

First Alternative NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

Fresh, local, organic groceries for everyone

North Store: 2855 NW Grant Ave • South Store: 1007 SE 3rd St

The 
SCOOP
December 2023



*From the First Alternative
Board of Directors,*

Kestrel Bailey

With the holiday season in full swing, it's the perfect time to reflect on our communities, from

families to friends to neighbors to co-ops.

So, while you're picking out the most beautiful Brussels sprouts and your favorite festive nog, celebrate the fact that you are a member of a community that makes up 12% of humanity: co-op Owners!

On top of that, over 10% of the world's population is employed by a cooperative business. With food co-ops, housing co-ops, farming co-ops, and beyond, you are one in over 970 million people worldwide who prioritize people over profit and recognize an "alternative" way of going about "business as usual."



Within the First Alternative community, the Board held our annual retreat with our Columinate governance consultant in October. Here, we were able to dig deeper into co-op governance and policy, explore future expansion options, and discuss specific action items for the Board to focus on in the coming months.

Following the retreat, the Board decided to modernize our governance policies as suggested by our Columinate governance consultant. These updates will allow First Alternative's policies to keep pace with modern day co-op policies and be better aligned with our fellow cooperatives near and far. Our current policies were put together in the 1990s, and a lot has changed in the world of cooperative grocers since then.

While our revamped policies will maintain the same missions and goals, their structure, wording, and philosophy will better reflect modern ideals and technologies.

Beyond policy updates, the Board left the retreat in alignment around specific points to consider moving forward, including expansion potentials, stakeholder engagement and communication, capital campaign requirements, and future board recruitment. While the retreat did not serve as a time for any decisions to be made, it was a much needed time for the Board to reconvene as a micro community, refresh

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We encourage the use of our carts and baskets while shopping and ask that personal bags be used at checkout only.

Thanks for your understanding!

**Two locations
Open daily
7am - 9pm**

Special Holiday Hours:

Dec 24: 7am - 6pm

Dec 25: Closed

Dec 30: 7am - 8pm

From the Board of Directors,

Kestrel Bailey

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on policy and mission, and reflect on what is important to First Alternative moving forward.

With future-focused vision, the Board has been exploring potential co-op evolutions, be it expansions, renovations, or entering new markets (including, but not limited to, the soon-to-be-open coffee kiosk at the South store!)

Within these discussions is the ever present net margin, the money left after expenses that can be used for reinvestment. At First Alternative, and cooperative grocers across the board, that net margin is a very slim 1%.

Unfortunately, that 1% is shrinking due to rising inflation and costs coupled with lower customer counts. As a result, the Board, our General Manager, and our Finance team are working to find ways to save our net margin while maintaining First

Alternative's people-focused mission, and, as strange as it may seem, expansions or renovations could prove to be a method to increase our net margin.

Within all this money talk, the Board and management have been actively working to finalize the 2024 budget, which should be completed by the time you're reading this article. As mentioned in previous articles, budget and finance talk often involves a lot of refreshing and/or relearning economic jargon and principles and working to ensure new Board members (like myself) have a holistic understanding of how First Alternative's budget "functions." (Math pun anyone?) Luckily for me, I've always found math fun (what can I say, I'm an engineer who competed in high school science fairs and thinks the history of the Bernoulli family is really cool).

Our Board is focused on ensuring the 2024 budget meets First Alternative's needs, but also allows us to consider future changes to the business and necessary upkeep, like parking lot maintenance or new cold cases.

As we wrap up 2023, our first quote-unquote "normal year since 2019," I'm incredibly grateful to be a part of this cooperative community. The Board's efforts in the evolution of First Alternative give me hope for the future of our co-op, and, despite the strange economic climate we're currently experiencing, I am truly excited to see where we go in the coming years.

While I may be a new member of the Board I have considered myself a member of the First Alternative community since I first stepped foot in the north store in 2017 and picked out a pint of local cherry tomatoes. I look forward to forging the future of First Alternative with my fellow Owners, and hope you'll join in opening your sparkling beverage of choice and raising a toast to the cooperative community we all find ourselves to be a part of. Cheers!



10% OFF Prepaid Cards

From First Alternative Co-op Deli through Jan. 2

GREAT GIFT OR STOCKING STUFFER!

Ask for them at any register!

December Board Committee Meetings

Owners interested in virtual attendance should contact BREC@firstalt.coop for details.

Owner Relations Committee:

The conduit for communication between Owners and the Board.

Monday, December 11, 6pm

Board Recruitment & Elections

Committee: Working to recruit qualified Board candidates.

Wednesday, December 12, 5pm

Finance Committee:

Reviews, analyzes, and makes recommendations on financial matters.

Wednesday, December 13, 4:30pm

Board of Directors:

Elected Owners putting our cooperative principles into action.

Tuesday, December 26, 6pm



2024 Beans for Bags Donation Recipients and Donation Schedule

Thanks to all the Owners that voted in our recent Beans for Bags election. Here are the sixteen local organizations that you chose receive our 2024 Beans For Bags donations.

The year's donation schedule is as follows:



JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH

- Coastal Range Food Bank
- Community Outreach Inc.
- Old Mill Center for Children and Families
- Unity Shelter

JULY • AUGUST • SEPTEMBER

- ABC House
- Region 3 K9 Search and Rescue
- Safe Haven
- Ten Rivers Food Web

APRIL • MAY • JUNE

- Co-op Recycling Center
- Jackson Street Youth Services
- South Corvallis Food Bank
- Vina Moses

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER

- Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center
- Grace Center for Adult Day Services
- Lumina Hospice
- Senior Dog Rescue

Bring your reusable bags and help support local charitable organizations!
More details at firstalt.coop/donations

Special Holiday Hours:

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Dec 25: Closed

Dec 30: 7am - 8pm

Follow First Alternative

For up-to-the-minute news,
giveaways, recipes, special offers,
and tons of cooperative fun.

@firstaltcoop    

Facebook • Instagram • YouTube • TikTok

The Co-op welcomed...



new Owners in October

In Memoriam Alan "Mushroom" Kapuler

The Co-op Community is mourning the loss of Alan "Mushroom" Kapuler, a scientist, modern artist, public domain plant breeder, and organic seedsman.

Mushroom, along with his family, has been a constant fixture at the Co-op and in the local sustainability community since they moved to Corvallis in the mid-80s.

An expert plant breeder and one of the co-founders of Peace Seeds, the lifetime of work that Mushroom did in preserving heirloom seeds, creating biodiversity, and bringing Andean crops to the area will promote health and spread beauty for generations to come.

Mushroom will be dearly missed and fondly remembered by all of us in the Co-op Community.



Everyone is welcome!

We encourage the use of inclusive language because our Co-op community includes people with a variety of identities.

Inclusive language includes terms like these until you know a person's pronouns:

people, person, folks, they, them

Thank you for helping us create a safe space!