

# 2020 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

## Vote in the Board of Directors' Election September 22 through October 14



**by Kirsten Lindquist**  
Employee Board Member,  
Nominating Committee  
Chair & Treasurer

**V**oting to elect the people who govern us is probably on the minds of a lot of people these days, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic has affected how we interact as well as participate in our democratic institutions. As a member and share owner of the North Coast Co-op, it is your right and your privilege to elect the Directors of the Board who govern the Co-op. Unlike other privately owned or traded businesses, it is the members, shoppers like you who have bought a share in the Co-op

who determine who is in charge. This year you will cast a ballot to elect two general members of the board and ratify the employee member who has been elected by his co-workers. As with all elections, I strongly encourage you to participate.

Many internal and external events have affected the Co-op in the past couple of years - local economic downturn, financial crisis, leadership change, power outages, and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to name a few - but as an institution the Co-op has remained resilient and is beginning to thrive again. The current candidates for the Board of Directors bring diverse experience and perspectives and are worthy of your thoughtful consideration before voting.

Due to health and safety considerations for voters, and those who will eventually count the votes, the Co-op is offering electronic voting for the Board of Directors for the first time in its history. While paper

ballots will be available in both store locations, we encourage everyone who can to vote online. Co-op staff have created a site that is secure and easy to navigate, with stringent protections against fraudulent voting. We hope that this will encourage more members to exercise their right to vote.

The Board of Directors looks forward to seeing the election results and welcoming the new directors in mid-October. Thank you for being a member of the Coop and thank you for casting your vote!



SEE INSIDE FOR  
Candidate Statements • Voting Guide  
Official Ballot • Annual Membership Meeting



# 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.



## Ahmed Foggie

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

I am well aware of the importance of the North Coast Cooperative to the Humboldt community. When I first came to Humboldt County, the co-op was a place that accepted me and that is something that I appreciate. A place that advocates acceptance where I would like to invest my time. Personally, I think that its a store like no other and I would like to help it to prosper. Now that I'm no longer an employee, I would still like to be a part of this establishment that I see as a pillar of the community. As a memeber of the Board of Directors, I want to take an active role in shaping the policies that help guide the principles of the co-op.

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

I have been working on sales floors since I was sixteen. I worked on the co-op's sales floor for over two years. I know what people want and how they want it. My educational background is steeped in Academia, which means that I'm good at talking to a room full of people and verbalizing my objectifications. I am a teacher by trade but I've also worked as a project team leader on several research projects. To sum it up, I am the person you call when you need something thoroughly understood then explained. I enjoy working with teams composed of people who are each aware of their distinct abilities and who understand the best methods for bringing their skills together.

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

Right now we live in a time of civil unrest, pandemic and deep political polarization. However, I believe that the only thing certain about the future is that it is uncertain. I think that at a time when the future feels more uncertain than usual, a place like the co-op has the potential to behave as a stabilizing force in this small community. Moreover, as foreign supply chains become less reliant due to global events, the co-op's access to local food resources is definitely an asset going forward. Realisitcally, one of the biggest problems looking ahead is the impact of legalized marijuana. Speaking candidly its is apparent that the the liquidity flow in the area was reduced during recreational legalization. It is evident that the long term effects are still reverberating. Nevertheless, we must also consider the current economical effect of the recession that we are facing. As more people began to deal with insolvency their want to spend on more expensive organic food may lessen. This may seem like a current issue but the results of economic downturns linger.

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

I worked on the North Coast Co-ops sales floor for a little over two years. Most of you probably recognize me. While I was recommending a piece of fruit, wrapping up your meat or ringing up your items we've probably had a conversation. We most assuredly got to know one and another. Now I'm trying to serve you in a different capacity. I understand how the store operates and now I wish to take that knowledge and reapply it.

# 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.



## Pamela Lee

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

I retired from my career of 30+ years in Aug. 2020. My work has been focused on food service, mainly as it relates to institutional food systems, such as schools, senior programs & underserved populations. I had the pleasure of working w/ FOOD CORPS these past years (3+ years) as I brought them into a school district where my role was that of Director of Nutrition Services. Food justice is social justice, & I believe FOOD CO-OPS can help promote this campaign. I believe all people should have access to healthy fresh foods.

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

I received a B.A. from HSU in 1987 in Home Economics w/ an emphasis in Foods & Nutrition. I spent the majority of my career working w/ nonprofits running large nutrition programs. My employers include the Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara, Ventura County's Senior Nutrition Program, The Orfalea's School Food Initiative & Ocean View School District. I sat on the advisory board whilst employed w/ VC Senior Nutrition program, attended school board meetings when at ocean view SD & volunteered for 2 years as a grant maker for the Fund for Santa Barbara.

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

A big challenge is to meet market competition. With Costco, Target, Eureka Natural Foods all offering organics & local (some) foods, what makes & will make the Co-op stand out? What will foster customer loyalty? What can we do to continue to provide a unique, pleasant shopping experience that will keep customers coming back?

Another hot topic is that of inclusion, diversity & equity. Does our staff represent our customers? Does everyone feel welcomed at our stores? Are the staff being retained by decent wages, regular & relevant training & paths to advancement? Is our vibe warm & welcoming because we are well taken care of & wish this for our customers too?

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

I am just completing a 2 year leadership program called Radical Aliveness ([www.radicalaliveness.org](http://www.radicalaliveness.org)). This training would assist me in being a productive board member by: being able to hear multiple perspectives; being able to assist w/ change: sharing my non-shaming attitude & assisting & being able to facilitate conflict.



# Meet the Candidates

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## David Dahler

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

I have been shopping at the Co-op for 35 years and appreciate what a cornerstone it is to the community. The Co-op has been around for more than four decades and I hope my service can be part of the Co-op going forward decades to come. I recognize the responsibility and commitment the board seat requires representing employees, members and overall Co-op interests; fiduciary, social, environmental.

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

I have been attending Co-op board meetings regularly for the past few years and have been sitting on the Co-op finance committee for the past year. I have grown to increasingly understand issues facing the board. I have past experience on committees in several non-profits. My education includes a B.S. and M.A. I have past membership in UFCW and Teamsters. My work experience is broad including retail, grocery, food services and retail security. I've had positions holding a box cutter or mop to training, supervision and management. I have worked for small businesses to large corporations.

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

The last few years have been challenging for the Co-op and notably there have been great improvements. We are now all amidst a great stressor. The immediate priority for the Co-op is business survival and the further development of consistent sustainable profitability. The next few years I hope we can address deferred maintenance and capital expenditures integrated into long-term strategic planning.

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

I have witnessed board membership is tough, stressful and a challenge to hang in there. I realize the position requires tenacity, patience, compromise, preparation and judgement for which I believe I have readied myself. I look forward to working with the board and management for the Co-op's success. I have gleaned from membership the desire for clear communication, financial transparency and accountability. It is my sincere hope we can increase member participation in voting as well as committee and board meeting attendance.

# 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.



## Thomas Wehland

Employee Candidate

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

I would like to serve on the Board of Directors because I love our Co-Op. It is an incredibly special institution that I feel our community can and should be proud of. I know I am. I feel that by sitting on the Board of Directors, I can make a difference and help shape the future of our Co-Op in these unprecedented and uncertain times. I intend to do this primarily by representing the voice of our employees, who I see as our greatest asset.

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

I've worked at the North Coast Co-Op for over 4 years, 3 at the Arcata location, and 1 in Eureka. In that time I've had a chance to develop positive collaborative relationships with my coworkers in nearly every department at each store, both those in the union and those in management. These experiences have afforded me a working knowledge of the great strengths and unique challenges that face the Co-Op in each location. It has also allowed me to see how the two workforces fit together as part of a greater whole working with common purpose.

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

The most immediate challenge I see facing the Co-Op is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the economic impacts thereof. With record unemployment, and the loss of many local businesses, it has never been more important for our community to have a stable pillar they can count on. Many grocery stores see the panic buying and stockpiling this crisis has led to as an a simple opportunity for increased sales.

However, looking forward I see a greater opportunity in pivoting to meet the needs of a community that may have financial difficulties, job losses, and food insecurity in their future. I see it as the North Coast Co-Op's natural role to lead the way in alleviating as many of these stressors on our community as we can. Hopefully this crisis will pass quickly, and we can return to our role in the community as a leader in sustainability in our local food chain, and be a positive force for regrowth in the local economy. If it does not pass quickly or easily, our role in supporting local business partners could become vital to help sustain the local economy.

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

If elected, I will serve on the Board of Directors during a potentially pivotal period in the history of our organization. I see it as a duty to fill that role by representing as many of your voices as possible. I believe that representation will be crucial to shepherd our Co-Op through these uncertain times. Thank you for your support.

# Voting Guidelines

Members can cast their ballots from September 22 through October 14 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 8, 2020\*.
2. Votes per ballot cannot exceed the number of open seats. (There are two open seats.)
3. Ballots must include the member's name written legibly, their membership number and their signature.
4. Write-in candidates 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, are to be received by 9pm on October 14.

## **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 14.
- 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, with the exception of the Employee Director. The Employee Director must be ratified by the membership.
- The Nominating Committee will count the ballots on October 17 and notify the membership with in-store signs by Tuesday, October 23.
- Household Shoppers on a membership are not eligible to vote.

## **Online Voting Guidelines**

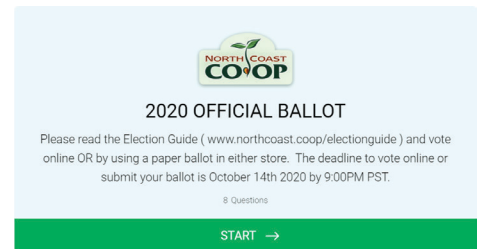
- Online voting can be accessed through a web browser on a computer or mobile device.
- The member number, full name and signature prompts are required for a ballot to be valid.
- All three voting prompts are optional. You may answer as many as you want to.
- Refreshing your browser window will restart the voting process. Only do so if you intend to start over.
- Step-by-step instructions on how to vote can be found on p. 7 of this Election Guide.

\* Based on Bylaw Section 4.13(c) Membership, the date for determining eligibility to vote is forty-five (45) days before the start of voting. This year's date of record is August 8.

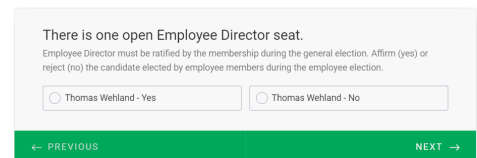
# Online Voting Guide

Vote online at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

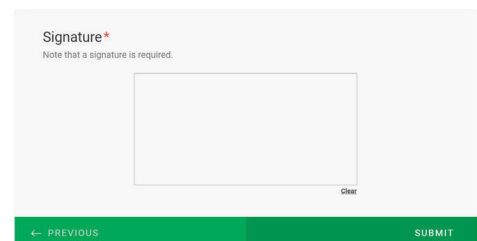
- Step 1 Go to [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote) on a computer, tablet or phone.
- Step 2 The front page has information on how to access this Election Guide electronically and the ballot submission deadline. Select START to proceed to the first question.
- Step 3 Enter your member number. This is a required step. Select NEXT to proceed to the next question.
- Step 4 Enter your First and Last name. This is a required step. Select NEXT to proceed to the next question.
- Step 5 Choose up to two candidates to vote for from the selection. You may choose up to two write-in candidates as your choices by selecting the write-in option and typing their name. Select NEXT to proceed to the next question. (If you choose not to vote on this question, select NEXT to continue to the next question.)
- Step 6 Choose to affirm or reject the Employee Director candidate elected by employee members during the employee election. Selecting an option will automatically proceed to the next question. (If the page does not automatically proceed or you choose not to vote on this question, select NEXT to continue to the next question.)
- Step 7 Choose to affirm or reject the proposed changes to the presented bylaw. More information on the proposed changes can be found on p.8 of the Election Guide. Selecting an option will automatically proceed to the next question. (If the page does not automatically proceed or you choose not to vote on this question, select NEXT to continue to the next question.)
- Step 8 Draw your signature in the designated box. If you are on a computer, use your mouse or trackpad to draw your signature. If you are on a touchscreen device, use your finger or stylus to draw your signature. You may select the CLEAR button to remove the signature if you need to start over. This is a required step. Select SUBMIT to complete the voting process.



Example of screen in Step 2.



Example of screen in Step 6.



Example of screen in Step 8.

# Proposed Changes to Bylaws

## Section 5.02 Amendment Explained



by Colin Fiske  
Board Vice President

Through the last several Co-op election cycles, the Board of Directors and staff have noticed some errors and inconsistencies in our Bylaws related to who can run for—and be elected to—the Board. Section 5.02 of the

Bylaws spells out qualifications for Directors, and we are now proposing a few changes to that section to help ensure fairness, effectiveness, and consistency in future elections. Here are the details for each proposed change:

- A) Although it might seem obvious, the Bylaws currently don't specify that a candidate for the Board must be a Co-op member—just that they have to be a member before they actually become a Director. As a membership-based democratic organization, it doesn't seem right that a non-member could run for the Board. We are proposing edits to clarify that as a board candidate you must be a member of the North Coast Co-op. See also part (c) below.
- B) The Bylaws prohibit employees in “management positions” from running for the Board. The idea is to avoid concentrating power in the hands of a few people and to ensure that rank-and-file employees can choose who they want as employee Directors. The term “management positions” has always been interpreted to mean the General Manager (GM) and those managers who report directly to the GM. But currently, the Bylaws don't actually include the GM in the definition—just the managers who report to the GM. That doesn't make much sense. So we are proposing edits to clarify that the GM also counts as a “management position.”
- C) Bylaws, Section 4.13(c), states that members are not eligible to vote if they joined the Co-op less than 45 days before the election. However, nowhere in the Bylaws does it specify a membership “record date” to run for the Board. That means that technically someone could run for the Board without even being eligible to vote in that election. That doesn't seem fair. So we are proposing a new Section 5.02(c) to clarify that candidates for the Board must be eligible to vote in the election for which they are a candidate.

- D) A couple of years ago, Co-op members approved a Bylaws amendment to allow the Co-op to slowly transition toward single-person membership. All new memberships are now limited to a single member, and existing multiple-person memberships are encouraged (but not required) to transition to single-person memberships. The idea is to ensure that each member has the same rights and voting powers. In that spirit, we are proposing a new qualification for Board members that would ensure that no two people from the same membership or the same household can be on the Board at the same time. Just like with part (b) above, we hope this would help avoid any unnecessary concentration of power and strengthen the Co-op's democracy.

If you have any questions about the proposed Bylaws changes, you can always reach out to the Board at [board@northcoast.coop](mailto:board@northcoast.coop). And if you want to be part of drafting future Bylaws changes, consider attending Policies & Procedures Committee meetings—they're open to all members and surprisingly fun! But whatever you do, please participate in the Co-op democracy. Vote!

### Proposed Changes to Bylaws Section 5.02.

- (a) ~~The Directors and candidates for Directors shall of the Corporation shall~~ be members of the Corporation and residents of California.
- (b) Individuals serving in management positions of the corporation shall not serve on the Board of Directors while they occupy such positions. “Management positions” ~~are will be~~ defined as follows: employees with management and administrative responsibilities that directly report to the General Manager. The General Manager and employees having management and administrative responsibilities and who report directly to the General Manager.
- (c) Any Director of the Corporation must be eligible to vote in the election for which they are a candidate.
- (d) No two directors of the Corporation shall share a single membership nor shall they reside in the same household.

*Proposed changes tracked in red.*



# Annual Membership Meeting

Sunday, October 11  
3:00pm-4:30pm via Zoom

Special Film Screening | Board Candidate Statements  
GM and Board Statement | Open Comment Session

## Special Film Screening

*Albacore Tuna: The Tale of a Fish*  
by Jennifer Bell & Jessica Eden



*From family fishing operations to sport and commercial fishing, this Food for Thought production explores the past and present of the albacore tuna fishery along the Pacific Northwest, including albacore tuna biology and fish processing.*



Zoom Meeting URL: [www.northcoast.coop/amm2020](http://www.northcoast.coop/amm2020)

NORTH COAST  
COOP



NORTH COAST  
COOP

811 | St. Arcata & 25 4th St. Eureka | northcoast.coop

*The* COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES *Seven*

voluntary  
& open  
membership

*Democratic  
Member Control*

MEMBER ECONOMIC  
PARTICIPATION

autonomy &  
independence

EDUCATION, TRAINING,  
& INFORMATION

*Cooperation among cooperatives*

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



# 2020 OFFICIAL BALLOT

Due Oct. 14  
by 9pm

Online voting option available at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

Please read the Voting Guides on p. 6 and p. 7 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 are two open General Director seats.**  
Vote for **two** candidates in this section. More than two votes in this section, write-in or not, will invalidate this ballot.

<b>Ahmed Foggie</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pamela Lee</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>David Dahler</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**2. There is one open Employee Director seat.**

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

**Thomas Wehland**    
YES NO

**3. Proposed Changes to Bylaws Section 5.02.**

- A) Directors and candidates for Directors shall be members of the Corporation and residents of California.
- B) Individuals serving in management positions of the corporation shall not serve on the Board of Directors while they occupy such positions. "Management positions" are defined as the General Manager and employees having management and administrative responsibilities and who report directly to the General Manager.
- C) Any Director of the Corporation must be eligible to vote in the election for which they are a candidate.
- D) No two Directors of the Corporation shall share a single membership nor shall they reside in the same household.

YES NO

Fold this section in first to retain anonymity.

## Vote by October 14 at 9pm

Vote online at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://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](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

## 2020 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

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All ballots due by October 14 at 9pm

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