

2026

North Coast Co-op Election Guide

**Vote in the Board of Directors Election
September 29 through October 20**



“

Most corporations exist to maximize profits for their owners, but at the Co-op we are the owners, and our values include self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

”

It Is Co-op Election Season

Fall is in the air, and that means it's election season for the Board of Directors at the North Coast Co-op. The board meets monthly to make decisions which affect the running of the Co-op, and it is time to elect two new members/owners.

According to the Board handbook, the Elections Committee is responsible for all things election-related, including “supervising the very process of democracy itself.” That may be a little grandiose, but the point is the Co-op is a democratic institution, which sets us apart from other types of grocery stores. Most corporations exist to maximize profits for their owners, but at the Co-op we are the owners, and our values include self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

For this model to work, we don't all have to serve on the board, but we do need to inform ourselves about the candidates and vote for the ones we feel are most qualified to lead the Co-op. So read up on the candidates, come to the Annual Owner Meeting, and vote in the board election. ■

Jon Haumeder
Elections Chair



Meet the Candidates

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



Katherine Almy

I came to Humboldt County over 30 years ago and have been a Co-op member for almost as long. As we all know, shopping at the Co-op is “more than a shopping trip.” I have met clients in the store asking for professional advice. I’ve met friends who passed on parenting tips and advice. I’ve gotten to know Co-op staff members. My son has grown up at the Co-op (even appearing in an ad campaign asking kids about their favorite fruit or vegetable - tomatoes for him). I trust the products I buy at the Co-op, because I trust the people I’m buying them from. When my husband and I were raising our son, we could rely on fresh

organic produce and healthy snacks for him. And now, as we get older and don’t always want to cook, we appreciate prepared foods that are made with local and organic ingredients. Being on the Board would be a way for me to support what I believe is a very important institution in Humboldt County.

My education is in business and community non-profit management, and my work experience includes running my own bookkeeping practice. Through this work I have been honored to be a part of the strength and vitality of the business community in Humboldt County. I have also served on the board of the Arcata Chamber of Commerce and the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. As a sole-proprietor, I’m able to make my own decisions without considering the opinions of others, but I am also limited to my own experience and knowledge when making those decisions. Working with a board is humbling, and sometimes frustrating, but gives the organization a greater depth of understanding when decisions are made with diverse leaders weighing in. Working with other boards has taught me to listen and try to understand opinions that differ greatly from my own.

One of the strengths of the North Coast Co-op has always been the commitment to the stated values of, “self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.” I believe that mission grows ever more important as the United States becomes increasingly fractured and suffused with mis-information and dis-information. People are looking for things they can rely on and believe in, and the Co-op offers that. With war in Iran, and rising gas prices, we face challenges as the economy struggles and people’s budgets are stretched. The Co-op will also, no doubt, face rising costs. These factors are both a challenge and an opportunity for the Co-op, which can be a source of good food, reliable information, and most importantly, community, in these uncertain times.



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Richard Livingston

A big challenge of the North Coast Coop is to be relevant to low-income residents. I would like to see the senior discount increased from 5% to the 15% offered by other local markets, including Wildberries and Murphy's Markets (Eureka Natural Foods offers a 10% senior discount). I would like to see policies that increase the number of SNAP recipients that shop at the Coop. I am 81 years old and am the managing director of EXIT Theatre, a small theater on the Plaza in Arcata. For 60 years I have directed a variety of nonprofit organizations. Thank you.



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Jasmine Sarp

I would love to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative because I am passionate about food systems and eager to serve the local community. I hold a Master's degree in Agroecology and Food Sovereignty, training that reflects my belief in sustainability across every part of the food system: ecological, economic, and social; and my commitment to helping local communities shape food and agriculture systems that provide healthy, culturally appropriate food. I would find joy in collaborating with the board, staff, and community members, and satisfaction in advocating for and helping to sustain the wonderful resource that is the co-op.

In addition to my Master's degree, I hold a BA in Graphic Design and have worked throughout my career in communications and marketing for clients including food brands, restaurants, and nonprofits. I have also played an instrumental role in volunteer spaces including an artist-run gallery, a feminist mapping collective, a community garden, and NCGA's Harvest Hub, where I served on the steering committee. Each of these roles strengthened my skills in collaborative organizing and project management. In my last professional role, I worked at Organic Seed Alliance as Assistant Director of Outreach and Communications, where I collaborated with fellow employees and the board to further our mission of putting the power of seed into the hands of growers, and completed racial equity training that continues to shape how I show up in collaborative spaces. In my current role with the Humboldt County Office of Education, I work on the Community Outreach and Engagement team and serve on our Equitable Hiring and Retention Committee, supporting schools and districts under the guidance of my supervisor and the Superintendent's Cabinet. While my position isn't in school nutrition, I'm always seeking out opportunities to advocate for healthy local food in our schools and to champion those doing that important work. Across these varied settings, I show up as a team player and a thoughtful listener, eager to effect meaningful change through measurable goals and action.

The biggest challenge I see facing the Co-op over the next five to ten years is making healthy, sustainable food accessible to all amid rising costs and inflation, while still giving producers and employees an equitable exchange for their labor. The biggest opportunity I see is continuing to build relationships with the many communities surrounding the Co-op: co-owners, the NCGA, the local extension office, the farming community, local tribes, immigrant communities, Cal Poly Humboldt's CASA program, the CR Shively Farm, Food for People, local schools and hospitals. The list goes on! This relationship-building, resource-sharing, and interdependence energizes me and gives me hope in facing the challenges ahead.

From my first job at 18, at a natural foods store, to who I am today at 38, I love and value food, and the people who go to great lengths to make it accessible to the public. I would be honored to bring that passion to the co-op's board. Thank you for your consideration!



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Karen Zimbelman

Hi North Coast Co-op member/owners!

Aren't we lucky to be able to shop at such a wonderful co-op? I'm grateful to our founders and all whose hard work, many hours of meetings, and dedication to the cooperative principles and values over our first 50+ years helped build such a strong, dynamic economic force in our community.

And I don't take it for granted. I'd like to add my experience and expertise to the North Coast Co-op Board of Directors to make sure we continue to have a vibrant cooperative serving its members well into the future. NCC has plenty of challenges ahead in the next 5-10 years, as do all grocery retailers. But we also have a strong foundation to build on.

If elected, I'd focus on making sure that the co-op has a strong and engaged membership – with new member/owners joining, investing, and understanding how they contribute to the co-op's success and their critical importance to the co-op's ongoing viability and sustainability. Making membership meaningful and relevant is a challenge facing all our peer co-ops, one that I think is critically important to getting to our second 50th anniversary.

About me: I've been a member of NCC since moving to Humboldt in 1987 to take the job of Membership Director at the co-op. I served in that role until 1989 and then began consulting with cooperatives and credit unions including training for their boards, volunteers and staff. Through that work, I:

- Provided training, ran strategic planning retreats, and served as an advisor to over 100 U.S. food co-ops spanning 25 years;
- Developed a self-study training program for co-op staff to help them better understand what it means to work for a cooperative that was used by over 45 co-ops;
- Was the founding executive director of the Cooperative Grocers' Information Network (now closed);
- Served as the coordinator for three regional cooperative grocers' associations (in the PNW, California, and SW regions) – organizing quarterly meetings, regional training sessions, store audits, resource sharing, group purchasing, etc.

In 2004, I was part of the team that merged nine regional co-op groups into National Co+op Grocers (NCG), a national cooperative of food co-ops that bring group volume and shared expertise to food co-ops throughout the US to better compete and improve benefits to their consumer members. I then worked at NCG, most recently as Senior Director of Membership and Cooperative Relations, until my retirement in 2023. In addition, I've served on the board or a member-elected committee of over 20 co-ops and non-profits including 35 years on the Supervisory (Audit) Committee of Coast Central Credit Union. In May I completed three terms on the board of the National Cooperative Business Association.

I'd love your vote in the year's election and welcome your thoughts, questions, or concerns at any time at kzimbelman@gmail.com. Most importantly, thanks for voting in our co-op's election!

Voting Guidelines

Owners can cast their ballots from September 29 through October 20 at 9pm.

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

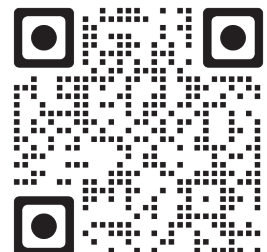
1. Ownership with North Coast Co-op is current as of August 15, 2026. Household Shoppers on an ownership do not qualify to vote. To check your ownership status, contact ownership@northcoast.coop or (707) 443-6027 x 434.
2. Votes per ballot cannot exceed the number of open seats. There are two open General Director seats.
3. Ballots must include the owner's name written legibly, their ownership number, and their signature.
4. All ballots, including mailed ballots, must be received by 9pm on October 20.

Policies and Procedures

- A vote may be cast online (preferred), at in-store stations, or via mail.
- In the event that more than one otherwise valid ballot is cast by the same ownership but by a different name on the ownership, the vote of the majority will bind all.
- Electioneering will not be allowed within 15 feet of the voting stations or 5 feet of any entrances to the stores.
- Voting stations 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 20.
- For a vote to be valid, a quorum must be met, which is 250 or 5 percent of the ownership (whichever is lesser) casting valid ballots.
- The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.
- The Elections Committee will count the ballots on October 22 and notify the ownership with in-store signs by Tuesday, October 27.

Online Voting Guidelines

- Online voting can be accessed through a web browser on a computer or mobile device by visiting northcoast.coop/vote.
- In-store online voting kiosks are also available.
- The owner 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.



Celebrate community ownership with good food and good vibes!

**Saturday, Oct 10
12pm-3pm**

**Arcata Community Center
321 Dr. M.L.K. Jr Pkwy
Arcata, CA 95521**

**12:00 - FREE food and live music by
Lizzy Moonbeam and JazzBros**

1:30 - Prize Drawing

2:00 - Owner Meeting



**RSVP at Customer Service or at northcoast.coop/RSVP
by Oct 4 and get an extra raffle ticket!**

*Open to Co-op owners, plus one
adult guest. Children welcome.*

2026 OFFICIAL BALLOT

Due Oct. 20
by 9pm

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

Paper ballots can be submitted via mail or at a voting station at either Co-op location.

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

Full Name *(Printed Clearly, Required)*

Owner 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 will invalidate this ballot.

Katherine Almy

☐

Jasmine Sarp

☐

Richard Livingston

☐

Karen Zimbelman

☐

Fold this section in first to retain anonymity.

Vote by October 20 at 9pm

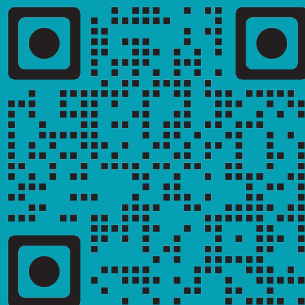
Vote online at www.northcoast.coop/vote or return your ballot to the provided ballot boxes available in both store locations.

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

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

**Attn: Ownership 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



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