



New Deal Cafe Cooperative General Manager's Report August 2013

Overall Summary

This month we were busy with grease recovery system repairs, several management agreement discussions, the pursuit of grand marketing opportunities and starting down the path to finally hiring more staff.

Financial Update

The café had a very successful second quarter. I've attached the 2013 2nd Quarter Financial Report, showing this quarter's sales (April - June) ahead of last quarter's (Jan - March) by approximately 2%. Compared to the 2nd quarter of 2012, sales were up 10%. Further detail can be found in the accompanying report.

Greenbelt City Kitchen

The café's debt to the city is paid in full! I had requested to have the late fees that were charged to us in 2006 and 2007 removed, but Community Center Supervisor Di Quynn-Reno declined that request, so the final payment was \$960. What an absolute relief to be finished with this 15-yr-old, seemingly never-ending debt.

Projects and Special Events

Teaching the Nature of Science Book Talk

Author Douglas Allchin gave a book talk at the café on a Sunday afternoon – it was low-key, as the participants sat around the long table asking questions and discussing the topic, but those attending seemed entirely enthusiastic.

Blues Festival 2013

FONDCA President Barbara Simon and I had an exploratory meeting with Kap Kapastin of Beltway Plaza Mall to discuss possible marketing opportunities. I later presented him with a proposal, which we are still negotiating. Blues Festival advertising is underway.

Greenbelt News Review Fundraiser

The fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 29 from 2-5. Planning is set to begin in earnest this week, so if you have any ideas, please share them!

Café Painting

Julia and I have been talking about painting the café for quite some time. I've discussed it with Karim, and he and Maria are totally agreeable. After postponing from a planned summer date, we've scheduled Sunday evening, Sept. 8 and Monday, Sept. 9 (in between art installations) for painting the front room and hopefully the hallway. Julia, Kristen, Barbara Simon and I went over paint samples some months ago and the artists came to an agreement on the color. The café will be closed on Monday, Sept. 9.

Entertainment

I took a preliminary look at 2 pianos: the woman changed her mind about selling the first one, and John plans to look at the second one. He also hopes to see 2 other pianos this week that may work for us.

Noah Gitlis came in as a new sound guy for a few weeks before he goes back to college – he came just in time to help us out when we really needed it! Noah is a music major who was already quite experienced with sound boards, so he did a great job.

Bar Operations

There has been much discussion about the continued use of volunteers as bartenders. GHI's employment lawyer was nice enough to teleconference with us for an hour, and we were able to ask many questions. I had initially referred the matter of hiring bartenders to the board, as the 2013 budget didn't set aside money for new positions. The board agreed to the additional hiring and advertising has begun.

A flyer has been posted in the café for the past week and a half and an ad was placed in the Greenbelt News Review, as is customary. Amethyst and I have tentatively agreed to a pay rate. So far, 4 applications have been received. Once the second week's News Review ad has run, Amethyst and I will review the applications and decide who to interview, before making the final hiring decisions.

In the midst of discussing pay rates for the new bartenders, the subject of beer prices came up and Amethyst indicated that she is now agreeable to raising prices. It seems prudent at this time to raise the prices, as I proposed a year or so ago, as our financial picture will change again with the new management agreement and the hiring of additional staff.

FONDCA

FONDCA held their summer meeting and we discussed lots of new ideas. The Artists' Reception was held on Sunday, August 11 for Nora Simon's screen prints in the back room, Zsundayka Nzinga's paintings in the front room and Susan DePlatchett's altered cigar boxes in the display case. It was a nice evening which drew a few new folks to the café, and we were all treated to one of Maria's cakes as well!

The Poetry Moment box holds a new poem for August which will stay up for 2 months: "Digging" by Irish poet Seamus Heaney.

Greenbelt Cooperative Alliance

The Greenbelt Cooperative Alliance got together to play "Co-opoly" to see if the plan to make a game of it in the Café in October was feasible. We had a good time playing the game, though it was a bit tricky to understand at first, and so have confirmed Saturday, October 9th for a public game-playing session at the New Deal.

Restaurant Contract and Facilities

Met with Karim many times regarding repairs to the facility and operations. The leak in the men's bathroom was temporarily, and then more permanently fixed by running a pipe from the condensate drain pan down to the mop room sink. Also, new fans were installed in the men's and women's restrooms.

After receiving a couple of estimates for replacing the grease removal system we decided to try to repair the current one. Craig Tooley took the lead on this - ordering the parts, repairing pieces and making it all work after Frank's electrician did the wiring. The repaired system passed inspection from WSSC, with additional paperwork to be posted alongside our licenses. Thanks to Frank, his electrician and Craig for all of their hard work completing this sticky project.

I ordered a Koala Kare changing table for the women's bathroom, so now the babies have a fun, new place to be changed!

I organized and transferred a load of last year's documents to our storage location.

GM Action Items and other matters

Special Entertainment Permit

The application for exemption from Prince George's County's Special Entertainment Permit is still in process. The café did receive a bulk mail memorandum warning intense enforcement of liquor laws is underway, including ensuring compliance with exemptions to the Special Entertainment Permit. It stated that the average fine in the last 6 months has been in excess of \$2000.

Recommendations on Management Agreement

The board held a special information session on the management agreement, which was well-attended by the members. I've prepared financial information for the board's use in deliberation. We continue to refine the contract, which will probably be presented to KMK within a week or two.

Meetings

Board Meetings = 2

Management Agreement Meetings = 2

Special Information Session = 1

FONDCA Meeting = 1

Coop Alliance Meeting = 1

Bar Manager Meetings = 2

Committee Meetings = 3

Upcoming Activities

The next special event will be the Labor Day Festival on August 30, followed by the Blues Festival on September 14.

Terri Rutledge

NDC Cooperative General Manager

August 23, 2013