



September 1978

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proposed capital fund

One of the biggest expenses for a store-front co-op is the inventory. The Co-op must buy the food so it can go on the shelves to be sold. This means the Co-op pays for the food before you pay the Co-op for it. The Co-op normally has about \$4500 worth of food on hand, and this is a bare-bones minimum. There are several ways to deal with this. The one I like best is the method the Puget Consumers Co-op (PCC) uses. In this, each person pays \$2 a month until they build up a certain amount of equity [at PCC it is \$60] that they get back (with interest) when they leave the Co-op.

I am proposing that we use this system, but only up to \$24, so each person would pay 2 bucks a month the first time they shop during that month. Their card would be stamped (we would get a special stamp made up, maybe even use a different color ink each month so the cards would be real pretty) until they had all twelve spaces on their card stamped (this means new cards, too). They wouldn't have to pay the 2 bucks a month again. Then when they left the Co-op, they would turn in their card and be taken off the membership rolls -- and get their money back, with interest. If they left just as they built up full equity, the interest would be less than a dollar. Of course, if you were in the Co-op 40 years and then left, you would get about \$475 back; but in 40 years that may not be enough to buy one avocado.

This system would eventually reach an equilibrium state where people joining equalled people leaving. If we balanced out with 100 people paid up, 100 halfway paid up and 100 people 1/4 paid, it would produce about \$4,400 -- almost exactly what we need for inventory, and almost 1/3 of the Co-op's outstanding debt. This proposal will be brought up at the general meeting Tuesday, Sept. 19. If you think the idea is wonderful, or the worst idea since the Edsel, please come and speak your piece. **STEVE**

Co-op
dinner
Sunday
Sept. 24th
4pm. til 8pm.

win the
bionic
pogo stick!
or a free
Radiance
Massage!
many more
prizes too

dinner - \$2.00 (adults)
\$1.00 (kids)
raffle tickets 25¢ each

**Olympia
Community
Center**

huge salad bar!
Plenty of veggies
Prizes Galore



Doug Plummer

financial history

The financial crisis the Co-op has been going through actually started when the Co-op opened in March, 1977. The Co-op started several thousand dollars in debt, from initial start-up expenses and the initial inventory. The Co-op started with a 15% mark-up over cost, and then later gave a 5% discount to working members and senior citizens. Starting September 1, 1977, the mark-up was raised to 10% working, 20% non-working and 32% non-member. But during this whole time no one really knew if the Co-op was making or losing money.

The staff did not have the time or expertise to set up and operate a workable bookkeeping system. When the bank account got low and checks started bouncing, we would borrow money, which would stop it for a while, and continue to muddle along. In March, 1978 we finally hired a real bookkeeper -- who then found we were losing about \$1,000 a month. There was initial panic, as some people wanted to raise the mark-up immediately and others were afraid of what the members would say if they found out we were losing so much money. We finally decided to wait another month until we had another month's figures to base a decision on. Then the whole thing got stuck in the mud of cooperative process, and it was July 1 when the mark-up was finally raised to 15% and 30%.

By the time the Co-op was deeply in debt. At the end of June we could not come up with the sales tax money we had collected for the state in May. This money was in effect a floating loan: we would collect it for the month, and then pay it to the state at the end of the next month, in the meantime collecting another month's worth of sales tax. So we had between one and two thousand dollars of the state's money in our bank account. This money had gradually gone out to pay other expenses (remember, we were losing \$1,000 a month) so when the sales tax ended, July 1, we weren't collecting the money any more and had to pay the state May's and June's tax -- about \$2,000.00. This money had to come out of the store's operations, which put us in a severe financial crisis.

We didn't have enough money to pay suppliers, checks were bouncing, we owed taxes to other government people, we owed payments on the new cash register and on loans. It was a day to day question if we would have enough money to continue.

When people found out about the crisis, they responded with loans that alleviated the day to day crunch -- but the long-term crisis is still there and still as serious as it was then. The Co-op has been through several crises, each one worse than the last. It's time we learned our lesson and dealt with it. If we wait for another one to hit, it may be too late.

**Stop.
please
read:**

Please attend
the next coop
meeting on
Tuesday Sept 19
the meeting will
be held at the Sr.
Center at 7:30 p.m.

Also: don't forget
the dinner and
raffle. Help the Coop



Doug Plummer



Produce Update

The new crop apples are coming in. We had Macintosh and some other early varieties for a couple weeks, and the first Gold Delicious are coming in. Peaches and nectarines are into the late varieties, still about 30-40¢ a pound. They'll be running through mid-September. Plums are real nice right now, about 33¢/lb. We're getting Concord grapes from Yakima at about 40¢/lb.

Local veggies are still going strong -- tomatoes at 35-40¢/lb, cabbage 28¢, onions 20¢/lb for yellow and 39¢/lb for white (organic); 26¢/lb for scallions (org). Cauliflower is 40¢/lb (org), broccoli (org) 50¢/lb, and green peppers (org) at 26¢/lb. We stopped carrying Ostrom's mushrooms during August because of slow sales and spoilage problems, but we'll have 'em again by the time you read this at \$1.30/lb.

As far as California stuff goes, avocados are real expensive. The only kind available right now are Hass, at \$1.21/lb. We hope to get some Reed in soon, at around 99¢-\$1/lb. Oranges will be going up a little, maybe 39-40¢/lb (they are 36¢ now). We can get smaller size which are cheaper, but still organic Valencias at 30-33¢/lb. Papayas (Hawaii) are 60¢ each for real nice big ones -- they've been going down slowly. We may have fresh figs in from California soon, don't know what the price will be yet. Lemons have gone up quite a bit, don't know where they'll stop. We may finally get yams and sweet potatoes again! They'll be back in season soon.

We have started a new policy on bulk orders. If you order in advance one case, bag, or whatever-it-comes-in of something, you receive a 5% discount less than your normal price. Here are a few case prices:

Oranges, org Val.			
56-88 size	14.13	38-40/lb	
(small) 113 size	13.50	42/lb	
(tiny) 138 size	12.88	45/lb	
Apples org Gold Del			
17.25	40/lb		
Peach org Red Haven			
14.38	25/lb		
Plums org Ital Primel			
6.38	30/lb		
Grapefruit org Wh.			
10.66	32/lb		
Grapefruit org Ruby			
11.96	35/lb		
Bananas org			
13.50	38-40/lb		

and lots of cheaper non-organic stuff that fluctuates too much to even attempt to quote prices. Come in and ask.

Oh, one last thing. Raisins may be going up in price. Hurricane Norman came along and got the raisin crop wet as they were drying; too early to tell what the damage was, but two years ago it rained while the grapes were drying and the price went from 52¢/lb to \$1/lb overnight. Hopefully this won't be as serious.

\$CRISIS\$

The Co-op is still in a financial crisis. Two weeks ago it was a day to day question if we could come up with the money to keep operating. We have received loans that have alleviated the crunch somewhat, but this does not mean the crisis is over. Far from it. Time, energy, and money are needed to get the Co-op solvent. We still owe \$6,000 (approx.) to suppliers, \$7,000 to various people for loans, and \$1,000 on outstanding checks. This totals \$15,000.

With the present mark-up, the Co-op will be producing income greater than expenses, providing money that can go towards repaying these debts. The question is, how much? The best estimates I have been able to come up with are \$300 a month average -- more in the busy months, less in the slow times. We are right now committed to paying back a lot more than that. Here is a month by month total of the amount of loans due:

	1978	1979	1980
Sept	\$ 887	Jan \$ 204	Jan \$ 104
Oct	734	Feb 554	Feb 103
Nov	388	Mar 354	Mar 103
Dec	1021	Apr 612	Apr 103
		May 567	May 103
		June 354	June 101
		July 359	
		Aug 759	
		Sept 381	
		Oct 248	
		Nov 104	
		Dec 104	

This is without touching the debts to suppliers. We owe approximately \$480 a month. To produce this would take an average volume of \$26,000 a month. At the present gross margin and expense levels, the highest month in the history of the Co-op was \$25,600 (in May). So it is unreasonable to expect the store to produce this amount of money over the next year.

There are several alternatives. First, raise the mark-up again, which I don't consider likely or feasible. Second, try for more long-term financing to spread out the time we have to pay it back. Or third, try other means of financing, like the capital fund system discussed elsewhere in this issue.

These and any other proposals will be discussed at the general meeting Tuesday, Sept. 9. If you care if the Co-op survives, please come. **STEVE**



Classifieds

Bookkeeper WANTED!

at the Co-op

minimum wage
for 20 hrs./wk.
work

lots of meetings to attend.

Plenty of
Responsibility

Apply AT Co-op OFFICE

Some experience helpful.

Community Forum

The subject of a community oriented newspaper has surfaced in the Olympia area recently. Should groups with some sort of common denominator join together and share all their news and information with other groups? Here in Thurston County the senior citizens embarked on a similar project in June on '77 and at this time the only publication with a wider circulation is the infamous Daily Zero.

It boggles the mind to think of the potential we have in this small newspaper. It really only takes a few of us pulling together to pull it off. If you have some ideas on the subject or would like to hear some others call Terri Turner 866-2253 or Chuck McKinney - 357-4685

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& Capitol Way
943-1371

22 American Indian Day

23 Autumnal Equinox

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by Jackie Tracey,
guitar accompaniment
by Ken Wright
and John Rice

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excellent acoustic
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favorites.

All performances begin
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cover.

29

GIL

30

Olympia's
all women Jazz band
helps Gnu Deli celebrate
our first anniversary!!



RADIANCE

has

HERBS

• • • • •

**THERAPEUTIC
MASSAGE**

202
W 5th St
357-9470

Come to the

Don't forget the co-op dinner and raffle on Sept. 24th. It will be held at the Olympia Community Center. The Sunday afternoon happening will begin at 4p.m. with all the raffles to be given away by 8p.m. SEE YOU THERE!!!!!!

dinner & raffle

Editor's Note

Have you gone into the co-op lately, planning to buy a few groceries and found it cost a little more to shop here? Well, it's true, once again we feel the crunch where it really hurts us all \$\$\$\$\$

There are a couple of options open to those who are finding it harder and harder to part with more and more of those fewer and fewer bucks we're lugging home.

1) Go down to the co-op and offer your services. There are a whole bunch of things that always need doing, i.e. cashiering, breakdowns, just stop a manager and ask 'em about it.

2) Work on the Fourteen Ounce Okey-Doke News!!!!!! We too, have lots of jobs that always need doing. Typing, articles, photography, etc.. If you'd like to put some art work in try to figure your time and a three hour project will earn working status for that month. The same holds true for articles and information-three hours work will earn you a month's groceries at a cheaper price.

If you'd like to earn working status by working at the co-op just stop by and speak with a manager. If you'd like to earn working status by working on the paper leave a note in the newsletter box (or tack it to the wall of the office) Or give the editor a call, Terri Turner 866-2253

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Special Thanks

The
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Senior News

RICK CRAWFORD
Publication Coordinator



Thurston County Parks
& Recreation Department



FO.O.OD. CO-OP INCOME STATEMENT AUGUST, 1978

Sales	\$ 17,266.
Cost of Goods Sold	14,985.
GROSS MARGIN	2,281.
Expenses:	
Rent	\$ 200.
Wages	1,045.
PR Taxes	185.
Utilities	73.
Supplies	21.
Telephone	82.
Taxes, Licenses	315.
Main. & Repair	16.
Misc Expenses	35.
Truck Operation	124.
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,096.
Net Profit	\$ 185.



women's workshops

The Olympia Women's Center for Health is sponsoring a series of workshops. They will be held each Saturday from 10-4:00 starting September 30. The first workshop will be on questions and myths concerning women's physiology. Some of the future topics will cover sexuality, birth control, pregnancy, menopause, and violence against women. Call the health center (943-6924) for more information.



Bob Todd



WIN:
a top hat
BLUE HERON BAKERY
gift cert.
a gift
From
Child-
hood's
End
many
more!