





## CON TEN TS



6 A SNAPSHOT OF **THEN & NOW OUR ENDS** Bill has the numbers! Troy looks at our What does a decade growth over the of co-op look like? past two years.

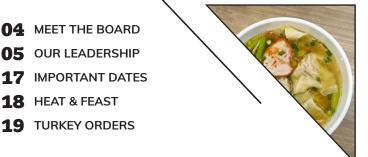




TNT BITTERS CO. Team member Anna has her own bitters company!

TNT

**FALL IN LOVE WITH** THE BERKSHIRES Matt knows where to go this season.



WONTON SOUP 16 WITH PORK ROLLS Warm up with this recipe from Arianna.



MEET PHIL! A quick interview with new team member Phil.

# BOARD directors



Jake Levin, President



Kevin Gorey, Vice President



Trish Mead, Secretary



Mickey Kammeyer, Treasurer



Erica Spizz



Jen Salinetti



Laurie May Coyle



Anna Houston



Nancy Maurice Rogers

# store LEADERSHIP



Troy Bond General Manager



Brandon Schuldt Finance Manager



Matt Sinico Operations Manager



Jessica Bosworth Center Store Manager



Mark Collins Produce Manager



Hayley Labshere Customer Service Manager



**Brian Murphy** Meat & Seafood Manager



Kyle Pezzano Fresh Foods Manager



Devorah Sawyer Marketing Manager

### \*



### From the General Manager

The Ends Policy for the Co-op is basically our mission statement. Unlike most mission statements, our Ends policy evolves each year. As General Manager, I am held accountable to keep the Ends in mind in all of the operational decisions that we make.

My report to the board in August outlined the progress and opportunities we made in the past year of FY21. As you'll see, the pandemic had a definite impact on our goals, mostly for better and some for worse.

### 1.) The Co-op cultivates generosity, cooperation, and care for our environment

Our generosity is a reflection of our community's support of our Co-op. The spirit of giving was especially evident at the height of the pandemic. And when customers buy more, we can give more.

Our charitable giving to non-profits soared in FY21 to \$49,196. That's almost an 8-fold increase from FY20 when we were able to give \$6,202.

Charitable giving is separate from our Round Up for Change program, which makes a direct line from customer to local organization. Our owners vote each year during our election for organizations they want to see on the roster in the coming year. Here, too, we saw a tremendous outpouring of giving: FY20 Round Up: \$10,490; FY21 Round Up: \$24,576—more than double.

The Co-op commits to buying as much product locally as we can. In FY20, our local percentage (within a 100-mile radius) was 31%, or \$2.6M in sales. Due to the pandemic and nationwide supply chain issues (including labor, raw material and packaging shortages) our percentage fell to 23% of sales, but our total sales of local products still increased to \$2.9M.

The Community Discount allows customers with SNAP cards to apply for a 10% discount on all purchases. The total customer savings in FY21 was \$37.5k, while the previous year was \$41.2k.

Senior Discount savings were boosted by adding a second day of the week. Now those over 65 years of age can let us know at the register on Sundays and Wednesdays that they qualify for the 10% discount. In FY20, seniors saved \$16,697, compared to \$88,139 in FY21, an increase of 428%



### 2.) The Co-op invigorates the local economy through equitable relationships and support of the cooperative movement

We are proud to support a host of local businesses beyond our regular local vendors: Carr Hardware, Great Barrington Bagel, Kwik Print, Taylor Rental, Mahaiwe Tent, Olde Ville Monogramming, to name just a few. We even use the bank next door, Pittsfield Cooperative.

At the start of FY21, our aim was to reduce our dependence on Amazon. As our sales increased 30% seemingly overnight at the same time the supply chain broke down, we found ourselves in a bind. In order to remain operational, we had little choice but to turn

to the online mega-retailer for timely procurement of face masks and office supplies, kitchen smallwares and register tape. We went from spending \$6,441 in FY20 to \$14,844 in FY21. We know we can do better, and are now implementing manager approvals for potential Amazon orders and spending more time looking for local or small business alternatives. So far in FY22 we've spent \$0 on Amazon.

We continue to support the local currency, accepting \$81,120 in BerkShares in FY21.

### 3.) The Co-op engages our greater community through education and outreach

This End was hardest hit by the pandemic. We couldn't hold in-store events last year while the specter of the pandemic loomed large, and that's one of the saddest parts of the Covid experience for our staff. The joy of bringing people together at the Co-op and sharing food and conversation and trying samples from a new vendor were on indefinite hold.

Although we may not have been able to participate in community outreach in the traditional sense, Covid pushed us to find new ways to gather. In 2020, we launched our weekly Music on the Patio program, we began our holiday giving tree tradition, and started our monthly Patio Party program - all in the fresh air on the patio.

In March the Scoil Rince Breifne O Ruairc held their first performance in over a year, right in our front yard. Spring brought our Mother's Day Tea and Father's Day Beer and Brats. And don't forget our quarterly Owner Celebrations!

We've made it this far, and we are hopeful. You may have already seen more vendors sampling. We are planning a robust holiday season with an Apple Fest, Halloween fun, Friendsgiving Feast and Beaujolais Nouveau Celebration, to name a few.

The board has also tasked the Co-op to take a lead in DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) work. We want everyone to know that we value diversity in our workforce and customers.

### 4.) The Co-op is the trusted source of healthful food for all

We are committed to revising the Food Policy annually. We intend to refine the policy annually to reflect changes in nutritional information, food production and farming practices that could impact the quality of our food. The next Food Policy update will be completed by the October 2nd Annual Meeting.

If you want to read the current version, we make it easy for you to find it at berkshire.coop/standards.





### A LETTER TO OWNERS

From the Board President

It is hard to believe summer is over, but with the fall comes many exciting changes and new beginnings, especially for the Berkshire Food Co-op.

As I write this, I am preparing to celebrate Rosh Hashanah with my family. Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the new year in the Jewish tradition. Like with most New Year traditions, you are asked to reflect on the previous year as well as look forward to the new one. Generally speaking, you cook sweet foods to help sweeten the new year. This year I will be grilling chickens raised by my fellow board member Anna Houston who is also the owner of Off the Shelf Farm. I will be glazing the chicken with a pomegranate molasses glaze and then we will be dipping Scott Farm apples in Rulison Farm honey.

But it is not just a new year in the Jewish calendar. We are coming up to a new year for the Co-op and its Board of Directors. October 2nd we will be holding our Annual Meeting and election for new Directors. The annual meeting represents the ending of the previous year and the beginning of the new one. Every year we elect three people for a three-year term to join the nine-seat board. This year we have all three seats open and we will have a contested election. This is exciting to me as it shows that there are a lot of people who are engaged with the Co-op and are eager to volunteer their time to help lead the way for the Co-op.

As I reflect on this past year, I feel extremely proud of the work we have done and grateful to all who have contributed, including our Board, Troy Bond (our GM), the incredible staff, and of course you, our fellow owners. It would be an understatement to say that this year has presented the Co-op with

many challenges. But we have met those challenges and risen above them. Both our ownership numbers and our sales have continued to grow this year! We have outperformed most Co-ops in the country and have become a leader and role model within the food Co-op community. For the first time in our board's history, we have developed a Board budget which allows to be more strategic in our decision making. The board has also created an Equity and Diversity committee which is working on helping the board address how we can be a more welcoming and open place for marginalized community members.

But that is really just the beginning of the work we have to do. As I look forward to this new year, I am so happy to welcome three new board members. I am eager to see some of the results from the work the Equity and Diversity committee, and to see what actions are taken as a result of that work. I can't wait to see how the Co-op continues to grow as we welcome more owners. As things continue (hopefully) to open up I am thrilled to see more programs with Jenny Schwartz and to see other ways in which we engage with our community and find ways of giving back. And I am excited to continue our exploration of opening up a second Co-op in Pittsfield.

As always, if you any questions or comments for us please join us at our monthly Board meetings, or feel free to contact me directly.

Best,

lake Levin. President

## A look at growth over a decade

higher due to heavy Buying Club activity. In fact, the official start of the pandemic was March 2020 and that month sales jumped by \$250,000 over the prior month and have maintained roughly the same level since.

A substantial contributor to the Co-op's current success has been the addition of three new departments (beer, wine, and miscellaneous alcoholic beverages) and the reintroduction of sushi. These four now account for about six percent of annual sales, or \$720,000.

Have shoppers changed what they buy at the Co-op over 10 years? Surprisingly, very little:

by Bill Tynan, Scan Coordinator





by 66% and the number of items
carried in the store by 36%, due
largely to the expansion into
the current store in June 2019.
A short time ago, in January
2018, total sales were \$606,000.
This past August (2021), sales
exceed that in the first 15 days
of the month. The average
calendar-year monthly sales
have increased year over year;
\$620,000 in 2018; \$677,000 in
2019; \$982,000 in 2020; and
\$1,095,750 year-to-date in 2021.
Calendar year sales have grown
in sync from \$7.5 million in 2018
to \$11.8 million in 2020. Through
August 2021 they stand at over
\$8.7 million. Noteworthy is that
during the first several months

of the Covid-19 pandemic, while customer count was down, the average sale was substantially

Many of you are longtime

Co-op customers, some of you

owners. Until recently, the story

of the Co-op has been one of

slow, steady growth. First the

move from Rosseter Street to 42

Bridge Street where the second

half of the last decade meant

one challenge after another; first

the continued reconstruction

of Bridge Street and then the

delayed opening of our 34

Bridge St. location, accompanied

by delays in removing the old

Co-op building and establishing

a viable parking lot. Personally,

I've been here for 10 years and

have witnessed the growth, which over the past two years

has become exponential. A

quick look in the rearview mirror

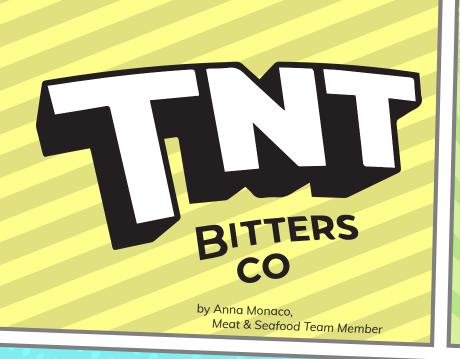
shows what's changed and. interestingly, what hasn't really.

Since 2011, sales have grown

	2011		2021	
	Units or		Units or	
Item	Pounds	Sales	Pounds	Sales
Hot Bar	33,941		13,896	
Buying Club (no tax)		\$104,887		\$265,011
Avocados		\$ 47,560		\$117,892
Broccoli	8,612		12,245	
Bananas	46,370		61,780	
Boneless Chicken Breast	2,886		3,580	
BFC Sesame Noodles	3,192		3,087	

However, the Pandemic effect is quite obvious in two cases. For a good portion of this past fiscal year we had very limited Hot Bar offerings. At the same time bulk buying through the Buying Club soared.

So what's ahead? While the pace of growth at this store will likely slow, we're looking forward to an expansion in the future to continue our overall growth. One can only guess where we'll be in another 10 years.



Hot damn, how did we get here?! Just like the perfect bitters, it took time, patience, trials, and a whole lot of tasting.

Tonic & Tinctures Bitters Company was founded by Anna Monaco and Michael Shane in the fall of 2017. Veterans of the food and beverage industry, Mike and Anna saw TNT as their way of breaking into the production side of the business with a bang.

TNT seeks to make bitters and cocktails more approachable. Not every great cocktail has to come from a dimly lit apothecary or the rooftop of a grand hotel, and not every bitter has to look like medicine (though they're damn good on the stomach). Food, drink, and everything that goes into them should be

So - BOOM - hit your tongue with some flavor dynamite!

### About Anna Monaco and Mike Shane:

Born in Bermuda, but not raised there much to his chagrin, Mike grew up in New York City, cut his teeth bartending there, and eventually left 'cause the RENT IS TOO DAMN HIGH! At 23 if you'd asked Mike his favorite drink, he would've said a Bud Light and shot of Jameson. The cocktail world then exploded and so did Mike's tastes. A stint in Austin, a winter in New Orleans, a few summers in Vermont, a Masters in Fiction Writing, and Mike was a full blown cocktail enthusiast (who still loves shots of whiskey and cheap beer). Mike approached alcohol as he approached most other things in life - with vigor and an academic spirit. He read the books, experimented (by tasting of course it's research!), and fell in love with the history of alcohol and the stories of those who made it. After many years behind the bar, Mike decided to join the brethren of alcohol makers and write his own booze story, bringing his knowledge

Born and raised in New York City, Anna has spent most of her life learning about food, cooking, and ingredients. Whether it was learning to cook her grandmother's traditional Thanksgiving dinner, reading a book about cheese written in French (note: Anna does not speak French), or hosting a blind bourbon tasting with some family to figure out if she'd been buying the right brand all those years, Anna knew food and beverage would be a major part of her life. After graduating college in central New York, she attended culinary school in Manhattan. She spent many years working in the hospitality industry for some of the greatest names in New York City before striking out on a new adventure. Armed with her Ivy League Bartending Degree (i.e. the 6 week bartending course at Columbia!), Anna packed her bags, moved upstate, and translated her love for ingredients into the bitters world.

### About Bitters In General:

What are bitters? They are the salt and pepper of the beverage world. Food without salt and pepper is unbalanced. The same can be said for a cocktail without bitters. Bitters augment your concoctions (alcoholic or otherwise) with a perfect hit of flavor, perfecting your punch, elevating your old fashioned, or simply making your soda sensational.

Bitters weren't always the delicious cocktail companion we think of them as nowadays. They started their storied journey as medicine. From the ancient Egyptians and the Middle Ages to the rise in popularity in the United Kingdom, these delicious elixirs were traditionally used to boost immunity, help with digestion, and generally cure what ails you. In the 1800s they made the jump from the apothecary's table to the bartender's shelves and we sure are glad they did!



### **ALIBI**

Citrus + Aromatic A trusty cocktail companion

From the top of the menu to the bottom, this bitter adds the perfect amount of bright citrus and aromatic spice to any drink. Designed originally for an old fashioned, this flavor can bring balance to pretty much any drink.



### A BETTER NAME THAN KAMIKAZE

Horseradish + Ginger Not for the faint of tongue

Ready to spice up your rum drinks and Bloody Marys alike, this little bottle packs some serious punch. The balance of these two flavors combines to bring a naturally spicy upper cut to your taste buds.



### NAPALM IN THE **MORNING**

Espresso Add some morning to your night

Perfectly balanced with notes of chocolate and sherry, this smooth addition to any drink (mezcal in particular) will make you get out of bed. Great in a Manhattan or a BBQ rub, this bitter brings the coffee, chocolate, and spice...and everything nice.



### PINK MIST

Smoked Grapefruit Flame, Fire.

The smell of a campfire the next morning mixed with the essence of grapefruit is the perfect addition to any drink in our opinion. This is our most versatile bitter, pairing with any base spirit from clear to brown and everything in between.

The above Core Four flavors come in the sample stick of dynamite.



### **FIRE DRESSING**

2 fluid ounces vinegar of choice

1 Tbs mustard of choice

10 dashes TNT Bitters Co Fire In The Hole Poblano Bitters

6 fluid ounces olive oil Salt and pepper to taste

Combine mustard, vinegar, and bitters in a small bowl. Drizzle in the oil while whisking to emulsify. Season to taste. Use in place of any salad dressing.



### **WHOA, NELLIE**

12 oz plain seltzer

2 oz cranberry juice

15 dashes TNT Bitters Co Sucker Punch **Lime Bitters** 

Combine all ingredients in a large mason jar. Fill with ice. Enjoy!





The first place to stop and look around is the highest point in Massachusetts: Mt. Grevlock Reservation at 3,491 feet. From its peak on a clear day, you can see as far as 90 miles away. No matter when you visit, there's plenty to do and see. The park is open from dawn to dusk. For more information you can visit the mass.gov webpage about it.



www.mass.gov

As you continue south on Rt. 7 you'll run into Stockbridge, home to the Norman Rockwell Center, Rockwell's "Main St. at Christmas" is one of the most famous paintings in Berkshire County history. You'll also find Chesterwood, home of sculptor Daniel Chester French who sculpted the Lincoln Memorial. Both these museums are perfect to visit during Fall as they are in the middle of peak forest conditions. Take a moment and visit the porch of the Red Lion Inn on Main St and enjoy a hot toddy. The red wicker chairs are worth the price of admission. It's one of the longest standing hotels in the United States—some parts of the building are from 1773. Down the street, the Mission House will teach you about the Mohicans who lived on this land before any of us.



www.thetrustees.org

Our heart always seems to be in Great Barrington. Which is home to another peak one needs to climb. Monument Mountain is. famously, where Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville first met. They both called Berkshire County home. From the top of Monument Mountain, you can see three states!



www.thetrustees.org

Fall Festivals are in great demand in Berkshire County. There's the Lenox Apple Squeeze in Lenox, the Harvest Festival in Stockbridge, the Lee Founders Celebration in Lee, and Fall Foliage Parade in Pittsfield. If it's food and gifts you crave you will not be disappointed. Falling in between the end of September and beginning of October, these four festivals define a true fall celebration. Parades, antiques, homemade goods, games, and—do not forget—food and beverages. Attending these celebrations is cherry on top of the fall atmosphere of Berkshire County.



www.berkshireeagle.com



Apple picking is a ritual deeply rooted in Berkshire County lore. There are many opportunities to dive into our local delicacy. These are three of the most popular places to get your apple picking itch scratched. Each has many activities and choices for taste buds craving locally grown apples.



Bartlett's Orchard Richmond, MA www.bartlettsorchard.com



Windy Hill Farm Great Barrington, MA www.windyhillfarminc.com



Hilltop Orchards Richmond, MA www.hilltoporchards.com

Once you have experienced fall in the Berkshires you will surely be back year after year. No vacation anywhere else at any other time of the year is like our fall spectacular.

# a recipe: Console Soup Recipe: Recipe:

by Arianna LaBosco, Refrigerated & Frozen Buyer

The Marketon Brown of Contract of Contract

As soon as the weather cools down, this is my favorite thing to make. I end up making it two or three times a month. It's a great recipe to try with someone you don't mind making 50+ wontons with. Use it as an excuse to dish out the latest gossip or update each other on your lives. Or, make the wontons in advance if you prefer cooking solo. Unfortunately for you, though, I measure with my heart when making this recipe. Let's call it a fun puzzle.

### Here's everything you'll need:

Blank Slate Sichuan chili oil Soy sauce Garlic Hoisin sauce Scallions Mushrooms Two pounds of BFC ground pork One large pork chop

One egg Chinese 5-spice blend Sesame oil Sweet red chili sauce Gochujang Wonton wrappers Egg roll wrappers One small onion

Oyster sauce Cabbage Two carrots 3 32oz boxes of Imagine ramen broth Onion powder Mushroom powder Honey Red pepper jelly

### For the wontons

In a large bowl, mix together one pound of ground pork, one egg, chopped scallions, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, oyster sauce, chopped garlic, onion powder, mushroom powder, and a tiny pinch of the Chinese five-spice blend. If you want to do less mixing in this stage, you could also use the ginger scallion sausage that our Meat & Seafood department makes. Those flavors work well for this. Add about a teaspoon of this mixture to a wonton wrapper and follow the folding instructions written on the packaging. Adding any more of the filling will make the wontons explode, and we definitely don't want that!



### For the pork rolls

Shred two carrots (I used a cheese grater for this) and thinly slice about half a cabbage. Mix that with one pound of ground pork, then saute with onion, soy sauce, hoisin sauce and Blank Slate chili oil. Follow the instructions on the back of the egg roll wrappers to make your pork rolls with the cooked mixture. Fry them in some neutral oil, and then let them cool down on a cooling rack. Closer to mealtime, throw these in the oven for about 40 minutes, flipping half-way through. You'll serve these with a sweet chili dipping sauce.

### For my version of char siu style pork

Trim the fat off the pork chop, but save some to use when making the broth later on. Mix some Blank Slate chili oil, gochujang, sweet red chili sauce, honey, and red pepper jelly. Line a pan with foil and grease it with oil. Cover the pork chop with the sauce and throw it in oven at 400°F for about 30 minutes or until the internal temp reached 145°F. Slice into small pieces and set aside for the soup.

### For the soup

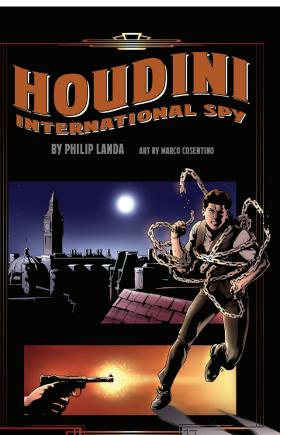
In a large pot, start with the trimmed pork fat. Chop one small onion finely with a teaspoon of sesame oil. If you have a little bit of wonton filling left over throw it in. If there is leftover pork roll mix it's also great in the soup. Slice some mushrooms and let them brown in there with the onion. Toss in a dash of oyster sauce, mushroom powder and soy sauce. Add the three boxes of ramen broth and let it simmer for 20 minutes. Add the wontons slowly but don't let them boil for too long so that they don't come apart. Sometimes I add ice if it's boiling too high and it makes them firm up better. Test the broth for taste and when you're happy, pull it off the stove. Serve topped with your sliced pork and a scallion garnish, with your pork rolls on the side.

## Get to know our team!

One of the recent additions to our Berkshire Food Co-op team, Phil Landa, has taken a winding path to his current position at the Co-op. He's the Accounts Payable Clerk, and works with Finance Manager Brandon Schuldt to pay our vendors.

Prior to the Co-op, he was Overnight Supervisor at Blantyre in Lenox, responsible for the nightly operation of the resort and generating the hotel's daily audit reports. But Phil also does his share of right-brain work as a published graphic novelist

The cover of Phil's graphic novel featuring a reimagination of Houdini



and award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker.

and

"They might seem like complete opposites, but bookkeeping and storytelling both require a fair amount of problem solving," he said. "Obviously, an organization's finances need to be accurate and sometimes that means figuring out

why something is out of balance, troubleshooting the problem, and fixing it so it accurately reflects the business. There's also a lot of problem solving when writing a screenplay or a comic book. The plot has to make sense, character motivations must seem logical and the climax of the story needs to be satisfying. All of these require a search for the best solutions."

When he's not working at the Co-op, Phil is a partner in a LA-based film production company, and their first feature, Shepard, a domestic thriller, was selected to play at the 2020 Los Angeles Film Festival, among other fests.

He's also written several graphic novels, including a reimagining of the famed magician Houdini as a spy. Volume One of "Houdini: International Spy" has Houdini on the trail of a missing infectious disease expert and ends up

uncovering a plot to release a modern-day Black Plague across Europe.

"I've always been intrigued by Houdini, and felt that his knack for escaping the tightest situations was similar to how James Bond is always able to wriggle out of tight spots and save the day," Phil said. "The book was published before COVID, and it's clear that the threat of a pandemic was as great a fear at the turn of the 20th century as it is today. The Houdini graphic novel is a way to write about issues we face today political unrest, food instability, economic insecurity, and environmental degradation – set in the dangerous and dynamic 1890s and early 1900s starring the world's greatest magician and first international superstar."

Want to chat with Phil about movies, comics, or debits and credits? Find him in the store!

### Dates to Remember

### **Annual Meeting**

Saturday, October 2 12pm to 2pm

### Friendsgiving

Thursday, November 4 store closes at 4pm, event at 5

### Beaujolais Nouveau

Thursday, November 18 5pm to 7pm

### **Holiday Hours**

### **Thanksqiving**

Thursday, November 25 closed

### **Christmas Eve**

Friday, December 24 8am to 5pm

### **Christmas Day**

Saturday, December 25 closed

### New Year's Eve

Friday, December 31 9am to 5pm

### **New Year's Day**

Saturday, January 1 10am to 7pm

### A Cleansing Cry a poem by Matt Sinico

A cry isn't always sad Sometimes it's happy or joy Of course there is sad and remorse But not all cries are for help There is a cleansing cry The type that takes over Starts from nowhere and builds It was inside of you for a moment Or even a lifetime You see yourself in a place A place you were You wonder why Why did you stay there Then it builds The emotion The cry You scream 'why' to no one You scream 'why' to the air Then the tears flow You feel them down your cheek And in a while you gather Find courage in yourself The cry does end Yet you're not whole A part of you is missing Someday to return It's ok to have that cry That cleansing cry You're going to be ok It will get bettter



### We'll do the cooking and you take the credit!

It's time to plan your Thanksgiving preorders. Maybe you just need the pie. Maybe you'd like to focus on the turkey and have us make everything else. Maybe you need a vegan version of one of your favorite sides. Whatever it is, we're here for you. Check out our website for more information. Place your order between October 1 and November 17.

### www.berkshire.coop/feast

Spend \$50 or more on your Heat & Feast preorder and get a

### FREE GIANT

insulated tote bag! ...Seriously, you can fit your whole Thanksgiving meal in here!

Bag dimensions: 16"w x 22"h x 11"d Bags will be given out at pickup.



### Reserve your turkey and get a **free GIANT insulated tote bag!**

...Seriously, the whole turkey can fit in here... and more!

Bag dimensions: 16"w x 22"h x 11"d Bags will be given out at pickup. While supplies last



### Don't wait! These turkeys go fast.

We have local turkeys, natural turkeys and organic turkeys waiting for you to come get them! Turkey reservations start November 1 and will continue until we sell out.

www.berkshire.coop/feast



print copy mail design

FULL COLOR DIGITAL PRINTING, OFFSET PRINTING, COPYING & WIDE FORMAT



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Kwik Print has always been the source of high quality printing combined with dependable service, state-of-the-art technology and community spirit. Located right across the street from the Berkshire Food Co-op, Kwik Print keeps business in the Berkshires.



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