

# 2025 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

**Vote in the Board of Directors' Election  
September 26 through October 22**



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## **It Is Co-op Election Season**

We have two people “running” for two open positions on the Board of Directors. So, this year we are not choosing ~ we are voting to confirm. Voting now would be an affirmation that you want a functioning board, and that it is important to you that we continue to be an inspired collaborative co-op.

Beyond the elections, your biggest vote is your voice at Board meetings; as well your choices of what food you choose to buy. And, of course where you choose to shop.

The workers on the Board are voted for by the workers; and then listed on the members ballot to be ratified.

The Annual Membership Meeting is a good opportunity to meet Board members.

See ya!

Roger, Board President



# Meet the Candidates

All candidates were invited to submit a statement of up to 500 words. Statements are printed as received, with no edits.



## Hayley Simera

Cooking, gardening, and baking have taught me one of life's truths: food brings joy! It is not just fuel; it is love, creativity, and connection. When you know the farmers who grow your carrots or the bakers who make your bread, it feels good. Shopping at the Co-op gives me that feeling of being part of something bigger, and it inspires me to help keep that magic alive for everyone. Serving on the Board would give me the chance to strengthen our local food system and keep our community connected, fed, and thriving.

I studied Agriculture at College of the Redwoods, where I gained a deep appreciation for the hard work that goes into feeding a community. I understand the realities local producers face, as well as the importance of making fair, informed decisions that honor both their effort and our members' needs. At the Gene Lucas Community Center, I hear directly from neighbors about their priorities and challenges, insight I would carry into every board discussion. Through my work with the Northern California Association of Nonprofits (NorCAN), I help put on board governance trainings that support stronger, more effective boards. I know what makes a board thrive: collaboration, respect, and a shared vision, and I am ready to bring that to the Co-op.

Looking ahead, I see challenges, like balancing fair pay for our local producers with keeping food affordable for members. I also see exciting opportunities, especially to reach more people in the southern parts of our county and bring the benefits of local food and community connection to new tables.

I grew up here in Humboldt County, and this community is in my bones. Serving on the North Coast Co-op Board would be my way of giving back by celebrating the farms, the people, and the connections that make this place feel like home!



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## Jon Haumeder

In 2015, when my family temporarily moved to Portland, OR, I expected to find a coop in every neighborhood. To my surprise, this wasn't the case. There were a couple of small coops but nothing to rival our North Coast Coop, which we greatly missed. We have been back in Arcata for several years, and when we have visitors from around the world who are impressed by our store, I feel a sense of pride. The pride I feel in the North Coast Coop, my belief in food distribution as a not-for-profit community endeavor, and my experiences as a 40 resident of Humboldt County will make me an effective Board Member.

My first memory of a food co-op was as a child in Walnut Creek Coop, part of the East Bay Cooperative. I don't remember extensive bulk bins, but I do remember educational presentations (my first chalupe) and a mean burger at the lunch counter. We would deposit our recipes in a box to accrue patronage dividends, which I came to understand came to use because we owned the store.

I came to Arcata in 1981 to attend Humboldt State University and graduated with a degree in Philosophy. I chose to stay in Humboldt, raised a family while working in construction and human services. My kids went to Gateway School in Arcata, a parent-run cooperative, where I served on the board (including a term as president). It was a beautiful, pre-charter school experience in community education, in which I saw first hand what a group of involved citizens could create when they worked together. I also have experience in consensus decision-making, was trained in non-violent direct action for the anti-nuclear movement, and as a non-violent direct action trainer during the forest protest days. More recently, I served on the board of Big Brother/Big Sisters.

I joined the North Coast Co-op in 1982, when I first came to Arcata (#5338) and thus, I have been shopping at coops almost all of my life. I watched the East Bay Co-ops fail in the 1970's due to unsustainable growth, and remember our co-op's unsuccessful expansion in Fortuna in the late 1980's. I believe in avoiding growth for growth's sake, but instead, focusing on core values such as supplying wholesome, locally produced food and nurturing our relationship to staff and the community.



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## Elizabeth Gahm

I'm seeking re-election as the employee representative on the North Coast Co-op Board of Directors. My first term, though partial, gave me valuable firsthand experience with the Board's responsibilities, structure, and impact. I am now ready and eager to contribute more deeply over a full three-year term.

Over the past year, I've regularly attended board and finance meetings and actively participated in the Strategic Planning process that established the Co-op's five-year goals. This work reinforced my commitment to cooperative values and deepened my understanding of how the Board can foster a culture of collaboration, transparency, and shared accountability throughout the Co-op. The North Coast Co-op has been part of my life since my daughters childhood and is woven into both my family's history and the broader community history of Arcata. I want to honor that legacy while helping shape a strong, resilient, and sustainable future for the Co-op.

I've been a member of the North Coast Co-op since 1979. The Co-op has always been more than just a grocery store, it's a central part of my community and my values. It's where I've built relationships and invested in something larger than myself.

As a long-time employee, I bring an inside understanding of operations, a strong commitment to our mission, and a deep respect for the people who make this organization work, from staff to shoppers to local partners. I also have experience contributing to community events, and volunteer efforts that rely on communication, cooperation, and shared purpose.

I support the Co-op's mission to uplift local producers, offer clean and responsibly sourced products, and lead by example when it comes to sustainability. I also believe in growing our reach and equity, ensuring we serve a diverse, engaged, and empowered membership. A challenge I see the Co-op faces is staying financially viable in an increasingly competitive market, especially as online shopping grows. Balancing the Co-op's strong values with practical financial strategies will be essential.

Another ongoing challenge is maintaining robust employee benefits, such as healthcare, while still meeting high expectations for service, quality, and community impact. Fewer staff and rising demands make this balance more complex.

That said, we also have powerful opportunities. By growing our membership, expanding our digital and social media presence, and strengthening relationships with younger and more diverse demographics, we can keep the Co-op vibrant and relevant. We also have the opportunity to lead the way in ethical sourcing, food equity, and climate responsibility, areas where cooperatives can truly shine. I'm proud to be part of the Co-op legacy, and I want to help ensure it remains strong for future generations.

As a board member, I am especially committed to increasing employee engagement in board-related work and strengthening the flow of communication between employees and leadership. I believe our staff's insight, knowledge, and creativity are vital to the Co-op's future, and I want to help elevate those voices in a constructive way.

# Voting Guidelines

**Members can cast their ballots from September 26 through October 22 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 12, 2025. 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 are two open General Director seats.
3. Ballots must include the member's name written legibly, their membership number and their signature.
4. Write-in candidate must be current members of North Coast Co-op and agree to candidate requirements (list available at voting table).
5. All ballots, including mailed ballots, must be received by 9pm on October 22.

## **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 22.

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 two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.

The Election Committee will count the ballots on October 25 and notify the membership with in-store signs by Thursday, October 29.

## **Online Voting Guidelines**

Online voting can be accessed through a web browser on a computer or mobile device by visiting [northcoast.coop/vote](http://northcoast.coop/vote).

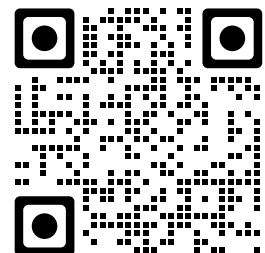
The member number, full name and signature prompts are required for a ballot to be valid.

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.