

BLUE HILL FOOD CO-OP

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BLUE HILL CO-OP NEWS

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2008

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Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement

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

President's Letter

What makes a co-op a co-op? Are co-ops supposed to be alternative and small and funky? Do they need to carry purely organic and local foods? Are they supposed to carry only non-corporately owned products? As a way of beginning this conversation, I'd like to share the definition of cooperatives, as adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance, upon which our own bylaws are based: "A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise."

Back a few decades ago when co-ops were often the only place to buy natural food, cooperative observers were fond of sharing the maxim that while food was the product of co-ops, community was the by-product. While we shopped for food that we couldn't buy elsewhere, people connected and ideas were shared, creating a sense of community. Now that natural food can be bought in many places, the maxim has been upturned. We hear now that community is the main product of co-ops, and food the by product. In other words, in the eyes of some, the reason to have a food co-op in the first place is to create community, and while this is happening, we can also, if we choose, buy some food. This is either serious back-pedaling or ingenious salesmanship, depending on one's point of view.

Under different cultural circumstances, the history of food cooperatives in our nation could have taken a very different turn. As an example, consider the Swiss grocery cooperatives, Migros and COOP. In Switzerland, these two cooperatives are the supermarket chains and the corner groceries, sized

Continued on next page

President's Letter

Continued from page 1

to fit the neighborhood or community, employing many thousands of people. Millions of individual Swiss own these markets and benefit from sizeable monthly patronage dividends (Migros) or store credit (COOP). Both co-ops are committed to prioritizing the sale of local, Swiss-grown food, and feature extensive organic options mixed right in alongside conventional produce and packaged goods. Of course, by dint of being half the size of Maine, anything grown in Switzerland is local. These cooperatives are also the main venue for nation-wide adult education programs, daycares, and hair salons, along with other ventures.

I've chosen to use the example of the Swiss co-ops for two reasons. First, I want to challenge those of us who assume that in order to be a co-op, a business cannot be mainstream and must remain small and alternative. Co-ops really come in all stripes. Second, I want to make the point that business endeavors tend to create their own momentum. If you live in Switzerland and join Migros hoping to advocate for a change back to privately owned supermarkets, you're bound to meet resistance. The success of the Swiss cooperatives has created a momentum that makes it difficult to imagine other business models.

So, here on the peninsula, one could pretty easily argue that Tradewinds, minus the cooperative structure, has become the equivalent of Migros and COOP. It is selling a range of natural and organic products, while making a diligent attempt to imaginatively meet customer needs. There is a car wash, and soon, low-income housing. Many of us are shopping there as well as at the Co-op, pinch-hitting at one or the other. Does this arrangement satisfy our common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations? We have to ask ourselves. We have to ask because this is a conversation that's already happening around many of our dinner tables anyway, as we wonder how building a new store could possibly lower the cost of our food, or how adding to the South Street sprawl could possibly make our community more sustainable or our lives easier or better.

We have to ask ourselves because how we define our common needs and aspirations will be instrumental in shaping the Blue Hill Co-op of the future.

Our little store, of which many of us are impossibly fond, has maxed out. While sales are strong, our growth has been relatively stagnant. While small may be beautiful, inflation coupled with the fixed costs of doing business tends to conspire toward requiring some growth. The summer season is our most profitable, the one that carries us the rest of the year, but it also creates enormous stress on our staff, and it is then that the size of the store and parking lot don't work at all.

Maybe we don't need to grow bigger, but I can assure you we do need to grow smarter. Before we spend a great deal of time and energy relocating, wouldn't it be wise to question the momentum we've created, and search for new retail paradigms? If Tradewinds is doing a decent job selling packaged natural foods, does it make sense to spend time and energy replicating that effort? Or do we enjoy shopping in an alternative store and harbor dreams of a scaled-down Whole Foods, albeit one that's cooperatively structured? What if your Co-op created an energy-efficient new store able to accommodate a year-round farmer's market? What about creating a full-service natural apothecary? What if instead of giving discounts your Co-op made a commitment to funding local agriculture initiatives? Would we be willing to make sacrifices if making them would increase the likelihood of our peninsula being a desirable place to live in the coming decades? Do we agree with the idea that the community that results from having a food co-op is beneficial enough as an outcome of doing business to render food a by-product?

So, let's talk, and reflect, and think. With respect for one another, and respect for good friends who just might define cake mix as an essential basic need, or good friends who just might have the means to enjoy a variety of top-notch olive oils, and respect enough to quiet the little inner dictators rooting around in most of us who are so sure of what's best for others. Let's see if together we can discover just what our common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations might turn out to be.

—Gail Bartlett

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, February 19th & Tues, March 18th.

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

Lucy Benjamin
Stephen Benson
Ruth Fiske
Rebecca McCall
Marianne Vandiver

The Newsletter Team

Maureen Farr, Editor

Whitney Landon, Production
Coordinator; 326-9242

Prudy Heilner, Ads; 374-5485

Board Liaison: Rebecca McCall

Columnists / Writers

Mary-Anne de Lany,
Catherine Princell, Allison Watters

*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 maureenfarr@verizon.net. Letters may be edited for style, not content; and should be brief. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number.

In Memorium:

Sally Krasnowieki, a long time contributor to the Blue Hill Co-op News passed away in December.

Many of our readers may remember Sally's *From the Garden* columns – in particular her wonderful review of seed catalogs which would appear every January to inspire us all to keep smiling through the long Maine winters.

We extend our deepest sympathy to her family and friends, and our appreciation for her great knowledge and love of gardening, which she shared with us so well for so many years.

—Maureen Farr, Editor

**DEADLINE FOR
APRIL / MAY ISSUE:
MARCH 20TH**

Even though it's the "slow" time of year, we have been busy bees here at the Co-op, working to bring owners and the community the best we can offer!

Our new Cheese / Wine Buyer, Laura Cramer, has done a fantastic job of co-ordinating with local businesses to bring you an event at Westcott Forge in early February, which included tastings of wines, local cheeses, and chocolates available at the Co-op. Look for similar co-sponsored events at local restaurants, including The Brooklin Inn, coming soon!

Our Owner Coordinator, Ruth Sullivan, has been putting together some educational workshops... the next being presented by local author Stephanie Tourles on April 24th from 7-8 pm at the Co-op.

The talk and demo is about making your own natural cosmetics and body care products using ingredients commonly found at the Co-op, Stephanie calls it a "show and tell, feel and smell" workshop... should be fun!

Hadley Freidman of our Café staff is working on getting a grant through the Healthy Peninsula Project centered

around food and the economy. A possible workshop might be to provide nutrition information to those in our community who are curious about how to improve their diet while on a tight budget. Stay tuned for more details.

Our Produce Department manager will be coordinating our 2nd Annual Farmers Meeting to review the past year and look towards ways we can continue to support each other into the future.

In our Health and Beauty Department, we have added a line of natural cosmetics, something customers have been requesting for a while now.

Our research yielded a wonderful line called Peacekeeper. All profits after taxes

support women's health advocacy and human rights issues, plus, they contain no nasty ingredients like

Toluene, Formaldehyde, and Acetone, nor are the products tested on animals. As they say... "Now that's beautiful!"

As time allows we will continue to bring you events and exciting new products such as these. Our buyers are always eager to hear your feedback and suggestions!

—Karen Doherty
General Manager

MANAGER'S LETTER

6^{FOR}/5

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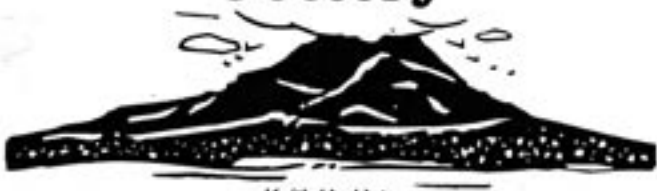
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Preparedness in Interesting Times

The opportunity for local self-reliance, of food production and preservation, is the topic here, in a context of rapidly changing times. National policies are impacting the global and local commons, in an atmosphere of bait and switch, and shamelessness. The debt-based fantasies are in trouble. A brief background discussion of the game follows. Then, on a more upbeat note – what can we do as individuals and community, here on planet Earth?

Shall we continue to rely on lettuce from California, grapes from Chile, and kiwifruit from New Zealand? (Consider Kingsolver's, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*.) Vice President Cheney stated that the "American way of life is not negotiable." (The price of crude oil was \$18/barrel when the Bush, et al. assumed power.) If we are indeed on the downslope of Peak Oil – the zone of increasing global demand and diminishing output – what are some ramifications?

We may eventually experience energy grid disruptions; we are currently experiencing resource wars, an over-leveraged economy, and higher prices of:

- **Fuel oil and propane** for homes and businesses
- **Gasoline** for commuting and errands
- **Food**, due to higher costs of:
 - Diesel and jet fuel for food transport
 - Diesel for fishing boats and farm tractors
 - Chemical fertilizer and pesticide, etc. production
 - Grains for human, dairy- and meat-animal feed, due to above, and the corn-ethanol canard, and weather-induced crop failures

Higher prices are being masked, by hyperinflation and debasement of the currency, via the Federal Reserve. (Think: Weimar Republic.) Government stats delete "volatile food and energy" from their inflation calculations; media is complicit in parroting absurdities. This creates a false sense of all being relatively sound, and slams fixed income folks – military pensions and Social Security income increases are based on the alleged inflation rate. The Fed's "liquidity" injections and lowered interest rates are designed to save the banksters of Wall Street. Job number one being to inform, enrich, and save the insiders,

not to save pension funds, 401ks, or Joe/Josephine Sheeple, who have maxed out credit cards and the use of home equity

as ATM (automated teller machine). "Investors" hob-nobbed with predators through the manic 1990s.

Meanwhile, the executive branch of government has been signing Executive Orders for many administrations, giving itself, and now FEMA of Katrina fame, powers of control and confiscation, in the event of a national emergency. Local vs. federal could become a hot topic. <http://www.disastercenter.com/laworder/laworder.htm>

As the unraveling of the game accelerates, we stand at a watershed moment. We ourselves can make choices based on common sense and community wellbeing. Just supposing that needed food shipments were not reaching Maine, how could

we prudently prepare? What skills and infrastructure can we encourage and rediscover?

1) Local fresh food production in gardens, farms, community gardens – including out of season via the Four Season Farm model (thank you, Eliot Coleman/Barbara Damrosch).

a. Cold frames/hot frames (can be as simple as an enclosure of straw bales with a window across the top. Old-timey hot frames have a layer of fresh, deep-dug manure below the soil.)

b. Sprouting: http://www.everything-kitchens.com/biota_sprouters.html

2) Root cellaring: potatoes, carrots, turnips, rutabaga, parsnip, winter squash, Belgian endive, apples, pears

3) Food drying

a. Making a solar dryer: http://www.organicdownunder.com/solar_dryer.htm

b. Building a light bulb dryer: <http://www.instructables.com/id/Apple-Drying-Rack-Tower/>

4) Canning (watch for Mason jars at yard sales; stock up on lids.)

5) Lactic fermenting of veggies, sourdough, dairy, kombucha (for fresh foods in off-season, with increased vitamin, anti-oxidant content, and digestibility)

Veggies: Countries of Northern and Eastern European and Asia have ancient village traditions of lactic-fermentation of foods for hard winters, and periods of isolation. Capt. Cook, in the 1760-70s, revolutionized long ocean voyages (3 years long!). Historically, hundreds of mariners lost their teeth and died each year from scurvy, the Vitamin C deficiency disease.

Capt. Cook loaded barrels of sauerkraut on board, as it is a good Vitamin C source. Lactic bacteria also help keep the gut healthy. Best corks for sauerkraut, pickles, ruby kraut, kimchi: http://www.wisementrading.com/foodpreserving/harsch_corks.htm

Dairy: Here is a non-electric method of incubating yoghurt, which I've done for many years: Using freshest yoghurt, (with active cultures) or powdered starter, and a dairy thermometer in the usual protocol, incubate the milk in sterilized glass Mason jars, nestled in a picnic

See WELLNESS NOOK, next page

WELLNESS NOOK



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1. New Owners: I want to extend a welcome to all new owners. If you haven't had a store orientation with Gabrielle Wellman, I highly recommend it. In a tour, she discusses:

- how the Co-op is run and organized;
- how to pre-order items, including those not carried in the store, at a discounted rate; and
- bits and pieces to make the Co-op easier to navigate.

The tour takes about one to 1-1/2 hours. Upcoming tour dates are: Tuesday, February 19th at 10 am and Thursday, February 28th at 3:45 pm. After these, the next tours will take place in May. To participate, please contact Gabrielle ahead of time at 374-2140 or Gabrielle@prexar.com.

2. Working Owners: Thank you to all the working owners who helped make this most recent inventory a big success! We finished the whole store by 10pm. Good job everyone, and thanks for your hard work! If you are interested in becoming a working member, please see me. We have lots of jobs that need doing, but you need to have a 20 minute orientation before you sign up to work for the first time. Contact me on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 12 and 5pm to schedule a time.

3. Inactive Notices @ the Register: Owners are often confused when inactive notices pop up at the register at seemingly unexpected times. I know this can be frustrating, so thank you for your patience.

Wellness Nook

Continued from previous page

cooler filled with 110°F water. Yoghurt can then be easily made into soft cheese, via drip method with cheesecloth/muslin, or: http://www.donvier.com/donvier/products/yogurt_cheeseMaker.html

Kombucha: requires starter (several Co-op members are in production), tea and sugar, glass jars. <http://www.seedsofhealth.co.uk/fermenting/kombucha.shtml>

So, imagining a sustainable future of regional food reliance, we can actively participate, by expanding our skill sets and low-tech infrastructure, and by supporting local growers and the businesses featuring those goods, like the Co-op. It is an exciting time to be alive.

—Mary-Anne de Lany

Keep in mind:

A) Your inactive notices pop up based on the date you JOINED, not on the date you last paid. So, if you joined on 1/1/06, your next payment would be due 1/1/07. If you didn't pay until 5/1/07, that payment would take you through 1/1/08, when the notice would pop up again.

B) When you owe "back" equity for more than one year, the computer will continue to think you owe payments until the back equity is paid. In other words, if you joined on 1/1/05, and then didn't pay again until 1/1/08, the computer would expect you to pay \$20 for 1/1/06 through 1/1/07 PLUS \$20 for 1/1/07 through 1/1/08; PLUS \$20 for 1/1/08 through 1/1/09 for a total of \$60 in equity to get you up to date. I know this seems daunting, but these payments are equity, which means we keep track of what you have paid; it all goes towards your \$200 in equity needed to be a fully vested member; and it is refundable to you if you choose to leave the Co-op. You just need to notify us in writing.

4. Two adults in one household: If you have more than one adult in the household each adult needs to join the Co-op. The bylaws say, "All adults in a household are

required to become owners, a household being understood to mean a group of individuals, whether or not related by blood or marriage, who live in the same residential unit and prepare meals in common." Please remember that each member of the household – spouse or partner – has a separate owner number and account. Each has voting rights, gets a patronage dividend, and receives

OWNERSHIP UPDATE

a discount at the register. Keep in mind, when you pay equity on one account, it only updates that single account. There is no family or household membership.

As always, feel free to contact me at 374-2165 or membershipbhcoop@verizon.net with questions, or ask the cashier to leave me a note in the Membership Notebook at the register. I am here at the store Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12-5. I will do my best to resolve your issues as soon as I can.

*Thanks,
—Ruth Sullivan*

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 information to: Prudy Heilner • PO Box 239 • Blue Hill, ME 04614, tel: 374-5485; or drop off at the Coop in Newsletter box.

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: Rebecca McCall

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.
Committee members: Steve Benson, Erich Reed, Deborah Wiggs.

Communicating ...

Getting more information from another person is a bit of an art. Often we may misunderstand instructions or fail to ask questions when we work with the health care system and our providers.

A key to making the health care system work better involves the ability to develop good communication with members of our health care team, but this can be intimidating and make talking freely with providers difficult. While we don't have to become best friends with our providers, we should expect them to be attentive, caring, and able to explain things clearly, but, we need to feel comfortable expressing our fears and asking questions in order to negotiate a treatment plan to satisfy us both. The relationship you have with your provider must be looked upon as a long-term one requiring regular work, much like a business partnership!

The biggest threat to a good relationship and good communication is time. If you and your provider had a fantasy about the best thing to happen in your relationship, it would most likely involve more time to discuss and explain things and more time to explore options. Since most doctors and other providers are usually on very tight schedules, one way to help get the most from the visit is to take **P.A.R.T.**

P means PREPARE: Before visiting your health care provider, prepare your "agenda." What are the reasons for your visit and what do you expect to receive from your provider? Make a list of your most important concerns or questions. It is important to be realistic with this though as a list of 20 items will not be

covered in a regular office visit!

But, writing everything down makes you remember and helps to prioritize your concerns. It is also not a bad idea to prepare a list for your provider, even though you won't be covering everything. Seeing your concerns may bring other issues into the conversation that might not have occurred otherwise. It also opens the door for a more focused conversation about the main problems you want to discuss. The more open you are, the more likely it is that your provider can help you.

JUST FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

If you have a problem, state your concern and try to avoid making your provider "discover" it as that wastes valuable time and you may leave without having your needs met at all. If anything has changed with your health or lifestyle since your last visit it is very important to let your provider know. Give your provider feedback – both negative and positive! If you don't share difficulties that you have encountered either with treatment plans, scheduling issues, medications or referrals, adjustments can't be made. And, providers appreciate hearing that things are getting better or going well, so, if you are pleased remember to tell your provider!

A means ASK: If you are to be an informed participant in your health care, getting understandable answers and information is one of the cornerstones of self-management.

Diagnosis: Ask what is wrong, what caused it, if it is contagious, what the future outlook is, and what can be done to prevent it in the future.

Tests: Ask if any medical tests are necessary, how they will affect your treat-

ment, how accurate they are, and what is likely to happen if you are not tested. Find out how to prepare for the test, what it will be like, and how and

when you will get the results.

Treatments: Ask about treatment options that include lifestyle change as well as medications and surgery. Inquire about the risks and benefits of treatment, and the consequences of not treating.

Follow-up: Find out if and when you should call or return for a follow-up visit. What symptoms should you watch for, and what to do if they occur?

Taking notes during the visit can be very helpful or, if you feel comfortable, consider bringing someone along to act as a second listener. Another set of eyes and ears may help you recall some of the details of the visit or instruction.

R means REPEAT: It is quite helpful to briefly repeat back to the provider some of the key points from the visit and discussion. This also gives the provider a chance to quickly correct any misunderstandings and miscommunications. Don't be afraid to ask what you might think to be a "stupid" question. If you don't understand something the provider said, admit that you need to go over it again.

T means TAKE ACTION: When the visit is ending, it is important that you understand what to do next. Ask for written instructions or reading material on a particular subject. If, for some reason, you don't follow the provider's advice, let them know and give them the reason. Was the medication too expensive or hard to take? Did your insurance not cover the recommended service? Was the lifestyle change too hard to do without further support and assistance? If you can't keep a followup appointment, let the office know so that it can be rescheduled.

Medical providers have been trained in ways to get specific information from their patients, but most of us have not been trained to ask specific questions. Taking P.A.R.T. in your health care will hopefully make a difference!

—Catherine Princell RN MS
Health Education Specialist

Reference:

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions. Bull Publishing 2006

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Highlights from November and December 2007 Blue Hill Co-op Board of Directors meetings

Among the recent decisions made by the Board of Directors during the November and December meetings, was one to simplify the overview of the board meeting activity, as it has appeared in previous Co-op newsletters.

In the past, a full summary of board decisions and activity was presented in the bi-monthly newsletter. This change will highlight the key board activities in the newsletter article, while leaving out some of the more mundane tasks that take place on a monthly basis. As always, the full minutes from each monthly board meeting will be available at The Blue Hill Co-op for owners to read.

An ongoing discussion during board meetings, is how the board can become better informed and educated about board and cooperative issues. The board trainings in 2006 and 2007 from co-op consultant Michael Healey were very helpful in guiding the board to seek ways of furthering knowledge through educational readings and through consultation with experts in co-op development.

To that end, the board of directors read and discussed two articles involved with interpreting and understanding financial statements: "Reading and Utilizing Financial Statements" by Fred Stapenhorst and "A Simple Matter of Comparison: Monitoring Fiscal Management in your Organization" from John Carver's book *Board Leadership*.

The board agreed that ongoing education regarding fiscal issues would take place at monthly meetings when quarterly financial statements are presented by the General Manager. Bob Sullivan, the board treasurer, will give a brief training at these meetings.

Also, in an effort to support ongoing board education, it was decided at the November board meeting to hire co-op

consultant Marilyn Scholl, to lead a retreat for board members and the General Manager in the spring of 2008.

Each month, as part of the board's observance of policy governance, an individual board member will monitor a designated policy. This not only ensures that policy is being followed, but also highlights any need for changes to be made to the policy. A board committee will then review the policy and make recommendations to the board. Policy is changed only after approval by the board of directors.

Recently this process came up regarding policy A2x. As indicated in the November board meeting minutes: "the policy committee proposed that A2x, a policy to limit what goods the manager allows the store to buy and sell, would better be described as an executive limitations policy, and not an ends policy. The committee further made the specific proposal that the former Board Ends policy A2, currently A2x, regarding 'buying' will be eliminated, and that specific policies regarding purchases of goods and services for resale through the Co-op will be within the purview of the General Manager rather than of the Board, within the constraints elsewhere indicated by Board policies."

Interpreted, this means that the buying policy falls under the jurisdiction of the General Manager, rather than the board, as issues involved with store products are better understood by staff. The board agreed to eliminate policy A2x from the policy book.

In the past year the board has instigated use of an annual calendar which contains various tasks and information, reminding board members to act on

items in a timely manner. This has proven to be an invaluable tool in organizing and guiding board activity.

Recently a committee of board members met to update the calendar for 2008.

*Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Fiske, board member*

BOARD REPORT

FRUIT TREES

Apples – Briggs Auburn,
Canadian Strawberry, Golden
Russet, Liberty, No. Spy

Peach – Reliant

Plums – Kahinta, So. Dakota

Catalog Available

MOFGA certified

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Blue Hill Piano Service

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ERRATA:

A misstep in the pre-publication process resulted in a number of amendments and corrections to the December 2007 / January 2008 newsletter not being incorporated in the printed edition. We apologize for any omissions, inaccuracies, or reader confusion this may have caused.

**DEADLINE FOR
APRIL / MAY ISSUE:
MARCH 20TH**

Amy Coppage:



Although it wasn't always obvious to Amy that the Blue Hill Peninsula was going to be her home, now that she's found herself here with her husband, Carl, and her little dog, Joon, she is here to stay. Before being hired as the Co-op's Bulk Manager, Amy worked in her fair share of natural food stores out west. While out there, she also found employment as a web designer outside of Seattle, honing her skills like so many others in the booming technological arena. Eventually, the high cost of living and long commute brought the couple to rethink their surroundings. After making a few visits to the Blue Hill Peninsula to reconnect with Carl's family, they decided to move here. Dogs and boxes were packed into a truck and they made their break. In Brooksville, Amy found the peaceful environment of the area reminded her of her childhood in rural New Hampshire. Her talents as a web designer landed her a telecommunication job for Pilobolus, a modern dance company, as educational outreach liaison. A desire to have more personal contact with the people of the area brought her to apply to the Co-op a few years ago. Amy says she has enjoyed working at the Blue Hill Co-op because it allows her to have a "real relationship with the community". Amy is a gifted craftsperson who makes jewelry as well as tailoring clothing. Her funky handmade earrings can be found at the downtown Blue Hill boutique, Bella Colore.

Laura Cramer:

You'd never guess that Laura used to peddle Barbie dolls up and down the east coast, would you? It seems a far cry from that occupation to her current position at the Co-op as wine/beer/cheese and house wares buyer, but at the time her saleswoman position made a lot of sense. Laura lived in Massachusetts with her daughter, and the flexible schedule she enjoyed as a doll wholesaler made it easier to be a working single mom. After stints as bartender and purveyor of dog food, Laura felt the need to "escape the rat race." After her daughter left for New York to attend college, Laura moved to Rockland – near where she had vacationed as a child. She wasn't long in Rockland before meeting her future husband, who lured her to the small village of

STAFF PROFILES

by Allison Watters

Brooklin. There she has been busy developing her own innovative business to help Maine people better market their handmade goods. She is hoping to act as a supportive platform for the variety of bakers, crafters, chefs, and other artisans who, in turn, need someone with sales experience to give these products exposure. This work has been fulfilling to Laura, but not quite lucrative enough. She found she needed an extra source of income. Her boundless enthusiasm won her the Co-op position. Laura has been married almost 6 months now. With her new husband, her business taking off and her stable Co-op job, she wonders how life could possibly get any better!



Chris West:



Next time you have a bird question and you find yourself in the Co-op, Chris is the one to ask. Chris has a long history as a wildlife biologist and her specialty is birds. Specifically she is an expert on the breeding and fledging habits of endangered and rare birds of the state of Maine. For years she was employed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife where she travelled the back roads of the state surveying avian populations during different times of the year. She once spent an entire summer scouring the wetland areas of Maine in her hip-high waders searching for the elusive rusty blackbird, a species for which she was trying to identify some range boundaries. She never did find one, but got to see lots of the state in the meantime. "There aren't that many places in Maine I haven't been," she says of her experience. After attending the University of Maine at Orono, Chris settled down in Penobscot with her son, Sam, and husband, Steve. Chris loves the location, which gives her easy access to Northern Bay for paddling and a complex network of trails for skiing and snowshoeing. An outdoorsy gal, Chris' former job was perfect for these interests. However, after many years criss-

crossing the state in her truck, she was ready for a workplace closer to home as well as a steadier paycheck. Although Chris has been involved with co-ops before, working here has given her a newfound respect for how many hands are needed to keep a store stocked and operational.