'Co-op' tightens inflated prices

By R. Michael Kerr

A lot of people are yelling about rising food prices, but few know what to do about it. Some of those few who do can be found in the Wesley Foundation, 82 E. 16th Ave., on Wednesday and Friday nights working together in the Community Union Food Co-op.

Working together is what the Co-op is all about. Only two people working for the Co-op draw a salary, a full-time bookkeeper and a full-time coordinator, according to that coordinator, Julie Boyland.

Others who volunteer their help can get a four to 15 percent discount off the Co-op's regular low prices, Boyland said.

New Incentive plan

The Co-op, organized in June of 1971, previously depended on everyone who bought food from the Co-op donating a few hours of work each month to help distribute the products to the buyers.

But at the beginning of July, Co-op members decided to start an incentive plan, which rewards people for helping.

Volunteers who sign up for work on Friday nights at the distribution or who work on Wednesday nights running an adding machine during orders taking get a four percent discount for each shift worked, Boyland said.

Workers' discounts

Regular workers who work in responsible positions every week, such as cashiers, order tabulators, and assistant product managers, receive permanent discount cards entitling them to 10 percent discounts.

The eight product managers, who buy the food each week, the clean-up chief, the head cashier, and the two personnel managers hold permanent cards entitling them to 15 percent discounts.

The incentive plan was started as a preparation for future expansion of the Co-op according to Boyland.

Non-students may buy

"There are a lot of people living in the University area that are not students and could benefit from a food co-op, especially — poor, working class, elderly," Boyland said.

"We'd like to see more of these people take advantage of the Co-op. And Autumn Quarter our orders will probably be back to where they were in May, about 450 a week," Boyland said.

The Co-op can afford to give these worker discounts even though its prices are already close to wholesale, because a 4 percent tax is figured into the price of each item. The 4 percent tax goes to a community development fund, which supports the University Community Tenants' Union and other community organizations.

"Anyone who volunteers to work has done their share for community development, and works off the four percent tax," Boyland explained.

Some refuse discounts

"But a lot of people are turning down the discounts, donating their time and paying the tax too, which is great," Boyland said.

About the only product the Co-op cannot carry is canned goods. The reason for this, Boyland explained, is no wholesaler can be found who will supply a cooperative.

Boyland speculated that the wholesalers fear they will lose business from the grocery stores they supply, because the Co-op's low prices aren't very popular among local grocery stores.

The area where the Co-op has the best prices and also the best quality is fresh produce, according to Boyland. But "all our product lines are top quality, and the price is usually lower than those in the stores," Boyland said.

Price difference

At the Co-op a half-gallon of homogenized milk costs 45 cents, while in grocery stores milk usually costs at least 53 cents a half-gallon. Yogurt is 27 cents for an eight ounce carton at the Co-op, but yogurt of comparable quality costs about 34 cents per eight ounce carton elsewhere.

According to those who shop at the Co-op regularly, those prices add up quickly when buying a week's supply of groceries.
Service-oriented aids community union

By Mike Balduf

Residents of the University community, students and nonstudents alike, have the unique needs and problems of urban dwellers existing in a youth-oriented, counterculture atmosphere that characterizes the campus area.

Plagued by inadequate housing, unfair landlords, high prices and a growing drug problem, the University community permits its financial resources to be drained by businessmen who have no real interest in the area.

This is the view of Community Union, a group which aims at "keeping control where it belongs — in the community, by providing alternative services to residents of the Ohio State University area," according to Peter Murchison, vice-coordinator of Community Union.

A loose-knit grouping of four organizations, the union is an attempt to solve community problems without "turning to outside businessmen or the city for help," Murchison said.

Composed of four groups (Community Union is made up of the Columbus Food Cooperative, Open Door Clinic, Switchboard, and the Tenant Union), formed during January, 1972 from five existing organizations, Community Union "serves as a focus for starting community projects and new organizations whose functions don't fall within the scope of existing groups," Murchison said.

He said the union can handle problems which might be too big for any one of its member groups. "For example, Food Co-op and Open Door might work together on a particular project which would be more easily accomplished with their combined resources," he said.

Community Union is run by a steering committee composed of two representatives of each member group, five members at large and three coordinators. Jerome Friedman, former Undergraduate Student body president, serves as chief coordinator.

Open meetings held
The committee meets weekly to conduct union business but major decisions on community projects are made at monthly open meetings, usually attended by several hundred persons.

"The open meetings are a chance for people to air their gripes and to propose new ideas and projects," Murchison said. He said programs are planned on the basis of consensus among those attending the meetings.

Although a Community Union general fund was established, each member agency maintains separate funding or sources of income.

Lack of money has limited the scope of Community Union activities since the organization has no regular income although the Food Co-op has donated $400 to the general fund.

Murchison said the union has requested a $250,000 grant from the Columbus Foundation to finance future projects.

One revenue-generating project was the Community Festival held during May.

Food co-op makes money
The only money-making agency in Community Union is the Columbus Food Cooperative, a kind of people's grocery store started in June, 1971.

Julie Boyland, a Food Co-op coordinator, said her organization has grown from filling 15 orders during the first week of business to more than 400 orders per week during May.

Growing customer volume caused the Food Co-op to outgrow two previous locations before moving to its present site in the Wesley Foundation basement.

Beginning with a limited stock of such items as cheese, raw honey and cider, the co-op now offers a full range of vegetables, meats, fruits and most other items found in any supermarket.

Boyland said the selection is usually limited to one brand of each item and that frozen foods and quick preparation foods are not carried.

Quality food available
She said the Food Co-op was organized with two goals in mind. "First, we try to provide the best quality food available. We think that our quality and prices are better than area supermarkets."

The second goal, Boyland said, is to channel money back into the community instead of losing it to supermarkets outside the University area.

"Now that the co-op is in a secure location and is making a profit, we've been able to
Wayne said.

"First, we try to talk him out of it, and then we refer him to a psychiatrist," he said.

He said Switchboard can provide transportation to area hospitals in cases of medical emergency. "But we have to be careful in picking hospitals to make sure the police don't get involved in drug cases."

Low cost treatment

In less urgent medical cases, Wayne said a caller is referred to one of several doctors and dentists who provide treatment at low cost or without charge.

Concerning drug problems, he said, "We have a sympathetic view toward the softer drugs. If someone is on an acid bummer we can handle it because some of us have used drugs and understand their dangers."

Switchboard operates the Way Station at 251 W 6th Ave., providing free overnight lodging for transients needing a place to sleep.

Switchboard is financed by a $10,000 yearly grant from the Metropolitan Area Church Board and by donations from other organizations.

A Switchboard client might be referred to Open Door Clinic, 1953 Waldeck Ave., another Community Union agency.

The clinic offers a wide range of medical and counseling services to community residents with problems like drugs, pregnancy, venereal disease or the draft.

Fulltime staff at clinic

A fulltime, paid staff of six, including a psychiatrist, is augmented by a volunteer staff which includes social workers, 30 medical doctors, pharmacists, psychiatrists, nurses, medical students, and about 50 lay counselors.

All services, including drug analysis and VD tests, are free with the exception of a one dollar charge for pregnancy tests, according to Jody Beittel, a registered nurse at the clinic.

She said the clinic handles about 30 patients per day, mostly for VD cases (gonorrhea is the most frequent) and problem pregnancies.

Severe drug cases are taken to area hospitals if emergency treatment beyond the capability of the clinic is required, she said.

Beittel emphasized that Open Door Clinic does not reveal names of any other information about persons treated there. "When the clinic first opened in 1970, I think some people were afraid to use it. There doesn't seem to be any such fear now," she said.

Doctor always on duty

Open Door Clinic is open from 8 a.m. until about midnight during the week and from noon until 4 p.m. Saturdays. A team of six people, including at least one medical doctor, is always on duty during these hours, Beittel said.

Open Door Clinic will receive a $300,000 grant from the National Institute of Mental Health for the establishment of a drug detoxification center at an as yet undetermined site, Beittel said.

"This drug withdrawal center will probably be a 35-bed unit for in-patient and out-patient treatment, primarily for heroin addicts," she said.

The Tenant Union is dedicated to eliminating landlord-tenant problems, according to Sue Urbas, a Tenant Union staff member.

Launched in November, 1971 with an $800 grant from Undergraduate Student Government, Tenant Union was an outgrowth of the University Apartment Referral Service, she said.

Tenant Union growing

Tenant Union receives about 20 complaints each day concerning such problems as evictions, health and housing code violations, and failure of landlords to make necessary repairs, Urbas said.

"One of our main jobs is helping tenants recover security deposits when they move out of an apartment," she said.

If a tenant contacts the Tenant Union to complain about inadequate housing, he is told whether his complaint is a violation of the Columbus housing code.

If it is, the problem is referred to Mini City Hall which then sends a housing inspector to the building in question. If the inspector
generate funds for community development," she said.

During March and April $1,500 were donated to community organizations, with $400 going to the Community Union general fund, $400 to the Tenant Union, $200 for community breakfasts, and the rest to various community projects.

According to Boyland, four percent of each customer's grocery bill is earmarked for community development, after Food Co-op operating expenses have been deducted from profits.

**Profits donated to Union**

"We plan to donate 50 percent of profits to the Community Union and 50 percent to a community capital fund for making grants requested by community groups," she said.

Food Co-op customers place their orders, using an itemized order form, on Wednesdays at the Wesley Foundation. Orders are picked up there Friday. The delay prevents wasteful overstocking by the co-op.

The weekly average of 435 orders includes about 35 block co-ops, groups which purchase food as a unit for distribution among several households, Boyland said.

She said Food Co-op was started because area residents were paying inflated prices for poor quality food in area supermarkets. The co-op opening was preceded by price checks at area stores and a survey of community residents to determine the types of food desired.

**Crisis Communications Center**

Swatchboard, another Community Union member organization, functions as a crisis communications center for area residents faced with urgent personal problems, according to Wayne, a Switchboard worker who refused to give his last name.

He also refused to disclose the location of Switchboard to the Lantern, claiming that he feared possible police harassment of persons utilizing Switchboard services.

Potential suicides, problem pregnancies and drug problems are some of the emergency situations handled by Switchboard.

Wayne and four other resident counselors are assisted by about 30 volunteer telephone operators who each work five hours per week.

The operators refer each caller to a counselor or specialist best suited to cope with his problem.

By dialing the Switchboard number (294-6378), a potential suicide can talk to someone sympathetic to his problems,
Co-op abandons honor system

By John Walker
24 MAY 74

The Columbus Community Food Co-op formerly based its entire operating policy on trust. But April's financial report revealed that instead of coming out several hundred dollars ahead, the co-op lost over $700.

Because of this the 82 E. 16th Ave. co-op, which operated under a complete honor system, has been forced to tighten security.

A spokesman for the co-op said "people's mistakes and customer rip-offs" caused the $739 loss. The spokesman, who identified himself as Wren, a floor manager, said figures from April's financial report "come out to mean one out of every 10 grocery boxes is stolen."

Honors system

Under the complete honors system customers were given a paper and asked to weigh and write down the prices of the items they purchased, Wren said.

"Now we're stamping the price on the item and it's checked out by a cashier," he said.

Wren said the co-op recognizes "some of the loss could have been people just forgetting to mark the price down on the sheet. If they started talking to someone maybe they'd just forget to mark the price."

But he added, "We have to crack down if the co-op is to continue."

The thought of having to tighten security does not appeal to the people at the co-op, Wren said.

No security before

"We didn't really have any security before because we wanted the honor system. We didn't want to create paranoia among our customers," he said. "Now a lot of the honest people have freaked out because of the increased security."

Wren said the co-op is open six days a week and sometimes has as many as 180-190 customers a day.

"We mark everything 10 per cent over the wholesale, and the customer knows this. I'd say supermarkets average a lot more than a 10 per cent markup," he said.

"But we can't fool ourselves, we've got to tighten up. All this security thing takes more volunteers than we have now. People's mistakes and rip-offs," he said. "That's what it is."
Phoenix rises from ashes of Olentangy Co-op store

By Tracy Greenwood
Lantern staff writer

There is an alternative to fast food on campus with the start of a new food co-op.

The Phoenix Food Co-op, located in the United Christian Center at 66 E. 15th Ave., offers natural and organic foods at reduced prices.

Phoenix is an off-shoot of the recently closed Olentangy Cooperative Grocery Store.

Phoenix is not a retail store, but if enough interest is shown in the fall, they might keep some food supplies such as bagels, fruits and nuts in the shop for non-members to buy.

In order to join Phoenix, a patron buys $50 in stock and can either pay immediately or work 16 hours for the co-op. This work can include paperwork, picking up or delivering food orders or answering phones. Using these methods, a customer can accumulate as much stock as he wants.

"It should only take six to nine months to accumulate $50 in dividends," said Pat Burke, vice-president of marketing for Phoenix.

The customer pre-orders food from a list given in the co-op membership package. This list is comprised of many natural foods such as whole wheat pasta, granola cereals, trail mixes and natural peanut butters and jellies. They also offer fresh fruits and vegetables.

The customer then either pays for the purchases or allows the Phoenix co-op to draw a set amount from his checking account each week, based on weekly spending.

"This method works well for college students because food is usually the last thing they spend money on," Milligan said.

"With the automatic withdrawal, they know they have to budget a certain amount of money for food, and the food they get is healthy."

"One nice thing about a co-op is that you can ask what is in your food or how it was made and someone can tell you," said Edle Milligan, treasurer of the Phoenix Co-op.

"At the Olentangy Co-op, they wouldn't sell bananas from Guatemala because some of the members found the employee exploitation there offensive."

The co-op also has a large line of herbs and spices which are hard to find in other stores.

"Some of the herbalists in the co-op share remedies for colds and coughs," Milligan said.

The Olentangy Co-op originated in the United Christian Center. It moved to a number of different locations in the 15 years it was open, and is now located between campus and Clintonville.

"I'm disappointed," said Jerome Friedman, one of the founders of the Olentangy co-op. "Their basic problem was that they moved from a subsidized location and went into competition with retail stores. They also lost walk-in trade on campus."

"They needed a location closer to campus or to Clintonville, and the opening of Cub Foods really took away a lot of business," Milligan said.

Friedman said the co-op departed from the original premise when it moved to a store-front operation.

"When the co-op was located at the Wesley Foundation, there were other efforts there like a tenant co-op, a daycare co-op and an open door clinic," he said. "It was designed to support community involvement," he said.

Another problem with the Olentangy Co-op was when it became a retail store, some members were unhappy with the change and stopped shopping there, Milligan said.

Anyone seeking further information can call 766-SHOP.
Co-op provides healthy choice

Students looking for a healthy, organic alternative to the often chemical-ridden supermarket food fare should try the King Avenue Food Co-op.

The co-op's primary mission is to offer a healthy alternative to commercially grown food, said Evan Davis, co-op founding member and board member.

The non-profit King Avenue Co-op sells natural foods and related items for the lowest possible prices, Davis said.

Located at 203 King Ave. in the basement of the North Presbyterian Church, the co-op recently celebrated its first anniversary with the addition of a new room, Davis said.

"The new addition will be an area where the members can sell their homemade jewelry, clothing and crafts," Davis said.

Organically grown foods, such as vegetables, brown rice, dried fruits, beans, spices, herbal teas and pastas are the co-op's staples, Davis said.

"Organically grown foods are grown without the help of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers," Davis said.

"Commercial foods are grown with those chemicals, which are unhealthy for the body and the environment," he said.

Davis said organic foods are grown with natural fertilizers that don't harm the body or the ecosystem.

"Chemical fertilizers can seep into the ground and become harmful to water supplies," Davis said.

Chemical fertilizers might also contain some of the 600 known toxins in use today, Davis said.

"The only way you can tell you're not eating toxins is by eating organic," Davis said. "Toxins are abundant in commercial foods."

Besides being safer to eat and environmentally friendly, organic foods are higher in nutrition than commercial foods, Davis said.

The co-op's food prices are also comparable to supermarket prices, Davis said.

The most popular foods at the co-op include Indian curries, different varieties of rice, coffee, Middle Eastern foods and fresh baked breads, Davis said.

The breads are baked every Saturday morning in the church ovens from flour ground fresh that day, Davis said.

"We sell biodegradable soaps, detergents, recycled paper products and cosmetic products that are free of animal testing," Davis said.

Within the last year, the co-op has gained 200 members, one-third of the members are OSU students, Davis said.

A year ago, Davis was part of a 100-member natural foods buying club in Clintonville. The buying club was part of the Federation of Ohio River Co-ops, a wholesale co-op where the King Avenue Co-op now gets most of its products, Davis said.

"We knew if we moved to King Avenue we could reach more people," he said.

A membership costs $6 per year for an individual or $10 for a household, Davis said.

"Non-members can shop at the store, but they don't receive the 5 percent discount on all products as members do," Davis said.

A quarter of the members work for the co-op, Davis said.

Working volunteers put in two shifts per month for a discount of up to 15 percent on all products, Davis said.

The membership believes in increasing the awareness of health and environmental issues in the community, Davis said.

"We want to promote a healthy lifestyle," he said.
Neighborhood Services supports students in need

By Amanda Hough
Lantern staff writer

Needy people in the campus area and some OSU students are being helped by a local food pantry.

Neighborhood Services, located at 82 E. 16th Ave., supplies the area's needy with non-perishable food items.

Denise Youngsteadt-Parrish, director of Neighborhood Services, said some international students have been using a division of the service called Food Pantry.

"By the time they pay tuition and find somewhere to live, they have nothing left to buy food," Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

The variety of people who use the pantry dispels the assumption of international students having a lot of money, Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

The pantry, which is close to campus, helps familiarize students and other people with the resources available.

"If a person comes to the point that they need government assistance, the Red Cross or a legal advocate, you may have to travel all over the city to each department," Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

"When you can't afford food or clothes, it is unlikely you can afford bus fare," Youngsteadt-Parrish said. Neighborhood Services offers these services in one location, close to campus.

The service distributed food to 934 people in March. The majority of recipients were between one and 18 years of age.

Youngsteadt-Parrish said it is important to remember how many needy people exist when considering the reasons why the pantry needs assistance.

She said although the pantry has success with its campaigns to maintain the food pantry and to provide material assistance, it struggles to dissipate myths about the needy in the community.

"The panhandlers on High Street could be the only image of poverty students see. There is a population of poor. Society doesn't see or associate with the problem of the hungry or homeless," Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

She said the service acts as a link for people to access help. It is a means by which some of the red tape in social welfare can be cut.

The service looks to Project Community, a student organization at Ohio State, for volunteers in its pantry.

Julie Lester, a volunteer for the past two years, said about 15 to 20 students work as volunteers for the service a few hours a week.

Student participation is always welcome, Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

When students move out of dormitories and apartments, Project Community and The Pantry want them to remember to donate food, furniture, clothes and carpets rather than throwing the items away, Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

At the end of every Spring Quarter dumpsters are placed at the North and South sides of campus and several off-campus sites.

"All you have to do is put it in the dumpster, we'll do the rest," Lester said.