

Belfast Co-op News & Commentary

A natural food and products store serving Midcoast Maine since 1976

JULY/AUG. 2007

Mark your calendars now for Customer Appreciation Day

Our annual Customer Appreciation Day will take place on Saturday, August 18. Mark your calendars now for this fun-filled event.

On tap this year is a full day of local music, a clever Co-op skit from local comedy troupe Vaudeville Review, delicious local food, visits from vendors near and far, a repeat opportunity to donate to the Blood Mobile, educational events for children of all ages, and fabulous in-store sales.

Last year's 30th anniversary party was fun, but we think this is going to be even better. More details will be available in the store and on our web site (<http://belfast.coop>) as the date approaches, so be sure to check for the final schedule of events. See you at Customer



CHECK OUT the many product samples at Customer Appreciation Day on Sat., Aug. 18. Ask staff, above at last year's event, about your favorites.

Appreciation Day!

Please note: the following weekend, the Co-op will close early on Sat., Aug. 25, for a Staff Appreciation Party. We will shut our doors at 3 p.m. so our Saturday evening crew can attend this FUNction.

Please plan accordingly. Thank you!

Many thanks for our new dairy cooler

New cooler's insulation will gain us green points

A special thanks to our faithful members and customers as we renovate our cooler system. Your patience with our dairy aisle, still narrowed as work nears completion, is greatly appreciated.

Contractors from Northeast Construction have been working away to construct a spacious (36 feet by 15 feet) walk-in cooler to house beer and dairy products.

A long "thank you" list

We have many to thank for making this project possible. First, our members, whose support and patronization allowed us to fund this project and envision an alternative cooler system that better meets our needs.

Thanks also to Larason Guthrie for his architectural contributions; Co-operative Fund of New England for help with funding; our environment committee for help coordinate contractors, including electrician John Weed, refrigeration gurus Kienow's Refrigeration, and plumber Jim Cheeseman; members Wayne Kraegar and Scott Giroux for help with demolition, and our department managers and staff, who still manage to get the job done despite temporarily losing floor and cooler space.

Saves time and helps environment

Our new cooler will let us load the dairy and beer inventory from inside the cooler, reducing the time stockers need to spend on the floor. It will also improve our ability to limit spoilage and gain us green

(Continued on page 3)

Vendor Profile:

Tide Mill is a true family farm

By Erica Buswell

Tucked away Down East on 1,600 acres of field and coastline in Edmunds, you'll find Aaron Bell, Carly DelSignore and their three young children—Hailey, Paige, and Henry—carrying on the family tradition on a ninth-generation saltwater farm.

Fresh chicken delivered

In our meat and cheese department, you'll find fresh, certified-organic free-range chickens from the family's Tide Mill Organic Farm for sale this summer. Maybe you had the pleasure of en-

joying one of their free-range organic turkeys this past Thanksgiving.

Tide Mill operates a diversified farm, producing not only poultry, but certified-organic pork, beef, milk, vegetables, fruits, herbs and seedlings. Aaron and Carly approach farming as part of managing a larger ecosystem.

An ecological approach

Community, compassion and utilization of local resources are just some of the values that are part of their ecological approach to farming. They work to

(Continued on page 5)



Belfast Co-op Store

123 High St.

Belfast, ME 04915

Phone: 207-338-2532

Fax: 207-338-5234

Web site: <http://belfast.coop>

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

Debbi Lasky, co-vice president

Bindy Pendleton, co-vice president

Allen Ginsberg, treasurer

Susan Lauchlan, secretary

Dagny Currier, staff representative

Zafra Whitcomb, staff representative

Karen Aveni

Richard Brown

Lorna Crichton

Scott Giroux

Wayne Kraeger

Michael Marino

Jerry Savitz

Paul Sheridan

Peri Tobin

Newsletter

Editors: Erica Buswell, Mary Ruoff

E-mail: newsletter@belfastcoop.com

SuperSale Day Reminder

Our next SuperSale Day

is Wed., Sept. 5.

Members get

10% off purchases!

**(Excludes wine, beer
and cigarettes.)**

For members: Our buying policy

We appreciate the encouragement from members when we hear, "The Co-op should be buying x instead of y . . ." We also appreciate the opportunity to try and meet the many needs of our diverse community. In that spirit, we are printing our food-buying policy below to encourage thoughtful reflection on the food choices we all make and the ways those choices might impact the needs of others.

This policy was developed to ensure that members' ability to choose products that meet their needs would be protected. We review our product mix periodically on the basis of sales to see if, in fact, our products are meeting your needs. Poor sellers tell us that you have used your dollars to let us know that you want something else. Keep voting with your wallet, and happy eating!

Belfast Co-op Food Buying Policy

Purpose of the buying policy:

The Belfast Co-op Food Buying Policy serves to provide the managers with guidelines for purchasing stock and services for the store, and to inform members, vendors and the public about our Co-op's values and purchasing goals.

Our goals:

Wholesome food is necessary for our well-being and we strive to satisfy a range of needs and tastes by purchasing the freshest, purest and highest quality foods available at reasonable prices. While recognizing our size limitations, when available we prefer to buy organically grown and produced products (without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides or preservatives) at prices fair to the producer, the store, and our members and customers. We are committed to buying from local growers and producers whenever practical. We search out new sources, both local and global, for pure, delicious, whole foods. We provide our members and customers with information on products and changes in the whole food industry.

Our values:

We support farmers who practice sustainable agriculture, the goals of organic agriculture, and humane treatment of livestock and poultry. We also strive to support

(Continued on page 4)

Co-op Events: July-Aug.

Café Gallery Art Shows Wed. July 11-Wed. Aug. 8. Oil and pastel paintings and graphite drawings by Richard Knox of Searsport. An Art Opening will be held during our wine tasting on Fri., July 20.

Introduction to Aromatherapy 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thurs. July 12 in the Co-op Café. Find out about aromatherapy, an ancient modality of healing and support for the body, mind, emotions and environment. Diane Braybook, a certified aromatherapist, will talk on the history of aromatherapy, the difference between essential oils and fragrances, using essential oils safely, and methods of application. For more information visit www.essentialsforyou.com.

Wine & Food Tastings 7-9 p.m. Fri. July 20 and Fri. Aug. 17 in the Co-op Café. 10% off wine purchases at tastings. You must be 21 or over to attend.

Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meetings 6:30 p.m. Thurs. July 26 and Thurs. Aug. 23 at Waterfall Arts, 256 High St., Belfast.

Co-op Discussion Group 6:30 p.m. Wed. July 18 in the Co-op Café. This quarter's topic: "How can the Co-op increase member participation?" We also welcome questions, concerns, ideas and comments about our Co-op and co-ops in general. Bring a mug for a free hot or cold coffee or tea.

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

Putting co-op principles into practice:

Should we join national co-op group?

This article is the last in a series on the seven Co-op Principles. Rather than exploring these principles in order, we've spotlighted them as they relate to current issues affecting our members and staff.

By Erica Buswell, general manager

The Fourth Co-op Principle states: "Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy."

Organization formed in 1990s

To help us get at the core of this principle, I am drawing on recent discussions among our store managers and buyers. We are in the very early stages of again exploring possible membership in the National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA). This organization was formed in the early '90s in response to national corporate grocery chains jumping on board with the natural foods movement.

As corporations typically have access to market resources that individual co-ops do not, NCGA grew out of a need for these small co-ops to get access to resources that would help them remain competi-

tive and viable in a global marketplace. NCGA has two functions, operating as a business services and a purchasing cooperative.

Members can elect to sign onto a National Purchasing Program that lowers the cost of goods to individual food co-ops by elevating their purchasing power to a national

We are in the very early stages of again exploring possible membership in the National Cooperative Grocers Association, formed in the 1990s.

scale. As a business services cooperative, NCGA provides a support network for co-op administrators and offers training opportunities and educational and consulting resources designed to help individual co-ops survive and thrive.

By utilizing a cooperative business model, NCGA functions as a member-driven organization working to provide for its membership's needs.

Annual tab for joining NCGA

While membership in NCGA has many benefits, members must, in turn, bear their share of responsibilities. Here is where we tie back into the Fourth Co-op Principle, which is about partnering with other organizations. To join NCGA, our

Co-op would be looking at a yearly member capital contribution of about \$6,000. That is \$6,000 of your capital as members of the Belfast Co-op. Every time you shop and spend your dollars as members, that money provides the financial resources for operating expenses like NCGA membership.

Must meet members' needs

If we as a Co-op are to take on the responsibilities of NCGA membership, we must do so because it meets our members' needs. In our recent member survey, the largest need expressed by participants is for us to lower our prices. Membership in NCGA could be part of a strategy to help us meet this need by signing onto the National Purchasing Program.

We can think also of future needs: we may find ourselves in a situation where Wal-Mart and/or Whole Foods are opening up down the street. Will we be able to compete and survive? NCGA membership could be part of a strategy to help us meet our need for further development and become even stronger in the face of fierce competition.

What do you think? If you would like to weigh in on this issue, please e-mail me (erica@belfastcoop.com) and we will add your ideas into our discussion. For more information on NCGA, visit www.ncga.coop.

(Continued from page 1)

points, as it is better insulated and uses electrical power more efficiently than our old system. This project has also given our produce department more space for storage and prep.

As we have been jokingly saying around here: "We are finally joining this century." That's your Co-op dollars and spirit at work.

Gracias!

(Continued from page 6)

looking for that we don't have, we are happy to try and order it for you.

Just remember, the possibilities are endless. You won't have to follow the "Reinheitsgebot," originally a German word that meant, "to sneeze your head off." It later became known as the German purity law of 1516, which called for using only water, barley malt, and hops. Good luck brewing, and *Gesundheit!*

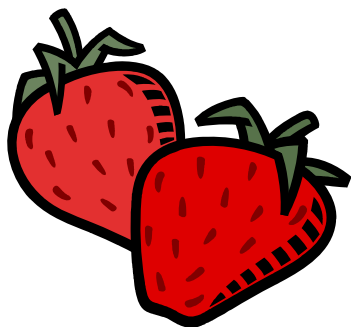
Buy Guest Cards

For many of us, summer means visitors. The Co-op offers a guest card benefit that can help members with the annual influx. Guest cards (\$5, good for two months) let anyone sharing your household temporarily shop on your membership, with purchases crediting to your Patronage Dividend. So send Uncle Larry down to the Co-op to pick up the Organic BBQ Sauce you forgot!

Strawberries: Love of a lifetime

By Chuck Smith, deli co-manager

I love strawberries more than you do. And while I adore the complexity of them macerated with citrus or balsamic vinegar, served on a bed of micro-greens, and garnished with Maytag blue cheese, I prefer them all by themselves, just picked and still warm from the sun.



Strawberries bring me back to a time in my life when, well, *life* was simpler. Every so often my mother would serve them along with pound cake and whipped cream. I remember relishing the tenderness of their ruby-red bodies, lavishing their mellow sweetness and their subtle acidic juices. Ah, I love strawberries like no other fruit. I am *overjoyed* that it is finally summer and the crop is about to come in.

Of the 20 or so varieties, it is the common Garden Strawberry that is most popular. Since all varieties of strawberry (*fragaria*) look pretty similar, with a straw-like runner, they bear the Old English title *strew-berige*, which literally means “straw-berry.”

In days of old, Germanic countries would thread them onto straws during harvesting. This could be another reason they wear the name strawberry.

But while Germanic countries did a great service for providing an absolutely luscious name, it was the Madam Tallien, a popular figure of the French revolution, who escorted them into the world of nobility among fruit. She, it is said, used to take baths in them to keep her skin looking radiant and shimmering.

Well, since you may not love strawberries as much as me or Madam Tallien, I've included a great recipe for Strawberry Shortcake. Even if you don't love them, eat them for their abundance of Vitamin C.

I, however, am going to strip down, prepare a bath of strawberries, and enjoy a long and relaxing soak. See you in the deli—I'll be the one with the glowing skin.

Fannie Farmer's Strawberry Shortcake

For the shortcake

2 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. baking powder
2 tsp. sugar
1-1.5 cup heavy cream
6 tbsp. butter melted (1/3 cup)

For the berries

1 quart strawberries
Sugar to taste
1.5 cup heavy cream
1 tbsp. unsweetened butter
Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Combine flour, salt, baking powder and sugar in a mixing bowl. Stir dry ingredients with a fork. Slowly add 1 cup of the cream, stirring constantly. When it holds, gather the dough together. Begin kneading. If the dough seems shaggy, add more cream. On a lightly floured surface, knead for another minute. Pat into a square about 1/2 inch thick. Cut into 12 squares; butter on all sides. Place two inches apart on ungreased baking sheet. After about 15 minutes in the oven and lightly browned, they are ready to serve—immediately. Slice berries; sweeten to taste. Whip cream with a little sugar, then fold a quarter of it into the berries. Split biscuits. Spread butter on one side, top with berries. Cover with other half of the biscuit. Top with a dollop of whipped cream. Garnish with more berries.

(Continued from page 2)

socially responsible producers, cooperative and worker-owned businesses, the use of renewable resources, limiting packaging and recyclable materials.

Our guidelines:

We strive *not* to buy foods which contain artificial sweeteners, colors, flavors, preservatives or additives; antibiotics or growth hormones; cottonseed or hydrogenated oils. Nor do we knowingly buy foods utilizing methods of genetic engineering or irradiation. We strive to limit our shelf space for foods containing chemically refined oils and highly refined sweeteners such as sucrose, fructose, corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup.

The Belfast Co-op Food Buying Policy applies to products stocked in the store. Pre-order buying choices through the Co-op are determined by individual co-op members and customers.

A copy of the Buying Policy will be given to each vendor with the understanding that this policy applies to their products and that we strive to do business with vendors who are in accordance with our policy. While the Buying Policy is one criteria that shall be considered in dealing with vendors, it is not the sole criteria and we realize that supporting flexibility by Co-op buyers is only good and sensible business practice.

The Board of Directors will review this policy annually with input from affected workers, members, customers and suppliers. Submitted by the purchasing committee; approved February 27, 2003 by the board of directors.

Deli Doings

We are delighted to announce that we have acquired a new gas range and a new grill for our deli. Our old equipment had become non-functional in many ways and posed serious safety threats to staff members. With swift action on the part of board and deli committee member Jerry Savitz, we are now the proud owners of a Deli Star char/broiler and a completely functional six burner Garland stove—it has two working ovens!

The \$4,420 spent on these purchases came from members' annual fee payments. Another example of your Co-op dollars at work! Thank you, and be sure to come by and enjoy an all-natural burger from Caldwell's or our own Co-op veggie burgers. You'll taste the difference a healthy membership can make.

CO-OP BOARD COMMITTEES

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

Board Development Committee Oversees board orientation, training, handbook and meeting process. Susan Lauchlan, 338-0406.

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. Susan Lauchlan, 338-0406.

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

(Continued from page 1)

promote diversity and ecology on their farm and view the soil as a living thing that should be honored.

Rotational grazing

Chickens are rotationally grazed along with the cattle, which helps improve the fertility of their fields and minimizes pests. Cover crops are also used to raise the fertility of their soil. Beneficial insects are welcomed into their gardens as a chemical-free means of fighting pests and disease.

Other members of the Bell family

This summer Tide Mill will deliver fresh, free-range chicken to the Co-op twice a week.

sustainably work the woodlands and blueberry barrens on the family land, where Scottish immigrant Robert Bell, guided by a Passamaquoddy Indian, built a tide-powered grist mill in 1765.

Delivered fresh to the Co-op

This summer Tide Mill will be delivering fresh chicken to the Co-op two times a week. The full, rich flavor of these birds is the result of the careful way they are raised.

Free to roam grassy pasture, they're fed certified-organic grains, sourced locally whenever possible to ensure that genetically modified organisms aren't passed onto consumers. The birds are also fed seaweed and mineral supplements to increase their nutritional content and aren't given growth hormones or antibiotics.

Aaron and Carly and their family and flocks are an amazing story of successful family farming in the state of Maine. We are proud to be able to offer you their seasonal poultry and encourage you to visit their web site, www.tidemillorganicfarm.com, to learn more of their story.

You can visit the farm on Wednesday afternoons this summer through Tours of Lubec and Cobscook

(phone, 733-2997; web, <http://toursoflubecandcobscook.com>). The hands-on tours are part of the farm's education mission. A farm stand is open 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays and 2-5 p.m. Mondays.

Yes, that's a great place to buy Tide Mill picnic fixings, but you can also do that at the Co-op. This summer our deli staff will cook up the farm's mouthwatering drumsticks and wings for our deli case and your eating pleasure. They are perfect for a picnic by the water.

New cheese vendors, too

Leave room in your picnic basket for other new items from our meat and cheese department, like fresh mozzarella, brie and camembert from Echo Ridge Farmstead in Mt. Vernon.

Garden Lore, located in Mariaville, offers a large variety of unpasteurized goat cheeses. You can get a tasty plain cherve made from the milk of Nigerian does and delicately seasoned with dill, produced by the folks at Painted Pepper Farm in Steuben.

We are also stocking new products by longtime vendors. Look for the new goat feta from an old Co-op favorite, Sunset Acres Farm in Appleton.

Whether you're Down East or in

Survey Results

Our recent member survey results are finally compiled and posted on our web site (<http://belfast.coop>). Thanks again to all who took time to respond and to the department managers, board members and members who helped with this project.

As the results are rich, we will publish tidbits here and there, including (with permission) participants comments. This month, a response to the question "What does being community owned mean to you?" from member Leah Trommer: "We all share in the success/failure of the Co-op. This means I am invested in helping to make it work."

Will you be one?

Farm Bill Hero

Congress sets the tone for what this country's foodscape will look like in coming years by periodically approving a Farm Bill. This comprehensive plan has ramifications for national policy relating to land conservation, renewable energy resources, commodity reform, sustainability incentives, research and development in organic farming, rural community development, agricultural trade, and food and nutrition assistance programs, to name a few.

We all have a stake in the bill

As the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition put it: "We all have a stake in the kinds of farm and food policies that are authorized every five to seven years in the federal farm bill. In setting the farm, food, and rural policy goals and priorities for our country, the farm bill has a tremendous impact on how food is grown, what kinds of foods are grown, who is able to participate in growing them, and who is able to eat them. In short, the outcome of the farm bill debate is of great environmental and social justice significance, not to mention being vital to our current and future nutrition and public health as a nation."

Influence the subcommittees

This fall Congress votes on the 2007 Farm Bill. With subcommittees at work on its contents, now is the time to get educated and make your voice heard. For a primer on the bill, visit the coalition at www.msawg.org or pick up "Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide to a Food and Farm Bill" by Dan Imhoff. Action alerts are available at the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, www.sustainableagriculture.net. As it says, "Be a Farm Bill Hero!"

Wine or beer: we can help you make your own

Co-op carries brewing, winemaking supplies

By Eric White, beer and wine manager
Making beer or wine? The Belfast Co-op is your one-stop shop. We have everything you need, from complete recipe kits for beginners to grains, hops and malt extracts for the more advanced brewer.

Why brew your own? It's easy and economical. Most homebrew recipes are designed to create a five-gallon batch, or two and a half cases of bottled beer. It's also fun and educational. With a few basics (glass carboy, a food-grade plastic fermenting bucket, and an airlock), you are on your way to creating your first batch.

Kits for beginners

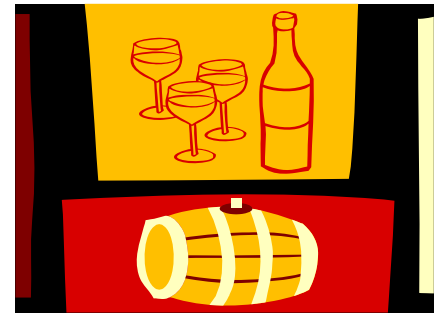
For beginners, it's great to start out with one of the many Tru Brew beer kits. They have all the ingredients you'll need, along with bottle caps and detailed instructions that will make first-time brewing a breeze.

For those that have brewed before, or those ready to move on from the

When it comes time to bottle your masterpiece, be it beer or wine, we still have you covered.

kits, hundreds of recipes are available for almost any style beer you would want. However, it is necessary to draw the line. Even if you like smelts, they may not be the best thing to include in a homebrew, but who knows?

There are many books available that offer sound advice and include both beginner and advanced recipes. Charlie Papazian's "The Joy of Homebrewing," available at the Co-op, is a great place to start. It's for beginners and advanced brewers. For those who are nervous about starting their first batch, Papazian recom-



mends, "Relax and have a homebrew!" How can you go wrong with great advice like that?

For those that are interested in trying wine or mead, we also have everything you'll need to get started. We carry a few wine kits, which contain the juice to ferment a five-gallon batch. There are many styles available, or we can special order something for you.

A lot of wine recipes are designed for smaller one-gallon batches. This provides the chance to try out different types of wine recipes using a variety of fresh fruits and ingredients. For those interested in mead or cider, we have yeasts and additives that will help get you started.

From cooking to brewing

If you like to cook, you'll love brewing on your own. Soon you'll be creating your own recipes and sharing them with family and friends. Just make sure to share the kitchen. Most brewing accidents don't occur during the actual brewing process, they occur when a loved one attempts to get you out of the kitchen. It seems like the better you get at brewing, and the more beer or wine you make, the more friends you have. I wonder why?

When it comes time to bottle your masterpiece, we still have you covered. Whether it's wine or beer, we have bottles, corks, bottle caps, food grade plastic hose, and racking buckets. If there's something you are

(Continued on page 3)