

Report from the directors of Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative, as presented at the 2015 Annual General Meeting Tuesday May 5, 2015

Back on April 6, 2010, Skookum was formally incorporated as a cooperative. Today we celebrate our first five years as Powell River's only non-profit cooperative devoted to increasing food security for our members, their families, and the region as a whole.

Projects

The lifeblood of our cooperative are the projects that our members manage for their mutual benefit. The past year has seen a few regular projects continuing, and one new project, bulk ordering from the Evil Cherry Company, that was very popular with those members who participated.

The Abundant Pantry is still our flagship project, with regular bimonthly orders going since early 2012. Special thanks go out to the Advisory Team of Barry Bookout, Karen LaCombe, Edward Sanderson, Kevin Wilson, and all the other volunteers and supporting members. We all owe extra gratitude to Barry Bookout for countless hours spent keeping the online ordering system up and running, and to Melissa Call at Ecossentials for putting up with us. We're entering our fourth year, and I will now turn the floor over to Wendy Pelton who will give us some of the highlights of the past year.

We made two orders from **Rancho Vignola** again in the fall and spring, which were decent fundraisers and also helped members to stock up on high-quality nuts and dried fruit.

The **Skookum Gleaners** organized 23 picks of fruit and nuts between early July and mid-September last season, with over one tonne picked and considerable amounts donated to local food banks, soup kitchens, and people in need. Thanks to all the pickers and to the people who gave us access to their trees. Special thanks here to Don Mitchinson, Jan Padgett, & Patricia Wilkinson, who have offered to help find funds to support this project in the future. And thanks go out to the Parish Council of St. David & St. Paul in the Townsite for agreeing to house David & Giovanni's large dehydrator, which we hope will get used this summer for group dehydrating projects.

Once again the **Fall Fair cider-pressing** was a good way to draw attention to Skookum while making just shy of \$600. Thanks to the many many volunteers and those who contributed apples.

Cider press rentals were up this past year from the previous year, from six rental days in 2013 to nine in 2014. Special thanks to Claire MacPherson & Scotty deVries for giving the cider press its annual tuneup, and huge thanks to Gary Burnikell for managing rentals and housing the press.

In the summer of 2014 we made an order from **The Sausage Maker**, which we had not done since 2012. Six members participated in a group order of dehydrators, pickling crocks, and other assorted food-processing equipment. This project managed to make just over \$300 for Skookum while letting participating members save on shipping.

Last summer, Dan Glover organized two group orders from **The Evil Cherry Company** in the Okanagan: 23 cases of organic cherries in July and 21 cases of organic peaches in August. We hope to organize this group order again this summer, as the quality was very high. Special thanks to Caroline Lance for stepping in to assist Dan with this.

Thanks also to **Giovanni Spezzacatena** for managing the sales of the remainder of the bulk order of Tattler lids that Skookum bought in early 2013. Once the current stock is sold out, the board will consider whether and how to reorder these for members.

Organizational development

During the past year, the board initiated or continued various projects to strengthen the organization as a whole and/or develop partnerships with other groups.

The board took part in a day-long session of **strategic planning** back in November 2014, facilitated by member Alison Taplay with graphical facilitation by Wayne Hanson. We owe a debt of gratitude to First Credit Union for providing funds to cover our costs. I now turn the floor over to Laura Berezan, who will discuss the outcomes of this planning session.

Directors Chris Matheson & Dan Glover created a **members' survey** and gathered feedback from our members about their skills and interests and what people would like to see Skookum doing. I turn the floor over to Chris to discuss some of the key findings.

Laura Berezan, working with former director Jan Burnikell, has done a great deal of **policy development**, and now the incoming and future boards have a body of policies to guide their decision-making in board operations, ethics, finances, partnering, and other areas. This is a big step forward, and special thanks go to Laura and Jan for this work.

The board entered into an informal **partnership with the Urban Homesteading School of Powell River**, a new organization managed by Skookum member Kevin Wilson with aims in alignment with Skookum's. It is this board's hope that the next board will formalize this relationship and continue to explore ways in which Skookum and The Urban Homesteading School can continue to work together.

Skookum continues to participate in **Powell River Dollars** and the outgoing board collaborated with the Urban Homesteading School of Powell River by subsidizing the Powell River Dollars portion of registration in the recent Urban Homesteading Bootcamp weekend. This was successful and we hope that the new board will continue to explore creative ways of moving Skookum's Powell River Dollars through the community.

Skookum continues to partner with **Permaculture Powell River** and the Sycamore Commons garden. Thanks to Ron Berezan and Rin Innes for all of their work on behalf of this great community initiative.

Laura Berezan worked with many other members to organize **members' socials** in the fall and spring. Thank you to all who came out and all who helped to organize these socials. And if anyone out there is interested in organizing future members' events, please talk to the board.

Skookum was successful in its application to participate in Townsite Brewing's **growler program**, which will see us receive one dollar from each growler sold in September 2015. These funds are earmarked to support the Gleaners project.

This board finally grasped the nettle and decided to purchase **liability insurance** to cover Skookum members who participate in our projects, notably the Gleaners project. Special thanks to Laura Berezan and Dan Glover for many hours spent dealing with non-responsive insurance companies.

Financial

On the financial front, this board implemented e-transfers as a way of making members' payments easier. We determined that Skookum is required to report and remit Provincial Sales tax, so we are working on setting that up. And Treasurer Edward Sanderson has developed a budget to help streamline decision-making and project management for the incoming board. Special thanks go to Bookkeeper Chris Matheson for migrating our ledger into online financial software and for producing monthly reports for the board.

Membership

Our membership continues to increase, even without a sustained recruitment drive. At the 2014 AGM our membership was 161 memberships comprising 219 members. It is now at 194 memberships comprising 267 members.

Special thanks

Besides the members acknowledged above, there are a few others who merit special thanks from all of us:

- **Jacqueline Huddleston**, for preparing the wonderful food served here tonight as well as at other Skookum social events.
- **Kevin Wilson**, for providing web hosting services at a very reasonable rate and for being there in an emergency to bail us out.

- **Sharon and Peter Deane**, for providing Skookum with a physical address at Kingfisher Books and a space for the Skookum resource library, and for offering members a place to pick up and drop off items.

It has been a busy year for the outgoing board, and I ask you to join with me in giving your sincere thanks to my fellow directors Laura Berezan, Tara Chernoff, Dan Glover, Chris Matheson, Edward Sanderson, and Pete Tebbutt.