

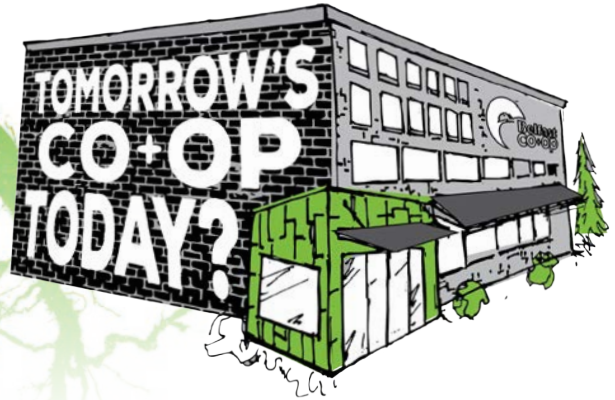
# ROOTSTOCK

ISSUE #24

JAN -FEB, 2018

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**“BUT, I THOUGHT WE WERE BUILDING A NEW STORE?”** I have fielded the same question from concerned owners several times over the last couple of years whenever we complete a significant physical improvement to the store. My response is often an explanation of the need to address the crumbling state of our current building coupled with a call to action for owners to be active participants in planning the next evolution of our beloved co-op. It is hard to juggle the concept of reinvesting in our current building while still laying the groundwork for what a new store could be, but that is precisely the work that the Board and I have been doing since I stepped into the General Manager role two years ago. I believe that 2018 will be a pivotal year for our co-op, where the workers, the board, and the owners take all of our desire, commitment, and best intentions and focus them on making concrete decisions about expanding the impact that we make in the community.

So what are the common needs that people share that the Belfast Co-op is not currently meeting? Convenient accessibility to healthy, nutritious food strikes me as a common need that is in jeopardy. Anyone who frequents the store in the summer or at the height of the holiday season can attest to the difficulty of navigating not only the store, but also the parking lot, when we exceed a reasonable volume of traffic. When we moved into our building more than twenty years ago we were

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## SAVE THE DATE



**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 AND COMMUNITY GUESTS** 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:

March 18th, 2-5pm  
at the United Farmers  
Market, 18 Spring Street



BELFAST.COOP 123 HIGH STREET BELFAST, MAINE 04915 207.338.2532

...continued from page 1...

producing less than a quarter of our current annual sales utilizing nearly the same retail footprint and the same parking lot.

Safe and efficient working conditions are also a challenge. From an operational standpoint, I feel we are doing a disservice to our workers by continuing to ask them to compensate for the shortcomings of our current building. We have made great strides in the past year to improve upon the workplace, but there are fundamental problems with the physical structure that we cannot mend without significant monetary investment.

Similarly I feel that we are doing a disservice to the community by not having a proper community room for co-op educational programming. The fifth cooperative principle charges us to provide education, training, and information to our community. Our meeting spaces are inadequate for the work that we do and that is an impediment to growing our impact. Though we have had tremendous support from local organizations like the Belfast Free Library and Waterfall Arts, we could do so much more if we had a community room and a teaching kitchen on the premises.

Now, what if we were to expand our search for unmet needs outside of the co-op's current comfort zone? In late November the co-op hosted a luncheon with Senator Angus King, Belfast Mayor Samantha Paradis, a number of Belfast City officials, and several local business and organizational leaders. The conversation was varied and far reaching, however the one piece that was reiterated often and that has stuck with me is the present and

future need for affordable housing in the city.

As Belfast flourishes, the workforce that is needed to fuel commerce and economic growth will need housing. There are currently not many prospects to meet that demand. If a lack of reasonably priced accommodations is a need in our community, how can the co-op plan for the future to help alleviate that need? If we are focused on building a new larger, more efficient store on the current lot, can we design a multi-level building that includes mixed income or even cooperatively owned housing? How big of an impact could we make in the coming housing crisis?

I see nothing but opportunities in our co-op's future and I feel the time to take action is upon us. Markets will change, competition will continue to increase, but through our efforts our Belfast Co-op will endure. How can we as a community prepare ourselves, our association, and our enterprise for the decades ahead? What role will you, as an individual co-op owner, play in growing our impact? How will you prepare for tomorrow's co-op today?

**DOUG JOHNSON**  
GENERAL MANAGER



## WHO WE ARE:

### GENERAL MANAGER

Doug Johnson

### BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance, [boardfinance@belfast.coop](mailto:boardfinance@belfast.coop)

Owner Engagement, [boardowners@belfast.coop](mailto:boardowners@belfast.coop)

Board Development, [boarddevelopment@belfast.coop](mailto:boarddevelopment@belfast.coop)

Bylaws (ad hoc), [info@belfast.coop](mailto:info@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: 4180**

**STAFF: 75+**



ALESSANDRA (CO-OP BOARD PRESIDENT)  
MEETING U.S. SENATOR ANGUS KING  
DURING A CO-OP TOUR AND LUNCHEON.

# LOOKING BACK...

## THE BOARD TALKS ZOMBIES + THE FUTURE OF FOOD



**IN OCTOBER 2017**, the board invited the community to discuss the sustainability of our food economy in the face of disaster in the “Zombie Apocalypse” forum. The seed of this idea arose largely from a desire to widen our discussions about strategic planning. Perhaps Halloween excitement could help provide a dramatic setting to think through what kind of contingencies or crises we may face, and how we might prepare in advance.

Joined by three local experts and 20 community members, we identified possible strategies to secure a resilient future. We’re lucky in Waldo County, in that we have infrastructure supporting our local food system already in place or being developed; we also have many knowledgeable people. We could make use of bikes, the river, the train (depending on the fuel), and sailboats to transport goods, convert the old chicken barns to storage sheds, and relearn how to milk cows by hand, fish from the harbor, forage in the forest, and ferment our harvests to preserve them throughout the seasons.

Yet much of this depends on all of us being able to work together in the midst of catastrophe. We will all need to cooperate to share knowledge, ration resources, and make sure everyone in the community has what they need. This is a way that the Belfast Co-op could contribute. As a cooperative retail store, we can model how to organize in support of a larger mission. We

can help convene people from across the county or in smaller communities (including outside of Belfast) to share traditions, teach skills, and build storage facilities.

Some of this work could begin before calamity strikes. We should make sure to support the greenhouses, seed saving, and storage facilities that are cropping up throughout the county. We should find out what the nutritional needs are in Waldo County, so we know what it will take to feed everyone. The knowledge that is such an abundant and important community resource will likely erode over the years, and we could do more to help people share it. Finally, many of us don’t talk to people who are very different from us, and we will need to if we are to come together.

This month, we are offering a forum called “Co-ops 101” to share more about what it means to cooperate. We invite you to continue these conversations and help to build a thriving, just, sustainable local food economy, and to ensure our community’s access to healthy, affordable food.

**SHANNON GRIMES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Photo by Jenny Nelson for Maine Farmland Trust



*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.



# COMMON CENTS RECIPIENTS

JANUARY

**CREATIVE LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE, INC.:** CLAP!'s mission is to support and generate educational experiences in creative learning and performance. Through fundraising we provide a venue for an education and training program and the development, rehearsal, and production of live theater for children, teenagers, and adults at The Playhouse in Belfast. Our goals are to continue a sustainable theater education program and to promote the production of live theater for children and adults in mid-coast Maine.

*Learn more at [clapbelfastmaine.org](http://clapbelfastmaine.org).*

## **WBFY BELFAST COMMUNITY RADIO:**

This local station has a broadcasting area of 5-10 miles and launched December 17, 2016 at 100.9 FM. With the enthusiastic response from business and individual donors, WBFY was able to be on the air ahead of the original January 2017 target date!

WBFY broadcasts from the Waterfall Arts building on High Street in Belfast. It is expected that the new hyper-local radio station will bring together diverse groups within Belfast as residents and visitors enjoy the mix of local talent.

*Learn more at [belfastcommunityradio.org](http://belfastcommunityradio.org).*

FEBRUARY



**ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER** in support of worthy causes - each month at #yourbelfastcoop. In October and November of 2017, co-op shoppers donated \$4301.44 to The Belfast Soup Kitchen and \$2534.56 to Waldo Community Action Partners.

## LOCAL LEADERS #REPRESENT AT THE CO+OP

On November 2nd, Maine House Majority Leader **ERIN HERBIG** visited the co-op on her **WALDO COUNTYWORKS** business tour.



Later that month, United States Senator **ANGUS KING** held a listening lunch at the co-op with Belfast area municipal and business leaders to talk about local food, farming, and economic development.

# WHAT'S COOKING

## SPANISH PORK + CHORIZO STEW WITH OLIVES

**TOTAL TIME:** 40 minutes; 20 minutes active

**SERVINGS:** 6

This easy stew is inspired by the cocido of Spain, a rustic stew made from whatever is fresh and local. For a vegetarian version, substitute cooked chickpeas for the meats, and add some extra cayenne for heat.

### INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
8 ounces pork loin, cubed  
8 ounces pre-cooked chorizo, sliced  
1 cup chicken stock  
1/2 cup dry sherry  
1 pound new potatoes, halved  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons fresh thyme, coarsely chopped  
1/2 cup mixed pitted olives

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** 398 calories, 24 g. fat, 57 mg. cholesterol, 837 mg. sodium, 22 g. carbohydrate, 3 g. fiber, 20 g. protein

### PREPARATION

Put a 4-quart pot over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Add the onion and sauté until softened and clear, about five minutes. Add the pork loin pieces and sear quickly just to brown. Add the chorizo, stock and sherry and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cover for about 20 minutes, until the pork is tender. Add the potatoes, paprika, salt, thyme and olives and bring to a simmer. Cover again and cook until the potatoes are tender and the juices are soupy. If the pan gets too dry, add more stock or water.

Serve warm, or store, tightly covered, for up to four days in the refrigerator.



**ROBIN ASBELL**  
*strongertogether.coop*

SHOP THIS  
RECIPE @  
YOUR CO+OP

## UPCOMING CO+OP CLASSES

### 1/24.....Disease, Recovery, and CBD

Phil and Ellen from Gerrick Alternatives (your Belfast Co-op's cannabinoid vendor) will highlight their own struggles with sickness (Lyme Disease) and a road to recovery that includes the use of CBD products.

### 2/28.....Save the Date: Class TBD

Look for announcements regarding upcoming classes on Facebook and [www.belfast.coop](http://www.belfast.coop).

All co-op classes take place in the learning room at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast, 37 Miller Street, from 6-7:30pm. Pre-registration is required. Our January class is free and open to the public. *Sign up at the register or RSVP on Facebook.*



THIS MEAL CAN BE MADE FOR UNDER \$18 WITH INGREDIENTS FROM #YOURBELFASTCOOP - INCLUDING LOCAL PORK AND CO-OP MADE CHORIZO.

THAT'S LESS THAN \$3 PER SERVING!

# • • • YOUR VOICE *counts* • • •

## A PASSIONATE PLEA

### 3 COMMENT CARDS, 1 AUTHOR, A COMMON COMPLAINT

Impossible? How hard would it be for you to bring in some kind of peanut butter that is affordable? \$5 to \$10 a jar is too much. CLASSISM. TRY HARDER.

How hard would it be to have ONE KIND of affordable BREAD? \$5 to \$10 a loaf is too much. CLASSISM. TRY HARDER, PLEASE!

AND how hard would it be to have ONE KIND of affordable CHEESE? C'mon, dammit!

*TRY HARDER!*

ANONYMOUS

"DO OR DO NOT. THERE IS NO TRY."

YODA, JEDI MASTER

## OUR RESPONSE:

### YOUR COMMENTS BRING UP A NUMBER OF POINTS THAT I BELIEVE ARE INDICATIVE OF THE STRUGGLE THAT CO-OPS CURRENTLY

**FACE:** Finding relevance in the modern world. The reality is that there is always a cost associated with food, and our responsibility as consumers and retailers is to choose where that cost is applied. Cheap food at the consumer level means that along the lifespan of that product someone was not paid adequately for their contribution, be that a farmer, a harvester, a processor, a distributor, or a retail worker. At the retailer level it can mean paying inadequate wages or benefits to your workers in order to keep lower margins and to reduce administrative costs. Once you factor in government subsidies and commodity food production you are presented with an unrealistic public perception of the relative value of the food we put on the table. Co-ops operate on a very thin profit margin. We are community owned and operated, and though that offers us a great deal of autonomy, it also limits our ability to purchase the volume of products that would allow us to take advantage of significant wholesale discounts. We do not have the luxury of a multi-billion dollar parent company to offset all the costs associated with running a suc-

cessful enterprise, and I, for one, am thankful for that. Our owners have told us that they want authentic food experiences and authentic community engagement and they want to pay the true cost of the food they eat. The rise of the local food movement in Waldo County is an affirmation that others in our community are looking for the same thing.

All that said, we will try harder. We will try harder to meet the common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations of our community. We will try harder to educate our consumers about where their food comes from and the costs associated with how their food is produced. We will try harder to fight the classism that you are accusing us of, because it is that same classism that has created an unrealistic picture of the food landscape and devalued the hard work and dedication of our farmers, growers, harvesters, and producers. We will try harder to care holistically for our workers and continually improve their workplace experience, because they are the backbone of our cooperative enterprise. The struggle is real, and we are committed to fighting it.

**DOUG JOHNSON**  
GENERAL MANAGER



# GETTIN' HYGGE WITH IT

## HOW DO YOU HYGGE?

By way of candles, extra quilts, cocoa and companionship, to name just a few avenues. The Scandinavian school of coziness, Hygge (pronounced "hoo-gah"), has taken the United States by (snow)storm, and we daresay that living in Maine predisposes us to acing it. After all, who among us lacks a hearty respect for wool, woodstoves, and warm beverages? There are many ways to invite the fireside feeling into your homes and daily rhythms this season, even if you lack a homespun sweater or cast iron collection. Hygge is a gathering of small, nurturing details that weave a homespun whole.

Your Co-op has the goods to stoke body and soul this season. A basket full of local meat and root vegetables is the start of a hearty stock, and hot beverages from coffee to cider to cocoa will keep you cozy while it cooks. Take a trek through snowbound woods or frosty fields or slushy streets to invite your neighbors over when the cookies are baked and soup's up. Technically you can honor the spirit of hygge on your own, but company is strongly encouraged. No raucous parties or formal place settings— just good food, good company, and maybe some candlelight.

You don't need merino or homemade marshmallows to make hygge happen; fleece and Marshmallow Fluff can do the trick when daylight is fleeting and wind-chills are fierce. If the home fires aren't burning hot, come to your co-op deli, where daily soups and free wi-fi are always at the ready. Strike up a conversation with your neighbor on the cafe bench- it could be the beginning of a friendship long as the winter dark. However you choose to hygge this season, we want to help make it happen, so come on down. The coffee is hot and our doors are open every day.



Drawing by Hannah Kreitzer,  
Hallowbone

## COZINESS IN STORE AT #YOURBELFASTCOOP

**STAYING WARM THIS WINTER (IN BODY AND SOUL)** is easy to do with a little help from your Belfast Co-op. We've got events and promotions in January and February designed with hygge in mind.

## LOVE LOCAL EVENTS

**SAVORY CO-OP MADE SOUPS** are on the menu at our Love Local tasting on **FRIDAY, JANUARY 26TH FROM 11:30AM TO 2PM.**

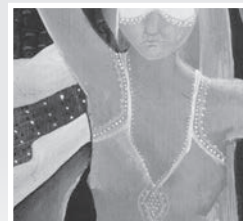
**FRONTIER MAPLE SUGARWORKS** will be joining us for a tasting of their Maine-made maple syrups on **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD FROM 11:30AM TO 2PM.**

Both **LOVE LOCAL** events are part of the Belfast Co-op's celebration of all things local - featuring a 10% discount on Maine products one day a month.

The Love Local discount is **OPEN TO ALL CO-OP SHOPPERS** and the 2018 sale dates are: 1/26, 2/23, 3/30, 4/27, 5/25, 6/29, 7/27, 8/31, 9/28, 10/26, 11/30, and 12/21.

## MAINE ARTISTS FEATURED IN THE CO-OP CAFE

**OUR FEATURED CAFE ARTISTS** for January and February will be Pamela Hedden (left) of Monroe and Becky Havens (right) of Hallowell.



Stop by, grab a cuppa, and get hygge at your cozy co-op.



**HANNAH KREITZER**  
**FRIEND + OWNER**

Hannah Kreitzer, or **HALLOWBONE**, renders things alien and deeply familiar in a broad range of mediums. She can be reached at [hannah.hallowbone@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.hallowbone@gmail.com), or on Facebook, Instagram and Etsy as Hallowbone.

### CO+OP CALENDAR

- 1/1.....Co-op Closed New Year's Day
- 1/2.....Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Cafe
- 1/3.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 1/4.....Art in the Cafe: Pamela Hedden
- 1/17.....New Sales Cycles Begin
- 1/17.....Board Forum: Co-op 101,  
6-8pm at the Crosby Center
- 1/24....Co-op Class: Learn about CBD Oil
- 1/25.....Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church
- 1/26.....Love Local Day: Belfast Co-op  
Soup Tasting from 11:30am to 2pm
- 1/31.....**NEW SALES CYCLE BEGINS**
- 2/2.....Art in the Cafe: Becky Havens
- 2/6.....Owner Social, 4-5pm in the Cafe
- 2/14.....New Sales Cycles Begin
- 2/22.....Co-op Board Meeting, 6pm  
at the Unitarian Universalist Church
- 2/23.....Love Local Day: Tasting with  
Frontier Maple Sugarworks  
from 11:30am to 2pm
- 2/28.....Co-op Class TBD: Save the Date

### Board Meetings

**January 25**  
**February 22**

6pm Social Time, 6:30pm Meeting  
**Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Belfast**  
37 Miller St.

### BOARD FORUM: CO-OP 101

**January 17, 6-8pm**

Panel discussion about co-ops and  
what it means to be part of a co-op.  
FMI: Contact boardowners@belfast.coop.

**The Crosby Center**  
**96 Church Street**



### OWNER SOCIAL

**January 2 • February 6**

Get to know fellow co-op owners and  
board members at our monthly gathering,  
**4-5pm in the Co-op Cafe**

### STAFF PICK



**POLY C.**  
**DELI MANAGER**

My pick is the **THAI COCONUT CURRY HUMMUS** we make in the deli. We use organic chickpeas, garlic tahini, jalapenos and coconut. It's made in small batches and always fresh. The flavor is spot on, just a little spicy and different enough to stand out from other hummus.