

The Firestarter

Newsletter of The Tonasket
Natural Foods Co-op



As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands - one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.
– Audrey Hepburn

Co-op Board of Directors

Peggy Tofte, *President*

Patti House, *Vice President*

Ron Jones-Edwards,
Secretary

Charlene Baka Rich,
Treasurer

Thom Speidel

Annie Kier

River Jones

Your Name Here?

Store Manager:

Sabrina Sofia

Assistant Store Manager:

Melissa Calhoon

Tonasket Co-op Member Appreciation Day

3rd Tuesday of each
month

Members may
bulk-order from the
UNFI Catalog at 20%
above wholesale.

Many Ways to Support The Co-op

Greetings to all our Co-op members and customers. This first Firestarter of 2024 brings a sense of new beginnings and the comfort of old friends. Thank you all for being such loyal Co-op supporters; we truly appreciate you.

And how we all love our Co-op! Where else can we buy so many bulk spices and herbs, both culinary and medicinal? Or how about finding such an array of organic produce? And our selection of healthy, organic foods, bulk and packaged, is readily available and absolutely unique in the North County.

It takes a village to keep a little store like ours vibrant and successful for over 45 years. And the most significant part of that success is due to our dedicated shoppers. We strive to provide the goods our customers want and to serve you all with the best possible options and prices. As a membership organization, we are always looking for new ways to help make such great products affordable for our shoppers.

You may have recently seen a couple of donation jars sitting on our front counter. One is marked *Improvement Fund*, and the other is our *Co-op Growth Fund*. These contributions go directly to support the store but in different ways. The *Improvement Fund* includes income that will go into an account that does exactly what the name implies: helps with store improvements. Our Board of Directors has jurisdiction over those funds, which are made available as needs arise. For example, when our cooler's compressor went out last year, we used those funds to purchase and install a new

one. Our *Improvement Fund* covered part of that \$17,000 fee, but we also had to borrow from our community's OCCF fund. We were fortunate that Freel's Refrigeration Service allowed us to pay them over time, and that debt has been satisfied. We are still paying the OCCF loan, but we should be finished shortly.

An older store like ours will always need updating and improvement on the equipment and other various endeavors, and this fund has enabled us to stay up on those types of expenditures.

The second jar for donations is our *Growth Fund*. This money goes directly into our checking account for the day-to-day expenses that generally come up and helps us better serve our customers in the best way possible.

Another way to support our Co-op is by volunteering your time. There are countless ways

to do so, and the Board of Directors has initiated a new Volunteer Committee.

There's a chart depicting the needed tasks at the entrance to the Garden room. Some jobs are fairly large, and some are as straightforward as changing our outdoor lightbulbs. Do you have some extra time on your hands? Please come and tie in with Sabrina or Melissa if you are available. We would really appreciate your help.

Other ways to get involved are to join one of our committees. Right now, we could use help with our Marketing and Gardening Committees, and there are plans to establish a Fundraising Committee that would work on events and other fun ventures. Joining any of these committees would be an excellent opportunity to become more involved with your Co-op, get to know more people, and help make a difference in our community.



Veanna displaying the funding thermometer which shows our *Growth Fund* progress. Let's grow that "mercury" and help keep our precious Co-op vital!

Why Eat Organic? You Are What You Eat!

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to eat healthier in 2024, you've come to the right place.

Your Co-op and our knowledgeable staff can help you make positive changes to your diet. We offer a full selection of organic bulk and packaged foods, beautiful organic produce, and organic and naturally processed meats.

Buying organic and natural products may seem more expensive, but the alternative is even more costly. How can that be? According to the Mayo Clinic (Mayoclinic.org), studies show that organic foods offer health benefits compared to foods grown using conventional methods. Conventional food production generally includes

pesticide use, growing in monocultures, which deplete the soils, and raising livestock with inferior feed.

Additionally, pesticides, fertilizers, and other toxic farm chemicals can poison fresh water, marine ecosystems, air, and soil. They also can remain in the environment for generations.

The big agribusinesses are able to invest a lot more into health-related research than the smaller organic producers. When this type of information comes from sources like the Mayo Clinic, it may be time to start paying attention to these studies.

Remember, "You are what you eat"!

Good News for Customers Who Like to Order from Azure Standard

Did you know you can order your Azure products directly from the Co-op? We can get your goods for nearly the same price that Azure charges. This way you don't have to be available at the delivery drop *and* you can use your SNAP benefits to pay. Ask one of our cashiers for more details.

The Co-op Café is open 7 days a week, with the Café Window open daily 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.

And we're offering Self-Serve soups again for your dining convenience. Come have lunch with us!



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 your bulk-order options.

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!

Sandy's Chocolate Cheesecake

Submitted by Co-op member, Sandy Vaughn

Crust:

1/3 cup crushed graham crackers (about 12)
1/4 cup butter
2 Tablespoons honey
Mix together, press into greased pan & bake until lightly browned

Filling:

2-8 oz packages cream cheese, softened
1 cup honey
1 cup yoghurt
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/4 cup cocoa
3 eggs, lightly beaten

Topping:

1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° Beat softened cream cheese well. Add the other ingredients, one at a time, and beat well after each addition. Be sure cocoa is free of lumps before adding to the batter. Prebake crust for 10-15 minutes.

Pour filling into cooled crust and bake for 35-45 minutes, or until done – still slightly soft in the middle and small cracks appear on top. Cool. Spread sour cream-vanilla mixture on top and garnish as desired. (Suggestions: shaved chocolate, fresh fruit, cooked (and cooled) fruit puree, or our Date Syrup or Pomegranate Syrup.) Yummy!

All Ingredients can be purchased at the Co-op

How One Man Single-Handedly Saved A Rare Butterfly Species

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!

One person *can* make a world of difference. Tim Wong, a senior biologist at the California Academy of Sciences, single-handedly brought a struggling butterfly species back to his home city of San Francisco.

"I became aware of the California Pipevine swallowtail - which is native... to San Francisco - a couple years ago," Wong said in

an interview with The Weather Channel this past summer. "I was looking into trying to create a pollinator habitat in my own backyard and I found that there were some native butterflies that needed a little extra help."

"What I learned is that a lot of our native butterflies have really tight relationships with native plants and some types of

butterflies may only feed on one native plant," Wong told meteorologists Stephanie Abrams and Jordan Steele.

Fortunately, Wong was able to find the plant in the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park and was allowed to take home a few clippings of the plant.

Source: OrganicConsumers.org



Tyler & Alex at the Okanogan Family Faire Booth last fall.

So many Faire-goers expressed their delight at seeing us after many years of taking a break. Look for us with a bigger and better booth at the 2024 Family Faire!

Co-op Garden Update from Board Member, Charlene Baka

Welcome to a new year from our garden crew. As the seed catalogs pour in, I'm dreaming of all the projects for the next gardening season.

As our garden ages, the 40-year-old trees need care. We have decided the Mountain Ash will be taken down this year. It didn't respond to pruning last season, and the roots are damaged beyond repair. The plan is to replace it with a smaller, bushy tree, hoping to

block the street noise – a special thanks to Keith, whose expertise and hard work have made this decision easier.

Other plans are in the making. We are painting the wall blue to follow the theme of "birds" in and around the town. One of the students has started a painting of a blue heron, which we will mount after the wall is completed.

I would like to place some planters with flowers by the

cafe wall with another table or two. It is the only place that gets the sunshine. We're also considering installing some misters to help us cool off during our hotter summer days.

Dreams do come true! So, anyone who can help lend a hand or throw some needed dollars our way, yay for us!!! The garden makes the coop a unique place to shop and rest from our busy daily schedules.

Till next time, Happy New Year! And hope to see you in the garden.



*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.*

River Jones, Newsletter Editor

Consider Paying For Your Store Purchases With Cash

Many stores in our area have established stricter rules regarding credit card and debit card purchases. Some require customers to pay with cash for minimum transactions, such as a \$5 or \$10 purchase. Others automatically tack on a percentage for all card sales. These actions are helping to keep small stores such as ours vital, although we don't want to go that route if we can help it. But we cannot possibly compete with the large corporate stores that enjoy the sales volume that allow them to forgo such steps. It's a bit of a dilemma for our little Co-op.

Since every card transaction has a fee attached to its processing, we wind up spending over \$1000 each month. And, of course, the more cards we process, the higher the "fee tab" is.

Our shoppers can help us to control our costs by using cash for purchases. Consider stopping by your bank's ATM on your way to the store. We also accept local personal checks with the proper ID.

Some shoppers round up their transactions to the next dollar amount, which can add up nicely and doesn't take a

chunk out of their grocery budget. This is another way to help our store stay solvent and continue to serve our public.

We understand that our customers can't be overly generous in these trying economic times, but every little bit counts at the end of the day. Thank you!



Thanks to all our committed volunteers who came out to help with this year's store inventory:

Lisa E • Kathy K • Jim & Peggy W • Peggy T • Shara C • Baka • River • Annie K • Sunny & Carol L • Su I • Ron E • Sandy V • Laura & Julie G • Mikkel G • Victoria V

We couldn't have done it without you!

Staff Picks

Products Our Co-op Really Likes and We Think You Might Too

Sabrina's latest faves:
Pop & Bottle Thai Tea
Contains NO Sugar and is Dairy-Free with 80 mg caffeine.
And
The Essential Baking Co. Sourdough Take & Bake Bread

Everyone is raving about our local
Whitestone Mountain d'Anjou Pears.
Be sure to get yours before they're sold out!

Justin says, try our **Spudsy Sweet Potato Hot Fries** Find them in our **chip section** of the store.

"I love
Tony's Espresso.
And I'm so happy that now we are carrying it in bulk!"
– Tyler

Courtney says our **Collagen - Keratin Capsules from Solaray** is the best product for hair growth. "They helped me regrow my hair after shaving my head!"

Lisa's pick is our **Aura Cacia's Tangerine & Grapefruit Aromatherapy Mist** "It's very invigorating and relaxing."

Follow the link on our website to submit an article to the Firestarter – the newsletter editor and store management will review all articles to determine suitability for publication.

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 & make kind recommendations. We take your suggestions to heart & do our best to provide what our customers are looking for.