

The Firestarter

Newsletter of The Tonasket
Natural Foods Co-op
Fall-Winter 2026



Co-op Board of Directors

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Secretary
Annie Kier
Anne MacDonaugh
Phil Gleason

Store Manager:

Sabrina Sofia

Assistant Store Manager:

Cady Bestor

Tonasket Co-op Membership Benefits

- 3rd Tuesday of each month bulk-order from the UNFI Catalog at 15% above wholesale
- EVERY Friday members receive a 10% discount on their vitamin and HABA purchases
- In-store exclusive specials for members only

Co-op Musings & Our 50th Birthday

As summer gently winds into autumn, we are reminded how the seasons shape our lives and direct our course. The sultry days of summer gradually give way to the crisp, refreshing air of fall, and the shift can be a refreshing change or a challenging adjustment, depending on our outlook. In the same way, the Co-op is working on changes, adapting to the needs and requests of our customers and members, offering a refreshing change, while keeping our spirit alive. After all, we're turning 50!

To that end, we need to know what you want and how we can fulfill your needs. What do you love about the Co-op, and how can we help to make your lives better?

Over the past several months, the Co-op Board and staff have been reaching out to our shoppers with these questions. We conducted a survey in the spring to gather input and suggestions on how we can better serve you. Some people have submitted suggestions to the box in the Garden Room; we read them all and pay attention to what people want.

The refreshing change is that we are moving forward with plans to revise parts of the store. We'll be adding features and items, removing some that aren't selling, and overall addressing the growing needs of our customer base. There's still time to let us know what you want to see happen, so please speak up and let us know. Our goal is to be your go-to place for your organic, local, and bulk food needs.

Some of the other items on our "To-Do List" are coming along, such as painting the front exterior of the Co-op and sealing the side. Plus, we've been actively

monitoring our garden, particularly the 30-year-old Mountain Ash, which needs to come down. We're also working on new signs for inside and outside the store, which will be a nice improvement.

Store sales have been down lately, which is not surprising given the general rise in the cost of living. But we're adaptable and resilient and are still strong and here for our members and all our customers.

Another exciting development in the Co-op has been implementing an employee health insurance fund for those who work 30 or more hours per week. This fund costs the store nothing and is a great benefit to our employees. Currently, we have 5 employees using this program. For more information about the Champion Health Inc. plan, visit their website at <https://champlan.com>.

Finally, the best for last: this coming year, we will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary. That's a monumental milestone for a little Co-op like ours. So, we have big



birthday plans coming up and welcome anyone and everyone to join in the fun. Festivities will begin around May 2027; watch for more information.

In closing, we want to thank all of our dedicated shoppers and the many people, staff, volunteers, and our Board of Directors for keeping the dream of the Tonasket Natural Foods Co-op alive. It's no accident that we've been here for 50 years; it's taken commitment and a shared goal of eating well and providing healthy foods to do so. And just a little bit of chutzpa (in Yiddish, that means sheer courage and a heap of confidence).

Thank you!



We Have All You Need For Your Festive Meals This Holiday Season

Visit the Co-op first when shopping for your holiday meals this season. We stock everything you need to whip up a delicious meal for your family and friends, and you can be assured that you'll be serving your loved ones the highest-quality food.

From organic turkeys to house-made stuffing to fresh or canned cranberries and pumpkin, you know you'll be buying the best at reasonable prices.

Our cooler is well stocked with organic dairy products for your family's good health; cream produced by happy cows raised humanely and ethically. So, you won't have to skimp on that rich whipped cream to top your decadent desserts; it's all healthy.

Watch for our specialty cheeses to come in, like brie, which makes a simple yet delicious appetizer.

In addition, our produce section features all organic fruits and veggies, many of which are locally grown, offering the best quality for your dinner salads and vegetable dishes.

Short on time? We have prepared organic pie shells in our freezer, along with a nice selection of other additions to your holiday tables.

And while you're shopping for dinner, take a look at our giftware section for that perfect hostess gift or stocking stuffers. We carry a great array of ethically sourced goods for holiday giving.

Good News for Customers Who Like to Order from Azure Standard

You can order your Azure Standard items through the Co-op and enjoy the convenience! Ordering with us is easy and you don't have to be available at the delivery drop. *Plus* you can use your SNAP benefits to pay for food items.

Ask one of our cashiers for more details.

MEMBERS

Look for the storewide SALES throughout the Co-op, displayed with red shelf tags below the items. Current Tonasket Co-op members receive special discounts on these products – some are a one-time deal, some are monthly sales, & some are introductory promotions.

Price tags show member prices and non-member prices.

These specials also apply to visiting members from other Co-ops. Just show us your membership card!



Image source: Pinterest.com

"Take a Book, Share a Book" The Co-op is looking into joining the Little Free Library project, a nationwide nonprofit dedicated to building community and inspiring readers.

Julie Greenwood is doing the research and planning; check our Facebook page for more updates coming soon.

One-Pot Creamy Carrot Soup (Vegan)

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 6 cups carrots, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 stalks celery, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (or more to taste)
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 1 - 14-oz can full-fat coconut milk

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat and then add carrots, onion, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent and the carrots are starting to soften, about 7 minutes. Then add the garlic, salt, thyme, and red pepper flakes. Cook another 2-3 minutes, until fragrant.
2. Add broth and bring soup to a simmer, then cover pot and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until carrots are very tender.
3. Turn off heat and stir in coconut milk.
4. Using an immersion blender, blend soup until completely smooth (or cool soup and use regular blender). Return to stove and gently heat. Season to taste with more salt and/ or red pepper flakes. Serve warm with crusty bread. Store leftover soup in fridge for up to 3-4 days or in

Microplastics Are Everywhere; You Don't Have To Eat Them Too

We encourage our customers to bring your own clean containers for all your bulk items.

Under Washington State regulations, we must charge for shopping bags. Please try to bring your own supply of reusable bags.

We also offer a great selection of lovely and practical reusable shopping bags to purchase.

Thank-you for doing your part!

Microplastics are everywhere, and while they're unavoidable, it's possible to minimize our exposure, especially by avoiding eating them. Microplastics are tiny plastic particles less than 5mm in size that can be found in various environments, and depending on where they come from, can be made of any number of elements.

Since microplastics typically come from the breakdown of plastics, they can be made of familiar chemicals, such as BPA (bisphenol A), or "forever chemicals" (found in cosmetics, non-stick cookware, or even dental floss). But there can also be chemicals in microplastics that we don't know much about; the government doesn't require chemicals used in plastics to be fully tested for safety.

One major health issue is that harmful chemicals can resemble human hormones, and exposure to such substances has been shown to increase the risk of a myriad of issues, everything from infertility to

poor fetal development and cancer.

It is possible to avoid some microplastics and take steps to stay as healthy as possible, including how we cook and store our food. If you microwave, don't use plastic, even if the packaging says it's microwave safe. It's easy to switch to ceramic or glass. Likewise, using stainless, ceramic, or wooden utensils in cooking and ditching your plastic cutting board are excellent steps to take. Handwash any plastic dishes instead of using the dishwasher. Better yet, quit using plastic altogether and store your food in glass or stainless-steel containers.

While tap water has been criticized as being unhealthy, consuming bottled water can be worse, due to microplastics sluffing off into the liquid. Instead of buying beverages in plastic bottles, opt for alternatives. Our Co-op carries *Boxed Water Is Better*, a plastic-free option for drinking water, as well

as many healthy drinks in glass bottles. Also, shopping our bulk foods section rather than packaged varieties helps minimize exposure, and we are currently working to expand our bulk offerings.

As health-conscious consumers, we are concerned about the impact of microplastics. Research has shown that you can lower adverse risks by taking care of your general health: get plenty of sleep and exercise, eat a healthy diet, reduce stress, and seek preventive care. By making simple changes in your daily routine, you can significantly reduce your exposure to microplastics and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Sources:
How We Eat, Drink and Breathe Microplastics, Dec. 1, 2022, Armstrong, M. www.statista.com

Microplastics Are Everywhere - we need to understand how they affect human health, Nature Medicine, 19 April 2024

Our fresh Organic Produce delivery comes every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday • Shop early for your best selection!
~ Not to boast, but we're pretty sure our prices on Organic Produce are the BEST ~

New Products at The Co-op

Our little store may be small, but we're not too small to bring in some new and exciting products for our customers.

In our bulk foods, we have added 100% organic granola from *Pure Bliss Organics*, also available pre-packaged. This delicious cereal is made with *no* refined sugars and is a great way to start your day.

Other new additions to our bulk offerings include tri-color quinoa, organic instant black beans, vital wheat gluten, and *Bluebird Grain Farms* organic Einkorn flour. In our liquid bulk section, we now offer organic maple syrup, an affordable and healthy option for your pantry.

For a little sweet-treat fun, we now carry yogurt-covered pretzels and "healthy" gummy candies in bulk, to satisfy your sweet tooth and your budget. More will be added soon, so keep watching our shelves.

We've recently brought in some new teas: a mushroom-based tea

from the *Bravo Tea Co.* and a medicinal blend of milk thistle and mullein from *Buddha Teas*. Ask a Co-op cashier if you can't find them on our shelves.

It's no secret that we love our new regional adult beverages: beer from *Mountain Mama*, which is Cascade-crafted in White Salmon, WA, and mead from *Sky River Meadery* in Woodinville, WA. Try some today!

You've asked us for kombucha and kefir starters, and we've found what you're looking for. Our new kombucha starter comes from *Cultures For Health*, which also provides our regular and gluten-free sourdough starters. For more information on this company, visit their website at <https://culturesforhealth.com>.

For our customers who want to make their own kefir, try our starter from *NW Ferments*, another regional purveyor of healthy foods.

To read more about their company and their tips on home fermenting, please visit their website at www.nwferments.com.

Do you have a favorite product you'd like us to carry? Feel free to make a suggestion. If it's available from our vendors and there's room on our shelves, we'll give it a try and see how it sells.
We can also special order items for you. Talk to a cashier for information on our policies and bulk-order options.



The Co-op booth at this year's Garlic Festival was a huge success, selling over 80 lbs. of local organic garlic. Thanks to all the volunteers – Ron, River, Raina, Melanie, Brechelle, Anne M., Stacy, Phil, Annie K., Summer, Rob T., and Ken V. Wow, great job, folks! And THANKS to Growing Resilience and The Bunch Barn of Wauconda for your beautiful garlic.

Supporting local farmers and the Community since 1977

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.tonasketcoop.com

Winter Hours

10am-6pm Monday - Saturday

11am-4pm Sundays

The Co-op Board of Directors meets monthly. Please check Facebook or call the Co-op for more information if you want to attend.

For more information on the Co-op and updated news, past Firestarters, and other pertinent articles visit our website at

<https://tonasketcoop.com>

To read the most recent minutes from BOD meetings click on the "More" tab and go to Board of Directors

Join Us On Social Media

We're on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TonasketCoop/>

And now on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/tonasketcooperative>

Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Resumes This Fall

Your Co-op participates in the state Adopt-A-Highway cleanup program, and our 2-mile stretch starts at the junction of Highway 20 and Highway 97, traveling east on 20. We've been doing this task for many years, but it fell off our radar for a spell. Now we want to resume this venture, helping keep Tonasket beautiful and be of service at the same time.

Meanwhile, we realized we need to have the WSDOT change the sign to reflect our current name, to *Tonasket Natural Foods Co-op*. It's great advertising and a good way to help our community.

The arrangement is that we need to take on two cleanup stints before the DOT creates a new sign. Thus, we plan to schedule one this fall and a second cleanup in the spring.

Please let Board Member Anne MacDonaugh know if you are interested in helping. It doesn't require any special equipment besides work gloves; the DOT supplies everything else we need. With enough people, the job will go quickly and smoothly.

Plus, the Co-op Café will feed all the helpers afterwards. Please consider joining in.

Come Eat at The Co-op Café!

Your Co-op offers some of the best and healthiest lunches in town, along with a lovely indoor setting for dining, our Garden Room. Or enjoy your lunch in our beautiful outdoor garden.

"Grab and Go" sandwiches and hot soup are available all day until they're sold out. We also offer delicious house-made salads and new and exciting sandwich selections. And now we're offering wraps, those delectable sandwich substitutes that are a soft flatbread, rolled around a delicious filling.

Please look for our daily soup schedule on our Facebook page, updated weekly.

Most sandwiches are discounted daily after 3 PM.

For your convenience we have recently installed a microwave to heat your favorite lunch item.

Staff Picks

Products Our Co-op Staff Really Likes and You Might Too!

Moon says,
"I love shopping our Bulk Foods Section. The prices for organic food can really become more affordable in these times when we shop in bulk, and we can even Special Order your bulk products!"

Halley has two picks.
She enjoys our Izze Bubbly Fruit Juices AND our house-made lemon cookies. "They have frosting on the top and are chewy deliciousness!" Plus, they are gluten-free.

Cady enjoys our Rose Lotion from Andalou Naturals. Called "the ultimate skin food" because it blends rosehips and argan oils with shea and cocoa butter. It's almost good enough to eat but best to use it to feed your skin!

Do you have a sweet tooth? Masha knows how to satisfy that!
Try our Vanilla Halvah Bars or our yummy carob coated almonds. For a healthier option, gobble up some Whitestone Freeze-dried Apples.

Madi wants everyone to know about our new delicious sodas from Dr. Perfy.
"They're refreshing and sweet, without causing a sugar crash because they use alternative sweeteners."

"I love our Viet-Wah noodles, located in the cooler section of the Garden Room. They're so yummy and such an easy lunch!"
— Summer