COOPERATION as practice

The Blossoming of a Dynamic Team Culture

FOOD CONSPIRACY CO-OP
EVERYONE CAN SHOP, ANYONE CAN JOIN.

412 N. 4th Avenue
Open 7am - 10pm daily
(520) 624 - 4821
At the 4th Ave. / 7th St. streetcar stop

www.foodconspiracy.coop
@foodconspiracy
On the Editor’s Mind
Creating a Successful Community

Richard Bergsma, Co-op Owner and Conspiracy News Editor

Our Co-op is experiencing an incredible level of staff cooperation and work integration. The Autumn issue is, therefore, appropriately titled “Cooperation As Practice”.

The fact is, we are not required to cooperate simply because we own a cooperative. Staff could show up for work every day, do their job, then head out. Shoppers could select their items, check out, and leave to enjoy them. This would make a fully-functioning and successful business. But that is not what we want to be. We want to be a successful community. And we believe that if we focus on making our cooperative community stronger, we cannot help but generate a successful business. That is why Board Members volunteer extra time to guide the East Entrance Project, why Owners volunteer their professional time and resources to Co-op endeavors and why Staff remain past their scheduled shifts to volunteer on committees and formulate new employee guidelines.

Read Board Vice President Kevin Hendricks’ Board Report to see how heightened cooperation among Board Members is resulting in significant policy improvements (page 3). And check out General Manager John Glennon’s column on how staff retention and development is redefining store culture (page 4). Then read the vignette on Staff Member Dana Mayorga, herself a returning employee (page 19). And consider long-time Owner Debra Cooper’s inspirational account of her 20-year relationship with the Co-op (page 11). So many inspiring stories to tell!

Be sure to read the articles spotlighting San Xavier Co-op Farm, Sky Island Brand / 47 Ranch and Hayden Flour Mills (pages 12 and 14, respectively) - all local, Arizona producers! We all favor local products, but was does local mean when it comes to product pricing? Co-op Produce Manager Todd Stadtlander helps us understand the issues that drive local product pricing on page 13.

Like many, we at the Co-op are talking a lot about the zero waste movement. Front End Employee Nick Super continues his Zero Waste Blog on page 5, while we delve into the particulars of what exactly is recyclable in Tucson - and what isn’t - in Master Recycler Natanya Siegel’s piece on page 10. Then, Wellness Buyer Jennica Smith introduces us to some new zero waste wellness products.

Finally, we welcome a new sponsor for this issue: Saguaro Juniper Corporation, offering local, grassfed beef for sale. Check out their ad on page 9.

Here’s to living the second half of the year as fully as we did the first half: cooperatively with intent and purpose. And let’s have fun!

Leave Us a Suggestion Online

You can make comments and suggestions on the Food Conspiracy website just as you can on the written comment cards provided in the store. To ask a question, express kudos, or make a product request, go to www.foodconspiracy.coop, click on Contact Us, and choose Suggestion Page. Thank you!

Back Issues at Issuu.com

You can find your favorite articles and recipes from previous issues of Conspiracy News in a convenient, page-turning format at https://issuu.com/foodconspiracycoop.

If you would prefer to receive your Co-op News by e-mail, register for the mailing list at http://www.foodconspiracy.coop/mailing_list/ or update your information in-store.
Board Report
The Synergy of Cooperation
Kevin Hendricks, Vice President, Board of Directors

These are exciting times at the Co-op, as we see our vision becoming reality every day! As a Board Member, I personally feel how rewarding it is to be a part of the ongoing collaborative work that has made this possible. Much like gardening, big things begin with small seeds, and all the great things that ever existed started with a vision: an idea whose time has come. Our new vision statement expresses the commitment to recognize those opportunities.

Reflecting on the Co-op’s recent efforts, the Board is seeing the planted seeds sprout in many pivotal actions that are building capacity to put our values into practice and become an even greater authentic expression of who we are. For example, we established a new 5-Year Strategic Plan and Vision, restructured our Board Committees so that all of our current and future work has a home, improved our Annual General Meeting experience, provided Staff with the option of ownership as an employment benefit, and recruited additional high-energy Board and Committee Members. Board and Staff also collaboratively developed a new Storytelling concept that will take our outreach to a new level. And we reported record Sales growth and the lowest Staff turnover rate in over five years. All is due to our Staff cultivating a commitment to the power of positivity and reciprocity with their declaration of the new Conspiracy Way, an initiative to ensure quality communication at all levels.

“We maintain maximum agility and responsiveness to meet changing customer and community needs. Together, we identify needs and work effectively to fulfill them.”
Food Conspiracy Co-op 5-Year Strategic Plan Vision

With the Board’s ongoing responsibility as strategic leaders, we revisited the “why” (our mission) and challenged ourselves to reimagine our vision of what cooperation means for us. If I were to choose one word that describes what our cooperation looks like at its best, it would be synergy, defined as “the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations or agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.” In other words, we can do more together. As a business, our competitive advantage is the actualization of our mission as a cooperative community organization. Our secret sauce is the simple but profound concept of a collaborative culture through inclusive participation and diversity of thought, reciprocity and creative ideas. All of this is possible because the people of the Co-op are passionate about their mission and cooperate to make their shared vision a reality in our community. The people of the Co-op make it possible to have high-quality local, organic, fresh, foods and health products! Food is the primary means through which we express who we are at the Co-op. We are people who express care and concern for our community and work toward finding innovative ways to share creative ideas and sustainable resources.

If you are an Owner and have not been to a Board Meeting, or haven’t been to one in a while, we would encourage you to join us and learn more about the work we are doing now and on the horizon. In the meantime, see you in the store!

Statement of Cooperative Identity
A cooperative is an autonomous association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Food Conspiracy Values
1. We adhere to the internationally recognized Rochdale Principles for cooperatives.
2. We promote whole, natural, organic, and chemical-free products with minimal packaging.
3. We value openness, honesty, and integrity with each other and the community.
4. We seek, through cooperative effort, to provide a humane, fulfilling environment in which to work and shop.
5. We promote social justice by encouraging and respecting diversity.
6. We strive for a sustainable, healthy ecology through use of clean, renewable resources.

Co-op Principles
Co-op principles were first stated by the Rochdale pioneers in 1844. The cooperative principles are guidelines by which we put our values into practice.
1. Voluntary and open Member-Ownership.
2. Democratic Member-Owner control.
3. Member-Owner economic participation.
4. Autonomy and independence.
5. Education, training, and information.
6. Cooperation among cooperatives.
7. Concern for community.

Co-op Mission
Food Conspiracy is committed to providing the highest quality natural and organic foods and related products to our members and the greater Tucson community.
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.
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.
Food Conspiracy cooperates with and supports the work of other non-profit organizations working on issues that are consistent with cooperative principals and Food Conspiracy’s stated values.
Greetings Food Conspiracy community! We have had a transformative year so far at our Co-op. There are a number of completed projects and metrics that demonstrate this transformation but none is more important than our reinvigorated culture of Staff retention. Our Co-op is reversing long-standing trends, setting new records, and laying the ground work for innovation all because of the stability, dedication, resilience, and expertise of our Staff; a primary asset of our Cooperative. From the Front End Cashiers to our Grocery Buyers and Kitchen Employees to Administration, all are dedicated to the success of the Co-op.

“Our Co-op is reversing long-standing trends, setting new records, and laying the ground work for innovation.”

Our reinvigorated culture of Staff retention did not occur in a vacuum. In fact, the shift goes back to 2016 (and I am sure had occurred in a number of iterations before then). At the December 2016 Board Meeting, the Board of Directors established a new precedent for the General Manager’s executive limitations policies that outlined the importance of reporting on and having plans to address Co-op Staff turnover rates. One manifestation of this change was a requirement by the Board that the General Manager complete and actualize a Board-approved plan for Staff retention, recognition and development. This change in policy was one of many enacted by the Board to bring the experience of the Staff in our cooperative workspace to the forefront of how we evaluate our success.

Since this seminal moment in 2016, we have seen a blossoming of the seeds sown at that time. I am proud to report that of our 44 total Staff, 43 have been at the Co-op for more than a year and we have welcomed back six Staff who worked at our Co-op previously. The importance of this for our Co-op is profound, especially considering the Staff turnover we have experienced in the recent past. We absolutely would not be in this new territory without the unending dedication and institutional knowledge of a number of our Staff who have been at the Co-op for 10+, 15+ and 20+ years. The perseverance and love these long-tenured Staff hold for our Co-op has been extremely inspiring to me and should stand as inspiration for us all.

Corresponding with Staff retention, our Co-op is experiencing the highest sales growth (year over year sales comparison for the same period) we have seen since 2014. So far through three quarters in FY2018-2019 our total store sales growth is 6.5% over last year, and we just finished Q3 (April-June) with 9% total store sales growth. In Q2 (January-March), we had the highest grossing quarterly sales for our Grocery and Kitchen departments ever. And so far this year, our total sales of locally-produced products have increased 23% over last year.

Next year’s Business Plan is all about pivoting from ingrained organizational stability to cooperative innovation. The parameters guiding our potential and innovation at Food Conspiracy are now wider than ever because our Staff is leading the way.

Listen to General Manager John Glennon’s presentation Do You Co-op? on the Mrs. Green’s World podcast at https://www.mrsgreensworld.com/podcast/do-you-co-op/.
Here we are, halfway through the year and six months since I began focusing on going zero waste, or attempting to. If you remember, I mentioned in my previous entry how I prefer to call my New Year resolutions intentions rather than resolutions. Well, I have found that attempting to produce zero waste, or a less plastic lifestyle, really becomes an intention and an act of accountability. One needs to approach zero waste with serious intention and be willing to make the subtle changes in lifestyle necessary to make it a habit. It is not effective to declare that you reject single use plastics and then order take-out with your plastic container, fork, knife and cup.

Back in April, Food Conspiracy hosted a Zero Waste Workshop with Claire Kaufman from Zerology, and she spoke about how to reach a zero waste lifestyle. Claire gave us pointers on how to begin and maintain this practice. We are all familiar with the three R’s: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Claire gave us two more Rs: Refuse and Repurpose. Number one, refuse. Refuse the plastic bag, the straw, the single use item. Don’t even go there, change your habits and refuse to use. Number two, Repurpose. Find another use for it or have it mended or repaired. I’m already seeing sites on social media outlets that talk about going back to the ways of our grandmothers. Instead of throwing the torn shirt away, have it mended, get as much life out of it as possible. Make a tote bag from those old jeans. This may be way out of the ballpark for some of us, but it helps us to look at things from a different perspective and think about how we can reduce the items we are sending to the landfill. How about a braided bath mat made from that old, ratty-edged bath towel?

Another tip Claire gave us was to begin logging the plastic items we use or purchase daily on our phone or tablet. This forces us to focus on what we’re actually doing and helps us break some of those habits we are unaware of. “Oh my, I used 12 pieces of plastic today. Five produce bags, a coffee cup, etc.” And it goes on and on. We need to refocus and change those habits about which we’ve never given a second thought.

Claire is an excellent instructor. She founded Zerology because she wanted to help friends and family take the plunge into sustainable, holistic, low-waste living. Her professional experience in sustainability policy and personal experience growing up in Los Angeles and dealing with health issues made her aware of just how profoundly powerful it is to consume consciously and live in alignment with the planet. Claire partners with her friend, Sarah Atkinson, who lives in the Boston area. They bill themselves as “Just two friends on a mission to reimagine waste and reinvent how we consume to support a healthier and more equitable planet now and in the future for people, plants, and animals alike.” When we allow our trash to build up and marinate in a landfill or float out to sea,” Claire says, “it destroys our air quality, contaminates our water, infects our food, decreases our living space, increases costs of natural resources, causes significant neurological and physical illness and, above all, means irreversible and irrevocable damage to our precious planet and all species that live here.”

So my recommendation? Be focused and cognisant of what you are doing. If you are really concerned about changing your habits and helping the environment, be intent on changing them one action at a time.

Zerology founder, Claire Kaufman, says her motivation is simple: 389 million tons of waste, the amount of trash Americans throw out every single year. This means that each American is complicit in producing approximately 6.6 pounds of trash every day or 95 tons of trash in a lifetime.

You can follow Nick’s blog on the Food Conspiracy website at http://www.foodconspiracy.coop/category/zero-waste/ or on the Food Conspiracy Facebook page. Additional information on Zerology and Claire Koffman can be found at https://www.zerologywaste.com.
East Entrance Project Update
Vision + Collaboration = Success

Michael DeSantis, President, Board of Directors

Owners attending the Annual Meeting in March met the announcement of the Co-op’s East Entrance Project with great enthusiasm and support. Much work has been done since then and it is appropriate to update our Owners on project progress.

The initial Vision Development Package was presented to the Board of Directors and approved. It is a conceptual package that contains everything shared with the Owners to date, such as the information and drawings presented at the Annual Meeting. We have now entered the Project Development Phase which is a critically important part of the process. It is in this phase that we do the research and perform the studies that will inform the actual design later on. It involves intricate cooperation among the Board, Staff, Committees, and community professionals and requires diligence and a lot of legwork. It will unearth opportunities and identify challenges moving forward.

“It is not about getting it done quickly, it’s about getting it done correctly. We owe that to our Owners.”

It is important to remember that the East Entrance Project impacts the entire property, from our storefront on 4th Avenue east to 3rd Avenue. It is not simply about putting a back door on the store for customers. An east entrance affects how the store operates on a daily basis and how spaces are arranged to facilitate work flow, customer interaction and security. It involves site work and building renovation. It is vitally important that we take the time now to dig deep into our organization and explore the project from all angles so we don’t look back later and discover we have missed opportunities. Owners have been asking for this kind of project for years, maybe decades, and we are committed to taking the time to do it right.

Two current activities illustrate the kind of due diligence required in the Project Development Phase. The first activity involves a comprehensive study of the Hoff Building, which currently houses the Conspiracy Kitchen, Co-op Administrative Staff, and the public meeting room (where our monthly Board Meetings are held). Determining the best use of the Hoff Building provides one of the first opportunities for Owners, Staff, professionals and community members to participate in the process directly. The term “best use” in this case means how we can use the building to best realize our vision, as outlined in our 5-Year Strategic Plan, and better meet the needs of our owners and shoppers. Input received from you and other stakeholders will give us direction once we enter the design phase.

The second activity is the formation by the Expansion Committee of a Garden Design Team. The Garden Design Team is a volunteer group including a Board Member, Staff and Owners with gardening, landscape design, and architectural experience. There are community programs that use the Co-op garden, and it is an important part of how we interact with our neighborhood. We partner with TUSD and other local groups that work in the garden and use it as a learning tool. The integration of proper open space and garden design components into the East Entrance Project is, therefore, essential and will provide great value to the overall success of the final design.

The Garden Design Team will meet three goals:
1. Assist the Expansion Committee in its effort to design an East Entrance Project that best realizes the Co-op’s 5-Year Plan.
2. Fully integrate all plantings and open spaces required by the City of Tucson to achieve other design goals.
3. Create a garden area, a number of fruit trees and value to the Co-op equal to or greater than what we currently have.

Our Co-op is a community-based organization and the East Entrance Project is a community-based project. It requires active participation by a number of stakeholder groups and will later also involve Owner input and review. It is an inclusive process that requires a diligent approach and a properly allocated amount of time in its initial phases to be most beneficial and ensure the best final outcome.

Michael DeSantis is the President of the Food Conspiracy Co-op Board of Directors. He has been an Owner at the Co-op since 1974. Since those early days, Michael recognizes that the Co-op has faced challenges but is proud that it has always evolved and thrived. He was instrumental in developing the Co-op’s comprehensive 5-Year Strategic Plan. In families or in neighborhoods, Michael believes that we are in this together and there is no more universal expression of caring than sharing good food.
How to Attend a Co-op Board Meeting

Board Meetings are open to the public. As a Food Conspiracy Owner, you have an opportunity to ask questions and to voice your opinions, concerns, praise and support regarding Co-op affairs. This is one of the primary benefits of Ownership.

1. Board Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except June and December) in the Hoff Building at 425 E. 7th Street, just east of the back parking lot, at 6:00pm.

2. From 6:00-6:30, as attendees arrive, they enjoy a meal prepared by Conspiracy Kitchen. Meals are always vegan or vegetarian. This is a time to chat casually with Board Members, Staff and other Owners.

3. The meeting begins at 6:30. The agenda is divided into three main sections. The first part of the meeting includes receiving comments and questions from Owners and a visioning session for Board members. The visioning session is a chance for the Board to focus on particular questions and ideas, and sometimes everyone present is invited to participate. The second and third sections include the General Manager’s Report, Committee Reports (such as those relating to the East Entrance Project), and other topics in front of the Board for discussion and/or a vote. While at the meeting, you may hear mention of an Executive Session; these occur occasionally, as needed, after the close of the regular meeting so the Board can privately address business matters of a sensitive administrative nature.

EVERYONE SALES

AUG 14 - SEP 17
10% off Sky Island Brand local meats

SEP 4 - OCT 1
15% off Hayden Flour Mills local products

OCT 2 - OCT 29
10% off local native foods

WEDNESDAY
DEC 11
Street Fair Sale
10% off purchases of $25 or more
Does not include special orders, gift cards or classes

DEC 4 - DEC 31
10% off local holiday gifts
Throughout the year, donations made by customers through our register Round Ups are placed in our Cooperative Community Fund, and the interest earned on the Fund is donated to three local non-profits of our Owners’ choosing (see our upcoming Round Ups in the graphic on the facing page). This year, in our annual general elections, several local organizations were nominated to receive contributions. Native Seeds SEARCH, Tucson Cooperative Network, and Living Streets Alliance were the top three organizations chosen by the Owners.

Our Cooperative Community Fund is part of the Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation. Our involvement is in harmony with the sixth and seventh of our Co-op’s founding Rochdale principles:

6. **Cooperation among cooperatives.** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. **Concern for the Community:** While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

**Native Seeds SEARCH** is a Tucson-based organization founded in 1983 that conserves and promotes the cultivation of nearly 1,900 diverse heritage crop varieties collected from the Sonoran Desert region. The seeds in the collection represent the farming, food and cultural heritage of nearly 50 indigenous and other communities residing in the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. The organization works to strengthen the foundations of food security, especially in communities with high rates of poverty, lack of access to nutritious food and increased vulnerability to climate change. One of its core programs honors the cultural origins of the collection by providing free seed to Native American households in the Southwest. Every year, over 500 households benefit from this program.

The mission of the **Tucson Cooperative Network** is to promote and support the creation of cooperatives and to grow a regenerative community with fair wages, equal rights, equity and mutual collaboration. The vision is a prosperous and resilient Tucson with a strong ecosystem of cooperatives. While the Tucson Cooperative Network officially formed in the beginning of 2019, it builds upon the experience of grassroots organizations that have been preparing fertile soil out of which cooperatives are beginning to sprout. Be on the lookout for cooperatives now in the process of forming, including the Tucson Rainwater Harvesting Co-op and Co-op Impulso, a cooperative specializing in training and education to help people reach their full potential.

**Living Streets Alliance** envisions streets as living public spaces that connect people to places and to each other. Its mission is to advocate for a thriving Tucson by creating great streets for all of us. On a daily basis, Living Streets Alliance works to make its vision of “Streets for People” in the greater Tucson area a reality. This is done by getting people out into the streets and creating fun and unique events that involve everyone.

General Manager John Glennon recently presented contribution checks to our selected 2019 Co-op Community Fund recipients. Top: Joy Haught for Native Seeds SEARCH. Middle: Raye Winch, Kate DeShiell, Genoveva Martinez, Monica Velasco, Isela Zazueta and Mike Wahl for Cooperative Community Fund. Bottom: Vanessa Cascio, Emily Yetman, Evren Sonmez and Colby Henley for Living Streets Alliance.
SEPTEMBER
Certified Naturally Grown
Promoting sustainable agriculture through peer-review certification

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

NOVEMBER
Local First Arizona Foundation
Creating innovative programs to build a more diverse and resilient Arizona economy

DECEMBER
Hermitage Cat Shelter
Advocates for animal rights and ending needless euthanasia of at-risk felines

Round Up
at the register

Saguaro Juniper Corporation

“In acquiring private governance of land, we agree to cherish its earth, waters, plants, and animals in a way that promotes the health, stability, and diversity of the whole community.”
- Saguaro Juniper Covenant

Grass fed beef for sale!

We sell quarters and halves by live weight. Although the weight of the animals vary, a quarter generally costs $650-$800 (about $7.50/lb of meat).

More info at www.saguaro-juniper.com. Contact torum@email.arizona.edu for questions or orders.

OWNER SALES

Saturday
OCT 19

OWNER APPRECIATION SALE
10% off for Co-op Owners on purchases of $25 or more
Maximum discount 10%
Does not include special orders, gift cards or classes

Saturday
NOV 23

THANKSGIVING SALE
The more you spend, the more you save!

Co-op Owners get
10% off 0-$74.99,
15% off $75-149.99 and
20% off $150 and up.

Maximum discount 20%
Does not include special orders, gift cards or classes
Do You Recycle Effectively?
Becoming an Official ‘Master Recycler’

Natanya Siegel, Co-op Owner

Last year at a Sustainable Tucson meeting, Tucson Clean & Beautiful (TCB) gave a presentation on recycling. I left inspired and decided that I wanted to become a Master Recycler, the title awarded to those who complete the TCB Master Recycler Training Course. In exchange for the training, attendees agree to train others on how to properly recycle in Tucson. The course included seven sessions and two field trips. I graduated with nine others in February 2019 and came away from the experience resolved to educate our community on how to properly recycle, thereby saving our recycling program money and allowing it to be profitable.

There is a lot to learn about recycling and every city does it differently. Cities have different equipment to process the recycled items. I’ll share with you what is required in Tucson.

We do not separate plastic, paper and glass in Tucson. All recyclables need to be clean, dry and safe, with labels and lids attached. Items must be larger than a 3x5 index card or your fist. There is a helpful app for your phone or device called Recycle Coach (https://solutions.recyclecoach.com) that can answer many of your questions.

**METAL CANS:** When opening metal cans, leave the lid attached to the can. After cleaning and drying it, push the lid inside the can, so no one gets hurt in handling it. For soda cans, rinse and leave the tab attached and do not crush them. The tabs separated from the can will not be recycled and it is costly to remove them from the rest of the items. Our city’s equipment does not recognize crushed cans and separated tabs, they go into the garbage.

**PAPER:** All paper needs to be larger than a 3x5 card or your fist, unless you put small pieces in an envelope. Otherwise, the loose pieces of small paper must be removed because the recycling machine does not recognize them. Do not recycle tissues, paper towels, napkins or other similar paper that has touched your body, as it may spread germs. Cardboard boxes like pizza boxes can be recycled but remove the stained sections and throw them away in the garbage. Remove any plastic wrap or liner.

**GLASS:** For glass jars, wash and put the lids back on if you have them. If the jar is broken, carefully wrap it up and place it in the garbage so no one is harmed.

**PLASTIC:** Plastic bottles must be cleaned and dried, and the lid must be replaced. Do not crush them (our machines do not recognize crushed bottles and it costs us to remove them). Do not recycle plastic bags in your blue bins but they can be used for garbage or brought to a store that takes them. You can also bring the plastic that covers your toilet paper and non-tear envelopes to the same locations. Rigid plastics that fit into your blue bin are recyclable.

Take care when putting your blue recycling bin out for collection. Put your bin out only when it is at least half full to save on the number of stops the truck has to make.

Learn more about Tucson Clean & Beautiful’s Master Recycling course at [https://tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org/](https://tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org/).
Pamper Yourself
New Zero Waste Wellness Products

Jennica Smith, Grocery and Wellness Buyer

One of my current projects as a Buyer is to bring in more zero-waste body care items. Enter shampoo bars! I’m really excited about our newest offerings from Sunleaf Naturals (left), as they use high quality, plant-based ingredients and essential oils while also utilizing packaging that is 100% compostable (therefore zero waste, nothing to recycle, and no land fill, this is true about everything they produce as a company). I personally love the Clarysage Lavender Shampoo the most, but they have a lovely range of scents (including an unscented, of course). They also double as body soap! Learn more at https://www.sunleafnaturals.com/.

I would also like to highlight the Skin Cleansing Oil from Badger. We recently increased our Badger lineup by adding both an Argan and Sea Buckthorn blend to the original Unscented. If you’re not familiar with oil cleansing, it can be tricky figuring out the correct types and ratios of oils, but these products are formulated to be perfect for facial skin, especially more sensitive types. Like the majority of Badger’s products, these are 100% certified organic. To quote our Co-op Cashier and oil cleansing guru Andrea Buttrick, “oil cleansing is the ultimate in self-care.” I also want to mention that Badger sunscreens are a Co-op favorite - not only are they ALL reef-safe, but come in a variety of formulas and application methods. We might be headed into the autumn months, but we know that our Sonoran Desert sun doesn’t get any less powerful. Be safe! More product information at https://www.badgerbalm.com/. Check out Badger’s Beginners Guide to Oil Cleansing!

Finally, I have to give a shout out to one of my favorite local companies, Kate’s Magic - Intention-Based Aromatherapy! I’ve been wearing the Woman See Bright anointing oil for years and it continues to be one of my favorites. I have yet to see another company quite like them and we are fortunate enough to be their neighbors! Each product is hand-blended in small batches with love and mindfulness in historic downtown Tucson. Their products are gluten-free, soy-free, and use no synthetic fragrances. Read more about Kate’s Magic at https://www.katesmagik.com.
Traditional Crops with Character
San Xavier Co-op Farm: Respect for the Land

It’s time for yellow watermelon! If you haven’t tried this local watermelon variety, you are missing out on one of the Tucson Valley’s agricultural treasures. Yellow watermelons come to us from San Xavier Co-op Farm, located on the Tohono O’odham Nation in the ancestral village of Wà:k. Jamie Encinas, the farm’s Produce and Inventory Coordinator says, “You can taste the difference. Our yellow watermelons have a very unique taste. It is a richer taste. When you bite into it, you recognize a different sweetness. I don’t know how to explain it, because there is nothing really similar. Everybody knows what a red watermelon tastes like, but a yellow, it just has its own distinctive taste.”

The history of the farm, its website explains, begins with the Santa Cruz River. For thousands of years, families farmed the land using an intricate canal system to irrigate fields. The Santa Cruz River was the only place on the ancestral Tohono O’odham land where flood irrigation agriculture was possible.

In 1887, the United States Congress passed the General Allotment Act. The Allotment Act was applied to reservations whenever it was advantageous for particular Native American nations. Members of selected tribes or reservations were either given permission to select tracts of land (usually around 40 to 160 acres in size), or the tracts of land were assigned. Around 69,000 acres of land in San Xavier were part of this Allotment Act with a total of 363 land owners. This allotment divided the land and made the production of food dependent upon individual families instead communities as a whole.

When surface flow along the Santa Cruz disappeared because of aggressive groundwater pumping in the early 1900s, O’odham agriculture in San Xavier became a thing of the past. But in 1971, a group of allottees in San Xavier formed a cooperative to piece the land back together and farm it again as a whole. Then, in 1982, Congress passed the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act, granting water to San Xavier through the Central Arizona Project (CAP). By combining their tracts of land, allottees were able to lease it and collectively seek resources to irrigate the land and produce on it again.

Learn more about the farm at http://www.sanxaviercoop.org/. Everyone is welcome to visit the farm. There is a store on site that is open Monday-Friday 8:00-4:45 and Saturday 8:00-1:00. You can also follow the farm on Facebook and Instagram!
Food Conspiracy prides itself on the amount of local products it carries. The Co-op always wants to support local family businesses, growers and producers. That is part of what makes the Co-op special. There are literally hundreds of locally grown and produced products on our shelves, from dried and packaged goods to produce and wine.

“One of the greatest misconceptions is that local means less expensive.”

The advantage to buying local products, other than supporting the Arizona economy, is that local products are less expensive. Right? They don’t have to be transported long distances so that means lower prices at the register. “Not necessarily!” says Co-op Produce Manager, Todd Stadtlander. “One of the reasons is volume. “Produce is all about volume,” Todd says. Large farms can sell much greater quantities of produce for wholesale cost while local farmers are generally not set up for large-scale, wholesale pricing. When it comes to local produce, the Co-op must compete with the farmers markets, where the growers can receive retail pricing for their goods.

“But growers have to consider their costs,” Todd explains. “What does a booth at the farmers market cost? What does it cost to transport the produce to the market and cart unsold items back home again? What does a day of the grower’s time cost?

An alternative is that the grower can bring their merchandise to the Co-op and even if it is purchased for a wholesale price, it is a guaranteed sale.” For example, Forever Yong is a local farm that has been selling produce to the Co-op for years. They work closely with the store and with Conspiracy Kitchen, providing weekly updates about produce that is being harvested and the quantities available, allowing the Co-op to consider its inventory and offer the farm the fairest price.

There is also the misconception of fresh food pricing in general. Even those of us that buy into the Co-op and recognize what it is and how it works are often programmed to believe that food should be cheap. It is the 99¢ culture. The reality is that growing food is not cheap. Many local growers have gone out of business in recent years, unable to make it a sustainable venture. “It is a tough gig,” says Todd, “and most farmers also maintain a day job to make a proper go of it.”

With large-scale farms, it is a distributor’s game. The middle man is needed because someone has to move the volume, and, by the time the produce passes through the distributor, the person making the least amount of money is, again, the grower! If a local grower approaches a distributor, the grower will have to sell their produce for even less than if sold directly to the Co-op or at the farmers market. “It’s a challenging situation,” says Todd, “but it is important for customers to understand that when the Co-op buys direct from the grower, the grower is getting fair wholesale pricing. The grower doesn’t have to pay the distributor cost or the added costs of the farmers market, and is guaranteed the sale.”

One thing is certain, local produce provides the highest nutritional value and the best taste. It is picked when ripe and customers know it has been picked recently. The Co-op also mandates that produce sold at the Co-op is Certified Naturally Grown, meaning no pesticides, herbicides, or synthetic fertilizers are used. Certified Naturally Grown, considered the grassroots alternative to Certified Organic, is a US-based farm assurance program certifying produce, livestock and apiaries for organic producers who sell locally and directly to their customers. It is a simpler way to administer quality and less expensive alternative to the USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) certification. This makes it economically accessible to small, family growers in Arizona and other regions.

So whether you shop at the Co-op or enjoy the farmers markets - or both – local products (while perhaps not the least expensive) are still the best for our environment and our co-op community!

Look for weekly produce specials on the Food Conspiracy website at http://www.foodconspiracy.coop/specials/produce-specials/ or follow the store on social media to find local deals. For more on Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) visit https://www.cngfarming.org.
Arizona Products Shine
Sky Island Brand and Hayden Flour Mills

SKY ISLAND BRAND / 47 RANCH

Sky Island Brand / 47 Ranch is a family-owned ranch located in the Mule Mountains and Sulphur Springs Valley of Cochise County. 47 Ranch raises crossbred cattle, Boer Goats, and Navajo Churro Sheep. The cattle are moved through 20 different pastures on the ranch during the course of the year, providing the land time for rest and regrowth. At 47 Ranch, they do not use hormone implants, grain feed, or antibiotics (except to treat injured animals). 47 Ranch has a USDA approved label for All Natural Grassfed Beef.

Cattle are naturally range-raised. This means that the cattle are grazed on the semi-desert ranch land that naturally evolves with the seasons. For example, during the months of May and June, nearly 90% of the cattle’s diet is mesquite leaves, flowers, pods and beans. When the monsoon rains of July and August arrive, the cattle’s diet expands to nearly 160 species of grasses, forbs, shrubs, and trees. On 47 Ranch ranch alone, over 50 different species of grass have been identified. This diversity of diet gives the beef cattle of 47 Ranch their unique flavor.

Sheep and goats are raised the same way, without hormones, grain or antibiotics. The sheep and goats graze out on the range during the day and are penned at night to protect them from predators. The sheep are shorn for wool to sell handspun yarn.

The ranch is dedicated to using renewable energy and has many conservation, habitat and watershed restoration projects in progress. The ranch is 100% wind and solar powered and the animals are finished on range to reduce their carbon footprint.

Food Conspiracy Co-op currently carries Sky Island Brand beef, lamb and goat. Special orders for unique cuts may be placed. Speak with Co-op Grocery Staff for assistance.

The Co-op will host a free tour of Sky Island Ranch on Sunday, September 15, 2019. Contact Jacob Cooper at Buyer@FoodConspiracy.Coop for more information.

Join the Co-op for a ranch tour Sunday, September 15!

HAYDEN FLOUR MILLS

Based out of Queen Creek, Arizona, Hayden Flour Mills provides high quality flours, grits, crackers, pastas and more! The grains that Hayden Flour Mills grows and processes are those that were in existence in the Southwest prior to the 1950s and prior to hybridization and large-scale industrial intervention. These are called heritage grains. In addition to heritage grains, Hayden Flour Mills also grows what are called ancient grains, those that were domesticated thousands of years ago. Grains are sustainably grown without the use of chemicals, bringing back a time when grain was non-hybridized, minimally processed and flavorful.

Hayden Flour Mills is considered a micro mill (like a micro brewery), processing small quantities for people that appreciate traditional milling methods, the quality of stone-ground grains, and the flavor produced by them. The flours are stone milled on the same farm where the majority of the grains are grown. By using slow, low temperature stone milling methods, they are able to preserve the germ of the wheat berry - the “heart” of the grain that is packed full of vitamins and minerals.

Grains are planted in December and harvested in June or July. The farmers wait for the wheat to dry out naturally in the field and that determines the harvest time. Heritage Grains originated in the Fertile Crescent, in the Middle East, so they do extremely well in the arid Arizona desert; they are naturally hardy and pest resistant, their root systems are long, and they require less water compared to modern varieties. Varieties offered include White Sonora (oldest variety in North America), Emmer Farro (ancient grain, namesake from rediscovering this grain in a tomb of an Egyptian Pharaoh), Tibetan Purple barley, Blue Beard Durum, Red Fife Wheat, Hard Red Spring Wheat, Einkorn, Rye, and Corn (sourced from Colorado).

Learn more about Hayden Flour Mills at https://www.haydenflourmills.com. They host a variety of events including mill tours and tortilla, pasta and bread making workshops.
SPOOKY KIDS HALLOWEEN & WAG-O-WEEN
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27
Candy and dog treats given all along 4th Avenue
BE SURE TO STOP BY THE CO-OP!

2019 WINTER STREET FAIR
DECEMBER 13 - DECEMBER 15
DON’T FORGET THE CO-OP STREET FAIR SALE ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11
10% off on purchases of $25 or more for everyone
Does not include special orders, gift cards or classes

DISRUPTORS FOR GOOD
Doing Good Things for the Planet

WEEKLY PODCASTS | COMMUNITY EVENTS | PUBLIC SPEAKING | BLOGS
LISTEN at MrsGreensWorld.com AND CONNECT @mrsgreensworld
Seeds are for Sharing
Many thanks to our friends at Food Conspiracy Co-op for giving us this space for the last three years so we can share with you all the joys of seed saving and sharing. As seed saving is still a new garden practice for many, we like to remind folks that there are a myriad of reasons for saving seeds. Seed saving is about economics for many, enabling people to save money on having to purchase new seed each season. Seed saving also moves us toward increased food security because when we plant and save seeds from heirloom and open-pollinated varieties, we are preserving the genetic biodiversity of available food crops.

Fabulous Fabaceae
The third largest plant family among the angiosperms (plants that flower and produce seeds) is fabaceae, also known as leguminosae. The family fabaceae includes somewhere in the neighborhood of 20,000 species of wild and cultivated plants! The fruits produced by plants in the fabaceae family are typified by a pod-like structure known as a legume. Some of the more familiar plants in the family fabaceae are chickpeas, alfalfa, peanuts, beans, carob, and that most majestic of bean-trees we desert dwellers know and love, the mighty mesquite. Another ubiquitous legume that is not only super easy to grow but also a treat to eat straight from the garden AND save seeds from, is the delightful garden pea (Pisum sativum).

Like Peas in a Pod
Peas are a lot of fun for gardeners to geek out on because there so many wonderful cultivars to choose from (i.e., varieties that have come about through human selection/plant breeding). Peas and other legumes are well suited for beginning seed savers because they are self-pollinating. Their flowers are both male and female and, therefore, sexually compatible. Although self-pollinating crops are less likely to be pollinated by another variety within the species, our friends at Native Seeds SEARCH recommend an isolation distance of 10 feet between different varieties to account for any overzealous bees.

Sowing Your Seeds
In our desert climate, peas can be sown as fall crops from mid-August through November and as spring crops from February through mid-March, however once temperatures hit 85 degrees, pods will not set. Sow your seeds about 1-2 inches deep and about 2 inches apart. Most pea varieties are climbers, so you may want to provide some kind of structure for them to climb. Seed Savers Exchange recommends planting a minimum of 5-10 plants if you plan to save seeds, but if you have space, more is better, as it increases the genetic variability and gives you more peas to snack on from the garden!

Seed Harvest
For seed collecting, allow pods to mature and turn a tan color on the plant. You will likely want to visit your peas daily to check in on their development. Test peas for dryness by giving them a squeeze. If they still feel flexible, allow them to dry a little longer on the plant. Harvest dried pods by handpicking them from the plant. Peas will set pods at different rates, so your pea harvest may take place over several weeks.

Cleaning and Storing
Once you have amassed your tidy harvest of dried peas, allow them to continue to dry in a cool, dark place with good circulation. When you are confident that your seeds are super dry, you can shell them. Store dry peas in an envelope, baggie, or jar in a cool, dark, dry space.

Share your bounty!
As always, 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 labors with friends, neighbors, and of course, the Pima County Public Library Seed Library!

References:
The Seed Garden: The Art and Practice of Seed Saving by Lee Buttala, Shanyin Siegel, et al. (Seed Savers Exchange), 2015

Justine Hernandez is a librarian at Pima County Public Library, a cyclist, amateur naturalist and evolving seed saver. In 2012, she and her fellow desert dwellers made a joint commitment to reclaim and restore the vitality and security of our food system through seed saving and sharing by inaugurating the Pima County Public Library’s Seed Library. By saving and sharing seeds as a community, Justine also believes we can create deeper connections to others and to the natural world.
Toasted with Lemony Pea Mash


1 garlic clove, quartered
1/4 C. fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for toast
Kosher salt
2 C. fresh shelled peas or frozen peas, thawed
2 Tbsp. fresh chopped chives
1 Tbsp. finely chopped preserved lemon peel, divided
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice or more
1/4 tsp. Aleppo pepper or crushed red pepper flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
12 slices country style bread or ciabatta, toasted

Combine garlic, parsley, 1 tablespoon oil, a pinch of salt, and 1/2 cup water in a small saucepan. Add peas and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until peas are tender, about 5 minutes for fresh peas, about 2 minutes for frozen. Drain, reserving cooking liquid.

Transfer pea mixture to a food processor; pulse until a coarse paste forms. Transfer to a medium bowl; mix in chives, 1/2 tablespoon preserved lemon peel, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1/4 teaspoon Aleppo pepper, and 2 tablespoons oil. Stir in reserved cooking liquid by tablespoonfuls until mixture is still thick but spreadable. Season pea mash with salt, black pepper, and more lemon juice, if desired.

Drizzle toast with oil; top with pea mash, sprinkle with remaining 1/2 tablespoon preserved lemon peel and more Aleppo pepper, and drizzle with more oil.

“In wine there is truth,” said the Romans. And the truth is that Food Conspiracy’s wine selection has never been more diverse or accessible. Our well-attended wine tastings during the First Friday Summer Sales highlighted top quality warm weather sippers and some offerings brand new to our wine shelf. As we head into cooler temperatures and the holiday season, Co-op shoppers will benefit from a unique array of sustainable, certified organic, and Arizona-produced wines. Our selection covers dozens of grape varieties, from the ever-popular Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay on the white side to the standby Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon on the red side, as well as some delightful pink rosés. But our selection also includes varieties you’ve never heard of from all over the world! And the majority of them are made by small, independent wine producers that share the Co-op’s values regarding quality and community.

An exciting new entry to our white wine line up is the Deep Sky Aurora made in Cochise County. It is made from Viognier (pronounced vee-yohn-yay) grapes, a variety that grows well in our Arizona climate. It is a dry, medium-bodied wine with flavors of tropical fruit, stone fruit, minerals and spices. Pair it with grilled white meat, a Mediterranean plate of hummus and feta or a bowl of pozole with green chili, and you’ve got a winner!

Deep Sky is considered by the wine industry to have the most technologically-advanced vineyards in the world - right here in Southern Arizona! The company employs a high-tech series of sensors placed throughout the vineyard, developed by owners Phil and Kim Asmundson and some very savvy Silicon Valley engineers. The sensors collect real time data about water usage and vineyard conditions. The data is then fed directly to the vineyards’ irrigation equipment which distributes water automatically on a daily basis according to the needs of each growing zone. Use of this system, called the Ag Platform, has reduced the vineyards’ water consumption by one third, and because of the system’s ability to conserve valuable resources, it is expected to become standard technology throughout the world’s wine regions. The Asmundsons are also big astronomy buffs, hence the wine’s name and space age, colorful label. Their other wines are also named with astronomical terms like Big Bang, Eclipse and Super Nova. So between the high-tech approach and the star-gazing, that’s a lot of wonderful personality that transfers directly to the wine!

And, if you really want to launch yourself into the modern wine world, how about trying our wines in a can?! WHAT?! “That’s just crazy talk,” say the wine traditionalists. But top quality producers worldwide are now bottling select wines in, well... cans! Canned wines are great for parties and travel well in beverage coolers, making them a super accompaniment to picnics, camping trips, and other outings. And what makes them attractive to many wine drinkers is the fact that most canned wines are produced without added sulfites.

The Co-op carries two trending California-produced canned wines. The Drop White Wine is a slightly fizzy and refreshing drink from a company whose motto is “Screw the corkscrew!” The Una Lou Rosé is made from sustainably-farmed grapes and a percentage of proceeds go to two organizations that support youth, food and agricultural education. Both of these wines have gotten a lot of positive press and would be great for holiday parties! Find them in our refrigerated wine case.
Conspiracy Kitchen
New Fall Items

Jesse Powell, Conspiracy Kitchen Manager

Looking for something a little different? The Food Conspiracy Kitchen has you covered! We are getting ready to roll out a ton of new items made from scratch in our wonderful kitchen. New Hot Bar dishes, Grab & Go items, and Baked Goods are on the horizon. Also, keep an eye on our constantly growing selection of delicious cheese!

Here is a small preview of what is to come:

- New Hot Breakfast Options (vegan, vegetarian, and meat)
- Raw Power Slaw (vegan)
- Cucumber Wakame Salad (vegan)
- Chocolate Chia Pudding with Blueberries (vegan)
- Cranberry Nectarine Chicken Salad (antibiotic and hormone free)
- Raw Pasta Salad (vegan)
- New Cookies & Cakes (vegan and vegetarian)
- Rosemary Potato Salad (vegan)

Cucumber Wakame Salad.

Chocolate Chia Pudding with Blueberries.

Back Home to Food Conspiracy

Dana Mayorga, Cheese Buyer

Dana Mayorga has worked in the health food industry for well over a decade, beginning her career at a mom and pop store in Charlotte, North Carolina as a teenager, then working at a co-op in Greensboro, North Carolina. She moved to Tucson in 2006 and began working at Food Conspiracy in 2010, starting in the small kitchen that was located at that time in the main store (before the kitchen was housed in the Hoff Building across the alley). Dana remembers, “back then, the kitchen had just a couple of hot plates and produced only a small amount of grab-and-go items.” A far cry from the large activity it is now, producing hundreds of grab-and-go products daily.

Dana is a shining example of Food Conspiracy’s “reinvigorated culture of Staff retention” (see this issue’s Generally Speaking column by General Manager John Glennon). Dana left Food Conspiracy at a time a few years ago when employee support and retention were a less developed part of the company culture. She left the Co-op to work in the Specialty Department at Whole Foods, the division in charge of wine and cheese. Working under a Fromager, a Cheese Professional, Dana gained a new skillset in cheese production and sales. Ultimately though, she became disenchanted with working in a large corporate environment where she often found it difficult to identify what the business really stood for in the enormity of its total operation. After learning about the revitalized culture at Food Conspiracy, she returned.

Dana now serves as the Co-op’s Cheese Buyer and cultivates a growing selection of cheeses and an array of interesting international and artisanal products. She lives downtown and enjoys free time with her son who is entering kindergarten this year. She is also a skilled artist and produces oil portraits of people and landscape. Ask her about her paintings!
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STUDENT DAY AT FOOD CONSPIRACY CO-OP
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HOMECOMING WEEKEND • SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019
PURCHASE A GIFT CARD WORTH $25 OR MORE AND WE’LL ADD 10%