Beginning a new year is always exciting. We set new goals and have a fresh outlook. We are optimistic, riding a new wave of energy. You will see with this issue of Conspiracy News that our cooperative’s energy level is higher than ever. Our Board of Directors has approved a new 5-year strategic plan and we have a vibrant staff actively developing new protocols for employee and customer interaction. We hope to set a good example not only to other forward-looking co-ops but also to our 4th Avenue business neighbors and downtown Tucson community.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kelly Watters for five years of dedicated service as the Co-op’s Outreach Coordinator and wish her the best of luck as she pursues new career opportunities. Kelly left the Co-op in October 2018. I worked with Kelly many times as a Co-op volunteer, assisting in the Outreach office with design, marketing, and newsletter-related tasks, including publication of two previous news articles. I forged new friendships with Co-op staff and have come to truly appreciate how committed they are to our community and to their environmental responsibilities. When John Glennon, the Co-op’s General Manager, asked me to take on the newsletter as Editor, I was happy to continue collaborating with the Food Conspiracy family.

You will see a new look to many things in 2019, including a refreshed newsletter focused on the people of the co-op. We think it is important for you to know the faces and personalities of co-op staff, management and producers. In future issues, we will also include additional participation of co-op owners. We want to share stories and promote staff/owner/customer interaction because in our togetherness we will grow stronger as 4th Avenue continues to change and the downtown economy grows and diversifies.

In this issue of Conspiracy News, we highlight some of the talented staff members who work tirelessly to bring you quality food and products. We present Laura Milkins’ entertaining progress report on the Zero Packaging Project, focus our Product Spotlight on Chef Abel’s Tortillas, and share another great review by our neighbor Antigone Books. I wrote a piece about an online cookbook service (and worked out an exclusive offer for Co-op patrons with the website’s owner!) and interviewed the founder of Tucson Improv Movement for our Tucson Gems column (researching that story was a blast!). We hope the faces and personalities involved will inspire, inform and entertain you.

Happy new year everyone!
JANUARY
Friends of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge
Created in Southern Arizona in 1985 to reintroduce the endangered Masked Bobwhite Quail back into the wild

FEBRUARY
Co-op Community Fund
Donated to three local non-profits of our owners’ choosing

MARCH
Mariposas Sin Fronteras
Supporting LGBTQ people in immigration detention

Round Up at the register

Bring your own bag to the Co-op and save money!

Single use paper bags cost 10 cents.
Choose from a colorful selection of reusable bags in the Co-op’s merchandise area.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOOD CONSPIRACY CO-OP

February is Our Birthday Month!
Join Us Saturday, February 2 for Conspiracy Cake and Food Demos PLUS...
Co-op owner discounts!
The Food Conspiracy Board of Directors is excited to announce that our Annual General Meeting will be held at Borderland’s Brewing Company on Saturday March 2nd, 2019. We will enjoy a beautiful dinner made from scratch with local ingredients from the Conspiracy Kitchen, as well as local craft beer served by Borderlands. This year we have something more for the Co-op kiddos. We are partnering with Playformance to offer a fun and engaging program during the business meeting portion of this year’s event. Our 2019 Annual Meeting will be a momentous milestone for Food Conspiracy as we unveil to you our new 5-Year Strategic Plan (read it on page 6) and the initial concept plans for our East Entrance Expansion Project.

Your Board of Directors finished another strong cycle of work in our November Board Meeting by approving Food Conspiracy’s 5-Year Strategic Plan, a project we have been working on for over a year. Please take some time to read it, paying special attention to our exciting Vision Statement. This plan honors our long history, powerful mission and strong community. With this vision, we look forward to Food Conspiracy’s bright future.

Considering owner input and all we had learned, about a year ago the Board of Directors took a thoughtful look at our expansion plans and set out in a new direction. Here is the Board approved statement that sums up that new direction: “The board has no plan to continue evaluating relocation options, but will continue exploring a wide range of expansion possibilities while better utilizing existing resources.” Consistent with that statement, we are happy to announce that we have begun the conceptual design of an improvement owners have been requesting for years – an east entrance to our store along with additional parking. It’s too early to provide details, but we plan to integrate our gardens and create outside café seating into the design and will have more information along with architectural renderings to share at our Annual Meeting in March.

This year, we plan to build on the momentum we generated at last year’s Annual General Meeting, and look forward to your input. Personally, the most meaningful statistic from last year’s election cycle was related to the three propositions we presented to owners. While two propositions received strong 2 to 1 support, one stood out with 3.5 to 1 support. It was the proposition addressing a potential barrier to running for a seat on the FCC Board of Directors. I deeply value our Co-op’s direct, highly functional democracy where all voices are heard. It has always been a beacon of light for me, even when I’m disheartened by world events. This year we will present another set of propositions that will open the door even wider for FCC owners who might like to serve on the Board of Directors. We are also continuing to review and revise our election processes to increase convenience and accuracy. We want your voice to be heard!

Join us for an exciting celebration of our Co-op: engage in discussions with your board members, hear from new board candidates running for election, learn and discuss our proposed bylaws changes that will be on the ballot, see our exciting east entrance concept drawings, and get to know your Co-op staff.

Come to the annual meeting March 2 and check out the conceptual drawings!
As I reflect on our theme for the 2019 Annual Meeting - Yes, We Are Open! - I am struck by how imperative the gesture of yes and the concept of openness are to our work at Food Conspiracy. Of course “yes” is the answer we want to hear when we ask if a product is available but for me our collective disposition to yes goes deeper than that by residing at the level of our cooperative culture. I believe the fluidity and movement of possibilities that the gesture of “yes” produces has the power to emanate throughout the space of our Co-op, extending into the very fabric of the aesthetic mood of our store. This tone setting gesture is then reflected in our interactions and relationships at all levels of our cooperation, whether in our Wellness Department, at the checkout lane, in a board meeting, or working with our local producers. I have committed my work as General Manager to instilling this culture of “yes” at Food Conspiracy every day, and I can share with you first hand that I’ve seen a blossoming of new pathways toward success with this approach.

The concept of openness is similar to the gesture of “yes” in that openness perpetuates potential. When our Co-op opens for business, we are opening to the potential of the day by striving to meet the needs of our owners and customers while facilitating health, wellness, sustainability and joy with the products we stock and the vibes of our store. However, the concept of openness as it relates to this year’s Annual Meeting has a very specific meaning. For nearly half a century, you - our wonderful owners and customers - have supported your Co-op by parking behind the store and walking around to our front door. At this year’s annual meeting we plan to present to you our openness to a vision: a vision to alleviate “the walk”, a vision to dramatically increase the convenience of shopping at our store, a vision to open new doors, a vision of an east entrance. The preliminary plan is to create an east entrance with cafe seating as you approach the new door with increased parking throughout our properties. We plan to integrate creative edible gardens throughout the design that will make for a truly beautiful parking and entrance concept. We are saying yes and opening new doors! Please be sure to come to our annual meeting on Saturday March 2, 2019 to celebrate with us and hear all about our plans for new successes at Food Conspiracy.

You might notice some awesome changes in our store culminating in January with our board-approved grab-and-go expansion project. In this project, we are replacing our sandwich bar with a new refrigerated case and a new island cheese case. The plan is to expand our back-of-house kitchen and produce production with new grab-and-go items and quick lunch/dinner solutions as well as a unique cheese and charcuterie set. We gave the sandwich bar its fair shot, but the numbers were not supporting it moving forward. After unanimous support from the Co-op staff and board for the grab-and-go expansion, I am extremely confident that these changes will be a huge win for our store.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for our grab-and-go expansion or for anything else in the store please let me know. Thank you!
Food Conspiracy Co-op 5-Year Strategic Plan

Prepared by the FCC Board Organization Committee

Revised November 28, 2018

VALUES
We adhere to the internationally recognized Rochdale Principles for cooperatives.
We promote whole, natural, organic, and chemical-free products with minimal packaging.
We value openness, honesty, and integrity with each other and the community.
We seek, through cooperative effort, to provide a humane, fulfilling environment in which to work and shop.
We promote social justice, human and animal rights, diversity and peaceful solutions.
We strive for a sustainable, healthy ecology through use of clean, renewable resources.

MISSION
The Food Conspiracy is committed to providing the highest quality natural and organic foods and related products to our members and the greater Tucson community.
The Food Conspiracy is also committed to expanding the selection of organic produce and products available in the store, and to network with and support organic producers and suppliers.
The Food Conspiracy promotes the health and well-being of our members and our community through education, information, service and outreach on food-related, ecological, sustainability, and cooperative movement issues.
The Food Conspiracy cooperates with and supports the work of other non-profit organizations working on issues that are consistent with cooperative principles and the Food Conspiracy’s stated values.

VISION
The Food Conspiracy Co-op (FCC) is the place to go for a variety of organic grab-and-go foods in the central city, offering healthy food and prepared meals. FCC production is at maximum capacity and supplying our branded goods, well-known for health and sustainability to various retail outlets. We are also a premier distribution site for local food producers and maximize the usage of our commissary.

FCC is financially stable with the capacity to support dynamic business ventures, develop numerous income streams and consider other opportunities as they arise. We also contribute in a meaningful way to long-term food security in our region, acting as a resource for food producers adapting to climate change and supporting innovative cooperative models of food production.

The FCC fully meets all legal obligations through bylaws and policies that are complete, legally sound and relevant to empower board work. Our board of directors is fully staffed and diverse, and our owner base is ever-expanding. Both are actively engaged, empowering the board and our owners to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. FCC staff is happy and fulfilled in their work. Our store is an anchor for the community as an educational center and is an important piece of Tucson’s identity.

FCC maintains maximum agility and responsiveness to meet changing customer and community needs, while still being deliberate and careful with our decisions. We have a tangible definition of what it means to be socially responsible and to further social justice. Our actual practice of these values is an example to the community, providing inspiration for other organizations. We fully collaborate with other community organizations, learning from them and maximizing resources. Together, we identify needs and work effectively to fulfill them.

GOALS
Increase production of grab-and-go products and FCC branded goods by at least 25% and increase the capacity and production of our kitchen by at least 25%.
Complete a full review and revision of FCC bylaws, policies and processes, focusing on high priority work first.
Initiate an organization-wide review and update of FCC documentation processes to better support the work of the board and operations, while ensuring access and transparency.
Revise board of directors application, nomination, election and on-boarding processes to maintain a full and diverse board and increase owner engagement and voting by at least 25%.
Develop and execute a viable expansion plan that prioritizes assessment and utilization of existing assets and resources, while increasing our capacity to recognize and evaluate a wide range of expansion possibilities.

STRATEGIES
Always remain faithful and attentive to FCC values and mission, driven by the best interests of an engaged ownership, as we make decisions and pursue our goals.
Effectively utilize resources from the board, staff and outside sources to accomplish our goals through effective collaboration.
Periodically review and revise FCC bylaws, policies and processes to better serve owners’ needs, enhance board function, support operations and assure fulfillment of all board responsibilities.
Meet Our New Front End Manager
Taking Pride in What We Do

Congratulations to Dave Porter, the Co-op’s new Front End Manager. Dave was promoted to the position in October 2018 and has since initiated a renewed focus on improving the customer experience. This means that he is the active director of first impressions, managing the Cashiers and Team Leads that greet our owners and walk-in customers, answer our questions, and direct shoppers in finding specific items. It also means that he is continually raising the bar in store cleanliness and organization, and implementing policies to properly handle the situations that are unique to life on 4th Avenue and the diverse cross section of people that walk through the door. It can be challenging and it takes a very skilled crew to execute these interactions properly. “We must have a policy that allows front end employees to do their jobs most effectively, establishes a protocol for customer interaction and, above all, keeps staff safe,” Dave says.

Dave and his front end staff are also currently developing a more uniform communication policy, both for internal communication and external. “We are the public face of the Co-op and are the educators,” Dave says. “Some of the most common questions the people at the front end receive involve how to become a member, what promotions we are currently running, and whether or not the Co-op carries a specific item. A clearly defined communication policy and effective, on-going training will ensure that these questions are answered in a reliable, consistent way so the same information is always made available regardless of which employee responds. It’s a learning process.”

“I have a great passion for the Co-op. We bring quality food to our community.”

Dave brings to his new position nearly 20 years in the retail and food industries, working at Trader Joe’s before coming to Food Conspiracy two years ago. He enjoys meeting people and the colorful atmosphere of the Historic 4th Avenue district. “In addition,” he says, “I have a great passion for the Co-op. We’re doing something different. I take great pride in what we do. We bring quality food to our community.”

Dave’s favorite Co-op product at the moment is Arizona-made High Desert Hot Sauce which he keeps handy in his home kitchen at all times (https://www.highdesertsauceco.com). He also enjoys drinking Conspiracy coffees, snacking on dried fruit from the Co-op’s bulk foods section and can’t get enough of the Conspiracy Kitchen’s freshly made fig bars.

Although born and raised in central Tucson, Dave and his new spouse have embraced a rural lifestyle west of the Tucson Mountains where they share their new homestead with a variety of large snakes (pythons to be exact!), turtles, dogs, and chickens. His next home project will be starting a garden.

Please say hi to Dave the next time you are in the store and let him know how he’s doing!

EVERYONE SALES

| JAN 2 - 29 | 10% off select CBD products |
| JAN 16 - 29 | 15% off bulk grocery |
| JAN 30 - FEB 12 | 10% off cheese |
| JAN 30 - FEB 26 | 10% off AZ beers |
| MAR 13 - APR 2 | 10% off select wines |

Please say hi to Dave the next time you are in the store and let him know how he's doing!
I did it. I accomplished my goal of zero packaging for six months. But I don’t feel like celebrating...

Since April 24, 2018 I have been completely package free. Except for a few mistakes and a compromise for prescriptions, I have not bought anything with stickers, tags, packaging, containers, shrink-wrap, boxes, etc. And still, it just doesn’t seem like I’ve accomplished much of anything. There are still so many packaged items in my house or tossed in the recycling bin. After six months of abstaining from buying anything with any kind of packaging, including stickers or tags, why is there still so much trash!? 

When I started this project I decided to use up anything I already had that came in a package rather than getting rid of it. The first stuff I went through was milk, cheese and packaged veggies. Bye-bye baby carrots; then canned goods, oil, soy sauce, peanut butter and salt (which I was already low on); followed by sugar, beans, brown rice, hand soap, feminine pads and toilet paper; and finally condiments, medications, and dry goods. Today, I took my last Women’s Daily vitamin and am wondering if there's bulk bin vitamins anywhere in town. Probably not, for health code reasons.

“Putting glue and paper on fresh vegetables seems antithetical to the concept of organic...”

and they would refill it for you. Thanks to the FDA, the days of sticker-free fresh vegetables and refillable bottles are long gone.

This project has made me evaluate which things I eat every day and which ones just sit in the refrigerator because of that one recipe that calls for pickled ginger. It’s nice to know that my daily food usage looks a lot like the food pyramid (or variations thereof): bread, grains, milk, cheese, peanut butter, vegetables, honey, salt, sugar and oil. Also, I have had a lot of fun trying out recipes to use up things like hot sauce and liquid smoke. Speaking of which, both go well in split pea soup.

The things I still have left in packages are: grains/flours, baking stuff (baking powder lasts forever... so why do I have two cans?); vinegar, seeds (flax, sesame, chia, etc), herbs and spices (although most of my spice bottles get refilled at the Co-op so I really don’t know which are in their original bottle), condiments, boxed teas, and specialty items like all the ingredients for making sushi including wasabi powder. So, I’ve decided to continue the project, at least until these are all used up.
I’m less surprised by the number of extra toiletries in my cupboard. Frankly, I’m a girly girl and have accumulated an embarrassing amount of cosmetics, skin and hair products. It will be another decade or two before they are all gone. In any case, I wouldn’t have to go without because the Co-op sells plenty of lovely bulk soaps, shampoos and creams. Part of me wants to see how long it would take to really go through every packaged item in my house. And part of me wants to be able to buy celery again (why does it always come with twist ties or wrapped in plastic?). Also, I’d have to find a creative use for the high-quality resume paper that’s been sitting in a drawer for 12 years. So, for now, the plan is to continue the Zero Packaging Project until I’ve eaten every item in my house that came in a package. Want to come for dinner?

Laura Milkins is a multimedia, interactive performance artist, living in Tucson and teaching Art and Visual Culture at Pima Community College. Recent work includes “The Depression Session”, a radio show devoted to destigmatizing depression, “The Kindness Project”, spending a year contemplating kindness, and “Walking Home: stories from the desert to the Great Lakes”, in which Milkins walked 2,007 miles from Tucson to Michigan wearing a live webcam. Laura has received grants, awards and international recognition for her work. Her performances focus on community and social interactions, and the role that technology plays in both.

Would you like to reduce the amount of packaging you purchase and discard?

Food Conspiracy Co-op sells a variety of containers for reuse in our Co-op merchandise shop, grocery and produce areas, and bulk foods department:

- Grocery bags
- Cloth bulk item bags
- Squeeze bottles
- Water bottles
- Baskets
- Canning jars
- Spice jars

You can also reuse any container you bring from home for bulk item purchases. Just make sure your containers are weighed at the register before you fill them so you are not charged for the weight of the container. A cashier will be happy to show you how it works!
**Product Spotlight**

**Chef Abel’s Tortillas: Showing Grown-ups How It’s Done**

Co-op patrons are raving about Chef Abel’s Tortillas. In fact, all of Tucson is buzzing about 11-year-old Abel Ramos and his amazing White Sonora Heritage Wheat tortillas. Hopefully, you were able to try them at the Co-op tasting event in early December. If not, don’t worry. Abel stocks the Co-op shelves regularly with his delicious product.

The winning formula involves just a few quality ingredients: a balance of stone-ground White Sonora Heritage Wheat, avocado oil, Sea of Cortez salt and filtered water. Abel’s recipe was developed with two goals in mind: to use the heritage grain originally brought to Southern Arizona by Father Kino, like his great-great-grandmother did; and to make a product that his grandfather could enjoy after switching to a vegan diet when diagnosed with Stage 4 prostate cancer. The tortillas are vegan, non-GMO, low sodium and sugar free.

While other kids Abel’s age might use their summer vacation to play video games and go swimming, Abel’s grandmother set him on a path last year to become an young entrepreneur and raise money for college. Obsessed with his grandmother’s tortillas, Abel decided that the tortilla would be the item around which his new business venture would be designed. With help from his grandmother, Abel is involved in all phases of production, from preparing the dough to packaging and distribution.

Abel’s business got a boost from Don Guerra of Barrio Bread (who also uses the heritage grain for his products sold at the Co-op). Don was the first to begin selling Abel’s tortillas and since then, Abel’s college fund has been growing by leaps and bounds!

Follow Chef Abel’s Tortillas on Facebook or visit his website at https://chefabelstortillas.com. Abel has a mission to “change the world one tortilla at a time” and his Facebook posts are perfectly charming in his expression of personal thoughts, family activities, and business adventures. Join his VIP e-mail list for instant access to new product previews, special discounts, and invitations to pop-up events.

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**Staff Pick**

**Monsoon Chocolate: Made in Tucson**

If you are looking for a special Valentine’s Day treat, Co-op Grocery and Wellness Buyer, Jacob Cooper, has a suggestion. His favorite product at the moment is Monsoon Chocolate. The Co-op carries five different kinds of Monsoon Chocolate, all unique and delicious. Monsoon Chocolate works directly with a transparent supply chain that connects cocoa-producers and farmers in several countries all over the world to ensure that their chocolate is produced as ethically and sustainably as possible. The beans are carefully sorted, roasted and milled before the chocolate is skillfully worked, aged and refined. Read more about Monsoon Chocolate’s delicious line of goodies on their website at www.monsoonchocolate.com or visit their café located at 234 E 22nd St. where they have a variety of confections available.
Winter Brings Fresh Citrus!

Desert Treasures: Tradition Continues at Tucson’s Only Remaining Orange Grove

Winter and early spring are favorite times of year for those who enjoy eating, preparing and preserving citrus. The possibilities are endless: juice, cocktails, marmalade and fruit tarts are all popular uses for citrus. Food Conspiracy gets much of its citrus stock from Desert Treasures Citrus near Orange Grove Road, beginning in mid-December. Arizona Sweet oranges are especially popular because of their sweet juice with less pulp and a more balanced flavor for juicing. They are very popular because they are hard to find elsewhere.

In the early 1900s Arizona had over 40,000 acres of commercial citrus growth. Today, only half that much land is still being used in citrus production and Desert Treasures is the only remaining citrus grove in Tucson. The groves were established in 1939 and Desert Treasures has been selling high quality citrus to the Co-op since 1973. The farm has over 400 trees that grow a range of citrus and the grove is carefully nurtured with organic fertilizers, well water, and the complete absence of pesticides. Navel oranges, lemons, kumquats and mandarins kick-start the season, appearing in mid-December. They are followed in January by a range of sweet oranges with fancy names such as Travitas, Arizona Sweets, and Valencias. Grapefruits make their first appearance in late January, and we are privileged to choose between the traditional Red, Ruby Red, Pink, Cocktail, and White varieties.

Locally available citrus is free from wax, so it is perfect for zesting. Add citrus zest anywhere you are using the juice, including salad dressings, marinades, sauces, and baked goods.

Pete Larsen of Desert Treasures Citrus.

Having friends over?

Super Bowl Feb 3
Academy Awards Feb 24

Do you have all your snacks and drinks? Remember to check your Co-op Deals!

And...
AZ beers are on sale Jan 30 - Feb 26!

Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) offers peer-review certification to farmers and beekeepers producing food for their local communities by working in harmony with nature, without relying on synthetic chemicals or GMOs. Food Conspiracy Co-op is a recognized Business Ally.
I am a pretty analog guy, no getting around it. I mean, electronic information is obviously the quickest and easiest to disseminate but I maintain that the tactile world is still the most inspiring.

Don’t get me wrong, I enjoy my iTunes but when I hear a 33 record played on a vintage turntable or throw a 78 record on the 1927 Victor Victrola I inherited from my grandparents there is no comparison in the quality of sound and auditory pleasure. In the same way, while I sometimes access books and news articles online, it doesn’t compare to the satisfaction I feel in pulling a hardcopy book off the shelf, dusting it off, and turning the pages.

“I love all my books but I treasure my cookbooks the most...sometimes I run across pages that are stained from use and remember the time I splashed tomato sauce or dripped wine from my glass.”

I don’t think I am alone in my preference of a less technological lifestyle. On a recent trip overseas, I was pleasantly surprised to see just as many airline passengers enjoying hardcopy books as I did those reading from a kindle or electronic device. I love all my books but I treasure my cookbooks the most, particularly the ones that provide historical information, show high quality photos, and recount the stories behind the recipes. They transport me to another time and place. Sometimes I run across pages that are stained from use and remember the time I splashed tomato sauce or dripped wine from my glass. It’s a total tactile and sensory experience.

Fortunately, there are ways to combine electronic and hard copy resources, not abandoning one for the other but letting them work together. One of my favorite tools for this is a web service called Eat Your Books. I’ve been a subscriber for years because it compliments my hardcopy world with electronic efficiency.

Eat Your Books helps me use my cookbooks more effectively. The website catalogs thousands of cookbooks, magazines, and food blogs. When you sign up, you are given your own personal bookshelf. You search the website’s extensive library of cookbooks for the books you own, search for the magazines to which you subscribe and place all the items on your virtual bookshelf. You can even add your own personal recipe clippings and bookmark your favorite online recipes. I have 33 cookbooks on my bookshelf and several years of Food & Wine magazine.

Once your virtual bookshelf is stocked to match your hardcopy shelf, the time-saving magic happens. Say the Co-op has eggplant on sale and I want to find a recipe that utilizes eggplant. I don’t have to pull out each cookbook, one by one, and search the index. I can perform a recipe search on the website and it will look through every item on my bookshelf for me, provide me a list of relevant recipes and direct me to the correct books. Now, the website won’t provide me the full recipe, that would be copyright infringement – it is a cataloging tool - but it will provide me a shopping list of all the main ingredients. I can build a shopping list right on the site and refer to it when I’m in the store. Super convenient and a great time-saver!

The site also includes social aspects. I can rate cookbooks and share recipe notes so others that want to make the same recipe can benefit from my experience. Perhaps a pasta recipe took less flour for me here in the desert than it would for someone in a more humid location, or perhaps I found that setting the oven at a lower temperature than suggested produced a more evenly-cooked dish. I can also follow the site’s informative blog, sign up for the mailing list, exchange comments in the forums, and enter monthly cookbook give-aways!

Overall, the marriage of my hardcopy bookshelf to a time-saving electronic cataloging system has worked well for me. Eat Your Books offers both free and premium memberships. If you mainly use online recipes you may find a free membership is all you need. With a premium membership you can add all your cookbooks and magazines to your bookshelf and you have a searchable index of all YOUR recipes – you’ll never waste time finding recipes again - which means more cooking time!

**SPECIAL OFFER**

Jane Kelly, co-founder of Eat Your Books, is offering a free, three-month trial for a Premium Membership to Food Conspiracy Co-op owners and shoppers! Use the voucher code FCAZ19 when you sign up at www.eatyourbooks.com.

Richard Bergsma has been a Co-op owner since he “went organic” in 2006. Rich has a BA in Architecture from the University of Arizona and has managed business development and marketing activities in the building industry and retail markets his entire career. He lived in Florence, Italy for many years and returns annually to recharge under the Tuscan sun. Additional Mediterranean travels in Croatia and Greece have grown his love of cooking and wine tasting. He has hosted two wine tastings at the Co-op which have boosted his status as a wanna-be sommelier.
Cookbooks for Sale at the Co-op

Food Conspiracy currently carries two cookbooks for sale in the store. Both highlight inexpensive recipes that focus on organic ingredients that you can purchase at the Co-op.

The most recent addition to our bookshelf is Good and Cheap, Eat Well on $4/Day, a New York Times Best-seller and IACP Cookbook Awards Winner, by Leanne Brown. The book is structured on the belief that kitchen skill, not budget, is the key to great food and that if you can become a more skilled, more conscious cook, then you’ll be able to conjure delicious meals anytime. The recipes were designed to benefit people living on SNAP, the U.S. federal program that used to be called food stamps. It’s also great for students living on a budget. The book includes tips for eating and shopping well, supermarket strategies, advice for how to use leftovers, how to stock a pantry, handy conversion tables and a seasonal growing chart so you know when specific fruits and vegetables are in season. Recipes also show the approximate price per serving and the total price of each dish for easy budgeting.

Also for sale is the Co-op’s own Tucson Cooks, A Collection of Recipes from the Food Conspiracy Co-op. If you’d like to create those delicious foods that you find on the store’s hot bar at home in your own kitchen, this is a must have! Also featured are Co-op recipes for bagels, muffins, soups, salads, and sandwiches. Additional recipes are provided by local producers, people who grow fruits and vegetables and others that make prepared foods in the greater Tucson area, like Exo Roast Co., Isabella’s Ice Cream, and Tucson Tamale Company. As always, Co-op recipes emphasize organic and local ingredients.

Check out these amazing books and the other items for sale in the Co-op’s merchandise shop the next time you are in the store!

In the Conspiracy Kitchen
Masa Sato, Assistant Manager, Kitchen

Meet the gentleman whose culinary skills shape all those delicious dishes on our hot bar! Masa Sato is Assistant Manager of the Conspiracy Kitchen where he dedicates most of his time to menu development and preparation. After 13 years in the fast-paced restaurant industry, where he served as Head Chef at Yoshimatsu, Masa joined the Co-op family in search of a career path offering greater community involvement and a more diverse creative outlet. Masa prepares hot bar dishes with their roots in Indian, Italian, Caribbean, Mexican, Asian and traditional American cuisine. At the moment, his favorite dishes to prepare are the Indian dishes, like Tandoori Chicken, that allow him to experiment with a rich palette of spices. In all preparations, Masa is focused on using locally-sourced and organic ingredients that ensure maximum freshness and flavor. Biking, hiking and trying out the local breweries are among his favorite hobbies outside the kitchen. The next time you see Masa stocking the store’s hot bar, be sure to thank him for his hard work and tell him what your favorite dish is!
Now Sowing
Radishes: a Nutrient-Dense Powerhouse Food

Meggin Kitterman, Seed Library, Pima County Public Library

French Dressing, Purple Plum, Easter Egg, White Icicle, Crimson Giant, Sparkler White Tip. Sounds like a party! But what do these festive words have in common? They are all varieties of radishes!

Why grow radishes?
Radishes may not be on your list of top vegetables yet but the following facts may make you re-evaluate this nutritious superfood. Ranked #41 on the Center for Disease Control’s list of nutrient-dense powerhouse foods, radishes assist in weight loss, reduce toxicity and thinning hair, fight cancer, promote glowing skin and aid digestion. Radishes mature quickly, as the genus Raphanus —Greek for “quickly appearing”— aptly implies. You can move some varieties from seed to table in as little as three weeks. Late winter and early spring is a perfect time to plant radishes in Tucson!

Growing and Harvesting Radishes
Checkout seeds at any Pima County Public Library (PCPL) branch. If your closest library does not have a seed library, we will send seeds to your library. Visit the library’s website at www.library.pima.gov/seed-library to learn how to borrow, grow, and share seeds from the library. Before planting, consider how many plants you want for edible harvests and how many you need for healthy, viable seed. The minimum number of plants to keep for seed saving is five but more is better as it increases the genetic variability.

Once you have seeds, sow directly 1/2 inch deep, 1 inch apart in a spot that gets full sun or part shade. When seedlings are about 2 inches tall, thin the plants to 3 inches apart. Thinning provides growing room and prevents shriveled, inedible roots. Radishes can be planted every 2-3 weeks for successive planting.

Radishes don’t fare well in the desert heat so plant before or after the summer months. Radishes are insect-pollinated so if planning to save to seeds, prevent cross-pollination by keeping 800 feet between your radishes and radishes growing nearby. Radishes are ready for pulling when the bulbs are firm and smooth and leaves are green.

Why save seeds?
Seed saving is important for many reasons. Consider these facts (from the Seeds of Diversity website):
• 75% of global food biodiversity has become extinct in the past 100 years.
• 90% of the remaining gene pool of crop plants is not being used commercially.
• Of the 7,098 apple varieties documented as having been in use between 1804 and 1904, for instance, about 86% have been lost. Similarly, 95% of the cabbage, 91% of the field corn, 94% of the pea, and 81% of the tomato varieties no longer exist.

If seeds collected from locally grown plants are saved, the genetic biodiversity of our food crops is preserved and a resilient stock of seeds that is better adapted to our unique climate is created. Not all commercially grown seeds available for purchase online or in stores are suited for desert growth. Locally sourced commercial seeds are wonderful for desert gardens, but seeds from crops grown in different climates, may not be as suited.

Food security depends on having access to crops that grow where we are. We cannot assume commercial growers are banking desert seeds. Food security depends on biodiversity and biodiversity depends on seed saving.

Source: https://seeds.ca/diversity/biodiversity-is-important

How to Save Seeds
After flowers appear and fade and pods turn from green to tan, the seeds are ready to harvest. Hang pods upside down in a bag to catch seeds or lay on a sheet to dry. Rub dried pods in your hands or gently crush or flail. Winnow to remove chafe. Store completely dry seeds in an envelope, baggie, or jar in your cool, dark, and dry space. We hope your seed saving adventures are full of learning and fun. If you are successful in saving seed, we invite you to share the fruits of your labor with friends, neighbors, garden groups, and of course, the Seed Library at the Pima County Public Library!

Source: https://seeds.ca/diversity/biodiversity-is-important

Meggin Kitterman has worked at Pima County Public Library for more than 10 years. During that time, she has enjoyed working with all ages at numerous locations, but is happy to call Joel D. Valdez Main Library in downtown Tucson her current library home. She’s excited to be working with the Seed Library team.
Know Your Produce Staff
Louie Benavidez, Produce Assistant Manager

If you are looking to share your hot vintage music finds, Louie Benavidez is your guy. In his free time, he scours local Tucson shops and thrift stores to grow his vinyl collection, an impressive selection of old records he says numbers in the thousands. As Produce Assistant Manager, Louie keeps the store’s produce shelves stocked with organic fruits and vegetables sourced from growers within 200 miles of the Co-op. He researches area growers and visits their operations in the field to ensure that they offer products that meet our owners’ standards of quality. He arrives early in the morning to unload the produce trucks and to prepare all of our fresh and colorful produce for display and purchase. Louie also acts as Staff Representative, a designated liaison between staff members and store management that promotes effective communication. Gregarious and outgoing, you will often see Louie out on the floor making our produce display look just right. If you have a question about the Co-op’s produce, please let him know!

Radish Top Soup
Source: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/38036/radish-top-soup/

2 tablespoons butter  
1 large onion, diced  
2 medium potatoes, sliced  
4 cups raw radish greens  
4 cups chicken broth  
1/3 cup heavy cream  
5 radishes, sliced

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the onion, and sauté until tender. Mix in the potatoes and radish greens, coating them with the butter. Pour in chicken broth. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes.

Allow the soup mixture to cool slightly, and transfer to a blender. Blend until smooth.

Return the mixture to the saucepan. Mix in the heavy cream. Cook and stir until well blended.

Serve with radish slices. It is also great with goat cheese or feta cheese crumbled on top.

Visit www.library.pima.gov/seed-library/ for further information. Remember that Library cardholders can check out up to 10 packets of seeds per month at Pima County Public Library.

Ever try a slice of fresh baked bread with a spread of butter and topped with sliced radish? Sprinkle with chives or dill for added zing. It’s a satisfying and delicious snack!
In an interview in 1963, James Baldwin told LIFE magazine, “You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read.” It was Dostoevsky and Dickens who taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who ever had been alive.”

I recently overheard a woman at Antigone Books telling her friend that she hadn’t read a book in years. It’s not surprising that the act of reading books, along with blue whales and seven species of bees, is becoming endangered. The average American spends almost three hours a day looking at their phone. Every time our phones ping or we get a message on social media, our brains give us a bit of dopamine. Psychology Today tells me that 42% of college graduates will never read a book again after graduating.

Since hearing that the theme for this newsletter’s issue is about the identities and community of those connected to the Food Co-op, I have been thinking about what makes us who we are. What if our biographies and resumes consisted not of our jobs or schools or degrees but of the things that have moved us: the people we’ve loved or known, the places where we’ve become ourselves, and the books we read during that process? What would you include in a biography of books?

Books offer a different kind of pleasure than phones and computers, a slower kind of pleasure. They remind us to look deeply at things: to linger on the morning-light fractured through a mesquite tree, a laugh scrawled widely across a child’s face. Reading activates the same brain pathways that life experience itself activates. This is why reading has been proven to increase empathy; it allows us to remember that others have their own interiority, their own lumps of pains and hurling desires, their own self built year by year and book by book.

It’s hard to talk about reading because it’s such a private act. I work in a place where people are trying to translate for each other these private acts of joy so that they become instead shared acts. Books are the original social media. Morgan Miller, bookbuyer at Antigone Books, told me that she read Circe, her favorite book of the year, with her mother. They took turns reading it out loud, while eating themed Greek food such as hummus. “We were both captivated,” Morgan tells me. Even after her mother left town, Morgan still heard her mother’s cadences in her mind, and so the solitary process of reading became a shared one.

How do you fall back in love with reading? Read a children’s book or a poem or one sentence and meditate on it all day. Read until you remember something from your childhood, something that was lost, floating in the ocean of you, and finally all these years later, it emerges, like sea-glass, covered in seaweed and gunk, made smooth with time, and you can hold it in your hand, put it on a shelf. Read until it is late at night, past your bedtime and you are suddenly wide awake, turning pages. Read until it doesn’t feel like reading but feels instead like flying, because that’s what it is: an act of transportation, of imagination, of space-travel, time-travel.

“Read until you remember something from your childhood, something that was lost, floating in the ocean of you, and finally, all these years later, it emerges...”
Harmony Hazard received her MFA in Creative Writing from Stony Brook University and has been published in The Rumpus, Catapult, Tiny Donkey, CALYX, Make/Shift, and in the anthology Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief. She can be found most days at Antigone Books helping customers with their purchases and giving advice to those wanting to expand their thinking horizons.

Antigone Staff Favorites of 2018

Here are some books that the staff of Antigone Books loved in 2018 and some of their impressions. These are books that became, for a while at least, part of our interior selves:

- **Feel Free**, Zadie Smith
  Recommended by Kate Stern
  “An exquisitely entertaining mind.”

- **Once Upon a River**, Diane Setterfield
  Recommended by Kate Randall
  “Absolutely wonderful and spellbinding!”

- **Circe**, Madeline Miller
  Recommended by Morgan Miller
  “A beautiful, moving, stirring epic.”

- **There There**, Tommy Orange
  Recommended by Karen Thomas
  “Heart-wrenching portrayal of the Native American experience.”

- **Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl**, Andrea Lawlor
  Recommended by Gaby Hurtado-Ramos
  “Fun and affirming.”

- **From Here to Eternity**, Caitlin Doughty
  Recommended by Rikki King
  “Straight-forward and warm tour of death practices around the world.”

- **An Absolutely, Remarkable Thing**, Hank Green
  Recommended by Melissa Negelspach
  “Abundant wit and humor!”

Antigone Books is an independent (and 100% solar-powered) bookstore that carries books for all ages and a large selection of fabulous gifts and cards.
Tucson Gems
Tucson Improv Movement: 4th Avenue Comedy

Richard Bergsma, Co-op Owner and Conspiracy News Editor

Did you know Tucson’s first established improv theater is located just a few blocks from Food Conspiracy Co-op? Tucked away on 9th Street, just off 4th Avenue, the Tucson Improv Movement (TIM) shares a renovated historic warehouse building with Revel wine bar. Justin Lukasewicz, is TIM’s Founder and Executive Director. He is one of those people with energy to spare, working a management position at the University of Arizona by day and running the improv company by night. He also performs with the company weekly.

Justin Lukasewicz (second from right) and TIM performers.

“Daily life (work, paying bills, etc.) is not fun. Improv allows adults to play.”

After graduating college in Tucson, Justin moved to North Carolina where he studied with an accomplished improv theater group and taught improv classes. When he moved back to Tucson a few years ago he found that, for it’s size, Tucson had no working improv theater. He founded Tucson Improv Movement on a hunch that the Tucson market would support it. “I figured it would work,” Justin said, “because improv is a fun and positive environment. Daily life (work, paying bills, etc.) is not fun. Improv allows adults to play. Doing other kinds of theater, like acting in a play, requires much more of a time commitment; you have to learn lines and spend hours rehearsing. Improv is less of a commitment and fits more easily into people’s busy schedules. Although there is a lot to learn in doing improv and it is not easy, you can quickly get to a point where you are able perform on a regular basis.”

For those bit by the performance bug, TIM offers a full range of improv and stand up classes, from beginner to advanced. After completing the classes, students can audition to become a permanent performing company member. There are currently 65 performing company members that do four regularly-scheduled shows per week. TIM also has staff specialized in team building and corporate training. Trainers use improvisational comedy and applied improv to help develop communication and public speaking skills. Corporate clients have included Raytheon, the University of Arizona’s Commission for the Status of Women, and NCAA referees.

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Food Conspiracy has deals designed just for you! Check http://www.foodconspiracy.coop/students/ for student discounts on groceries and other items.
“Although the financial model is based on filling classes,” Justin notes, “it takes all aspects of the business to keep the doors open – theater shows, education, training, concessions. Everything works in tandem. If there are no classes, there are no performers for a show; if there is no show, no one is experiencing improv and becoming interested in taking classes.”

Charging just $5 per show, TIM offers economical fun and the ultimate small theater experience. There is a quaint lobby where you can purchase beer and wine and a stage/theater area that maxes out at about 45 seats, creating an intimate and up-close performance environment. Shows use two methods of improv: short form and long form. Short form involves quick, two-minute vignettes, similar to what you may have seen on the television show Who’s Line is it Anyway; TIM’s weekly show Throwdown is the company’s flagship short form performance with two teams battling it out in a fast-paced improv competition. Long form improv uses a single idea or theme to inspire a whole show; TIM’s most popular long form show is Soapbox in which people tell stories then improvise off of those stories. Performances often include local celebrities, like radio and TV personalities.

TIM is very creative with its show themes. Pilot Season is a show based on a suggestion from the audience for a television pilot. Players then invent and act out the pilot episode, including all the commercials! Another show is called The Dating Scene and players tell stories about dates they’ve been on, good or bad. Other programs are designed especially for kids and held during afternoon hours.

TIM’s annual events include the Tucson Comedy Arts Festival in November and the Cactus Flower Comedy Festival, a weekend featuring women performers. TIM also hosts a March Madness-themed event during the NCAA championships in which eight teams of two improv performers each compete in a tournament-style playoff format. Held over the course of several weeks, one team is eliminated each round until the champion team emerges victorious with all the bragging rights.

It’s easy to see why Justin admits, “I’m tired all the time!” But bringing fun and laughs to the downtown scene is certainly an honorable endeavor. “The goal with every show is to make someone fly,” Justin says, “to create that crazy moment that amazes the audience.”

You can follow TIM on all major social media platforms. Check their website at www.tucsonimprov.com for a complete calendar of events and information on classes. You can buy tickets online too!

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**BUILD YOUR OWN SIX PACK AT THE CO-OP**

Buy any six bottles of beer or wine (mix and match) and get 10% off!

Watch our website and social media outlets for news of wine tastings!
CONSPIRACY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE
Food Conspiracy Co-op Annual Meeting
Saturday, March 2, 2019
Borderlands Brewing

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