

"It's just food!"

Brighton Food Coöp Newsletter
September 2012

Welcome New Member Terri MacKenzie of Brighton!

Key Upcoming Dates:

- Next Distribution: **Tuesday, September 4th** (Terra Bulloch will announce shift times.)
- Initial Orders Due: **Wednesday, August 22nd** (by 9:00PM)
 - **UNFI** – Login to the Online System at <https://www.unfi.com> . (Choose **UNFI East Region**.)
 - **Frontier**: Send order to Megan Putnam.
 - **Outside Vendors (OV)**: Send order to Christie Winch at tcwinch@yahoo.com.
 - **Sami's Bakery**: Include your Sami's order with your OV order to Christie Winch.
- **Produce**: Include your Produce Share order with your OV order to Christie Winch. To suggest items for inclusion in the Produce Share or to inquire about availability of items for whole case orders, contact Nicole Brown at [colerie@ charter.net](mailto:colerie@charter.net).
- Unfilled Case Orders Due: **Sunday, August 26th** (by Noon)
- **Creswick Meats**: Orders due Sunday August 19th for pickup on Saturday September 8th.
- **Vendor 7**: Honey & Maple Syrup can be ordered this time; Nuts, Candy, and Maple Syrup next time.

Distribution Recap

A shortage of floor workers slowed down the August 7th distribution so that some members had to wait till after 3:00 to take home their orders. Once again, no tortillas were available for pickup at the Ann Arbor Tortilla Factory. Produce distribution went more smoothly because, as requested, many floor workers stopped what they were doing and helped offload the B&B truck; and produce counts were finally spot on because those involved in the counting wrote down their counts rather than just shouting them out.

Almost a dozen kids were present, but they mostly sat quietly and well-behaved against the back wall, occupied with their Tablets, Game Boys, Smart Phones, etc.

Just a reminder: Most of those kids will head back to school in September. In fact, our September 4th distribution falls on the first day of school, which may present a number of challenges for members working the distribution.



Some coöp members may be late that morning because of start-of-school activities, and some may have to leave early to pick up their kids because of the short school day. Please bear with these disruptions and expect a longer distribution than usual.

Freezer Found!

In last month's issue, we asked whether anyone could donate a freezer -- or recommend a great deal on one. Having a freezer in our storage room at the church would enable us to store frozen and freezable extras (like nuts and foods containing oils that might otherwise go rancid) without forcing us to drag the stuff home and find space in a freezer there. Well, we had not one, but two responses! Both Nichole Patrick and Terri MacKenzie (our newest member) offered freezers. Since Nichole lives way down in Lincoln Park, we've decided to take Terri up on her offer first. (She lives in Brighton.) However, we may end up using Nichole's freezer as well -- in order to store Beeler meats (more about that below). Thanks to both Terri and Nichole for coming through for the Coöp!

Coöperating Coöps

As BFC members, we're used to coöperating with each other for our mutual benefit. But now the Board is considering an interesting coöperative proposal on a larger scale. Our "neighbor" Livingston Foods (see <http://www.livingstonfoods.com>) has proposed a coöperative venture that may enable both coöps to acquire products directly from Beeler -- with much greater variety and at much better prices than through UNFI. The reason we haven't previously tried to buy directly from Beeler is that we couldn't meet the order minimum. Evidently, neither could Livingston Foods. But if the two coöps combine their orders, the minimum is within reach.

The main obstacles are logistics and accounting. Livingston Foods is open every Monday, but BFC meets every fourth Tuesday. We would have to treat Livingston Foods as a new vendor (more complicated than it sounds) and submit our consolidated BFC order to them. Livingston would then combine and submit the orders to Beeler. Beeler would ship the combined order to Livingston. Someone from BFC would then have to pick up our order from Livingston (and of course pay them) the day before distribution, deliver the order to the church, and store it overnight (hence the need for a second freezer). As usual with this kind of proposal, the Devil is in the Details, and the Board is currently trying to work out the details for feasibility. Stay tuned for further developments on this matter!

Nuttin' Matters!

For a number of years, BFC members have complained that Albanese offers no organic products. The complaint is not just about availability, but also about image. BFC tries to project an image as a source of wholesome foods, but Albanese is essentially a confectionary company (i.e. a junk food dealer). Some members have given up on Albanese and, instead, now order organic versions of these products from UNFI. Unfortunately, UNFI does not have the wide variety of nuts and candies that are available from Albanese, and UNFI prices are much higher. Ideally, Albanese would simply add organic products to their lineup, but there's no sign they'll ever do that. For that reason, we've been searching for an alternative supplier for a while. Many members have continued to take advantage of the Albanese prices and variety, especially for nuts, so this search has not had much urgency – until now.

What makes the search more urgent now is that Albanese has recently raised their minimums. For example, the minimum on Almonds used to be 5 pounds; now it's 50 pounds! Even ordering every other month, we're not likely to meet that minimum. One proposal is to order various Albanese items only once or twice a year on a rotating schedule so that members can "stock up" on those items. (For example, order Almonds in September and March, Pecans in November and May, etc.) But the current alternating-months schedule is hard enough for members to keep straight. Adding a complex rotating schedule would just about guarantee we'd never get what we want from Albanese!

We're now looking seriously at two alternative suppliers: Nuts.Com (<http://nuts.com/organic>) and Tropical Valley Foods (<http://www.tropical-valley-foods.com>). Tropical Valley Foods is specifically dedicated to organic and "natural" products and does not sell candy other than chocolate-covered nuts and fruits. Nuts.Com sells a wider variety of products, including nonorganic items and candies. Neither of these companies can match Albanese in price and variety, so we may have to keep looking. If you know of a supplier of nuts, candy, and dried fruits who has organic products, good prices, and low minimums, please contact our "Nut Lady" Tina Pospeshil (tina.pospeshil@yahoo.com). Meanwhile, please keep in mind that if you want to continue ordering from Albanese, you'll have to "step up your game" and order much larger quantities than you have in the past!

See you on the 4th!

Jim Brown

BFC Communications Coordinator



*Live long and prosper;
keep life in perspective;
and don't ever forget--
it's just food!*