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BLUE HILL CO-OP NEWS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2009

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You own it! By keeping your \$20 annual equity payments current, you are an active owner of your consumer co-operative business, the Blue Hill Co-op. What does this mean, to be an owner? It means that you have made a socially responsible investment in a business owned by the community, and that you recognize the value of having such an entity in your community. What exactly is that value? Why be an owner? What is the benefit? Many owners first response might be...because I get a discount! But I beseech you to think more deeply about this question, particularly in these times of economic downturn, where we are seeing layoffs in our local hospital and less spending everywhere as we tighten our belts for the duration.

Marilyn Scholl, in an excellent article* in *Cooperative Grocer*, has this to say:

In our society, we are programmed to look out for number one; we are not taught how to create, maintain and share the ownership of community assets and common wealth. The cooperative structure offers us an economic means to meet our common needs through democratically owned businesses. When many of today's food co-ops were established, we wanted to create an alternative to the capitalist society, but many of us threw out the baby with the bath water. Rejecting concepts equated with capitalism—profit, equity, ownership, and management—too many food co-ops went out of business clinging to their idealism.

Fortunately, we can look to the cooperative principle, along with the generations of businesses that existed before us throughout the worldwide cooperative movement, to establish effective and sustainable structures that balance the needs of individuals and of business, so both can prosper. If co-op members only look at personal gain, they miss the power of cooperation. The opposite is also true: if cooperatives don't offer meaningful benefits to [their] owners, cooperative leaders have missed the point. **Cooperatives must balance the needs of the owners**

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager's Report

Continued from page 1

and the needs of the business they own [bold mine]. Owner equity investment and patronage refunds are effective tools to create the right balance.

...Ultimately a co-op's success is dependent on its understanding and effectively implementing the economics of ownership within the principles of democracy.

The notions of ownership and patronage refunds are embedded in the third cooperative principle: "Member Economic Participation." Rising from the successful innovations first realized by the Rochdale Pioneers some 160 years ago, this principle outlines the way cooperators contribute to, control, and share the wealth created by their business. This distinctly cooperative advantage has proved itself for generations, and it is even codified in our current tax laws and IRS rules.

Cooperative membership is cooperative ownership. Our owners and directors, staff and management, should all understand that this economic model offers us many advantages, including the ability to serve members, build equity, and share in the common wealth.

In alliance with Marilyn, I would posit that the most important benefit of ownership of the Co-op is the existence of the Co-op itself. Our board has created our Ends Policies, which more precisely define what we hope to achieve through the Co-op's existence. The Ends are our road map to creating the benefits we seek. These goals include not only having a retail source of good food, but also contributing to the success of a vibrant local agricultural community; a community better-educated around (especially) food issues and, therefore, a healthier community; being a major source of employment in the community; and a return of economic value via charitable contributions, outreach, and patronage dividends to owners. I encourage you to be informed owners; take a moment to read your Co-op's Ends Policies (available on our website and in this newsletter) and develop your understanding about what practices are in the best interest of keeping the Blue Hill Co-op a healthy, sustainable, viable consumer cooperative well into the future.

Business owners sometimes have to make sacrifices, understanding that it is for the benefit of the business in the long run. What if you owned a hardware store, for instance, and you were giving yourself a certain sum as a paycheck each week? Realizing that, not being a fortune-teller, you had no firm handle on what your profit was going to be for the year, you decided to cut back on your own pay knowing it would be more prudent to wait until the year's end to see what was left over. That would indeed be considered a wise decision on the part of a business owner.

Co-ops across the country have time and again made this prudent decision, opting for patronage dividends over discounts, knowing this is a best practice for providing economic benefit to owners. Patronage dividends offer a better alternative to a discount system in that they are directly tied to the health and prosperity of the co-op. The board decides how much to allocate only after ensuring that the business has actually made money. With discounts, the "earnings" are given away before we know there are any. The grocery business operates on a very small profit margin. Giving discounts to owners means that our margin is even smaller, and can result in artificially raised prices to meet the operating expenses. The raising, lowering, and offering of discounts has always been at the discretion of the Co-ops' General Manager, and as I mentioned at the annual meeting in September, as your General Manager I can no longer in good conscience continue to give away profits before knowing we have earned them. It just doesn't make good business sense, and I would be a bad manager were I to allow this practice to continue.

The discounts will be changing between the time you read this and April 1. The supporting and senior discounts will no longer be available, while we will strive to keep the working member discount program for the time being. The patronage dividend program we currently use (never meant to be used in tandem with member discounts) and other member benefits will replace the discount system. New benefits will include in-store member-only discounts on products, encouraging those who are not members to invest. Also, coupons for discounts on entire one-time purchases will be available to owners quarterly. You may redeem these coupons 4 times a year, and buy as much as you like for that one purchase. The amount of discount is yet to be determined—somewhere between 5–10%. Your first coupon will arrive in time to use it during our last fiscal quarter, April 1–June 30. I'm looking into a monthly Senior Discount Day as well. For more details on this issue, we will be creating discount information handouts available in the store.

To gain greater understanding, I strongly encourage you to read the very informative article by Marilyn Scholl: "Membership Is Ownership, The Cooperative

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Notice of Board Meetings

The Co-op Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month, 6:30–9:00 p.m. The meetings are held in the Howard Room at the Blue Hill Public Library. They are open to the membership. The next Co-op Board meetings will be held on March 17 and April 21, 2009.

Co-op Board Officers & Members:

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

DEADLINE FOR APRIL/MAY ISSUE:

MARCH 16

The Newsletter Team

Ads: Prudy Heilner; 374-5485

Editor: Marge May

Design & Production: Aimee Beal

Staff Liaison: Eileen Mielenhausen

Columnists/Writers: Allison Watters
and Co-op Board & Staff

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

General Manager:

Karen Doherty

Store Hours

Monday–Friday, 8 am–7 pm

Saturday, 8 am–6 pm

Sunday, 9 am–5 pm

(207) 374-2165

www.bluehill.coop

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 newsletter@bluehill.coop. Letters may be edited for style, not content, and should be brief. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number.

It was suggested to me that I write a piece about how the Blue Hill Co-op Board of Directors works—its responsibilities, practices, etc. The timing for this is good because, as spring approaches, we are beginning the process of recruiting owners as candidates for the board, to be elected later this year. At the same time, we also hope to create a large pool of potential candidates who, while not able to commit time this year, might be willing to consider board service at some later date. We are looking for those of you who are dedicated to the cooperative, its owners, and its mission. Ideally, a candidate will tend to think in

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

terms of systems and context, be able to participate assertively in discussions, be honest, and have independent judgment, courage, and good faith. It's also very helpful to be able to think futuristically and collaboratively with others. To be considered, you must be an owner in good standing (meaning you are reasonably current in your equity payments), be at least 18 years old, and have been a Co-op member for at least six months. Along with the notable benefits of personal growth and development, directors receive a working discount for their time.

So, what is it that Co-op directors do? First and foremost, we have fiduciary responsibility for the organization. This is commonly understood to mean oversight of finances, and this is certainly true. Yet, in a larger sense, fiduciary responsibility entails holding in trust the best interests of the Co-op and, in turn, the best interests of the owners. In doing so, we embrace several important duties: we agree to be loyal to the organization and avoid conflicts of interest that could arise not only from self-interest but also from our affiliation with competing organizations; we agree to work prudently for the best interests of the Co-op and make informed decisions in good faith; we have the responsibility of creating adequate and accurate records for the organization, all the while ensuring that we adhere to state and federal laws, our bylaws, and the articles of incorporation. All of this helps to ensure the longevity of the Co-op into the coming decades.

As your elected representatives, directors think and act in your place, much in the same way that state senators and representatives do. We represent you, the owners, equally—each and every one of you—not only those who are most committed, or who have been members the longest, or those who are the most vocal. Because membership in the Co-op is open and voluntary, we represent people with varying political, social, and religious beliefs, as well as those of varying economic means.

While the board is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the store, we do set the parameters for those operations. To give just one example, while for very good reasons we don't arbitrate between our general manager and the store staff, we do make sure that a detailed, fair and legal staff treatment policy is in place, and we periodically make sure that our general manager is interpreting that policy fairly and accurately.

Alongside these responsibilities, our more creative and fun work consists of envisioning what this Co-op can contribute to our community. We try to define and articulate the objectives and activities of the Co-op that will enrich our community life in ways unique to the Co-op. (You can read about the board's current thinking by reading parts 1-8 of our mission statement.) We do our best to think and dream collaboratively, which means being able and willing to lay aside our personal opinions, idiosyncrasies, and certainties. We do our best to go with the "nine heads are better than one" program.

Like those of most food cooperatives, thousands of schools, hospitals, and non-profits, the Co-op board uses policy governance to help us organize the decisions we've made over the years. Like the Dewey Decimal system that enables library users to easily

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MOVIES:

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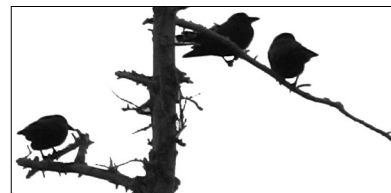
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Aimee Beal | Three Crows Editorial

Writing Editing Proofreading Layout



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Down to Earth Pottery



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199 Ellsworth Road Blue Hill 04614 (207) 374-5492

CO-OP ROCKS

★ video contest ★

The Blue Hill Co-op announces the **My Co-op Rocks Video Contest**, a nationwide contest where you tell the world the ways our Co-op rocks, starting March 1! Videos will earn votes from the viewing audience, people like you (people's choice), and a select set of judges (judges' choice), and there are seriously awesome prizes at stake.

Just how creative can you get with your video? Depends on how big your imagination is. Unleash your sense of humor or desire to become the next Spike Jonze or Wes Anderson. Share your up-to-two-minute masterpiece with the world for your chance to win fame and cool prizes! Create your own Top 10, choose one of these humble suggestions below, or create your own non-Top 10 original idea:

- Top 10 Reasons I Love My Co-op
- Top 10 Foods at the Co-op
- Top 10 Funniest Sights at My Co-op
- Top 10 Ways to Get a Date at the Co-op
- Top 10 Reasons Why Shopping at a Co-op Is Just Better

Stay tuned and check back often at www.MyCoopRocks.coop for the latest news and updates!

ALTERATIONS

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



Front End Update

Winter greetings! The Co-op has focused on some important projects this winter to get us ready for spring and some new ideas for how we can support the local economy. For example, we're collaborating with the Stonington Lobster Co-op in a project that will support local fishermen and get more locally-caught seafood in the store. We have been discussing ways to use the Community Supported Fishery (CSF) program so that local fishermen can receive an up-front investment and a fair price for their shrimp this winter. We are delighted about this and are committed to exploring new ways to help sustain local jobs on the water. In addition to fresh-picked shrimp, we hope to make other local seafood available in the store through this CSF program and others. (See related article, page 5.)

We are also working to get the front porch community information space more organized and easier to browse. The community board helps people in the area to communicate all the great things happening. We want it to be easier to read, tidy, and organized. We hung new large pushpin boards and labeled areas to make the information you want easier to find. Specific areas for the most common postings like rental/housing information, for-sale flyers, and arts/entertainment have been created. In an attempt to keep things clean, we ask that you post only on a bulletin board in the area that makes most sense. Please do not post on the building or entryways. Also, post only one copy of your business card or flyer so we can accommodate as many requests as possible.

Another project coming up will be a fresh coat of paint in the front of the store. We are gathering up a team of working members to give the front of the house a new look before spring is here.

The store has hired three new cashiers since my last report to you. Betheney, Carrie, and Sarah are all regulars at the register these days and have brought a great deal of enthusiasm to the front of the store. They have wonderful, interesting lives you should ask about. One is a chef, one works on the water, and another is a knitting champion. Talk to them the next time you stop in the store.

Finally, check out the counters at the register! We have cleared space for our shoppers in an attempt to facilitate bagging your groceries so you can head home. We hope this makes for quicker lines and happy owners.

*Brian Loring
Front End Manager*

Winter: Getting Back to the Roots

This time of year, it's our roots that sustain us: potatoes, beets, turnips, onions, and carrots from our root cellars, spending time with friends and family, sharing meals and stories by the warmth of the woodstove. Slow foods for a slowed-down season. Getting back to the roots for the Co-op means taking stock of what's selling, available, and affordable.

Produce assistants Alexe, Sarah, Justine, Beth and I have been working hard to stock and spruce up the Produce Department.

We had a visit from Richelle Elder of La Montanita Co-op in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She instructed us in wise buying practices and produce handling procedures that prolong the life of the product. In an effort to keep our prices reasonable, we are scouring the organic produce markets to find the freshest and best-possible food. We always give preference to local (or at least New England) products. Often, these products are more expensive than the produce from large organic farms in California and Mexico. This is because local produce is usually hand raised (weeded and picked) as opposed to mass produced.

During the coldest months of the year it is difficult to get greens locally. Eliot Coleman is no longer growing winter greens and no one else has picked up the business. For us, this is a huge loss. We are trying to bring in comparable greens from Albert's Organics. We are doing our best to keep these items in stock; however, there is often limited availability during the coldest times and less frequent deliveries by our distributors. With the coming of longer days and spring happening elsewhere in the nation, these items will be more easily obtained. Soon our shelves will be overflowing with local produce, and the long dark days will be behind us.

We are committed to bringing you the freshest organic fruit and veggies at the best prices possible. Please let us know your requests as we are here to try and meet the owners' needs and wants. Be on the lookout for weekly produce sale items as promotional "specials" come in from Albert's Organics. We'll keep you posted.

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Please contact me at 374-2165 or produce@bluehill.coop.

*Sallie Grossman
Produce Department Manager*

Shrimp Ahoy!

The Co-op is pleased to offer you more local products in the store this winter. We have recently added canned soups from Bar Harbor Foods (Whiting) and apple cider vinegar from 5 Star Nursery (Brooklin). And the big news is local, fairly traded sea-



Carrie & Justine "picking" local CSF shrimp to sell in-store. Photo by Suzanne Coolidge.

food! The Blue Hill Co-op is purchasing shrimp from the Stonington Lobster Co-op and Community Supported Fishery (CSF). We buy, pick (clean the shrimp and remove the shells), package, and offer the shrimp to you at a low price. The fishermen receive more profit for their product because we pay them a price

that they have set as fair. Your Co-op is doing its part to support the local fishermen by paying them four times the price they are receiving at other markets.

Aaron Dority of Penobscot East Resource Center is working with a group of Stonington fishermen and the Stonington Lobster Co-op this year to offer local shrimp through the CSF. Penobscot East is a nonprofit organization in Stonington whose mission is to secure a future for the fishing communities of eastern Maine.

Similar to a CSA, local residents can buy shares of fresh, whole shrimp. For those of you who want to "pick" your own, you may purchase a share in the Stonington CSF: full shares=ten pounds per week, half shares=five pounds per week. The share price will depend upon how many weeks are left in the program.

The CSF began January 10 and continues through Saturday, March 14. The CSF truck delivers the shrimp to the Blue Hill Co-op parking lot on Saturdays at 11 a.m. The deliveries may extend past March 14. Contact Aaron for more details at 479-9677 or aaron@penobscoteast.org. We are also negotiating with the CSF to make ground fish and shellfish available to our shoppers this summer. Stay tuned for more information about fresh, local Fair Trade fish and seafood at the Co-op!

Upcoming Events

- **Taking Stock: Farm to Table on Our Peninsula.** Inviting all Peninsula farmers, grocers, bakers, chefs, and other commercial food purveyors and producers for an extended coffee break Monday morning, March 9, East Blue Hill Grange. Let's look at how we can get more locally-produced food to local tables. What produce and products need more markets? What products are lacking? What do grocers, restaurateurs, and other sellers need to purchase more from around the corner? The Grange will open at 8:30 am; we'll start at 8:45 and finish at 11:30 in time for noon chores. Coffee, tea, cider, and locally-produced munchies provided. For more information or to help, call Betsy Bott at 460-0837 or Mia Strong at 359-8572.

- **Health Angels.** Gabrielle Wellman, Guild Certified Feldenkrais® Practitioner, will present a talk and a sample experience in The FELDENKRAIS® Method of Somatic Education at the Blue Hill Co-op on Thursday, February 26 at 6:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Eileen at the Co-op: 374-2165.

- **The Simmering Pot: A Community Supper.** Every other Monday at the Congregational Church, Blue Hill, 2:30-5:30 p.m. FREE! For more information contact Hadley at 374-2898 or Brendan at 374-2065.

TREASURES

from home and all over the world

NEW CARGOES

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ON THE WALL @ THE CO-OP CAFÉ:

FEBRUARY: Corey Paradise
Valentine Art & Beyond

MARCH: Margaret Baldwin
Drawings & Paintings

APRIL: Blair Grant
Paintings

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

Affiliating Family Members

You can now add family members to your individual owner account, allowing your dependents or significant other to use your account when shopping at the Co-op.

This benefit is the result of 1) the owners voting to remove the requirement that all adults in the household have their own accounts and 2) a software upgrade to our membership database providing us the technology to affiliate additional names on an owner's account.

Of course, your spouse or partner may continue to support the Co-op by maintaining a separate owner account and investing their \$20 per year in equity to keep the cooperative strong and thriving.

Please fill out a form at the register (ask cashier) if you would like to add family members to your account. For more information, contact Eileen at membership@bluehill.coop or 374-2165.

Working Members

Thank you to all our dedicated working members for showing up and doing what needs to get done at your Co-op! We are looking for working members to help with the following tasks:

- painting front end area
- picking shrimp
- cleaning store departments
- planning children's activities (e.g., a garden)
- organizing summer farm/facility tours
- writing articles for the newsletter
- coordinating Health Angels talks
- stocking, stocking, stocking!

To become a working member, you'll need to sign up for an orientation. Working member orientations are usually held on Wednesday afternoons. Please call Eileen to schedule: 374-2165.

Website

Do you know...How to place a pre-order online? Which Co-op products are local? Where to find the latest on events happening at the Co-op? How to contact a board member? All of this and much more is available at your fingertips via the Blue

Hill Co-op's colorful and informative website (www.bluehill.coop).

The Co-op website is only seven

months old but growing by leaps and bounds. New information is added or changed every week. Check it out if you haven't yet—and keep coming back! Please direct your feedback to Eileen (membership@bluehill.coop) or Howard (webmaster@bluehill.coop). We'd like to hear your comments and suggestions. Thank you!

Customer Survey

We need your feedback! How are we meeting your needs as Co-op owners and shoppers? Look for the customer survey included in this issue of the *Co-op News*. Complete the survey and return it to Eileen, Brian, or Karen by March 31 and your name will be entered into a drawing for prizes. You can hand-deliver it or mail the survey to Customer Survey, Blue Hill Co-op, P.O. Box 1133, Blue Hill, ME 04614. The data will be collected in a manner to ensure survey participants will remain anonymous.

Where Are You?

Have you moved? Changed your name or phone number? Please help us keep the Co-op membership database accurate by giving us your current mailing address, phone number and e-mail. Contact me at (207) 374-2165 or membership@bluehill.coop. Thanks!

Eileen Mielenhausen

Membership & Marketing Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our Community Cares!

We appreciate all of the food pantry contributions made by our Co-op shoppers and others in the community. Donations since Oct. 15, 2008 total \$472.80. In addition, we made several deliveries of non-perishable food items to both Peninsula pantries. A big "Thank you" goes to Laura Cramer for always making herself available to personally deliver these food items to the Island Food pantry. Please keep the donations coming, as the deepening recession is really taking its toll on our community members.

Many thanks go to area organizations and businesses for helping Peninsula community members collect food and funds to benefit the Tree of Life Food Pantry and the Island Food Pantry.

Lastly, if you have cardboard egg cartons, you may drop them off at the Tree of Life and they will put them to good use.

Thank you for your generosity!

Hadley Friedman

Co-op Café

"We're not going to 'greed' our way out of this but 'green' our way through it."

—Blue Hill Co-op owner,
commenting on the recession

Dear Writers-in-Waiting,

The Blue Hill Co-op newsletter provides information, ideas, stories, and news that support the Co-op's mission (printed on page 7). You read about health, food and nutrition, community resources, activities at the Co-op, farms and other local enterprises, and people and organizations connected with the Co-op. Writers include Co-op staff, board members, and Co-op owners.

Would you like to write for the *Co-op News*? Use your creative talent to fulfill your monthly work commitment as a working member. If you're interested, don't be shy. Contact Editor Marge May (marge.may@mainelywired.net) or Eileen Mielenhausen at the Co-op for more details.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail rather than US Mail, please send an e-mail message to newsletter@bluehill.coop or call Eileen at 374-2165.

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

President's Letter

Continued from page 3

find needed books, policy governance enables a board to access a history of prior decisions without the need for a time-consuming search through many pages of previous minutes. It's also useful for clarifying the job of the board, as opposed to the job of the general manager. Another tool our Co-op Board regularly uses is consensus decision-making. This means that only under rare circumstances do we take a vote at our meetings; rather, we try and make sure all concerns are aired and recorded before reaching consensus on recommendations or decisions.

The board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Blue Hill Library, usually in the Howard Room. Meetings are open for observation to all active owners in good standing. In addition, we set aside time at the beginning of each meeting for you to share your good ideas or concerns with us. We may not have an instant response, but you will have our full attention. You can email the board anytime at board@bluehill.coop. If you are interested in being considered as a potential board candidate, you may contact membership coordinator Eileen Mielenhausen at the store or at membership@bluehill.coop, or send an email to the board at the address previously given. Please consider candidacy—this is a perfect opportunity for you to engage in the kind of servant leadership that our new U. S. president is encouraging!

*Gail Bartlett
President of the Board of Directors*

Manager's Report

Continued from page 2

Advantage." Copies are available in the Co-op and can be found online at our wonderful website, www.bluehill.coop.

It is my own great hope that our lovely Co-op will be here for years to come, and that the owners and our community will continue to receive great value and benefit from its existence.

*Karen Doherty
General Manager*

**Cooperative Grocer, May–June 2008, no. 136. "Membership Is Ownership: The Cooperative Advantage." M. Scholl. Marilyn Scholl is on the leadership team at Cooperative Development Services (marilynscholl@cdsfood.coop).*

Sedgwick School Project

The Sedgwick School Learning Garden and Kitchen program continues through a collaboration of school personnel, Healthy Peninsula, and Hadley Friedman of the Co-op Café. Check the Co-op website (www.bluehill.coop) for updates on this ongoing program.

For more information, or to assist the Sedgwick School program, please contact Hadley Friedman at the Café, 374-2165, or at hadley.friedman73@gmail.com.

Blue Hill Co-op Community Donations

The Co-op has donated to the following organizations during the period of July 1 through December 31, 2008:

Hospice of Hancock County
Blue Hill Library
Nichols Day Camp
Downeast AIDS Network
MOFGA
The Ark Animal Shelter
Maine Library Scholarship Fund
Tree of Life Food Pantry
Island Food Pantry
Blue Hill Consolidated School's Fuel Assistance Benefit
The Bay School
Food First
WERU-FM Community Radio
The Howard Bowers Fund

In addition to responding to annual appeals from charitable organizations and contributing to special fundraising events in the community, the Blue Hill Co-op would like to contribute a percentage of sales to a different nonprofit each month. The organizations will be highlighted in the newsletter and on our website. This will be a way to educate owners and customers about the good work being done in our communities, as well as help raise much-needed funds.

We will select organizations from a variety of categories: Environment, Education, Health, Arts, and Social Services. Near the register at the front of the store, you will find a clipboard with a form so that you can nominate a worthy organization to receive funding from Co-op sales and from shoppers' contributions. The more you shop, the more we give!

Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement & Ends Policies

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

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

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

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

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

"What Does the Co-op Mean to Me?" Essay Contest

Why do you love the Co-op? Why are you a Co-op owner? We'd love to hear from you! Submit an essay in your own words (250–500 words) and you may be eligible to win a store gift certificate. We reserve the right to reprint all submissions in the *Co-op News* and other publications. Contact Eileen for more details or send an e-mail to newsletter@bluehill.coop.

Staff Profile: Sallie Grossman

by Allison Watters

Sallie is new to the Blue Hill Peninsula but not at all new to the rural lifestyle that so many of us enjoy here. She lived in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont for 35 years, having started a women's retreat center with her partner. Greenhope Farm, as the center was called, started in 1980 with campsites and grew from there. Women came from all over the U.S. and abroad to attend classes on basic country living skills such as milking, cheese making, gardening and putting up food for the winter. Gradually, the center incorporated horseback riding and later included children as well as families.

Drawn to the state of Maine to care for aging parents, Sallie sold the farm and over a period of years moved to her new home on Naskeag Point in Brooklin. She quickly found work at the Blue Hill Co-op as Produce Manager. It was a good fit for her as she had been a founding member of a Vermont "carrot co-op" which shared the washing and marketing of many varieties of root crops. Now she is in charge of ordering from all the area's local produce farmers and keeping the store stocked with organic fruit and vegetables in the winter season.

A self-described "hopeless horse person," Sallie has pared down her herd to four. She plans to give horseback riding lessons to kids and open a half-day summer camp beginning in the spring. For more information you can check out her website at www.greenhopefarm.com.



by Allison Watters

Vendor Profile: Coasts Bio Resources



Even if you're not familiar with this local company's name, you have probably seen their products in the supplements or pet sections of the Co-op. Do the supplement names "ArthriSea" or "SeaCuMAX" ring a bell? How about the pet products "Sea Jerky" or "SeaFLEX"? These joint health products for both pets and humans have anti-inflammatory properties and are used by many people (and their companion animals) who have trouble with mobility.

Coasts Bio Resources was started in Stonington by Ron Stegal and Pete Collin in 1994 to explore, develop, produce, and patent dietary supplements made from sea cucumbers. Sea cucumbers are a lesser-known invertebrate relative of the starfish and sea urchin. They are found locally as well as in tropical oceans. Although they are a delicacy in China, they are not commonly consumed here. These funny-looking sea creatures contain amino acids and polysaccharides that are similar to our own cartilage. Collin claims that his products have joint supportive properties that dampen a chronic inflammatory response, and many of the Co-op's customers would attest to that claim as well.

After Coasts Bio's products were tested in medical models and clinical trials, the company began producing them for sale. Local chiropractor Dr. Michael Aker used the supplements to treat his patients, with much success. Collin also notes that the Blue Hill Co-op was an early supporter of the products. The company experienced instant popularity, and soon their products were being shipped all over the U.S. as well as internationally. Recently, Coasts Bio Resources has developed several new products, such as an anti-fungal lotion and "ImmunoSEA," a stimulator of natural immunity.

Farmer Profile: King Hill Farm

by Allison Watters

Winter is not typically the time to see an abundance of local produce in our Co-op's produce case, but King Hill Farm's turnips, rutabagas, beets, parsnips and carrots continue to nourish all of us through the cold season. The farm is located in Penobscot and was started in the 1970's by Dennis King and his brother, Ron. Today it is run by Dennis and his wife, Jo Barrett, with the help of seasonal apprentices.

An impressive homestead first and foremost, the 160-acre organic farm includes five types of pasture-raised livestock, a small orchard and vineyard, pasture land, and a woodlot. The farm also produces an enormous array of summer vegetables and root crops, which are stored in its large root cellar and distributed as far as Portland. This diverse farm strives to create a closed system within itself by recycling farm nutrients into compost and producing its own hay for livestock feed. Since the farm has been in constant operation for so long and has been under the care of this sustainably-minded couple, the soil quality is of the utmost fertility. What is not eaten or canned on site is divided up between the 60 members of the King Hill Farm CSA, or is sold at farmer's markets or through local health food stores and co-ops.

Dennis and Jo also work to educate children by teaching the importance of healthy eating and to show community members where their food comes from. The farm is MOFGA certified and also holds memberships with the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society and Maine Grass Farmers Network.

