training materials were used during the workshop sessions. Each attendee was provided with a conference informational booklet. These materials will be made available through the MAFCA website at www.mafca.coop. MAFCA brings together food cooperatives in the MidAtlantic region and has been a project of KDC who provides a local facilitator for the group.

Conference sponsors included the Cooperative Development Foundation Howard Bowers Fund, Keystone Development Center, National Cooperative Grocers Association, Park Slope Food Co-op, The Reinvestment Fund, Weavers Way Co-op, Tacoma Park Silver Spring Co-op, Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund. The Food Trust. National Cooperative Business

Association, The Common Market Co-op, Flatbush Food Co-op, Swarthmore Food Co-op, Newark Natural Foods Co-op, and Hungry Hollow Co-op.

KDC would like to express our gratitude for a job well done to conference coordinator and KDC consultant Bob Noble. Bob reached out tirelessly, both regionally and nationally, to bring resources and people together for this conference. Well done, Bob, and Thank-you!

Hall of Fame Dinner Pinnacle of Many Worthy Events Sponsored by Cooperative Development Foundation



Hall of Fame Dinner

The Cooperative Development Foundation outdid itself on May 4th, 2011 with another outstanding annual Hall of Fame Dinner honoring the cooperative heroes of our time. This year's Dinner recognized the life-long accomplishments of five extraordinary cooperators: agri-business leader Noel Estenson; international cooperative developers Gloria and Stanley Kuehn; former congressman and credit union leader Daniel A. Mica; and civil rights leader and cooperative developer Shirley Sherrod. Four hundred and fifty people filled the hall at the National Press Club where they enjoyed exceptional dining while learning about the amazing accomplishments of this year's inductees.

In the early 1980's, Noel Estenson was the force behind a joint venture between Cenex, Inc. and Land O'Lakes Inc. This ground-breaking joint venture eliminated duplication for both cooperatives in regard to supply and energy operations. As CEO of Cenex he later merged his co-op with Harvest States Cooperative creating CHS Inc. Today CHS is the largest

cooperative in the United States and markets both in the U.S. and overseas. Estenson retired as CEO of CHS in 2000.

Working recently with the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) Stanley and Gloria Kuehn are currently helping to establish rural credit unions in Kenya and Ethiopia. For many years Stanley was Country Director for NCBA's CLUSA International program in El Salvador and Nicaragua. This husband and wife team has 25 years of international experience helping small farmers to grow organic, and non-traditional crops for growing markets.

Dan Mica was fourteen years President and CEO of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA). His time at CUNA was distinguished by significant accomplishments of benefit to the entire credit union movement. This former Member of Congress fiercely led a proactive legal defense against attacks on credit unions by the banking industry. The resulting legislative/regulatory atmosphere was a landmark victory for credit unions and marked CUNA as among the most respected trade associations in Washington, DC.

Civil rights veteran Shirley Sherrod has dedicated her life to achieving economic justice and rural land ownership for small and lower-income farmers in the rural South. She was co-founder of a 6,000 acre black-owned cooperative and land trust that was forced into foreclosure in the 1970's. She and colleagues were party to the Pigford law suit, a recently-successful class action against the USDA for discriminatory lending practices. She joined the Georgia field staff of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/LAF, after the foreclosure, where for thirty years she helped small farmers and developed rural cooperatives. She was appointed the Georgia State Director of USDA Rural Development in 2009 by the Obama Administration, and resigned a year later.

For more information about the Cooperative Hall of Fame visit: www.heroes.coop.

Cooperative Issues Forum

The Hall of Fame Dinner, while certainly the cooperative highlight of the year for many U.S. cooperators, is not the only event The Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) coordinated during the first week of May in DC. On the afternoon of May 4th, just hours before the Hall of Fame Dinner, CDF held the First Annual Cooperative Issues Forum, also in the National Press Club. Seven leaders from various sectors of the cooperative community were present to discuss how the cooperative principles factor into their business practices.

Panelists included Scott Aebischer, Senior VP, Customer Service at HealthPartners; Bill Cheney, President, CEO & COO, Credit Union National Association (CUNA); Charles Connor, President & CEO, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC); Pete Crear, President & CEO, World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU); Karen Kulp, President & CEO, Home Care Associates and Martin Lowery, Executive VP, External Affairs, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The Cooperative Issues Forum drew 250 people and produced a lively discussion among panelists with a significant amount of audience participation.

Cooperative Home Care Workshop

On Friday, May 6th CDF concluded a week of co-op activities with a workshop on home-care cooperative development for practitioners. Several members of Cooperation Works! participated in this informative session regarding the potential for developing home care cooperatives that

help people to age in their own homes. Topics covered included variables in states regulations, Medicare reimbursement and the need for cooperatives to achieve economy of scale in this industry.

The workshop for practitioners is a part of a larger CDF strategy to create a cooperative atmosphere in the United States that empowers elders to remain as independent as possible while also engaging elder-care workers in a business model that offers living wages and an ownership stake in their companies. In addition to educating Cooperation Works! practitioners about the home health care industry, CDF also has arranged a series of workshops for regional elder-care organizations and direct-care workers to teach them about cooperatives. Through these efforts, CDF is emerging as a hub for information about cooperative home health care.

Grants, technical assistance and other resources are available, particularly in rural areas, for persons interested in starting home health care cooperatives. To find out more about the various resources available regarding home care cooperatives visit the Senior Resource Center at - <http://www.cdf.coop/about-src/>.

Practitioner's Perspective: Plan for Co-op Month!

Many co-ops each year forget to plan for co-op month (October) and sometimes the month goes by without much celebration or acknowledgement. Many cooperators and their communities are missing out on a fantastic opportunity to teach and learn about cooperative businesses, cooperative history, cooperative models, and in general about the cooperative community.

Greater awareness of the cooperative model and greater networking on the part of cooperatives translates into increased membership and revenue for cooperatives. Such educational opportunities also contribute to the replication of cooperative models throughout the value chain and can lead to what economists call a clustering effect, which is essentially a cluster of complementary businesses located together in an area. In other words, the more we talk, teach and learn about cooperatives, the more likely our co-ops will be successful, because we will be building a cooperative community through which our cooperatives are more likely to thrive.



So I am going to share with you ten ideas that can help your co-op to make the most of co-op month and begin to build a supportive cooperative community.

1. First book mark the Co-op Month website at <http://www.coopmonth.coop/>. They have a tool kit with materials and posters, a co-op primer and a co-op directory online.
2. Throw a multi-co-op potluck party. Invite not only your local farm and food co-ops, but also your housing co-op, worker-co-ops, credit unions and mutual insurance people. If you don't know who those other co-ops are in your area, you can use the directory referenced above, or call KDC for personal assistance. All KDC consultant regions and phone numbers are listed at

www.kdc.coop.

3. Teach a place-based co-ops 101 class where participants are not only introduced to key co-op concepts but also to their local co-ops. Ask participants to list all of the co-ops they belong to. When mutuals and credit unions are added to the list they may be surprised at how many co-ops they already patron.
4. Ask your city or town council to declare the week of October 17th through 23rd a community-wide Co-op Week. Make sure you invite your council members to the co-op pot luck party!
5. Write an op-ed about cooperatives for your local newspaper.
6. Contact local community colleges and universities and ask if you can come as a guest speaker to a business or economics class to talk about co-ops.
7. Write a short article about your co-op being a co-op, and what that means to you, and send it in your newsletter or some other communication to all of your vendors and clients.
8. Gather your local co-ops for a first meeting about establishing a regional multi-sector co-op network.
9. Visit your local Rotary Club to talk about co-ops. Small businesses are often interested in co-op succession planning or purchasing cooperatives made up of small businesses purchasing together to achieve scale with vendors. Find out how local businesses currently interact with cooperatives or explore how they might in the future.
10. Donate to the NCB Co-op Month Fund by sending a check to Pam Young, NCB, 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22202

I am interested in any and all activities in the Mid-Atlantic region concerning "October is Co-op Month." Please feel free to contact me at stolarski@kdc.coop with your ideas, questions and comments about co-op month, or if you need to find a way to contact other co-ops in your area. I would love to hear what you are already planning for co-op month or could help you come up with the right way to celebrate for your co-op.

Thanks and Happy Planning! Lisa!

Cooperative Development Institute & TESA Launch cultivate.coop

Cooperative Development Institute is a cooperative development center similar to KDC, covering the North-eastern states. Both CDI and KDC are members of the cooperative professionals organization Cooperation Works! This article is reprinted with permission of CDI and was written by Brian Van Slykes.

In 2010, CDI worked with an emerging worker cooperative, the Toolbox for Education and Social Action (TESA), to launch a new effort called Cultivate.Coop (<http://www.cultivate.coop>), which aims to help democratize our economy and workplaces by democratizing knowledge. CDI has found that one of the largest barriers for people in setting up cooperatives is a lack of knowledge on the subject, a lack of exposure to the concept of democratic participation, as well as a lack of free, accessible and interactive resources on cooperatives and cooperation. These skills and knowledge are not taught in schools, and training tends to be expensive.

For people to teach themselves and each other about cooperatives and cooperation, they need cheap, accessible, high-quality and relevant content and tools. One of the best ways to deliver these is to harness the power of the Internet to help the cooperative community pool its collective resources and knowledge to share with others.

CDI worked with TESA to build a tool for sharing knowledge and resources on co-ops that would also serve as a space to practice cooperation and build educational tools for the co-op community. Essentially, the vision is to create a knowledge commons on all things co-op (what they are, how to start and run them, etc.) and cooperative economics. In other words, Cultivate.Coop is a Wikipedia specifically for cooperatives and cooperation.

Cultivate.Coop can be continuously updated using a combination of wiki technology, expert curators and democratic control--meaning that its content is never in danger of going "out of date." The project builds on the best of what is available and seeks to strengthen other resources rather than draw energy away from them. Since its launch in December 2010, Cultivate.Coop has been a smash hit with thousands of visitors from across the globe, new content and resources being contributed to it every week.

Cultivate.Coop is not only a useful tool for individuals seeking to learn more about cooperatives and cooperation, but it can also be a tool for co-ops, co-op organizations and co-op programs. Recently, CDI organized a major training for people doing co-op development work in Connecticut and was able to use a host of articles from Cultivate.Coop for the reading list. However, there were a few topics that were not on Cultivate.Coop. Therefore, CDI wrote articles for these subjects and then contributed them to Cultivate.Coop. By doing this, CDI could use the articles for its program and then other cooperators could share in the fruits of its knowledge. If others follow suit and share their knowledge and resources (while also building upon those already on Cultivate.Coop), this will be a great way to prevent the cooperative community from having to continually reinvent the wheel.

Cultivate.Coop is a valuable tool, one that enhances all of our other resources. CDI hopes others will consider using it in their work, contribute to it and share it with others.

For information, contact Noemi Giszpenc at 413-665-1271 or ngiszpenc@cdi.

Next issue we hope to have an exciting update on that cooperative development legislation we mentioned a few issues back. We will also have a report back from CCMA, the Consumer Co-op Management Association conference which is in San Diego this year. Additionally, we will feature a buying club in a food desert in Pittsburgh.

Please don't forget to contact Lisa Stolarski with you plans for co-op month celebrations!

Sincerely,

Cathy Smith
Keystone Development Center

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