



ROOTSTOCK

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE **Belfast CO+op**

ISSUE 22 SEPT-OCT 2017

www.belfast.coop

CO-OPS COMMIT

Co-op Month 2017

The Belfast Co-op is celebrating National Cooperative Month in October, along with 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide. "Cooperatives Commit" is the theme of this year's celebration, when cooperatives across the nation engage in efforts to make more people aware of the advantages of the cooperative business model.

As member-owned and member-controlled businesses, cooperatives commit to meeting the needs of their members and communities, rather than generating returns for distant investors. Our cooperative had more than \$2.1 million in local sales in the past year, with most of those dollars being returned either to our members or reinvested in the co-op. Those dollars circulate close to home, helping to strengthen the local economy.

Belfast CO+op CELEBRATES Co-op Month



Consider these ways that co-ops commit

COOPERATIVES COMMIT TO COMMUNITY

The seventh cooperative principle is Concern for Community. Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through employee involvement in local organizations, through charitable contributions to community efforts and through support for schools.

COOPERATIVES COMMIT TO JOBS

Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services. Cooperatives often take part in community improvement programs, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from the cooperative experience.

COOPERATIVES COMMIT TO TRUST

Most co-ops strive to adhere to seven key cooperative principles, which combine to help build trust between the co-op, its members and the community. For example, the first principle is Voluntary and Open Membership, which means that we are a voluntary organization open to all people to use our services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership. The second principle, Democratic Member Control, gives members a voice in the cooperative's policies and decisions. Through the fifth principle, Education, Training and Information, we enable members to contribute to the development of our cooperative.

COOPERATIVES COMMIT TO A BETTER WORLD

Through all of the above ways, cooperatives build a better world.

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123 HIGH STREET

BELFAST, ME

207.338.2532

7:30AM–8:00PM



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CONSUMER RECYCLED PAPER BY

YOUR BOARD @ CCMA 2017

COOPERATE TO DIFFERENTIATE

In early June three members of the Belfast Co-op Board of Directors, President Alessandra Martinelli, Vice President Andrew Watkins, and Secretary Zafra Whitcomb, traveled to Minneapolis, MN to attend the annual Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA) conference. This conference offers opportunities for co-op General Managers, Directors, and staff to engage with peers from across the country and to discuss the critical issues that are affecting our co-ops.

**“HAVE YOU EVER INHALED
AFTER A VIGOROUS
THUNDERSTORM? THEY
ARE DESTRUCTIVE TO
BE SURE BUT NATURE
BOUNCES BACK WITH
RESILIENCY. HOW CAN WE
BECOME RESILIENT IN THE
RETAIL FOOD MARKET.
MULTI-MODAL CAPACITY
BUILDING IS THE
KEY AND OWNERS
TAKING OWNERSHIP,
BOARD STEERING IT,
AND MANAGEMENT
INSTITUTING THIS
PROCESS IS CRUCIAL.”**

*-Andrew Watkins
Vice President*

Belfast Co-op Board of Directors

The theme for this year's conference was “Our North Star: Cooperate to Differentiate,” a nod to Minnesota's state motto but also a call to find those values that differentiate us from the competition. The challenges that face co-ops are growing exponentially, however in the wisdom and inspiration of our peers we find hope. Keynote speakers included Michael Sansolo, former senior vice president of the Food Marketing Institute, and Dr. Monica White, Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Mr. Sansolo offered a practical view of the changes happening in the retail food industry and how that shift will affect where co-ops fit into the system. Dr. White

gave a very compelling presentation on the history of black agricultural co-ops and the heritage of devising sustainable systems to combat food insecurity. Both speakers shed light on the complexities of the food system and challenged the audience to examine their own current contributions and the future they want for their co-ops.

The breakout sessions offered at CCMA 2017 covered a variety of topics, from fundamental Board/GM relationship building to change management when your co-op has hit rock bottom. The presenters were from all aspects of the food cooperative world including managers, directors, consultants, and vendors. It is inspiring to know that no matter how difficult the struggles at your co—op may be, there is a network of peers out in the world that are working toward the same goals of surviving and thriving in the new normal.

GENERAL MANAGER

Doug Johnson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alessandra Martinelli, President
Andrew Watkins, Vice President
Zafra Whitcomb, Secretary
Lindsey Schortz, Treasurer
Betsy Garrold
David Balicki
Shannon Grimes
Violet Jastram
Justin Howard, staff rep.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance Committee
boardfinance@belfast.coop

Owner Engagement Committee
boardowners@belfast.coop

Board Development Committee
boarddevelopment@belfast.coop

Bylaws Committee
Ad hoc



for the next meetings of the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEPTEMBER 28 • OCTOBER 26

6 PM SOCIAL TIME,

6:30 PM MEETING

WATERFALL ARTS, 256 HIGH ST.





GM CORNER

by Doug Johnson
Belfast Co-op General Manager

LOOK BOTH WAYS.....

Autumn is a special time for the Belfast Co-op. Our fiscal year runs from the beginning of October until the end of September, so early fall is a natural time for us to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the year ahead. As the summer traffic that is so important to our ongoing profitability succumbs to a slightly slower pace of business, we have the

freedom to focus more on meeting the needs of our local community. Our business, like so many in Belfast, is increasingly seasonal, which can be both a challenge and an opportunity. Fall is a time when we can catch our breath after the frantic summer before diving headfirst into the holiday season.

This year is exceptionally poignant for us in terms of reflection, as we have done a great deal in the past year to modernize our operations and create a more accessible and holistic shopping experience. A significant amount of time and effort on the part of the Co-op workers went into the changes that you see when you walk into the store and I am eternally grateful to everyone on our staff, on our Board of Directors, and at National Co-op Grocers that played a part in the center store reset. We can all agree that there are significant physical limitations to our current site, but that should not deter us from reinvesting in our store and doing the best that we can with what we have. Twenty years ago our gross sales were just over \$2M and this year we are poised to reach in excess of \$8.3M while occupying the same physical space. That is a profound testament to the ingenuity, dedication, and retail expertise of the workers and management that have passed through our store over the years. As we look ahead to the 2018 fiscal year be prepared for more continual improvements that will make a positive impact on the daily experience of workers and consumers.

Looking back on the previous year I am also reminded of the numerous visioning exercises that the Board of Directors and I embarked upon, both with the owners at our quarterly Forums and also on our own at the annual retreat, that sought to set a course for the future of the Co-op. There is so much passion in our community for a strong local food economy, for worker's rights, and for environmental sustainability.

That passion has formed the basis for all of the amazing and important work that this co-op has been able to do over its 40 year history and it will carry us forward as we decide what impact we want to make in the future.

I firmly believe that this co-op has limitless potential, however currently the inefficiency of our physical space limits what we are able to do. I have real concerns about where the natural foods market is going and how we can adapt to meet the coming challenges, yet I believe that this community and this co-op are resilient enough to not only survive, but to thrive in the new normal. How can we best design our future store to serve the needs of our customers and make tomorrow's Belfast Co-op something that can endure for another forty years? What services can we provide that we are currently not able to and what are the barriers that we run into now that we want to avoid in a future space? How will our next store serve the cooperative values and principles and allow us to fully realize our Ends? These are big questions that I have about the future of our Co-op, and I welcome your input.

Feel free to drop me a line at doug@belfast.coop or pull me aside in the store if you have ideas on how growing our operation physically will allow us to grow our impact in the community.

“I HAVE REAL CONCERNS ABOUT WHERE THE NATURAL FOODS MARKET IS GOING AND HOW WE CAN ADAPT TO MEET THE COMING CHALLENGES, YET I BELIEVE THAT THIS COMMUNITY AND THIS CO-OP ARE RESILIENT ENOUGH TO NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT TO THRIVE IN THE NEW NORMAL.”

The Belfast Co-op exists so that our member-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

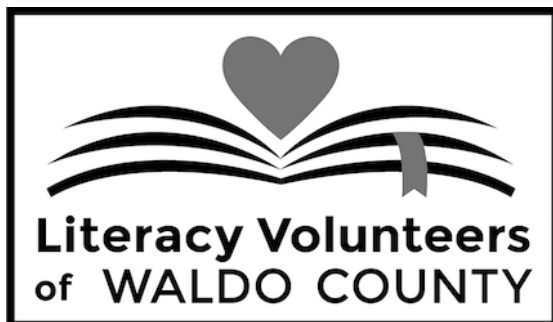
A greater understanding of health, food systems, and economic & environmental sustainability

An invested, engaged, and empowered staff that thrive in a safe, respectful, inclusive, and equitable workplace.



Each month, the Belfast Co-op provides the opportunity for the community to donate to a local organization, nominated and voted on by our Owners at our annual meeting.

SEPTEMBER



The mission of Literacy Volunteers of Waldo County is to empower adult learners by increasing their literacy skills, improving opportunity through reading, and enhancing a culture of literacy within our community.

OCTOBER

The Mission of the Belfast Soup Kitchen is to provide a safe community where the guests can find food, comfort and hope for the future in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.



In the month of August our community raised

\$3,941.65

for **Natural Resources Council of Maine** through the Common Cents program!



THREE SISTERS SOUP

By: strongertogether.coop

Total Time: 80 minutes

Serves 8

The Three Sisters (corn, squash and beans) was a Native American growing technique that capitalizes on the strengths of each individual ingredient. Cooked together they make a great soup that is popular with vegetarians and vegans. Try it on your Thanksgiving table menu.

Ingredients

4 pounds of your favorite winter squash (butternut, acorn, sunshine)
4 quarts vegetable stock (or water)
2 small yellow onions, diced
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons dried thyme
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 pound fresh or frozen corn kernels
4 (23-ounce) cans cannellini beans
1 bunch green onions, sliced
1/2 cup white wine
1 large bay leaf

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Halve the squash and scoop out the seeds, then roast for 40 minutes, or until soft. Remove from the oven, cool, and scoop the flesh of the squash into a large bowl (save any liquids!). Puree the cooled squash in a blender or food processor (add a little liquid if needed).

In a large stockpot, heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the onions until they begin to brown.

Add the garlic, thyme, and black pepper and cook, stirring often, until the garlic turns light brown in color.

Add the stock, bay leaf, wine, and squash and bring to a simmer. Add the remaining ingredients and salt, and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Taste and adjust as needed.



WHAT'S NEW AT THE BELFAST CO-OP

FROM THE PRODUCE ALLEY

I hope the summer has been treating you well. You've probably seen some new faces in the produce department, including mine. I was initially brought on board on an interim basis to help keep the department running as we experienced a bit of transition, and now I'll stick around as Produce Manager. Our collective aim—management and staff—is to make sure that the co-op's produce department is stocked with the freshest, most delicious local offerings we can possibly offer you. Produce staff--is to make sure that the co-op's produce department is stocked with the freshest, most delicious local offerings we can possibly offer you. Produce has always been a focal point of our co-op, and it's certainly a passion of mine. We are working hard to buy locally in the name of supporting our friends, our community, and our economy.

In department news, we said goodbye to longtime produce guru Rurik who left for Keene, New Hampshire with his partner. We wish him the very best! And when you see Ashleigh (who you undoubtedly recognize from the front end), please congratulate her on her new position as Produce Buyer/Assistant Department Manager! Her familiarity with local food and farmers, as well as her work ethic and great customer service, will allow our produce department to continue to be a great place to shop.

- Michael Walter
Belfast Co-op Produce Manager



JUST PICKED



HI! MY NAME IS **Leo** & I WORK IN
Beer & Wine HERE AT THE CO-OP.
I JUST PICKED **Vina Mayu**
Pedro Ximenez white wine
BECAUSE It's a unique and
refreshing white, made
from Pedro Ximenez grapes
which are more commonly
used in brandy or sherry!



OCTOBER IS FAIR TRADE MONTH
EVERY PURCHASE MATTERS



12 years ago this August,
Equal Exchange began
roasting after building
the largest worker-owned
coffee roasting operation
in the U.S. – and maybe
the world!



love local ... PROFILES ...

SEPTEMBER

VILLAGESIDE FARM

ORGANIC PRODUCE FOR MIDCOAST MAINE



Polly Shyka & Prentice Grassi have been farming their diversified family-owned organic farm near Freedom, Maine since 2001. They aim to build a sound farm business that supports and demonstrates ethics of service to the land, community and greater good, serves the residents of Waldo County with a wide array of wholesome farm products, and connects people with the source of their food. They imagine Villageside Farm as a community resource.

OCTOBER



BACK
40 Bakehouse

Back 40 Bakehouse produces handcrafted breads baked to perfection in a stone hearth oven. They strive to achieve a superior product by the use of 100% organic stone-ground flours, natural leavening, gentle handling of the dough and slow fermentation. They firmly believe that the nutritional value of their bread is just as important as an appealing crust and flavorful crumb.

YOUR VOICE counts

"Please replace the fluorescent lights with something, ANYTHING else!"

Yes! We are in the process of eliminating the fluorescents and incandescents from around the store and replacing with LEDs.

Look for changes to the sales floor lighting in the fall.

Thank you!

-Jeremy
Operations Manager

"I really miss the Vegan Café Salad in the new menu. Hope you bring it back. Thank you for considering."

The bad news: The vegan café salad was a slow seller and given how many vegan options we have we didn't feel the need to keep it around.

The good news: You can still get it by asking to add olives, tempeh, and vegan cheese to a large garden salad.

-Poly
Deli Manager

"So excited we're carrying the Kombucha on tap! It's a great product! Thanks!"

We're super excited about it too! We think it'll be a great long-term addition to the store.

-Evans
Center Store Asst. Manager

"Could you sell celery by the stalk/pound, along with bunches? As a single person my celery always gets old before I use it all up. I would be willing to pay a reasonable premium on the price."

Many Produce items can be cut or split to size. Just ask any of our staff working the Produce section and we'd be happy to accommodate!

-Jeremy
Operations Manager

thank you for your cooperation!

CO-OP MONTH

I own a grocery store with some friends

by Mandy Makinen

I am probably the last person you would expect to own a grocery store, and yet, I do. In fact, I own three. I am a Midwestern, married suburban mother of two, my car is twelve years old and most of my fashion finds come from the thrift store. I don't fit the bill for corporate honcho, and my bank account corroborates that truth.

So how do I manage to own not one but three successful grocery stores? I guess in true "industry disruptor" style, I found a unique solution to a common problem: how to get the kind of food I want, and have my voice heard by a place where I shop. That solution is food co-ops. My local food co-op offers me fresh local food, a way to support my community and the opportunity to invest in the co-op, ensuring it remains a resource in our community for good.

TO BE HONEST, I'M MOSTLY IN IT FOR THE FOOD

I can still remember the first time I tried a fresh, organic and locally grown sugar snap pea. The crisp, tender pod was a shimmering, almost translucent spring green, the texture was light and juicy and crunchy, the flavor sweet and slightly floral in a way that only a freshly picked pea can taste. I had this amazing experience in the produce aisle of my co-op, the specimen unceremoniously thrust at me by a tall guy with a beard and a flannel shirt, the very same guy, it turned out, who had grown the peas, picked them early that morning and brought them to the store to sample to customers, like me.

As a sales technique, it worked, you better believe I bought some. But unpredictably, it had a life-changing effect on me because it opened my eyes to the existence, and value, of locally grown food. It turns out that locally grown food is not just better tasting, it's better for the local economy because it keeps people employed in the rural areas that surround where I live and it's traveled a much shorter distance to arrive on my plate. Another unexpected bonus of buying locally grown food has been that fresher vegetables actually have more plant sugar in them (it's chemistry!) so they have been a much easier sell for my kids. When vegetables taste the way nature intends them, people more naturally enjoy them. It's neat how that works.

LIKE A BOSS! CREATING JOBS AND MAKING INVESTMENTS

Most of us don't expect a lot more than food out of our grocery store, but why shouldn't we? Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures but to be real, it's one of its greatest chores, too. Buying and eating food is not optional, so it makes sense that we should have somewhere to buy food that is just here to help us meet



that basic need, not to make money for business executives that live in other states. I don't know about you, but I am tired of sending my money to Wall Street while Main Street closes up shop. Food cooperatives are locally owned by the people that shop there, like me, and my investment means that I get to vote for our board of directors and weigh in on important governance changes. If I wanted to, I could even run for the board!

Even better, when I buy food at my co-op more of the money I spend goes back to the local community via local producers and patronage refunds (a return on your investment, similar to a stock dividend or profit sharing but your amount is proportionate to how much you spend). Also, co-ops provide good jobs, most of them with benefits, to people in my neighborhood. Because co-ops are community-based (and because I'm an owner!) it's easy for me to see how my shopping choices can benefit my community directly.

YOU CAN OWN A FOOD CO-OP, TOO

There are many reasons why it's smart and fun (yes, fun!) to shop at and invest in your local food co-op, I could never cover all the reasons here. For me, shopping the co-op is a great way to get the fresh, local and healthy food that I love (plus super tasty treats and snacks!) and at the same time, participate in an organization that is working to meet the needs of my community first and foremost. That community focus will never change as long as it exists, because that's what being a co-op means, and that's what makes it different from other stores.

Just like you don't need a wallet full of Benjamins to own a food co-op, you don't need a Ph.D. to know that co-op ownership just makes sense.

Originally posted on strongertogether.coop

BELFAST FREE LIBRARY

PRESENTS



**Tuesday, September 12th, 6pm
at the Belfast Free Library, Abbott Room
WILD MUSHROOMS: FORAGING
FOR FUNCTIONAL FOOD**

with Greg Marley

On Tuesday, September 12, at 6pm in the Belfast Free Library, Maine mycologist and author of "Mushrooms for Health; Medicinal Secrets of Northeast Fungi" (2009) and "Chanterelle Dreams, Amanita Nightmares; The Love Lore and Mystique of Mushrooms" (2010), Greg Marley will present an introduction to the best edible and medicinal mushrooms in the fall woods of Maine. Guidelines will be presented on ways to learn mushrooms and recommendations for finding and using edible and medicinal mushrooms will be reviewed.



**Tuesday, October 3rd, 6pm
at the Belfast Free Library, Abbott Room
THE HISTORY OF
APPLES IN MAINE**

with John Bunker

On Tuesday, October 3 at 6pm in the Belfast Free Library, apple expert John Bunker will lead an interactive presentation about the history of apple farming in Maine, from its colonial beginnings to the present. In addition to describing historic harvesting methods, Bunker will discuss the many unique varieties of apples found all over Maine, with a special emphasis on cultivars only found in Waldo County. Guests who have their own apple trees are encouraged to bring fruit for identification.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE LIBRARY @ 338-3886

SEPTEMBER

Common Cents: Literacy Volunteers of Waldo County

Artist of the month: Mattie Rose Templeton

September 1-7 - **Owner Appreciation Week**, Owners save 10% off one transaction of their choosing.

September 12 - **Wild Mushrooms**, Tuesday 6pm, Abbott Room, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St.

September 28 - **Board Meeting** Thurs. 6pm social time, 6:30pm meeting, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

September 29 - **Love Local Day**, featured vendor Villageside Farm. 10% off all local products, all day long.

OCTOBER

Common Cents: Belfast Soup Kitchen

Artist of the month: Heather Q Hay

October 3 - **The History of Apples in Maine**, Tuesday 6pm, Abbott Room, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St.

October 11 - **Owner Social**, Wednesday 4-5pm, Belfast Co-op Café, 123 High St.

October 26 - **Board Meeting** Thurs. 6pm social time, 6:30pm meeting, Waterfall Arts, 256 High St.

October 27 - **Love Local Day**, featured vendor Back 40 Bakehouse. 10% off all local products, all day long.