

The Harvest Beet

SPRING 2022

est. 1979

NATURAL
HARVEST

FOOD CO-OP

*Locally owned,
organically grown.*

Board Member Contact Info

• BOARD OFFICERS •

PRESIDENT • Stephen Levchak
(Education Committee)
stephen@naturalharvest.coop

VICE PRESIDENT • Victoria Ranua
(Perpetuation Committee)
victoria@naturalharvest.coop

SECRETARY • Raini Knaeble-Weiss
(Education Committee)
raini@naturalharvest.coop

• BOARD •

Jenna Ballinger
(GM Evaluation Committee)
jenna@naturalharvest.coop

Kyle Lynch
(Education Committee)
kyle@naturalharvest.coop

Jennifer Krenz
(GM Evaluation Committee)
jennifer@naturalharvest.coop

Tera Nowicki
(Perpetuation Committee)
tera@naturalharvest.coop

Dominic Renollet
(Perpetuation Committee)
dominic@naturalharvest.coop

Your quarterly source of information for healthy living!

General Manager's Report: Spring is in the Air

Anja Parenteau, General Manager & NHFC Owner

After what seems to have been a very cold and very snowy winter, who isn't looking forward to longer days, warmer weather, and sunshine! A sure sign of spring approaching at the Co-op is our display of veggie and flower seeds. This year we have North Circle Seeds for the first time, whose Midwest growers produce regionally adapted seeds. Just right for our northern gardens!

As the pandemic recedes, we are going to open our classroom again to shoppers wanting to have lunch in there or community groups needing a meeting space. Feel free to give us a call if you would like to schedule a time for your group to use the room. We are also working on increasing our lunch options again, our new Deli Manager is ready to delight you with her creations.

We also welcomed a new Bulk Buyer to our team and are ready to promote our bulk department as a way to shop and live more

sustainably. Bring your own containers and fill them with beans, flours, snacks, or spices which can save you money and reduce your carbon footprint. Check out grocery.coop for a lot of easy recipes using products you can find in the bulk department. Cooking from scratch is generally the best way to live healthier, stick to your grocery budget, and give your taste buds a new experience!

On a more personal note, I wish to announce that after more than 8 years as General Manager of our Co-op, I am ready to hand over the reins and start a new chapter for myself! It has been a privilege working alongside so many talented and dedicated people on staff and on our Board of Directors. We accomplished a lot together, and I can't wait to see what is next for our awesome cooperative! 🌱

With Gratitude,
— Anja

Our GM's Accomplishments Have Forged a Stronger Co-op

Stephen Levchak, NHFC Board President & NHFC Owner

As many of you may already know, our Co-op will look a little different soon. On April 15, our general manager, Anja, will be stepping down from her current position to pursue other endeavors. While she will no longer be involved in the day to day operations of the store, her numerous accomplishments, as well as positive attitude and kindness, will be remembered for many years to come.

In 2007, Anja was hired as our produce manager where she held that position until being promoted to general manager in 2013. During her time as GM, Anja has managed all aspects of the business, successfully completed

*Thank
You!*

a major expansion with the construction of our new building at its current site, and fostered a deep commitment to cooperation and our local community. Membership has steadily grown, the financial condition of our store is sound, and the products

and services we provide are ever growing.

The Board of Directors would like to thank Anja for everything she has accomplished during her time at Natural Harvest and we wish her well in all that she does. We are that much stronger because of her hard work and dedication.

Thank you, Anja! We'll miss you! 🌱

— Stephen Levchak

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF OWNERS OF NATURAL HARVEST FOOD CO-OP, INC.

*Friday,
April 29, 2022*

The 2022 Annual Meeting of Owners is on! Join us Friday, April 29th at the Virginia Elks Lodge for a night of dinner, music and celebration of another successful year of cooperation.

Doors will open at 5:30 PM for a social hour and reception with live music from MorningBird. Dinner — a three-course meal of Lasagna (GF, Vegan, and Vegetarian options available), salad, and a dessert — catered by the Natural Harvest Deli, will be served at 6:00 PM, with the Business Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM.

Register today at
www.naturalharvest.coop/annual
or in-store at the
Customer Service Desk.



Board Report: A Pillar to Lean Upon

Kyle Lynch, Board Member & NHFC Owner

A week ago I heard through the grapevine the groundhog had seen his shadow and there will be only six weeks left of winter to remain. At the time of this writing (mid February) the frigid temperatures seem to be relentless as can be, dipping down colder than it has all winter. Which has embedded a skepticism of the groundhog in most of us, I would assume. Nonetheless, we all push forward in knowing the cold will break and warmer trends will ensue.

How this all pertains to the Board you may wonder? Well, we too have seen warmer trends towards normalcy in the wake of a turbulent and learned time. As of now the NHFC Board has decided to host the Annual Meeting for April 2022 in person. Which is very exciting for all of us on the Board who have been relegated to only virtual adaptations for what seems ages now. The current Board members all look forward to reconnecting with our community on a more personal level and the newer members like myself look forward to the experience the veteran Board members know from the past.

In the spirit of adaptation everyone has embraced, despite the unknown future that still looms, the Board has also resumed to all official Board meetings in-person. We have leaned on

technology to aid in keeping our Board connected and productive in a hybrid virtual/in-person format if needed. We now have the technology to ensure all Board members who are unable to attend in person, for reasons of life or uncontrollable circumstances, the capability to remote in and keep us moving forward to best serve our membership.

For the more usual Board activities, we have continued updating and monitoring policies, improve upon The Board Dropbox, digitizing the Board Books in a more living documented form to more quickly adapt to future changes, clarifying Board Commitment Policies, and planning for what we hope to be an exciting summer.

The theme that most stands out in my mind while serving on the Board has been one of adaptation, knowledge, patience, and empathy. I am very proud of how our Board has come together alongside our steadfast GM Anja, who works very hard for our Co-op. This brings great comfort to me knowing not only our Board, and our GM, but the whole community has come together not in perfection but in the spirit of compromise and endearment while the NHFC stands as a pillar for the foreseeable future. 🌱

It's Time to Choose Board Members!

Spring is here — time to elect your new Natural Harvest Food Co-op Board Members! This year, there are four open seats on the Board of Directors — to be filled by driven Owners like you.

What do Board members do for the Co-op? A vital, efficient, and effective Board of Directors is necessary to provide guidance and leadership to keep your Co-op healthy, active, productive, and responsive to Owners' needs. The Board employs the principles of policy governance to focus on big-picture issues to evaluate and help plan for the future of your Co-op without managing day-to-day operations.

Use the ballot on page 3 to select your choices for open Board Member positions. Ballots must reach the Co-op by Thursday, April 28th. If you miss this deadline, no worries! You will be allowed to submit your ballot while attending the Annual Meeting on Friday, April 29th. One vote per Owner number, please. We'll have a ballot box at the front of the store, or you can choose to mail your ballot. New Board Members will be announced at the Annual meeting.

We asked each candidate about their interest in becoming a Co-op Board member (see answers on pages 3). Information on each candidate, along with ballots, will also be available in-store and online at www.naturalharvest.coop. 🌱

1 Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of Natural Harvest Food Co-op?

2 Describe any volunteer or paid experiences relevant to your service as a Co-op board member. What skills or experience will you bring to the board?

3 What opportunities and challenges do you see in the future of Natural Harvest Food Co-op?

BALLOT

Board Election

**RETURN BALLOT BY
4/28/2022**

Use the ballot box at the front of
the store or mail your ballot to:
732 N. 4th St. • Virginia, MN 55792

There are four spots open on the Natural Harvest Board of Directors. Please choose up to four Board Member candidates here, and return your ballot to the store by Thursday, 4/28/2022.

_____ **Stephen Levchak (incumbent)**

_____ **Sulaiman Syed**

_____ **Jennifer Krenz (incumbent)**

_____ **Victoria Ranua (Incumbent)**

_____ **(Write-in Option)**

ONE VOTE ALLOWED PER OWNER NUMBER. YOUR VOTE REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL.

Name & Owner # _____

NHFC BOARD CANDIDATE BIOS

Stephen Levchak (Incumbent) (Chisholm, MN)



- 1** The opportunity to run for a second term on the Board of Directors of Natural Harvest is something I am very excited about. I value healthy living, a sustainable environment, and being part of a community. These are ideals found in our Co-op, and I would like to keep giving back to such a great organization. I am committed to continuing to work hard and put in the time and energy needed to govern effectively and represent every Owner.
- 2** Over the last three years, I have collaborated with my fellow Directors to develop long-term goals and set the strategic vision of our Co-op. Regular financial review and policy monitoring have been an integral part of this. I have also used a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving in order to visualize the big picture to see how different actions could potentially affect our overall results. In addition to my work on the Board, my prior experience includes operating the Alworth Planetarium in Duluth, where I was responsible for program development and educational outreach to local schools and the surrounding community. Currently, I work as a control room operator at Hibbing Taconite. Through process monitoring, I maintain productivity and meet targeted goals while working with colleagues from several departments. Going forward, I will use my skills to help ensure the success of our Co-op.
- 3** Natural Harvest is well-positioned to remain at the forefront of the healthy living and organic movement. People are becoming increasingly concerned about their health, where their food comes from, and who benefits from the purchasing of this food. As a result, we have a great opportunity to further increase ownership, provide the products and services our communities want, and be an educational resource for those who choose a healthy way of life. A challenge to this, however, is our ability to remain competitive in a market environment where more stores are increasing their variety of organic product offerings, often at a lower cost due to their larger

sales volumes. It is, therefore, important that we continue to use the skills, resources, and reputation of our Co-op to do what we do best: welcome everyone into our store with great service from our knowledgeable staff, offer a wide selection of products which includes many that are locally produced, and provide a sense of belonging through Ownership.

Sulaiman Syed Makinen, MN)



- 1** Upon moving into the area in April, 2021 and learning about the Natural Harvest Food Co-op, I quickly became a member because I believe in the values of a cooperative model, which is democratically organized and managed, focusing on uplifting the local food economy and providing high quality products to the community. I would like to serve as a Board Member for Natural Harvest because I want to offer my skills and experience to help build a greater sense of community, uphold the values of the Co-op, and continue to improve access to a robust and healthy local food economy.
- 2** I have over 12 years of experience working in Accounting and Finance in a wide array of industries, ranging from private multi-national corporations to local small businesses and non-profit organizations. I obtained my CPA license in 2011, a Masters in Economics in 2019, and currently work as a Financial Analyst. I have strong experience in financial reporting, long-range financial planning, and financial modeling. I believe the breadth and diversity of my experience would be an asset to the Board and the Natural Harvest Co-op.
- 3** As we are entering a period of radical flux and global/systemic challenges, some challenges specific to the food economy include swings in food commodity prices driven by adverse climate conditions and supply-chain bottlenecks. This is an opportunity for Natural Harvest to boost its local footprint by furthering its efforts in supporting and promoting local food providers.

Jennifer Krenz (Incumbent) (Gilbert, MN)



- 1** I would like to participate in maintaining a valuable community resource that contributes to a healthy lifestyle for myself, family, and community.
- 2** My diverse work experience has given me a strong background in grant management, non-profit administration, and financial management.
- 3** One of the biggest challenges will be to stay relevant in an increasingly competitive market. Big box retailers continue to increase offerings of organic food and wellness products making it difficult to attract future customers that are able to achieve one-stop shopping on a tight household budget.

Victoria Ranua (Incumbent) (Soudan, MN)



- 1** To give back to the community in a manner that is meaningful to me. Being a part of providing access to good wholesome food in a community I live in is very important to me. I want to be part of continuing the legacy Natural Harvest Food Co-op has started and see it expand its role in our community.
- 2** I have managed large budgets for tribal and municipal governments, as well as a small impactful non-profit, Minnesota Wildflowers Information. I have been instrumental in exploring the foundation of issues facing entities. I have served to build good paths forward.
- 3** Having served on the Board, I now see the challenges include meeting the needs/desires of all our members, which can often be conflicting. Furthermore, ensuring that the existing and well-trodden paths to Ownership are not barriers for some members of our community.

Change within reach

Round-up Report

Once again, your contributions have added up in a big way! We would like to extend a huge "THANK YOU" to everyone who continues to donate to the program. Your nickels and dimes are helping make our Iron Range Community stronger. In 2021, shoppers collectively donated over \$21,400 for local charities.



A LOOK BACK

In December, we collected \$2,097.03 for **The Angel Fund of Northeastern Minnesota**; in January, \$1,581.96 was donated to the **Howard Wagoner Trails Club**; and in February, \$1,445.81 was raised for **Range Mental Health Center's Project Warmth**.

LOOKING AHEAD

April contribution will support the **Contented Critters** non-profit and no-kill animal shelter by funding alterations, food, and care.



May donations will be collected for the **Iron Range Off-Road Cyclists**. Your donations will support trail renovations and fun outdoor activities, working to help more people to get out and enjoy the nature our Iron Range community has to offer.



June donations will go towards **Friends of the Greenhouse** at Olcott Park, funding ongoing expenses such as maintenance, plants, and soil, as well as supporting their Monarch Butterfly initiative to help stop the decreasing butterfly population.



Do you represent an Iron Range non-profit organization? We'd love to see your name on this list! Visit our website to fill out an application by August 31, 2022.



Sustainability at Your Co-op

Sully Kosmas, Marketing Manager & NHFC Owner

Throughout the last few years, sustainability efforts across the globe have taken a major hit. Companies and organizations around the world have cited the pandemic as the reason behind relaxation of their recycling, reuse, and environmentalism policies — Natural Harvest, unfortunately, was not above this.

As we enter a new era, however, your Co-op is proud to return to our roots, standing at the forefront of the environmentalism movement. We have been, and continue to make changes throughout the store to make a positive impact on our community and the world around us. As these changes are implemented, we look forward to your input and thoughts on how we can make NHFC even better for our shoppers, our Iron Range community, and the planet.

Learn more about our Co-op's efforts at NaturalHarvest.coop/sustainability.

Reduction of Single-Use Bags

Beginning Earth Day, April 22, 2022, we will resume our plans to implement a 10¢ fee for single-use paper bags at checkout. In doing so, we hope to reduce the amount of paper waste generated by a store of our size. All proceeds from this program will fund future sustainability efforts at your Co-op.

Details

- Fees waived for shoppers on SNAP/EBT
- Fees not charged on produce, bulk, or protector bags
- Bag fee 10¢ per bag
- Program begins Earth Day, April 22

Addition of Recyclable Containers

Ever notice that a lot of our Deli containers aren't recyclable in Virginia? We did, too. We've been working to source more #1 and #2 plastic containers for our hot bar & grab-and-go cooler, and have found a quality source!

Next time you shop Co-op for a quick bite, feel free to rinse out the container and recycle it once you're done.

More Selection in Our Bulk Section

Looking to reduce your plastic intake? Look no further than your Co-op's Bulk department! Instead of buying an entirely new bottle of dish detergent, all-purpose cleaner, or hand soap, refill the bottle you already have! Simply mark down the weight of your empty bottle, fill it up, and feel good!

Discount for Reusable Bulk Containers

Ditch the single-use habit by refilling what you already have! When you bring in and fill your own sanitized container in the Bulk department, we'll take 10¢ off your purchase. Save green by going green!

Don't have your own container? No worries! Take one of our labeled reusable containers, pay a small deposit, (put towards our sustainability efforts) and get your money back when you return the container!

More Sustainable Items

Want more sustainable items but don't know where to start? Your Co-op has you covered! From beeswax food covers to bamboo utensils, we have everything you need to go green. Ask one of our friendly staff members for a recommendation!

Return of Reusable Dishware

They're back! Rather than tossing yet another compostable plastic spoon, use our reusable utensils & dishes available at your Co-op's Deli! Sitting down for a bit? Opt for a ceramic coffee mug rather than a single-use paper cup. There are so many ways to support the environment at your Co-op! 🌱

Welcome to our newest Natural Harvest Owners!

Susan Beers (Ely, MN)
Jonas & Peggy Naylor (Ely, MN)
Jill Bedard (Virginia, MN)
Natalya Walker (Aurora, MN)
Kelly Bonner (Cook, MN)
Alyssa Scherer (Bigfork, MN)
Teresa Halldorson (Anoka, MN)
Elexa Holcomb (Virginia, MN)
Denice Danielson (Ely, MN)
Jan Pepelnjak (Virginia, MN)
Kathy & Jan Horak (Tofte, MN)
Samantha Silcox (Virginia, MN)
Jayme Rahier (Effie, MN)
Sarah McHale (Hibbing, MN)
Sherri Skinner (Mountain Iron, MN)
Elizabeth Biondich (Eveleth, MN)
Audrey Cyr (Duluth, MN)
Laura Stella (Tower, MN)
Kori Clark (Angora, MN)
Teresa Hirsch (Makinen, MN)
Vicki & Karen Podominick (Ely, MN)
Max & Kaycee Gantt (Ely, MN)
Heather Cavalier (Ely, MN)
April & Travis Mattson (Aurora, MN)
Christine Kloppenberg (Ely, MN)
Misty Eliason (Bovey, MN)
Kristi Ongalo (Virginia, MN)
Jeanne Ostlie (Eveleth, MN)
Stephanie Hurley (Eveleth, MN)
Ashley Plath (Hibbing, MN)
Paul & Donna Bak (Orr, MN)
Eske Ellis (Ely, MN)
Beth Getman (Aurora, MN)
Dennis French (Eveleth, MN)
Mary Harju (Virginia, MN)
Jessie Brooks (Ely, MN)
Todd & Karen Strom (International Falls, MN)
Toni Mitchell (Virginia, MN)

Now Hiring!

Are you looking to join a great team?

We are hiring friendly foodies to work in our deli, grocery, and front end departments!

\$13 Minimum Starting Wage
Plus staff discount and more...

Fill out an application today!



Visit our website or ask to speak with a hiring manager for more details





Farewell, Anja Parenteau!

For the past eight and a half years, you've fought for and kept this store afloat throughout an expansion, pandemic, and much more. We wouldn't be where we are today without you, (literally!) and are thankful for everything you've done.

From all of us at Natural Harvest, auf Wiedersehen! 🌱



Go Green With E-receipts

Every little bit helps! Join 425+ of your fellow Owners in opting out of paper receipts by sending us an email request (info@naturalharvest.coop) or by asking a cashier upon your next visit. To process the update to receive emailed receipts, we will need a current email address listed under your Owner account. Thank you for adopting green practices with your Co-op! 🌱

Change within reach



Do You Represent A Non-Profit?

Applications for the 2023 round of Change Within Reach recipients are now open! Each month, a different non-profit is selected to receive the rounded-up change from shopper's orders. To apply, visit our website at naturalharvest.coop/cwr

Change Within Reach Round-Up Program Eligibility:

- Your group must be a 501(c)3, 501(c)4 or other designated non-profit organization
- Your organization must serve the local Mesabi Iron Range community directly
- Your organization must be religiously and politically neutral
- Your organization must be non-discriminatory on the basis of any legally recognized category including but not limited to race, creed, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status or physical disability

Applications are due by August 31, 2022 and can be turned in via email, in-store, or mailed to Natural Harvest Food Co-op, ATTN: Marketing, 732 4th St. N. Virginia, MN 55792. 🌱

Where Would YOU Like To Work?

How about your Co-op? Do you love food and supporting your community? Are you interested in the cooperative way of business? Want to be part of a team where you feel supported? We'd love for you to bring your talents to our team — we are now hiring!

- **Marketing & Owner Services Manager** — Part Time with potential for Full Time
- **Assistant Front End Manager** — Full Time
- **Manager On Duty** — Part Time

Full Time Benefits: 15% Employee Discount, Paid Time Off, Medical & Dental, Simple IRA
Part time Benefits: 15% Employee Discount, Paid Time Off

Fill out an application today! Visit naturalharvest.coop or ask to speak with a hiring manager at the Co-op for more details!



100% Recycled Fiber

"The Harvest Beet" is a quarterly publication of Natural Harvest Food Co-op. Editor: Sully Kosmas

~ ON SILVER LAKE ~
OPEN MONDAY – FRIDAY:
8 AM - 7 PM
WEEKENDS: 9 AM - 6 PM

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