

# ROOTSTOCK

ISSUE #27

JUL - AUG 2018

*The Official Newsletter of the* **Belfast CO+OP**

## WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

**FROM THE DESK OF THE GM**

I GREW UP IN A SMALL TOWN IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA WHERE EVERYONE KNEW MY FAMILY. My parents have always been hardworking, down-to-earth folks who chose to live and work in the same community where they were born. The kids that I went to kindergarten with were the same ones that I stood next to at graduation. I moved away for a while, but returned to Pennsylvania when my father became seriously ill during my senior year of college. When I moved back to PA I saw how radically different my parent's lives were now that they were navigating my father's recovery. I also saw how their friends and neighbors rallied around them, supporting and caring for them in their time of need. I think about that time in my family's life often when I think about the impact of community and how important we all are to each other.

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Much like my father, our co-op has had its fair number of setbacks and trials over the years, but it is the commitment, love, and support of this community that has nurtured our co-op to recovery.

What is it then that makes a community truly matter and how does that relate to our cooperative? Co-ops are founded on a set of ethical values that I believe mirror aspects of a healthy and vibrant community, such as **honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others**. The benchmarks of an engaged community are the same criteria that define an engaged cooperative, from financial participation to involvement in governance to taking part in visioning and strategic planning. We, as invested owners, care about the happiness of our fellow owners and we want our co-op to succeed. Community at its core is about investment, be that social or economic, and I would say the same can be said for co-ops, as neither would exist if not for the time and resources invested by their participants.

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**BELFAST.COOP** 123 HIGH STREET BELFAST, MAINE 04915 207.338.2532

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As a natural foods retailer trying to survive in the modern food economy, we are directly affected by the erosion of community that comes from the rise of online marketplaces. As the giants of e-commerce grow their operations and expand their natural foods offerings to meet the needs of an ever more disengaged and isolated consumer base, Co-ops offer what they have always offered, an alternative. We have been, and we will continue to be, a place **where community members congregate to have an authentic food experience with their neighbors**, and as we grow to meet the needs of our local community I believe our survival is dependent on creating even more opportunities for those interactions. We are the sole place in our community where business owners can interact directly with all levels of our local food economy, from producer to distributor to retailer to consumer, all while shopping for dinner on a weeknight.

Our ends point to a **thriving, just, and sustainable local food economy** and a greater understanding of health and food systems, and I believe that speaks to our commitment to keeping our local community (workers, consumers, vendors, growers) active and engaged in the alternative food economy that we are providing.

Our cooperative community continues to grow. Year after year we evolve and improve our cooperative association. Month after month we see an increase in the number of new owners and shoppers we engage in the co-op economy. Day after day we work to create a space where **the ties that bind us together as members of this community are strengthened by authentic experience**. The successes of the Belfast Co-op are the successes of the Belfast community, and together we will support and care for each other and grow to meet our collective needs for decades to come.

## who we are:

### OWNERS:

4272

### STAFF:

80+

### GENERAL MANAGER

Doug Johnson

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alessandra Martinelli, President  
Andrew Watkins, Vice President  
Ernie Cooper, Treasurer  
Shannon Grimes, Secretary  
Betsy Garrold  
David Balicki  
Violet Zerbe  
Heather Selin

### BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance:  
boardfinance@belfast.coop  
Owner Engagement:  
boardowners@belfast.coop  
Board Development:  
boarddevelopment@belfast.coop

## why we're here:

### THE BELFAST CO-OP EXISTS SO THAT OUR OWNERS AND OUR COMMUNITY WILL HAVE:

- A thriving, just, and sustainable local food economy
- A source of healthy, nutritious, affordable food, and water
- An efficiently managed, democratically governed inclusive cooperative retail store
- A greater understanding of health, food systems, cooperatives and economic and environmental sustainability
- An invested, engaged, and empowered staff that thrive in a safe, respectful, inclusive, and equitable workplace



# 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1. VOLUNTARY, OPEN OWNERSHIP
2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL
3. OWNER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE
5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION
6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES
7. CONCERN FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Belfast Co-op adheres to the seven international cooperative principles which are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

**Principle 7: Concern for Community**, guides cooperatives to work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their owners.

Elizabeth Archerd, formerly of Wedge Community Co-op, wrote: “The key phrase in this seemingly simple statement is “work for the sustainable development of their communities.” The principle makes explicit what has been a foundation of the cooperative movement for 150 years. In essence, cooperatives are a blend of commerce and community. Community members form co-ops to obtain goods or services unavailable from the business sector or government. Co-ops employ and serve people who live in the community and unlike major corporations that frequently ship the profits off to investors, they return the fruits of the enterprise to the community.”

The Belfast Co-op strives to be an active partner in our community. We recognize that practicing good business citizenship supports the mission of our co-op and raises the overall level of social and economic well-being in our community, strengthens ties within the community and provides a local food buying alternative for Belfast.

Former U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon summed up co-ops importance: “Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility”.

**The co-op succeeds when our community succeeds, together.**



The “Keeping Belfast Beautiful” town clean-up Co-op team.

## P7 at the Belfast Co-op

### Community Participation

Board members, staff, and their friends and family regularly participate in local events and activities that improve and enrich our community.

### Education

The Co-op regularly hosts classes with local partners in order to educate our ownership and community on topics that align with cooperative values and our ends statement. Farm and store tours educating individuals and groups about smart shopping and healthy eating are also conducted periodically.

### Shared Space

The Co-op shares our space as a venue for local groups. Topics such as community activities, fundraising, and civic action are commonly covered. Our café is also a frequent meeting place for community groups.



Participants in Belfast Has Pride with a rainbow of produce.



# COOPERATIVE SERVICE & THE CO-OP STORY

**NAYA FLANZALA**  
**HR MANAGER**

In April, Co-op workers participated in a whole-staff Cooperative Service training led by Brittany Baird and Rebecca Torpie of CDS Cooperative Consulting Services. The training focused on customer service basics (greetings, eye contact, “making it right” when we don’t meet expectations), and went further into training workers to tell the Co-op story. The following day, management workers gathered to talk about where we are now, where we want to be, and how we can get from here to there.

## OUR SUCCESS IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE ARE ABLE TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY

Customer service is one way that our Co-op can set itself apart from other natural foods outlets (area competition, web-based retailers). Our Co-op is a community owned and community-focused organization, and a measure of our success is the degree to which we are able to serve the community - not just by providing healthy natural foods, and supporting the local food economy, but by providing our owners, shoppers, and visitors with an authentic and engaging shopping experience that can be difficult to find when browsing the internet or visiting a conventional grocery store.

In the training, workers were given an opportunity to practice telling the Co-op story - the story behind our Co-op (a community-focused organization founded by community members in search of the products they wanted to consume, in a time when unprocessed foods and alternative remedies were not as easily accessible as they are today), and co-ops in general (organizations founded and driven by a desire to meet the needs of the community that they serve).

The co-op story is vast, and can be intimidating to relay in the few moments a worker is expected to answer the question, “what is a co-op?”. During the training, we were given an opportunity to practice answering in simple ways - “we’re a community-owned grocery store” “we’re a food store owned by members” and to expand the story if time allows.



Our Co-op serves dedicated owners, whom we often recognize by name, owners who shop at the Co-op less frequently, community members who choose not to participate in ownership, and a myriad of visitors looking for anything from a familiar co-op experience, to visitors who stumble on the Co-op on their way up from the harbor, or on a stop in their drive along Route 1.

All of these constituencies are looking for something slightly different, and all of them provide us with an opportunity to give excellent service. Our Co-op is committed to giving workers the knowledge and skills to provide that service with confidence (including the confidence to say, “I’m not sure what the answer is, and I’m happy to find out for you”).

## PROVIDING OUR OWNERS, SHOPPERS, AND VISITORS WITH AN AUTHENTIC AND ENGAGING SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Cooperative Service training allowed us to build that confidence, in a way that we rarely get to learn - as a group, removed from the bustle of the sales floor, and able to learn from each other which techniques work well for them, and what might be their Co-op story.

# COMMON CENTS RECIPIENTS

JULY

## BELFAST BAY WATERSHED COALITION



supports conservation and stewardship of natural and public resources of the Belfast Bay watershed through research, community building, and education. The BBWC is a non-profit, with all offerings free and open to the public. Throughout the year, the BBWC offers engaging and educational workshops, lectures, and nature hikes. Local schools benefit from a number of different initiatives such as the "Natural Literacy" program which aids schools in educating about the outdoors and "Salmon in the Schools", where local students raise salmon from eggs until they are released as fry in streams on their way to the ocean. Sessions are taught by local scientists, naturalists, and educators to better inform and engage our community in the natural beauty and diversity of our watershed region.

More info at: [belfastbaywatershed.org](http://belfastbaywatershed.org)



**ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER** in support of worthy causes - each month at #yourbelfastcoop. In May co-op shoppers donated \$3,197.03 to the Belfast Maskers and at time of printing in June \$2,871.55 to Maine Farmland Trust.



The Belfast Maskers receive their Common Cents check.



A shop smart tour in progress.

## WALDO COUNTY YMCA

is a community-focused nonprofit with recreational programs and services for people of all ages and abilities. It is the mission of the Waldo County YMCA to promote the physical, mental, social, and spiritual development of Waldo County children and families. General group and specialty fitness classes are available as well as a wide selection of youth and adult sports programs. The collaborative community efforts are evident in the many "Y" programs sponsored by or partnered with over forty local, state, and national organizations: assuring our constituents the "Y" remains a vibrant hub of healthy activity for all ages, backgrounds, and economic levels in this rural Waldo County community.

More info at: [www.waldocountyyymca.org/](http://www.waldocountyyymca.org/)



AUGUST

## The Y. For a Better Us.



## P7 at the Belfast Co-op

### Community Donations Program

The Co-op strives to serve our region through our **Community Donations Program**. We continually donate money, food and time to numerous local nonprofits and organizations whose work helps build local resilience.

### Common Cents: In Community We Trust

We organize our "Common Cents" donations, which allow Co-op shoppers to round up the total of their purchases to the nearest dollar. This money is collected and donated every month to a new group whose work contributes to local resilience.

### Employment

The co-op strives to be a safe, respectful, inclusive, and equitable workplace for 80+ area people. Providing jobs means keeping our money in the local economy!



# • • • YOUR VOICE *counts* • • •

## COMMENT:

Co-ops have Members. Corporations have Owners. It's a principle in case you were unaware of that.

## RESPONSE:

In reality, the terms have been used somewhat interchangeably over the years to describe the cooperative structure. In recent years with the rise of retailers like Costco or Sam's Club that offer "membership" in exchange for discounts, co-ops have moved to either using the hyphenated "member-owner" or simply "owner" to designate equity holders. The language change is subtle, but the intent goes to the core of why cooperatives are different from other more traditional enterprises. In our current culture we are conditioned to look for opportunities that benefit the individual rather than those that support the ownership of common wealth. Ownership, community members investing in the association and using their voice to manage how the collective assets are utilized, is fundamentally different than paying a fee up front in exchange for sales and discounts. If co-ops are to survive in the modern competitive climate we need our equity holders to be invested in the values and principles on which we were founded and we need them to take the responsibility of ownership seriously.

*-Doug, General Manager*

## COMMENT:

If your cafe did GF pizza that would be wonderful.

## RESPONSE:

Gluten Free pizza will be returning in June and for the entire summer.

*-Poly, Deli Manager*

## COMMENT:

I love being able to round up for fine causes and institutions- a chance to help a little to raise a lot everyday.

## RESPONSE:

Yes, it does! Agreed. What a fabulous community we have. Keeping our dollars local only makes us stronger.

*-Carisa, Marketing Manager*

**COMMENT CARDS** are located at the front of your Belfast Co-op.  
**We appreciate your feedback!**

A poster for a 'SUMMER JAM' event. The text 'SUMMER JAM' is in large, bold, green capital letters inside a green square frame. To the right, the date and time 'SATURDAY AUG 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 | 4-6 PM' are written in black. Below this, a green horizontal bar contains the text 'live music • food • friends' in white. Further down, it says 'free event in the Co-op parking lot with live music from' in black, followed by 'SUGARBUSH' in large, bold, green capital letters.

**SUMMER JAM**

**SATURDAY AUG 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 | 4-6 PM**

**live music • food • friends**

**free event in the Co-op parking lot with live music from**

**SUGARBUSH**

# upcoming classes

## MAKE YOUR OWN KOMBUCHA



**Wednesday July 25 6-7:30pm**  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church,  
37 Miller St. Belfast  
Sign up in advance, as space is limited.

Kombucha, is an ancient fermented tea, also called “Immortal Health Elixir” by the ancient Chinese. It has been around for over 2,000 years. Kombucha has been consumed for thousands of years—some say it originated in Manchuria in 220 B.C.; others trace its roots to Russia—and enthusiasts prize the drink for its beneficial probiotics, organic acids, vitamins and antioxidants. It has a natural effervescence that makes it a delightful and refreshing summertime beverage!

In this class we will learn about the myriad benefits of Kombucha and how to make and care for your own. We will talk about the history and uses of Kombucha, brew some batches and experiment with different flavors and combinations. All participants will walk away with new knowledge about preparing this ancient recipe and a batch of starter Kombucha including your own SCOBY (symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast) to brew and replenish your supply of kombucha.

Ayse Ozkaya is someone who prior to moving to Maine, would drive 5 hours to have breakfast at Chase's Daily and buy local favorites at the Belfast Co-op. Food is nourishment, culture, and enjoyment all rolled into one. You may recognize her as one of our friendly and helpful Floor Managers here at the Co-op!

## FERMENTATION BASICS : MAKE YOUR OWN SAUERKRAUT



**Wednesday August 22 6-7:30pm**  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church,  
37 Miller St. Belfast  
Sign up in advance, as space is limited.

“Wild fermentation involves creating conditions in which naturally occurring organisms thrive and proliferate. Fermentation can be low-tech. These are ancient rituals that humans have been performing for many generations. They are a powerful connection to the magic of the natural world, and to our ancestors, whose clever observations enable us to enjoy the benefits of these transformations” - Sandor Katz, Wild Fermentation

In this class we will be learning the basics of fermenting vegetables by making our own sauerkraut. Different preparation techniques, how to incorporate fermented foods into your daily life, as well as a little history and science will all be covered. Each participant will go home with a jar of pre-fermented veggies, recipes, and a list of resources. Please bring a sharp knife (if you are able), all your fermentation questions, and a sense of adventure.

Instructor Annie Bussiere is a real food and folk skill enthusiast with a deep love for gardening, food preservation, and fermentation. With a background in wilderness skills and outdoor tripping, Annie's love of food grew from her passion for the natural world. You can often find her smiling away at the co-op as our Beer & Wine Assistant and a Center Store Stocker.

If you are interested in signing up for one of these classes, please call the coop @ 338-2532  
Additional questions may be sent to [jamie@belfast.coop](mailto:jamie@belfast.coop)

**LOVE • LOCAL • FOOD**



### Board Meetings

**July 26**  
**August 23**

6pm Social Time, 6:30pm Meeting

**Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Belfast**

37 Miller St.

### OWNER SOCIAL

**July 3 • August 7**

Get to know fellow co-op owners and  
board members at our monthly gathering,

**4-5pm in the Co-op Cafe**

### STAFF PICK



**HEATH  
CENTER STORE  
STOCKER**

My pick is **Equal Exchange's French Roast Coffee**. It's simple, delicious, and has a delightful smokey chocolate aftertaste. It goes well with a book: Proust or even Cortazar. Don't worry- it's responsibly sourced!

### CO+OP CALENDAR

- 7/1.....Art in the Café: Leslie Woods
- 7/3.....Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Café
- 7/4.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 7/4.....Independence Day - open regular hours
- 7/7-8.....Arts in the Park
- 7/18.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 7/20.....Wine Tasting 4-6pm
- 7/20-22.....Maine Celtic Celebration
- 7/24.....Our Town Belfast: Auction & Gala
- 7/25....Co-op Class: Make your own Kombucha
- 7/26.....Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church
- 7/27.....Love Local Day\*: Ocean's Balance
- 7/27.....Art in the Café: Adrienne Beacham
- 8/1.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 8/4.....**SUMMER JAM**, 4-6pm
- 8/6.....Our Town Belfast Street Party
- 8/7.....Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Café
- 8/17-19.....Belfast Harbor Fest
- 8/22....Co-op Class: Fermentation Basics
- 8/23.....Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church
- 8/30....Art in the Café: Heather Daniels Pusey
- 8/31.....Love Local Day\*: Chaga Mountain

**\*Love Local Day:**  
**Everyone saves 10% on  
all local items all day!**

# #lovelocalfood