

# Belfast Co-op News &

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

MAY/JUNE 2008

## **Co-op to open lunch stand at local Farmers' Market**

**Dishes will be made with foods from vendors**

The Belfast Co-op will open a lunch stand at the Belfast Farmers' Market's monthly Street Festival.

That's when the Friday market moves to upper Main Street, turning it into a walking mall.

Our stand will sell sandwiches, salads and the like, made largely with food sold at market that day. So look for our menu to grow along with the offerings at vendors' stands as summer

heats up. You'll find not only fruits and vegetables, but items like bread, meat, cheese and honey.

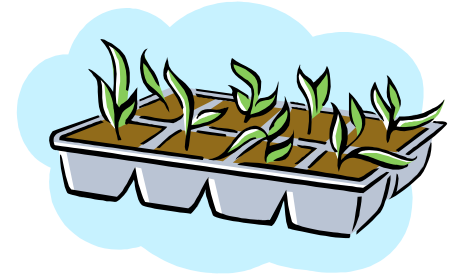
Because we have been looking for new ways to partner with other organizations that encourage our com-

munity to eat local, we were thrilled when the market approved our application. In keeping with this mission,

our stand will provide recipes using locally produced ingredients as well as information on stocking up and putting by home-grown food.

The market is open Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. from mid-May through October. This year its regular home is at a new location: on

Front Street in the public parking lot near the Belfast Maskers theater. The market moves to upper Main Street on the following Fridays: May 23, June 27, July 18, Aug. 15, Sept. 26 and Oct. 10. See you there!



## **Area growers supply Co-op with seedlings**

Spring is here, and so are our seedlings. As in years past, we are selling flower seedlings as well as a large variety of plants to help you with your edible landscaping, be it garden rows or herbs tucked in garden beds.

Longtime growers Mark and Paula Fulford of Teltane Farm in Monroe and Claudette Nadeau of Roots 'n Shoots Farm in Montville supply the Co-op with beautifully tended vegetable, herb and flower seedlings.

Claudette has been growing seedlings for the Co-op in her wood-heated greenhouses since 1989 and

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*Teltane Farm in Monroe and Root 'n Shoots Farm in Montville are longtime Co-op seedling suppliers.*

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specializes in open-pollinated heirloom tomato varieties.

Certified by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) since 2003, she also offers peppers, globe artichokes, eggplants, brassica, celery packs, celery, cucumbers, leeks, onions, shallots, lettuce, tomatillos, and culinary

## **Store improvements continue**

Do you notice a difference when you walk into our store? We hope so. Our interior continues to change as we work to increase energy efficiency and improve the goods and services we provide.

In March we installed six new food cases financed partly by member annual fees. Thousands of dollars have been saved in electric bills and service fees since installing our walk-in dairy cooler last fall (see article page 5). We expect

similar savings from the new cases.

Customers can now help themselves to our prepackaged meat and cheese products. We are able to carry fresh seafood—and more of it—seven days a week. Now we're stocking more foods to-go from our deli kitchen.

But improvements haven't stopped there. New shelving is coming for our grocery department and new and better racks for our

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## 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)

### 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

Kate Harris, 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

Erica Buswell, editor

Mary Ruoff, copy editor, graphic designer

## Co-op to take part in women's health conference in Belfast

### May 17 event will "celebrate" women's mind, body, spirit

Don't miss our interactive booth at the Midcoast Maine Women's Health Conference from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, May 17 at the University of Maine Hutchinson Center on Route 3 in Belfast. We will be providing food and supplement samples and lots of information, all of it related to women's health, including alternative therapies.

The Midcoast Maine Women's Health Conference grew out of a vision nurtured by the grassroots Women's Health Initiative to provide a program for our community that celebrates women's health. The event focuses on health practices that recognize the whole woman: body, mind and spirit.

Admission is \$10 per person, and men and families are welcome. Participants can attend four workshops (two morning and two afternoon sessions). Workshops will cover a variety

of topics from traditional and alternative healing practices to financial and career planning. To register and preview the workshops visit [www.midcoastwomenshealth.com](http://www.midcoastwomenshealth.com). The event wraps up with a concert by the vocal and percussion ensemble Inanna, Sisters in Rhythm.

Can't make the conference? You can still celebrate women's health by checking out the art exhibit in our café through May: "Women: Concern, Issues, Honoring, and Appreciation . . . the dimensions of being woman—mystical, emotional, intellectual, physical." The show features the work of 12 area artists who have chosen pieces that express women "being in the world." For more information about the exhibit, contact Fran Clemetson, our education coordinator, at [education@belfastcoop.com](mailto:education@belfastcoop.com).

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## Co-op Events: May-June

**Café Gallery Art Shows** May: A group show by local artists, "WOMEN: Concerns, Issues, Honoring, and Appreciation." June: Recent works by Ed Moffitt and Phoebe Bly.

**Wine & Food Tastings** 7-9 p.m. Fri. May 16 and Fri. June 23 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** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thurs. May 22 and Thurs. June 26, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

**Finding Balance with Homeopathy** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thurs. May 8 in the Co-op Café. New to homeopathy? Want to fine-tune your present knowledge? Please join us for an informative talk by Carleen Johnson, a certified homeopath in Thorndike. Free.

**Culinary Landscaping** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tues. May 27 in the Co-op Cafe, or outside by the seedlings weather permitting. Rose Whitehead will discuss landscaping for your menu, adding edible color, collecting garden recipes, and maintaining an organic garden. Free.

**Beer Making** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tues. June 10 in the Co-op Café. Learn the fine art of making beer with Roy Antaki of Weeping Duck Farm. Roy has a rich history in the wisdom of ferment-

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

**Please VOTE in our board election if you haven't yet. We need to reach our quorum. VOTE TODAY!**

# Fair Trade: It's about more than a good cup of joe

*Fair Trade Day is Saturday, May 10. The Fair Trade Federation defines Fair Trade as “a system of exchange that seeks to create greater equality and partnership in the international trading system. Fair trade promotes positive and long-term change through trade-based relationships that seek to empower producers to meet their own needs.” In celebration of Fair Trade Day, and in solidarity with farmer/producer cooperatives worldwide and organizations working with them for economic justice and sustainability, we share this article from Equal Exchange, a Co-op supplier of Fair Trade coffee, tea and chocolate.*

By Phyllis Robinson, education and campaigns manager for Equal Exchange  
 “We’re better than Fair Trade.”  
 “We’re beyond Fair Trade.” “Ours is direct trade.”

If you’re a coffee buyer trying to choose your brand, chances are you’re familiar with these refrains. How, then, do we sort through all the seals, messages and marketing promotions to make the right purchase? Clearly, we select our coffee by its quality, flavor profile and roast, as well as how much comes out of our pocket. But for just a moment, if we set aside our personal taste preferences and economic realities, what do we look for next?

When a company pays a higher, fairer price to farmers, as Fair Trade coffee companies do, the growers’ standards of living rise and so does their quality of life. New opportunities arise and change becomes possible. By working together and creating a clear vision of the future that extends beyond themselves and their families, farm cooperative members make investments in their businesses and improvements in their communi-

ties. They work with other organizations to influence, improve and change national trade and agricultural policies. In this way, organized and well-run small farmer cooperatives can acquire the economic and political power necessary to create lasting, deep-seated change.

When the Fair Trade movement began working with coffee, its leaders understood this. Activists, progressive roasters and organized farmers recognized the tremendous inequities in the market and the potential for this model to create, support and foster a myriad of changes: higher standards of living and increased cross-cultural understanding; changes in business practices and purchasing behaviors; the empowerment of farmers and consumers; and

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***Many people concerned with human rights and economic justice worked on behalf of, and alongside, small-scale farmers to demand their rights for land, credit and a chance to organize.***

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local community development in the United States and abroad.

Many people concerned with human rights and economic justice worked on behalf of, and alongside, small-scale farmers to demand their rights for land, credit and a chance to organize. The farmers’ long struggles continue today; much blood has been shed and many lives lost. Some have fled political repression and economic crises, leaving families and communities so they can forge a new life elsewhere.

To really understand the key difference between Fair Trade, beyond-Fair Trade, better-than-Fair Trade, direct trade, and just about every



other kind of neo-Fair Trade, it’s important to look back at the historical roots of the movement. Then we can move forward with a deepened commitment to substantive change.

Do my purchases, and ultimately my support, foster an environment for positive, collective change? What if I know that through my purchases, and the way I do business, an entire cooperative and members’ communities can develop according to their *own* vision?

Only by sharing a common vision and working in true partnership can profound structural change occur—change that happens when people stay focused on their dreams, keep the bigger picture in mind, work together and take risks. Fair Trade coffee—because it continues to support small farmer cooperatives—has the ability to be that engine. But not all Fair Trade is the same, and not all “beyond and better than Fair Trade” is, in fact, “beyond or better.”

So, the next time you buy your coffee (or tea or chocolate), think about the company’s underlying message. Look beyond the labels and seals, and ask yourself what kind of *change* they are committed to and how deep that commitment goes. What change do *you* believe? Changing the status quo is never easy and solutions aren’t always clear, but let’s challenge ourselves to ask the difficult questions.

*For more information: World Fair Trade Day, [www.wftday.org](http://www.wftday.org); Equal Exchange, [www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com) and Fair Trade Federation, [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)*

## 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, 525-3234.

**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. Lorna Crichton, 322-3417.

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

## Many members donate refunds

### Money grows building and equity assistance funds

Thank you to our members who donated a portion of their annual patronage dividend to our Equity Assistance and Capital Improvements funds. At the end of March, \$626 was received for capital improvements and \$695 to assist members and potential members who ask for help paying their equity shares. It is a joy to see such an outpouring of generosity from our cooperative community! Last year we were able to help 21 households that otherwise would have been unable to join due to financial hardship. Because of your support, we have enough money to do so again this year.

*(Continued from page 1)*

and medicinal herbs, as well as holyhocks and perennial and annual flower packs. Manure from the farm's goats is used in its custom seedling potting mix.

Teltane Farm has been growing seedlings and vegetables for the Co-op's produce department since its beginning. The farm's products are "certifiable," meaning that Mark and Paula use growing methods that are non-toxic and promote lasting soil fertility, such as enriching soil with compost and rock powder minerals and fertilizing growing plants with nutrient-rich foliar sprays.

Mark has created a custom blend of rock powders for Waldo County that contains mineral nutrients typically lacking in our local soil. This is added to his custom potting mix. Teltane Farm also offers vegetable, herb and flower seedlings. Medicinal herbs and 50-pound bags of Mark's rock powder are available by special orders (call 525-7761).

Don't have a garden? Don't despair! Visit your local library to learn more about container gardening, or link to the web site Urban Gardening Help from the Resources for Co-operative Living page at our web site ([www.belfast.coop](http://www.belfast.coop)). Join or start a community garden in your area. For information about a community garden project that is growing in Belfast, contact organizers Carolyn Pressley and Marshall Mittnick at 338-0842.

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One example of the Co-op's commitment to women's health is our large supply of herbal remedies from Avena Botanicals in Rockport, a women-owned business that prides itself on its commitment to women, community and the planet. If you don't see the herb or herbal compound you need, ask for help: we can special order those that aren't part of our regular inventory.

Deb Soule founded Avena in 1985, following her heart's call to help people heed the wisdom of plants and to create a working environment where women's voices could be heard.

More than 120 species of medicinal herbs grow in Avena's Gardens. All are hand-harvested and certified organic by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. Herbs that are not native to Maine are grown by certified organic growers and skilled wildcrafters.

The women of Avena use biodynamic gardening practices created by Rudolf Steiner to enrich the fertility and vitality of the herbs, thus ensuring that their herbal preparations are of the highest quality and maximum potency.

To learn more about Avena Botanicals, visit their amazing gardens this summer. They are open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Thursday from May through October. You can also learn more about the company at its web site, [www.avenabotanicals.com](http://www.avenabotanicals.com).

## Co-op taps free state program

# Energy audit helping trim utility costs

By Erica Buswell

Over the past few years, the Co-op has done many things to increase the energy efficiency of our 50-year-old building. Our recent state energy audit recognized and applauded our efforts while also identifying areas where we could conserve more energy.

The audit is part of Efficiency Maine, a program operated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Our audit was done earlier this year while the Co-op was in the midst of upgrading and replacing our deli, meat and cheese coolers (*see article on page 1*).

As part of the process, the auditor laid out our energy use during 2007: 455,040 kilowatt hours of electricity to run our lights, appliances, coolers and air conditioning; 815 gallons of fuel oil to heat our building and hot water; and 2,193 gallons of propane to cook all those delicious deli items. In dollars and cents, our energy consumption cost \$67,606.35.

### **T-8 lamp fixtures are helping**

Our lighting systems are relatively efficient, the audit found. The T-8 lamp fixtures and electronic ballasts installed in 2005 helped reduce our electrical usage. The audit suggests that we could improve this system by installing motion sensors to turn lights off and on in low-use areas like our basement.

The Co-op was also advised that by replacing our "Exit" signs with

those powered by energy-saving LED lighting, we would save an estimated \$68 annually.

Our building exterior was applauded for the smaller, double pane windows installed in the cafe area some years ago. Over the past year, we added wood siding to the west wall of the building, insulating underneath the siding to improve the

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*The auditor was very impressed with the heat reclamation system we installed last year to capture the heat escaping from our compressors and use it to preheat our water.*

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efficiency of our new walk-in cooler.

Several suggestions were offered to make our exterior more energy efficient: replacing the single pane windows on the front of the store with smaller double pane windows that would match those in the cafe, adding a second set of doors to create an air lock in the front of the building, and insulating our east wall.

The auditor was very impressed with the heat reclamation system we installed last year to capture the heat escaping from our compressors and use it to preheat our water. He recommended that we try to expand this system in order to provide heat to our back offices. We were also

advised to insulate our pipes and ductwork and get a boiler tuneup.

It was noted that most of our new office equipment has the Energy Star seal of approval. To activate more energy-saving features, we simply need to consult our manuals, the auditor informed us. He also recommended that computer monitors be shut off when not in use.

Refrigeration is one of our biggest energy expenditures, and our new walk-in cooler and upgraded compressor room design are also helping us trim those costs.

### **Produce coolers redesigned**

The auditor recommended we consider changing our produce display. Overloaded coolers restricted air flow, causing cold air to cascade out at floor level. We have since improved the design, and we hope to eventually get new cases that will be more energy efficient. It was also recommended that we come up with a regular maintenance schedule for vacuuming the heat exchangers on our coolers.

Tapping the state's free small business energy audit program was a great opportunity. It has helped us set priorities for equipment upgrades and generated simple strategies to help cut energy use. That's in step with our cooperative and environmental values. To set up an energy audit for your business, contact Efficiency Maine: 866-376-2463, [www.encyencyMAINE.com](http://www.encyencyMAINE.com).

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locally baked breads. Our greeting cards and Fair Trade general merchandise will be moved away from the front windows to a spot near produce. This will make room for an express register and a customer service and family education area.

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companies should reformulate, or else drop their "organic" and "all-natural" claims. In response to the OCA report many companies have indicated they are doing this.

In the meantime, consumers can visit OCA at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) to learn

which companies can be trusted and which use petrochemicals and questionable synthetics. And always look for the green "USDA Organic" seal.

*Charlotte Vallaey is a Farm & Food Policy Analyst at The Cornucopia Institute ([www.cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org)), a top organic industry watchdog.*

More than skin deep . . .

## “Organic” and “natural” beauty products may not be all that these labels suggest

By Charlotte Vallaeys for The Cornucopia Institute

For years, consumer advocacy groups that are part of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics have reported on toxic chemical ingredients and residues in beauty and body care products, revealing that this notoriously under-regulated industry is liberal with its use of possibly carcinogenic and other toxic synthetic ingredients.

Consumers with an interest in avoiding unnecessary toxic exposure believed they had found refuge in body care products made with “natural” and “organic” ingredients. But what few consumers know is that unlike organic claims on food, body care products often use the word “organic” on labels of products that are based on conventional and petrochemical ingredients.

Body care products may freely use the word “organic,” but they may only use the green United States Department of Agriculture’s organic seal on products that are made with at least 95 percent certified organic agricultural ingredients and contain no toxic or suspected carcinogenic or synthetics.

A recent report by the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) reveals that this distinction—between many body care products using the word “organic” and those actually bearing the green “USDA Organic” seal—is significant. Using an independent testing lab, OCA analyzed various “organic” and “all-natural” beauty and body care products for residues of one particular toxic chemical, 1,4-dioxane.

While some of the self-proclaimed “organic” and “all-natural” products tested contained up to 30 parts per million 1,4-dioxane residues, all of the USDA certified organic products



were found to be completely free of these residues. Products certified under the German BDIH “natural” program were also clean.

The International Agency for Cancer Research classifies 1,4-dioxane as a probable human carcinogen, and it is banned from all cosmetics and personal care products, natural, organic *and* conventional, in Europe. Unfortunately, there is no U.S. prohibition against the use of suspected

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*The International Agency for Cancer Research classifies 1,4-dioxane, used in many body care products, as a probable human carcinogen.*

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carcinogens in body care products.

Scientists disagree over the level of carcinogenicity of this chemical. Some suggest that the Environmental Protection Agency has overestimated this chemical’s potential cancer risk, while other scientists caution against the use of any chemical that is listed as a carcinogen in laboratory animals, including 1,4-dioxane.

As with most chemicals, we will not find an easy answer or a clear verdict. Scientists have a very rudimentary understanding of thousands of

chemicals and their effects on our health. Our ability to produce chemicals and our understanding of how they affect the environment and public health rarely progress simultaneously. As with DDT and PCBs, we tend to figure out how to produce and widely distribute a chemical before we fully understand its impacts on health and the environment.

While scientists disagree among themselves about the level of health risks of 1,4-dioxane, you and I have been slathering this chemical on ourselves and our children—often daily. As a consumer, doesn’t it seem only wise to question the sanity of this? The Food and Drug Administration would require manufacturers to remove 1,4-dioxane from products only if there is demonstrated harm. But why should the burden of proof be on the unsuspecting consumer?

This question becomes especially salient when we consider that residues such as 1,4-dioxane are simply not necessary in our body care products. Plenty of companies with a true interest in the values of organics use only environmentally friendly ingredients that are safe for humans. This includes firms that market “USDA organic” products, like Dr. Bronner’s and Terressentials, and others that are not certified organic, like Burt’s Bees and Tom’s of Maine.

We encourage all companies marketing themselves as “organic” or “all-natural” to remove these chemicals and their residues from their products. “Organic” and “all-natural” labeling can be useful marketing tools only as long as consumers can trust these claims and are not turned off by findings of potentially dangerous chemical residues. These

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