

# Belfast Co-op News & Commentary

*A natural food and products store serving Midcoast Maine since 1976*

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

*Mark your calendar now*

## Board election, annual meeting set for March

By the Elections Committee

There would be no Belfast Co-op without you, the members. Also important are the representatives of the members, our Co-op's Board of Directors. Yes, we know those other elections were over a few months ago, but the really important one will soon be here: election of our board.

Everyone has responsibilities in the Co-op. A major responsibility of members is to vote in the annual board election. The directors set the goals for the organization and guide the management team as it carries out the running of the store. But the board cannot do its work without your input.

Who do you want to be directing the Co-op? As the saying goes, "They truly represent you."

You can vote in the store from March 8 to 29. We need to have at least 10 percent of members (about 270) take part for the election to be valid. If you'd like, take a ballot home before voting. You can pick them up for other adults on your membership (household members share the same member number). Again, ballots are due by March 29.

Meet and speak with candidates at our **Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon, March 8, Belfast Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St.**

Add the date to your calendar now!

More details about the meeting, including the time, speaker and agenda, will be posted at our web site, [www.belfast.coop](http://www.belfast.coop), and in the store. So will candidate photos and statements.

We are still looking for members to run for the board. This year several

veteran directors are retiring, so we need members to step up and commit to run. The requirements are simple: you must be a Co-op member for at least six months as of Feb. 1, the start of the nomination period.

The best way to know what a board meeting is like is to attend one. They're held at Waterfall Arts Center, 256 High Street, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month unless otherwise announced (the date is often changed

in November and December). Sheets describing the director's position and requirements and benefits are available at the Co-op.

The deadline for declaring your candidacy is Feb. 22; pick up a form at the Co-op. For more information, contact Bindy Pendleton (338-4256, [tbmaypen@verizon.net](mailto:tbmaypen@verizon.net)), or leave a note with your name, phone number and/or e-mail in the Elections Committee mailbox in the Co-op office.



### Member checklist for the Co-op's 2009 Board Election, Annual Meeting

- \* *Consider running* in the election, or encourage a fellow member to do so
- \* *Inform yourself* about the candidates at the Annual Meeting, Sunday, March 8
- \* *Vote* in the Board Election, March 8-29



## Co-op forms Recycling Committee

***Recycling more plastic is at the top of its list***

By Erica Buswell

One of the Co-op's top goals for the new year is improving store-wide sustainability. Our 2009 business plan sums this up as "reducing the amount of waste which we produce as an institution, as well as reducing the amount of energy that our store consumes."

To help us achieve this goal, the board of directors has created a Recycling Committee, made up of board members, staff and Co-op members, to strategize ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

### ***Committee in formative stages***

Still in its formative stages, the committee has three major goals: to educate itself about opportunities for and barriers to recycling,

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Belfast Co-op Store

123 High St.

Belfast, ME 04915

Phone: 207-338-2532

Fax: 207-338-5234

Web site: [www.belfast.coop](http://www.belfast.coop)

E-mail: [info@belfastcoop.com](mailto:info@belfastcoop.com)

### Winter Hours:

7:30a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Sat.,

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday

Closed New Year's Day, Easter,

Thanksgiving and Christmas

### General Management Team

Erica Buswell

Ronald "Goldy" Goldstein

Sanford "Pepper" Bush

### Board of Directors

Bindy Pendleton, president

Debbi Lasky, vice president

Allen Ginsberg, treasurer

Susan Lauchlan, secretary

Zafra Whitcomb, staff representative

Richard Brown

Scott Giroux

Wayne Kraeger

Michael Marino

Kip Penney

Jerry Savitz

Paul Sheridan

Peri Tobin

### Newsletter

Erica Buswell, editor

Mary Ruoff, copy editor and

graphic designer

## Talks to spotlight Ayurvedic medicine

Learn about Ayurvedic medicine at the Co-op with Deborah Keene-Jones of Inside Moves of Liberty. This free two-part event is from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Café on successive Thursdays: "Stoking the Digestive Fire," Jan. 15 and "Food is Medicine," Jan. 22.

Ayurveda (pronounced 'Ah-your-vay-dah') means "the knowledge of life." It's the oldest continuously practiced health care system, originating in India more than 5,000 years ago.

Ayurvedic medicine teaches that each of us has a unique mind-body-spirit constitution. When our constitution is in balance we experience optimal health in body and mind; when out of balance we experience a range of physical symptoms and mental conditions that can manifest as disease. Ayurveda emphasizes preventative measures and "right diet" and offers natural and individualized therapies.

(Continued on page 5)

## Co-op Events: Jan.-Feb.

**Café Gallery Art Shows** Jan.: Staff art show. Feb.: "Sustainable Agriculture in Maine," photos by Lily Piel.

**Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meetings** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thurs. Jan. 22 and Thurs. Feb. 26, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

**Ayurveda Part I and Part II** 6:30-7:30 p.m. on successive Thursdays, Jan. 15 and 22, in the Co-op Cafe. Free. Deborah Keene-Jones of Inside Moves in Liberty will discuss Ayurvedic medicine, which is based on the mind-body-spirit connection. Part I will explore the basics of Ayurveda. Part II will review the basics and discuss the fundamentals of diet. *See article above.*

**Eat Healthy on a Budget: Soups** 1-3 p.m. Sun., Jan. 25, Belfast Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St. Free. Warm up with a hot bowl of soup as you learn the basics of making stocks and turning them into quick, healthy meals. The Co-op's Erica Buswell and Fran Clemetson will lead the class. *See article page 3.*

**Healthy Hearts** Co-op-sponsored panel discussion in February at the Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Time, date to be announced. Free. Learn about the array of modalities for prevention and healing of heart disease. *See article page 3.*

**Community Supported Agriculture Fair** Sun. Feb. 8, 1-4 p.m., Belfast Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St. Free. Learn about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in your area. Learn how you can support local farmers and get fresh produce throughout the growing season and beyond. Sponsored by Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, the Co-op and the UU Church.

**"The World According to Monsanto" Screening** Tues. Feb. 24, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Free, co-sponsored by the Co-op. This French documentary shines a critical light on Monsanto Corp., which produced Agent Orange and PCBs and makes genetically engineered seeds. After the showing Logan Perkins of Food for Maine's Future will lead a discussion. *See article page 3.*

**The Co-op Model: Transition to a Democratic Economy** 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sat. Feb. 28, Pine Tree State Arboretum, Augusta. Sliding fee to \$20. Learn about cooperatives (housing, food, etc.) and buying clubs at the 15th annual Changing Maine gathering. Sponsors: Resources for Organizing and Social Change, Cooperative Maine. To learn more: [www.cooperativemaine.org](http://www.cooperativemaine.org), 525-7776.

For more information call Fran Clemetson at the Co-op, 338-2532, or e-mail her at [education@belfastcoop.com](mailto:education@belfastcoop.com)

## For Members Only: SuperSales Day

Our biannual **SuperSales Day** is Wed., March 4. Members get 10 percent off all purchases (except beer, wine and cigarettes).

Member Advantage Program sales are suspended that day.

## CO-OP BOARD COMMITTEES

Call the contact person listed below for more information and meeting times. Not all committees meet regularly.

**Board Development Committee** Oversees board orientation, training, handbook and meeting process. Paul Sheridan, 338-0350.

**Bylaws Committee** Reviews Co-op bylaws. Kip Penney, 722-3112.

**Charitable Giving** Reviews charitable giving policy. Ronald "Goldy" Goldstein, 338-2532.

**Community Interaction Committee** Responds to communications, especially complaints and grievances, directed to the board. Bindy Pendleton, 338-4256

**Deli Committee** Advises on deli operations. Jerry Savitz, 338-1492.

**Elections & Annual Meeting Committee** Plans and carries out elections and annual meeting. Debbi Lasky, 589-4546.

**Environment Committee** Advises on the store's physical environment. Scott Giroux, 323-0609.

**Finance Committee** Serves as financial advisor to management, oversees Co-op's finances. Allen Ginsburg, 338-1757.

**Long-Range Planning Steering Committee** Guides long-range planning process. Richard Brown, 338-3408.

**Management Oversight Committee** Meets regularly with general management team and evaluates team members. Bindy Pendleton, 338-4256.

**Membership Education and Outreach Committee** Advises on membership policies and matters, including member education. Erica Buswell, 338-2532.

**Purchasing Committee** Reviews our purchasing policy and process. Richard Brown, 338-3408.

## Film exposes GMO producer

The Co-op is co-sponsoring a showing of "The World According to Monsanto" from 6:30-9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at the Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Logan Perkins of Food for Maine's Future will lead a discussion afterwards.

A French documentary directed by independent filmmaker Marie-Monique Robin, the film is about Monsanto Corp.'s impact on our world. The company is brought us Agent Orange and PCBs and now supplies 90 percent of the United State's genetically engineered seeds.

According to Greenpeace International's Geert Ritsema, "Mrs. Robin should be congratulated for revealing the sinister practices of the world's leading producer of genetically engineered seeds. Her film is alarming and should be a call to action for everybody who cares about the quality of our food and a healthy future for our planet."

## Ecology course fills fast

A Co-op-sponsored six-week ecology course, "Menu for the Future," filled its 12 slots fast. The Northwest Earth Institute ([www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org)) program explores how food systems impact society and the environment.

Eating healthy on a budget:

## Warming up with chicken soup



By Fran Clemetson

Chicken soup is not only a comfort food, it is an economical way to use leftovers from a

roasted chicken dinner and get a delicious, nutritious meal. My family often sits down to a satisfying bowl of steaming chicken soup and a loaf of whole grain bread with a chunk of cheese on the side.

Cooking soups is easy once you understand the basics. A really good book about making soup is Barbara Kafka's



## Heart health talk in Feb.

In February—national Heart Health Month—the Belfast Co-op will sponsor "Healthy Hearts" at the Belfast Free Library (date and time to be announced). The panel discussion will explore an array of modalities for preventing and healing heart disease. Conventional, integrative, alternative and holistic perspectives will be presented. The panelists are:

*Teri Gallo*, registered nurse at Waldo County General Hospital, Kripalu certified yoga teacher, owner of Fountain Yoga, Bangor.

*Margaret Peet*, naturopathic doctor in Camden, Ayurvedic practitioner and co-author of "My Doctor Says I'm Fine. . . So Why Do I Feel So Bad?"

*Belinda Pendleton*, Belfast family nurse practitioner, certified yoga teacher, Waldo County General Hospital cardiac rehabilitation unit consultant, and owner of Eastside Shore Herbs

cookbook, "Soup, A Way of Life." You can get it from the Belfast Free Library through an interlibrary loan.

For some hands-on help, join the Co-op's soup-making class from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25 at the Belfast Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St. Enjoy some hot soup while learning how to prepare stocks and turn them into tasty, simple meals.

Here are some stocks and chicken soup recipes to get you started:

(Continued on page 4)

# PRODUCE ROW . . . *BY CHRIS GRIGSBY, PRODUCE BUYER*

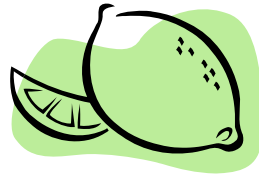
As the end of the year approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the local growers and providers of this year's wonderful harvest. The "Eat Local" culture is really taking off, and our local farmers were there to answer the call. We are still enjoying the benefits of their labors, even as winter sets in.

Though apple and cider availability is on the wane, we are still well stocked with Maine-grown squashes, onions, garlic, cabbage, carrots, beets, turnips, rutabagas, celeriac and potatoes. New to us this year is produce from Half Moon Gardens in Thorndike. They offer year round greenhouse-grown mesclun mix as well as chard, herbs, kales, spinach and lettuce.

We are also happy to report the Troy Howard Middle School Garden Co. is in full swing. The Co-op is enjoying biweekly deliveries of rain-

bow chard and mesclun.

Meetings with farmers for the upcoming growing season are well un-



**This time of year the focus is on citrus. A multitude of orange varieties are coming out of Florida and California.**

derway. We've set our sights on an even more successful year in 2009.

Our supply of items "from away."

meanwhile, is steady. This time of year the focus is on citrus. A multitude of orange varieties are coming out of Florida and California. Satsumas, Clementines, Cara Cara navel, tangerines, tangelos, Meyer lemons, and Rio Star red grapefruit from Texas top the list.

California vegetable crops are high quality and fairly priced. We expect the broccoli market to stay solid for a couple of months, which will translate into lower price. Celery remains soft, with quality low. Southeast production is plentiful, with Florida and Georgia items leading in quality and price. Avocados from Mexico are of good quality and low price.

While shopping in our department, keep your eyes out for cooking ideas and recipes featuring produce we have in stock. If anyone has any recipes to share, please let us know.

Thank you for shopping with us!

*(Continued from page 3)*

## **Chicken Stock**

Put chicken bones in a large stock pot and add water to about 2 inches above the bones. Bring to a boil, then simmer about 12 hours. (I start my stocks in the evening and let them go all night. I also add a tablespoon of cider vinegar to extract more minerals from the bones.) Strain stock, let it cool, then refrigerate. The fat scrapes off easily after awhile. Now stock is ready for soup or to

## **Simple Chicken Soup**

Ingredients:

8 cups of chicken stock  
1 medium onion, diced  
2 tablespoons olive oil or butter  
4 cloves garlic minced  
3 large carrots, diced  
1 stock of celery, chopped  
1 cup frozen peas (optional)  
2-3 cups cooked chicken meat, bite size  
2-3 cups cooked pasta or grains  
2 tablespoons dried parsley  
1 tablespoon of dried thyme  
1 teaspoon of dried sage  
Salt and pepper to taste

Simmer stock in a large soup pot. Add the carrots and celery and cook till tender (about

8 minutes). While the vegetables are cooking, sauté the onion in oil or butter on medium heat in a heavy skillet. When the onion is translucent, add the minced garlic and sauté a few more minutes. When the carrots are tender, add the onion mixture and remaining ingredients. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Simmer on low about 20 minutes so the flavors blend.

*(Continued from page 6)*

membership. This year we'll spend most of it reducing our debt.

We're projecting that we will be able to pay off at least one loan and increase payments on another so that we pay back the principle before the loan matures. Reducing debt in bad economy should help keep us in business for years to come.

## **Stretching your money**

The Co-op is also planning to stretch that cent to finish construction of the new member service and education area at the front of the store (former site of the "Castle.") A portion will also go towards labor

costs so we move closer to our goal of providing a "living wage" to our employees. If any money is left over after meeting these goals, we'll try to replace front store windows to help us meet another goal: greater energy efficiency.

We hope following one dollar's path helps you feel good about choosing to spend your food dollars at the Co-op. We feel good about this opportunity to put the cooperative values of honesty and openness into practice.

## **Reviewing financial statements**

All Co-op members have the right to look at our financial statements. If you are interested in doing so, please come to a monthly board meeting, where they are presented in summarized form. In late February, look for your patronage dividends in the mail.

During these tough economic times, we want to extend a special "Thank You" to members for contributing to our continued success.

*(Continued from page 1)*

to educate members about these opportunities and barriers, and to build a network with other community groups working on these issues, such as Belfast's Energy and Climate Change Committee and the Belfast Unitarian Universalist Church's Green Sanctuary Committee.

### **Long history of going green**

Throughout the years, the Co-op has made a very conscious effort to be green. Most of our office equipment is Energy Star compliant. We use heat reclaimed from our compressor room to preheat our hot water. We recycle office paper, cardboard, brown paper, aluminum, glass, paperboard and No. 2 plastics. We compost our vegetable trimmings. We have been using compact fluorescent light bulbs for years.

The sustainability of packaging and production methods is something department managers consider when bringing new inventory into our store or phasing items out of the product mix. Shoppers have many reusable packaging choices, from containers for your bulk tamari to small bags for bulk spices. Our awesome new reusable plastic shopping bags, with member Cathy Herson's great "LOCAL" logo on it, are only \$2.49. Buy them at the registers! They make great gifts, too!

### **Plastics are a major concern**

But one of the areas we are concerned about is waste plastic that can't be recycled locally. Many of our products come in containers made from Nos. 1,4,5 or 7 plastic, none of which are recycled at the Belfast waste transfer station.

We've done a lot of research in the area of "bio-plastics," with hopes of being able to use compostable packaging in some of our departments, particularly the deli and café. But we've found that most of these products can only be composted at commercial composting facilities that aren't readily accessible from Belfast. That's contrary to marketing

claims that they will completely break down in home compost.

### **Forming a community network**

The Recycling Committee hopes to assist in remedying the "plastics problem" by working with the growing network of community organizations and committees that share our desire to see increased access to recycling opportunities. Ideally, we would like to help develop a community recycling program that would allow us to recycle all of the different kinds of packaging that come through our doors. Lobbying the manufacturing companies that we purchase from to use more readily recyclable packaging is another tact that we could pursue.

The committee recently held an



educational meeting with Skootch Pankonin, the recycling co-coordinator for the community of St. George—the community with the highest recycling rates in the state—and Sam Morris of the Maine State Planning Office. We learned more about what happens to recyclables after they make it to the recycling center and what our community can do to create more incentives for recycling, on an individual and family level as well as a policy level.

### **Helping the public recycle**

In the coming months, we hope to spend time and energy creating educational materials on recycling for the general public as well as members. In the meantime, the Co-op's recycling team offers the following tips to make your shopping trips more sustainable:

### **Bring your own containers and produce bags:**

*You can use your own containers to fill up on items from the bulk department as well as delicious items from our service deli case. Reuse plastic produce bags.*

**Bring your own mug:** *You can save paper and money when you bring in your own cup to enjoy your morning brew. A small coffee costs \$1.50, but when you fill your own mug it costs only \$1.25. We have a utility sink next to the freezer aisle where you can rinse your cup. Ask a staff member for assistance if you can't find it.*

**Bring or buy your own bag:** *Recently the Co-op discontinued the practice of allowing customers to bring used plastic bags for reuse by others. Much of what we were taking in was of poor quality—in many cases unusable, even unsanitary. In addition to selling reusable shopping bags designed for purchasing groceries, we continue to offer paper bags and boxes. Used plastic bags can be recycled at the Belfast transfer station and Hannaford. Hopefully in time we'll all remember to ALWAYS bring reusable shopping bags. Lots of folks find it helps to store them, or stash extras, in the car.*

**Make packaging a part of your purchasing decision:** *When you have the option, wherever you are shopping, choose items with packaging that can be reused or recycled.*

*(Continued from page 2)*

The first Ayurveda session will focus on the importance of maintaining a strong digestive fire and how this prevents the build up of toxins. The next session will include a review and focus on "food is medicine."

Keene-Jones is a registered yoga teacher with 25 years experience. She has written on health for local newspapers and produced "Body-Mind-Spirit" for WERU community radio. She teaches classes, holds workshops and does consultations at her business, Inside Moves (589-4254, [insidemoves@fairpoint.net](mailto:insidemoves@fairpoint.net)).

## 2008 sales are the highest in our 32-year history

# Follow a Co-op dollar as it profits members



By Erica Buswell

At the Co-op's December Board of Directors meeting, the general management team and board members sat down with our accountant, Mike Nickerson, to review our year-end financial statements for 2008. We got great news—the Co-op has booked another profitable year!

Thanks to the regular and dedicated patronage of our members, our hard-working staff, cautious purchasing, and stepped up efforts to reduce spoilage, we've been able to show a profit for three years running. To top that off, this past year we had the highest sales in our 32-year history.

### **Tracing a dollar's journey**

While it's exciting to see our big financial picture, we thought you might like a close-up look at how and where our incoming dollars are spent running a sustainable, cooperative business. So, I'm going to trace the journey of a single dollar—say a dollar you spent on a beautiful local organic carrot—as it makes its way from your wallet, to the till, and back into the store in a profitable year.

As we follow this dollar, keep in mind a tenant of the co-op business model, one that distinguishes it from other investor-owned businesses: financial surpluses generated by a co-op must be retained by the business to improve services for members, or be distributed to members equitably. Essentially, all profits re-

main the property of the cooperative and are used, invested or redistributed for the good of members as a whole. That way the cooperative itself profits.

### **Co-op has lots of Maine vendors**

OK, so you are buying a \$1 carrot. From that dollar, we use 66 cents, or about two-thirds of our revenue, to buy inventory for the store. This money is paid to vendors and distributors so that you can buy products you want and need at your Co-op. Roughly 50 percent of what we pay out as “cost of goods” goes to Maine-based producers and vendors. We're proud to be contributing to a strong local food economy.

Now, after deducting the cost of

---

*We thought you might like a close-up look at how and where our incoming dollars are spent. So we've traced the path of a dollar spent on, say, a beautiful local organic carrot.*

---

goods, we have 34 cents left from that original dollar to cover all the other expenses of running our business.

### **Labor is second biggest cost**

The second biggest cost, after cost of goods, is paying staff to provide great service to members and shoppers. Of the remaining 34 cents, 23.7 cents goes toward labor costs. This includes wages, payroll taxes, holiday bonuses, vacation, holiday and personal time off, health, dental and life insurance for eligible employees, retirement plan contributions, workers' comp insurance, and professional development.

After covering these costs we now have 10.3 cents left from your carrot purchase. Of that, 8.1 cents covers general and administrative expenses,

essentially our overhead. This includes advertising, electricity, telephone, water and sewer services, liability insurance, equipment maintenance and repairs, and small equipment purchases.

On this part of our expense sheet you'll also find money spent on member services like our newsletter, web site and educational events as well as charitable giving. Respectively, they totaled 0.08 cents and 0.05 cents per dollar in 2008.

### **IRS gives co-ops deductions**

That leaves 2.2 cents from that carrot purchase for the “profit” column. We then pay the Internal Revenue Service before determining our net profit for the year. Because we are a cooperative, we don't have to pay income taxes on patronage refunds or loan interest.

(For each dollar in sales, including that carrot purchase, we pay 0.44 cents in patronage refunds and 0.69 cents in interest on four loans: our mortgage and loans for building upgrades and major equipment purchases, including our 2006 office addition, a receiving room addition and new walk-in cooler in 2007, and deli and meat and cheese cases bought last year.)

Essentially, after many of these numbers have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a cent, we had a net profit of 1.1 cents per dollar—that's our taxable income. We used that to pay .35 cents in income taxes, leaving the Co-op with a whopping net profit after income taxes of about 1 cent (liberally rounding here for the sake of argument.)

### **Spending cooperatively**

That's right, when all is said and done, we have one cent left from that dollar you spent on your tasty carrot. We use that penny, and our cooperative spirit, to improve services to the

*(Continued on page 4)*