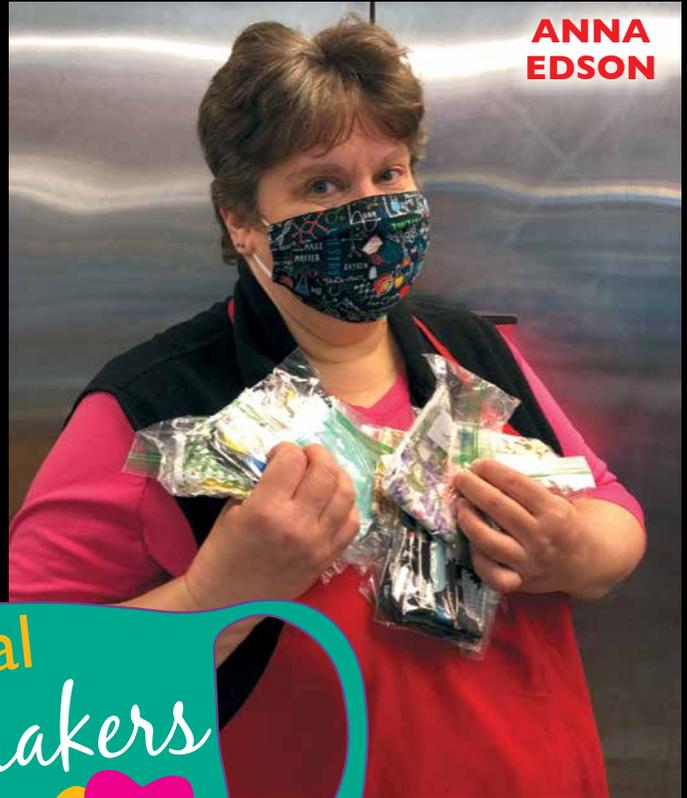


JULIA
DUKE



ANNA
EDSON



Local
Maskmakers

LINDA
PAGE



LESLIE
REED



Producers ^{OF} THE *Month*

DECEMBER 2020



BRATTLEBORO FOOD CO-OP

Producer OF THE Month

by Jon Megas-Russell

Masks. They are the new fad, the new look of 2020, and have brought many creative people to the forefront of society, sewing together a staple of our daily fashion. With that in mind, Cindy in our Housewares department has selected four seamstresses who are now producing and selling masks here at the Co-op. The material patterns consist of everything from animals to food to flashy colors, with the common idea to protect us from the current pandemic. I was inspired by Cindy's suggestion to feature four different folks who sew masks to sell at the Co-op as our Producers of the Month. Thus, I felt it best to let them share a bit about themselves from their perspective in a question-and-answer style format, unedited and directly to you our loyal Co-op customers. A big thanks to them for their countless hours of sewing to help keep our community safe. So, without further ado, Anna, Leslie, Linda, and Julia will share a bit about themselves and why they started creating masks.

JULIA DUKE

What was your inspiration for making masks?

I work in healthcare, I love to sew, and I have a big stash of fabric!

Tell us a little about yourself and your background!

I've been sewing on a machine since I was 8 years old. My grandmother made all of her clothes, my mother and her twin sister sewed their clothes, my grandfather used to design corsets and operate an

industrial sewing machine, and my brother also sews. It's been a valuable skill and a great hobby. I come from a family that makes things, and it is a big part of my identity. A few years back I started a sewing company, 802 Textiles, to supplement my income.

I've lived in Brattleboro for almost 20 years now and love it here. It's been a great place to raise my daughter and my dearest friends are all here. I've been a school nurse at Green Street School for 15 years. My prior nursing experience includes visiting nursing, college health, and nursing homes and Hospice care. My best times are spent with my family—and my daughter has a new puppy who is ridiculously adorable. Outside of work my passions are gardening, sewing (of course!), knitting, nature, paddle-boarding and riding my motorcycle, and trying out new cooking recipes with my husband.

What is your day job?

I'm the school nurse at Green Street School, an elementary school in Brattleboro.

What has been the biggest challenge about the pandemic for you?

The biggest personal challenge has been the restrictions in being able to see family members in person. Two people in my family have died (not from COVID) since the pandemic began, and we have been unable to support each other and commemorate our loved ones in person. So being separated by distance and social distancing and masks and Zooms and no physical contact puts a damper on grieving and healing.

But I don't like to complain and am grateful for the connections that I do have with my family as well as the relative ease with which we continue to live here in Vermont.

As a school nurse, there have been many challenges in planning for a safe school environment. The hardest part about school is not being able to see all the students in person—yet. I'm hopeful that with the safety measures we have in place in our schools, that we can get students back to school more days per week and enrollment can gradually increase. The fact that we live in Vermont and have low disease prevalence is a big positive factor for schools.

What has been the biggest opportunity with the pandemic?

Slowing down, spending more time at home, and cherishing time with family and friends when we're able to get together.

What do you love about the food Co-op?

I love the Brattleboro Food Co-op for the good vibes, for Nut Shakes, Pasta di Noce, and for all the good things that food co-ops represent.

What type of fabric do you use?

I use cotton fabric for masks. When I started my sewing business, it gave me an excuse to expand my fabric stash, and so I have piles and piles of colorful quilting fabric and calicos to make masks from!

How many masks have you made?

Too many to count!

What would you bring to a potluck?

This is a fun question! Roasted eggplant with tahini sauce! This is my new favorite recipe.



ANNA EDSON

What was your inspiration for making masks?

When the panic buying started with the pandemic, my family was not able to find masks or hand sanitizer. I took it upon myself to make both. I got out my brand-new sewing machine and started making deaconess-style masks for family and friends. I kept making them, later giving them to co-workers at no cost to them, and to non-profits and schools in the area. I joined a couple of mask making non-profits, MASKSNOW.org and Sewing Masks So VT/SW NH Area (on FB). I have sent masks all over the country free of charge. These organizations have provided hundreds of thousands of masks across the country at no charge to the recipients.

Tell us a little about yourself and your background!

I was born and raised in Texas, lived in California for 17 years, Las Vegas 2 years, and now live in New Hampshire. I have two boys, 20 and 13, and lots of “adopted” kids. I have been sewing since I was eight, and

cooking since I was three. I love to read classics from Stephen King to biographies and history. I love cooking and exploring new recipes which comes in handy with the meat department. I also studied chemical oceanography in college. Lastly, I belong to Project Linus and occasionally crochet blankets.

What is your day job?

I work full time at the Brattleboro Food Co-op meat department.

What has been the biggest challenge about the pandemic for you?

Trying to keep my family healthy.

What has been the biggest opportunity with the pandemic?

Thanks to the masks, I have a renewed interest in sewing! It was a forgotten hobby.

What do you love about the food Co-op?

I love a lot about the Co-op. First and foremost, I love my meat department teammates. I love my co-workers, and the customers I have come to know, and their children I have watched grow.

What type of fabric do you use?

I use cotton material at all times. I try to change things up with prints and colors to have some fun.

How many masks have you made?

I have made at least 2,000 masks.

What would you bring to a potluck?

It depends. I have two smokers and a grill at home and love to make pulled pork and brisket, but I also love making homemade bread.

LINDA PAGE

What was your inspiration for making masks?

COVID-19.

Tell us a little about yourself and your background!

I started sewing at the age of 7, my grandmother taught me how to hand stitch dresses for my Barbie dolls. At age 10 I went to 4-H and learned to make clothes for myself. As a Junior and Senior in high school I attended the Vocational Center in Keene and studied flat-pattern design. Over the years, I married, had two sons, divorced and remarried, have two teenage grandsons, finished a bachelor's degree in 2009 from Fort Hayes State University online, went to Marlboro College Graduate School here in Brattleboro and earned a Certificate in Non-Profit Management. I have been doing volunteer work for over 30 years in over a dozen organizations, among them the Turning Point Recovery Center here in Brattleboro, and currently the Hinsdale Lions Club. I have been at the Brattleboro Retreat since 2010 in a variety of departments. For fun, I read science fiction and urban fantasy, and until COVID shut down travel, I have traveled to several parts of the country with my husband during vacations.

What is your day job?

I am the Assistant in the Clinical Education department at the Brattleboro Retreat.



What has been the biggest challenge about the pandemic for you?

Dealing with people who don't "believe" in science.

What has been the biggest opportunity with the pandemic?

Making masks!

What do you love about the food Co-op?

The Bulk spice department and the grocer in fresh Produce—my sister, Kathy Fisk.

What type of fabric do you use?

100% cotton masks.

How many masks have you made?

Almost 500.

What would you bring to a potluck?

A salad from the Co-op Deli—yummy.



LESLIE REED

What was your inspiration for making masks?

My inspiration for making the masks came from the fact that I had already been making masks for myself, family and friends. The Co-op approached me and asked if I'd like to make them for many more people and so I agreed. It

takes up a lot of my extra time, but I think it's worth it.

Tell us a little about yourself and your background!

I'm full of energy, extroverted and love to be in the company of other creative minds. I live in Northampton Massachusetts in my moderately sized one-bedroom apartment with my cat Zoe. I've been into arts and crafts and sewing for most of my life. About a decade ago I decided that sewing was my favorite hobby, now that's pretty much all I do in my free time—aside from hiking and being around friends and family.

What is your day job?

My day job is working in the produce department at the Brattleboro Food Co-op, and also one day a week at a Cumberland Farms gas station.

What has been the biggest challenge about the pandemic for you?

I would say the biggest challenge concerning COVID-19 for me personally is distancing myself from my parents. It's one thing to distance yourself from friends and strangers but when it's your own family that's when it really hurts.

What has been the biggest opportunity with the pandemic?

I would say the biggest opportunity I've come across during this pandemic has been that due to my gym closing down I was forced to find another form of exercise and now I have come to really love hiking. I even bought myself a brand-new kayak! I don't think outdoor sports would have come into my life without this pandemic and I am thankful for that.

What do you love about the food Co-op?

What I love about the food co-op is probably a bit different being that I am an employee myself; I very much



appreciate how much freedom I have as an employee, i.e. being permitted to be myself completely, dress any way that I desire in a way that makes me feel like me. I feel free to express myself—whether happy or sad, and I have so many people that I look forward to seeing each day—both fellow employees and customers alike.

What type of fabric do you use?

For fabric I use 100% cotton, as that is the recommendation for a safe and effective mask.

How many masks have you made?

So far, I have made 146 masks.

What would you bring to a potluck?

I'm not sure how this pertains to mask making LOL, but I suppose I might bring my mom's zucchini casserole.

These masks are all located on the middle end cap across from the registers in the Wellness Department. Support locally made people by purchasing one of their masks during the holiday season. Stay safe. Wear a mask.

