

COMMENTS OF RUSTY CIVILS TO THE FBFC BOARD FEB. 18 2016

I want to comment further on the proposal to set aside 1% of gross sales to be given to nonprofit groups.

Why do I care about this so much about this? Because the world is going to hell in a hand basket and I want the Co-op to be, in this situation, something more than a really nice natural foods store and an effective jobs program. If that's all it is then I may as well shop at Earth Fare or Amazing Hopey. I expect more of the Co-op than I do of Earth Fare or Sam's Club. I expect it to be a cooperative, to be a responsible citizen of the earth, to be a real alternative to the corporate economy. Mainly I expect it to be a cooperative, with democratic governance and a membership that cares about it. I expect it to have members who have some emotional investment in it, who feel that they have something at stake. The 1% proposal would take us in the direction of accomplishing that.

We live in a country where elections are routinely stolen, where the natural world is being systematically destroyed, where the corporate news media ignores the real issues, where we are diverted from even finding out about what's going on in the world. The public, and especially co-op members, hunger for something more than consumerism and personal gratification. This is evident in the response to Bernie Sanders. In a counterfeit culture he is offering something real, he is talking about real issues and telling the truth.

Our members would see something real, something to be excited about in the 1% program. All our customers would. And it would give our customers another reason to join the Co-op.

Also, today, there is a lack of democracy skills. The Co-op could be an arena for practicing democratic governance if its members had a reason to do so, and were allowed to do so. The 1% program would give them one reason to participate in the governance of the Co-op.

I've been advocating this idea for years to successive Coop boards, and it seems always that it's something we can't get to right now, or maybe it's just too dangerous to seriously consider a new idea, or maybe it's just too dangerous to allow the members of the Co-op to actually make a decision. I don't know if any board has ever actually taken up the proposal for consideration. I have submitted many comments to the Board and I always include my phone number and invite anyone to call if they have any questions or would like to discuss the issues, and only one board member has ever called. Apparently FBFC Boards are simply not interested in anything that is outside the normal range of conventional board business, or busywork, such as rewriting the bylaws, which is something boards do to make themselves feel like they're accomplishing something when they don't know what else to do. We did it when I was on the board almost 20 years ago. Let me admonish you to not waste any of your precious time rewriting the bylaws, or the board policy manual, etc.

I implore you to seriously consider this 1% proposal, or if you are not inclined to do so, will someone please let me know so that I can consider starting an owner petition to put this question on the ballot. If anyone wants to discuss any of this, please call me at 242-6073. Thanks, Rusty