



COLLABORATIONS

December 2014

Issue: 4



**Greetings,**

**Celebrating the Night They Lit the Lamps**

December 21, 2014 marks the 170th anniversary of the night the Rochdale Pioneers opened their store at 31 Toad Lane, "the night they lit the lamps". My friend David Thompson has written extensively about the conditions in 1840s England that caused a small group of families to create their cooperative grocery. I encourage you to read one particularly fine (and short) piece [here](#).

Two years ago I had the opportunity to journey to 31 Toad Lane to visit the original store, today an international museum for cooperation. It was an awesome experience to stand on the very flagstones where the Pioneers conducted commerce, and to compare "then and now" 31 Toad Lane was only the first store; in a few short years they build a second much larger store just up the street. A key feature was the auditorium on the 3rd floor where thousands of co-op members came to learn about cooperatives, and to educate themselves about that policies and politics of the time affecting the lives of working persons in the Industrial Revolution. I wonder: where are those comparable gatherings of cooperators today?

Last spring, I was asked to give a short presentation about what it might mean if modern cooperators gained deeper understanding of the role of "participation" in their co-ops. My conclusion? Deeper understanding and practice of cooperation and cooperative principles holds the potential to not only reinvigorate our cooperatives, but to revitalize our practice of American democracy itself. You can watch the video [here](#).

We live in a time of great cynicism. Cooperation is an antidote. Time for a new dose of participation.

Kevin Edberg  
Executive Director

**Inspirational Gifts: Thank you!**

Our ability to do our work this year relies on receiving \$20,000 in unrestricted charitable contributions by August 31; we have received cash and pledges to date of over **\$10,500**. Thank you! If you would like to consider an end-of-year gift, you may donate [here](#).

We were also inspired this past month by a **\$50,000** restricted program gift from an anonymous donor, to support our work in nurturing young cooperative leaders! We are grateful that there are people who share a vision for cooperatives, and who will invest in us to advance that vision. Many, many, many thanks!

**Highlights of our Annual Meeting**

CDS held its Annual Meeting in La Crosse WI on November 19th. Key actions included election of new board members, approving our FY15 budget, and receiving a clean (unqualified) opinion from our auditors.

We said goodbye to two longstanding board members, Dennis Johnson and Dennis Hunwardsen. Both will be missed. Current board members David Swanson (Dorsey-Whitney law firm), Michelle Schry (People's Food Co-op) were re-elected. New members Ted Kjos (TriCountry Rural Electric) and Chris Kopka (BrightPeak Financial) were elected to three year terms, and Gail Graham (Mississippi Market) was elected to fill the remainder of a two year term.

Our audited financials and IRS 990s will be posted to our website shortly.



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