

Belfast Co-op News & Commentary

A natural food and products store serving Midcoast Maine since 1976

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

School time: We can help you pack healthy lunches

It's back to school time again. That means time to load up your child's lunch box with healthy fare. The Co-op can make it easier for you to choose delicious, wholesome lunch foods that kids will love to eat. Here are some tips to chew on before your little ones brown-bag it:



Pesticides: To avoid pesticides in your kids' lunches, and at all your meals, go organic whenever possible. The "dirty dozen" are 12 fruits and veggies—peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, lettuce, imported grapes, pears, spinach and potatoes—you should always buy organic. These common produce items have the highest pesti-

cide levels, according to a 2007 study by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit environmental research organization.

EWG recommends that consumers try to minimize exposure to pesticides as much as possible. Their toxic effects, especially in developing children, may be long term and wide ranging. Consumers can lower their pesticide exposure nearly 90 percent by choosing organic produce, according to the organization. For more information visit EWG's web site, www.foodnews.org.



Nutrition: Foods harvested at the peak of ripeness are also the most nutritious. A wilted bunch of chard or kale just doesn't

PLEASE NOTE

On Sunday, Sept. 28, the Co-op will close early at 2 p.m. so we can conduct our end-of-year inventory. Please plan to shop early in the day or the next day, Monday, Sept. 29, when we will be open regular hours (7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.). We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your cooperation.

THANK YOU

look like it is going to be nourishing, does it? How about a pale red tomato? A withering pepper? Bruised fruit? No way, mom. Produce starts decomposing as soon as it is plucked. For every day that produce sits on a truck, in a warehouse, or on a produce shelf, its vitality, along

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Program sell shares of Midcoast fish harvest

Co-op hooks Port Clyde Fresh Catch

By Erica Buswell

Perhaps some of you noticed the pickup truck with the big green cooler parked on the side of the Co-op on Sunday afternoons this summer. Maybe you are among those who walked away from that pickup with your weekly share or half-share of fresh fish.

This summer we've helped members become consumers of another area cooperative, the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative (MFC) of Port Clyde. This is in step with our efforts to promote local foods. It also reflects our commitment to the Seven Cooperative Principles: Cooperation among cooperatives is Co-op Principle Six.



fishing community (350 year-round residents) on the St. George Peninsula, down Route 131 out of Thomaston. Its economic health is strongly tied to the health of the local groundfish population. In recent years, that population has been in decline, due to overfishing and de-

The MFC is made up of 20 fishermen working the waters of Penobscot Bay and the Gulf of Maine. Port Clyde is a tiny

creased habitat for groundfish.

As a result, the fishing industry in this village has seen smaller profits and fewer jobs. In 2007, fishermen came up with a plan to restore the health of groundfish populations and develop new business models to sustain the economic health of their industry and community.

The result of this cooperative effort is Port Clyde Fresh Catch (visit www.portclydefreshcatch.com), which provides locally harvested, wild-caught fish to area residents who have purchased shares of the weekly catch. "If it were any fresher, it would still be swimming," proudly notes MFC.

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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

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

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Bindy Pendleton, president

Debbi Lasky, vice president

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Peri Tobin

Newsletter

Erica Buswell, editor

Mary Ruoff, copyeditor and

graphic designer

2008 Customer Appreciation Day a big success despite some rain

Thank you, one and all, for visiting us on our annual Customer Appreciation Day on Saturday, Aug. 16. Even though the festivities (music, food, product samples) got rained out at the very end, it was still a great day.

A special thanks to everyone who bought items from our used book and media sale or purchased tickets for our raffle of Co-op gift baskets. Proceeds totaled more than \$1,240 at press time and will be divided between the following: Stone Soup Kitchen in Belfast, Northport Food Pantry, New Hope For Women in Rockland, Food For Maine's Future in Thorndike, Knox County Animal Shelter and DEW Animal Kingdom in Mt. Vernon.

Our Customer Appreciation Day blood drive generated 17 pints of blood. Rumor has it that we had the blood collectors asking for mercy, with so many willing volunteers lining up.

With everyone's help, we succeeded in fulfilling our cooperative responsibility to give back to our communities—both fun-wise and fund-wise.

Co-op Events: Sept.-Oct.

Café Gallery Art Shows Sept. 3-30: "Sustenance" by Lisa Martin. Photographs of individuals in rural Maine creating a life from the soil in a sustainable way. Martin lives in Monroe and is an adjunct faculty member at Unity College. Oct.: A display of almost-extinct world heritage wheats collected in Europe and the Mideast by Eli Rogosa of the Heritage Wheat Conservancy. Farmers and gardeners are invited to work with the conservancy (www.growseed.org) to restore rare wheat.

Wine & Food Tastings 7-9 p.m. Fri. Sept. 19 and Fri. Oct. 24 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. Sept. 25 and Thurs. Oct. 23, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

SuperSales Day Wed. Sept. 3. 10% off sales to members only (excludes beer, wine and cigarettes). Note: Held the first Wednesday in September and March.

Beyond Sauerkraut 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thurs. Sept. 4. Ana and Roy Antaki of Weeping Duck Farm (www.weepingduckfarm.com) talk on lacto-fermentation, a natural way of preserving food and killing harmful bacteria without using heat.

One Potato, Two Potatoes 1-2 p.m. Sun. Oct. 5, Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St. Learn how to buy, store and cook local organic potatoes. Enjoy potato dish samples; there will be a children's activity during the talk. First in our four-part "Eating Healthy on a Budget" series. Preregister at the Co-op; space is limited.

Sugar Blues Workshop 6:30 p.m. Tues. Oct. 7, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Is sugar addictive? Are artificial sweeteners safe? Learn which sweeteners to try and which to avoid as Holly Noonan discusses how they affect your body, energy and moods. Noonan runs a nutrition counseling business in Camden; for more information visit www.MindBodyNutrition.net.

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

Coming in Nov.:

OUR 2nd ANNUAL

**"EAT LOCAL
CHALLENGE"**

**Details forthcoming in
our store and newsletter
and at our web site**

October is National Co-op Month

Take part in a campaign that's in its 78th year

Did you know that we are approaching National Co-op Month? In October, cooperatives all across America celebrate the role, accomplishments and contributions of our nation's cooperatives.

Every year representatives from co-ops in all kinds of economic sectors choose a unifying theme for Co-op Month intended to heighten awareness about the positive economic impact co-ops can have on the communities we serve.

The theme for Co-op Month 2008 is "Stronger Together—Go.coop!" The goal of the campaign (in its 78th year) is to highlight the positive economic contributions co-ops make to the global marketplace.

There's loads of great information at www.coopmonth.coop, the campaign's web site. Read studies about the economic impact of cooperatives. Learn how they can meet many of your everyday needs for food, electricity, housing and healthcare as highlighted in "A Day in the Life of Co-operative America."

To whet your appetite, here are some facts and figures about co-ops, courtesy of Co-op Month 2008:

***U.S. co-ops serve more than 130 million members, or 4 in 10 adult Americans. They generate revenue in excess of \$230 billion a year, employ more than half a million Americans, and have total payrolls of more than \$15 billion annually.**

***Cooperatives operate in every industry including agriculture, child care, energy, financial services, food retailing and distribution, health care, insurance, housing, purchasing and shared services, and telecommunications.**

***Cooperatives range in size from large enterprises, including U.S. Fortune 500 companies, to small storefronts.**

***About 30 percent of farmers' products in the United States are marketed through 3,100 farmer-owned cooperatives.**

***More than 30 cooperatives have annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion, including such well-known**

To learn more about Co-op Month 2008 visit the web site of this national campaign, www.coopmonth.coop. You'll find studies about co-ops' economic impact and learn how they meet needs like housing.

names as Land O' Lakes Inc. and ACE Hardware. The top 100 co-ops have a combined \$131 billion in revenues.

***9,000 U.S. credit unions have more than 86 million members and assets approaching \$700 billion.**

***More than 900 rural electric cooperatives own and maintain nearly half of the electric distribution lines in the United States, cover 75 percent of the land mass, and provide electricity to 37 million people.**

***270 telephone co-ops provide service to 2 million households.**

***7,500 housing cooperatives provide homes for 1.2 million households.**

***300 purchasing cooperatives offer group buying and shared services to more than 50,000 independent businesses.**

Also during the month of October, consider patronizing the following area cooperative businesses:

***One of the five Maine food co-ops: Belfast Co-op, Good Tern in Rockland, Blue Hill Co-op in Blue Hill, Rising Tide in Damariscotta and Fare Share Market in Norway.**

***Down East Credit Union, with**

branches in Belfast, Unity, Baileyville, Machias, Bangor, Calais, Richmond, and Bowdoinham

***Art Alliance Gallery in Belfast**

***Fedco Seeds, Trees and Bulbs in Waterville**

***True Value Hardware in Belfast, Brooks, Bucksport, Union and Unity**

Another way to honor National Co-op Month is to buy cooperatively produced goods available at the Belfast Co-op, such as Organic Valley milks, juices and cheeses, Cabot Creamery cheeses, Equal Exchange coffees, teas and chocolate, Once Again Nut Butters, Alvarado St. Bakery frozen breads, and nut thins from Blue Diamond Growers.

Get ready for Nov.'s Eat Local Challenge

For the second year in a row the Co-op will sponsor a celebration of local eating and our local economy during the month of November. Look for details in the store and our next newsletter and at www.belfast.coop.

But don't wait to get ready and set to go for this fun family event. Take advantage of fall's bounty to stock up on local foods you can store or process to enjoy long after the harvest is over. There are many ways to "put by" produce in season—canning, freezing, fermenting, drying—so it's available year-round.

Both the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (www.mofga.org) and University of Maine Cooperative Extension (www.umext.maine.edu) offer workshops on food preservation. Look for how-to information at your library and the Co-op's blog, www.belfast.coop/blog.

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.


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with its vitamin and antioxidant content, diminishes. Fruits and vegetables that haven't had the advantage of ripening on the vine won't peak nutritionally. By choosing local foods that may be just hours away from harvest, you will get the best bang for your buck nutrition-wise.


 **Food safety:** Another benefit of choosing local foods for the lunch box is that you may just be close enough to the farm where your food came from to decide whether or not you think it's "safe." Think of the recent outbreak of salmonella in tomatoes and peppers. At the Co-op, these items would have come from very far away off-season; we have no way of really knowing how they are being handled during harvest and transport. Food produced locally offers us the opportunity to build relationships of trust with our producers. Even if you don't have the opportunity to visit the farms where your tomatoes are coming from, you can feel safe knowing that Co-op buyers have before given them our safety stamp of approval.


 **Taste:** It's no secret that food tastes its best as soon as it's plucked from its garden plot.

But would it surprise you to know that much of our food supply is not grown primarily for taste, or even for nutritional quality, but for its ability to endure storage and transport? Maybe our children would eat more broccoli if they had the chance to eat it when it is less than 24 hours old, not a week old. By choosing local and in-season produce, you may just discover that your child prefers carrot sticks to potato chips.


 **Education:** Lunch preparation time can also be a great opportunity for a lesson on healthy eating as well as a conversation about the benefits of choosing local foods. Make lunch together! By involving your kids in the process, you get to spend quality time together, and they learn healthy hab-

its. They just might be interested in what's in their lunch box.

 **Packaging:** When you are the lunch-maker, you also have the opportunity to decide how your lunch will be packaged. You can choose reusable (aluminum foil, plastic or glass) containers or recycled packaging to reduce what gets thrown in the landfill. Your packaging choice might also help you minimize your child's exposure to toxic chemicals such as Bishphenol-A or BPA, a plastic that may be toxic to infants and children and is used to line the interiors of some food and drink cans, particularly soda cans. Plastic containers containing BPA are labeled as PC #7 on the bottom (for more info on BPA visit www.ewg.org). You can find both kid-safe and planet-safe packaging options at the Co-op.

 **Economics:** Taking the time to prepare lunches from whole foods may take more time than just throwing in a snack bar, but it will likely save you money. By purchasing items from our bulk department, you get the benefit of volume discounts. Seasonal produce is often a good value (think of the cost of strawberries in February.)

Plan to cook in large quantities, when you have the time, and then freeze leftovers. It's just as easy to grab a pumpkin cake from the freezer as it is to grab that snack bar.

 **Lunch box suggestions:** Some easy favorites: homemade applesauce, assorted in-season veggies with yogurt dip, soup or chili in a thermos, baked potatoes with cheese sauce, pizza made with seasonal veggies, cold salads made from whole grains with nuts, fruits and veggies, yogurt sweetened with maple syrup or fresh or frozen fruits, hard boiled eggs, trail mix or granola, beans and salsa in a tortilla, celery stuffed with nut butter or cheese. *For an easy treat you can pull right from the freezer, try the pumpkin cake recipe on page 5.*

Recipe: Low-sugar pumpkin snack cakes



Reprinted with permission from chef Cheryl Wixson, www.cherylwixsonskitchen.org

My teenagers are always rummaging throughout the cupboards for a snack. I make Pumpkin Snack Cakes and store them in the freezer. Better than cookies, one little cake has over a gram of fiber and provides 20% of the RDA of Vitamin A. Dry milk powder and chopped apricots replace the sugar to add extra calcium and Vitamin C.

Beat all together with electric mixer in large bowl:

15 oz. can of pumpkin (1 ½ cup cooked pumpkin)

½ cup sugar

3 eggs

1 cup canola oil

1 ½ cup skim milk

½ cup fat-free dry milk powder.

Mix together in a medium bowl:

½ cup wheat germ

2 cups whole wheat flour

1 tablespoon cinnamon

1 ½ teaspoons grated nutmeg

Set aside:

1 cup chocolate chips

½ cup finely chopped dried apricots

Stir dry mixture into pumpkin mixture. Stir in chocolate chips and finely chopped dried apricots. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray mini-muffin pans with cooking spray. Spoon batter into pans and bake for about 15 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool on rack. Store in tin, plastic bags or plastic containers, or freeze. Makes 72 cakes.

Nutritional analysis per cake: 83 calories, 2 grams protein, 10 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fat, 1 gram fiber, 29 mg sodium.

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Colonial America, brought by British settlers for seed savers in Massachusetts; *Crimean (Turkey Red) aka Banner*, a delicious heritage wheat for seed savers in Maine; and *Vermont Heritage Wheats*, bred by Cyrus Pringle and Read in the 1800s, for seed savers in Vermont.

Wheat planting tips

Plant seeds 12 inches apart in deep-dug, well-fertilized soil. Save the seed from the most robust, healthy plants. Each year, at the Northeast Organic Farming Association and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) conferences, HWC hosts a heritage wheat booth with a seed exchange.

You can also join us in the Exhibi-

tion Hall at MOFGA's Common Ground Fair to tour "Wheat sheaves," our display of rare worldwide heritage wheat. It will then move to the Co-op's Café Gallery, where it will show through October. To learn more about the conservancy, visit our web site, www.growseed.org.

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Fish are harvested with ecologically sustainable practices intended to reduce damage to underwater habitats. By using new technologies and gear that exceed the requirements of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the cooperative hopes to be able to speed the recovery of diminishing fish stocks in the Gulf of Maine.

MFC's business model was adapted

from Community Supported Agriculture programs. Called Community Supported Fisheries, or CSF, members pay for their "shares" at the beginning of the fishing season, then pick up their shares weekly. By having the cash on hand at the start of the season, fishermen have the financial resources to make repairs, upgrade equipment, pay for fuel, etc.

This business model adds economic security since market fluctuations have less of an impact once the co-op has determined the value of a season's share. Consumers benefit, too. They are buying direct, with no "middle markup." Fishermen keep more profits because they aren't paying brokers to get their products to the market. Consumers and fisherman also benefit from working as partners to rebuild local fisheries.

But when that pickup truck pulled up in our parking lot on Sunday afternoons, the focus was on the food. Throughout the summer, Belfast area CSF members opened their shares to find fresh hake, haddock, flounder, cod, monkfish, redfish, dabs, grey sole and pollock, along with a weekly newsletter offering myriad cooking options.

The fish are cleaned but remain whole. Most still have their heads attached, which improves storage life and provides the most essential ingredient for making a yummy fish stock.

Based on the program's success, the Co-op hopes to offer members the opportunity to buy shares of fresh scallops and shrimp through Port Clyde Fresh Catch this winter. Look for information in our store and upcoming newsletter and at our web site, www.belfast.coop.

For more information about Port Clyde Fresh Catch, the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative and the Midcoast Fishermen's Association, a non-profit advocacy group for area fisherman that works in partnership with the cooperative, visit www.midcoastfishermen.org.



Like heirloom tomatoes and apples? You can also grow, share and eat heritage wheats



By Eli Rogosa,

of the Heritage Wheat Conservancy

Adapted from the Maine Agriculture Society Report of 1857:

“There was a time when wheat was a sure crop in Maine. It was raised without serious difficulty in quantities adequate to the wants of the people. It was the most common and reliable of crops. Wheat was a surer crop than Indian corn, more bushels of it were annually harvested and consumed. The only flour brought into our State was bome hither from vessels from Baltimore and Richmond, but seldom used except in small measure by families in our seaport towns for pastry purposes. The Erie Canal had not yet opened and NY’s Genesee flour was unknown here.

“For wheaten bread our population relied upon the home article. Few stores were without ample bins of wheat. Our wheat was not white like the brands of St. Louis. It was sweet and nutritious but of brownish hue. Much of the bran was mingled in the flour.

“The best variety of winter wheat cultivated in Maine is known as the Banner wheat. In 1844 we received a small package of this grain from the Patent Office, just imported from the Baltic. We sowed it and its proceeds, till three years afterwards, a harvest of thirty-two bushels was obtained. We distributed it in various parts of the State for cultivation. As uniformly as with us, it proved a good success. Siberian, aka Java or China Tea, and Black Sea winter wheats also have been grown with great success.

“The Banner wheat has been raised to this day. It is a splendid grain.

Sowed on grounds that the frosts do not heave badly, it is found to survive the winter nearly as well as herdsgrass or clover. But it should be sown in August that it may get firmly rooted before winter. If a pasture is plowed in July, fertilized, harrowed, sown and rolled in August, or if the seed is scattered in the corn-field previous to the last hoeing, the chance is sure of an ample harvest in July following.”

The Heritage Wheat Conservancy (HWC), a Maine-based seed saving network, addresses a concern shared by organic farmers, artisan bakers, and people who enjoy delicious food, a concern that spans New England to encompass global food and farming issues: heritage wheats, many that date back to biblical time,

When peoples immigrated to the New World, they brought landrace wheats, now almost extinct, from their homelands.

are almost lost to the world.

The wheat grown in North America originated in the Fertile Crescent spanning the Mideast up into Old Europe. Wheats whisper the journeys of the peoples who carried them, the trading, migrations and conquests that are kneaded into our breads. When peoples immigrated to the New World, they brought landrace wheats from their homelands. These are the wheats that nourished earlier peoples but today are almost extinct.

Biodiversity is key to food system

Biodiversity is at the heart of a robust community food system. More and more people are seeking the rich flavor and nutrition of heirloom

wheats and vegetables. Yet today’s commercial wheats, such as AC Barrie, Ingot, etc., are grown from patented seeds owned by goliath seed companies and bred in agrochemical-soaked fields for high yield and uniformity. Nutrition is not a criteria. Flavor is forgotten.

Almost all commercial wheats are patented to prevent farmers from saving them, and they are replacing heritage wheats even in remote villages worldwide.

Heritage wheats near extinction

Heritage wheats are more delicious and higher in nutrition but are *on the verge of extinction*. They are taller, compete naturally with weeds (no herbicides needed), and have extensive root systems to absorb natural fertility and promote greater photosynthetic activity. Heritage wheats have higher protein and micronutrients than modern wheat and are rich in flavor and nutrition—the very qualities bred out of modern wheat.

Artisan bakers seek heritage wheats for their delicious taste. But where are the heritage wheat seeds? Let us liberate seed from the control of the multinational seed companies. Join generations of farmers who saved their own seeds. HWC invites farmers and gardeners to restore a community seed system of heritage wheats by growing heritage wheats and sharing them with neighbors.

Order heritage wheat seeds online

You can order heritage wheat seeds at www.growseed.org/seed.html. All proceeds support conservancy farms in Palestine, Macedonia and Maine. Seed varieties available for free to community seed savers include: *Red Lammas*, the first wheat grown in

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