

Businessmen get the scoop on ice cream and much more

By **SUSAN KAUFFMAN**
Special to the DTH

When a premier ice cream maker scooped Ben and Jerry's Heath Bar Chunk in front of the Weaver Street Market in Carr Mill Mall Annex on Saturday, it was the first time many people in the crowd had heard of the brand.

The lack of strong name recognition in Chapel Hill did not surprise Jerry Greenfield, co-owner of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, who said the company does not yet actively distribute in this area.

Ben and Jerry's ranks number two in national ice cream sales, second only to Pillsbury-owned Haagen-Dazs, Greenfield said. Unlike most company presidents, who might only brag about such an achievement, Greenfield preferred to scoop the all-natural ice cream studded with one-inch square hunks of chocolate bar.

Greenfield also chatted with the people who had turned out on a gray, chilly day to eat ice cream outdoors. "This flavor is Cherry Garcia, named after our favorite guitarist," he told a small child, who had almost certainly never heard of the Grateful Dead.

As his wife Elizabeth filled pink, blue and green "Ben and Jerry" balloons with helium, Greenfield scooped ice cream and talked about

his business philosophy.

"There's a feeling as you get more successful, you see yourself as having more to lose," he said. "Being risk-averse is not a good way to run a business or your life. We're trying to do innovative things and not worry too much about how we're doing in the marketplace."

In the corporate world, giving 2 percent of pretax profits to charitable organizations is considered generous, Greenfield said. Ben and Jerry's gives 7.5 percent.

This unusual approach to business has caught the eye of the media. The New York Times, Time, Life and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) have all run specials on the two owners.

The company has come a long way since Greenfield and his friend Ben Cohen started the business 10 years ago after scrimping together \$12,000 in start-up capital. By 1987, projected net sales had reached \$27 million.

In 1976, Greenfield worked at N.C. Memorial Hospital as a medical technician and repeatedly tried and failed to get into medical school, he said. Cohen, a friend of Greenfield's since seventh grade, had just quit his job teaching crafts to mentally disturbed children.

The two knew nothing about making ice cream, Greenfield said,

and they did not have enough capital to invest in equipment for their first choice — bagels.

"We were just going to be this little homemade ice cream bar from this \$5 correspondence course," he said. "The whole thing is pretty astounding."

For some people, Ben and Jerry's popularity comes from the owners' social activism as much as from their outstanding ice cream.

"We're converting people down here to Ben and Jerry's," said Margie Stockton, a Duke alumna who had just bought some of their Mint Oreo ice cream. Stockton said she grew up in Burlington, Vt., where Ben and Jerry started their business.

Cohen and Greenfield are creative about making and naming their ice cream, Stockton said. But she said she probably would not be as "gung ho" about their product if they did not send out a good social message.

But people often wonder why Ben and Jerry's has contributed so much to food banks in the northeast and various other nonprofit organizations.

"Because business has the responsibility to give back to the community," Greenfield said. "We learned early on, if we can make it, it would be because of the support of the community."

"Their personality seems to permeate the whole business," said ice cream customer Mary Martin, as she savored her scoop of New York Super Fudge Chunk.

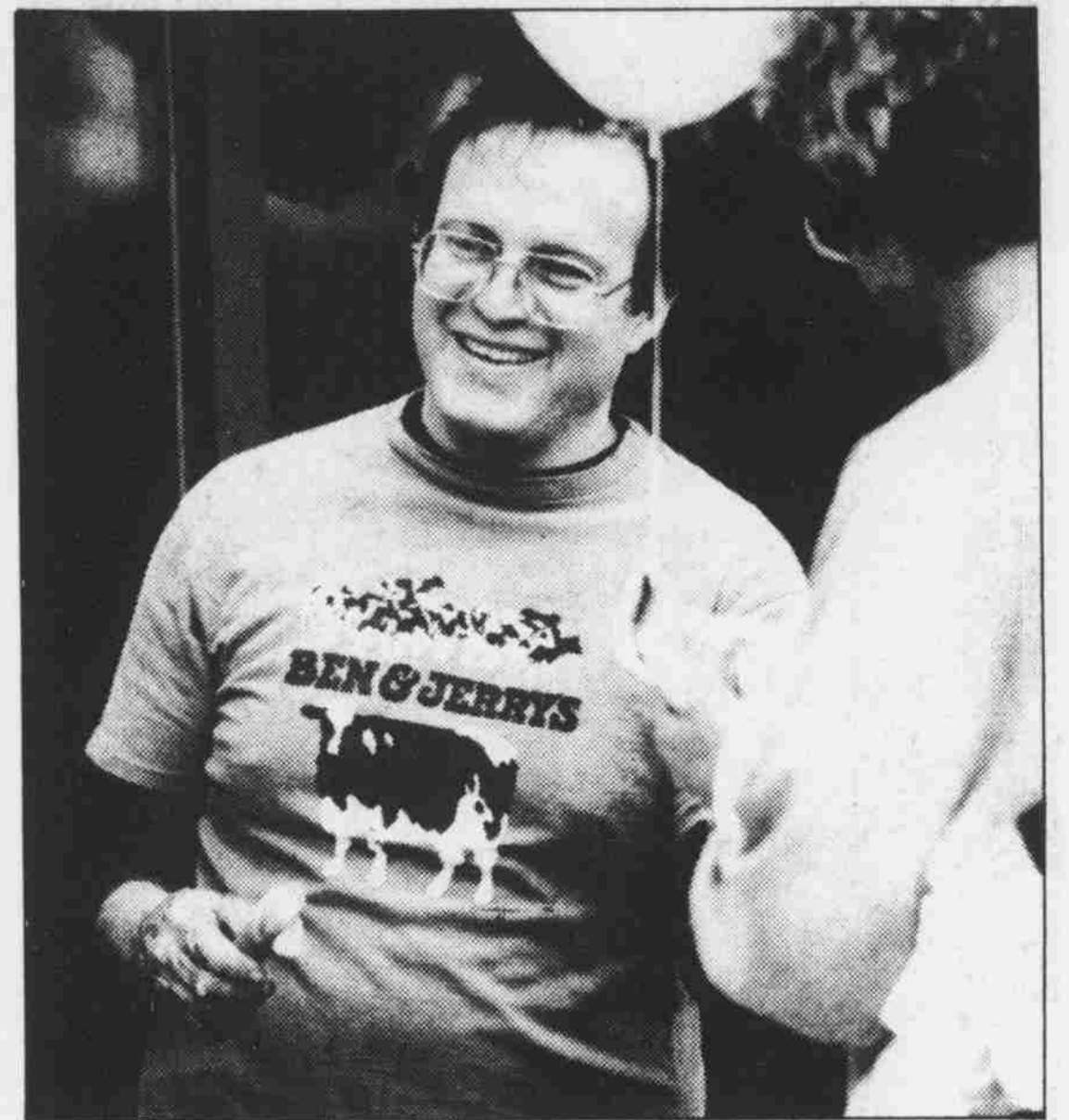
Martin said she had seen the owners on a PBS series called "Building a Business." Ben and Jerry had picketed the Pillsbury headquarters for threatening the distribution of their ice cream. The small business conducted a grass roots "What's the Dough Boy Afraid Of?" campaign against the large corporation and won.

"We try to get involved in more than ice cream," Greenfield said.

While Greenfield was scooping ice cream, his partner was in the Soviet Union. They want to open a store there and use the proceeds to fund cultural exchanges, Greenfield said. World peace is the cause he most wants to promote, he said.

In advising people who want to start their own businesses, Greenfield said people do not necessarily need to listen to what the experts say.

"I would say do not try to pretend to appear to be something you are not, especially something larger or more professional," Greenfield said. "Let people relate to your business. You know, it is hard for people to relate to these big corporations."



DTH/Julie Stoval

Jerry Greenfield dishes out free ice cream in Carrboro Saturday

Community-owned market to offer friendly atmosphere, low prices

By **CAROLE SOUTHERN**
Staff Writer

The people of Carrboro and Chapel Hill are curious.

Before 11 a.m. on a sleepy Saturday people were lined up outside the Weaver Street Market in Carr Mill Mall Annex. Young and old alike enjoyed balloons, ice cream and familiar faces at an ice cream "scooping," which featured Jerry Greenfield, co-owner of Ben & Jerry's Homemade Ice Cream.

The preview was held so that citizens could learn about this community-owned grocery store, which will open in May. Interested observers had the chance to talk to those involved in the market, see the space and find out more about this new type of store.

"The people in Carrboro are very helpful and really excited about our store," said Ruffin Slater, one of the market's three general managers.

The people who work and shop in this type of market will also own it, Slater said. Workers receive a share of the profits and a voice in their employment. Customers will have the chance to receive a 5 percent discount and a share of ownership in the market if they invest at least \$75.

C.C. and Alice Hollis, of 104 Glendale Drive, said they were anticipating the market's opening. "We have invested in the market

and are happy at the opportunity to save money when we do our shopping."

"The people who had the idea for this type of store combined different models that they have seen," Slater said. The market owners are trying to recreate the flavor and intimacy of the neighborhood grocery store, which is rare in today's society. The owners also hope the market will play a role in the community and improve the community fabric, he said.

"The Weaver Street Market is trying to create an atmosphere — not impersonal like large supermarket chains — but friendly and personable where the employees know the customers by face," Slater said.

Greenfield said, "I think it's really good to have community-owned stores because people need to get involved with their own lives instead of sitting in front of the TV. I like community involvement in general because it is good for the future of the world."

Shares in the market are priced at \$75 for one adult, \$135 for two adults in the same household and \$175 for three or more adults in the same household. Shares are refundable and can be paid in full or in installments.

"A refundable share does not change in value," Slater said. "If you

pay \$75 and you leave town, we will give you \$75 back."

The use of refundable shares gives the store operating capital without having to get a bank loan and pay interest on it, Slater said. The customers benefit from this because the store is able to offer lower prices.

After buying a share in the market, a shopper is entitled to store discounts, community discounts from other merchants and the right to vote for the board of directors (or run for an office). Customers will also receive a free newsletter subscription, free delivery of groceries for senior citizens and invitations to health education seminars and other events.

Before Saturday's ice cream scoop, the market had 157 shareholders and shares were also being sold on Saturday.

"We hope to have hundreds and thousands of shareholders eventually," Slater said. "The amount of money saved in a year will make it a good investment."

Community ownership is not the only distinguishing feature of the market. It also carries a fresh foods product line enabling customers to find produce that is not sprayed with chemicals, Slater said. Fruit and vegetable juices are also squeezed daily, and one can find a tremendous selection of unpackage nuts, bulk grains and spices.

"The market will emphasize locally produced fresh foods in order to save on transportation costs, promote a local economy and concentrate on a close-knit community," Slater said.

Dorothy Stevens, a Chapel Hill resident who was present at Satur-

day's preview, said she liked the idea of a natural foods grocery store. "I don't like supermarkets where everything looks plastic and artificial."

"I like stores that treat you like an individual rather than having mass food and mass treatment of customers," Stevens said. "In a big store you are just a person who buys — I like the small-town aspect because being treated like an individual is nice."

A cafe with patio dining and music outside during warm weather will be located inside the 7,000-square-foot market. The market will also contain a fresh fish and poultry market, a deli, a book department and a newsstand, Slater said. The cafe and deli will serve prepared

foods, but they will all be natural and healthy.

"We want to provide a convenience, such as the fast food places do, but combine it with a higher quality of food," Slater said. "I think that the concept will be really popular."

The market is the first business to receive a loan from the Carrboro Downtown Development Commission. The owners' application stressed the market's advantageous location, which would attract people and other businesses to the downtown Chapel Hill area, Slater said.

"Other businesses are also excited because they are looking for us to be an anchor and bring more people to this area," Slater said.



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