

2023 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

Vote in the Board of Directors' Election September 19 through October 18



by Mike Connors
Director and Nominating
Committee Chair

Fellow Member-Owners,

I hope you were able to join us August 20 as we celebrated the Co-op's 50th Anniversary and thanked the countless individuals whose energy and efforts brought the Co-op to where it is today. I am incredibly proud of our members because you support local farmers, culinary artisans, charitable giving, environmental initiatives, and you do all of this while providing quality jobs with excellent benefits to our ~180 employees. All of this is possible because at some point during our 50-year history, you chose

to invest in your community and you continue to turn to the Co-op for the local products we all love. Thank you!

So much about our organization, our community, and our planet has changed during the decades since we first opened our doors as Humboldt Common Market. What will the next 50 years bring? If you are anything like me, trying to think that far into the future elicits excitement and intimidation; offering opportunity and potential peril. How can our beloved Co-op not just survive but thrive as the pace of change around us inevitably accelerates? No one person has the answers. The best way to achieve our goals is to work as a community, CO-OPERatively, and shape that future together.

Here's how you can play an active role:

Vote - Cast a ballot! We are a democratic institution and are not beholden to Wall Street or wealthy owners. Members decide our direction and our future.

Show Up - Share your voice! We need everyone's input to be our best. Join a Board Meeting, fill out

a survey card, reach out to Board Members, talk to staff, engage with us on social media, AND submit comments on our website. **Serve** - Run for the Board of Directors. Join a committee. Take a larger role in shaping the future of our Co-op.

Vote today to help us fill one general and two employee Board seats. Our future depends on a diversity of ideas, opinions, and participants. Please join us!

Thank you.

Save the Date!

50TH ANNIVERSARY
**ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

AT THE
D STREET
NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTER
1301 D STREET
ARCATA, CA

OCTOBER 15, 1-4PM



SEE INSIDE FOR
Candidate Statements • Elected Employees
Voting Guidelines • Official Voting Ballot





Meet the Candidates

All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



Joanne McGarry

1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

I have lived in Humboldt for eleven years yet I have been familiar with the North Coast Co-op from its early days when visiting here since the 1970s. I have been a non-member observer of the Co-op's evolution and decided to finally join as a member and run for the Board because I now see this institution 50 years on being the agent for change.

2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I think my experience as a student at UC Davis during the mid to late 70s prepared me for a life of commitment to just causes. Working with political causes and candidates such as farmworker rights and anti-nuclear and anti-apartheid back 45 years ago to my current advocacy for climate justice and peace plus my 16 years as Board Secretary for The San Francisco SPCA have given me the experience of what a Board does and what is required of a Board member.

3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

Challenges and opportunities facing the 50 year old Co-op are to stay relevant and become a renewed leader in our Humboldt community for demonstrating the values of the founding organization to provide healthy and sustainable food and other products in a community sharing way and educating the members and the greater community about true cooperative living that will be the only way to survive in the future climate changing world.

4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

A vote for me will not be regretted.

Meet the Candidates



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George WinterSun

1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

When my wife and I first moved to Eureka in 2004, the presence of the Coop was a key factor in our decision, and we've been members since then. I've been interested in the Board for years but didn't have the time for it until retiring earlier this year. I think food is a key area for community building and local resilience, and the Coop is the natural hub for this. I would like to help the Coop maintain and strengthen its important focus on organic food for and from the local community.

2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I am also on the KMUD Board of Directors as a member representative.

3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

Ongoing financial viability is likely the main challenge. The opportunity is to be a leader and focal point of local resilience in the face of upcoming issues including climate change and local economic uncertainties.

4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

Even with great local CSAs and farmers' markets, the Coop is still the anchor institution year-around.



Meet the Candidates

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Ellis Smith

Employee Candidate

1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

I have been a Co-op employee for a year, starting at the Arcata store as a cashier and moving to my current position as an auxiliary clerk at the Eureka store at the end of 2022. I believe that as an employee director, I would be able to provide a perspective often absent from the decision-making process of an organization such as the Co-op. As a nonbinary person with over a decade of experience in the service industry, I believe that I could provide a voice for the queer working class of Humboldt County, which is widely represented in our employee and member rosters but often left out of discussions about the future of both our organization and the community at large.

2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I graduated from Humboldt State University in 2017 with a degree in marine biology. The focus of my studies was the ecology of marine plants and algae, a field that provided me with a deep respect for interconnectedness in both natural and human relationships. My educational background as well as my years of service experience have left me with an ecological mindset that values a holistic approach to decision-making where the needs of the community are at the forefront. I believe that this mindset would help me to be an adaptable and thoughtful member of the board.

3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

The political and environmental landscape of our world is changing, and I believe that it is important for the Co-op to adapt and react to these changes with empathy and community service at the forefront of its approach. Most importantly, I think that the Co-op has a unique opportunity to be a safe haven in our community. Too many businesses ignore the world outside of their bottom line, and I think the Co-op is in a position to be a different kind of business in the face of an unstable and worrying future, one which genuinely cares for its employees, community, and natural environment.

4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

At 29, I know that I am young and have a non-standard background for a board member. However, I think that my life experience and values would be an invaluable addition to the board's membership. Above all, I deeply care about the Co-op and want to see it thrive.

Meet the Candidates



All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



Mimi Smith

Employee Candidate

1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

I feel the North Coast Co-op plays an important role in our community in very many ways. I appreciate the commitment to finding and carrying products from local vendors, especially BIPOC vendors, which very directly supports the local economy and helps local business owners thrive. Customers know that the Co-op is an excellent place to find products made in their own county and they feel good knowing that their patronage is supporting their neighbors. As an employee, I feel well equipped to say that the work environment the Co-op fosters is one to be admired. The Co-op strives to treat its employees well and values their input as it

knows that it will receive the dedication and diligence it needs to thrive in return. It is able to create an environment of teamwork and respect that I am proud to be a part of. I feel that taking a place on the board of directors would give me the opportunity to serve both our members as well as my coworkers to the capacity they deserve.

2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

As a Senior Clerk at the Co-op, I spend most of my time at the Customer Service desk, which is very central to the store. I am delighted to have the chance to greet all of my coworkers daily and establish relationships with them. Senior Clerks are often the first ones people come to with issues they may experience during their work day and it is a great pleasure of mine to be able to assist them with it and work through it, no matter the department. I feel having the rapport that I do with my coworkers will lend me a better voice to represent them if I were a board member. It also demonstrates that I am thrilled to work as part of a team and do well as part of discussions and problem solving. Through both my work as Senior Clerk at the Co-op, as well as an Assistant Manager through my previous job at Sonic Drive-In, I have had the opportunity to train many people to thrive at their workplace. I feel that training others has made me a better communicator and given me the opportunity to work closely with people, which is an experience I really value.

3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

I believe the Covid-19 pandemic still presents a very big challenge. Not only were there major changes in store that we are still feeling the waves of, but our community suffered as well. There are businesses that we once supported that shut down as a result of it, leaving gaps in the market for local products consumers are not able to get anymore. I feel that while this is challenging, this presents the Co-op with the opportunity to reach out more than before to try to help Humboldt County thrive. Our county is a very unique one that holds an emphasis on supporting its local community, which the Co-op is very well equipped to provide. members. I hope to continue to do this important work.

4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

500-word count limit reached.

Voting Guidelines

Members can cast their ballots from September 19 through October 18 at 9pm.

Votes will be considered valid if all of the following apply:

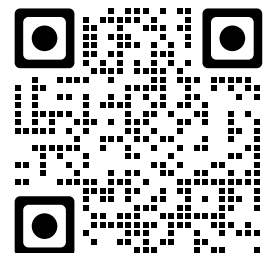
1. Membership with North Coast Co-op is current as of August 5, 2023. Household Shoppers on a membership do not qualify to vote. To check your membership status, contact membership@northcoast.coop or (707) 443-6027 x 434.
2. Votes per ballot cannot exceed the number of open seats. There is one open General Director seat.
3. There are two open Employee Director seats that must be ratified by the membership.
4. Ballots must include the member's name written legibly, their membership number and their signature.
5. Write-in candidate must be current members of North Coast Co-op and agree to candidate requirements (list available at voting table).
6. All ballots, including mailed ballots, are to be received by 9pm on October 18.

Policies and Procedures

- A vote may be cast online (preferred) or with a paper ballot.
- In the event that more than one otherwise valid ballot is cast by the same membership but by a different name on the membership, the vote of the majority will bind all.
- Electioneering will not be allowed within 15 feet of the ballot boxes or 5 feet of any entrances to the stores.
- Ballot boxes are located near the front entrance in each store.
- Ballots may be dropped off at ballot boxes in the Arcata or Eureka store or mailed to the address shown on the ballot. All mailed ballots must be received by 9pm on October 18.
- For a vote to be valid a quorum must be met, which is 250 or 5 percent of the membership (whichever is lesser) casting valid ballots.
- The one candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.
- The Nominating Committee will count the ballots on October 21 and notify the membership with in-store signs by Thursday, October 26.

Online Voting Guidelines

- Online voting can be accessed through a web browser on a computer or mobile device by visiting Northcoast.coop/vote.
- The member number, full name and signature prompts are required for a ballot to be valid.
- All voting prompts are optional. You may answer as many as you want to.
- Refreshing your browser window will restart the voting process. Only do so if you intend to start over.
- Refer to this election guide during the online voting process, if needed.



Scan to access online voting page.

2023 OFFICIAL BALLOT

Due Oct. 18
by 9pm

Online voting option available at www.northcoast.coop/vote

Please read the Voting Guidelines on pg. 6 of the Election Guide and vote online OR below.

All three lines below must be filled out and legible in order for this ballot to be valid.

Full Name *(Printed Clearly, Required)*

Member Number
(Required)

Signature *(Required)*

Fold this section in second.

1. **There is one open General Director seat.**

Vote for **one** candidate in this section. More than one vote in this section, write-in or not, will invalidate this ballot.

Joanne McGarry

George WinterSun

Write-in:

2. **There are two open Employee Director seats.**

Employee Director must be ratified by the membership during the general election. Affirm (yes) or reject (no) the candidates elected by employee members during the employee election.

Ellis Smith

 YES NO

Mimi Smith

 YES NO

Fold this section in first to retain anonymity.

Vote by October 18 at 9pm

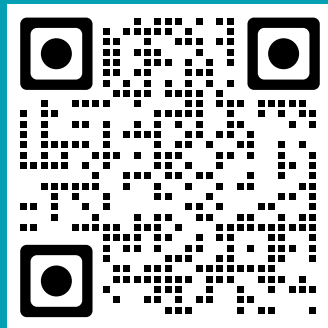
Vote online at www.northcoast.coop/vote or return your ballot to the provided ballot boxes available in both store locations.

Be sure to fold your ballot in thirds along the guides to retain anonymity.

You can also put your ballot in an envelope and mail it to:

Attn: Membership Coordinator
North Coast Co-op
811 I Street
Arcata, CA 95521

Save a trip to the store by voting online at
www.northcoast.coop/vote



Scan to access online voting page.

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**All ballots must be received by
October 18 at 9pm**

Return your ballot to the provided ballot boxes available in both store locations.
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