

# Report from the directors of Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative, as presented at the 2012 Annual General Meeting Friday, April 27, 2012

In July 2011, at a time when membership applications were not presenting themselves with any vigour, when membership engagement seemed difficult and the board's time was largely taken up with Skookum Gleaners and the Abundant Pantry, the board decided that we needed some assistance. The board wanted to find out how it was doing and what it could do better. We contacted member Laura Berezan asking for assistance with governance; she accepted and volunteered her time and skill to present a workshop on governance which turned out to be both informative and encouraging. The workshop occurred on September 15, 2011.

We were surprised and delighted to discover that we were quite well balanced between the roles of governance, management, and implementation, and that we were fulfilling these roles well and in accordance with the values and principles of the Cooperative.

With this new found understanding the board moved forward to accomplish many of the goals stated at last year's AGM. They did this with the voluntary support and skill of a number of Skookum members who undertook projects or necessary tasks which are making our Cooperative what it is today, and will greatly assist its continued development into the future.

There are five main areas the board has identified and operates within:

**Governance, management & documentation:** To formalize the structure of the Association and provide documentation so that members, directors, and officers know how things work.

**Projects:** To provide our members with activities that help them produce, process, and preserve more food for themselves and others.

**Publicity & outreach:** To let people know who we are and what we are doing.

**Fundraising:** To find appropriate sources of funding to support our activities, particularly in our startup phase.

**Membership:** To recruit new members and respond to the needs and interests of our members.

In the coming year the incoming board will be to continuing to encourage members to support our principles of individual self-empowerment & community self-reliance by working together to accomplish collectively what is difficult to do individually. This means reducing (as much as possible) the barriers that prevent members from managing projects which involve other people, financial transactions, reporting, and so on. The board is primarily

responsible for crafting, testing, and modifying all of these policies and procedures.

Meanwhile, we need all our members to be creative and come up with clever ideas for projects which they are willing to manage... with support from the board and from their fellow members.

## Accomplishments since the 2011 AGM & Goals for 2012

### Governance, management, & documentation

- We held 10 monthly board meetings including a regular discussion of Values & Principles at monthly board meetings;
- Board met with member Laura Berezan for an introductory workshop on board governance (September 15, 2011);
- Developed Memoranda of Understanding with Ecosential's Melissa Call and with Wendy Pelton, Coordinator of the Abundant Pantry Bulk-Buying Club;
- Developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ron Berezan and Rin Innes of the Permaculture Design Course;
- Began allocating project profits to Community Fund, accruing \$109.06 by March 31, 2012;
- Paid off the remaining balance owing on our cider press (\$669.76);
- Member Jan Burnikell has begun developing a manual of board policies and procedures;
- Began developing a policy on partnering with other organizations & individuals.

### Report card

The board has achieved a lot and ongoing work is needed to refine policies and procedures for projects, particularly how finances will work. A board manual is to be completed and published, detailing how the board functions.

### Goals for upcoming year

- Create a 2012-2013 budget and use it to track finances & set goals (Treasurer);
- Hold at least one special board meeting for visioning & strategic planning;
- Complete & adopt board orientation manual & resources;
- Complete & adopt policy manual;
- Develop policies & procedures for disbursing the Community Fund by 2013 AGM;
- Finish developing a policy on partnering with other organizations & individuals.

## Projects

- The Abundant Pantry Bulk-Buying Club is up and running (with huge volunteer effort from Wendy Pelton & Barry Bookout). The bulk buying club is now in its second order cycle, the next ordering deadline being May 13. Work continues on adding products to the website and is in progress to produce policy regarding what products will be made available on the website;
- Developed a partnership with members Ron Berezan and Rin Innes concerning their permaculture design course and Skookum's involvement in it; This relationship accrued \$435 as a contribution to Skookum and offers opportunities to both members and the wider community;
- Made a bulk order of fruits & nuts from Rancho Vignola (September 2011);
- Member Jacqueline Huddleston organized a two-day dehydration workshop (December 2011);
- Board decided, with some regret, that the Skookum Gleaners project did not meet our mandate and was taking up excessive board resources, decided to let this project go;
- Member Giovanni Spezzacatena managed a bulk order of seeds from local seed company Eternal Seed;
- A Project Team has been formed (Stanley Darland, Leslie Forrester, David Parkinson, Pat van Schaik & Pete Tebbutt) to develop policies and procedures for member-managed projects;
- The Abundant Pantry Advisory Team has been formed (Dan Glover, David Parkinson, Wendy Pelton, Laura Wallace & Pete Tebbutt) to support Wendy and develop policies & procedures. special thanks to Melissa Leigh for her voluntary assistance with bookkeeping for TAP;
- Discovered and adapted a set of standards for local producers on the Sunshine Coast (SunCoast Grown) {with thanks to the Kootenay Agricultural society} to be made available to producers on the entire Sunshine Coast. At the time of this meeting these have yet to be ratified by the board.

## Report card

There has been much accomplished, especially the launch of the Abundant Pantry. All the projects were run without fault returning a portion of their proceeds to Skookum. The introduction of the advisory teams is most welcome and will prove beneficial to the co-operative. The main goal now is to empower members to take on creation and management of projects with the support of the board, since all projects so far have been instigated and largely managed by the board. We must work towards a regular year-round roster of projects designed to increase members' household food security and to strengthen the regional food economy.

## Goals for upcoming year

- Make six bimonthly orders through Abundant Pantry Bulk-Buying Club;

- Encourage local producers to use the Abundant Pantry to market their produce;
- Ratify the SunCoast Grown standards and encourage their use on the entire Sunshine Coast;
- Finalize policy regarding product availability on the TAP website.

## Publicity & outreach

- 21 published blog posts;
- Information table at Edible Garden Tour (August 7, 2011);
- Pressed and sold apple cider at Fall Fair (September 24 & 25, 2011);
- Participated in a First Credit Union publicity campaign;
- Loaned our cider press to the Farm to School program at James Thomson Elementary School for a school lunch (November 28, 2011);
- Appeared as one of the featured local organizations in the Waste Wise Community Calendar, thanks to member Coco Hess;
- Presented the film "To Make A Farm" at the Powell River Film Festival (February 18, 2012);
- Information table at Seedy Saturday (March 10, 2012);
- Initiated a meeting with the First Credit Union, with more to follow with the intent of building a strong, collaborative relationship.

## Report card

There is now a much greater awareness about Skookum in the community and work here will be ongoing. The challenge now is to hold four seasonal events which are of benefit to the members and the larger community which raise awareness of the Co-op.

## Goals for upcoming year

- Continue to develop relationship with First Credit Union;
- Attend Fall Fair;
- Attend Seedy Saturday;
- One public fundraising event.

## Fundraising

- Raised \$526.75 in donations and proceeds from cider-pressing.

## Report card

There is room for improvement in this area. We will prepare a budget so we know how to focus our fundraising efforts and enlist members to help with planning fundraisers.

## Goals for upcoming year

- Develop budget, fundraising strategy, & fundraising team;
- One public fundraising event.

## Membership

- Have continued to invite members to attend board meetings;
- Developed and deployed a member survey to learn more about members' interests and reasons to join Skookum;
- Sponsored member Gayle Morton's participation in a workshop presented by Enterprising Non-Profits;
- An Event-Planning Team has been formed (Stacy Fitzgerald, Jacqueline Huddleston, Jean Mackenzie, Alison Taplay, & Connie Thurber) to plan and facilitate regular events to engage members & the public;
- Membership has increased since the last AGM, from 65 memberships comprising 84 individuals to 102 memberships comprising 138 individuals.

### Report card

We will continue to define the benefits of membership, mainly by creating and managing projects whose benefits are evident.

### Goals for upcoming year

- Continue inviting members to attend board meetings;
- Hold four seasonal member engagement events.

## New business and possible projects

- Create policy and/or another department of Skookum to engage with CSA type ventures;
- Continue to encourage membership involvement in advisory committees;
- Encourage the adoption of the SunCoast Grown standards for the Sunshine Coast;
- Investigate and create a tool and equipment club as part of Skookum;
- Explore collaboration with SD47 and Brooks High school and encourage youth involvement.