



**BLUE
HILL
CO-OP**

COMMUNITY
MARKET & CAFÉ

PO Box 1133
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Blue Hill, ME 04614

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BLUE HILL CO-OP NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2008

Calendar of Events

- October is National Co-op Month!!!
- Sample our Fair Trade products at the store during October's Fair Trade Month
- Root Cellar Workshop in Nov.: TBA
- November: Eat Local Challenge happening all month!
- November 7, 12, and 20 from 7-9 pm, Food Security Film Series at Blue Hill Public Library
- Sunday, November 16: EAT LOCAL Community Harvest Supper & Dance, 1:30 to 6 pm, Blue Hill Congregational Church

Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement

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

Hello all! At the Annual Meeting, I updated owners about the Co-op's successes of the past year and the challenges ahead. One of the many hats I wear as General Manager is that of Finance Manager. The Co-op's annual report for FY08 (July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008) contains a Balance Sheet and Income Statement, which shows our financial performance compared to our performance in the previous year. If you would like to learn more about our finances, I welcome your inquiries at any time.

In addition to the financial report, the General Manager's Annual Report contains information about challenges to the Co-op, including owner discounts, staffing, and store space/relocation. This report will be distributed to owners within the next month or so. Below is some factual data extracted from my annual report to the membership.

Karen Doherty

MANAGER'S REPORT

Just the facts...

Co-op Annual Sales: \$2,140,824
Sales compared to previous year: 1.6% increase
Total number of employees: 25-30 (seasonal)
Employees working 30 hours per week or more: 16
Average hourly wage paid: \$10.69
Retail floor space: 1400 square feet
Total store space: 2600 square feet
Average Inventory for last 4 Quarters: \$138,387.00

Manager's Report Continued from page 1

During Fiscal Year 07-08, the Blue Hill Co-op contributed food, non-food items, gift certificates, or in other ways to the following organizations:

Food For Maine's Future
Benefit For Trevor Moon (Local, Heart Attack victim)
Organic Consumers Association
Island Peace and Justice
Bagaduce Music Lending Library
Downeast Audubon
WERU
Deer Isle-Stonington High School
Washington-Hancock Community Agency's Fuel Assistance Program
Town Of Brooklin (Benefit for fire chief Rick McNiel's medical bills)
Blue Hill Library
Peninsula Pan
Resources for Organizing And Social Change
Hannah and Greg Medical Bills fundraiser at Surry School
The Bay School
Cooperative Development Foundation
Howard Bowers Fund
George Stevens Academy Recreation Program
Brooklin Youth Corps
Liberty School
New Surry Theater
Morgan Bay Zendo

Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
US-El Salvador Sister Cities Committee
Surry Food Bank
Maine Peoples Resource Center
Parents, Teachers, Friends of Blue Hill Consolidated School

The Cooperative Principles:

- **Open and voluntary membership**
- **Democratic member control**
- **Member economic participation**
- **Autonomy & independence**
- **Education, training and information**
- **Cooperation among cooperatives**

The Cooperative Values:

Self-help
Self-responsibility
Democracy
Equality
Equity
Solidarity
Honesty
Openness
Social responsibility
Caring for others

Notice of Board Meetings

The Co-op Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 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 Tues., Nov. 18 and Tues., Dec. 16, 2008.

Co-op Board Officers & Members:

<i>President</i>	Gail Bartlett
<i>Vice President</i>	Deborah Wiggs
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Sullivan
<i>Secretary</i>	Erich Reed
	Chip Angell
	Betsy Bott
	Rebecca McCall
	Marianne Vandiver
	John Vincent

The Newsletter Team

Ads: Prudy Heilner; 374-5485

Layout and Design: Mary Wolcott and Eileen Mielenhausen

Proofreader: Whitney Landon

Staff Liaison and Editor (this issue): Eileen Mielenhausen

Columnists/Writers

Mary-Anne de Laney, 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

Mon - Fri 8 am to 7 pm;
Sat 8 am to 6 pm; Sun 9 am to 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.

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Highlights from July and August 2008 Blue Hill Co-op Board of Directors Meetings

The Co-op's Board of Directors cancelled its August break this year in order to keep up with a heavier than usual workload. In addition to preparing its agenda for the Annual Meeting in September, the board discussed with General Manager Karen Doherty some of the projected budget for the 2009 fiscal year and a proposed feasibility study of the co-op's possible move to a new location. The Board heard Karen's proposal to contract Debbie Suassuna of Cooperative Development Services to conduct, at a cost of \$10,200, a market study to examine the feasibility of such a move. The board asked Karen to provide, among other things, a sample market study report from CDS and some alternative options through the National Cooperative Grocers Association, and agreed that consideration of this proposal would continue at September's meeting.

Steve Benson led a discussion on communicating and engaging with owners and the importance of keeping

owners up to date on current high-interest issues like discounts and re-location. Possible strategies toward these ends include a website "questions for the Board" link, an in-store Board questions box, and even more board members "loitering" in the store to

BOARD REPORT

interact with owners and get feedback on issues facing the Co-op.

The Nominating Committee gave updates on the election of new board members and the small bylaw change in that election process. Monitoring reports involving the General Manager's budgeting and financial planning and the Board Committee Policies were presented and accepted. In addition, after reviewing the policy that describes the role of the board president, which is number B2 in the Co-op Policy Book and available for your

perusal at the front of the store, the Board approved a proposed change that would remove the suggestion that the president has more role with finances than other board members.

As always, owners are welcome to attend board meetings, and time is allotted at the beginning of every meeting for their questions or comments. Co-op board meetings are regularly held at the Blue Hill Public Library, 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month, and minutes of meetings are available in the racks at the front of the store. The next board meetings will be on October 21, November 18, and December 16.

Rebecca McCall

[Note: Copies of board minutes and policies are also available to owners on request to the secretary, Erich Reed: erichreed@yahoo.com]

Co-op Election Results Are In!

The election is official and complete. Let us warmly welcome our three new board members: Chip Angell, Brooklin; Betsy Bott, Blue Hill; and John Vincent, Harborside! We also passed both bylaws change measures.

The Co-op needed 50 votes for our 5% quorum (we have 1000 active owners) and we exceeded 13%. We received 134 valid ballots and 60 invalid (missing one envelope, missing both, missing owner information, and six members who were inactive for more than six months). Last year we received 103 valid ballots and 75 invalid--so we had an improvement

in turnout and decrease in discounted ballots. The bylaws change we just passed should promise a further reduction of invalid votes next year.

All three prospective board members received strong support from our owners, and both bylaw changes passed with minimal dissent (129 to 4 for the household change and 122 to 10 for voting with one less envelope).

Special thanks to owners Heather Albert-Knopp, Eileen Mielenhausen, and Mia Strong for their efficient and cheerful work on the vote count!

Erich Reed
Election Coordinator



Mark Schapiro, award-winning investigative journalist and author of Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products, and Maine Rep. Hannah Pingree both spoke at the July MERI lecture sponsored by the Blue Hill Co-op.

50 Artisans in...



- November 14 & 15 • Friday noon-6 Saturday 10am-4pm •
- HOLIDAY INN • High Street • ELLSWORTH
- Silent Auction to benefit The GRAND, Cafe Area & more
- Join us for the area's premier winter craft show •
- www.GiftedHandShow.com

TREASURES
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NEW CARGOES

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Sedgwick School Learning Garden Project Update

With the start of the 2008–2009 school year underway, the Blue Hill Co-op E.A.T.S Initiative has been busy continuing with planning the implementation of the nutrition education classroom component to complement the Sedgwick School's existing garden activities. During the months of October and November, we will continue our conversation with Dr. Don Buckingham, Sedgwick School Principal, on the matter of how best to enter the classroom. Additionally, we will also discuss with Dr. Buckingham the most suitable classroom/grade to integrate this type of programming. Because we will be working with the CookShop Curriculum, it will be possible to vary the lesson plans to assist K–6 elementary teachers in meeting certain Maine State Learning Results. This allows for great flexibility and creativity in the classroom. We hope that these weekly lessons will begin January 2009.

On another note, I represented the E.A.T.S Initiative and our partnership with Healthy Peninsula and Sedgwick School at the 12th Annual Community Food Security Coalition's Conference in Cherry Hill, NJ, October 5–8. The focus of this year's conference was "Restoring Our Urban and Rural Communities with Healthy Food." This year's conference was well-timed since I recognized that I needed guidance and more information on local, state and national best practices for working in a rural demographic setting in order to be most sensitive to and productive for my community's needs.

*Hadley Friedman, Co-op Café
(Project Coordinator, Sedgwick Learning Garden & Kitchen)*

New Staff Greeting You at Front End

Greetings! At the front end of the store, you have probably noticed many new faces have joined the Co-op over the last few months and just as many have moved on to other things. From what I have been told, this has been the largest seasonal shift in employees the Co-op has seen, so my thanks goes out to all of you who have been patient as we have prepared ourselves for this coming fall.

To those who have moved on--Yvonne, Emily, Summer, Sarah, Mackenzie, and Addie--we want to thank you all for your knowledge, patience and teaching during our time of change. We hope to see you all again soon, while wishing you the best in school and the other opportunities you are following in life. It was great to work with such a positive and thoughtful group.

The good news is one group of good people has brought us another. We have been lucky enough to hire Beth, Tyler, Stephanie, Estelle, and Mary to be a part of the store. All of them work at the register and in other capacities in the Co-op and are excited to be a part of what is happening here. They all have played a huge role in the store's success through the end of this summer.

Another point of thanks must be extended to John, Justine, and Genny as their continued presence has kept us afloat through another very busy summer season. I have greatly appreciated having these outstanding people in such an important role in our co-operative.

As the new Front End manager I am here to help the owners of this co-op fulfill the goals they have set forth. I see this as the work of making real our mission, "Through a thriving cooperative enterprise we encourage a vibrant healthy community and a sustainable local economy." Part of my job is to have a perspective on how that can happen,

and I do, but today I am most interested in learning our communal history. That is this area's proud history of farms and farmers' markets, fisheries and forestry, schools and libraries, which have shaped the who, what, and how of the cooperative's daily life today. It is in the lessons learned from this past that I hope to come to know you all and our shared way forward. I believe it is crucial to take a critical view of how this co-op has, and has not, realized its mission in the community and what we can do to further work toward that goal in the years to come.

My sincere thanks to all of you who have taken the time to introduce yourselves over the last few months. I look forward to the shared history we will make in the future. For now, here's to a vibrant healthy community and a truly sustainable local economy.

*Brian Loring
Front End Manager*

Grocery Department Gears Up for Fall

I hope you all had a great summer. It was very busy at the cooperative! I welcome fall, my favorite time of year, when things seem to go back to a breathable pace again. However, I am grateful that our co-op had a wonderfully prosperous summer.

This summer we reset the housecleaning section and the pet provisions section. The fall and winter seasons are a time to get projects accomplished which we had to put off during our busiest time of year. As always, we welcome your comments on changes and improvements in the store.

*Michael Luciano
Grocery Buyer*

TIME TO BUY OR SELL A HOUSE



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Keith Herklotz

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Tea with F. W. DeKlerk [article by Nicholas Reid, Equal Exchange]

As the food we eat becomes more and more political, we begin to hear the story it tells. In too many cases, it is a story of environmental destruction and human despair.

The story of rooibos tea is no exception. It begins thousands of years ago, with the native ethnic groups of South Africa, who first cultivated the bush and thrived in the southern Kalahari. Colonial invaders forced these farmers off their ancestral homelands to make room for white-owned plantations. Europeans and foreign businesses seized the gold and diamond deposits near Johannesburg and appropriated the arable land. By the 1940s, rooibos seeds were among the most precious in the world,¹ but its growers sank deeper into poverty and despair, slaves on the land they once owned.

The National Party that ran South Africa for the next 40 years segregated black South Africans from the most profitable sectors of the economy, denying them the right to own land or benefit from the country's vast mineral wealth—a system we all know as Apartheid. "Homelands" served as desperate pools of cheap labor for the gulags of the South African economy.

The Rise of Fair Trade Rooibos

If there is a silver lining to this story of exploitation, it is the miracle of rooibos. The few Khoisan farmers who survived Apartheid found themselves on desert plots dismissed by the ruling elite...but perfect for rooibos production. The plant grows nowhere else in the world.

In the village of Wupperthal, the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the

Khoisan formed the Wupperthal Tea Association in 1998 with 16 founding members. To the north, the community of Heiveld received assistance from the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) and the Heiveld co-operative was created in 2000 with 14 members. Today, over 100 small farmers produce rooibos for export.

Access to international markets, and Fair Trade prices, have dramatically improved the farmers' incomes. In her book, *Boiling Point*, Leonie Joubert describes Heiveld: "The community's fortune is changing. All the co-operative members have their first bank accounts. One person had a set of dentures made; another took a family member to hospital for treatment—both healthcare 'luxuries.' These are quiet signals that a community, whose education often does not extend beyond grade four, is dipping its toe into a viable mainstream market."²

The (Uncertain) Future of Rooibos

Today the progress of Heiveld and Wupperthal is threatened once again by white landowners, and by the very people who champion "Fair Trade," by allowing plantations into the system. Plantations divert premiums away from the small farmers that need them most, and toward an investment in their competition. White-owned estates are becoming more efficient, expanding their share of rooibos exports (already 98% of total production), and the prosperity of white landowners.

While the story of rooibos is not over, the ending has yet to be determined. Equal Exchange is proud to work exclu-

sively with small farmers to strive for an empowering conclusion. Our rooibos tea is an investment in the communities of Heiveld and Wupperthal—and an investment in social justice and equality.

Notes

¹Green, Lawrence. *In The Land of the Afternoon*, Standard Press Ltd. 1949.

²Joubert, Leonie. *The Boiling Point*, Wits University Press. 2008.

Not mentioned in the article: These two communities will be the recipients of a \$20,000 investment on behalf of Equal Exchange's Small Farmer Green Planet Fund to finance a climate change adaptation initiative (imagine global warming in the Kalahari Desert...). This fund is made possible by the support and donations made by Equal Exchange and co-ops through the sales of Organic Co-op Blend. For every pound of Co-op Blend sold, Equal Exchange donates \$.25 to support small farming communities. This October, the co-ops of NCGA have agreed to double that contribution through the CAP program.

For more information on Fair Trade, please check out the following web sites:

www.transfairusa.org
www.fairtraderesource.org
www.fairtradefederation.org
www.fairtrade.net/standards.html
www.equalexchange.coop
www.ncga.coop/newsroom/fairtrade
www.wftday.org



ON THE WALL @ THE CO-OP CAFÉ:

OCTOBER: Leslie Moore

Pen-and-ink Drawings & Woodblock Prints

NOVEMBER: Eileen Ahern

Paintings & Tiles

DECEMBER: Annie Poole

Advent Calendar

Are you a Co-op owner who's also an artist?

Want to show your artwork at the Co-op Café?

Call Mary Barnes: 359-5053 to schedule a show.

Eat Local Challenge

The Blue Hill Co-op is teaming up with the Belfast Co-op to sponsor an Eat Local Challenge in November. We have planned a variety of events and activities, including a film series, speakers, Eat Local recipes & menus, and a resource directory of local farmers and producers. The big event will be a community Harvest Potluck Supper on Sunday, Nov. 16 at the Congregational Church in Blue Hill. Please see the orange flyer inserted in this newsletter for more information!

Annual Meeting

We had a wonderful time at the Annual Meeting on September 28! Thank you to Mia Strong and Juni Charlton for helping coordinate the event. Also, thanks to Robin & Hadley in the Cafe for a delicious meal, to the fabulous board for set up & clean up, to Michael product giveaways, Strong, Dave & Trent and Ngoma for the

Winners of the "Connections" prizes were: Lucy Benjamin, Heather Albert-Knopp, Marianne Vandiver, Chip Wadsworth, Jane Ploughman, Phil Norris, and Juni Charlton. Thank you to all the businesses who donated prizes: DragonFlye Inn, Barbara Joy Hare, Gallery 66, Blue Hill Karate, Gabrielle Wellman, Edee Howland, Simplicity Farm & Mercantile, Sally Clinton Yoga, North Light Books, Hypno-Health, Clayfield Farm, and Old Ackley Farm.

Membership Rebates & Equity Reminders

We are working on processing owners' patronage dividends for Fiscal Year 2008. This dividend is the percentage of the Co-op's profits based on sales to members, which is returned to active owners based on your amount of spending during the fiscal year.

Remember that you can pay off your total equity at any time at the register. You can also make smaller payments towards the \$200 (in increments of \$20). Just pay the cashier by cash, check, or credit/debit--and please make sure you keep your receipt showing the equity payment & date.

Once you join as an owner, you are always an owner—even if you are inactive—unless you formally notify us that you wish to terminate your membership. For more information, please contact Eileen at 374-2165 (Mondays-Thursdays) or via e-mail (membershipbhcoop@verizon.net).

Working Member Hours Increase

Starting in November, the 1.5 hour shift requirement for working members will increase by a half hour. Thus, in order to earn a 10% discount, owners will need to work 2 hours per owner per month (4 hours per couple).

Would you like to become a working member and receive a 10% store discount? The Co-op & Cafe need people to work shifts in the following areas: delivery truck/stocking; cleaning store departments; quarterly inventory.

If you would like to become a working member, please contact me to schedule an orientation. Thank you!

Eileen Mielenhausen

Membership & Marketing Coordinator

Have you moved? Please help us keep our membership database accurate by giving us your current mailing address, phone number, and e-mail. Thanks!



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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Luciano for all the
and to musicians Al
Quinby, Baba Kevin
lively music!

"Community Con-

Gratitude Corner

We welcome Mary Barnes as our new Cafe Art Coordinator. After a long haul as stocker and truck delivery helper, Mary is lending her expertise as artist and art show coordinator to the Co-op. Please contact her at 359-5053 for information about our Cafe Art shows.

A big thank you to outgoing art coordinator Marge May for her many years of service to the Co-op.

And gratitude to Yvonne Chick for help with store displays and volunteer coordination, Nell & Jim Beer for their contributions on a number of projects, and to Judy Wick for graciously hostessing the Foliage Food & Wine Festival fondue cheese-tasting at the Co-op.



CO-OP NEWS ADVERTISING

Fine Print:

Ad Rates for Newsletter: \$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, tel: 374-5485; or drop off at the Co-op in Newsletter box.

**DEADLINE FOR
DECEMBER/JANUARY
ISSUE: NOV. 18**

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Owner Voices: From Manager to Customer

Hello to all of the Co-op's wonderful customers! I wanted to be sure to take the opportunity to say thank you to all of you awesome Co-op customers & owners whom I have had the pleasure to get to know over the last couple of years. I left the Co-op as a staff member in mid-August but have stayed on as a working owner, helping our amazing membership and marketing co-ordinator, Eileen, with many of her projects. My belief in the cooperative principles remains strong, and it is important to me to continue to offer my support.

My commitment to Customer Service at the Co-op has been very, very rewarding. The majority of our customers are pleasant and friendly, and I truly miss the daily life connection with so many of you! You have brightened my days and given me a place to focus my need to give my time and efforts to others. But, along the way there have been some interesting challenges as well. This last summer we had a new issue to consider: What are the boundaries of acceptable treatment by customers toward our cashiers? Our cashiers were experiencing much more disrespectful treatment, and it would be unfair to attribute it ALL to those from away. . . .

My feeling is that just as I did my best to train our staff to be courteous, accommodating, helpful, and compas-

sionate to the needs of our customers, it is the responsibility of our customers to offer our staff the same respect. I see it as a two-way relationship and one that transcends the retail environment to plain, human courtesy that should be extended to all, regardless of who is serving whom in any situation. As I switch from a customer service giver to receiver here in the store, I am grateful for my time on "the other side" and try to bring that compassion to the check-out line when it reaches back to the coffee grinder. I try to remember to say something extra kind to the cashier who looks harried from the frantic pace that we have all experienced during the daily lunchtime rush.

I will miss so very many of you but feel confident that you are in fantastic hands with our new Front End Manager, Brian. He brings talent, compassion, and calm competence to our store. If you haven't said hello to him yet, I know he would love to meet you!

Yvonne Chick

Wardwell Oil Offers Discount

Wardwell Oil has graciously continued a special discount for Blue Hill Co-op owners. Co-op members in good standing can receive 10 cents off each gallon of oil they purchase from Wardwell.

To receive this discount, you must pay Wardwell for the oil within 5 days of delivery. For details, please call Chevy at Wardwell Oil at 359-8953.

Advertise your business for a 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, page 6, for details.)



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The Blue Hill Co-op Supports PICA and Fair Trade Products

Since 1991, the Bangor-Carasque Sister City Project has built solidarity and friendship between Mainers and rural Salvadorans. PICA is Peace through InterAmerican Community Action, a grassroots organization based in Bangor. They "seek a world where people working together have power over their own lives and their own communities, and where corporate rights do not trump human rights."

PICA'S marketing committee sells products from Carasque's fair-trade cooperative. The Blue Hill Co-op now carries lovely embroidered dinner napkins, tortilla cloths, aprons, and [soon] potholders. Please come take a look, and pick up a brochure to learn more about this incredibly dedicated organization. We are selling all of these items at our cost. We want our owners to be aware of PICA'S work and hope that you support this project. Contact information:

PICA
170 Park Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
Phone: 207-947-4203
E-mail: info@pica.ws
Web: www.pica.ws

*Laura Cramer
Housewares Buyer*

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Farmer Profile: Blue-Zee Farm



Blue-Zee Farm sprouted up slowly over the past few years in the hands of Mark and Renata Scarano, who moved to the Blue Hill peninsula to farm full time. Last year they were joined by their daughter Julia and have turned the 100-acre farm into a productive mixed vegetable and blueberry venture. Their two greenhouses allow them to start many of Maine's hot-weather crops earlier in the season than most home gardeners can. This is why they were one of the first farmers in the area this year to have such whopping eggplants and peppers.

Mark comes from farming stock, having grown up in Maryland on a grain and vegetable farm. In 1992 he started the Dutch Buggy Farm in Kennebunk and later moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas to start another farm. In 2005, Mark decided it was time to return to Maine and began looking for land in the Downeast area. Renata,

a native of Sao Paulo, Brazil, had been living in NYC and working on Wall Street for a number of years. Always ready for an adventure, she made the move from the big city to a life in Maine in 2006.

But where does the name "Blue-Zee" come from? The "blue" part originates from being in Blue Hill and the fact that they grow blueberries. The "zee" is derived from "zihna," which in Portuguese refers to things small or little. When Julia was in utero, she was known as "baby-zihna" or "baby-zee." So it seemed fitting that soon after Julia was born, Blue-Zee should emerge as this farm's name.

by Allison Watters

Staff Profile: Brian Loring

Brian is an affable young fellow, new to the Blue Hill Peninsula, who has become the Co-op's first front end manager. This means that he spearheads training on the register for all new cashiers and then supervises cashier schedules. He also leads instructional sessions on customer service, alcohol sales, and other issues Co-op cashiers may have.

Like many of us, Brian's path to this area is a bit circuitous. He worked with the homeless populations of both Cincinnati, Ohio and Portland, Maine, the latter at the Preble Street Resource Center. He also has spent time in more agriculturally related pursuits, most recently at a tree farm and homestead in Franklin, Maine, which he heard about when he was volunteering in post-Katrina New Orleans.

While living in Portland, Brian became more interested in the issues surrounding food security in small communities. He was part of the Winter Cache Project, an urban gardening initiative in the city, but gradually found he wanted to do work that would allow him to get his hands dirty. His time at Schoodic Hollow Farm in Franklin was perfect for this. Now after living in Maine for five years, Brian and his partner, Stephanie, are planning their next venture as stewards of a piece of land in Blue Hill. Brian says he is very excited to meet more people in the area who have interests related to small-scale agriculture. If you are a farmer or organizer, go meet Brian at the Co-op one afternoon and introduce yourself!

by Allison Watters



Where is the President's Letter, usually so prominent in the newsletter? For many years, the newsletter production has been under the auspices of the Board of Directors, who sponsored the Newsletter Committee. In keeping with common cooperative practice, this past summer the Board turned the responsibility of newsletter production over to the store manager and staff. While the Board president and directors will continue to contribute to the newsletter, our role may not be as pronounced as has been the case for the past few years.

Most recently, the President compiled a substantial Annual Report to the Owners, which was presented at the Annual Meeting. Space prohibits its replication in this newsletter, but you can find it posted on the Co-op's website at www.bluehill.coop. If space permits, the Board report will be published in a forthcoming newsletter or distributed to owners via mail.

by Gail Bartlett