

the annals of an awning

covering zingerman's deli with history

422

ZINGERMAN'S DELICATESSEN

422

What's so exciting about an *awning*? A whole lot, as it turns out—especially when a rich legacy of creativity and ingenuity is woven into its sturdy fabric.

Such is the case with the classic black awning that hangs above the entrance to Zingerman's Delicatessen, at 422 Detroit Street in Ann Arbor's Kerrytown Historic District.

Even a gem needs polishing sometimes, and in recent years, the original Deli awning—installed in the late '80s—needed more than that: it was weathered, tattered, and ready to be replaced. A local awning company had been contracted to produce a new one, but for various reasons, both logistical and aesthetic, that project fell through. (The company's offer to provide a high-tech, motorized, remote-controlled awning seemed a tad at odds with the building's 1902 origins.)

Enter Nick Jaroch, a sign painter and merchandiser at the Deli for nearly two decades. With quiet, persistent curiosity, Nick had already discovered that the white letters on the old awning ("422 ZINGERMAN'S DELICATESSEN 422") had been hand-painted—but by whom? Seeking some answers, he turned to Deli team member Felix Muno, whose father, Steve Wallag-Muno, was an early graphic artist at Zingerman's. Steve's and his wife Monique's handwriting was the basis for our signature "Muno" font, and he's also responsible for the unique tile mosaic on the Deli's facade.

"I was like, 'Oh, do you think your dad knows anything about this?'" Nick recalls with a laugh. "And Felix said, 'Yeah, I know about it. My grandma Rose sewed the awning, and she painted it.'"

Eureka.

"When I heard that, I thought, oh my gosh, this is crazy, and I'm glad the other awning didn't work out," Nick says. "We've got to make a new one, and we've got to paint it."

Nick was equally intrigued by the awning's vintage mechanical hardware. (If you've ever seen an old-school shopkeeper at sunrise or sunset hooking a piece of equipment to an awning to hand-crank it open or closed, you know the Edward Hopper vibe that we're talking about.) In the Zingerman's spirit of preserving history, he said, "We've got to save that, too."

Now it was time to rally the troops.

Nick knew that Fiona Powell, a Deli front-of-house staffer, did some sewing, so, naturally, she was his first ask: "I said, 'Hey, have you ever sewed an awning before?' She was like, 'No, what? I've never done that.' So I said, 'Are you willing to try? We'd love it if you could do this.' And she was like, 'Okay, I think I could.'" Done.

In true DIY fashion, Fiona was provided with the necessary supplies. And on the morning of Sunday, May 16, Nick and Rodger Bowser, head chef and co-managing partner of the Deli, took down the old awning so Fiona could use it as a model. They also disassembled its hardware.

But there was no time to waste, as Rodger hoped to have the new awning up within two weeks. After all, it isn't just a charming decoration; it serves a critical practical purpose.

"It provides substantial shade and cooling to the store," Nick explains. "The folks in the Specialty Foods department were like, 'Yeah, we really need that back.' And it keeps water off the entryway when it's raining out."

Fiona managed to sew Awning 2.0 in the span of a week, and Nick and fellow Deli artist Lulu Maturo quickly got down to painting it. "I had already climbed up on a ladder with tracing paper and traced the existing letters [on the original awning]," Nick notes. "Then I redrew them, and I made a stencil that I could transfer onto the new awning."

Which still left the pesky issue of that vintage iron hardware. "Rodger and I took a look at it and noticed little parts and pieces were broken," Nick says. "We would need some new bolts and things, but it was all stuff you can repair or replace."

Figuring out the full functioning of the mechanisms, however, took a bit of legwork, as there was no company name or maker's mark stamped on any of the gear—only a number. Undeterred, Rodger used this number to track down a 1936 patent for a tension awning arm secured by Henry C. Heiser for the Astrup Company of Cleveland, Ohio—once upon a time, the largest awning maker in the country.

The patent "provided a whole schematic" for the system's operation, Nick says. "It explained everything and showed us how it all goes together. It was like finding the manual for it."

Nick and Rodger used this 90-year-old "manual" as a guide to repairing the damaged parts. And on the evening of Tuesday, June 2—just over two weeks since the old awning had come down—Rodger, with the help of Specialty Foods Manager Trevor Murray, installed the new one in its rightful place.

Reflecting on the entire process—completed with remarkable speed and skill—Nick says, "The idea was that we wanted it to look the same, and we wanted to restore what was there. We looked at it, and we thought we could do it, and we did." Without the aid of any newfangled automatic technology, to boot.

So the next time you pass by the Deli awning, remember that it's much more than just a 20-foot-long piece of fabric overhanging a beloved storefront. Contained within its handsewn threads and hand-painted letters is a vital sense of history; a deep-rooted ethic of resourcefulness, craftsmanship, and teamwork; and a passionate commitment to honoring the past while looking ahead to the future.

And that's what Zingerman's is all about.

Cary

Cary Gitter
Zingerman's Special Beat Reporter

YOU REALLY CAN DO BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

Several stories of opting for the dub sublime

"regeneration puts Life at the center of every action and decision...regeneration creates livelihoods that bring Life to people and people to Life. it is work that Links us to each other's well-being, that provides those in poverty with purpose and a future of dignity and respect." — Paul Hawken

When I'm out traveling in the greater work world—the world that exists well beyond the border of the Zingerman's ecosystem—the laments I hear from businesspeople are all too common: "It's impossible to find good employees," "Customers are so difficult to deal with," "Business is so cut-throat," "Work is such a slog." Honestly, it's wearying just hearing folks voice them.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. If there's one thing I've learned in our 44-plus years here at Zingerman's, it's that you really can do business differently. The way I experience it, business can be almost the exact opposite of the commonly held beliefs above—it can be fun! We get to work with wonderful people, and we have incredibly supportive customers. And it isn't cutthroat; it's collaborative.

Within our ecosystem—which includes Zingerman's guests like you, staff, suppliers, and neighbors—business is an uplifting, energizing, and educational activity. It helps build community and makes a positive difference in people's lives. And it does the same for those who interact with it as regenerative farming does for the soil. The point of a regenerative approach is that, essentially, everyone involved is improved by the experience, right? We all support each other. Mutual aid in action is a magical thing. When the greater ecosystem around us is being pushed to adopt an autocratic model, regenerative business is a wonderful act of productive and proactive resistance!

Regenerative Organizations

What is a regenerative organization? In a 2024 essay subtitled "From Fear to Hope?", Dr. Joel Carboni offered this valuable framing:

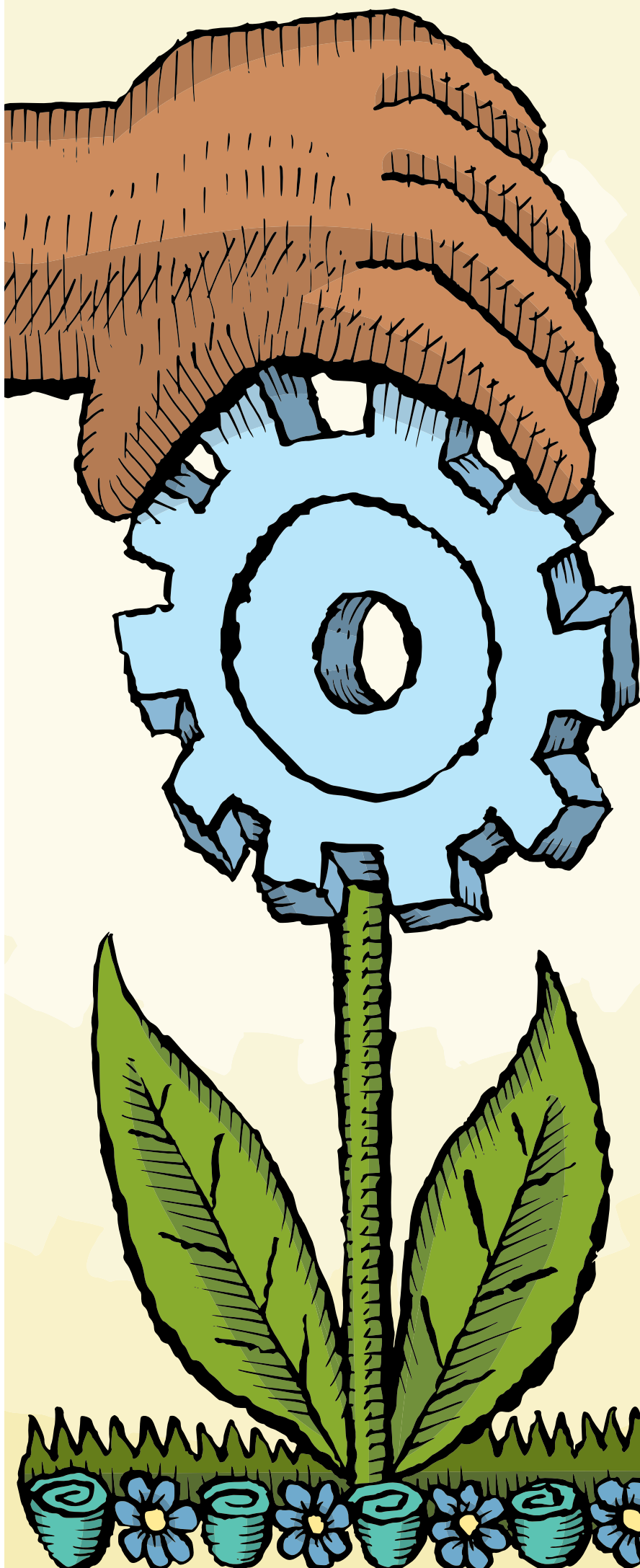
Regenerative business practices offer a fresh perspective. Rooted in an ecological world-view, they recognize that businesses are integral to the natural world rather than separate from it. By adopting this broader view, businesses can transition from merely balancing competing interests to creating enterprises that contribute positively to both social and ecological well-being, ultimately achieving net positive outcomes. . . . Embracing a hopeful, regenerative approach can also foster a culture of creativity and collaboration within organizations. . . .

The world we're operating in now demands regeneration: leave things better than you found them. That means restoring trust, repairing ecosystems, rebuilding capability, and creating net-positive value for people, planet, and prosperity.

I wouldn't have known enough to frame it so eloquently, but Dr. Carboni is describing exactly the kind of democratic organizational model I spoke about at a LeadersConnect gathering here in Ann Arbor late last spring. The afternoon began with a former Deli staffer, DeVaux Gauger, performing one of his own beautiful songs. What he said next, though, truly touched my heart:

I worked at Zingerman's before there was a ZCoB [Zingerman's Community of Businesses]. Before the Training Compact. Before there was really any training. It gave me a really great foundation for everything else I've done in my life: being a father, a lighting engineer, a musician. It's had a really big impact on everything I've done since.

After the talk had ended, while signing copies of the new "Why Democracy Matters" pamphlet, I ran into Jesse Hadley at the book table! She had also worked at the Deli many years ago, and we see each other around town now and again. She'd come to the event with her teenage son, and she shared with him and me both how much of a positive impact her Zingerman's experience had had on her. Again, it was a good feeling to know that work we'd done so many years ago had now shaped the life and values of a very cool family. She bought the "A Revolution of Dignity in the



Twenty-First Century Workplace” pamphlet for herself, and a signed copy of “Democracy” for her son.

The following day, trying to catch up on email, I opened a message from a dishwasher who currently works in the ZCoB. He wanted me to know that he has worked in food for years, and this is the first time in his life when he’s actually felt welcomed and at home. I totally teared up reading it—wholly unexpected and almost overwhelming, in the best possible way.

That alone was already a lovely run of unexpected affirmations. But then, on Saturday morning, I got a call from longtime ZingTrain client and friend Vince Gabriele. *He* wanted me to know that a decade ago, back in 2016, he had come to ZingTrain to write his first long-term vision. “Most of it wasn’t happening yet, and I wasn’t in a good place,” he wrote. “But 10 years later, pretty much everything I wrote happened. It completely changed my life.” (You can read the story of my and Vince’s original connection on page 366 of *The Power of Beliefs in Business*.)

Imperfect but Still Inspiring

These nice stories are not meant to indicate that there aren’t plenty of problems to be dealt with here in the ZCoB; as always, we have shortcomings on every front—frustrations abound in pretty much every direction one looks. This, though, is the nature of human nature, of the world—not to create nirvana, but to design approaches to constructively improve the non-nirvanic elements of our ecosystem. But still, even drilling down into my doubt, all these lovely stories remind me that much of our work does make a difference. These are stories about long-term, meaningful enhancement. Yes, they all involve money in one way or another (salaries, sales, et cetera), so this is not an esoteric appeal to eliminate buying and selling. It’s just to say that, again, one really *can* do business differently.

The fact that so many people *don’t* feel this way is not, I believe, due to some fundamental human failing. (Nine times out of 10, I’ll suggest that when anyone finds themselves in a healthy, supportive, learning-driven, regenerative organization—whether a company, community, or country—the odds of them doing much better and *feeling* much better about themselves go up drastically.) Rather, many are mired in what I suppose we could call “degenerative” business. As author Carol Sanford conveys so powerfully, “The way most companies manage their workforces is bad for business. Not coincidentally, it’s also bad for people and for democracy.”

When we do business differently, regeneratively, it’s the opposite: it’s good for democracy and for people. What we seek, it seems, as the Persian poet Rumi wrote, seeks us.

I was reflecting the other day on how best to describe to folks the great training work that ZingTrain does so much of. Not the particulars of each course—that’s pretty straightforward, since there are thorough descriptions on the ZingTrain website. But there’s something more—*much* more—to the power and meaning of what ZingTrain offers. My mind goes to small, nationally known but very specifically focused learning institutions, such as my friend Natalie Chanin’s School of Making in Alabama. Maybe we could be something akin to “The School of Doing Business Differently.”

An Artistic Approach

Speaking of doing things differently—in ways that interested people will take note of—in an April 2026 video interview for the great Louisiana Channel, the now nearly 92-year-old English artist Rose Wylie said clearly and directly, “Contrast gives life.” I believe she’s correct—the fact that we do business differently at Zingerman’s is definitely one of the reasons people are drawn to us.

Contrast also provides context. To wit, if someone from Neptune were to read the national news right now, they might well conclude that business was mostly about extraction, taking advantage, tricking one’s opponents, finding

ways around seemingly agreed-upon ethical stances. It would be an easy conclusion to arrive at. It would not, however, be the whole truth. There’s more to the business world than Wall Street, IPOs, arbitrage, and secret Swiss bank accounts!

When I reflect on our own organization, I don’t have to go far to find the kind of contrast Wylie refers to. When we were doing introductions at our “Welcome to the ZCoB” orientation class this past weekend, one of the attendees, closer to my age than to that of many new staff members, said, “This is my first food job. I’m a refugee from corporate America.” “What brought you here?” I asked. “It was so soulless,” she said. “I couldn’t take it anymore. So I came here.” Does she like it? “Yes, because it’s a whole different world—a complete contrast!”

Wylie and her artwork both are really quite incredible. She paints in her own particular way, following no one else’s patterns, and, it seems, she’s been doing so for decades. In a piece in *HURS* entitled “The Unapologetic Art of Rose Wylie,” Bonnie Langedijk writes, “It’s about discovering and intervention and pushing. There’s no certain recipe or solution. You don’t want it to always look the same.”

Regenerative Farming in Action in Austria

Another great source of inspiration, when I’m in doubt about what it means to do good work in the world, is the Austrian farmer Sepp Holzer. Born in the small town of Ramingstein, in the southern end of the district of Salzburg, in 1942, Holzer has been called “the Werner Herzog of regenerative agriculture” and “a permaculture visionary.” It’s not hard to see he is a remarkable human being doing remarkable work.

When Holzer turned 20, he took over the family farm from his parents. At the time, it was just another small, struggling mid-20th-century farm, located in the Austrian Alps at an altitude between 3,000 and 5,000 feet. As he explains, Holzer tried using all the packaged pesticides and fertilizers everyone told him to use. Nothing worked. Things got worse. Over the years, he turned the whole farm inside out, essentially creating his own version of regenerative work, very closely connected to what others of us know as permaculture. Holzer came to be called the “rebel farmer,” which in turn became the title of his second book. I’ve never been myself, but everyone I’ve heard from has raved about his farm’s biodiversity and the flavor of his food.

All of these examples of “doing business differently” are inspiring. Each works in its own unique way in its own particular place. Which is true, too, for the source of this essay’s subtitle: “Several stories of opting for the dub sublime.” I kind of have to laugh because I’d been mulling over what to call the essay when, as I have so often of late, I found myself looking at the cover of the book *IR 61 Searching for the Dub Sublime*, from my friends at the global anarchist collective IR::Indigenous Resistance. And sure enough, it hit me: “searching for the dub sublime,” metaphorically, is what *all* these people I’ve written about here are—in their own idiosyncratic ways, of course—doing.

Among the many amazing lessons I’ve learned through the years is to not look for one single magic answer as to how to do work differently. Regenerative business is never just one particular technique that makes the artist, writer, or business leader who they are, but rather a whole combination of contributing factors. Many of these factors are hiding in plain sight—we just haven’t trained our eyes to see them. As Amastara from IR writes in *Ethiopia: The Journey*,

The best things for me have always been hidden or just under the surface. They have never been obvious or garishly hyped or advertised. Never! It’s always been very subtle. What might seem to have very little on the surface is often the exact opposite.

Carol Sanford, who’s written a great deal on regenerative

business—always in her own unique way—has this to say on the subject:

Businesses that foster initiative and self-management change forever the way employees look at the world. . . . By evolving the natural source of human creativity and responsibility, a regenerative business builds more than itself. It grows better citizens and, as a result, it builds a better nation and a better world.

I’ll note here that the idea of regenerative work—originally in the form of farming—came from the Rodale Institute in Pennsylvania. More and more, I can see that the approaches I’ve alluded to above align well with what J. I. and Robert Rodale had already begun imagining around the same time we were getting the Deli going in the ’80s. Robert Rodale said,

By marching forward under the banner of sustainability we are, in effect, continuing to hamper ourselves by not accepting a challenging enough goal. I am not against the word sustainable, rather I favor regenerative agriculture.

Doing Business with Dub

So what do you do to make these awesome, dub-sublime things happen? The mainstream might tell you to find the models you like and copy them. I will suggest the exact opposite: Do not do business like Zingerman’s. Don’t make art like IR. Don’t paint like Rose Wylie. Don’t farm like Sepp Holzer. Learn from all of them and then some, but in the end, do it *YOUR* way!

But if you want some meaningful guidance from *outside* the mainstream, all the folks above offer a plethora. ZingTrain has 20 different seminars that are listed online, and I’ve written about as many books and pamphlets. IR has records and films and posters. Sepp Holzer has both books and training programs. Focus not on following in others’ footsteps, but on making your own. Carol Sanford writes,

In a regenerative organization, systems themselves are instruments for the development of people—designed to be managed and continuously upgraded by those who are using them rather than by outside experts. . . . Developmental thinking structures . . . enable us to become conscious of the way our thinking is structured and to reshape it. . . . In a regenerative organization, workers are expected to be self-motivating, self-managing, and conscious of the whole of the business.

While millions, I’m sure, can still be made in a matter of minutes on Wall Street, the kind of uplifting regenerative magic I want to see us make happens much more often, very quietly, right on the corner of Main Street and . . .

Which finally brings me to today’s bottom lines: Be yourself. Be kind. Be caring. Approach with love. Do it your way. As Rose Wylie says, “When you paint, you are perhaps looking for something which hasn’t been.”

This is how I feel about business.

Or, in the words of Indigenous Resistance:

As I walked, I could feel energy surging up my body. . . . Obviously [this place] had some special significance. A message that calmed my soul and confirmed my pathway.

Ari

Ari Weinzwieg
Co-founding Partner
Zingerman’s Community of Businesses

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7 Lessons I've Learned from Traveling the World

When people ask me what I do, the simplest answer is that I design, lead, and execute culinary tours around the world. But that answer only scratches the surface.

Over the years, these journeys have become much more than opportunities to explore food cultures. They have fundamentally changed the way I see the world, the way I feed myself and my friends, the way I interact with my community, and, perhaps most importantly, the way I understand and work with other people across many cultures.

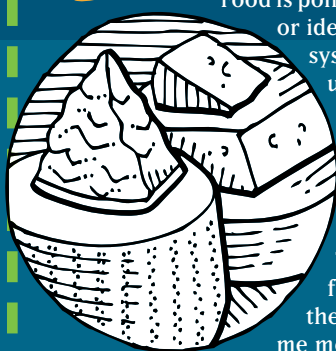
What began as a professional endeavor became one of the greatest educational experiences of my life. Travel has taught me seven unexpected life lessons:

Kristie

Kristie Brablec
Managing Partner
Zingerman's Food Tours

1.

Food Is Never Just Food—It's Also Political



Food is political not in the sense of party affiliation or ideology, but in the sense that every food system is shaped by decisions about land use, labor, trade, water, transportation, education, and access. The people who grow, harvest, transport, prepare, and sell our food operate within systems that influence what ends up on our plates and who benefits along the way. Traveling the world has given me a front-row seat to both the beauty and the challenges of those systems and made me more aware of their fragility. Supporting local producers, reducing waste, protecting natural resources, preserving food traditions, and creating equitable access to nutritious food are not just agricultural concerns—they are community concerns. Food may bring us together around the table, but it also spurs us to think about the kind of world we want to help create beyond it.

2.

Sustainability Isn't One-Size-Fits-All



In many places, sustainability isn't a trendy movement or marketing strategy; it's simply the way people have always lived. I've met farmers who save seeds because their grandparents taught them to, and their communities depend on it. I've visited fishing communities that protect local waters because their livelihoods rely on the health of future generations.

These experiences have challenged my assumptions about what sustainable living looks like. They've reminded me that caring for the earth doesn't always require grand gestures. Sustainability is often rooted in fundamental respect—respect for land, resources, traditions, and future generations.

3.

Abundance Isn't Measured By How Much We Own



I've watched families create extraordinary meals from simple ingredients. I've seen communities gather around tables where hospitality mattered far more than luxury. These experiences have caused me to question many of the messages we receive every day about needing more. More things. More convenience. More speed. Instead, I've come to appreciate quality over quantity, craftsmanship over mass production, and experiences over possessions.

The most memorable moments from my travels rarely involve something I purchased. They involve conversations, shared meals, laughter, and human connection.

4.

Great Cooking Is More About Care than Complexity



Travel has taught me that cooking is not merely a task. It's a way to connect with culture, community, and the people we love. Some of the most inspiring meals I've encountered weren't prepared by celebrity chefs or served in acclaimed restaurants. They came from home kitchens.

I've learned that great cooking isn't necessarily about complexity. It's about care. It's about understanding ingredients, respecting seasons, reducing waste, and preparing food with intention. This has helped me become more curious, more adventurous, and more mindful as a home cook.

5.

Curiosity Fuels Connection



It's difficult to maintain stereotypes when you're welcomed into someone's home, even when you know your beliefs may differ. Food has a remarkable ability to bring together people who might otherwise never cross paths. It's hard to hold onto preconceived notions when you're standing beside a farmer explaining the challenges facing their family, or sharing a meal with someone whose history and circumstances differ dramatically from yours.

Again and again, I've been reminded that most human beings want many of the same things: safety, opportunity, dignity, meaningful work, and a better future for their children. The more people I meet, the less possible it becomes to reduce anyone to a label.

6.

Compassion Starts with Listening



The world becomes infinitely richer when we spend less time trying to prove what we know and more time listening to others. Not listening to respond. Not listening to debate. Simply listening. Listening creates connection. Connection creates understanding. And understanding creates compassion.

Whether sitting around a table in Italy, walking through a market in Mexico, speaking with producers in Japan, or sharing stories with artisans in France, I've learned that every person has something to teach. Everyone has a story, and most likely it's remarkable in its own way.

7.

Every Meal Offers an Opportunity



When I first began leading culinary tours, I thought I was helping others discover the world. What I didn't realize was how much the world would change me. These experiences have made me more compassionate, more curious, more thoughtful, and more connected to both global and local communities. They've taught me that food can be a bridge. A bridge between cultures. A bridge between strangers. A bridge between understanding and misunderstanding.

Most importantly, they've reminded me that every meal offers an opportunity, not just to nourish ourselves, but to learn, connect, and become better citizens of the world. For that, I am endlessly grateful.

A Job for All Seasons

two crew members who help make zingerman's mail order thrive



Every holiday season, Zingerman's Mail Order hires nearly 800 staff to help meet the huge national demand for our foods, pastries, meal kits, gift baskets and boxes, and beyond. These hardworking crew members receive thousands of orders in a matter of weeks and prepare, package, and ship them at a dizzying pace.

For some, it may be their first job ever—for others, a post-retirement return to the workforce. Many come back year after year, and some stay on past the holidays, drawn by the singular Zingerman's work experience and the close-knit community at Mail Order.

This is the story of two such team members—at very different stages of life—who joined the business on a seasonal basis, found passion and purpose at Mail Order, and have become integral parts of its success.

Vince Toia, Team Lead

Vince Toia is a restaurant man through and through. Born into an Italian family, he grew up back and forth between Palermo, Sicily, and Chicago, where his relatives operated local pizzerias.

Over the course of his decades-long career in the industry, Vince opened a luncheonette out west in California; had stints working for two national restaurant chains; managed catering at the Italian American Club of Livonia, outside Detroit; and, finally, ran the Plymouth Fish Market, a popular seafood eatery, for an impressive 18 years.

Then came retirement—or so Vince thought.

After dealing with a heart issue, he received some firm advice from a cardiologist friend to get active again: “You need to go back to work.” Hoping to stay in the food world—but out of the kitchen this time around—Vince found a listing online for a holiday team lead position at Mail Order. Bingo.

He started in November 2025, working in the bread department. And as he puts it, in his warm, enthusiastic fashion, “I fell in love with Zingerman's over the holidays. And we were *busy*, brother.”

What wowed Vince the most right off the bat was the incredibly robust training he received.

“Immediately, they started teaching us in a classroom environment, which was fantastic,” he says. “One of the managing partners, Tom Root, actually held the class. What a great speaker. And then [Warehouse Manager] Lisa Roberts—another gem. They'll always be on the floor, too, doing what needs to be done. It's like, wow, that's leadership.”

Vince was equally thrilled by the “all-hands-on-deck” spirit of collaboration at Mail Order. He recalls a moment just before Christmas when the bread squad was particularly slammed: “We needed more help, so James, another floor lead, jumped in to take over the computer and the label printing. This way, we were able to do all the manual work and get everything done.”

“At that point,” he says, “I made the decision that I'm going to stay here. These people know what they're doing. This is a perfect job for me.”

Sure enough, once the holidays were over, Vince was hired back to remain on the bread team as a part-time crew member—and today, he's still going strong and embracing the work. It doesn't hurt that there's plenty of delicious food to nosh on as well; his personal Zingerman's favorites include the Deli's Corned Beef (natch) and the Bakehouse's Cinnamon Raisin Bread.

But most importantly, Vince says the job keeps him active (12,000 to 13,000 steps in a day on the floor!), healthy, and thriving. When asked if he plans to stick around, he replies without hesitation, “Oh, yes, sir. If I can work, I'll be here.”

Ethan Kuo, Service Star

Ann Arborite Ethan Kuo came to Zingerman's at a much earlier point in his professional career, having previously held jobs in food service and media production, as well as a yearlong gig at an out-of-town IKEA. In between roles and in the midst of a move, he spotted a posting for a holiday crew position at Mail Order.

“It was a flexible seasonal job, so I was like, ‘I'm game,’ and I sprung for it,” he says. “And it turned out to be a great experience that far exceeded my expectations.”

Ethan went to work as a “Holiday Service Star” in October 2025, taking calls, assisting guests with orders or issues, and “really just being a useful voice on the other end of the phone,” as he describes it. After about a month, he was offered the chance to be a coach and help other crew members get up to speed, which was “a really good change of pace.”

The holiday role ended in January, but, like Vince, Ethan was soon rehired. In March, he joined Mail Order as a full-time Service Star with expanded responsibilities.

What made him so eager to return? “Definitely the environment and the people,” he says. “It's super flexible and accommodating, and everyone is just trying to encourage each other and be helpful.”

Ethan also appreciates the emphasis on continued growth and learning. Lately, he's enjoyed getting to work warehouse shifts—hands-on training required of everybody in the service center.

“I've found it to be very valuable,” he says. “It makes a lot of sense, in terms of being able to give the best service, to know how things are prepared from start to finish.”

And on a personal level, Ethan has strengthened his confidence in utilizing “the power of language,” as Zingerman's refers to it, with guests.

“It's basically being aware of how certain words and phrases can change the vibe of a conversation or steer it one way or another,” he explains. “I was kind of insecure about that, but there are a couple people at work who are great at this and always have excellent advice. It's been good for me in my development of that skill.”

Almost a year into his tenure at Mail Order, Ethan is quick to offer this advice to anyone considering applying for the coming holiday season: “I would say absolutely go for it. I think it's a fantastic opportunity, and I would recommend it.”

Vince Toia no doubt shares this sentiment. At different phases of their lives—but united by their vital work ethic and their commitment to embodying Zingerman's core principles—these two Mail Order colleagues are shining examples of how a seasonal job can transform into so much more.

Cary

Cary Gitter
Zingerman's Special Beat Reporter



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Michigan
September

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. AFSP creates a culture that's smart about mental health through education and community programs, develops suicide prevention through research and advocacy, and provides support for those affected by suicide. With chapters in all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, AFSP is leading the fight in suicide prevention.

Each fall, AFSP's signature fundraising walks bring together friends, family, and supporters in more than 400 communities nationwide. On Sunday, September 20, we will gather for the Washtenaw County Out of the Darkness Walk to raise awareness, support one another, honor and remember loved ones, and fund critical efforts to protect mental health and prevent suicide. Eighty-three cents of every donor dollar directly support our four focus areas: research, advocacy, education, and loss and healing programs. Join us as we fight to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide.



Washtenaw County Walk
Rolling Hills County Park, Ypsilanti
Sunday, September 20
Event opens at 9 a.m.; ceremony at 10 a.m.

Register today: afspwalks.donordrive.com/AnnArbor

**OUR
HOUSE**

October

Our House is a Washtenaw County-based, mission-driven organization dedicated to empowering youth and young adults with experience in foster care and similar circumstances as they transition to independent adulthood. Through mentoring, life skills education, housing support, and community engagement, Our House helps participants build the confidence, stability, and practical skills needed to create successful, self-sufficient futures. Every relationship built and every opportunity provided are rooted in the belief that no young person should have to navigate adulthood alone.

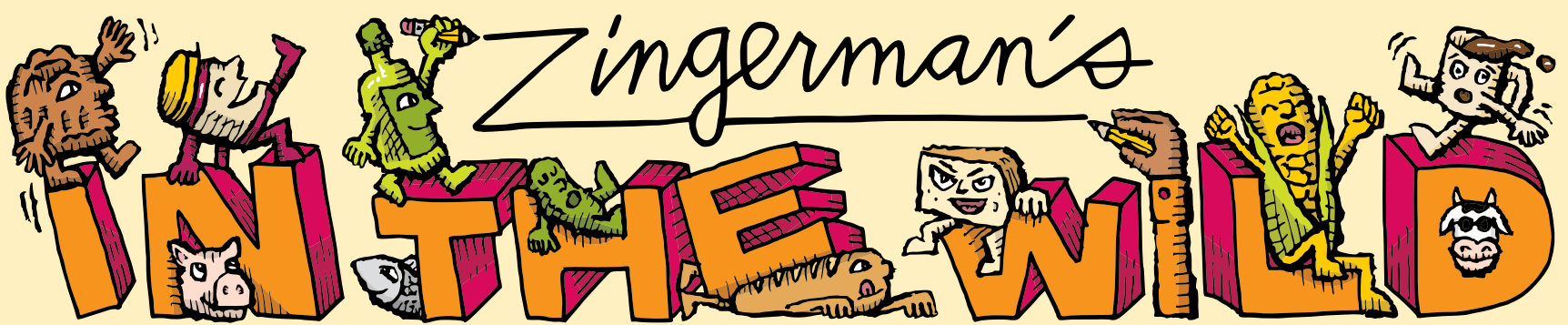
The organization's housing programs provide safe, stable, and supportive environments where young adults can focus on achieving their educational, career, and personal goals while receiving individualized guidance. Through one-on-one mentoring, dedicated volunteers offer encouragement, connection, and consistent support that help young people develop meaningful relationships and a strong sense of belonging. Life skills programming equips participants with practical tools for adulthood, including financial literacy, employment readiness, education planning, health and wellness, cooking, transportation, budgeting, and other essential skills for independent living.

"Community members looking to make a difference are encouraged to get involved. Whether volunteering, becoming a mentor, referring a young person to the mentoring program, or learning more about becoming a mentee, there are many ways to support the mission and help strengthen the community.

The work of Our House is made possible through the generosity of donors, volunteers, and community partners. Financial contributions and donations of needed items from the organization's wish lists directly support youth and young adults as they build stable, independent futures." — Josh Noud, Development Manager

To learn more about Our House, explore current wish lists, become involved, or make a donation, visit www.ourhousemi.org or reach out directly to jnoud@ourhousemi.org. Every act of support helps create opportunities, build lasting relationships, and ensure that more young people have the resources they need to thrive.





Share your photos with us!

Did you have a great sandwich at the Deli? Catch a sunbeam on the Southside after a class at ZingTrain? Tuck a loaf of Better Than San Francisco Sourdough into your carry-on? Wear a Zingerman's T-shirt on your latest adventure? We want to see!!

Either tag @zingermanscommunity on social media or send pictures to photos@zingermans.com. Each issue, we'll be sharing a handful of our favorites, and you might see yourself pop up on our social media channels, too!

Fine print: By submitting your photo, you're permitting us to reshare your fabulous self on our platforms.



nutmeg stopped by the zingerman's tent at an afc game!



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you really can taste the difference!™

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