

Letter to Editor, *Durango Herald*, 350 Words

Democratic institutions cannot survive without participation of their members; nor without access to open communication with members. It's the right of Durango Natural Foods Co-op members—indeed our obligation—to take responsibility for our co-op in a democratic way to protect it from impacts by Board decisions not in the members' interests.

“Whistleblowing” is the courage to walk the path of truth and integrity. The DNF Board fired our well-liked and competent Co-General Manager Kimberley Wiggins Thursday, August 28, for doing just that. At the request of myself and Pat Blair, long-time DNF members initiating this effort, Kim sent out an email-blast to all members, with our cover-letter and links to our member-initiated petition to remove the Board, and a supporting analysis that debunks the Board's claims. Kim was fired 24 hours after it went out. No reason was given to Kim or the staff.

Misrepresentations by the Board is the core ethical justification for our petition. The Board's claim that “merging” with La Montañita Co-op is an “attractive opportunity” holding “many advantages” for DNF members was a ruse, not based on fact or analysis. See related *Herald* articles August 13th, 19th and 28th.

Our report is at: <http://AlpineAnalytics.com/reports/dnf/DNF-PETITION-to-remove-Board-SUPPORTING-ANALYSIS-8-27-2014.pdf>. A two-page document is also available as: “.../Open-Communication-to-DNF-members-8-31-2014-Root-Routledge.pdf”.

In the interest of stability, the petition contains a vote-option for an interim Board consisting of Pat and me until elections can be set up to bring other Board members on. Neither of us are attached to being on the Board for any other reason than to protect DNF and our members' interests in the interim. Reinstating Kim would be our first decision; Kim has made a courageous ethical decision and has done nothing wrong. We call on co-op membership to stand in solidarity at this crucial time in DNF's 40-year history by signing the petition. Our intent is nothing less than a management “reset” at DNF.

If enough member signatures on this petition, which is what it will take, bring things forward where some collaborative engagement can ensue with integrity, nothing would please us more. The petition is available through September 7th.

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