

ROOTSTOCK

ISSUE #25

MAR-APR 2018

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

DEMOCRACY IS BEAUTIFUL

FROM THE DESK OF THE GM

WHEN I FIRST STARTED WORKING IN CO-OPS I HAD NO IDEA HOW DRASTICALLY DIFFERENT THEIR STRUCTURE WAS FROM OTHER RETAILERS. I knew that I was passionate about natural foods, having worked for a privately owned store when I was in college, but had very little understanding of what community ownership meant or what eventually it was going to mean to me. Having immersed myself in the cooperative world for the past sixteen years, I now come to regard democratic member control as the crucial aspect of our business that makes me the most hopeful for a bright future.

So where did this concept that is so integral to the cooperative model originate from? In 1844 in Rochdale, England a group of 28 weavers and artisans came together to form the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society. These visionary individuals organized themselves cooperatively and their values and principles have been embraced worldwide by the cooperative community. Among their original organizing documents was this rule of conduct:

"That the principle of 'one member one vote' should obtain in government and the equality of the sexes in membership."

The spirit of this original rule was revised in 1995 by the International Cooperative Alliance in what has become known as the 2nd Cooperative Principle: Democratic Member Control.

This principle states that:

"Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives

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SAVE THE DATE

Mar.
18th

THE 2018 BELFAST CO-OP ANNUAL MEETING

will take place on Sunday, March 18th at the United Farmers Market at 18 Spring Street in Belfast - just next door to #yourbelfastcoop.

OWNERS ARE INVITED for networking, refreshments, and updates from leadership at the Belfast Co-op. Owners will be given the opportunity to vote for 2019 Common Cents donation recipients as well as elect the co-op Board of Directors.

JOIN US!



BELFAST.COOP 123 HIGH STREET BELFAST, MAINE 04915 207.338.2532

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members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.”

The Pioneers were facing severe economic hardships and banded together to meet their basic needs in a way that was just and equitable for all who chose to participate. Their success was hard fought and has stood as a testament to the power that individuals have to control their own collective destiny.

Even with that admirable foundation, anyone who has been associated with a cooperative for a period of time can attest to the turbulence that comes from democratic control of a business. It is not easy to consider the hopes and aspirations of thousands of individuals when making decisions, and for elected directors that difficulty is real and present every month when they come together to govern. In recent years there have been stories of cooperative boards being taken over by owners incensed by the direction that their cooperative is going, oftentimes leading to board officers or co-op management being overthrown. Conversely, an inactive owner community can lead to stagnation in the board, in the management, and in the cooperative as a whole. Though either outcome would be certainly disruptive and is arguably not in the best interest of the cooperative as a whole, it is completely within the purview of the owners to decide their own fate.

So how then do we protect the beauty of our co-operative democracy? We stay active. We take part in board elections, bylaw revisions, and owner discussions. We choose wisely when electing representatives and seek out candidates who match our ideals and values and who are committed to doing the work of the board. We engage each other and our community to ensure that the Co-op is working to meet the common needs of the owners and we speak up when we feel the association is falling short of its ends. We support our elected representatives when they have successes as well as failures, because though the job of a director is often

it is extraordinarily vital to the health of our cooperative.

In our recent public discourse, where implications of outside influence have eroded our belief in accurate representation, democracy has gotten a bad rap. It seems as though the will of the people has a hard time making it to the top, which in turn makes people less trusting of their elected officials, which in turn makes people less willing to actively participate. I would like to believe that your co-op exists as an example of the beauty that can happen when voices are heard and representation is authentic. Sure, it is not always the most efficient way to operate an enterprise, but there is elegance in its design. Together we can explore the limitless refinements to that design and as owners craft a democratically governed association that meets the needs of all the people now and in the future.

Democracy is not always pretty in action, but it is remarkably beautiful.

DOUG JOHNSON
GENERAL MANAGER

WHO WE ARE:

GENERAL MANAGER

Doug Johnson

BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance, boardfinance@belfast.coop

Owner Engagement, boardowners@belfast.coop

Board Development, boarddevelopment@belfast.coop

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alessandra Martinelli, President

Andrew Watkins, Vice President

Zafra Whitcomb, Secretary

Ernie Cooper, Treasurer

Betsy Garrold

David Balicki

Lindsay Schortz

Shannon Grimes

Violet Zerbe

OWNERS: 4193

STAFF: 75+

SINCE
1976



2017 YEAR IN PHOTOS

Thanks to all of our board, staff, and shoppers for another great year at the Belfast CO+OP. You are the #coopdifference! Follow us on Instagram for more fun in 2018.



*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, affordable food
- An efficiently managed, democratically governed cooperative retail store
- A greater understanding of health, food systems, and economic and environmental sustainability
- An invested, engaged, and empowered staff that thrive in a safe, respectful, inclusive, and equitable workplace.

JOIN US: SUNDAY, MARCH

at the United Farmer's market of M

VOTE

Meet the nominees
Learn about the 2019

Belfast Co-op

BOARD

of directors

Annual Meeting

OF OWNERS

FEATUR

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and Lake

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Owners: Sign
our annual el

CELEBRATE Y
LOVE •

BOARD NOMINEES

RICHARD BROWN is a former teacher who will bring to the board room his skills as a considerate listener and practical presenter. He understands the importance of the role of board member, having served on the Co-op's Board of Directors from 2003 – 2009. Richard would like to see the Co-op remain a unique and autonomous community resource. He has a passion for local and organic foods and would like to ensure that all community members have access to local and organic foods no matter their economic situation.

ERNIE COOPER has served on the Co-op's Board of Directors for the past year and is currently the Board Treasurer. A retired attorney and former college administrator, Ernie has been an active member of the community, including work with the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, Belfast Community Works, and Window Dressers. Ernie wants the Co-op to continue to be a significant force in fostering local community and a key institution for support of local food and local agriculture. Ernie lives in Belfast with his wife, Lisa. He is an avid reader, a member of the Belfast Curling Club, and enjoys walking in the woods.

CH 18, 2-5PM

Maine, 18 Spring Street, Belfast

for the Board of Directors - and vote!
9 Common Cents nominees - and vote!

ING LOCAL FARE:

Tasting with Thresher's
St. George Brewing Co.s

imentary Hors D'oeuvres
arvest Moon Catering

up to vote electronically in
ection at www.belfast.coop.

OUR BELFAST CO+OP AND LOCAL • FOOD

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HEATHER SELIN is a consumer rights and public health advocate specializing in tobacco control which has given her extensive strategic planning, communication and policy analysis skills, as well as experience with a wide range of cultures. As a recent worker at the Co-op, she has gained a greater appreciation for its customers, staff and management, and an insight into its policies and systems. Heather has also served on the board of the Marsh River Co-op in Brooks. Her vision for the future of the Co-op is to expand the Co-op's reach to a more diverse group of owners and customers through outreach and through exploration of additional Co-op goods

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

We had a very successful menu relaunch in 2017. Customers have enjoyed the many affordable options on the co-op basics menu. We've sold more grass-fed beef and veggie burgers with our many signature burger offerings. The quicker service and easier-to-navigate menu have been big hits too.

POLY C., DELI MANAGER

It was a good year in the cheese department with 6.2% growth. We made new partnerships with local creameries, North Branch and Crooked Face. The meat department sold a total of 6,694 lbs of co-op made sausages and 2,945 units of our newest Co-op Basics product, Thousand Hills grass-fed ground beef. 4,086 local Pemaquid oysters were sold in 2017.

In March we welcomed aboard Kyle K. and in June of last year Joe F. celebrated 4 years with the Belfast Co-op. It was a blast last year and we are going to continue growing into 2018!

ALEX C., MEAT & CHEESE MANAGER

The produce department underwent major changes over the summer, saying goodbye to Sofia, Rurik and crew and bringing on board Michael and Ashleigh, as well as a great team of produce clerks. The department has experienced significant growth, and we're focused on heading into 2018 keeping our relationships with local growers strong and our service to you excellent.

Our goal is to become and remain the best produce department in Waldo County, with abundant displays of local and organic fruits and vegetables and prices everyone can afford. We're looking forward to what's in store for 2018.

MICHAEL W., PRODUCE MANAGER

Center Store had an exciting 2017, full of change! March kicked off three months of resets. Staff spent many long overnights every few weeks demolishing old shelves, scrubbing old floors, building new shelving units and resetting product. Bread was the last change of the year finally getting its new shelving just before Thanksgiving. We got a fun new addition to our department mid-June when we brought in Aqua ViTea kombucha on tap. We're not done making Center Store the best it can be, so stay tuned for more improvements this year as well.

JUDITH O., CENTER STORE MANAGER

Outside of the store we extended the concrete receiving pad for more efficient and safe use of the forklift and resealed the parking lot to mitigate cracks. Inside the store we installed new flooring, continued to transition much of our lighting to LED and remodeled the bathroom. We've added insulation and weather sealing throughout the store to mitigate heat loss and installed new fire and smoke alarms.

CARMINE F., FACILITIES MANAGER

...YOUR VOICE *counts*...

The berry seltzer cans are not recyclable - if you didn't know - have to be thrown away (per Belfast Recycling Center, 1/15).

ANNE

Anne,
The Field Day berry seltzer cans are recyclable, and you can certainly bring them to any recycling center to be included with other recyclable materials. However, they are not currently redeemable and we have pulled them from the shelves as a result. We are in contact with the distributor to get these products properly registered, at which point we will put them back on the shelves for sale.

Thank you,

**JEREMY
OPERATIONS**

UPDATE

This issue has
been resolved!
Enjoy.

Hey! :)

May we please have handi-wipes at the "sticky" station?! Where the maple syrup and honey (bulk is? Otherwise I have sticky paws for the rest of my shopping.

KRISTEN

Kristen,
Great idea, thank you! We'll start putting them out today.

**JEREMY
OPERATIONS**

Beautiful local potatoes are turning green because they're sitting in light too long. It's not healthy to consume green potato. Potatoes should be covered.

ANONYMOUS

Thanks for your note. This is a common problem in produce departments - keeping potatoes away from the light. We are trying some new merchandising techniques as well as covering them at night. We hope you see an improvement!

**MICHAEL
PRODUCE**

Hello - More and more and more plastic - Why? Over 90% of plastic goes in waste stream, is not recycled. Ends up in the ocean. Less plastic please!

ANONYMOUS

Absolutely!

It was very apparent shortly after we made the change to prepackaged containers that it wasn't the right solution. Eventually we plan on offering most of our bulk offerings in bins to further reduce package waste! We appreciate your patience while we make alterations.

**JUDITH
CENTER STORE**

Joann in the wellness area is so helpful. Thank you.

CLARE

Thanks for letting us know! We really appreciate her efforts and will pass this feedback to her directly.

**JUDITH
CENTER STORE**

COMMENT CARDS are located
at the front of #yourbelfastcoop.
We appreciate your feedback!

COMMON CENTS RECIPIENTS

MARCH

OUR TOWN BELFAST is a community-driven and nationally-accredited Main Street organization whose mission is to grow and sustain our historic downtown while celebrating our unique cultural heritage.

OTB believes in supporting local businesses, honoring Belfast's heritage through historic preservation, and in bringing together the community in order to make downtown Belfast a better place to live, work, and play.

Signature OTB activities include downtown decorating and the August Street Party.

Learn more at ourtownbelfast.org.

PEACE RIDGE SANCTUARY was founded in 2001 in order to address animal cruelty, neglect and exploitation, and to promote vegan ethics in New England. They advocate for all animals – farmed animals, domestic companion animals, and wildlife.

Peace Ridge believes society needs to rethink the way that it views and interacts with animals in order to become a more peaceful and just society. - and that social justice cannot be achieved unless we acknowledge the social injustice perpetrated on animals.

Learn more at peaceridgesanctuary.org.

APRIL



ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER in support of worthy causes - each month at #yourbelfastcoop. In December and January, co-op shoppers donated \$3041.59 to Hospice Volunteers of Waldo County and \$3529.44 to CLAP! (Creative Learning and Performance, Inc., commonly known as the Playhouse).

Owner Appreciation Week

OUR QUARTERLY CELEBRATION OF OWNERS

You are the #coopdifference!

USE YOUR
10% OFF O.A.W.
DISCOUNT
on any one
transaction between
MARCH 1 and 7.

ENJOY FREE
TASTINGS with
local vendors
daily from
11:30am-2pm

SIGN UP TO
BECOME A NEW
#COOPOWNER
during the week
and be entered to
win a big prize!

THURS-WED, MARCH 1-7

Board Meetings

March 22

April 26

6pm Social Time, 6:30pm Meeting

**Unitarian Universalist
Church of Belfast**

37 Miller St.

BELFAST CO+OP ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, March 18, 2-5pm

Elect our Board of Directors and vote for
2019 Common Cents program recipients. Visit
and engage and celebrate #yourbelfastcoop.

at the The United Farmers Market, 18 Spring Street

STAFF PICK

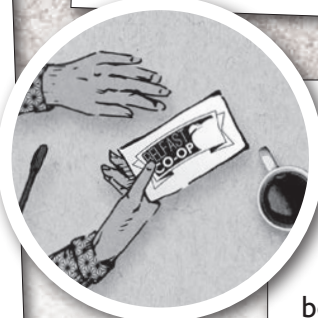


ALEX C.
MEAT + CHEESE MANAGER

My pick is the **FRONTIER SUGARWORKS MAPLE SYRUP**. It is the most delicious maple syrup I've ever had and has that pure Maine flavor that could only come from trees out in the wild frontier. It's so yummy I gave some to my Mom for Christmas. Favorite use? Over pancakes - for sure!

CO+OP CALENDAR

- 2/28..... **NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 3/1.....**Art in the Cafe: HOME, Inc.**
- 3/1-3/7.....**Owner Appreciation Week!**
- 3/6.....**Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Cafe**
- 3/14..... **NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 3/22.....**Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm
at the Unitarian Universalist Church**
- 3/28.....**Co-op Class:
Lyme Time with Steve Byers**
- 3/30.....**Love Local Day: Toddy Pond
Farm Sampling from 11:30am to 2pm**
- 4/3.....**Art in the Cafe: Aeriana Blue**
- 4/3.....**Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Cafe**
- 4/4.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 4/18.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 4/25.....**Co-op Class:
Seaweed Recipes with Atlantic Holdfast**
- 4/26.....**Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm
at the Unitarian Universalist Church**
- 4/27.....**Love Local Day: Beacon
Blessings Sampling from 11:30am to 2pm**



OWNER SOCIAL

March 6 • April 3

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

4-5pm in the Co-op Cafe