

BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES

2016 WEAVERS WAY CO-OP ELECTION

Each candidate was asked to respond to these questions:	1. Why are cooperatives in general and Weavers Way in particular important to you?	2. How will your experience, skills or unique perspectives strengthen the Co-op Board?	3. What do you perceive to be the long- and short-term challenges facing Weavers Way and how would you address them?	4. What volunteer experiences have you had with other cooperatives or organizations?	5. How can Board members better represent the opinions of the membership?
Raimon L. Artis 	Co-ops allow members to engage in economic and social development to the fullest.	My being a resourceful, passionate and youthful spirit that stays current with growing trends.	I think marketing would be a definite challenge, and my response would be, "We must become more creative."	I volunteered at the Roth Farm in North Wales. The Roth Farm is affiliated with Delaware Valley University, which I am currently attending.	I would have to learn more about the membership and those on the Board to better answer that question.
David Fellner 	Cooperatives are important in general because they are a way of expressing that our well-being is a shared one. The Co-op does that better than any other institution in Mt. Airy, both as a community-owned store and as a generator of other community efforts that would not exist otherwise.	I spent 40 years working in businesses that were strongly identified with Northwest Philadelphia, first as a car dealer and then as a real-estate investor who took a lead in revitalizing the 7100 block of Germantown Avenue. In all of that time, I was keenly aware of how businesses embedded in the community strengthened the community.	Find niches in the marketplace that others might not be able to occupy and allow the Co-op to differentiate itself. In particular, the Co-op needs to maintain a brand identity that is consistent with the Co-op being embedded in the community and gives the Co-op a true competitive advantage in the marketplace.	Forty years of being involved in community activities such as serving on the board of West Mt. Airy Neighbors, creating the Sedgwick Cultural Center, and the initial formation of the Schools Committee.	See that the staff and members share perceptions of what is good and what is bad about the Co-op. If perceptions aren't shared, it is the Board's responsibility to facilitate dialogue with the goal of achieving shared perceptions. Focus groups, the Shuttle and community bulletin boards are tools the Board can use.
Chris Hill Incumbent 	Co-ops allow people to pool resources to create something of value for their community — something they own and control. Weavers Way, in particular, is the heart of my community. Through all its initiatives — stores, farms, nonprofits, partnerships — it makes Northwest Philadelphia a special place to live.	I've served on the Weavers Way Board for over 8 years, currently as president. I also serve as board treasurer for the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (devoted to strengthening the cooperative economy in our region). I know and care deeply about our local food system; have served on local urban farm boards and organized an urban farm bike ride for the past 10 years. I have deep experience of co-ops, of boards and how they function best, and of the regional food system.	Weavers Way and all food co-ops exist in a highly competitive marketplace. We need to grow to ensure greater efficiencies of scale, to provide better products and services and to attract a growing membership who understands the value of local, owner-controlled businesses. Obvious first challenge: To compete successfully with Fresh Market in Chestnut Hill (which the Weavers Way staff is well-prepared to do).	[See No. 2]	The Board must continue to work with staff to create opportunities for conversation with members, as we did with the series of meetings in the past two years about pricing (which resulted in at least three new initiatives to help lower costs) and expansion (which gave us member perspectives on growth and a third store).
Joan Patton 	Cooperatives offer an alternative economic model that not only serves their members, but also contributes to the surrounding community while providing healthy foods. Weavers Way has demonstrated this with its Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill stores. Its commitment to Food For All, and its outreach, transparent governance and ongoing communications with members are important to me.	My experience with strategic planning for public institutions, working collaboratively with members of my community, and being part of a grassroots effort to create a food co-op in my suburban town would strengthen the Co-op Board.	Competition will be an ongoing challenge. I see expansion as a way to address that issue. It would increase membership and provide economies of scale. It could also address the issue of additional space for the prepared-foods department.	I have served in leadership positions in K-12 home-and-school associations, on the Board of Directors of the Wissahickon School District and the Board of Trustees of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library. I was one of six people who planned the community meeting to see about creating a food co-op in our town. I then signed up to be on the Steering Committee of the Ambler Food Co-op and presently serve on the Board of Directors as Secretary/Treasurer.	One possibility would be an ongoing series of educational programs based on input from the members on what matters to them.
Laura Morris Siena Incumbent 	I love Weavers Way — my second home. Our nonprofit, Weavers Way Community Programs, provides an additional dividend of engagement with our neighbors. The cooperative economic model is an important counterbalance to Wall Street.	Experience on Weavers Way Board: Chaired the General Manager Search Committee, Leadership Committee and ad hoc Board committees; three years' service as Board secretary. Deep involvement in and leadership of Northwest Philadelphia community organizations over 25+ years, as well as regional sustainable agriculture.	Competition in the natural-foods arena has increased dramatically in the last several years, driven by private equity and traditional supermarkets' entrance into the organic/health-food sector. Nationally, a third of food co-ops are doing well, a third are treading water and a third are losing money and might close. Weavers Way is in the first group and needs to stay there by continuing to attract new member-owners, adding a third store and expanding other lines of business.	I serve on the Development Committee of the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance and have helped Kensington Community Food Co-op with its member loan campaign. I also serve on WWCP's Board.	It's essential that member-owners have an active voice in the future of their Co-op, and our open forums, general membership meetings and special meetings are good avenues for that. At the same time, I believe it's vital that Board members provide leadership for the Co-op and apply a perspective — gained from national trends and other co-ops' best practices — to the decisions we make.
John Wicks 	Cooperatives like Weavers Way provide an opportunity for communities to take control of their food-supply chain, choosing suppliers that are committed to a healthy, hopefully delicious, product. I am drawn to Weavers Way for the food being offered and the diverse, well-informed and engaged community of people who drive and support it.	I have 10 years' experience running a food-service company. I regularly evaluated menu items and ingredients as they related to our sales and profitability. I have been involved in real estate for many years, currently holding a PA real-estate license, and hope to aid the Board in meeting ongoing real-estate needs.	Clearly, competition is now an issue for Weavers Way. Pricing and quality of items in competing stores will need to be evaluated and adjustments made as necessary. Expansion, especially a commissary kitchen, will help us operate more efficiently and competitively. I favor adding an additional location as well, as long as the commissary kitchen is designed to accommodate a three-location load. At some point, though, questions need to be asked: How big is big enough? When does local become not so local?	I am currently on the development committee at the Waldorf School of Philadelphia, where I help organize fundraising events and contact potential benefactors.	I've always felt the communication from the Weavers Way Board/staff to members was excellent, both in paper and digital form. Why not do occasional email surveys of members on both general and specific topics?



2016 OFFICIAL BALLOT

Election for Weavers Way Co-op Board of Directors

Voting ends Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 6:15 p.m. at the General Membership Meeting
 Schuylkill Center
 8480 Hagy's Mill Road, Philadelphia, PA

To vote online: See the instructions on our website, www.weaverswaycoop.org, and follow the directions on your election reminder email. Note that the order of the candidates in the online ballot will be randomized when you open the ballot.

To vote by mail: Official ballots will be accepted by mail if received by May 14, 2016, at the Leadership Committee mailbox. Mail to: Leadership Committee, Weavers Way Co-op, 559 Carpenter Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

To vote in stores: Place official ballots in the ballot box at the Mt. Airy store, 559 Carpenter Lane, or the Chestnut Hill store, 8424 Germantown Ave., by noon May 15, 2016.

To vote at the General Membership Meeting: Place official ballots in the box provided at the meeting no later than 6:15 p.m., May 15, 2016.

Please note: Only one vote per member household. Once a vote has been cast, it cannot be changed.

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Vote for no more than three (3). The top three vote-getters will serve 3-year terms. In the event of a tie, we will hold a runoff at the General Membership Meeting.

- Raimon L. Artis
- David Fellner
- Chris Hill (incumbent)
- Joan Patton
- Laura Morris Siena (incumbent)
- John Wicks

PROPOSED WEAVERS WAY BYLAWS AMENDMENT

- YES.** I accept the amendment to Section 7.6: "Patronage dividends shall be based on the Co-op's taxable net income attributable to member sales."
- NO.** Keep the Bylaws as they are: "Patronage dividends shall be based on the Co-op's pretax net income attributable to member sales."

Fold in half for a confidential vote. Every effort will be made to maintain the privacy of each member's ballot. This information is mandatory for your vote to be counted. One vote per member household and the first vote registered will be the vote that counts. Any paper ballots received after an online ballot is cast (by the same household) will not be input and will not count.

Date _____ Member # _____

Print Name _____

Signature _____

