

BLUE HILL FOOD CO-OP

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BLUE HILL CO-OP NEWS

JANUARY / FEBRUARY / MARCH 2007

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President's Letter

As I write this letter we are deep into the holiday season. This time can be rich with friends and family and also crazy-making as we heap expectations onto sometimes fragile relationships. Hopefully by the time this is published we will be well on our way into the new year and maybe even enjoying some winter sports (wishful thinking?). Whatever your holiday experience, I wish you a happy new year full of friends and abundant good health.

The Co-op Board went through a weekend training with a professional consultant from Cooperative Development Services back in October and have been working to integrate what we learned into our decision making. We learned what, specifically, our jobs are as Board Members. We focused on the principles of Policy Governance and how to accomplish our tasks using this system.

We learned that our most important tasks are to create a mission statement that clearly states why our cooperative exists, and to make and monitor policy. Through these tasks, we can create a vision that addresses our owner-members' values and do our best to see that it becomes real as a result of the Co-op's activities.

We discovered that much of the work we were trying to do in both the Membership and the Eye to the Future committees really belongs to the manager, as executive officer mandated to make our values effective through store policies and operations. Board and management both need to base all of our future decisions on the mission statement that the Board is now working on.

Continued on next page

Exercise ... How much is enough?

Regular physical activity is good for you! Research has proven that the lack of physical activity is bad for your health, but, we are still a very sedentary society. In fact, 38% of us don't participate in any leisure time activity at all and only 33% of us are exercising moderately, while only 23% are doing regular vigorous physical activity.

A general rule regarding exercise for adults is to include at least 30 minutes of moderately intense activity daily. That changes the old three days a week idea and the more recent five days a week idea. The reason for the change is because statistics are proving that not only are we getting fatter because of our sedentary lifestyle, but we are also developing more chronic diseases at younger ages.

Speaking of losing weight, the rules are getting even more specific. If you carry your weight around the middle, the kind of exercise required for weight loss is more intense and it should last for at least 60-90 minutes daily.

According to research, the least amount of exercise per day that is okay for weight loss in general is 45 minutes and the aerobic component is really important. Weight training at least twice weekly is also important for weight loss and has a role in the prevention of osteoporosis.

What about kids? Again we see statistics that show weight gain and lack of regular physical activity among children and adolescents. This has led to the recent American Heart Association recommendation for all children two years and older to get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education has made it even more specific. They start with toddlers and break it down to 30 minutes of planned physical activity and 60 minutes of free play daily.

Preschool children should be doing 60 minutes of planned physical activity and 60 minutes of free play.

School age children are back to 60 minutes daily, but they recommend that school age children should not be inactive for periods longer than two hours unless they are sleeping.

Adolescents fall into the adult category of at least 30 minutes daily to stay healthy and the

weight loss exercise guidelines are the same as adults.

Weight training is also very functional for young children and adolescents and this can be accomplished easily with a variety of free weights at least twice per week that meet the child's strength and age level.

These recommendations relate to exercise for the sake of maintaining or enhancing health. If your goal is to train for a marathon or a particular sport the guidelines become much more specific.

Exercise is a strong prevention and health promotion tool. Identify how physically active you are daily and your current health status.

Are you overweight? Do you have Diabetes? Do you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol? If so, the hour rule applies, but starting with 30 minutes is very good and if you are really out of shape, break it down to 10 minutes at a time three or more times per day.

JUST FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

President's Letter *Continued from previous page*

This will be posted for feedback once we have reached consensus on it, and owner-members will review it at our Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for the last weekend in May.

The Board is also actively working on updating our By-laws so that they reflect more accurately how the organization has evolved and safeguard the Co-op as a legally sustainable enterprise. There is also a working group looking at improving our election procedures to involve

members more fully and decisively in creating the board they want. We are a busy and focused group.

Please feel free to contact me or any other board members if you have any questions about this work we are up to. Enjoy your winter and remember, "as the daylight lengthens the cold strengthens."

—Deborah Wiggs

It is also important to talk this over with your doctor to make sure your exercise plan is healthy and safe.

Are you in good health and at your normal weight but out of shape? Work on the 30 minute a day plan and, if you can, add two days per week of weight training. Don't forget flexibility exercises, especially if you suffer from arthritis.

What can you do for exercise? Walk, jog, ride a bike, swim, play tennis, ski, ice skate, roller skate, join an exercise class or a gym, get an exercise video or DVD, get a treadmill or exercise bike for home use, use free weights or a home gym for strength training, play with your kids, hire a personal trainer, and the list goes on... It doesn't have to be expensive to work, but it should be something that you enjoy enough to make it a habit that lasts!

— Catherine Princell RN MS
Health Education Specialist

The Newsletter Team

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Prudy Heilner, Ads; 374-5485

Columnists / Writers

Meggan Dwyer, Catherine Princell

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

General Manager:

Karen Doherty

Store Hours

Mon - Fri 8 am to 7 pm;

Sat 8 am to 6 pm; Sun 9 am to 5 pm
374-2165

Letters to the Newsletter

The Newsletter Team welcomes input. If you have something you'd like to share with other Co-op member-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 mozelle3@verizon.net. Letters may be edited for style, not content; and should be brief. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number.

On January 17th we had our first ever annual Co-op Farmer's Dinner and Discussion! The Co-op has supported local organic agriculture and sustainable local food systems for many, many years. Given the turnover of produce managers over the years, it has been challenging for the produce department to create systems and relationships with the growers that work well. In an effort to remedy this, local farmers, the produce department staff, and I gathered to share a meal (cooked by the Co-op Café) and to share our ideas on how the Co-op can continue to support local growers and producers, and how they in turn can understand the issues facing the Co-op.

It was a wonderful evening filled

with ideas. Hot topics included in the discussion were ideas about marketing, display, pricing systems, organic certification vs. those farms that practice organic farming but are not certified, consumer education, labeling, lack of adequate space, and how to improve systems of purchasing so that both the farmers and the Co-op can anticipate each other's needs. We decided to meet again one more time before we all get too busy. This was a great meeting and we look forward to the next.

Speaking of local, here's a great website: www.localharvest.org. From Organic Bytes: "Local Harvest lists

almost 10,000 farmers' markets, cooperative grocery stores, restaurants, and retailers that provide locally grown, organic produce to consumers. It's one of the best tools online for helping you find these important resources near you. Buying your food locally or regionally cuts down on the amount of energy consumed to transport your food, sup-

ports your local economy, and can provide you and your family with safer, fresher foods.

MANAGER'S LETTER

Make a New Year's resolution for 2007 to put a special effort towards buying local." We are listed, as are a few local farms. Check it out!

In other Co-op news, we have been very busy "tagging" the store with shelf tags for each product. This has streamlined the process of getting items on the shelf; we no longer have to price each individual package as it arrives. Instead, if there's a price change we simply print a new label. Kudos to the staff who worked long hours to make this a reality!

One last note; you may have noticed that, as mentioned several newsletters ago, the customer survey that was to come out last September never showed up. This delay has occurred because of a re-assignment by the board of responsibilities, shifting this task from committee work to that of the General Manager. Look for a survey one day soon!

—Karen Doherty

ON THE WALL @ THE CO-OP CAFÉ:

FEBRUARY: Joan Kasoff, Penobscot

Photos, elements, elementals, nature



Pumpkin Island Light, by Beth Whitney will be on exhibit in March at the Co-op Café.

MARCH:

Beth Whitney,
Trenton
Watercolors

APRIL:

Ann Poole,
Brooksville

Are you a Co-op member who's also an artist? Want to show your artwork at the Co-op Café? Call Marge May: 326-9394 to schedule a show.

Non-members receive one month free membership while their artwork is on display.

Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement

Blue Hill Co-op is a cooperative committed to understanding the relationship between consumption, health, and community. The following visions and values underlie this mission and our policies:

1) Knowing that mindful consumption can lead to improved health, the Co-op is a democratic organization dedicated to supplying food, sharing information, practicing economic and environmental sustainability, and encouraging community strength, with respect for the diverse requirements of all people.

2) Believing that a community is healthier when nutritious foods and quality products are available, the Co-op operates a storefront so that members may acquire and sell the products and services they desire.

3) Seeing that community grows from the ability of people to come together, the Co-op is committed to supporting and fostering other community-minded organizations.

4) Understanding that we are linked to other sentient beings without regard to political boundaries, we seek to practice cooperation, non-violence, and compassion.

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the membership and by the Board.

Notice of Board Meetings

The Co-op Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. The meetings will be 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 Tues, Feb. 20th & Tues, March 20th.

Co-op Board Officers & Members:

<i>President</i>	Deborah Wiggs
<i>Vice President</i>	Gail Bartlett
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Sullivan
<i>Secretary</i>	Stephen Benson

Lucy Benjamin
Emilie Disney-Hoey
Ruth Fiske
Edee Howland
Erich Reed

What's Up In Board Meetings: October, November, & December 2006

a Summary, Based On The Approved Minutes

In October, Emilie Disney-Hoeft facilitated a meeting that included board members Lucy Benjamin, Steve Benson, Deborah Wiggs, Bob Sullivan, Gail Bartlett, Erich Reed, and Ruth Fiske, along with general manager Karen Doherty. Deborah announced Greg Williams' resignation from the board due to his lack of time to participate, reducing the number of directors to eight. Erich facilitated the November meeting, with Lucy, Steve, Deborah, Gail, Ruth, and Edee Howland present. Bob was facilitator in December, when all of the active board members attended.

The Board decided to set aside ten minutes in the opening period of every formal monthly meeting for owner-members to communicate ideas and concerns. This will not be a time for discussion or decision-making but an opportunity to listen to advice or questions from owner-members, who may remain to follow the remainder of the meeting or leave, at their discretion. We are looking forward to learning from this practice.

We also agreed to try to post a draft of our agenda in the Co-op (on the bulletin board close to the entrance) one week before each monthly meeting. This may serve to encourage owner-members' interest and participation, although their contributions do not need to be oriented to the agenda.

The board has set the last weekend in May 2007 for our annual membership meeting. This meeting will require more preparation than usual, including education about proposed bylaw changes that owner-members will be voting on.

The board continues to develop its application of policy governance in order to more clearly understand and evaluate existing policies and to make sure that the board and management make choices to realize the board's goals in accord with our stated values within the limits we have marked out. In October this practice led to discussion of a \$618 assessment of penalties from the IRS for late filing of payroll reports, which the board encouraged Karen to appeal.

Monitoring some reports led to minor editorial revisions in policy. In

December the board identified a lack of baselines and target goals for specific policies the manager is expected to fulfill, without formulating a specific remediation plan. The board also recognized that it has not been comparing manager's monitoring reports to one another in developing manager performance evaluations.

The board established a new Management Continuity policy, to ensure that a staff member is prepared and identified

to succeed our general manager on an interim basis if she is unexpectedly unavailable to fulfill her duties for an indefinite period of time.

Karen's manager's reports to the board noted that her analysis, using the Co-op Living Wage Model as a tool, showed that most Co-op employees are earning above a livable wage for our area; she planned to pursue this evaluation of payroll and benefits further. She spoke enthusiastically about hiring Anna Fernandez as Produce Manager and organizing together a January dinner at the Co-op for local farmers to communicate their needs and concerns to the Co-op. The Board learned that bookkeeper Mary Hildebrandt and weekend manager Nico Lustig will be leaving the staff this winter; Yvonne Chick will take Nico's role.

Karen reported on trainings in nationally based cooperative organizations to develop greater understanding and control in pricing and planning. Assessment of the effects of cost-plus pricing on the store's various departments is expected to lead to cutting prices without undue risk. Another side effect of closer analysis of how goods are sold is the intensive effort to tag shelves throughout the store with merchandise names and prices.

Rob Martin, a consultant from National Cooperative Grocers Association, gave a day to our co-op helping Karen develop ways of analyzing data that is produced by the point-of-sale system that our new cash registers work with. His ideas are likely to be helpful in finding errors in pricing, in scheduling staff, and in making weekly departmental

budgets, among other areas. Comparing data from our co-op with that of six others, he noted that our price margins were lowest. He also commented from personal experience that managing a co-op of our size is much harder than managing one with three times the sales volume.

Karen also noted problems with our fax/copier and obtaining services under warranty. She reported that Bangor Hydro has, as anticipated, reclassified the Co-op as a medium-class user of electricity, raising our charges perhaps \$300 per month.

In October the Finance Committee recommended its meeting quarterly rather than monthly, based on its sense that its meetings drained and diverted time and energy more than serving the board and manager and that a quarterly overview of compliance with budget planning would be a better use of the committee.

A first quarter financial analysis was presented, spanning July through September 2006. This report showed store sales down 2.6% and café sales up 6% from the same period of the previous cycle. Payroll was \$3,820 under budget, electricity and discounts both about \$1,000 over budget, and net profit \$20,880 under budgeted projections.

Karen presented a revised budget, which calls for a 1% increase in gross sales. The budget showed decreased health insurance costs (owing to rise in deductible) and increased payroll expenses, due to employee raises and creation of a new position for coordinating working members. The board recognized Karen's authority, implicit in policy, to authorize the budget herself, rather than seeking formal approval from the board, provided that she keeps the board informed of significant variations and risks in financial planning.

After some deliberation following an October retreat with consultant Michael Healey, the board decided not to participate this year in the Cooperative Board Leadership Development program. Moneys for board training would instead be more focused on utilizing consultation and trainings

Continued on next page

specifically toward pressing issues and overall board development. CBLD participation will be considered again for upcoming years, once the program has proven itself over time and the board takes on new members.

In reviewing its experience with Michael's training in October, the board expressed general enthusiasm and reinvigoration as its sense of task, structure, and orientation was refreshed and clarified. Directors felt the training had refocused the board on identifying larger scale goals and organizing its responsibilities around the values and governance of the Co-op rather than tasks it needs to delegate to the general manager. The board decided to retain Michael as a consultant available for advice through the coming year, with an option for at least one full-day training with him.

We agreed that policy revision has to focus first on ends policies, which define the goals of the Co-op and the values that underlie them. This includes, above all, our Mission Statement, which has been a source of some uncertainty for the board and its committees in recent times. Ends statements define (a) the results, changes, or benefits that should come about (b) for specified recipients, beneficiaries, or otherwise defined impacted groups, and (c) at what cost or relative priority for the various benefits or various beneficiaries. In November Emilie led the board in a brainstorming session to develop a rich inventory of such intentions, so we could keep these in mind as we refine a new mission

statement.

Further discussion in December's meeting led to some immediate decisions on implementing what we had learned through our October training. Erich, Steve, and Emilie agreed to draft an annual calendar to help focus the board on tasks of various kinds across the year. The board decided to eliminate three board committees, because they serve functions that are subordinate to the general manager's implementation of policies set by the board: the Finance Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Eye to the Future Committee. The Policy Committee, the Newsletter Committee, and the Nominating Committee will remain as board committees.

Deliberating over the major tasks that the board sees as pressing, we decided these needed to be prioritized so we would not be floundering or swamped, and we decided on a sequence of identified areas of focus for coming months:

1. Co-op mission and values
2. Bylaws revision and work on equity system
3. Election reform work and activating the nominating committee
4. Interpretation and implementation of membership linkage
5. Ongoing policy revisions

In this context, we realized we may require extra work-focused meetings this winter, including one proposed for January to resolve a mission statement and values statements as needed.

Deborah agreed to review each month's agenda to see that these priorities are addressed.

The board is working with attorney Laddie Lushin, a Vermont specialist in working with cooperatives, on a comprehensive updating of our bylaws to secure our enterprise with legal and responsible fundamental provisions, including issues of patronage dividend and election procedures. A working group comprised of Lucy, Gail, and Bob will offer the board their provisional evaluations of Laddie's draft before the board discusses it in full.

Erich presented findings of his research into equity systems in co-ops and agreed to work with Ruth, Karen, and Deborah on planning for a reform of our equity system.

Emilie presented proposals based on her research into election processes within cooperatives. She suggested that candidates for the board be selected both by the Nominating Committee and by themselves or fellow owner-members. Steve and Erich joined Deborah on the Nominating Committee to work towards more concerted activity in candidate's preparations for election and in election planning. Emilie agreed to present a proposal for specific procedural reforms.

Complete approved minutes of Co-op Board Meetings and Annual Membership Meetings are available in a tan envelope beneath the bulletin board just inside the entrance to the store. Minutes of meetings not represented there (or any other documents pertaining to Board meetings and activities) can be requested by application to me through my mailbox at the store. Please note, also, that a complete board policy book is available for members' perusal, in the board's mailbox area near the store office. A complete board policy register is now also available in a Word document, by application to the Secretary.

Please come to share in all or part of a Board meeting, the third Tuesday of any month from 6:30 to 9:00, upstairs in the Blue Hill library. If you arrive late and find the door from the parking lot locked, please ring the bell to your left — we'll be happy to let you in.

*— Submitted by Stephen Benson,
Secretary*

—Maureen Farr, Editor

FROM THE EDITOR

Are you wondering why this issue of the Co-op News is covering three months?

Each year, the deadline for the January/February newsletter falls within a week of Christmas, making it extremely difficult to pull everything together and get the first issue of the new year out in early January.

So, at our December meeting, we decided to change the publishing schedule by moving up one month. Because of this change, it is necessary to start with a three month issue, then continue with the following schedule: April / May; June / July; August / September;

October / November; and December 2007 / January 2008.

We expect that this change will resolve our struggle to get all issues of the Co-op News out in a timely fashion.

If you have any comments or concerns you'd like to see us address in future newsletters, please write to us:

Letters
Blue Hill Co-op News
PO Box 1133
Blue Hill, ME 04614

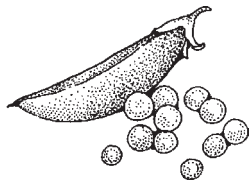
or via email: mozelle3@verizon.net

Thanks for your patience as we make this publishing schedule change!

CLASSIFIEDS

ALTERATIONS

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



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ARCHITECTS

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Sundays: All Hours

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

DEADLINE FOR

APRIL / MAY ISSUE: MARCH 22ND

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

This list includes a current description of the existing Co-op committees, which work in an advisory role to the Board of Directors. The status and recent activity of each active committee is reported on by the committee's Board liaison during the Board's monthly meeting.

NEWSLETTER - The Newsletter Committee (Team) produces a newsletter which is distributed every other month.

Liaison: Steve Benson

NOMINATING - The Nominating Committee looks at the needs of the Board, recommends new Board members, and helps to facilitate the work of the Board. This committee also examines the Coop's by-laws and makes recommendations to the Board in order to keep the by-laws and current Co-op practices in concert.



After selling cars for twelve years in Ellsworth, **Michael Luciano** made up his mind to find a job more in accordance with his personal interests. Driving through Blue Hill three years ago, he saw a posting for a working member coordinator at the Co-op. A practitioner of herbalism and healthy eating since the age of 15, Michael decided working at the Co-op was the change he needed. After a more recent rearrangement of management, Michael was promoted to general merchandise buyer, a full time position. Michael is quite knowledgeable about his products as he has studied the healing properties of herbs extensively and tries to follow the principles of natural healing and avoid western medicines whenever possible. Originally from Machias, Michael went to University of California Los Angeles and then joined the civil service where he spent time in Beijing and Okinawa. Though, he does not often get to use his fluency in Japanese and two dialects of Chinese in Blue Hill, he does not miss the pressure of the job or living in large cities. At the Co-op, he enjoys his work and the small town atmosphere with which he grew up. At home in Southwest Harbor on MDI, Michael loves being outdoors, hiking, biking, and sea kayaking.

STAFF PROFILES

by Meggan Dwyer

Get to know the great people who work at our Co-op through Staff Profiles, a regular feature of the Newsletter. Look for more short profiles in future issues.



When **Ruth Sullivan** and her husband, Bob, came to Blue Hill in February three years ago to meet with one of Bob's clients, they knew they had found the perfect place to relocate from their Maryland farm. They figured if they could enjoy northern Maine in midwinter, then they could enjoy it any time of year. Ruth and Bob now run the Old Ackley Farm in North Blue Hill where they raise pigs, cows, chickens, and turkeys and sell some of their products at the Blue Hill Co-op. Ruth's interest in sustainability and farming has been life-long. A graduate of Oberlin College with a BA in Wildlife Biology, Ruth worked to protect farmland and promote local food systems for seven years. Here in Maine, she continues to support local dairy farms as the cheese buyer at the Co-op. Responsible for the tempting fridge full of a variety of local cheeses, Ruth believes that the Maine artisan cheese industry is growing as dairy producers find selling "value-added" products such as cheese, butter, and yogurt is a lucrative business. More recently, Ruth has started to help with marketing at the Co-op. When she isn't working on her farm or at the Co-op, Ruth plays both the African Djembe drum and the Irish Bodran drum and is a Cape Breton step dancer.



Not many know that **John Broeksmit** spent five years as a drummer in a Chicago rock band. After graduating from Northwestern University with a degree in English, John decided to follow his dream of becoming a big city musician while he was young. After a few years of the fun but taxing lifestyle, John was ready for a change of scene. When the opportunity arose to live in his grandparents' old family house in Brooklin, John jumped at the chance to return to the place where he swam and caught pond frogs during childhood family vacations. He arrived back in Maine five years ago to find that the area hadn't changed much and was still the quiet and beautiful place he remembered. With a history of working in natural food stores in Illinois and a personal interest in vegetarianism, the Blue Hill Co-op seemed like a good fit for John. He works at the Co-op full time and though the new scanning system can get hectic, he enjoys cashiering because he gets to know everyone in town. He balances cashiering with the more solitary job of stocking the shelves. John found out a while ago that he gets more satisfaction out of eating grains and vegetables than meat products and he buys all of his food at the Co-op and from local farmers. He is particularly fond of the Lazy Lady cheeses.