

## GORGE LOCAL – IN BUSINESS

## New service allows purchasing from Gorge farms

HOOD RIVER — A new service, Gorge FarmBasket, offers Columbia Gorge residents an opportunity to purchase locally grown and produced fruits, vegetables, eggs, honey, cured meats, flowers, garlic and more online. It can then be picked up at one of two locations every week, combined into one convenient order. The service was launched on April 1 and will continue through at least late November each year.

Gorge FarmBasket was founded by Bonnie Cox and Ronny Tannenbaum, farmers from Hood River and Parkdale, respectively. Their goal is to organize offerings from many local farms for the convenience of “one-stop shopping” for fresh locally produced food. New participating farmers continue to come on board, giving customers an even wider variety of products to choose from. Across the growing season, customers will find fresh greens, vegetables, herbs and garlic, pastured eggs, local honey and cured meats. Also available will be in-season fruits including pluots, strawberries, peaches, apples and fresh flowers.

Cox is the owner of Oak Rose Farm in Hood River, and grows tomatoes, many



kinds of unusual greens, and other vegetables, said a press release. She is also known in the area for her strawberries. Cox has always loved produce, farmers and farming and honed her organizing skills in the Peace Corps in Bolivia helping local beekeepers set up businesses. This has lent itself well to this new effort with a diverse team of farmers.

Tannenbaum and his wife Ellen have run Nature's Finest in Parkdale for more than eight years. They grow mostly cool season crops like spinach, broccoli and carrots. He's also the “logistics nerd” who keeps Gorge

FarmBasket's ordering system running smoothly, said a press release. Tannenbaum's depth of experience in vegetable production and operations is an important asset to the group.

The team of farmers selling through the Gorge FarmBasket spans the five Gorge counties of Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Skamania, and Klickitat. Many of the farmers have decades, or generations, of experience with their crops and bring their expertise to the shared marketplace. By selling together, each farm gains a new way to reach local customers and to share



FarmBasket founders Bonnie Cox and Ronny Tannenbaum started operations April 1, allowing Gorge residents to order from several different farms with a choice of pickup locations. Contributed photos

the specialties from each individual farm, in one convenient FarmBasket.

#### How does it work?

Go to [www.gorgefarmbasket.com](http://www.gorgefarmbasket.com), where produce and other products available for the upcoming week are shown. There are no surprises at checkout — prices on all items can be seen on the website — and there is no need to sign up for anything to have a look.

Once you decide to order, set up an account and place your order. There is no money required upfront and no minimum purchase. You can buy only when you want to and you don't need to make any set number of purchases. There is a \$2 service fee added for packing your order.

The two pickup locations are The Rockford Grange in Hood River, and Nature's Finest Farm in Parkdale. “These farmer-hosted pickups are also a great way to meet the farmers and learn more about what's fresh from the field,” said a press release. “The group hopes to eventually expand to other pickup locations including one in Washington.”

Ordering can be done from Thursday through Sunday and the pickup takes place the following Wednesday afternoon.

The Gorge FarmBasket follows careful safety procedures in the age of COVID. Pickups are primarily outdoors, the farmer on pickup duty wears a mask (and customers are asked to do likewise) and safe distancing applies. Customers bring their own bag or box to transfer their order from a pre-packed reusable tote.

The totes are sanitized each week before they are re-used and are good for the environment with the avoidance of single-use boxes.

“The farmers involved in the Gorge FarmBasket are from the communities of Hood River, Parkdale, White Salmon, Trout Lake and Mosier, providing the best of the local farm offerings in the Columbia Gorge area,” said a press release. “Several members of the group are certified organic growers, but all follow best practices for farming including integrated pest management. The eggs come from a licensed egg handler's operation, the cured meats come from pigs who graze in the pasture, etc., ensuring the best quality for you and your family.”

For a full list of the participating farmers, a description of their businesses, and the products available go to the Gorge FarmBasket website, [www.gorgefarmbasket.com](http://www.gorgefarmbasket.com). Offerings will change from week to week based on growing seasons. The group expects to have fresh, local farm products available for you and your family through at least late fall each year.

## Want to write a letter?

Columbia Gorge News encourages readers to submit letters to the editor for the weekly opinion page. Letters on all topics are welcome.

Writers must include their name and hometown (for publication) and daytime phone number (for verification, not for publication). Letters from an agency or group must be credited to the author or a contact person.

Anonymous or “name withheld by request” letters are not accepted.

Letters must be 350 words or fewer; generally, the briefer the message, the better. Opinion pieces longer than 350 words may be published as a guest commentary at the discretion of the editor.

Letters are published as space allows, and efforts are made each week to provide as much space as possible.

Deadline for letters is noon on the Friday prior to publication.

We reserve the right to edit all letters: Letters must be civil.

Vulgar or inappropriate language will not be considered, nor malicious, false or misleading statements.

Letters attacking an individual, rather than an opinion, are not acceptable.

Letters criticizing a particular business over a particular complaint or grievance will not be considered.

The opinions expressed in letters are “Your Voice,” and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Columbia

Gorge News, its staff, publisher or advertisers.

Letters may be submitted online at [www.ColumbiaGorgeNews.com](http://www.ColumbiaGorgeNews.com): Scroll to the bottom of the page and select “Submission Forms,” then select “Letter to the Editor.”

NEW — Letters also may be sent via email to [Letters@gorgeneews.com](mailto:Letters@gorgeneews.com).

Or mail your letter “attention editor” to any of the Post Office boxes listed at bottom of page 4.



## Wildwood Academy welcomes Holly Walsh!

Wildwood Academy welcomes Holly Walsh as incoming Head of School for the 2021/22 school year!

Holly is going to lead Wildwood Academy after spending the past 17 years at Catlin Gabel School in Portland where she was most recently the 8th grade English teacher and 6th -12th grade English Teacher Leader.

We feel very fortunate to have someone with Holly's qualifications and experience to lead Wildwood and we warmly welcome Holly, and her family, to Hood River.



WILDWOOD  
ACADEMY

Wildwood Academy is an independent middle school, serving 5th-8th grades, in downtown Hood River.

For more information please go to [www.wildwood-academy.org](http://www.wildwood-academy.org)  
[info@wildwood-academy.org](mailto:info@wildwood-academy.org)