JULY & AUGUST 2021

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7/4 Independence Day Reduced Hours 7:45 AM - 6:00 PM

7/27 Board of Directors Meeting 5:30 PM

8/24 Board of Directors Meeting 5:30 PM

BIG PLANS FOR YOUR LITTLE CO-OP

The Stevens Point Area Co-op has always been an oasis for our community- fresh, local, and organic foods, vegan and gluten free options, and even sweet treats without questionable ingredients. Since 1972, SPAC has been committed to providing products to this community that uphold our values, but that often comes at a high price- literally. In previous newsletters, we've explored the very real impacts of food deserts in both cities and rural areas, and although Stevens Point is by no means a desert, affordability of local foods is certainly an issue. For a business that began with one ideal- to increase access to local, organic, and natural whole foods, breaking down the barriers that make these products less affordable is our main focus.

With the help of our members, SPAC is growing and quickly outgrowing our cozy store. We have increased our order volume to keep up with demand and reduce prices, but anyone who has spent a moment in the Co-op knows that we simply do not have the space for large scale buying and storage. In late 2019, staff began the conversation of expansion. SPAC made the decision to acquire the property to the north with a plan to eventually demolish and grow our footprint. We are so excited to be in the beginning stages of expansion planning, and we look forward to updating our membership as our plans develop! However, expanding our storefront is only a piece of the puzzle.

In truly serendipitous fashion, while we talked about expansion, community members were simultaneously proposing to save a local historic warehouse space that was on the verge of being razed- the Altenberg Dairy building. The Cook and Altenberg Co-op (CAC) is a lease holding cooperative formed by like minded businesses to revitalize the building, and by doing so, grow the local food economy. SPAC has been a member of the CAC since its inception and is excited to continue growing into the space. CAC's plans for the Central City Market includes the relocation of The Main Grain Bakery, an open air market, a tap house and venue space, and an ice cream shop (Heavens to Betsy is already open for business and ready for visitors). SPAC was given the opportunity to make our dreams come true by acquiring a warehouse space within the historic structure. Our neighbors at the Central City Warehouse include Tapped Maple Syrup, Upstream Cider, Company Cooperative, and Altenberg Dairy. After almost two years of construction, hard work and planning, through a pandemic, no less, SPAC's warehouse space is ready for occupancy!

To fund this project, SPAC received a grant through the Buy Local Buy Wisconsin program, whose goals are to increase consumption and distribution of local foods to increase production and grow the local economy. Through this grant funding, we are realizing our goals of planning and executing the organization and function of the Central City Warehouse. We will have storage space for our products and may even be able to distribute to local food businesses and retailers to increase their scale in the future. We are so excited to increase our purchasing power to pass on more local products, variety, and savings to our members and community!

If you're interested in supporting and growing your local food community, or investing in the project, visit our website at centralcitymarketsp.com, and follow us on Instagram @spacoop and @centralcitymarket. The future is bright for this local independent grocery co-op! Stay tuned for more exciting updates on our journey to a more accessible and sustainable store!

-Annette DeRosiers, Jasmine Moran

LEVITT AMP:
SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

The countdown to an unforgettable season of free concerts along the Wisconsin River is underway! CREATE announced another impressive lineup of artists who will perform at Pfiffner Pioneer Park each Thursday at 6pm from June 3rd to August 5th as part of Levitt AMP Stevens Point. Grab your family, friends and neighbors and get ready to experience the power of free, live music to bring our community together! Levitt AMP Stevens Point will present 11 free, family-friendly concerts featuring a diverse lineup of high-caliber talent spanning genres like indie rock, blues, reggae, hip hop, bluegrass, jazz, and folk. We've seen headliners like the Concrete Roots, L.A. Buckner, and Ley Line throughout June and other headlining performers include, Horseshoes and Hand Grenades on July 2nd (Riverfront Rendezvous), Gangstagrass on July 4th (Riverfront Rendezvous), Roxi Copland on July 8th, John Roberts y Pan Blanco on July 15th, Angela Perley & The Howlin' Moons on July 22nd, Longshot & Lazerbreak on July 29th, and Shamarr Allen on August 5th. Concerts will include local food trucks, beverages featuring members of the Central WI Craft Collective, SURGE participants, and other community organizations and entrepreneurs adding to the event. The public is invited to bring their own blankets and lawn chairs to the concerts and to set up spaced apart on the large lawn at Pfiffner Park. The City Parks Department will be drawing lines eight feet apart to serve as guides for social distancing and the public health department encourages attendees to be mindful of accidental clustering around food trucks and other vendors. CREATE encourages all attendees to pay attention to public health recommendations and to make plans that prioritize personal and public health. This health planning should consider vaccinations, masking, hand-washing or sanitizer, distancing, and other precautions that reduce the spread of COVID-19. Still, CREATE reminds audiences that there are risks associated with attending and that people should make decisions that feel best for their own circumstances. CREATE also asks attendees to respect the choices others make regarding their personal health and safety.

The Levitt AMP concert series is located at Pfiffner Pioneer Park, 1100 Crosby Ave, Stevens Point, WI. Admission is free. Visit https://www.createportagecounty.org/levittamp for a full schedule of concerts, directions and information on parking and wheelchair accessibility. Sponsored in part by the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation, a national funder of creative placemaking that empowers towns and cities across America to transform underused public spaces into thriving destinations through the power of free, live music. In 2021, more than 600 free Levitt concerts will take place in 28 towns and cities, all featuring a rich array of music genres and high-caliber talent. Learn more at levitt.org. In addition to support from the Levitt Foundation, other local series sponsors include Delta Dental of Wisconsin, Worzalla Publishing, the Worth Company, Prevail Bank, La Quinta Inn and Suites, the City of Stevens Point, and the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin.

Levitt AMP Stevens Point is a CREATE Portage County experience. CREATE Portage County accelerates creativity, connection, and collaboration to advance vibrant and welcoming communities. For more information about CREATE and its experiences, visit createportagecounty.org

-Chris Klesmith

HAPPY CAT YOGA

Happy Cat Yogini of the month:
Lizzie Messerli

"Practicing Yoga online has allowed me to continue to feel connected with others and it helps me to show up on my mat. Knowing that others from around the world are joining in at the same time is such a cool experience!"

SPECIALTY ONLINE YOGA CLASSES:
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ONLINE YOGA CLASSES:
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PLASTIC FREE JULY:
JOIN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Recycling Connections, the proud recipient of 1% Fridays in July at the Stevens Point Area Co-op, encourages members to take the Plastic Free Challenge in July. Join the global movement and become part of the solution to address plastic pollution by changing your relationship with single-use plastics.

In recent years, the attention of our addiction to plastic has grown significantly. It is not that there aren't appropriate ways to use plastic; there are applications of plastic that certainly are more effective and have overall benefits for our society. Unfortunately, single-use plastics for the purpose of convenience and one-time use has been abused and needs to be addressed. In 10 years, since its inception, the Plastic Free Challenge has reached millions of people across the globe in 177 countries.

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Join the movement by going to www.plasticfreejuly.org and select "Take the Challenge." You will then be connected to tips, tools, and resources to curb your plastic use. Plus, you will be joining a global community committed to the cause. After taking the pledge, start trying out new ways to use less plastic.

A few ideas to get started:

1. Say "goodbye" to the top four single-use plastics: plastic bags, takeaway coffee cups, plastic straws, and single-use water bottles. Try developing new habits of using and remembering to bring reusable bags, a coffee mug, water bottle, and metal straw with you when you are on the go.

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2. Make the habit to "choose to refuse" single-use plastics whenever possible. Getting takeout? Ask restaurants to NOT pack plasticware with your to-go container because you now carry your own items or can use silverware at home or work.

3. Go back to the bar. Take a look at the soaps you use. Could you try a shampoo bar for a month? How about switching out the plastic pumps of soap or returning back to the bar of hand soap? The SPA Co-op is here to help you make the switch away from plastics. You can visit the bulk food section using your own bags or containers for spices. There are several products that are packaged plastic-free. Give them a try and let us know what you think.

Recycling Connections is a non-profit based in Stevens Point. This year we are celebrating our 40th anniversary of promoting waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting in Central Wisconsin. Visit our website www.recyclingconnections.org or follow us on Facebook or Instagram. And thank you for taking one step forward in addressing our global plastic pollution problem.

-Susan Schuller, Recycling Connections

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WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT HYDROPONICS

Hydroponics, aeroponics, aquaponics: chances are you've heard of at least one of these terms with increasing frequency, or perhaps you've even eaten produce that was grown using one of these systems. If you've been into the Co-op, you've definitely seen some hydroponically grown produce from local farmers! These soilless agricultural systems have experienced a boom in popularity (and sales) over the last decade, but they've also faced immense push back from farmers and produce lovers alike when it comes to the question of organic certification. The USDA National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), leading organic farmers, and organic certifiers have pointed to hydroponics and aquaponics reliance on nutrient input rather than soil and has led NOSB, farmers, and organic certifiers to state that they cannot truly be organic. Others from the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), some organic certifiers, and those from the hydroponic community would beg to disagree.

This puts us at the Co-op in a tricky position. We follow product selection guidelines formed by our Beautiful Foods Circle (available by request) that help us decide which fruits and veggies we choose to sell. Some are no-brainers, such as carrying as much organic as possible from as close to our store as possible. We make exceptions to the first rule very rarely, and only if the product meets the second; we believe that organic certification is less important than organic practices and food from local farmers. Hydroponically grown produce makes this a little more complex.

During the winter and into spring, much of our produce comes to us from the West Coast or even internationally, which is quite a fuel consuming journey. Hydroponics offers a solution for a portion of these items; while the current local focus has been on leafy greens, there are hydroponic operations branching into other vegetables and even fruits. Yet we come back to our first product standard: should we carry hydroponics if some experts think it can't be organic? That's a bigger question than you might think, and it has a tumultuous history that requires us to look at what organic produce even means, the controversy surrounding the legality of certifying hydroponics as organic, and where the Co-op stands on this issue.

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At the end of the day, words have the meaning you give them. This is especially true when it comes to words like "organic," which have a few colloquial definitions as well as a legal standard. Both of these can change over time, and different people have different definitions: some will point to the stewardship of soil, others to the reduction in chemicals and inorganic additives, others still to the sowing or harvesting practices utilized. We like to point to the four principles of organic agriculture developed and maintained by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements: health; ecology; fairness; and care. These principles refer to systems of agriculture and ways of life which sustain and enhance the HEALTH of soil, plant, animal, human, and planet; which are based on living ECOLOGICAL systems and cycles and work with, emulate, and help sustain; which build on relationships that ensure FAIRNESS with regard to the common environment; and which are managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to CARE for the health and well-being of current and future generations.

More information can be found on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements' website: www.ifoam.bio

It is more important to us that the farmers we partner with follow these organic guidelines than have any sort of organic certification. However, we also recognize the importance of official regulation for who can or cannot say that they are or-

ganic, both for organic producers and consumers alike. We've written before about the use of "green washing" by larger corporations to trick consumers into thinking their product isn't as bad for their health and the environment as it actually is. This extends to the organic agricultural industry: consumers are happy to buy produce with the little organic sticker without really knowing how and where their food comes from. This can be damaging to smaller producers who take the time and energy to grow organically, as well as to the health of the people who trust our USDA's organic programs. This is why we care so much about what it takes to be labeled organic, and why the debate on organic hydroponics is so important.

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This debate began, at least on a legal level, with the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) and their legally mandated advisory board, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Without the legally required input of the NOSB, the NOP released a statement regarding organic certification for hydroponics: "[o]rganic hydroponic production is allowed as long as the producer can demonstrate compliance with the USDA organic regulations." Not only was this statement released without the required input of the NOSB, it was in direct contradiction with the NOSB's 2010 recommended prohibition of organic certification for hydroponic and aeroponic systems based on their inability to support natural and diverse soil ecology. In the NOSB's own words: "[o]bserving the framework of organic farming based on its foundation of sound management of soil biology and ecology, it becomes clear that systems of crop production that eliminate soil from the system, such as hydroponics or aeroponics, cannot be considered as examples of acceptable organic farming practices."

We'd like to thank our kind friends at Pisarski Funeral Home for being thoughtful, generous neighbors for many years!

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The statements by the NOP triggered immediate backlash and formed a rift among the United States' largest organic certifiers and organizations. In response, the NOP created the Hydroponic and Aquaponic Task Force to "clarify the NOSB's 2010 Recommendation." Unfortunately — though perhaps unsurprisingly — the initial task force selection was limited to people with at least three years of experience in these soilless farming productions and the task force ended up with a clear bias towards hydroponics and aquaponics.

This part of the story came to a head at the Fall 2017 NOSB meeting, which was attended by significant numbers of organic farmers and organic industry giants. Over 60 farmers spoke. A vote was called: will the NOSB ban organic certification of hydroponics? Seven NOSB board members were in favor, eight were opposed, a clear win for the hydroponics industry. Supporters of the 2010 NOSB recommendation would call this an underhanded move. NOP Deputy Administrator McEvoy insisted that the vote be structured to prohibit rather than allow organic certification of hydroponics, knowing that the vote to allow would not have passed with the required two-thirds supermajority while a vote to prohibit would also fall short.

Do you know how...When you were a kid,
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Hydroponic organic certification is still in flux, with little guidance provided by the USDA and individual certifiers left with making the final call on whether or not they'll certify these farms and how best to regulate this certification. Luckily for us, we don't need to rely on the USDA for our produce purchasing decisions. We care more about the practices used and the people we know, which is why we carry local, hydroponically and aquaponically grown produce. That's one of the special things about eating from our community: you can go to where your food is grown and meet the people growing it. We'll take that over a special sticker any day of the week.

-Lyn Ciurro

FEATURED PRODUCTS

You asked and we answered! Check out these new products we've brought in based on your suggestions from our 2021 Food Survey!

Moon & Ivy - Face Rollers, Gua Sha Board: We've brought in 3 different types of face rollers: jade, rose quartz, and opalite, and also a jade gua sha board. Gua Sha is an ancient Chinese practice in which someone takes a flat tool and using a bit of pressure, pulls it across the skin to increase blood flow. This activates the body's natural healing abilities and can help with inflammation, clearing up breakouts, and preventing wrinkles, just to name a few benefits.

Tarazi - Falafel Mix: A traditional Mediterranean delight, this falafel recipe is a vegetarian and made of ground chickpeas, fava beans, and spices. It makes for a quick and satisfying, high-protein meal. In addition to stuffed pitas, you can try something different and use this mix to make falafel veggie burgers! Gluten-free and dairy-free.

Frontier - Various Medicinal Herbs: We've brought in chicory which is a medicinal root that can be used as a coffee substitute. In addition, we've been stocking up on stress relieving and immune strengthening herbs like kava kava, reishi, astragalus, ashwagandha, skullcap, and oatstraw, because who doesn't need a little support in those departments these days?

Brew Dr Kombucha - Various Flavors: Started as a neighborhood tea shop in Portland, Brew Dr is committed to keeping its small business roots by continuing to source all their teas and packaging from local small businesses. They are committed to being a positive force within their community, having donated over three hundred and fifty thousand dollars to local non-profits. Brew Dr is also a member of 1% For The Planet, a global network of businesses, individuals, and non-profits that are committed to helping deal with the world's most pressing environmental issues. 1% of all the revenue of their Uplift flavor is donated to organizations focused on radical justice. For the third year in a row, Brew Dr is partnering with The Trevor Project, the leading organization in crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ youth, with revenue from their Love flavor going to support them.

A NEW BOOKSTORE? IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN!

Picture this:

It's a warm, Summery day. You just got done strolling by the Wisconsin River, or riding along the Green Circle Trail, or maybe you just rolled out of bed. You have the whole day ahead of you, and the possibilities seem endless. This is a blessing, though at times it may seem like a curse. How can you even begin to decide? Your choice just became a lot easier: come to Bound to Happen Books and Process - Point!

Process - Point and Bound to Happen Books have teamed up to create a new storefront in downtown Stevens Point at 1008 Main Street. The aroma of new books and hand crafted soaps will draw you in, but it'll be the warm and inviting atmosphere and team of helpful shop minders that keep you coming back for more! You may know the building as Agora, or the old Five Rings Studio, or, if you've been around for awhile, Play N Learn, but pretty soon you'll recognize it as the one-stop-shop for all your literature and low waste needs. Our regular summer hours are Wednesday nights from 5pm to 9pm and Thursday through Sunday from 10am to 6pm. But, if you're ever walking past and see the door open, just come on in! Each of the five owners love the space here so much that at least one of us is working on something on a Monday or Tuesday, but our favorite part is seeing folks like you in the store.

Bound to Happen Books is, funnily enough, a bookstore offering an intentionally curated selection of newly printed and published books. We'll have almost every genre you can think of (well, that may be a bit of an exaggeration), but our specialties will be: diverse Young Adult fiction, non-fiction, and graphic novels; a Children's collection that spans from classic picture books to stories which help you introduce the kiddos in your life to difficult, but important, conversations; Critical Theory and Nonfiction titles to spark conversations and expand your perspective; and new Fiction books because we all need a good story to escape in every once in a while. We can also special order just about anything that you want, so we actually really do carry almost every genre!

Process - Point is a low waste shop selling home goods and personal care items. Their journey began last Summer out of the Tomorrow River Homestead and quickly grew into their storefront in downtown Amherst. When Rubina and Sheena heard Agora was moving to a new downtown location, they knew they had to seize the opportunity to expand the low waste options available in Stevens Point. The thoughtfully selected products you can find in either of their stores or on their website (lowwaste.shop) use sustainable packaging and are sourced locally or regionally whenever possible. Want to skip the packaging all together? Process - Point's bulk department has you covered; bring in your old mason jars, spray bottles, laundry containers, or anything else you want to refill and choose from any number of the bulk options they offer.

While both of our stores sell things (duh, that's what a store does), we have all known from the start that we don't want to stop at just that. We love the fact we can offer our community the products they want, but our goals aren't limited to profits or sales. Bound to Happen Books and Process want to support our new neighbors in starting the process of reducing individual waste while sparking conversations and leading the charge on institutional changes to make, at the very least, our part of the state an even better place to call home.

Process - Point has a lot of ideas up their sleeves to make bulk home care the new norm (make sure you follow them on Facebook and Instagram to learn more as this develops), and Bound to Happen Books is hard at work shifting our community's focus and resources away from destructive power structures. Our bookstore carries new and popular titles, but our emphasis is on authors and stories not typically represented in mainstream literature. There is power in telling your story and speaking your truth, just as there is danger when only certain stories are allowed to be told. It's no secret that the world of literature has been that of wealthy white men. Strike that: the world and its power structures have been that of wealthy white men. We have to boldly recognize this truth and stand against it to begin the process of subverting, undermining, and, with any luck, replacing these power structures with something more equitable and community oriented. That's why our motto is "community centered, justice driven."

Our storefront officially opened for business on June 5th and the support we've received has been incredible. We are endlessly appreciative of how the Stevens Point community has received us and we can't wait to continue forging new relationships and developing our downtown space with you all.

-Lyn Ciurro, an owner of Bound to Happen Books

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