LA MONTAÑITA ELECTION 2026 VOTER GUIDE



LA MONTAÑITA FOOD CO:OP
50 YEARS

OUR NEXT CHAPTER STARTS WITH YOUR VOTE
NOVEMBER 1-14

Annual La Montañita 2026 Election

As a cooperative business rooted in democratic ownership, La Montañita gives current members a voice in how their co-op is governed. Each year, members may vote for candidates to serve on our Board of Directors and on any proposed amendments to our bylaws, the governing documents of our co-op.

2026 Election Details at a Glance

Members may vote anytime from Nov. 1-14. This year, there are no proposed bylaw amendments on the ballot.

Five Board of Directors seats are open, with terms ranging from one to three years. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes will fill the available seats, with longer terms assigned in descending order based on vote totals.

Voting Period

Sunday, Nov. 1-Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026

Voting closes at 11:59 p.m. MST.

Board Seats Available

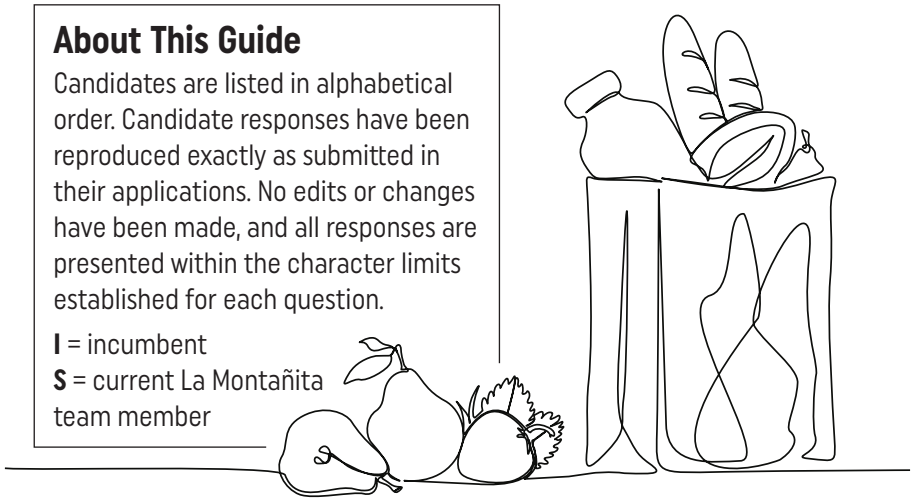
- Three (3), three-year terms
- One (1), two-year term
- One (1), one-year term

One (1) of the five available seats may be filled by a current La Montañita team member, up to the maximum of three staff-held Board seats. Team members directly supervised by the general manager are not eligible.

About This Guide

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order. Candidate responses have been reproduced exactly as submitted in their applications. No edits or changes have been made, and all responses are presented within the character limits established for each question.

I = incumbent
S = current La Montañita team member



ACTIVE MEMBERS ELECT THE BOARD

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Nick Barral

Provide a short bio that explains who you are and why you're interested in serving on the La Montañita Food Co-op Board of Directors.

My family and I moved to Santa Fe in 11/2007, from Southern California. Over the years I've worked in downtown at the Lensic and Galerie Zuger. I worked on the Southside at Target, Subaru of Santa Fe, and FedEx Express. I'm currently working at Santa Fe Pro Musica as the Marketing Manager. I believe everyone should work in retail. The variety of people provides a prospective on humanity few other jobs can. People's habits, behaviors, and product choices are out in the open for anyone to observe. The daily interactions with customers, even customers someone may know well, are specific and special only to that moment. I know this, because of my past work experience, and also because I worked at this Co-op's Santa Fe store for 3 years. I've been a member for 18 years. I appreciate so much about the people, the store and the company. I want to have a meaningful impact on the Co-op's future.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

I became a member in 8/2008. I can't explain my motivation to join at the time. We lived far enough away to only visit

(Barral, continued on next page)

the store once or twice a week. When we moved into the neighborhood, in late 2011, the Co-op was within walking distance of our home. The Co-op had the food and supplements we wanted. The sales and member discounts were appreciated. Now, there have been times when I shop at the Co-op 3 or 4 times a day. I worked at the Co-op, on the Front End, from 10/2021 until late 9/2024. I appreciated, and still do, getting to know and work with the staff. The trust and appreciation is mutual.

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

I am nearing a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from NMSU. My work background includes, but not limited to: marketing, IT, websites, graphic design, photography, retail, and customer service. I served on the Board of the Casa Solana Pool Association for 4 years. My work at Santa Fe Pro Musica combines a number of my skills. Those skills have ushered in a considerable improvement in increased ticket sales over the last 3 seasons. I hike. I've hiked in the Sangre de Cristo mountains above Santa Fe for 4 years, and last September, Mt. Whitney in California. I've driven to, and photographed, the capitol buildings of the 48 contiguous United States. I've been editing the maps of Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, in the navigation app Waze, for 6 years. I have a broad understanding and appreciation of people and places. The area that is the state of New Mexico is like nowhere else. Kind of like the Co-op. I know the state and the Co-op, well enough, that I want to have a meaningful impact on both.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

I'd like to see considerable growth for the Co-op in the Albuquerque area. I have visited the Nob Hill, Rio Grande, and Gallup stores. I have not been to the new store in Avanyu Plaza. What I knew, when I worked at the Co-op, was that Nob Hill, Rio Grande, and Gallup stores, could all fit in the Santa Fe store. I know that Santa Fe leads the company in sales. I don't have current insight into how the Avanyu Plaza store is doing, but its potential is tremendous. These days, in stores, there's a focus on value, especially because prices have gone up. But, I'd like for the Co-op stores in Albuquerque to evoke the same feeling I have at the Santa Fe store, community. Why Santa Fe stands out, is because of the familiarity of staff to customers, and customers to customers. I see that as one way to grow the Co-op in the Albuquerque area.



Peter Chestnut (I)

Describe what you believe has been your most important contribution during your time on the board.

I am a current board member, serving as treasurer and chairing the Finance Committee for the past five years. Cooperation, and the cooperative business model used by our LaMontanita Food Cooperative are long time interests. I retired as a lawyer, after 49 years in practice, emphasizing Indian Affairs, water Law, and cooperative associations' I served on the board of La Montanita during the 1980s, and on the Finance Committee for the past 35 years.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

My wife Elizabeth and I joined as a household back when LaMOntanita started in 1977. We purchased a lifetime membership when they became available many years ago. I am a peaceful person who believes that cooperation contributes positively to our society. The cooperative values and principles which LaMontanita exemplifies and works to implement daily are more important than ever in the present time.

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

Serving on the board of directors for La Montanita for 15 years, and serving as its member representative to, and on the board of directors for, the Tucson Cooperative Warehouse in the 1980s and 1990s gave me insight into the natural foods cooperative sector of the food industry. My past experience and commitment to working with other cooperators to provide leadership during times of change will support my continued service as a member of our board of directors.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

As LaMontanita approaches its 50th year in business, the vision for growth of past boards and management came to fruition when our new state of the art grocery store in Albuquerque opened in March.. Helping it grow strong roots by selling more groceries and household items to nourish our customers and expand our cooperative presence in the Albuquerque business community is a tremendous opportunity to help our co-op grow well into the future.. Shopping together at our new North Valley location in the years ahead can benefit our

(Chestnut, continued on next page)

households, as well as our community, and show the value of our cooperative business model to the state of New Mexico and the National Cooperative Grocers network. The new store project completion cost more, and took longer than anticipated to reach that milestone. The 19 Pueblos of NM wanted a grocery store at Avanyu Plaza in their 19 Pueblos District of Albuquerq



Peter Clark

Provide a short bio that explains who you are and why you're interested in serving on the La Montañita Food Co-op Board of Directors.

My name is Peter, and I am an experienced health & safety and production management professional specializing in emergency management, logistics, and technical operations. My career spans attractions, entertainment venues, TV/film, live events, festivals, and construction projects.

In January 2024, I was appointed as an interim La Montañita Food Co-op Board member, serving through January 2025. During that time, I gained valuable insight into Board governance and made meaningful contributions to the Co-op.

I believe my professional experience in risk management, operations, strategic planning, and problem-solving can support the Board's continued success. I value LMC's mission and am seeking a BOD term to contribute to long-term goals, build on existing work, and help see important projects through to completion.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

I became a La Montañita member in 2018 when my family relocated to New Mexico. I am a strong advocate for organic, local, and regional food systems, and I value La Montañita's leadership in supporting these priorities across New Mexico. I joined LMC and continue to invest my time and resources because I believe our food dollars should strengthen the local food system and directly benefit farmers and small businesses. Member engagement and dedication are essential to LMC's continued success, and our collective support helps build a more sustainable and equitable food system in New Mexico. On a personal note, La Montañita is also my daughter's favorite place for a blueberry muffin—which makes supporting the Co-op even more meaningful.

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

With extensive coursework in anthropology and cultural history at Prescott College, I bring more than 20 years of experience in production management, risk management, workplace safety, corporate security, construction, and budget oversight. I currently serve as Senior Director of Health & Safety and hold an NFPA Certified Hazard Recognition Specialist (CHRS) credential, along with advanced OSHA and ASIS (PSP) certifications. My background also includes more than a decade in renewable energy, managing renewable power systems for events and residential and commercial applications. As an interim La Montañita Board member in 2024, I completed extensive training and study of cooperative grocery operations and vulnerabilities. I have also dedicated decades to community service, including The Food Depot, Team Rubicon, Santa Fe Watershed Society, Meals on Wheels, and the Red Cross.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

Navigating the consolidation of retailers, products, availability, and quality is an increasing challenge as technology and big business reshape the food sector. I believe the Co-op's strength lies in being different: a hub for local products, producers, and community resources. Rising costs and fewer purchasing options create a delicate balance between affordability, member value, and financial stability. At the same time, the next five years offer significant opportunities for growth and evolution as cooperatives expand nationwide. As the Avanyu Plaza store continues to stabilize, LMC has an opportunity to strengthen its reputation, grow its membership throughout New Mexico and beyond, and build toward its strongest membership to date. Member engagement will be central to achieving that success.

IT'S EASY TO VOTE ONLINE

For an email reminder sign up here!

lamontanita.coop/signup



Christopher Currie

Provide a short bio that explains who you are and why you're interested in serving on the La Montañita Food Co-op Board of Directors.

I'm a lifelong New Mexican, classically trained French brigade chef, and culinary professional with more than 20 years of experience dedicated to sustainable food systems, healthy nutrition, and supporting local food producers. With my first restaurant job in Albuquerque washing dishes as a young adult, my career has taken me from New York City, Los Angeles, and Paris, where I trained in French cuisine, as well as Panama, where I studied coffee production. I have worked at renowned kitchens including Tartine Bakery in San Francisco and Bouley in New York City, and have lived and worked on organic farms, gaining firsthand knowledge of food production, agriculture, and distribution.

Having shopped at La Montañita my entire life, I want to give back to an organization that has long been part of my community and to help advance its mission of building a more sustainable local food system.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

I grew up shopping at the Santa Fe Co-op with my dad, so La Montañita has been part of my life since my childhood. After moving back to New Mexico in 2024, I became a household member because I wanted to invest in an organization whose values align with my own.

I believe community-owned cooperatives are an important alternative to increasingly consolidated corporate food systems. Co-ops empower members to determine how food is sourced, strengthen local economies, support farmers and producers, and make it easier for communities to access fresh, healthy food. As both a culinary professional and lifelong advocate for sustainable food systems, I value organizations that prioritize people, local agriculture, and environmental stewardship over short-term profit.

Becoming a member was a natural extension of those values, and I'd be honored to help further that mission through board service.

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

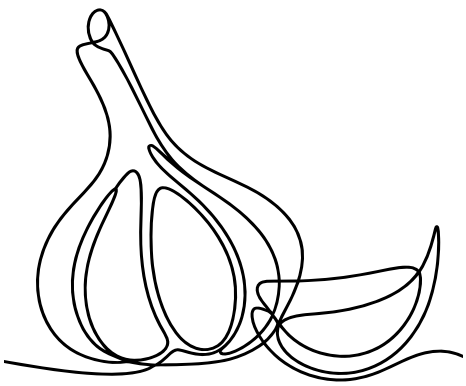
My first professional cooking job was here in Albuquerque, and after moving back to New Mexico in 2024, I have been intentional about investing my time and expertise in our local food community. Since returning, I have helped open or expand food programs for several local restaurants, breweries, and businesses, creating spaces that celebrate quality food and local connection. This fall, I will partner with my friend and business partner, the owner of Rumor Pizza, to open a new Italian restaurant, Velvet Panther, in downtown Albuquerque. I am passionate about helping cultivate a vibrant, resilient local food ecosystem and believe restaurants, farms, cooperatives, and small businesses all play an important role in that vision.

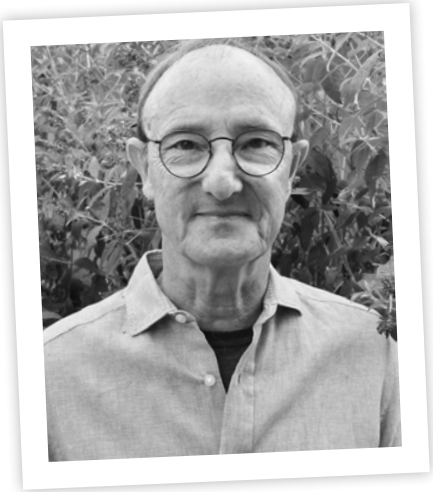
Beyond my 20+ years as a classically trained culinary professional and deep knowledge of food systems, I bring executive leadership experience in organizational planning, operations, budgeting, and governance. I have led teams, managed budgets, and I am passionate about strengthening New Mexico's local food economy. I believe my culinary expertise, leadership experience, and commitment to community would allow me to make a meaningful contribution to the La Montañita Board.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

I believe La Montañita has an opportunity to recommit to, and expand upon the cooperative values that have made it a cornerstone of New Mexico's local food movement. Food is more than something we buy, it is a lifestyle that brings people together, strengthens communities, and connects us to the land and the people who grow it.

I'd like to see stronger partnerships with local farmers, ranchers, dairies, and food artisans, creating more direct opportunities for members to know their producers. I also see huge potential for chef demonstrations, cooking classes, wine and local beverage tastings, producer meet-and-greets, and seasonal harvest events that make the Co-op a true community gathering place. These experiences strengthen our local food economy, attract new members, and preserve the community-centered identity that makes La Montañita distinct from conventional grocery stores.





C.E. Pugh

Provide a short bio that explains who you are and why you're interested in serving on the La Montañita Food Co-op Board of Directors.

I have spent my adult life in the grocery industry and view improving the food system as a spiritual endeavor. I believe food co-ops will continue leading the creation of more just and sustainable local food economies. My experience can help La Montañita continue to serve its members, staff, and local suppliers.

I grew up on a family farm and from 1976 to 2002, I held management roles with two locally owned multi-store grocers, overseeing operations, purchasing, merchandising, and marketing.

In 2002, I served as La Montañita Co-op's general manager, helping expand the co-op and launch a distribution business supporting local farmers, ranchers, and producers.

In 2008, I joined a national purchasing co-op owned by natural food co-ops, serving in several management roles until retiring in 2025.

My wife and I live in Santa Fe and have two adult children.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

I joined La Montañita in 2002 when I began working at the co-op. I have long been inspired by its local ownership and commitment to supporting area farmers and producers. Local food cooperatives strengthen local economies by supporting and purchasing from locally owned farms and businesses.

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

For more than 50 years, I have valued local farmers and producers. I grew up on a family farm raising cattle, hogs, chickens, and vegetables for both market and household use. My career includes management roles at two family-owned grocery operations where supporting local producers was a strategic priority, as well as six years as La Montañita's general manager, when I helped double local product sales. I also held management roles at a national purchasing cooperative serving natural food co-ops, where I worked to secure better pricing and service from distributors and brands so member co-ops could focus more on local products.

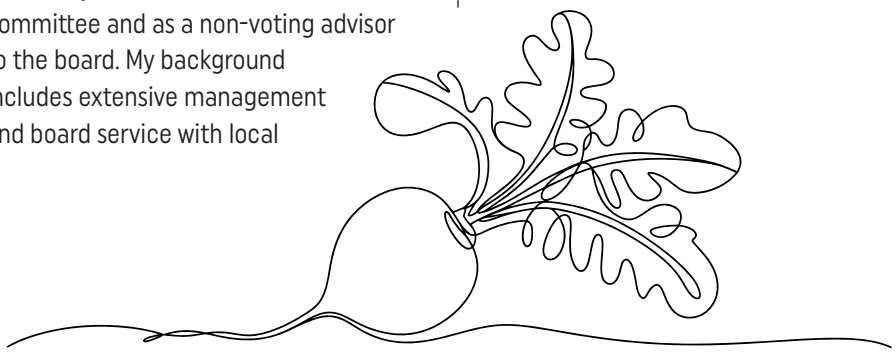
I currently serve on La Montañita's finance committee and as a non-voting advisor to the board. My background includes extensive management and board service with local food co-ops and national cooperatives focused on expanding the cooperative economy. Throughout my career, I have worked to strengthen local economies through local and cooperative ownership.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

La Montañita is one of the nation's largest and most successful food co-ops because we serve our members, local suppliers, and staff. By honoring our cooperative structure, supporting local producers, and upholding our core values, strong leadership can help us meet new challenges and serve our communities more effectively.

Our greatest opportunities are to strengthen communication with members, staff, and local producers and expand our purchases of local products and services. Growth matters, but our primary responsibility is to engage members as owners and serve their needs.

I respectfully ask for your vote to represent you on La Montañita's board.



VOTING OPENS NOVEMBER 1

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Ayanna Zahra

Provide a short bio that explains who you are and why you're interested in serving on the La Montañita Food Co-op Board of Directors.

Ayanna Zahra, Nob Hill's Top Holistic Skin Therapist, has embraced and helping women of color all over the world reverse hyperpigmentation, acne, and the effects of auto-immune diseases and/or medications, now Certified in Ayurveda Foundations to further support every customer via Holistic Skin Services as well as Clean product formulation and education.

Ms. Zahra is also an author of sought after Skin Guides available on Amazon Kindle, Google Books, and an Educator in spaces that yearn for her unique perspective on Skin Wellness, Mycology, Ayurveda, Herbalism, which allows us to connect various elements to a healthy skin organ.

Before life in New Mexico, Ayanna focussed on Holistic Studies across South America, Asia, North America, and Europe while Designing Clothes.

Healing my community includes food security. My natural skills could build the Coop's relationships in our community.

When did you become a member, and what inspired you to join?

I became a member at the top the Cyclospora threat. However, I have shopped at your Nob Hill Location since our Skin Club opened in Nob Hill, just a block down Silver and Tulane in 2024. I became a member because I appreciate access to local produce and eggs. Why not have a membership? I shop there enough. :-)

Describe your relevant experience, education, skills or interests you believe will support your service on the board.

In summary, I am a strongly effective, results-driven strategic leader with a proven record of strengthening branding voice and presence/recognition, optimizing core business processes, establishing high-value strategic alliances, and driving significant revenue growth through streamlined operations. Expert in managing complex, cross- functional projects, implementing new technologies, and cultivating high-impact partnerships across government, healthcare, academic, and business sectors.

I am an ideal Liaison and Community leader with strong negotiation skills, keeping in alignment with organization mission and vision. Forming and building strong, relevant, and productive partnerships is an especially sought after skill that I possess.

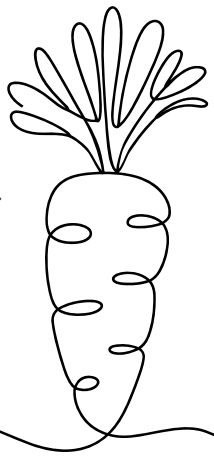
My interest in serving on the board is to ensure the Coop is serving our community in ways that exist now as well as opportunities. My above mentioned experience and skills have the natural ability to support the board and how the Coop serves our community.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for La Montañita Food Co-op to better serve its members and the broader community over the next five years?

I am leading with the fact that La Montanita Food Co-op is doing a beautiful job being accessible to and affordable for much of our community. Food insecurity is more than just a limitation on food access. It is also about limitations on fresh, local, whole foods access and home care items.

Strategic Community Partnerships across New Mexico are a major opportunity for the Coop, which will serve the broader community and increase memberships over the next five years. These partnerships range from transportation to non-profits and food services.

I am not a current board member, so I am not aware if this is an area you are currently working on. However, I have a strong track record of building a strong long-game in partnerships.



WHO SERVES ON THE BOARD?

Find out more about our current board members.

lamontanita.coop/board

MAKE

HEALTHY FOOD & GOODS ACCESSIBLE

PROMOTE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR PRACTICES & PRODUCTS

CREATE A

WORKPLACE BASED ON DIGNITY OPPORTUNITY & FAIR COMPENSATION

CHAMPION

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

WELCOME & CELEBRATE

OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY

LA MONTAÑITA FOOD CO:OP

50 YEARS