

Belfast Co-op News & Commentary

A natural food and products store serving Midcoast Maine since 1976

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

SuperSales Day is Wed. March 7

The first Member SuperSales Day of 2007 is coming up. On Wednesday, March 7, members will get 10 percent off all purchases, excluding alcohol and tobacco.

When shopping on SuperSales Days, keep in mind that Member Appreciation Program (MAP) pricing is suspended for that day only. In some cases MAP pricing is a better deal, so you may want to buy those items next time you're in and fill your cart with non-sale items instead.



SuperSales Days were held quarterly until last year. As part a plan to offset last fiscal year's financial loss, they now take place twice annually: on the first Wednesday in March and September.

A lot of you asked when the canceled December sale was taking place, and we sadly had to let you know to put all your big shopping off until March.

Now that's around the corner. We hope you've been making a long shopping list over the past few months.

Guest cards available

Members can buy a card for their guests to shop with

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Directors has approved a new member benefit—a Co-op Guest Card.

A number of members have told us they wished they had more flexibility to send house guests and visiting relatives, or others who may be temporarily sharing their household, to the Co-op to shop on their membership. We developed our Guest Card with these members in mind.



The guest card allows the card holder to shop on their host's membership. Shoppers can buy items at Member Appreciation Program pricing, and purchases are credited to members' patronage dividend.

The Co-op benefits, too. We involve more people in our membership program while upholding our "one member, one vote" principle.

Members must come in and purchase the guest card. The price is \$5, and the card is good for two months. You have the freedom to choose who uses the card and how often. Cards can be bought at the registers.

Maine is Vacationland, so many of you have guests and may find the cards helpful. If you do let us know!

Co-op is no longer selling Horizon dairy products

What's up with the Horizon Organic dairy? Some of you may have noticed that we no longer carry Horizon products in our refrigerated and cheese sections. You may have also heard the buzz from organic watchdogs questioning whether Horizon's

It's argued convincingly that Horizon "organic" milk is made under factory farming conditions.

farming practices are really up to organic standards.

To be a certified organic dairy, cows have to have access to pasture. Research by the Cornucopia Institute suggests that Horizon's cows have

little or no access to fresh, green grass. The research also questions whether the organic farming ethics that organic consumers expect are being upheld.

Convincing arguments suggest that Horizon consumers are paying a premium for "organic" milk that in fact comes from cattle kept under factory farming conditions, and that parent company Dean Foods is profiting from this misrepresentation.

After reviewing these arguments, our grocery, dairy, and meat and cheese managers decided to pull Horizon from our mix. For more information and to see Horizon's factory farming conditions, visit the Cornu-

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Belfast Co-op Store

123 High St.
Belfast, ME 04915
phone: 207-338-2532
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www.belfastcoop.com
e-mail: info@belfastcoop.com

Store Hours:

7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily
Closed New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving and Christmas

General Management Team

Erica Buswell
Ronald "Goldy" Goldstein
Sanford "Pepper" Bush

Board of Directors

Kip Penney, board president
Bindy Pendleton, co-vice president
Debbi Lasky, co-vice president
Allen Ginsberg, treasurer
Susan Lauchlan, secretary
Jenn Hall, staff representative
Roger Quehl, staff representative
Richard Burbank, scribe
Richard Brown
Lorna Crichton
Scott Giroux
Wayne Kraeger
Lynne Rayburn
Jerry Savitz

Newsletter

Editors: Erica Buswell, Mary Ruoff
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Music Series Jams

Our first Empty Mug series at the Belfast Co-op was a big success. Alex McGregor of Ponies in the Surf entertained a full cafe, with listeners spilling into the aisles. Garrett Soucy of Tree By Leaf performs Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 6 p.m. Come on down! Please bring a donation for the mug we pass around at the end.

A Call to Members . . .

Write for our new column

Do any of you longtime Co-op supporters remember our original newsletters? They contained a "members editorial column" where members could write about food politics, share a favorite recipe, and report on other cooperative topics for the benefit of our active and diverse membership.

We would like to resurrect this column, giving you more opportunity to take part in your store and be heard. Our vision is that this column will strengthen our membership and our cooperative business approach. Members can share what's on their mind, connect with one another, and enlighten the Co-op and the community.



Controversial topics are OK

Guidelines for the column will be developed as needed. While we don't encourage airing dirty laundry (we will not print profane language or commentary on staff members), we do welcome submissions that you feel are controversial and/or commentary on things of an anti-cooperative nature. Articles that educate members and encourage their cooperation are especially welcome.

Articles, letters and recipes can have up to 500 words. Submit to Erica at the Co-op as a hard copy or e-mail to erica@belfastcoop.com. Please include your name, member number, and the date of submission. We will publish submissions as space allows.

Co-op Events: Jan.-Feb.

Café Gallery Art Shows Staff art show in January (carved wooden masks, water colors, poems, photo collage). Art by Ed Moffit and Hollie Hilton in February.

"Fun with Fermented Milk" 6:30 -7:30 pm Thurs. Jan. 18, Co-op Café. Eric Rector of the Maine Cheese Guild will discuss and demonstrate the art of turning raw milk into yogurt, sour cream, cheese and more. Free.

Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meetings 6:30 pm Thurs. Jan. 25 and Thurs. Feb. 22 at Waterfall Arts, 256 High St., Belfast.

Wine & Food Tastings 7-9 p.m. Fri. Jan. 19 and Fri. Feb. 16 in the Co-op Café. 10%off wine purchases at tastings.

Belfast Co-op Book Club 1-3 pm Sun. Feb. 4, Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St., Belfast. Meets first Sundays through May to discuss Michael Pollan's "The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals." Pre-register with Fran (education@belfastcoop.com).

Co-op Discussion Group 6:30 p.m. Wed. Jan. 24, Co-op Cafe. Topic: "Why is our Co-op important to our community?" Meets quarterly. Free.

Empty Mug Music Series 6:30 p.m. Wed. Jan. 31, Co-op Café. Performance by local musician Garrett Soucy of Tree by Leaf. Free, but donation encouraged.

Storing Your Garden Harvest with Fermentation February (date to be announced), Co-op Café. Talk and demonstration by Anna and Roy Antaki of Weeping Duck Farm. Free.

For more information contact Fran at the Co-op, 338-2532, education@belfastcoop.com

Putting co-op principles into practice:

A history of welcoming all

This article is part of a series on the seven Co-op Principles.

By Erica Buswell, general manager
“Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.”

At first glance, this first Co-op Principle looks cut and dried: all are welcome. To those of us living in a “democratic” society, it is easy to take this principle for granted. We like to think that in our society, we no longer discriminate on the basis of social classifications. However, when we look at the social history that gave rise to the co-op movement in the early 19th century, this principle takes on deeper meaning.

Co-ops have long valued equality

The co-op movement has always concerned itself with furthering the ideal of social equality. In a society based on a rigid class structure, co-ops developed to provide an alternative to classism by offering members an opportunity to participate in an organization where all made an equal contribution to attain equal benefits.

The co-op pioneers recognized that their only chance of survival as an organization would be to create strength through social harmony. In order to succeed against the “company store,” which functioned

only to keep them poor and voiceless, they needed a mechanism that would overcome the discrimination that fractured society. They needed an organizing principle that would put members on an equal footing even when outside the co-op’s doors and faced with classism, etc.

Co-op members buy equal shares

The mechanism that they came up with, which we still use as an organizing principle today, was an equity system that required each member to buy an equal share of the organization. An equal share gave each member equal benefits regardless of social background. It may not seem like a big deal today, but back in the 19th century, it was a revolutionary idea. It also provided people with a revolutionary opportunity to participate in a democratic organization.

Co-ops remain outlets for participatory democracy. Each of our members has made an equal equity payment, and in doing so, participates equally within our organization.

Joining together as equals

Ultimately, the responsibility inherent to membership is this: to make the choice to join as one amongst equals. It sounds great on paper, but it also works in practice in the co-op world. Think of your membership in this way: it gives you a discount, a dividend, voting rights and—most importantly—a chance to participate in democracy as equals.

Cheese Curds from Smiling Hill Farms (Westbrook), and shredded and sliced cheeses from Organic Valley, a producers co-op that gets milk from Maine farmers.

Our local cheese supply is growing (look for the forthcoming organic goat cheese). Jim, our meat and cheese manager, invites area cheese makers to contact him about selling their products.



Winter is tea time

By Chuck Smith, deli co-manager

In case you require a reason to drink hot tea—not like you need one—January is national hot tea month. That’s right! It has its own month. It’s time to reach into the bowels of your cupboard, ferret out your favorite mug, give it a little dusting, and brew some hot tea.

There is a debate between historians as to whether it was Gautama Buddha or the legendary emperor of China, Shennong, who first discovered this refined beverage. However, the fact is that while tea is still treasured in the Orient, its popularity has soared in the west.

Whether it was a gentle breeze that whisked the random tea leaf into Shennong’s boiling clay pot of water or just his own intuition, steeping tea leaves, buds, or the bush itself is still a perfect way to create a great liquid concoction. It’s also chock-full of antioxidants.

So hunker-down, pull open the curtains, and cozy up to a warm mug of hot tea. Whether or not you are a tea aficionado, you are guaranteed to enjoy these two wonderful and unique recipes from “Madhur Jaffrey’s Indian Cooking”:

Apple-Assam Tea

2 Cups Water
 1 ½ Cups Apple Juice
 ¼ tsp. Cinnamon
 1/8 tsp Cloves
 2 Tea Bags-preferably Assam
Just bring the water, apple juice, cinnamon, and cloves to a simmer. Then, steep your tea-it’s that easy!!

Masala Chai

1-1/2 cups water
 1 inch stick of cinnamon
 8 cardamom pods
 8 whole cloves
 2/3 cup milk
 6 tsp. sugar (or to taste)
 3 teaspoons any un-perfumed loose black tea
Put water in saucepan. Add cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves and bring to a boil. Cover, turn heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Add milk and sugar and bring to a simmer again. Throw in tea leaves, cover, and turn off the heat. After 2 minutes, strain the tea into two cups and serve immediately.

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copyia Institute’s Web site, www.cornucopia.org, or the Organic Consumers Association Web site, www.organicconsumers.org.

Removing Horizon products opened up space for more Maine products, such as Caldwell’s line of pasteurized and homogenized milk (Turner), Dickinson’s Raw Butter (Brooks/Jackson), Silver Moon

With a new book club, discussion group and membership education area . . .

Co-op expands education offerings

Member and community education are at the core of the cooperative movement. During the past few years, the Belfast Co-op has stepped up efforts to fulfill this part of its mission with regular speakers and special events, art shows, and an expanded Member Appreciation Day.

As promised, we have added a discussion group and a book club to our mix of educational offerings. Don't worry if it's hard to wrap your schedule around scheduled events. We now have a small member education center right in the store. Read on for more information on these exciting new offerings:

Membership Area

Just outside the Café (behind the bread rack and above the water cooler), our new member education center is stocked with newsletter archives, information about member events, and educational resources about the cooperative movement.

The idea of creating a "membership and education library" has been enthusiastically batted around for some time, but we hesitated to set aside a place for it because of space considerations. At times it seemed the idea would have to be put off until a future expansion.

After a gentle reminder that "things can start small," we located a bookshelf and a couple of binders and cleared a small amount of conveniently located space near the deli for this long-awaited member benefit.

Now you can learn a bit of our history and read up on co-ops while dining or hanging out in the café. While there are hand-outs you can take with you, the rest of the materials are for in-store use only. Please keep them clean for others' enjoyment and education.

Discussion Group

"Why is our Co-op important to our community?" A discussion group focused on answering this question is in the process of forming. We invite you to be a part of this great conversation.

The group will meet quarterly for an hour. Our first meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. in the Co-op Café (snow date: January 31). Future dates will be announced.

Even if you can't make the group every quarter, we encourage you to attend when you can. We'll treat you to a free hot beverage if you bring your own cup.

Handouts with background info that may help inform the discussion are available in our new membership education area just outside the café above the water cooler. The direction of the group will ultimately be determined by you, our participants.

Please join us for this exciting and important opportunity. An educated membership builds a strong co-op.

For more information contact Fran at the Co-op, 338-2532, or by e-mail at education@belfastcoop.com.

Co-op Book Club

The world of food politics is rich with topics for discussion and outlets for action. If you're interested in the impact your eating habits might have on the greater world, we invite you to join the Co-op Book Club.

There's obviously a strong appetite for this new program: our first session is nearly full. It will meet from February to May on the first Sunday afternoon of the month to discuss the "Omnivore's Dilemma: A History of Four Meals" by Michael Pollan. To learn more about the book visit: www.michaelpollan.com.

Don't worry if it's too late to join. The club will be ongoing, and you can pre-register now for future sessions. Just contact Fran at the Co-op (education@belfastcoop.com). Future books to be announced; we will preorder books at a group discount.

The club meets from 1-3 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast. Both the church's Belfast Green Sanctuary Group and Maine Organic Farmer and Gardeners Association are co-sponsoring the club.



A gift for our newest members

If there is a baby in your future, we want to be one of the first to welcome this new little Co-op member into the world. To give you a chance to try some of our all-natural and sustainable products for baby, we will provide you with a gift basket upon his or her arrival as a "thank you" for your patronage and commitment to good health during your pregnancy. You can register for this new member benefit with any cashier. If you have questions, contact Caryn, grocery manager, or Rani, Health and Beauty Aids manager. Let us know what we can do to help you find nourishing, healthy, and all-natural products for you and your baby.