



**BLUE
HILL
CO-OP**

COMMUNITY
MARKET & CAFÉ

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Blue Hill, ME 04614

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BLUE HILL CO-OP NEWS

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

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Upcoming Events

Four Talks on the Integration of Body, Mind and Spirit given by Paul Weiss, Director of The Whole Health Center in Bar Harbor.

Thursdays: January 8, 15, 29, February 5

(snow dates: Jan. 9, 16, 30, Feb. 6).

7:00-8:00 pm, at the Blue Hill Co-op Café.

For more information, contact Eileen at 374-2165.

Greetings fellow Co-operators! The snow is falling and Winter Solstice is nearly upon us as I write this. I love the rhythm of the seasons, as they reflect our internal rhythms, every breath in requiring a breath out. And so, too, does the Co-op experience a seasonal rhythm. This time of year we get a chance to catch up on things, and to continue our work on projects we'd set aside to accommodate the busyness of summer. Many of the projects being tackled now have to do with systems: as we evolve and grow, we are always working towards creating better systems that can be easily understood and passed on. Projects this winter include developing systems of staff training modules, emergency preparedness, and pricing updates; improving our in-store communications and appearance; and general improvements to our operating practices and procedures. We are upgrading our register system so that we can better serve the needs of our owners.

And we are all very excited about creating the Co-op Basics Program, which we hope to roll out in early 2009. This program will spotlight about 20 essential food items in the store, such as peanut butter, pasta, canned beans, and eggs. We will highlight these items as "Every Day Low Price" items to be consistently offered for sale at a discount. This reflects our commitment to keeping the Co-op "shop-able" for everyone interested in buying organic and natural foods and supporting our community-owned cooperative store. We are also working on in-store Owner Bonus Buys; expect to see those items highlighted in the early part of 2009 as well.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Continued on next page

Manager's Report

Continued from page 1

We continue to explore the feasibility of expanding or relocating our store. Part of this process includes finding out where our customers come from, so we can get an idea of what the market will bear. This information has been gathered via a survey. The data will be pulled together and used to help us understand what size store will best suit out needs in the coming years. Of course, no one really knows what will happen given the downturn in the economy, but we need to keep asking the questions and planning for the future no matter what. We are planning a series of forums for owners to learn where we are in this process, and we hope you can attend. Look for flyers in the store and announcements on our website for dates and times. Our website, by the way, continues to expand. Check it out at www.bluehill.coop!

The marvelous staff at the Co-op works tirelessly to provide owners with the best services and product mix possible, and they do such an amazing job! I continue to feel blessed and honored to be a part of this great cooperative.

Happy winter to you all!

*Karen Doherty
General Manager*

**DEADLINE FOR
FEBRUARY/MARCH ISSUE:
JANUARY 18**

The Brooklin Inn
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Bulk Department

You may have noticed our new bulk assistant Pete Collier. He's been with us since October and is a fantastic addition to the team. Welcome, Pete!

You may also have noticed some bulk items migrating around the department lately. Thanks for your patience during this process! We've been moving a few products to more appropriate containers, and we also have a few new items for you to check out, including:

- Lundberg eco-farmed short brown rice (a more affordable alternative to organic rice);
- Tierra Farms agave cashew pear ginger granola;
- a new local trail mix from Grandy Oats;
- and local pinto and local yellow-eye beans.

There will be more items coming in over the winter, so keep a lookout, and, as always, *please* feel free to ask if you can't find something!

*Amy Coppage
Bulk Department Manager*

Advertise your business for one year for only \$125

It's easy! A business card ad costs \$25 per issue. Run it for a full year, prepaid, and save \$25. Or consider a classified ad. See Fine Print on page 3 for details.

Notice of Board Meetings

The Co-op Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month, 6:30–9:00 p.m. The meetings are held in the Howard Room at the Blue Hill Public Library. They are open to the membership. The next Co-op Board meetings will be held on January 20 and February 17, 2009.

Co-op Board Officers & Members:

President Gail Bartlett
Vice President Deborah Wiggs
Treasurer Bob Sullivan
Secretary Erich Reed
Chip Angell
Rebecca McCall
Marianne Vandiver
John Vincent

The Newsletter Team

Ads: Prudy Heilner; 374-5485

Editor: Marge May

Design & Production: Aimee Beal

Staff Liaison: Eileen Mielenhausen

Columnists/Writers

Allison Watters and Co-op
Board & Staff

Newsletter articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the board, staff, management, or Newsletter Team.

General Manager:

Karen Doherty

Store Hours

Monday–Friday, 8 am–7 pm

Saturday, 8 am–6 pm

Sunday, 9 am–5 pm

(207) 374-2165

Letters to the Newsletter

The Newsletter Team welcomes input. If you have something you'd like to share with other Co-op owners, please send a letter to: Letters to the Editor, Blue Hill Co-op Community Market, PO Box 1133, Blue Hill, ME 04614, or send an e-mail to marketingbhcoop@verizon.net. Letters may be edited for style, not content, and should be brief. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number.

MOVIES:
new, independent, popular, documentaries
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The historic wooden theater on Stonington's working waterfront.
INCITE ART, CREATE COMMUNITY

Hello to all of you! I hope the winter season finds you warm, nourished, and in good health and spirits. Now the days are growing longer, the weather colder, the light brighter. Change is afoot both near and far, as we prepare to embrace a new season, a new administration and a shrinking economy. Here at our Co-op, we welcome two new Board members, Chip Angell from Brooklin, and John Vincent from Harborside. Both men bring to our table a wealth of life experience and knowledge, and we feel very fortunate to have them. Aside from fiduciary responsibility, a big undertaking of Board service is learning to think and dream together, collaboratively, to ensure the longevity of the Co-op into the coming decades.

One of the expectations for the Co-op, and one of the reasons it's important to have a Co-op in the first place, is stated in part five of our Mission Statement: "the Co-op's bioregion will have a vibrant local agricultural community and that community will, in turn, have a reliable retail market for its products." So, even while we've tossed around ideas about micro-lending to area farmers, in the conversations we've had with them the feedback we keep getting is "What we really need help with is better marketing," or, "There simply isn't enough room in the store to adequately display my blueberries, or lettuce, or meat." It's become obvious that to be proactive, and to support our local producers, we at least need to explore the possibility of having a store with a more abundant display area, more storage, and better working conditions. With a thoughtful design, we might even be able to host the Farmer's Market in the Co-op parking lot and have both organizations experience mutual benefit.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Why can't we simply get smaller? Well, this would mean at least two things: we would meet fewer member needs and wouldn't have the capacity to serve more members. Besides local food, our store provides grains, beans, nuts, seeds, oils, dried fruits, herbs, spices, coffee, tea, and chocolate, plus many other grocery items from non-local sources which our members continue to need and desire and purchase, so we cannot simply subtract those items and still meet the needs of our owners. By accepting that our Co-op community should not grow in size we're essentially agreeing to remain a smaller circle, and exclude potential new owners, except in dribs and drabs. A more hopeful

and positive view of our future Co-op would invite as many people as possible to participate in a growing circle of people committed to owning and using a cooperative business.

If this seems like a crazy dream in the existing economy, consider this: An alternative to the stock market is investing our money in our own community so that, along with receiving a modest return on an investment, we receive a "living return" in the benefit of living in a more sustainable local economy and a healthier community.

As an organization, I believe we must confront the fact that the future is unknown and unknowable. To be proactive, we have to base our ideas about the future on something: a set of ideas about what's important, some conception of where the challenges and opportunities lie. Relying solely on the past or having a deficiency of imagination will not be helpful. We need research, good analysis, and interesting new ideas as constant inputs. Food distribution will likely change

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Working Members FAQ

Q. Do I have to be an owner to become a working member?

A. Yes, you need to be an owner in active status (annual equity paid up) in order to become a working member and receive a 10% store discount.

Q. How do I become a working member?

A. To become a working member, you need to make an appointment with Eileen (the Membership Coordinator) for a brief orientation. Working member orientations are usually held on Wednesday afternoons. Please call Eileen to schedule: 374-2165.

Q. If I was a working member a few years ago and I want to start again, do I still need an orientation or can I just show up and start working?

A. Even if you have been a working member in the past, you still need to schedule an orientation with Eileen before coming in to work. This is because the working member program has changed and is more structured—and also because we want to get to know you better in order to match your job skills with the needs of the Co-op.

Q. How many hours am I required to work for my working member discount?

A. You need to work two hours per month if you are the only adult in your household. If there are two adults in the household, you are required to work four hours per month. Both adults can each work a two-hour shift per month, or one of you can work all four hours per month.

Q. My partner is not an owner and so we only have one Co-op owner account in our household now. Do we need to work

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Co-op News Advertising Fine Print:

Ad Rates for Newsletter: Classified ads: \$2.50 for up to 20 words; 15¢ per word over 20 (phone number counts as one word). Display ads (Boxed): \$10/column inch. Business card ads: \$25.

SPECIAL! 6 Business Card Ads for the price of 5: Ad must be pre-paid for a year to receive this special rate of \$125 for six ads.

Regulations and Terms: All advertising is accepted subject to approval by the Newsletter Team. The Newsletter Team reserves the right to refuse any advertisement at any time. The Blue Hill Coop Newsletter assumes liability for errors in advertising only to the extent that it will publish, at no charge, a corrected version of the advertisement in the next issue of the newsletter.

All ads must be prepaid. Make check payable to Blue Hill Coop. Send payment & ad info to: Prudy Heilner • PO Box 239 • Blue Hill, ME 04614 • 374-5485; or drop off at the Co-op in Newsletter box.

TREASURES
from home and all over the world

NEW CARGOES

Blue Hill's little department store www.newcargoes.com

■ 49 Main Street, Downtown Blue Hill ■ Open Every Day ■

Eat Local Challenge: "Local Food for Local Folks"

The Peninsula community (and beyond) came together this fall to plan, participate in, celebrate, and initiate the Blue Hill Co-op's first Eat Local Challenge. The purpose of the challenge was to bring awareness to issues of food security and sustainability and to encourage people to buy, cook, and consume more locally grown or produced foods. We accomplished this by: creating a resource directory of local products and sources with an accompanying map of local farmers (one for vendors is in the works!); gathering recipes and menu ideas using local products (recipes available in store or online at <http://bluehilllocalrecipes.pbwiki.com>); sponsoring a film series on food security and sustainability at the Blue Hill Library and a workshop on root cellar storage with Tim and Leslie of Five Star Nursery & Orchard; reaching out to Peninsula elementary schools and community members to raise awareness and encourage participation in the challenge; offering a place for participants to share by blogging; hosting a community potluck supper complete with a panel discussion with area farmers and live music (about 125 people attended); collecting food and money for local pantries; and providing information in newspapers, on the radio, in the store, and online.

A hearty "Thank You!" to the following individuals and businesses who volunteered time, equipment, products, or services for the Co-op's very successful Eat Local Challenge and Community Harvest Supper: Jo Barrett & King Hill Farm, Paul Birdsall & Horsepower Farm, Eliot Coleman & Four Season Farm, Bob St. Peter & Food for Maine's Future, Betsy Bott, Mike & Susie Fay, Living Daylight, Marion Gonzales McMahon, Karen Doherty & Blue Hill Co-op Staff, Robin Byrne, Scott Devlin & Co-op Café Staff, Brook Ewing Minner & Blue Hill Public Library, Caroline Coe & WERU, Stephanie Brunelle, Gordon Longworth & Donna Gold at College of the Atlantic, Charlie Ferden & Downeast Graphics, Richard Merrill & Autograff, Union River Gallery, Wendy Ritger & First Congregational Church, Blue-Zee Farm, Fiddler's Green, Five Star Nursery & Orchard, Gladstone's Under the Sun, Good Fields Farm, Gramp's Farm, Grandy Oats, Longfellow's Creamery Maine Coast Sea Vegetables, Millbrook Company, Mother Bloom Botanicals, Old Ackley Farm, Peaked Mountain Farm, Smith Family Farm, Swan's Honey, Tide Mill Farm, and Tinder Hearth Breads.

And thanks to the awesome locavores on the Eat Local Challenge team (Co-op owners & staff): Betsy Bott, Brian Loring, Chris West, Colin Sarsfield, Eileen Mielenhausen, Jackie Pike, Kiera Chick, Leda Beth Gray, Marjo Kannry, Mia Strong, Stephen Strong...with assistance from Amy Coppage, Anna Fernandez, Claudia Goudy-Smith, Dylan Howard, Hadley Friedman, Laura Cramer, and Suzanne Coolidge.

Stay tuned for more Eat Local events being planned for the winter and spring. If you can help coordinate a Fresh Network meeting in January—or would like to be involved in other Eat Local events—please contact Eileen at the Co-op.

Eileen Mielenhausen
Membership & Marketing Coordinator



Betsy Bott introduces the panelists at the November 16 Community Harvest Potluck Supper sponsored by the Blue Hill Co-op. The speakers included (from left) Jo Barrett, King Hill Farm; Bob St. Peter, Food for Maine's Future; Betsy Bott (moderator); and Paul Birdsall, Horsepower Farm. Not pictured: Eliot Coleman, Four Season Farm.

In Case You Missed Them...

Two Eat Local Challenge events were recorded by WERU community radio and are available for online listening on their website: weru.org. Check the Voices section of the WERU archive for the Eat Local panel discussion on supporting local farm networks and the talk on root cellar storage with Tim and Leslie of Five Star Nursery & Orchard.

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HABA Healthy Holiday Season

Happy New Year from the Health and Beauty Aids (HABA) department of the Blue Hill Co-op! These are changing and challenging times and, as the Buyer and Manager of this complex department, I am committed to offering you, the Co-op member or shopper, the latest and the best at highly competitive prices. For a brief review of some of the good things happening, read on.

Showcasing Locally Made Products

Working member Jennifer Traub and I recently moved Avena Botanical's line of creams and ointments higher up for easier shopping and gave this Rockport-based company, committed to organic and sustainable products, its own entire shelf. Under that shelf we feature another premier local company—Indian Meadow Herbals of Eastbrook, which is committed to equally high-quality skin-care products. Their "Love Your Face" cream is incredible, and a little goes a long way.

Across the aisle, the Co-op offers more than 150 of Avena's herbal tinctures in both their simple (one herb) and compound forms. Tinctures are highly potent and absorbable. Try "Immune Tune" for boosting immunity or "Hop to Bed" to aid during sleepless times. Also on this side of the aisle are Avena's powdered Ayurvedic tonics like Ashwaganda, legendary for tonifying both the male and female organs to create greater vitality.

Please note that Blue Hill Peninsula herbalist Anna Fernandez's tinctures (under the Mother Bloom

name) are available in self-dispensing containers in the Bulk Department.

Back in the bar soap section, I've given a whole shelf to the beautifully-packaged local soaps made right in Brooksville by artist and soap maker Patricia Arvidson of Island Soaps. You will find concoctions such as Ginger Peach and Pine Tar (which is very popular, believe it or not). We have also expanded a great line from Orono's Holly Farms (e.g., Lavender Poppyseed soap), which also offers wonderful shampoo, bodywash, and a face cream, too. I encourage everyone to experiment with these local products.

Building Immunity

The world of supplements is vast and can be overwhelming. The Co-op offers some of the finest brands on the market, including New Chapter, Boiron, NOW, and Stem Tech.

Everyday prices for the New Chapter line will be discounted 15% off the suggested retail price starting January 15th! New Chapter offers an amazing product line due to its commitment to being sustainable, organic, probiotic-rich, and cultured so that all the multivitamins are absorbed like whole food because they *are* whole food. You don't have to eat them with a meal. This means less stress and work on your organs and far easier assimilation. New Chapter's "Host Defense" in tincture form is most likely our strongest immune boosting item. We also have it in capsule form, but the tincture form delivers parts of the mushroom that cannot be captured

in capsules. Take it every other day throughout the winter to keep your immune system in optimal shape.

Most of the New Chapter herbs are delivered in gel caps and processed using super critical extraction, a system developed in Germany that is the most advanced method known for getting the most out of an herb. Please note that New Chapter's "Blockade" has been renamed "Immunity Take Care." This is the first elderberry extract in the industry that guarantees 1000 active compounds in every lozenge by using a highly sophisticated technology known as Direct Analysis Real Time (DART). These blueberry-flavored lozenges taste good and are another way to fight viruses and boost the immune system. If you have the flu, taking "Immunity Take Care" lozenges may substantially reduce symptoms. In vitro tests show up to a 100% immobilization of viral activity.

If you're somebody who never gets enough fruits and vegetables, especially in the winter, New Chapter's "Berry Green" is the best in this regard. It is made with no grasses, all freeze-dried organic super fruits and vegetables, and probiotics incorporated.

Another great flu fighter is Boiron's "Oscillicocum," which uses homeopathic principles to build your body's resistance. These will remain on sale throughout the winter. You can take one vial of "pillules" every two weeks as a preventative, or take five pillules every few hours if something is trying to drag you into its evil net.

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ON THE WALL @ THE CO-OP CAFÉ:

JANUARY: Joan Kasoff
Photography

FEBRUARY: Corey Paradise
Valentine Art & Beyond

MARCH: Bill Geisler
Mixed Media

*Are you a Co-op owner who's also an artist?
Want to show your artwork at the Co-op Café?
Call Mary Barnes to schedule a show: 359-5053*

Survey

Thanks to all who participated in the customer-based survey conducted in November as part of the Co-op's feasibility study (see General Manager's report on page 1). Owners will have the opportunity to give feedback with a different type of survey this winter. A questionnaire will be distributed in a mailing in the next few months to gather your comments about our facility, departments, customer service, etc., as well as more demographic data about our Co-op shoppers. Complete this questionnaire and return it to the Co-op by the deadline and you will receive a coupon for a delicious bowl of soup or a sandwich from our Café. Who said there's no free lunch!

Equity Questions

I have been receiving a lot of questions because of the change in by-laws dropping the requirement for the second adult in the household to become an owner. A few of the more predominant questions about equity are listed below with my answers. Please see the Working Member FAQ on page 3 for clarification of how this change affects working members.

Q. How is the current equity system different from the old way of paying dues?

A. Owners no longer pay annual membership dues. Instead, Co-op owners invest \$200 in equity (divided into \$20 payments over ten years). Some owners have already invested the full equity (\$200); others choose to contribute the minimum of \$20 a year. Putting equity in the Co-op is different than paying dues because equity is refundable. The equity system allows you to invest in the Co-op and receive a return on that investment in the form of patronage dividends issued annually.

Q. We only want to have one membership per household. How do we do that?

A. If you choose to only have one adult in your household as an owner, then one of the owners will need to formally close their account. With the membership software upgrade on our computer system, I will be able to "affiliate" or add your partner's name on your record as a user—for those who choose that option. *Remember, you and your partner can both keep your individual accounts and retain your individual benefits, including voting rights.*

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

that you wish to end your membership (a written statement requesting termination must be received within 30 days of your renewal date). You will then be refunded the total equity you paid (minus a \$5 processing fee).

Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will have completed our software upgrade. This new version of the Catapult POS software will enable me to make adjustments in your owner account, which will facilitate our ability to affiliate owners, process refunds, and print reports.

Working Members

We have a few working member positions open in the following departments: Receiving/Stocking, Wine & Beer, Produce, HABA. We also need help cleaning in all departments. We are asking working members to commit to a particular job and stick with that position. We do value your service to the Co-op, and it does take valuable staff time to orientate and train you. So, please help us to keep the working member program at the Co-op by keeping your commitment!

Note: If you have not worked your hours for the current month, your 10% discount will be removed. Please contact Yvonne Chick or Eileen if you have questions or need to make special

arrangements regarding your work commitment.

To become a working member, you will need to sign up for an orientation with Eileen. Working member orientations are usually held on Wednesday afternoons. Please call Eileen to schedule: 374-2165. Check out the Working Member FAQ on page 3 for more details about requirements and changes in the working member program.

Newsletter Team

The Co-op welcomes two talented (and grammatically correct) working members who are now leading the newsletter team—Marge May as editor and Aimee Beal doing design and production. They join our fabulous group of owners who write articles, collect ads, and deliver the *Co-op News* every other month. Please contact Marge at 326-9394 if you would like to write a piece for the newsletter. We'd love to hear your voice!

Eileen Mielenhausen
Membership & Marketing Coordinator

President's Letter

Continued from page 3

a great deal in the coming decades, but feeding all of the 13,000 souls who call the Blue Hill Peninsula home from food solely grown and produced here isn't a change that can be forced, or one that will happen overnight. It makes no sense whatsoever for us to become fundamentalist in our thinking and throw the baby out with the bathwater—there are no simple answers, only intelligent alternatives, and as humans we are, for better or for worse, most always graced with knowing both too much and too little.

Gail Bartlett
Board President

Editor's Note: The Board accepted the resignation of Betsy Bott at their Nov. 18 meeting.



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Belfast and the Blue Hill Peninsula

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Working Member FAQ

Continued from page 3

two hours or four hours per month?

A. Since the by-laws change was approved by the membership in September, both adults in the household are no longer required to be owners. However, to receive your 10% owner discount, you still need to work four hours per month if there are two or more adults who are using your Co-op account.

Q. Can my child work my hours for me?

A. Children under the age of 16 are welcome to work as volunteers with adult supervision. However, that work does not count towards the working owner requirement for the family. The General Manager reserves the right to disallow a child from working in the Co-op if that child is disruptive or causing difficulties to staff or other working owners.

Q. What happens if I sign up for a shift and then can't make it?

A. You need to call the Co-op as soon as possible and speak with the manager you usually report to (or speak with Eileen). If you consistently cancel, you may be asked to leave your position. As a working member, you need to adhere to the same standards and expectations as Co-op staff.

Q. What are the benefits of becoming a working owner?

A. Besides the material benefit of receiving a 10% store discount, working members enjoy getting to know staff and other owners, feel connected to the Co-op community, learn about products and how your cooperative business runs. Owners have said it is very rewarding to know they are contributing to the health of the Co-op and the success of the business. And finally...you can have a lot of fun being a working member!

Holiday HABA

Continued from page 5

As always, the NOW line of supplements offers a high quality product at a bargain price by reducing overhead and advertising costs. Also keep in mind that the Co-op can special order items not found on the shelves, saving you substantial money. If a brand or a particular item is not on the shelf and you want it and we can get it, your price goes down at least 25%!

Lastly, a brand new product on our shelves is Stem Tech's "Stem Enhance." You've probably heard of the adult stem cells that live in your bone marrow. They were recently used in the first surgery to successfully transplant a windpipe to a woman in need. Stem Tech is offering the first product ever produced that has been clinically shown to increase the release of your body's adult stem cells into your bloodstream by up to 30% of normal levels. These stem cells have been shown to migrate naturally to areas of the body which need their healing power. Stem Tech uses a component of green algae (*Aphanizomenon flos-aquae*) to produce this effect. Top athletes have reported recovery times from intense training that have been dramatically improved through use of this product.

Please visit the Co-op to explore more of the extensive and diverse products we carry for your health and healing!

David Walker

HABA Department Manager

ALTERATIONS

Alter, repair, make almost any clothing. Anne Walker 374-5749

Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement & Ends Policies

Through a thriving cooperative enterprise, we encourage a vibrant healthy community and a sustainable local economy.

In light of this mission, the Blue Hill Co-op is dedicated to achieving the following ends:

- The Blue Hill Peninsula will have a retail source of food that is fairly priced, healthy, and organically grown and/or processed locally to the fullest extent possible.
- There will be economic value returned to the community via charitable contributions, outreach projects, patronage refunds to members, and other avenues.
- Customers will be better educated about food issues and, as a result, make healthier choices than those who shop elsewhere.
- There will be a vibrant cooperative sector in the economy, both nationally and regionally, and a local community educated in the value of cooperative principles and enterprises.
- The cooperative's bioregion will have a vibrant local agricultural community and that community will, in turn, have a reliable retail market for its products.
- There will be a major source of employment in the community that provides personal satisfaction to employees, livable wages and financial security for employees and their families.
- There will be a thriving business organization that protects and restores the environment.

*Mission Statement approved by the Board
03/20/2007*

*Global Ends approved by the Board
09/19/2007*



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Vendor Profile: The Sow's Ear Winery

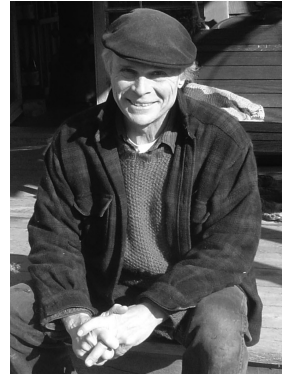
by Allison Watters

Tom Hoey has been making wine for over thirty years now. When he and his wife bought their Brooksville property in the mid-seventies, Tom pondered just what value-added farm product he might produce from home that would be salable. At the time, his choices came down to bread, cheese, or wine. After deciding that he enjoyed the process and time constraints particular to wine making, Tom planted his orchard of over sixty cider apple trees and began his education into vinification.

Tom started with chokecherry wine and then expanded his repertoire to include rhubarb, blueberry, apple, and wild berry. These days he also makes a couple of sparkling blends as well. Tom has always been careful to find unsprayed local or wild fruit when he couldn't grow it on his own land and has nurtured relationships with several local farmers over the years.

Tom's winemaking process involves gathering the fruit and then pressing it in an antique press that he acquired when he was just starting out. Then the wine is aged in oak barrels for one to two years where it is exposed to wild yeasts. After bottling, it has more aging to do before it is ready for sale. Currently, Tom makes about 400 to 500 cases of wine a year.

The Sow's Ear Winery is open in the summers five days a week for tastings. All varieties of Sow's Ear wine can also be purchased at the Co-op and at other local stores.



by Allison Watters

Vendor Profile: Black Dinah Chocolatiers



Just how does a chocolate company find itself on a small island off the rocky coast of Maine? Co-owners and conspirators Kate and Steve Shaffer met years ago in California but found themselves on Isle Au Haut as the cook at the Keeper's House and as a carpenter, respectively. When Kate's lighthouse job ended, the couple needed to find a way to stay on Isle Au Haut in the community they had fallen in love with. Kate had been cooking for two decades on both coasts (including a stint in the Blue Hill Co-op Café). The idea of a mail order chocolate business came to them as an excellent way to utilize their talents while staying on the island.

After an online course or two and a trip to Vancouver for intensive training, Kate has spent copious amounts of time experimenting with chocolate. Currently, she is crafting a variety of interesting and luscious flavors that range from the traditional to the adventurous (the *Sexy Mexi*, for example, is infused with whole ancho chiles). Their new "Farm Market Collection" is inspired by the local farm products of Hancock and Knox Counties and includes fruits, herbs, and cheeses

from six area farms. Kate and Steve are no strangers to using local products whenever possible. Although their chocolate is sourced from a fair trade company in Venezuela, they purchase Maine butter and cream for their truffles and try to buy organic ingredients whenever possible.

Black Dinah Chocolates can be purchased at the Blue Hill Co-op and several other local outlets. Steve also attends two area farmer's markets in the summer season. All their flavors can be seen (but alas, not tasted) at blackdinahchocolatiers.com. If you find yourself on Isle Au Haut in the summer, make sure to visit the Black Dinah Café for coffee and pastries (and chocolates, of course).

Staff Profile: Erica Schweikert

by Allison Watters

Erica's is one of the newer smiling faces you'll see if you stop by the Co-op Café lately. She has been employed there happily for six months, after a lengthy travelling hiatus to India and Thailand where she continued her passion for the practice of yoga.

Although she was born in the Bangor area, Erica spent five years in Boulder, Colorado, at the Naropa Institute studying yoga and dance before embarking on her travelling spree. After being called back to her home state with her partner, Jack, Erica taught yoga at the University of Maine at Orono.

These days she and Jack are building a cabin on some family land on Newbury Neck in Surry. Learning as they go, they poured their slab themselves and progress has moved on from there. The couple recently moved in despite the cabin being not quite finished yet. They are both thrilled to be a part of the Blue Hill community and living amongst family, although Erica admits it is a little difficult to break into the crowded local yoga teaching market. Instead Erica is thinking of relying on her dance skills for the time being and has considered taking on a class or two of youngsters to round out her time cooking in the Café and making her home in Surry.

