

# Belfast Co-op News & Commentary

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

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

## Oct. is national Co-op month

October is National Co-op Month. This is a time when cooperatives across the country strive to celebrate, and educate our communities about, the role, accomplishments and contributions of the nation's co-ops.

The University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) just completed phase one of a study measuring the national economic impact of cooperatives. It paints a bright financial picture of our nation's co-ops. Here are some of the reasons why:

\* In 2009, nearly 30,000 identified co-ops are operating at 73,000 places of business throughout the country.

\* American co-ops generate an estimated \$500 billion in revenue, \$25 billion in wages and 2 million jobs.

\* When we account for both the direct and indirect economic im-

pact of cooperative businesses, the amount of money they contribute to the economy is huge. This includes the economic activity that results when co-op workers and owners spend their wages and dividends, as well as business activities generated by the relationships

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*A new University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives study paints a bright economic picture of the nation's co-ops.*

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that co-ops have with other businesses (a loan provided by a credit union, for example). Co-ops contribute \$654 billion in revenue, more than 2 million jobs, \$75 billion in benefits and wages, and \$133.5 billion in value-added income to our national economy.

\* Cooperatives account for roughly 1 percent of the U.S.

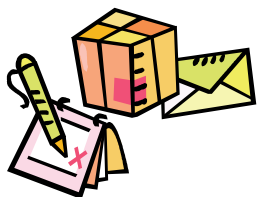
Gross Domestic Product (\$154 billion of \$14 trillion), according to the National Cooperative Business Association.

To put this into a little perspective, General Motors, which ranked 6th on the list of Fortune 1000 companies in 2009, brought in \$149 billion in revenues and employs 200,000 people worldwide. American International Group (AIG) generated \$11 billion in revenue and employs 116,000 in 130 countries.

The results of UWCC's study confirms that cooperatives have a lot to celebrate this month. As businesses, we are making a positive impact on our nation's economy, providing a large number of jobs for our national workforce, and creating opportunities for the wealth that we are generating to be reinvested again and again.

Go co-op!

## Co-op switches to comment box



Looking for the customer comment book? Try the customer comment box instead!

The book was replaced with a box for a couple of reasons. We feel the new format will help us give

members and customers a more personal response to their comments and questions. It should also encourage customers who might refrain from commenting due to the very public nature of a comment book.

The box will be emptied on Thursdays. You can still expect a timely personal response from the appropriate department or general manager.

## Patronage Dividends expire Sept. 15—use them now

Please note that your 2008 Patronage Dividend is set to expire on Tues., September 15. The IRS tells us that any dividends that are not redeemed by this date will then roll over into taxable income for the Co-op.

One of our many cooperative advantages as a member-owned business is that any profits generated by members' purchases cannot be counted as taxable income. So it is in your best interest as a member to put your dividend toward your grocery purchases or donate it to the Co-op.

There are two options for donations: our Equity Assistance Fund, which provides memberships for lower-income members, or the Capital Improvement Fund, which helps pay for store improvements.

## 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)

### 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

Chris Grigsby

Joe Jordan

Mylisa Vowles

## Board of Directors

Bindy Pendleton, president

Debbi Lasky, vice president

Allen Ginsberg, treasurer

Peri Tobin, secretary

Paul Sheridan, scribe

Phil Prince, staff representative

Zafra Whitcomb, staff representative

Russ Barber

Jeanne Gail

Wayne Kraeger

Kip Penney

Jerry Savitz

Jerome Weiner

## Newsletter

Erica Buswell, editor

Mary Ruoff, copy editor and

graphic designer

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harnessing the power of the internet to coordinate a planetary day of action on Sat., Oct. 24. We hope to have actions at iconic places around the world, from the Taj Mahal to the Great Barrier Reef. To learn more visit [www.350.org](http://www.350.org).

The Belfast rally is from 3 to 4 p.m. Sat., Oct. 24 at the Belfast Common, Union St. (see events, below). A series of events leads up to the rally. They include a Sept. 29 climate change talk at the Belfast Free Library (see events, below) and Maine Partners for Cool Communities' ([www.coolmaine.org](http://www.coolmaine.org)) "Cool Congress" at the University of Maine in Augusta, Presque Isle and Machias on Sat., Oct. 3.

## Co-op Events: Sept.-Oct.

**Café Gallery Art Shows** Sept. 2-Oct. 7: "Sketches, preparation studies, and paintings" by Ed Moffitt, who lives, sketches, paints and teaches in the Belfast area and along the coast of Maine. He builds community among artists by hosting monthly artist's gatherings at the Badger Cafe in Union and organizing artist's retreats. A showing of art by Dina Petrillo will follow Moffitt's show in October.

**Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meetings** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thurs. Sept. 24 and Thurs. Oct. 22, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

**Wine & Food Tastings** 7-9 p.m. Fri. Sept. 18 and Fri. Oct. 16 in the Co-op Café. 10% off wine purchases at tastings. You must be 21 or over to attend.

**Storing and Using Local Food** 6:30-8 p.m. Tues. Sept. 15, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Learn creative ways of storing and using local food with author and food historian Sandy Oliver of Islesboro. It's one thing to grow and store your food, quite another to know how to use it in tasty recipes. Join us for an inspiring evening full of great culinary ideas. For more information about Sandy visit her web site, [www.foodhistorynews.com](http://www.foodhistorynews.com).

**Pie & Story Festival** Afternoon on Sun. Sept 20, Belfast Boat House, foot of Commercial St. Enter a pie in the pie contest, listen to storytelling, and join in the judging of the pies at a dollar a slice. The Co-op is co-sponsoring the event.

**Belfast Farmer's Market Festival** Fri. Sept. 18 and Fri. Oct. 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., upper Main St. Support area farmers and enjoy live music at the market's monthly street festival. (On non-festival Fridays the market is downtown on Front St.)

**Climate Change Talk** Tues. Sept. 29, Belfast Free Library, 106 Main St. Jim Merkel, author of "Radical Simplicity," will discuss climate change. This is part of the Belfast 350 Series leading up to the 350 Climate Action Rally on Sat. Oct. 24 (see page 3 and also below). Co-sponsored by the Co-op, it will call attention to global warming. For more about the talk call Brenda Harrington at the library, 338-3884.

**Common Ground Country Fair** Fri. Sept. 25-Sun. Sept. 27, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association fairgrounds in Unity. Tickets and posters for the popular annual fair are for sale at the Co-op. Visit the association's web site, [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org), for more information.

**350 Climate Action Rally** 3-4 p.m. Sat. Oct. 24, Belfast Common (along Union St.). A parade to the common starts at 2:30 at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 37 Miller St. The rally is sponsored by the City of Belfast and the Belfast 350 Committee, which includes the Co-op. The event takes place along with over a 1000 others around the world that aim to raise awareness about the need to reduce carbon dioxide in the air to below 350 parts per million. To learn more call Fran at the Co-op, 338-2532, e-mail [education@belfast.coop](mailto:education@belfast.coop) or visit [www.350.org](http://www.350.org).

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

**The Co-op's  
next Eat Local  
Challenge is  
in Nov.**

## Board Report: Co-op's new GM Team taps store talent

By Debbi Lasky,  
Co-op board vice president

The latest news from the Board of Directors is the hiring of the new General Management Team. Chris Grigsby, Joe Jordan and Mylisa Vowles were voted into their new jobs at the last board meeting.

It has been very exciting to be able to choose people who are already members of our staff, who have previous management experience, and who are committed to the Co-op's principles and spirit.

Mylisa has been at the Co-op for four years and is currently the front end manager as well as a floor man-

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ager. Chris has been working in the produce department as purchasing manager for almost two years, working with local growers and vendors. Joe has been with the Co-op for 16 months, working behind the deli counter, in health and beauty aids (HABA), and more recently as a floor manager. All three managers will work some of their hours as

general managers and some hours continuing the jobs they now do.

Ronald "Goldy" Goldstein, who was on the GM Team for several years, is continuing to work full time at the Co-op. He will be doing many of the jobs he already does, including managing specialty products, working on special projects and annual events, representing the Co-op at community groups and functions, and running the forklift and training others to use it.

For the next month or so, Goldy and Erica Buswell, also part of the outgoing team, will continue as general managers. They will work with the new team, showing them "the ropes" and helping them through this transition period. Erica is also working as a floor manager; a proposal to hire her for a new position that would include membership outreach is still under consideration.

The next big item the board will be focusing on is the annual budget. Our fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, and the management team, along with the finance committee, has been working on a budget for the board to review and vote on.

As always, we invite members to come to our monthly meetings, held on the fourth Thursday of the month at Waterfall Arts, 256 High St., at 6:30 pm. We always schedule time for member comments.

## More than \$1,000 raised for charity at customer event

This year's Customer Appreciation Day was an enormous success in raising funds for a group of wonderful local nonprofit organizations.

In addition to music, kid activities and a barbeque, the event again included gift basket raffles and one heck of a huge used book sale. Together they generated money for five local charities.

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*Book sales and gift basket raffles at our annual Customer Appreciation Day in August rang up \$1,178!, which was divided among five charities.*

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This year we accepted used books from the public for only one week, and still we received thousands! You name it, and we had the category covered: history, mystery, cookbooks, self-help, even romance.

Our vendors and distributors were fantastic supporters as well, supplying us with so many products that we were able to create 22 raffle baskets. That was a record! There were pet baskets, health and beauty baskets, a grill lover's basket, even a basket for an ice cream bash. As always, the "Made in Maine" basket drew a huge number of entries.

Together, the book sale and raffles raised a grand total of \$1,178.52.

That means each organization will receive a check for \$235.70. Wow!!

There is no doubt that these funds will make a difference in the lives of many. So where exactly is the money going? Let's take a look:

**New Hope For Women:** This organization offers support to people in Lincoln, Knox and Waldo counties affected by domestic and dating violence and provides educational

## Co-op joins global effort to fight global warming with an Oct. 24 rally in Belfast

*From the Belfast 350 Committee:* 350.org is an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis. Our focus is on the number 350: as in parts per million, the level scientists have identified as the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.

This December, world leaders will meet in Copenhagen to craft a new global treaty on cutting carbon emissions. But the treaty currently on the table doesn't meet the severity of the climate crisis. That is, it doesn't pass the 350 test. In order to unite the public, media and political leaders behind the 350 goal, we're

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## PRODUCE ROW . . . *BY CHRIS GRIGSBY, PRODUCE PURCHASING MANAGER*

What a wild year! From a rainy June to a hot August, our local farmers have continued to produce despite Mother Nature. We did see some gaps in production and lots of crop loss, but everyone seems to be in good spirits and looking forward to a solid fall.

A bit of the fall harvest is already arriving, with more to follow soon. Delicata squash and carrots have begun to roll in, as well as early McIntosh apples and storage potatoes. Other products we are expecting include plums, pears, melons, winter squash, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, broccoli and Asian cabbages.

Our preorder program this summer was a huge success, with customers and members purchasing 1,000 pounds of blueberries and almost 2,000 pounds of peaches. Special thanks to Blue Barrens Farm in Co-

lumbia and Baldwin Apple Ladders in Brooks for making these items available to us.

Also new this year are rosebushes and other perennials, including lilies, lilacs, clematis and fruit trees from



Harvest Hill Farm in Waldoboro. We stock them through September; pre-orders are available upon request.

*West Coast Report:* I am happy to report that with all of our wonderful local producers we have not needed to go to the West Coast for most of our vegetables. Our focus this time

of the year on produce from out West is fruit. Citrus is in a tough spot; supplies of stored citrus are finishing but new crops are not quite ready for packing. Quality is low and prices are high.

Apples continue to come from New Zealand, but Northwest production is underway. This should not affect us much due to local apple availability. Pears from Washington have begun shipping, with Bosc, Bartlett and Red Bartlett leading the way. The quality is nice and pricing is fair.

Stone fruit is on the wane, with plums being the best price- and quality-wise. Avocados have been a volatile market of late, but with South American production ramping up the cost should stabilize in the coming weeks.

That's all for now. Thanks for shopping!

## **Demystifying health care cooperatives**

### **They may help the country solve its health care insurance crisis**

Maybe you've heard the buzz from Congress and the media about the place of health care co-ops in the health care reform debate. We've been fielding more than a few questions about what health care co-ops are and what they can do to improve health care in this country.

At press time, it was still too soon to know how co-ops may figure in the U.S. Senate Finance Committee's proposal to reform health care. In future issues we'll update you on that. For now, we'll share tidbits to help you understand some of the co-op options on the table.

We hope this information stimulates meaningful debate and discussion of the merits of increased consumer ownership of health insurance.

\* Health care cooperatives, like

all types of consumer co-ops, give consumers control of goods and services they use. Co-op members, often through elected boards, are in charge of making decisions about how the co-op will do business, who it will do business with, and how its profits will be used. While co-ops must abide by all local, state and national laws, they are ultimately autonomous organizations that foster democratic control and autonomy in their business activities.

\* By law, co-ops must use any profit earned in a way that benefits members, whether that means reinvesting it in the business, returning profits to the members through a dividend, or improving the quality and cost of the goods and services offered.

\* One possible proposal, put forth

by North Dakota Sen. Kent Conrad, would create a consumer cooperative from a pool of individuals seeking health insurance. The co-op would become the insurer, creating and contracting with a network of providers.

Since co-ops are businesses that exist to serve members as a group, not to generate profits for individuals, health care costs could be greatly reduced—the profit motive would be taken out of the business equation. Any surplus would be reinvested to help lower members' premiums. They would have the ability to determine who their providers would be, allowing the co-op to maintain control over the quality of care members receive.

This model already enjoys success.

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## BELFAST CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMITTEES

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

### **Board Development and Election Committee**

Oversees board orientation, training, handbook, meeting and election process. Debbi Lasky, 589-4546.

### **Building and Grounds Committee**

Advises on the store's physical plant and environment. Wayne Kraeger, 567-3231.

### **Community Interaction Committee**

Responds to communications, complaints and grievances that are directed to the board. Kip Penney, 722-3112.

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

### **Long-Range Planning Committee**

Guides long-range planning process. Erica Buswell, 338-2532.

### **Management Oversight Committee**

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

### **Purchasing Policy Committee**

Reviews our purchasing policy and process. Paul Sheridan, 322-3961.

### **Recycling Committee**

Reviews our recycling policy. Bindy Pendleton, 338-4256.

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resources to assist our communities in creating a safer and healthier future. New Hope for Women was incorporated in 1981 and now has offices in Rockland, Belfast and Damariscotta. To learn more:

[www.newhopeforwomen.org](http://www.newhopeforwomen.org)

**Northport Food Pantry:** Operated by Cleo Alley, the food pantry is located on Route 1 in Northport. It serves all of Waldo County. It is open the 3rd Wednesday of the month, and no one is ever turned away. Phone: 338-2868

### **Humane Society of Knox County:**

The animal shelter was founded in 1989 in response to the needs of homeless animals: protection, care and adoption. With generous support from many animal lovers, and a substantial mortgage, the present facility was built and opened in November 1991. All animals admitted are cared for until they are adopted. No animal is euthanized unless severe physical or behavioral problem exist that cannot be resolved. To learn more:

[www.humanesocietyofknoxcounty.org](http://www.humanesocietyofknoxcounty.org)

### **Food For Maine's Future:**

Founded in 2004, Food for Maine's Future seeks to build a just, secure and democratic food system that protects Maine farmers and the environment from corporate control. They empower farmers and local communities to create local food systems and promote sustainable local agri-

cultural alternatives. To learn more: [www.foodformainesfuture.org](http://www.foodformainesfuture.org)

**D.E.W. Animal Kingdom:** Perhaps one of the greatest secrets in the area is D.E.W. Located on 43 acres in Mount Vernon, this animal sanctuary and working farm is home to numerous domestic and exotic wildlife such as camels, monkeys, and even lions, tigers and bears (Oh My!) Also on the farm are many other traditional farm animals, large and small. The exotic animals come from many different backgrounds. Some are from zoos and some from individuals who got in over their heads; others are rescued animals.

Run by Bob and Julie Minor, the mission is, "To inspire people to respect, protect and sustain the natural world. To provide sanctuary for misplaced, unwanted and abused animals with high quality husbandry and housing. To educate and entertain the public in hopes of encouraging everyone to protect our environment now and in the future. To enjoy and respect the diversity of all animals while continuing innovative farming with alternative livestock." To learn more:

[www.dewanalkingdom.com](http://www.dewanalkingdom.com)

Each of these organizations provides a special service. We encourage you to learn more about them.

The Co-op is very proud to make these donations on behalf of members. Once again, thank you.

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Some examples include Group Health in the Pacific Northwest and Group Health in Minnesota. To learn more about Sen. Conrad's proposal visit <http://tinyurl.com/healthcarecoops>.

\* Another option, not currently not in any legislative proposals, would be to create a purchasing cooperative that would pool individuals so they could buy a group policy from a health insurance company. Wisconsin farmers have done this through their co-op, Farmers' Health Coop-

erative of Wisconsin. By pooling their purchasing power, individual farmers have been able to take advantage of lower costs by buying insurance as a group, instead of paying for higher-priced individual health insurance.

\* Regardless of what happens with the present attempts at reform, forming co-ops to purchase group health insurance is one option individuals in any state can pursue to cut costs and improve access to insurance. To learn more about this option visit [www.farmershealthcooperative.com](http://www.farmershealthcooperative.com).

Co-op employees offer tips on . . .

## Putting up the harvest come fall

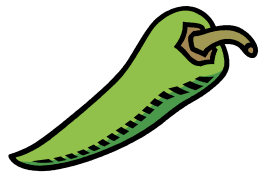
Here's a list of some of our staff members' favorite ways to preserve the harvest in the fall. Whether you are new to gardening or an old-timer, we hope you find it helpful (and, during the cold months ahead, delectable).

**Garlic:** Trim half an inch of the tops of whole heads of garlic, rub with olive oil, and roast at 400 degrees for one hour or until soft, golden and fragrant. Squeeze from the heads and



freeze in individual ice cube trays; retrieve one or two cubes at a time as needed. --*Erica Buswell, General Management Team*

**Hot peppers:** Put your hot peppers into plastic bags and pop them right into the freezer for a quick storage option. Avoid blanching, as the heat will remove the "heat" of the peppers. Should keep for up to a year. --*Stan Belch, Maintenance Co-manager*



**More hot peppers:**

Turn your hot peppers into crunchy slices for

sandwiches. Slice peppers to desired thickness and put in a clean quart jar. Add 1 teaspoon canning salt and fill the rest of the jar with your favorite vinegar so the peppers are completely covered. Screw the lid on tightly to seal jars. Keeps for up to a year. Hungarian hot wax peppers are my favorite for this method. --*Stan Belch, Maintenance Co-manager*

**Roasted Red Peppers:** Cook them on the grill, then stuff them in a jar

and cover with olive oil. Yum! --*Danielle Vinci, Cashier*

**Onions:** Hang onions in a cool, dry room in clean, unused pantyhose by cutting off the feet and trying a knot in the bottom of the stocking. Retrieve as needed and knot again. --*Erica Buswell, General Management Team*



**Parsley:** Preserve parsley by plucking the leaves off the stems and finely chopping them. Put pieces into small zip-lock bags and freeze.

When you're ready to use some parsley, mash the bag with your fingers to loosen and pour out as much as you need. --*Rani Howe, Health and Beauty Aids Manager*

**Tomatoes:** Don't let your green tomatoes go to waste! Turn them into mincemeat and chutney and can them for a delicious treat or accompaniment to a winter meal. Check out our blog,



[www.belfast.coop/blog](http://www.belfast.coop/blog), to see recipes for Green Tomato Minced Meat and Leek and Sour Apple Chutney with Green Tomatoes. --*Fran Clemetson, Education Coordinator*

**Relish:** Relish it! An abundance of almost any garden produce can be savored year round as a condiment. Whether you're knee-deep in fennel, zucchini or corn, consult a book on canning recipes, buy some vinegar, and hit the stove. --*Holli Cedarholm, Produce Stocker*

**Canning:** Set up an outside can-

ning station so you aren't stuck inside on these beautiful late summer days. Purchase an outdoor portable propane burner; it will heat up the water really fast so there is less waiting time. Invite friends over and can together. What a great way to create community around food! --*Fran Clemetson, Education Coordinator*



**Fermentation:** Add some salt! Fermentation may be one of the oldest forms of putting food by and also one of the easiest. Grate up your



vegetables, toss with salt, and allow the water to seep out, forming a brine (add more water if necessary to

cover). Transfer to food-grade plastic bucket or wide-mouth Mason jar, fashion a weight to keep the food under the brine, and watch for the bubbles. The book "Wild Fermentation" is a great reference. --*Holli Cedarholm, Produce Stocker*

**Storage:** Get creative with storage space. Don't have a root cellar? Don't worry. A cool corner of the house—a closet on the north side, for example—may not be cool enough or damp enough to keep your beets and carrots alive all winter, but might be the right temperature for winter squash, garlic and onions. Keep an eye on how things are keeping, as necessary. Spoilage may inspire some creative cooking, like red onion marmalade or butternut squash lasagna. --*Holli Cedarholm, Produce Stocker*