CDC Issues

For those who have been unable to attend any of the Wednesday evening get-togethers down at Radiance, here is a brief sketch of what the Olympic CDC has been up to:

Since the benefit held April 16, at which we earned approximately $75 by donations and food sales, we have been meeting weekly to share our energies, drawing up preliminary by-laws for a community Credit Union and discussing information gathered throughout the week. Issues such as "What are the conditions of membership going to be?", "How will the Board of Directors be comprised?" and "How will existing community service groups be able to work within the CDC organization?" are being discussed, and each week we make a certain amount of progress towards the first draft of the by-laws.

A good deal of outreach work has been going on as well – getting in touch with groups like the Community for Christian Celebration, which is attempting to organize extended families in Olympia/Thurston County; the Crisis Clinic, which so far has acted to get people in touch with groups; and the Women’s Health Center. These groups have expressed encouragement and brought new ideas of how to go about the work we have set out to do.

Our feeling is that as we grow and learn with each other about the directions we share as individuals living in a community, bonds of cooperative, neighborly assistance can develop; and that we all have a great deal to gain by working together in this manner.

The original project of organizing a community credit union is already well underway, and each week we discuss new ideas and connections in other areas of community development, all of which lead to the birth of a group of folks working together to facilitate alternative and cooperative and working systems such as a hardware store, alternative school, musicians guild, working together to facilitate alternative and cooperative and working systems such as a hardware store, alternative school, musicians guild, skills bank, transportation collective, and any other needs which are brought out during meetings which can be developed by ourselves through working with one another to make it happen.

As the Beatles have sung, "And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make." Whatever good energy you can share with the CDC will be amply rewarding. Come to one of the meetings when you are interested and want to share with us in the community. Every Wednesday evening at 7:00 or slightly thereafter, Radiance Herbs and Massage, Fourth Avenue, Olympia.

WEDNESDAY AT RADIANCE ** 7:00 PM

Contributions for Register

During the month of June cashiers will be asking shoppers in the co-op if they will contribute $1 (or more if you like) toward the purchase of a new cash register for the store. The new register which has been chosen will help the staff compile sales and inventory information which will give us some idea of where we lose money, so we can cut those losses.

At present, the co-op is unable to make ends meet. Work on a new mark-up and membership fee system is under way. Accurate information from a good cash register will help. But we need some means of financing this new machine. It will cost about $1,600 altogether. About $600 has already been raised via benefits and contributions. We will continue doing benefits. We will also continue asking members to contribute. About 90% of the people responding to a survey last month said they would contribute $1 for the cash register. Most felt the contribution should not be mandatory.

The new cash register should be in and working by the first of July – which is, by the way, the first day that there will be no sales tax on food.
Editor's Note

Howdy! Here we are again, trying to improve with every month. I hope all you folks out there are reading the OKIE DOKIE NEWS and enjoying it. All the folks involved have been working very hard and coming up with some very good results. I want to take the space to thank everyone who has worked so diligently. Thank you to Brenda Dickson, Rick Crawford and the Thurston County Parks and Recreation Department, Co-op managers Beth and Steve, Anna Schlecht Carolyn Kuhn. Doug Plummer, a ghost writer for the CDC, Jo Feinberg, Jan Haimer, et al.

If there are any of you who would like to help out on the newspaper in July we would really appreciate the help. I will be going on vacation in mid-July and we'll need to find someone to take the paper down to the press on the 2nd Thursday of July. The press is in Centrailla at the Daily Chronicle, it takes about 2 hours to print and then you are set to jet. We'll also need some help with layout and ad sales if any of you feel so motivated. Remember it's a great way to earn your working membership and do something worthwhile for our co-op. If you might have a few free hours in July please get in touch with me at the Blue Heron Bakery 866-BAKE or at home, 357-9324.

Produce Update

The co-op tries to carry as much organically grown food as possible. We also try to let people know what is organic and what is not. Yet now the only thing we know is what the person selling it to us tells us, and as long as there is a difference in price between organic and non-organic, there will be people trying to pass off commercially grown food as organic.

I would like to get some interested people together and work out a policy on what we call organic and what we don't; and maybe to investigate our sources and see what kind of food we are really getting. Anyone who is interested should contact Steve, at the co-op.

Produce is in that middle between seasons where prices fluctuate crazily. Lettuce has dropped to almost reasonable levels, but is reportedly going sky-high again, possibly by the time you read this. Local stuff will be in within a couple of weeks, and the prices will come back down then. Oriental greens are still expensive, but not quite as bad as they were. Zucchini is getting cheap now, half the price it was a month ago. Cucumbers are also cheap. Tomatoes are coming from Florida now, and are looking much better. The old ones were from Hawaii, were not very good quality, and Mexican growers can use any pesticides they want, including DDT.

Fruits are coming in. The California cherry season was real short, so cherries are outrageously expensive, but Eastern Washington cherries will be in before too long. Nectarines and peaches will be in soon, cantaloupes will be coming down in price; non-organic bananas have been dropping in price, though the organic co-op has been carrying have not. All winter the organic has been the same price as the non-organic, but now our peaches have a significant difference we may carry both.

Apples are going up in price. The organic Golden Delicious (my favorite) may be out for the season, and the last ones we got were of terrible quality. Organic apples are expensive but still available, though quality varies from terrible to excellent. We will have the non-organic reds and Winesaps. Apricots will be in soon, but it's too early to know what prices will be.

Fuerre avocados are out of season; Hass are the only ones available and are more expensive. Watermelon is available, but expensive; but the price is coming down. California strawberries are really nice, and Oregon should be in soon. Local produce is just starting. Asparagus, green onions, and radishes are in now, and more soon. If you are growing more than you and someone is interested in selling to the co-op, contact me (Steve) at the store.

Alternative Info

'Sout time we introduced ourselves. A group that sprouted out of shared interest in "Alternative Intentional Communities" that was refined with some academics last year and defined with the expansion of the Faith Center at TESC to encompass a budding "alternative community formation center," and redefined by increased involvement with the CAREL group that puts out CASCADE is now (wheat** take a breath) is now a more and more workable resource file covering these listed topics and more.

We have available the addresses of a large number of people and places around the region, the U.S. and even some in the rest of the world who are interested in, studying about, and/or living in "intentional communities" of one kind or another. We have files of names and addresses of communities; institutions and individuals studying communities. We have a complete and continuing list of the two major magazines put out by people within the community network about and for the people in communities: Communities, published in Louisville, KY and Oregon Revolution, from the School of Living-Downhill Farm. Many related magazines, both American and British. You'll find books and a very comprehensive bibliography of the diverse literature on communities: pragmatic critique and solution, and visionary theory. You can almost always find a paper with some background and/or enthusiasm in talking about the prospect of a supportive community to share your life and energy with around here, too.

This summer Alternatives Community Access will be working to include most all of this information on computer memory so it can be more readily accessible to the local alternative community, and that it may be expanded to include the social change, self-help, and social/community services groups available in the Lower Puget Sound area.

All of you can help a lot with that by dropping a lot of the folks you know who are doing some some kind of work the alternative community should know about and share in, in your neighborhood or wherever, and we'll ask them if they'd like to be included in a community services directory like this one for Olympia/Lower Puget Sound.

Almost any Olympian would be surprised at the number of their neighbors doing social healing activities in our community who don't know about all the other Oly folks involved in similar work areas.

Let us know what you're up to, and come help to look through all this good stuff.

Yours in cooperation,

Jim Reiten
Randy Clark
Clark Devinney

Alternatives Community Access
A-922 TESC, 866-5005
or 3rd Floor TESC Library 3227
Compost

55 gallon drums FREE or whatever you would like to donate towards a new cash register. The co-op empties two oil barrels a month and cannot return them to the distributor.

If you prefer working in the co-op when it's not crowded and noisy, come in and help clean up before 10:00 am or after 7:00 pm (5:00 pm on Saturday). There's usually someone in by 8:30; 9:00 to be on the safe side, and there's always lots of work to do starting anytime after 5:00 or 6:00. If your household or group would like to do a project together for working status, talk to the staff about arranging a clean-up party, crew, whatever.

The co-op meeting schedule is:

- Staff meetings every Thursday at noon (closed because the office is tiny).
- Staff/Board of Directors meeting on the second Monday of every month at 7:30 pm, Board meetings the Wednesday morning following the staff/Board meeting at 9:30 at Betty's house (anyone who attends three consecutive Board or Board/Staff meetings may then vote at Board meetings as long as they continue to attend, or get themselves elected).

General membership meetings are the third Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm in the Friendship Room of the Senior Center across the street from the co-op.

Special meetings will be announced in the Newsletter and posted in the store. There will be evaluation and goal-setting workshops June 5, 8, and 13 at 7:30 pm at Radiance, and a special financial planning meeting Wed. June 14 at 7:30 at Radiance.

Climb Aboard

Anyone interested in standing for these positions may contact members of the staff and Board through the store, or come to the next general meeting June 20 prepared to give a brief statement of why you are interested in serving on the Board, what relevant experience you have, what kind of time commitment you are willing to make, etc. If you may be interested but are uncertain about the obligations or anything else, make an appointment to talk to one of the staff or Board members.

There will be three positions on the Co-op Board of Directors opening at the end of June. Elections for these positions will take place at the general meeting Tuesday evening, June 20. One of the positions is a six-month term; the other two are each one year. Board of Directors responsibilities include representing the membership in policy decision-making, and hiring and firing of staff; dependable attendance at various meetings; maintenance of a close working relationship with the staff; a knowledge of store operations; and a willingness to work within a cooperative group situation.

Blue Heron Bakery

BLUE HERON BAKERY
P.O. BOX 1992
OLYMPIA, W.A. 98507
P: 666-2225

HERBS

NET WT. 2.4 oz. (1 lb. 8 oz.)

GNU DELI

serving fine soups, sandwiches, desserts, imported beer and wine. Quiche dinners after 6 p.m.

In downtown Olympia on the corner of Thurston Ave. & Capitol Way

943-1371
Alienation or Involvement

First impressions are always tinged with a fair amount of curiosity, especially in places with their own rhythms. I can remember my first visit to the co-op and what it was like to try and find a toe-hold in the organic hustle-bustle of this funny little store. Though I ended up falling in love with this place and became a manager, many people remain on the fringe.

Despite the cooperative ideals that we pride ourselves on, this co-op can be very alienating to new people — and, sadly, even to regular shoppers who don’t feel they have a place in the store. This alienation is the result of many things, but is mainly due to the various “isms” that we arbitrarily categorize each other and ourselves with. Hipism, organicism, ageism, and though we may not choose to own up, even classism and sexism sneak some of us across the face when we come into the store, while others of us remain innocently oblivious. We lose touch with our goal as a solidarity cooperative when we overlook the alienation that puts off lower-class people, senior citizens, middle-class people, gay people, and other community people.

In accordance with Newton’s First Law of Motion (a body at rest tends to remain at rest) this problem will linger until we all take more responsibility for it; alienation is the product of a symbiotic neglect. Those of us who feel comfortable enough to hold our conversations across the store need to be aware of how that affects others. And those of us who feel alienated need to think about why we don’t have a place in the store and perhaps make an effort to create one (being a working member does wonders). We all need to learn more sensitivity in working with each other.

Anna

Co-op Bank

The creation of a National Consumer Co-operative Bank moved a step closer to reality recently. On April 6th the U.S. Senate Banking and Urban Affairs Committee voted to report to the full Senate an amendment version of a Bank Bill passed by the House last July. This move coupled with Carter administration support increases the bill’s chances for passage this session.

Such a Bank could play a vital role in strengthening the consumer-cooperative movement in this country. It could be especially important to so-called "new wave" co-ops, those with primarily lower income members. As a lending institution the Bank could provide capitalization needs by many co-ops to stabilize their operations. It could also be the key to enabling co-ops to develop integrated solutions to community problems such as housing, childcare, healthcare, etc. To help co-ops gain expertise in these areas, the Bank will be authorized to provide technical assistance similar to the services the Small Business Administration provides to independent business people. There is also a special self-help fund within the Bank provisions for use by under capitalized co-ops who cannot meet normal loan requirements.

The Senate Banking Committee took this latter assistance to low income co-ops further than originally called for in the House version. They changed the definition of low income co-op from one who has 40% or more of its membership at or below the poverty level down to only 35%. This should qualify almost all of the "new wave" co-ops. The committee also added provisions requiring at least 35% of all co-op bank loans be made to low income co-ops. They further provided that low income credit unions could be eligible to receive Bank technical assistance, thereby helping poor people to gain control of their own monies. Many of these provisions are expected to meet significant opposition when the Bank Bill is considered by the full Senate.

The Senate committee also significantly reduced the proposed allocation for the Bank from its original $500 million. This reduction was necessary to secure administration support for the bill. During its first years the Bank will issue $100 million in preferred notes to the Treasury Department. The Treasury will purchase $50 million each year for the next four years bringing the total allocation to $300 million. The $100 million that is required to be repaid each year and subject to Congressional review each year thereafter.

All federal government money received by the Bank must eventually be repaid. As this occurs the Bank will change from a government controlled institution to one owned and operated by its member borrowers. To insure the solvency of its operations, and to protect private business from possible unfair competition, the Bank will be required to issue all its loans at the fair market price. At present this is expected to average 8%.

The Bank can be of great use to our co-operative movement. It is, however, not yet a reality. To be a strong opposition to the Bank bill in the Senate as there was in the House. The bill passed by only one vote last July. Opponents can be expected to damage the bill if they cannot defeat it. One such attempt may be to replace a sub-committee with the banking committee stripped from the House version. This clause would require the Bank to automatically cease existence after five years. Such a clause is both dangerous and unnecessary. It would prevent the Bank from securing long term financial agreements when the federal financing stops.

Bank supporters among the co-operative movement are urged to counter this opposition — to demonstrate the need and the support for creation of a National Consumer Co-operative Bank. Petitions of support signed by co-op members and letters from co-op representatives which are sent to our Senators can help show our backing of this important legislation.

Do any of you readers out there have a recipe for Scandinavian rye bread, the old-country, thin, nimble, hard, rye-based, large-diameter 12½" wafer with a hole in the middle?

Clarence Bruce
C/o F.O.O.D. Co-op
112 N. Columbia