

Spring 2020

grassroots

A Quarterly Newsletter from People's Food Co-op



Board of Directors

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Attend a Board Meeting!

Board of Directors meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of every month from 5:30-8:30pm. Member-Owners are always welcome! This is a great chance to get your message to the Board or just to see what's going on at the Co-op. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings may be held online via Zoom, or may be rescheduled. Find updates on our website at peoples.coop/from-the-board.**

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, April 28th, 6-8pm
Tuesday, May 26th, 6-8pm
Tuesday, June 22nd, 6-8pm

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Cover photo courtesy of Persephone Farm.

Printed by Oregon Lithoprint.

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from the editor

When we first started putting together the Spring edition of Grassroots, we were hard at work developing special events, promotional sales, and Community Room programming to mark the Co-op's upcoming 50th anniversary. This newsletter was supposed to kick off a year-long celebration, and we couldn't have imagined that it would come out in the middle of a global pandemic.

Obviously, a lot of things have changed since then. But one important thing hasn't, and that is the sense of interdependence between People's and our community. When the Co-op first opened its doors in 1970, it was so that members of the community could buy whole foods that weren't available elsewhere. In the '90s, when it looked like the Co-op might close, members of the community who relied on the foods we had to offer took on the labor of keeping it afloat. In the 2000s, community members helped the Co-op expand into its current size and form, building out the addition, helping out in the store, and shopping throughout the construction. As the Co-op has worked to meet the needs of the community, so has the community worked to support the Co-op.

In this historic moment, as we work to learn new ways of being, working, and living in community, together yet apart, our mutual dependence is more apparent than ever. When our customers line up and patiently wait their turn to shop at the Co-op, they are telling us that the work we do is important to them – the food we sell, the organizations we support, the programs we offer, the care and precautions we take to keep each other safe during this pandemic. We hear from them too, that no one is doing this better than People's, that the Co-op feels like the safest, calmest, and best place in town to shop right now. And so, despite the many changes and challenges we've undergone in the last 50 years, we find ourselves again in the position of meeting our community's food needs in a way that other stores won't or can't.

At the same time, we feel the threads of community support that have been woven over the years gathering around us as well. We have received unsolicited donations of hand-sewn face-masks from Member-Owners and hand sanitizer from Stone Barn Brandyworks. A community partner, Farmers Market Fund, offered the Co-op additional funding to double our Farmers' Market SNAP match to \$20 per person per week. Shoppers have been donating generously to our staff support fund at the registers, and frequently call and write to thank us for our work. On top of all this support from individuals in our community, both the Co-op and Farmers' Market have received support from a broad network of other co-ops, community organizations, and nonprofits. These donations and offers of support have enabled us to continue to do our work with more ease and stability.

We are grateful for all the ways our community has shown up for us, and for all the ways we have been able to support you. It seems there is a lot here to celebrate amidst all this direness, and I am glad we are all in this together. This isn't the celebration we had planned or hoped to share with our community, but we trust that there will be time for that later.

Ashley Todd, Co-Manager

Greetings from the Board!

When we first thought about writing an article for the Spring Grassroots we were looking forward to sharing some very exciting news: People's Co-op was founded in 1970 and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year! We were anticipating planning and sharing ways to celebrate this with you, our Member-Owners and the greater community. Along with this milestone we were, and still are, excited to share that the Co-op made a profit in 2019! This is the result of many challenging conversations, decisions and hard work by the Collective Management to increase sales and run the store more efficiently. We were excited for the conversation at the April board meeting to discuss the possibility of returning some of that profit to you, our Member-Owners, who have been a key part of making this possible. The conversation will still happen at our April meeting, however will likely look very different within the current situation. We know you have other choices, so we appreciate your continued support and patronage! Thank you.

Between when we first thought about this article and now, the world has changed dramatically. The current situation is unlike anything we, as individuals or collectively have ever experienced before. It is scary, hard and challenging on so many levels.

Our staff is rising to the challenge, problem solving and adapting (as we all are) and learning to navigate this new world. The Co-op has never been in a situation like this, and the Board is grateful for all the attention and thought the Collective has put into how to best respond to the ever-evolving landscape. You, our Member-Owners and community at large, have also been adapting to and understanding these changes as we all work together to stay safe and healthy. We know our staff, shoppers, and community have all been under an incredible amount of stress, in both our personal and work lives. The Co-op is doing its best to meet our staff's needs and the needs of the greater community to access healthful food, and creating a place for just a little human connection as more people are staying home and limiting their contact with others.

No one knows how long this will last. We hope you keep supporting the Co-op, so that we can keep bringing you the high quality foods and sense of community that you have come to appreciate. We are all in this together, and that is how we are going to get through this. People's is so much more than a store, it is a community. And that matters now more than ever.

Wishing you safety and health in these uncertain times,

Jenny Owen, Board President

Community members sculpting the Co-op's cob exterior, circa 2002.



Root Building Revival Working Group Update

by Amina Rahman, External Development Manager

On January 6th, the Collective Management closed the store in order to complete several much-needed updates that would have otherwise been impossible to perform. The closure mainly involved the installation of our new retail freezer, but also included other updates, such as repainting the beloved kids' corner, repainting the customer restroom, as well as several other imperative maintenance projects that could not be completed during regular store hours. These projects were carefully planned and coordinated by the Root Building Revival Working Group, a new committee of the Collective Management.

The Root Building Revival Working Group (RBR) was established after the Collective Management decided against the relocation of People's Food Co-op to

a different, larger location. The RBR has been tasked with making larger improvements to the "root building" to make our beloved but small building safer for workers, as well as to improve accessibility to customers and staff, and create a more beautiful community gathering space for all. Projects that are actively being investigated include: re-organizing backstock for safety and efficiency, resurfacing the retail floor, resetting the retail shelving, and reviving the living roof.

Do you have creative ideas for how the Root Building Revival Working Group can care for the building? Are you a contractor or tradesperson that would like to work with us? Email us at rbr@peoples.coop!

9 Ways to Help Us Feed the Revolution

by Jen Bishop,
Board of Directors

Editor's note: this article has been updated to reflect the Co-op's changes in operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

People's is at a metaphorical crossroads, proud of our 50-year history yet uncertain about what the future holds. As a small, community-owned, collectively-managed grocery store, we struggle to compete against the industrial-scale grocers wooing conscious customers away from our store. We're an O.G. (Original Grocer!) in the natural foods movement, but with so many big players saying, "Oh, gee, there's a LOT of money in natural foods," we need your help to keep fighting for food justice.

So, in the spirit of everyone giving what they can, here are 10 ways to support our co-op's revolutionary vision. Free things, fun things, tough things... there's something for everyone.

We can't stress enough that we need your help to thrive. There's no shortage of ways to get involved and support our community resource, and we'll be truly grateful for whatever you can contribute. Thank you for feeding our revolution. We can't do it without you!

1 Buy from People's whenever you can

Don't let perfectionism get in the way of our shared prosperity by saying, "But I can't do all my shopping at People's." Every single purchase counts, whether it's one item or a hundred.

2 Place special orders

Did you know that placing a special order for a case or bulk quantity of an item can get you a 10% discount? Some restrictions apply, but most items we carry (and even some we don't normally) can be special-ordered – everything from rice to shampoo to cauliflower. Ask for more information and fill out a special order form at the register.

**Some items may be unavailable for special order during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

3 Attend Board meetings*

Your Board of Directors represents Member-Owners, and a portion of every meeting is reserved for your concerns. Whether you share what's on your mind or come to check out what the Board is up to, your presence is valued. Meetings are held in our Community Room on the 4th Tuesdays of the month and start at 6PM. A healthful, organic meal is served at 5:30PM.

**Check peoples.coop/from-the-board for info on Board meetings during COVID-19. Meetings may be held online via Zoom.*

4 Attend the Annual Meeting of Member-Owners*

The Annual Meeting is a great time to meet up with other Member-Owners for an afternoon of learning, conversation, and delicious food.

**Due to the pandemic, the Annual Meeting, which was scheduled for July 11th this year, will be postponed until the Fall or Winter. Stay tuned for a date!*

5 Apply to work at the Co-op

People's is a human-scale, democratic, and empowered workplace committed to fostering human rights, social and economic justice. If you – or someone you know – would thrive as a worker at People's, learn more at www.peoples.coop/employment.

6 Become a Hands-On Owner (HOO)

HOO's support staff and our Collective Management (CM) in stocking, cleaning, and maintaining our store, and are rewarded with a shopping discount up to 15%. To apply, go to www.peoples.coop/hoo-application.

7 Vote in our upcoming Board of Directors & NMEC Elections

Vote for Board and Nominations & Member Engagement Committee (NMEC) candidates! You can vote online or in the store. Stay tuned for more information about candidates and the process.

8 Shop at People's Farmers' Market*

Our Farmers' Market is the longest running year-round market in town and happens every Wednesday from 2-7PM. Farmers literally feed the world, and they need our support.

**The Farmers' Market is operating differently during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stay up to date at peoples.coop/farmers-market.*

9 Introduce your people to People's

Everyone is a unique venn diagram of community – geographic, social, familial, etc. When we actively expand our various communities' boundaries, we diversify and strengthen the People's community, too.

Spring Reflections from our Local Farmers



by Sarabell Eisenfeld, Produce Co-Buyer

People's Produce department gets excited each spring when the availability of local produce expands. New crops are continually rotated into the farm delivery lists and produce displays, and we celebrate the season's "multiple springs."

For greenhouse growers, their awakening comes in February. For growers who plant outdoors, their firsts of spring come to us March through May. And for our fruit growers, the season begins as late as June. At People's, we're in constant relationship with the subtleties of the seasons. Only small co-ops like us can get quantities of special spring tastes like nettles and wildcrafted morels to pass along to you.

I reached out to our Farm-Direct farmers for their reflections on land stewardship, their relationship with People's, and what they're looking forward to this spring. Here's what some of them had to say!

**This article was written before the COVID-19 pandemic. It feels especially important right now to root in what is close, dear, and nourishing, and it's a testament to the importance of our local farm relationships that this content feels as relevant as ever.*

Persephone Farm

Lebanon, OR; Santiam & Kalapuya lands

Long-time Persephone Farm owners Elanor and Jeff are in the process of handing the farm off to Erin and Theo, who are pictured at left.

"Little pockets of warm air cling to the higher points around the farm as the sun sets, and the cool pockets settle in the dips.... Dew on savoy cabbage leaves and kale dimples sparkle like a thousand little diamonds in the early light."

"We are farming on the land of the Kalapuya tribes that lived along the Santiam River. As farmers, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves about the history of this land, settler colonialism and first foods."

"[Persephone] treats the soil with respect, making sure the soil has plenty of rest between crops and is covered by legumes and grasses over the winter to help with water filtration and to mitigate soil erosion. Our soil's organic matter content has increased markedly since the farm's beginnings in 1985! We continue to encourage biological and ecological practices with insectaries, beetle banks, and hedgerows planted to native species."



Wobbly Cart Farm

Rochester, WA; Chehalis land

Wobbly Cart workers are pictured above.

"This season, we're planting many new-to-us varieties of chicory/radicchio. We celebrate our CSA program in its 14th year! The farm is spread out over several locations in the beautiful Chehalis River Valley. The river remains undammed and is subject to broad fluctuations in flow throughout the year. We often have major flood events and wetlands that fill in large sections of the farm in the winter. Wildlife include Bald Eagles, Wood Duck, Beaver, Deer, Several salmon species, Coyote, Black Bear and Cougar. People's Food Co-op has been very supportive of us over the years. Not only buying from us regularly for the store but also hosting our SE Portland CSA drop off. We appreciate the values of the co-op to prioritize local growers, sustainability, and social justice." -Asha

Hood River Organics

Hood River, OR; Wasco & Wishram lands

Hood River Organics has been selling produce to People's for 20 years.

In early Spring, Dan was finishing up pruning the apple and pear trees, celebrating that it is "actually very enjoyable manual labor, your body is up right and in good ergonomic position (opposed to being hunched over toiling in the gardens)."

Other than those sweet fruits, their tried-and-true planting is their Spicy Greens Mix. "For the past several years we've just tried to improve on what we grow with subtle changes. This year we are adding more edible flowers to our Spicy Greens Mix like a mix of delicate marigolds and nasturtiums."



Fiddlehead Farm

Corbett, OR; Cowlitz land

Katie Coppoletta and Tayne Reeve of Fiddlehead Farm are pictured above.

"Fiddlehead is a queer, women owned and operated family farm. We have a 6 year old daughter and my parents also live on the property, helping with our daughter and property maintenance. Plus they cook us dinner a lot in the busy season!"

"We're following our tried and true Spring planting plan for beets, carrots, peas and spring greens. We prep the ground in October so we can start our planting in February and get a jump start on all the spring treats!" -Katie



Blue Truck Farm

Wilsonville, OR; Atfalati & Kalapuya lands

Charlie's 4-year-old, who likes to help around the farm, is pictured above.

"I involve my kids in as much of the growing process as I can. Although my 1 year old is really good at eating dirt, my daughter is great at seeding the trays in the green house, weeding and helping with harvesting. This year we'll grow around 25-30 varieties of Heirloom tomatoes. My almost-4 year old spends hours picking the cherry tomatoes and ground cherries. Last year, not a single ground cherry made it to an account because she ate them all! We see the fog roll down the Willamette River from the coastal range in the distance. The neighbors have a few cows that get the produce that doesn't make the cut." -Charlie

Our Table Cooperative

Sherwood, OR; Kalapuya land

Our Table workers are pictured at left.

"At Our Table, we try to cause the least amount of soil disturbance, maintain the health and vitality of our soil and preserve it for future generations. We grow Rainbow Chard from Uprising Seeds and Lacinato and Dazzling Blue Kale from Wild Garden Seeds – both are awesome local seed companies!

"We love to work with other co-ops to provide great local food! [We're] looking forward to sugar snap peas, purple snow peas and shell peas for the Spring, they're already in the ground and looking good!

"We strive to provide full time year round employment with a living wage to our farmers. Since we are a co-op, we are worker-members and owners of our farm! We have almost 9 acres of blueberries that have been here 25 plus years." People's sells Our Table's blueberries every Summer!" -Karen

Gathering Together Farm

Philomath, OR; Kalapuya & Chemapho lands

"Every vegetable that comes off of this farm and has made it onto your plate was first gazed upon by someone who was looking at it to decide whether or not it was ready, whether or not it was good. We take years of experience and embodied knowledge into a single glance where we ask ourselves—should I pick this? All the while knowing that what is not ready today only awaits our asking of the same question tomorrow. There is always a relationship before there is food." -Laura

"We are farming on Kalapuya lands along the Mary's River. In our fields that are closest to the river, dark obsidian shards and arrow-heads have been found in the soil, telling the story of the lives of the people who lived on these lands before they were forcibly removed from them. We're learning more about the land that we're on, and about the history of who has been allowed to own land in this state and who hasn't, to be a part of the conversation about how to make reparations going forward." -John



Mustard Seed Farms

St. Paul, OR; Ahantchuyuk & Kalapuya lands

Mustard Seed has been selling produce to People's for nearly 30 years! Farmer Brown is pictured above.

"Being flat and open we can watch the weather as it approaches. This area is drier than the surrounding areas. When the wind blows there is nothing to stop it so we feel the full force of it. We have a wonderful grove of trees around our house and farm buildings which shelters us from the wind.

"People's has been our #1 customer in Portland for many years. We appreciate the feedback we get from your staff about the quality of our produce, so we have a great 2 way relationship." -David

Northwest Organics

Ridgefield, OR; Cowlitz land

Northwest Organics has been selling produce to People's for 17 years.

"We get our tomato starts into the ground in April. Our biggest crops are our Heirloom tomatoes in late July, and garlic starting in June. Garlic curls will be coming in May. You also know us for our fresh raspberries in June. People's carries our raspberries in the freezer all through the year. Be in touch if you're interested in farm volunteer opportunities." -Greg

Thank you, farmers, for the gorgeous foods and the relationships you tend. Thank you shoppers, for valuing these tales, and the ties between your table and the land.





Garlic Scape Pesto

Garlic scapes are the marvelous, curly tops of garlic, which are harvested before they flower. Their flavor is mild, sweet, and lightly garlicky. This recipe is meant to be freeform – adjust the quantity of each ingredient to your liking!

Ingredients

- 3 handfuls garlic scapes
- 10 handfuls of all the Spring greens you can find. Sorrel and fresh nettles are both great options!
- 2 handfuls seeds or nuts. Sunflower seeds and/or hazelnuts taste great in this pesto.
- ½ cup yogurt
- 1 tablespoon each lemon juice and ume plum vinegar for tang!
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- Pinch salt
- Calendula flowers for garnish

Instructions

In your food processor, blend all ingredients. Add more salt, lemon juice, ume plum vinegar, and nutritional yeast as desired, to taste. Garnish with calendula flowers.

Dip chips, serve on rice, pasta, tortillas, eggs, or eat it by the spoonful!

Store in the refrigerator.

The Seven Cooperative Principles

#1 Voluntary, Open Membership

Open to all without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

#2 Democratic Member Control

One member, one vote.

#3 Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. The economic benefits of a cooperative operation are returned to the members, reinvested in the co-op, or used to provide member services.

#4 Autonomy & Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

#5 Education, Training, & Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

#6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional, national, and international structures.

#7 Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



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