



Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives

Supporting the Success of Worker Co-operation in the Valley & Beyond

Report from the Executive Director

for VAWC Member Meeting, January 24, 2018

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Worker Co-op Voices, Leadership increasing in Regional and International Dialog

VAWC continues to elevate the profile and impact of worker co-operatives. In this report we'll see how we did so by supporting a true life-long co-operative champion.

Next we celebrate the new Director General of the world wide umbrella organization, the International Co-operative Alliance, who brings decades of worker co-operative expertise.

Lastly we will update you on the progress of there being three interns in the VAWC system this spring. They will advance our research agenda as well as sales for some individual co-operatives.



J. Kevin Crocker, Co-op Troubador, Passes Leaving Legacy

We mourn the passing of a steward of co-operatives and education who was kind, friendly, insightful and selflessly hardworking. Kevin Crocker dedicated much of his life to co-operation. He was part of a unique group of faculty and staff at UMass, Amherst, Department of Economics who supported the partnership of co-ops and higher education. Kevin was also a member at Pelham Auto, a worker co-op.

We are beyond grateful for you and your work, Kevin. Your goals and your high caliber of commitment will be honored and carried on through member run venues like ours.

As we mentioned in our last report, Kevin was instrumental in forging a mutually beneficial relationship

between co-operatives and the academy. Between 100-200 students take classes about co-operatives, which are offered every semester. To our knowledge this is the only program of its kind in the U.S.

His obituary asked for people to make a contribution to the Scholarship in his name. Visit www.newenglandfarmersunion.org, click on the "Donate" button, and indicate that your donation to the NEFU Education Foundation is for the "J. Kevin Crocker."

To make a contribution by mail, please make your check out to "NEFU Education Foundation" with "J. Kevin Crocker Fund" in the memo line and send it to:

NEFU Education Foundation
176 Avenue A, Suite 2, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Former Secretary General of CICOPA becoming Director General of the International Co-operative Alliance



International Co-operative Alliance
Co-operative enterprises build a better world

"VAWC is on the right track. You need to build power and impact the national movement."

- Bruno Roelants, General Secretary, International Co-op Alliance 2016, interviewed by VAWC



Bruno Roelants is the new Director General of the International Co-operative Alliance (ica.coop).

Bruno Roelants brings more than 30 years' experience within the co-operative movement. Prior to his election as the Alliance's next Director-General, he served as Secretary General of CICOPA, the sectoral Organisation of the International Co-operative Alliance for industry and services.

Were VAWC members to join an international federation, we would fall under CICOPA's umbrella. Their guidelines are the gold standard for ensuring the identity and structure of worker co-operatives around the world.

"VAWC is on the right track. You need to build power and impact the national movement." said Roelants. "Leadership from co-operatives themselves is crucial for the movement to grow", he continued, and have direction and voice from worker co-op members.

Congratulations, Bruno!

VAWC and Co-op 108 host Three Interns from UMass Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative

Join me in welcoming Melissa Eng, Jack Fischer and Michael Ruther, our intern cohort for Spring 2018. They will be performing research and "on-the-floor" labor for a total of 18 full time equivalent weeks.

Melissa will be working with Co-op 108 supporting market research as well as sales. Jack will be working with VAWC in a partner project with the Neighboring Food Co-op Association on researching the impact of worker and food co-operatives in New England. Michael will work with VAWC to support our conversion research and materials.

All three interns will present final reports near the end of the academic semester. All VAWC Member Co-ops are encourage to attend.

Upcoming Events



Neighboring Food Co-op Association - Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 17, Greenfield Community College

35 food co-ops and start-ups will gather for their annual meeting. Doug O'Brien, new president of NCBA is the keynote speaker.

What is CICOPA?

The International organization of industrial and service co-operatives, or CICOPA, has been a sectoral



organization of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) since 1947. Its full members are representative organisations of co-operatives from different sectors: graphic design, construction, social services, renewable energy production, industrial production, education, transport, health, intellectual services, artisanal activities, etc.

Many of those co-operatives are worker co-operatives, namely co-operatives where the members are the staff of the enterprise, i.e., worker-members, being the owners of the company. CICOPA also represents social co-operatives which are specialised in the provision of services of general interest or in the reintegration, through work, of disadvantaged or marginalised workers and co-operatives of self-employed producers.

CICOPA currently has a total of **48 members in 32 countries** which in turn affiliate **65,000 enterprises employing 4 million persons**.

For more, visit www.cicopa.coop.

First time reading a VAWC Report?

VAWC is itself an expression of co-operative principles — a co-op of worker co-ops that have come together as a means of strengthening the efforts of our individual co-ops to develop their businesses, serve their members, and contribute to the wider co-operative economy. Our core goal is to provide ourselves with the resources and support we need to advance our co-operatives, empower our members, and benefit more people in our communities. VAWC Representatives attend meetings, direct Staff and resources while defining the goals of our organization. Interested in being a Representative or on the Board? Contact adam@valleyworker.coop. Here's some of our main activities:

- Ad/PR campaign through area food co-op newsletters, local and movement media;
- Maintain your **VAWC Owners' Manual** aimed at educating, training, and empowering current and especially new members;
- Measures of economic and environmental impact and a shared identity among VAWC members; and
- Developing our co-operative economy especially with inter-VAWC purchasing and cross sector collaboration.
- Education of many sorts including directing the UMass, Amherst Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative (on Facebook) and the undergrad Certificate program we co-created.
- Operating the **VAWC Interco-operative Development Fund** made from 5% of VAWC Member surplus, owned and controlled by VAWC Members.

Worker co-operatives and our movement are made stronger through shared identity, statutes and structural provisions that preserve our individual autonomy while clearly identifying our organizations as co-operatives united in the common cause of developing a co-operative economy.

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Information and Training
- Co-operation among Co-operatives
- Concern for Community

The worker co-operative identity is further detailed by the World Declaration on Co-operative Worker Ownership established by CICOPA (The International Organisation of Industrial, Artisan and Service Producers' Co-operatives) in 2004.

The Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives (VAWC) is rooted in the ideals of co-operation, mutuality and solidarity. VAWC is itself an expression of co-operative principles — a “co-op of co-ops” that have come together as a means of strengthening the efforts of our individual co-ops to develop their businesses, serve their members, and contribute to the wider co-operative economy. Our core goal is to provide ourselves with the resources and support we need to advance our co-operatives, empower our members, and benefit more people in our communities.

VAWC Member Co-ops

Broadfork Permaculture Co-op
Collective Copies
Co-op 108
Green Mountain Spinnery Co-op
Oxbow Design Build Co-op
Pedal People Co-operative
Pioneer Valley Photovoltaics

VAWC Board of Directors

Philippe Rigollaud
Pioneer Valley Photovoltaics
Faith Seddon
Collective Copies
Lauren Yohe Von Krusenstiern
Green Mountain Spinnery
Suzette Snow-Cobb
Franklin Community Co-op
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www.valleyworker.coop

Working
for a Co-operative Economy