

# The Firestarter

Newsletter of the  
Tonasket Natural Foods Co-op  
Spring-Summer 2025



## Co-op Board of Directors

Peggy Tofte, *President*

River Jones, *Vice President*

Charlene Baka Rich,  
*Secretary*

Ron Jones-Edwards,  
*Treasurer*

Thom Speidel

Annie Kier

**Your Name Here?**

## Store Manager:

Sabrina Sofia

## New And Noteworthy at The Co-op

The Co-op has been a busy place lately with so much going on. From new products to new staff to new improvements, our little store is so bustling it seems to have a mind of its own. And the year has just begun!

One recent development is our new credit card processing procedure. We've been discussing and revising how we handle this situation for months because of the costs involved, which has become a dilemma. Most months, our card fees have exceeded \$1,200, taking its toll on our finances. After much research, we found a company that would work for us and our needs, and it would only affect those shoppers who use their credit or debit cards. With this new arrangement, essentially a dual card processing system, all "plastic" will have up to .0389 included in their total at the register, depending on which card you use. So, if you choose to pay with debit, Visa, MasterCard, or Discover cards you will have one amount, while cash, check, and EBT purchases will have a lower amount. When you are at the till, your cashier will give you two totals, one for cash or check purchases, and one for cards. We really did not have an option; it was either that or raising all prices throughout the store. This system does not tack on any more than the card company charges, so none of this money goes into our store's coffers.

In other store news, we are pleased to announce that sales from last year increased over \$1,960 from 2023, and annual memberships were up almost \$150. This number does not include the lifetime dues we're

hoping members will voluntarily donate, which the membership voted on last year. It's not a very large amount, only \$10 a year, and will enable our store to keep our doors open for our community. So please consider making this change next time you're shopping.

Finally, the best news for last:

As an expression of our gratitude and show how much we value our members, we are offering you additional discounts on purchases, both in-store and bulk orders. Please see the update on Membership Perks below.

## New Membership Perks

### We LOVE our Co-op Members!

We want to express our gratitude with another special membership benefit. Along with your exclusive savings on in-store purchases, we're offering a 10% discount on the last Friday of each month for all Vitamin and HABA (Health and Beauty Aids) purchases.

### This perk is for MEMBERS ONLY!

Your newest benefit is in addition to the recently improved **Member Appreciation Day** discount on UNFI bulk orders. On the third Tuesday of each month, members can enjoy a 15% markup on prepaid orders, reduced from the 20% markup we've previously offered.

## Calling All Volunteers

Do you have some extra time and talents to share with your community?

The Co-op is always looking for volunteers to help lighten the load that it takes to keep our store flourishing. Currently we have a few carpentry projects on our to-do list, such as fixing the front screen door and adjusting the awning over the front window. We also could

use your expertise in a couple of building projects.

Along the same lines, we would welcome your help with daily tasks that are always necessary, such as cleaning, stocking, processing the big food order on Sundays, and more.

If you're interested, please talk to the store manager or one of our cashiers.

*"We will all profit from a more diverse, inclusive society; understanding, accommodating, even celebrating our differences, while pulling together for the common good."*

— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

## Tonasket Co-op Member Appreciation Day

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each  
month

Members may  
bulk-order from the  
UNFI Catalog at 15%  
above wholesale.

## Why Add Nuts To Your Diet? For Your Good Health!

Eating plenty of nuts is a tasty and valuable addition to your healthy diet, and the Co-op provides many choices.

Clinical studies on eating walnuts several times a week have shown a 30-50% lower risk of heart attack, sudden cardiac arrest, or cardiovascular disease ([www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)). This superfood, whose meat resembles a tiny brain, may improve brain health, contains high omega-3 fatty acids, is credited with decreasing inflammation and oxidative bodily stress, and may help protect against prostate cancer.

Brazil nuts, which the Co-op carries in our cooler section,

may also reduce inflammation and help improve gut health. These large, rich-flavored nuts are loaded with selenium, an element known to help fight inflammation.

Another underrated nut is the amazing cashew, and research has shown that roasted cashews can be beneficial in boosting our mental health ([www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com)). From staving off stress to coping with depression to reducing anxiety, these packed little gems deliver many valuable nutrients and healthy fats, such as tryptophan, magnesium, Vitamin B6, and the healthy fats we need for optimum

health. Just a handful a day can help manage and improve attitudes and help stave off depression.

On the whole, most nuts contain plenty of fiber, Vitamin E, magnesium, calcium, and phosphorus, and they may help lower the "bad" cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Some studies have suggested that they may promote muscle and bone health.

Your Co-op has an abundant selection of organic and conventional choices, both in our bulk and cooler sections. Next time you want a snack, consider grabbing a handful of your favorite nuts to munch on.



*The Co-op Café is open Monday through Saturday, with the Café Window open from 11-2.*

*Special order a hot Reuben Sandwich, our Sandwich of the Week, or one of our newest Café Specials when the Café window is open.*

*"Grab and Go" sandwiches and hot soup are available all day until they're sold out.*

*Look for our daily soup schedule and lunch specials on our Facebook page, updated weekly.*

*We also offer Self-Serve soups for your dining convenience.*

*Come have lunch with us!*

**Let's get the word out: We're on Facebook and Instagram!**  
**You can support the Co-op by sharing our posts when you see us on social media. Even if you don't want to share, just tap the "like" button and let your friends know how much you love your Co-op.**

### You Can Order Your Azure Standard Products Through the Co-op

Customers can order from Azure Standard through the store, and we can get it for nearly the same price that Azure charges. The benefits are you don't have to be present at the delivery drop *and* you can use your SNAP benefits to pay.

The Azure order is placed every four weeks, so 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.**



*Some of our new and exciting products for our valued customers.*

*Tyler says, "I love the Island Thyme products, especially their Blackberry Lip Balm!"*

**Dear Lifetime Members:**

We're reaching out to our Lifetime Members who signed up before June 2024. Can you donate a yearly \$10 amount, which will become your standard contribution to the financial health of our store? Our Members voted on this at the last Membership Meeting, and if you can contribute it would help YOUR Co-op tremendously.

Just to put it in perspective, that breaks down to 83¢ a month or less than 3¢ a day. And with over 580 members, even if half contributed in this way, it would bring in a sizable amount each year. It really doesn't take much to make a big difference!

Do you have a favorite product that you'd like to see us carry?

Feel free to make a suggestion.

If it's available from our suppliers, and there's room on our shelves, we'll give it a try and see how it sells. Also, please know that we can special order items for you.

Talk to a cashier for more information on our policies and bulk-order options.

**We welcome our customers to bring your own clean containers for all your in-store bulk purchases.**

**Thank You!**

**EWG's Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen for 2025**

Source: [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a nonprofit organization that researches and promotes environmental and public health. This watchdog agency compiles an annual list of conventionally grown fruits and vegetables with unacceptable amounts of pesticide residue, known as the *Dirty Dozen*. Along with that, their *Clean Fifteen* list is comprised of the produce that has the least amount and is safest to eat. We publish this information for our customers every year because we care about your health.

**Dirty Dozen**

Strawberries	Pears
Spinach	Celery
Nectarines	Tomatoes
Apples	
Leafy Green Vegetables	
Grapes	
Bell Peppers	
Cherries	
Peaches	

**Clean Fifteen**

Avocados	Cabbage
Sweet Corn	Carrots
Pineapple	Mushrooms
Onions	Mangoes
Papaya	Sweet Potatoes
Asparagus	Watermelon
Kiwi	
Honeydew melon	
Sweet peas (frozen)	

**The Easiest Vegan Chocolate Cake Ever**

Preheat oven to 350°

**Ingredients**

1 ½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup organic granulated sugar  
3 Tablespoons organic unsweetened cocoa powder \*  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt

Gently mix together with a spatula and then make three trenches in the dry ingredients.

**Evenly distribute:**

5 tablespoons mild flavored oil (not olive)  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract (or almond, coconut, etc.)  
1 cup cold water

**Using a spatula, mix** the ingredients directly in the dish, gently scraping the edges and bottom, incorporating all dry ingredients. It's okay if there are a few lumps, it all works out.

Bake for 30 minutes in an 8X8 pan, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

The simplest way to serve this cake is plain, or if you need to dress it up, wait until it cools and add berries in season.

\* Research has shown that choosing organic chocolate over conventional means fewer heavy metals and a more sustainable environmental impact. Organic farming methods lower the number of heavy metals absorbed by cacao plants used to make chocolate, thus cacao nibs contain 95% less cadmium and 67% less lead. Organic cacao farms also provide environmental and economic sustainability for rural communities by providing 20% more profitability and 27% greater gender equality while minimizing water use by 29% and greenhouse gas emissions by 22% Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com>

*Supporting local farmers and  
the Community since 1977*

**ADDRESS:**

21 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

PO Box 591

Tonasket WA 98855

**PHONE: (509) 486-4188**

**E-MAIL:**

info@tonasketcoop.com

**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

**www.tonasketcoop.com**

**Spring-Summer Hours**

**9am-7pm Monday - Friday**

**Saturday 9am - 6pm**

**11am-4pm Sundays**

*The Co-op Board of Directors  
meets monthly. Check Facebook  
or call the Co-op for more  
information if you wish 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>**

**Thank-You!**

To everyone who has continued to  
support the Co-op for  
over 45 years.

As a member-owned nonprofit  
business, this is your store. We  
encourage you to use the  
suggestion box. It is a great way to  
communicate with us about what  
you like about the Co-op and make  
kind recommendations. We take  
your suggestions to heart & do our  
best to provide what our customers  
are looking for.

## News From Our Garden Manager

As winter closes and the  
anticipation of spring is here,  
we have many plans and  
hopes for the Co-op garden.

I have been looking after the  
garden for a few years now,  
and this is the first winter we  
haven't had a blanket of  
snow. I'm hoping the summer  
will not be too dry, and I'm  
also looking at improving our  
old drip system with a little  
help from our friends.

I'm delighted to report that  
Melanie Thornton has stepped  
up to assist with watering our  
trees. This offer is so  
appreciated since it takes  
an hour 2-3 times a week.  
Alex Moon has also  
volunteered to do our planters  
in front of the store. Thanks,  
Alex; your creative flair will be  
a welcome addition!

Keith Seydlitz will monitor our  
trees, some approximately 40  
years old, and Jessica  
McNamara will lend her  
expertise whenever needed.  
(Jessica was our Garden  
Manager for many years  
before I came aboard.) You  
both are so appreciated; the  
trees need you!

Please let me know if you  
could lend a helping hand;  
we're always looking for  
volunteers who enjoy  
gardening. Leave your name  
and number at the front desk,  
and I will contact you.

I look forward to a new  
beginning and seeing you all  
in the shade of our beautiful  
garden.

P.S. A surprise will be coming  
soon. Stay Tuned!

*Our fresh organic produce delivery comes  
every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.  
Shop early for your best selection!*

The most noteworthy thing  
about gardeners is that they  
are always optimistic, always  
enterprising and never  
satisfied. They always look  
forward to doing something  
better than they have ever  
done before.  
– Vita Sackville-West

### **We Want To Hear From YOU!**

*What do you like about  
the Co-op? What do you  
think we could do differently?  
The Board of Directors will  
be conducting a survey to  
learn what our customers  
want and need and what you  
feel needs changing. We hope  
to be sending it out via email.  
We really wish to have YOUR  
feedback, so our staff will ask  
for your current email  
address in the coming weeks.*

## The Co-op Now Carries Local Flours From Bluebird Grain Farms

Bluebird Grain Farms, a local  
Methow Valley company, is  
dedicated to growing certified  
organic ancient whole grains  
and providing freshly milled  
and handcrafted blended  
flours. Using regenerative  
farming practices, Bluebird  
Grain Farms is committed to  
restoring and enhancing soil  
health, increasing biodiver-  
sity, and improving the envi-  
ronment with their responsi-  
ble growing methods.

Ancient grains provide higher  
protein content, among other  
nutrients, than standard grain  
products, supplying abundant

B vitamins, omega-3 fatty  
acids, iron, magnesium, zinc,  
and selenium ([www.brownhealth.org](http://www.brownhealth.org)). As a nutritious  
and versatile addition to a  
healthy diet, benefits include  
improved heart health, blood  
sugar control, and digestive  
health, among others.

Founders Brooke and Sam  
Lucy are passionate about  
their products and believe  
that "better farming means  
better food." They value their  
customers and recognize our  
contribution to a "shift away  
from harmful agricultural  
practices and towards a

healthier soil future through  
organic regenerative  
farming." Bluebird Grain  
Farms strives to "preserve  
some of the most ancient  
and nutritious food staples  
known to humanity,"  
promoting everyone's health  
and well-being.

The Co-op carries several  
varieties of their products,  
which can be found among  
our packaged grains and  
flours. For more information  
on this company, visit their  
website at [www.bluebirdgrainfarms.com](http://www.bluebirdgrainfarms.com).

**Shoppers may have noticed that many products are out of stock lately. This issue is due to a few factors: several companies have closed their doors, and there have been transportation issues which are out of our control. We will continue to try to keep our shelves well-stocked and will continue looking for alternatives to your favorite products.**