

**LCFC NEWSLETTER**

**Special Report**

**This is not a**

**regular**

**NEWSLETTER**

**Read on...**

**April 1978**

# Looking at our Co-op

Soon the Leon County Food Co-op will be four years old. In those four years, it grew in membership numbers as well as in physical size. The move to the store on Gaines Street expanded our potential, allowing for this radiant growth in several directions.

The attitude of LCFC seems to have been basically loose and unstructured as much as possible. Within this loose framework, we have accomplished much.

Perhaps the phenomenal rate of membership growth is slowing. With several thousand households, we have achieved the broad member base we so desperately needed two years ago. But, the time has come for us to make our act a little tighter, to provide as much quality as we provide quantity, and to create a governing process that operates fairly and efficiently.

But how? What is the prime motivation of a large-volume co-op? When decisions have to be made, who should make them? How can general members have their input make a difference? How many coordinators do we need? What is the case for paid cashiers?

It's become obvious that the Board of Directors must involve itself with the complex issues a thriving alternative grocery store revolves within. There are policy issues, financial issues and legal issues for the BOD to consider. The BOD meets once or twice monthly to inform themselves of these issues. But they **are** complex. And often the decisions aren't clear cut.

This special edition of the LCFC Newsletter is the reflection of some of the most concerned members and BOD members. They took the time and energy to discern their feelings and to state their opinions on some of the most pressing decisions LCFC faces now.

If you're concerned about the direction our ship - our Co-op - sails, then sign on as the crew. Lend your energy, not only toward your work obligations, but toward the governing process of LCFC. Find a BOD member and state your feelings, ask questions, demand answers. Come to general membership meetings and BOD meetings. You would be amazed at how easily influenced humans can be when strong viewpoints are expressed. And, if your view is expressed, you can bet it will receive consideration.

Though in the past decisions have been made with little outside input, it doesn't have to continue that way. And it probably won't if serious, informed ideas are brought forth.

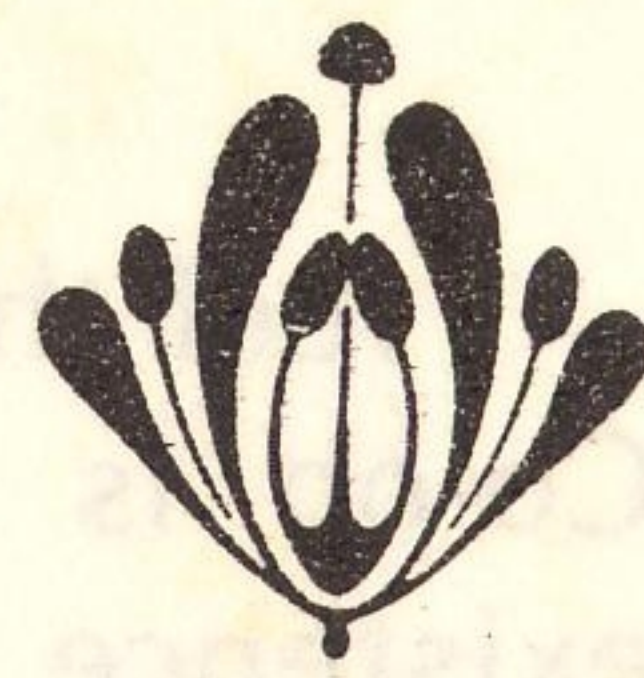
And that is the main purpose of this Newsletter, to help increase your understanding and help prepare you for decisions that you will soon be facing as LCFC members.

One final word: In my alone moments sitting at my drawing board, I often reflect upon the Co-op. Sometimes I am pained or frustrated by what I perceive as our lacks in ability or judgement. But

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# General Membership Meeting



## January 15, 1978

A brief financial report was given by coordinator Patricia Handschy, who described a generally stable financial condition with the exception of a cash flow problem over the Christmas holidays.

The major order of business was a discussion of hiring five paid cashiers. The general consensus was against such a step. Clustered members felt that the register assistant coordinators should be better trained, and that inefficient AC's or those who failed to come to training sessions should be dismissed. Counter arguments were that assistant coordinators could not be found in sufficient numbers with or without training, that their attendance was not sufficiently regular, that close supervision by the coordinators was impossible, and that it was the awkwardness of the system rather

than the shortcomings of individuals which were at fault.

The result of the discussion was a vote of 15 to 7 in favor of a motion to hire not one but **two coordinators** on February 5, that they were to work part-time until John Woodworth left March 30th, and then both would become full-time coordinators.

Before and after the vote was cast, there was discussion of the propriety of the motion being put before the general membership since such financial decisions are, according to the bylaws, supposed to be the job of the Board of Directors. The members present expressed resentment toward the practice of the Board not feeling bound by the vote of the general membership on financial issues.

Announcements were made of a party to be held at Tommy's, of LCFC participation in Health Week, and of the fact that applications for coordinator were being taken.

A brief discussion about encouraging member participation in various committees which should be formed in order to accomplish special tasks ensued. These committees could tackle such areas as education, starting the juice bar, decorating the Co-op and other worthy projects.

The meeting adjourned.

Richard White

### Looking at our Co-op (continued)

usually, I am joyous about what we're doing, how far we've come and that we have the opportunity to learn so much more about improving the Co-op as a community center and a distribution channel for healthful foods. And I find that I'm downright proud that we humans can get it together to plow through the unknown, into sunlight -- a viable Leon County Food Co-operative.

Tana McLane



# Membership Participation and Decision Making in the Co-op

I feel that the Leon County Food Co-op is at a crisis point in its existence, and that the members, more than ever, should become informed on the issues, and should act to make their opinions known. Communication of ideas, of facts and of values no longer flows as smoothly as it once did among members of the Co-op. In saying this, I am not pointing a finger at any particular individual as individuals, nor at any particular part of the organization of the Co-op such as the Board of Directors or the coordinators. The problem is directly related to growth, and to our present size, and the responsibility for its existence falls collectively on all of the active members of the Co-op.

This breakdown in communications was not deliberately caused nor was it wanted by anyone. It just happened. But it is, nonetheless, a fact with which to contend and a problem to be solved if ours is to continue to be a participatory co-operative.

We have become complacent in the employment of the fruits of the obvious success of our collective endeavor. Participation is lessening. Willingness to work two, four, or eight hours a month is not merely the point here, though this seems to be a detectable slackening here, both in quantity and quality, in this type of participation. What is at point is that the heroic endeavors of many in the past, in working far over and beyond the call of duty, seems to have begun to fade away.

Interest has been lost in undertaking new and creative projects ("Let the coordinator do it, they get paid for it.").

Little sympathy is shown for the problems of new shoppers, who are seen as an annoyance ("If they can't figure out how to use the scales, then damn it, they shouldn't be holding me up. I'm in a hurry,").

Even worse, we have lapsed into role playing. ("My job is to punch keys on the register...I will punch keys on the register..." "My job is to weigh nuts...I will weigh nuts..."). Or "I am a shopper. I will not get involved with any work even if it doesn't cost me any real time or effort. I will shop and nothing else." This is supposed to be a **Co-op**, with people working together -- all of the people all of the time, not just when they feel like it or when there is something in it for them. I mean, really, isn't that what it's all about? Or am I only a completely uncompromising idealist, a relic of the glorious days of the sixties when nobody had any sense, or wanted to have any sense anyway!!!

So, I have described our situation as I see it. Now, what do I think should be done about it? Here are my ideas, for what they're worth.

I think that members need to become immediately and decisively involved in bringing about the often-discussed educational program for our Co-op. This program should be run by volunteers from the membership, not the coordina-

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## Membership Participation (continued)

tors. And it should cover not only the practical aspects of Co-op membership, but also the theory and value system behind cooperativism.

I think that the thousand and one valuable projects which have been conceived in the fertile minds of the membership over the years - but which have never been acted upon by anyone should be brought to fruition **now!** Members should come forward to take responsibility for coordinating special projects, and they should be willing to put forth the sustained effort - the actual physical work - that will be required. Some sample projects are a Co-op library, a childcare co-op, the long awaited juice bar, a co-op laundromat, or even more mundane projects such as painting the walls and improving interior decoration. These things are **not** the jobs of the coordinators. They are jobs for individual members with initiative, drive, imagination, and a sense of co-operative responsibility.

I think that the whole decision-making process in the Co-op needs to be closely examined for the first time in the history of the Co-op, that unclarities should be removed from the bylaws, and that numerous procedural restrictions be put upon both the Board of Directors **and** the general membership so as to assure that decisions are arrived at in an orderly, pre-arranged manner. And that while the BOD should get due deference for the work and knowledge they devote to supervising the operation of the Co-op, final decision making authority should be in the general

membership. It is not acceptable to me that the BOD should negate a decision of the general membership as been done in the matter of whether to hire a fourth coordinator or not. It is not acceptable to me that such decisions, supposedly by the general membership, should be made by **15 people**. Nor is it acceptable to me that the person who introduced a motion to create a new salaried position should already be an applicant for that position. It is not acceptable that the supposed general membership that decided against hiring paid cashiers were, almost without exception, in a situation of conflict of interest because they are in the privileged minority of members who are assistant coordinators, and whose status as such would perhaps be threatened by paid register operators who efficiency could be controlled much more efficiently.

The membership should become immediately and drastically concerned about the present lethargic drifting of the Co-op away from member participation and control. The membership should become informed and should participate fully in the decision-making process. In furtherance of this goal, the corporate charter, the bylaws and the most recent financial statement and minutes of the most recent BOD and general membership meetings have been posted where all members can read them. And the issues should be fully discussed at the next general membership meeting. If you care about the future of this beautiful Co-op that we have created, then this is one meeting you can't afford to miss.

Richard White



## Save Now/Grow Later or Pay Now/Grow Now



At this stage of the Co-op's growth there are certain areas of daily functioning that require supervisory attention. Some of these areas are: the ordering of all goods for sale in the store, coordinating all workers and special projects, maintenance of all official and financial records and files, responsibility for all business transactions and daily cash flow, availability to all questions, emergencies and all public relations contingencies, and consideration of future viability and growth of both the Co-op storefront and Community Interests, Inc. of which LCFC is part. Right now, three coordinators and a bookkeeper handle most of these plus many other duties. Each coordinator works 30 hours a week while the store is open for 53 hours a week. The amount of attention required for all of the areas of operation of the store to run efficiently and consistently is greater than what four part-time people can offer. One or two more coordinators or five paid cashiers, or electronic scales, or computerized cash registers or any number of improvements that money can buy, will help the efficiency and financial picture of the Co-op.

There has never been any conflict about these needs. The disagreement has been a matter of priorities. The total amount of money available each month must be spent on the most important expenses. The net revenue from total sale of goods must exceed

operating and other expenses, such as salaries, rent, and other bills in order to have the working capital for expanding the inventory, the number of paid employees or buying new equipment. Of the people who can make this kind of decision, some feel that hiring a fourth coordinator will alleviate many of the problems facing the Co-op, such as lack of supervision at the store due to the amount of responsibility (and the large range of duties) each coordinator now has. Others feel that hiring five paid part-time cashiers and buying more sophisticated equipment will prevent cash losses and increase the efficiency enough so the coordinators will be able to concentrate their attention on their primary duties. The other position is that our net profit is not large enough to afford any major financial output such as the \$7,200 a year a new coordinator would make at \$150 a week for 50 weeks or the \$15,000 total annual salaries of 5 cashiers at \$3.00 an hour for twenty hours a week each.

My judgement is to hire a fourth coordinator as soon as possible. Although their schedules overlap now during peak hours, there should be two coordinators running the store at all times. Frequently the coordinator is unavailable to either shoppers or workers due to errands which take them away from the store, lunch hours or being tied up on the phone which can take a

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## Pay Now (continued)

half an hour sometimes. When the assistant coordinators who run the register do not show, the coordinators sometimes must take over there. Many work hours are wasted and very often money is lost due to lack of supervision of the volunteer workers who misprice items or make mistakes that later workers must correct.

There is a tremendous amount of potential existing in our Co-op. If we always assume that the money we make is never enough or if we don't consider investing in our future as a viable priority, then any goals or special projects that would benefit all the members will always be put off until later. Hiring a fourth coordinator is just one

example of using the money we now have to try to make a better Co-op which would then make more money which would make it possible to make a better community, etc.

How can the Co-op be improved? Which decision or combination of decisions should be made and by whom? As a member-owned and -operated enterprise, each member has a share in the concern and direction of the Co-op. Feedback on these articles and this Newsletter is important in affirming the basic structure of a co-operative effort. If you have an opinion, please express it. How many other businesses or agencies would care if you did or not?

Larry Teich





## Anxious...The Fear

Is a man free if he feels shackled by the thoughts of others? I am in an uneasy situation. Anxious - the fear of being free.

These are the facts: In November 1977, the LCFC Board of Directors spoke of hiring a replacement for resigning John Woodworth and an additional 4th coordinator. It was moved that applications would be received in January. At the January board meeting, the board voted to hire a 3rd replacement coordinator on February 5th. I reminded them of the 4th coordinator position but, with scarcely a moment's discussion, the idea was passed by. During the following week, I submitted my application for position of LCFC coordinator.

The next Sunday a general membership meeting was held. I presented a motion calling for the hiring of an additional 4th coordinator along with the new 3rd coordinator. The two were to be hired on February 5th and start work by the 20th at part-time (30 hr. per week). When John left at the end of March, the two new trainees' working commitment would be extended to full-time (30 hrs. per week). We discussed this and related issues for more than an hour. The members present voted in favor of this motion. Concern was expressed by certain BOD members as to whether LCFC would really have to abide by the motion, or if the BOD could simply take our desire under consideration. A coordinator stated that if the voting of the general membership was not valid - would not be put into

action - that she would rather resign than continue with a co-op that was not based upon participatory democracy.

The next week a sign was placed in the storefront advertising "a" coordinator position opening. The day after the general membership meeting, a special BOD meeting was called for the following Monday (with one week's notice, according to the bylaws of LCFC). At that meeting, the board voted to hire only one coordinator. During the 1st week of February, the board was to narrow down the field of applicants and finally hire "a" new coordinator. In the January and November board meetings the BOD discussed whether to advertise outside the Co-op in the community media and around the country. It was decided that we possess ample talent in LCFC (reaffirming in January after several applicants had filed) and there was no need to search elsewhere. However, Andy Leon, in an eleventh-hour move, called for a straw vote among some board members to postpone the hiring of "a" new coordinator so LCFC could advertise out of town. A majority of the board members were contacted and agreed. According to the BOD's own rules, this was not a valid decision. However, it seemed to be in effect.

So the LCFC is having a democratic crisis (either minor or major, depending upon one's convictions toward democracy -- can democratic principles be breached in degrees?)

The general membership voted

# of Being Free



to progress where the board faltered when the job sign was placed in the window, where democracy was circumvented. The follow-up vote by the board raises a question about the balance of power in LCFC. And the postponement reflects a disregard for democratic due process. Too bad.

I first joined LCFC as a charter member. I am into the beliefs of anarchy and view cooperative efforts as a manifestation of such. However, foods were foreign to me and apple juice at \$1.50/gallon was costlier than Publix' 4 qt./\$1.00. Two years later, a friend invited me to a general membership meeting. Many good folks were there. On a Tuesday, I entered the Macomb St. storefront and began my career as a cheese cutter...a job to be done. Soon afterward, I tasted "real" apple juice for the first time and now it's also less expensive than that at Publix. We had less than 1500 members then, 3 coordinators, and a small store (1800 square feet at its largest stage).

We now are 5500 member families strong, have a large building (13,000 square feet approximately) and three coordinators. We have space for lots of food, warehouse capacity, day care center, juice bar and more. However, these functions do not partially or fully exist. The BOD has voted for these fine uses of our building. But now they refuse to vote for a staff adequate to coordinate the space. A move that could best have been made 1½ years ago. Our building is a tool.

Because we have too few technicians (managers), we utilize our fine tool at a lower efficiency and effectiveness.

A new coordinator's energies will be frustrated. Without benefit of time provided by a 4th coordinator, a new replacement coordinator will be confined to the status quo and not allowed time enough to develop other areas.

So, I suppose I should be anxious - finding myself as sponsor of a motion which in effect is critical of the BOD's judgement; and now being openly critical of the BOD's failure to exercise certain democratic principles while at the same time applying to that same board for a job. Perhaps I should believe myself foolish. I do believe in the future progress of LCFC, the democratic process, and I do believe I am free. Isn't that what Co-ops are all about?

Jim King

**Ed.'s note:** The decision to postpone the hiring of John's replacement was a majority decision of the BOD, not a unanimous one. Two BOD members were not contacted on the straw vote that preceded that decision. To their credit, several BOD members expressed negativity toward over-riding a general membership decision. There is now a bylaws revision committee meeting to solve the question: where does the power lie in LCFC? If you are truly interested in working on the democratic process of LCFC, contact Jerry Johansen, chairperson of this committee.

When Napoleon's armies were engaged in their last decisive battle, a man named Grouchy commanded an important isolated section of the forces. The situation required urgent action, but

Grouchy had been given the order to remain inactive till further notice. He stuck to that stubbornly, to the despair of all his allies. Due to his isolation, Napoleon had no chance to give him new orders and thus lost the war.

Andy Leon showed the courage and adaptation which Grouchy lacked when he recognized that the Co-op could run into a difficult situation if it did not gather the best possible applicants for the position

of coordinator. The necessity to advertise the open position is therefore obvious. But time threatened to run out. Andy tried to contact the other members of the Board of Directors, but some of them have no telephones and so, like Grouchy, he remained partly isolated. He did act in spite of this, taking thus the risk of indignation. Had he been in Grouchy's place, Napoleon would probably have won. I find it, of course, very regrettable that the Board members were not all asked, and I am sure Andy does so too. But given the conditions, he seems to have chosen the most ethical path possible. Under normal conditions, of course, all the Board members have to be consulted.

Leopold Halpern

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## The Hiring Policy of the BOD

Something has happened which demands your immediate attention! It concerns the future direction of LCFC and the role each one of us plays in its functioning.

Recently, a motion was passed at a general membership meeting to hire two coordinators: one to replace John, whose resignation became effective March 30, and one to expand the present staff of coordinators. At the following BOD meeting, this motion was overruled by the Board, and the decision was made to hire **one** full-time coordinator to replace John and then to hire another coordinator at a later date. Also at this time, the Board decided on its official hiring policy, which is part of the minutes of this BOD meeting and which has been posted in the

Co-op. (See excerpts below, pertaining to this matter.) From information I've gathered, those applicants who wished to be considered for the coordinator's position followed the prescribed policy and waited until February 2nd for the BOD's decision on who to interview, with a final decision due on February 6th.

To my dismay, I was told that one of the Board members, one who had attended the BOD meeting at which the hiring policy was determined and was therefore aware of set policies, called other BOD members as he decided that it would be necessary to advertise more extensively before filling the position. If you ask other BOD

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## Hiring Policy of BOD (continued)

members, they will tell you they're not quite sure how exactly all this came about, but the final decision on hiring was postponed due to this straw ballot.

It's important for the general membership to be aware of this incident for it implies that the Co-op is under the control of minority rule rather than by the general membership (in the spirit of a cooperative venture).

My impression is that the general membership is not involved with the Co-op on the level needed to be an effective co-op which ultimately responds to its members' needs. If you're a new member -- or even an older one--please realize that your participation must extend beyond the few hours a month you work for your percentage. Let me encourage you to attend the general membership meetings -- they are held once a month (the dates are announced in the Co-op). This is where you are informed of and included in discussions regarding LCFC. It is your opportunity to express your opinions and initiate programs you feel are worthwhile.

It is also the responsibility of each member to make the BOD responsive to the Co-op's needs as discussed at the general meetings and responsible for its actions. Have you attended membership meetings, passed a motion and later discovered that this motion was over-ruled by the Board? Have you ever been told why? Attend the BOD meetings! They're open to everyone. **That** is where each of us

should be, to guarantee that our decisions, our needs and our ideas are listened to -- not merely tabled.

The Co-op belongs to each of us. Once we relinquish our right to decision making, you can be assured that someone else will make the decisions, and not necessarily in the Co-op's best interest. What has happened in hiring a coordinator is one example of this. I urge you not to let this go by the wayside. Please -- come to the next membership meeting and bring some friends. Let's talk about co-ops and what they can become. I think it's time to redefine our goals and objectives and to work from there. Just remember: this shouldn't be done without your participation.

Martha Weinstein-Correia

### From the BOD Minutes 1-9-78

**General membership meeting agenda for Sunday, January 15, 1978 at 2 p.m.:**

1. Pros and Cons of hiring cashiers
2. Health Week
3. John Woodworth's resignation
4. Party at Tommy's
5. Committee for membership input
6. Hiring of new coordinator

**Process for hiring a new coordinator was set:**

1. Formal and informal resumes requested
  2. Work requirement of four hours during a peak period be met
  3. Interview by coordinators
  4. Interview by BOD during a special meeting Feb. 5
- Applications not accepted after 6 p.m. 1-21-78.**

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## Paid Cashiers

Through a rather convoluted set of circumstances, the Board of Directors of the Leon County Food Co-op has found itself embroiled in two very important controversies. One, should it decide to either hire paid cashiers to replace assistant coordinators who now run the registers or, two, hire a fourth coordinator full-time? Arising out of its attempt to solicit input on the above and come to a decision as to which would be the best course of action for the Co-op, the Board stepped smack dab into that behemoth mud puddle that exists in place of a comprehensive policy on how autonomous the BOD can be in making broad, far-reaching economic, personnel and structural changes within our organization. Since it is difficult to understand the later issue without discussing the merits of the former, I will address myself to the issue of hiring permanent cashiers.

I suppose the first thought that might come to peoples' minds is

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**From BOD Minutes 1-24-78**

**Job applications: discussion on eliminating some applicants because there are too many to thoroughly interview.**

**Motion: BOD members are to evaluate the applicants from 1-10, 10 being excellent on their applications or resumes; the deadline for the BOD to hand in evaluations in Jan. 31, 1978; top ten applicants will be interviewed by BOD Feb. 5. Rob Dunn and Barry Snitkin will handle the evaluations by the BOD and each resume will be evaluated of its own accord.**

**PASSED.**

that hiring cashiers will be a dangerous step towards altering the Food Co-op from a participatory to a non-participatory co-op, where members would not have the opportunity to reduce their food bills by working in the storefront. But, I doubt such a fear is warranted. Any proposal that we shift over to an entirely paid staff would result in alienating those very members who have been the bedrock of this co-op, to say nothing of the tremendous overhead that would be generated by hiring the large staff needed to run a retail outlet of this size. Either of these situations could destroy the Co-op financially.

Hiring paid cashiers would raise our overhead greater than hiring a fourth coordinator, but the benefits would, in my opinion, outweigh the cost of the increase. Figuring that 100 personnel hours per week would be sufficient to meet our needs, paying an hourly rate of \$2.75-3.00/hour, we would have a maximum addition to overhead of \$316.50 per week (included is the store's share of FICA tax). What we would receive for this expenditure is a regular, well-trained and easily managed corp of cashiers. We would reduce our absenteeism problem at the register, and it is reasonable to expect that paid personnel would be far more conscientious in showing up, thereby relieving the coordinators of a very annoying problem - running the register in the absence of an AC. We would be able to pinpoint the source of overages and shortages at the register, either of which has at times exceeded fifty

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## Paid Cashiers (continued)

dollars a day. With a smaller number of people running the registers, it would be easier to insure that voids, food stamps and memberships would be handled properly, resulting in tighter accounting at the register, less risk of violating federal laws governing food stamps, and lessening the possibility of members being left off the rolls. A cashier working 20 hours a week would acquire a greater familiarity with procedures, prices, products, etc. than a cashier working two hours a week and consequently would be more likely to spot mispriced items as they come through the register.

But, could we afford a payroll increase of \$1200 a month? No one could accurately predict a dollar figure on what savings might be realized with paid cashiers. Surely, being able to spot mispriced goods at the register and reducing our cash/receipts discrepancies would realize some increase in the cost-of-goods sold figure. But more importantly, by removing the continual problem of having to fill in for an absent two-hour AC, it would enable the coordinators to concentrate more time and energy towards other areas and, very importantly, those AC's who are

normally scheduled to supervise stock areas would no longer be called on to leave their areas and run the registers. Thus, we could begin tightening up on our inventory shrinkage problem. This is an important point. The percentage gross return figure calculated at the end of each month by our accountant is considerably lower than the gross percent figure taken off the registers (the mark-up figure you pay each time you shop). To date, the only explanation for this phenomenon is that we are losing some of our inventory between the time it arrives in stock and the time it passes through the register. Outside of spoilage of perishable goods, this shrinkage can be explained in great part by mispriced goods and incorrectly weighed bulk items. Having coordinators and AC's concentrate more of their time on stock procedures (and conversely, less, if any, on the register) and cashiers experienced enough to know that, for example, a quart of honey weighs close to three pounds, and cannot cost only \$1.16 - would realize a considerable increase in revenue and quite probably offset much of the payroll increase.

John Woodworth

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## Economic Feasibility and Necessity

Whether to hire a fourth coordinator or paid cashiers (or both, or neither) is directly dependent upon necessity and economic feasibility. The question of economic feasibility is, in itself,

manifold. Do we have the money to spend? If not, would employing new employees generate the money to pay their salaries? The question of necessity has its sides, also. Which do we need more, if we

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## Economic Feasibility (continued)

financially can't have both? Do we need either one?

There is no question in my mind that the Co-op would run more efficiently with a fourth coordinator. Ask me when there are two trucks outside, both needing to be unloaded, three deliveries inside, ten two-hour workers needing directions, a new register AC needing to be trained, an order deadline in an hour and bills to be paid. Ask me then, and I'll tell you we need four coordinators. Ask me at the end of the day and in closing the registers when I come up \$55 short in one and \$92 in the other - this is a common occurrence. Ask me when I hold register AC meetings on four different days so all can come and three people show up each meeting. Ask me if we need paid cashiers when I have to run the register for two hours and the bread delivery man has to bring me the check book to get paid.

The most indignant of the protesters against paid cashiers are the volunteer register AC's. They don't want to be replaced. Yet they are the ones who don't show up for the meeting, who don't realize that when customers have waited fifteen minutes in line they don't want to wait fifteen minutes more for the cashier to finish talking to their roommate, they are the ones who refuse to keep the area around the registers clean, who refuse to do voids correctly - I could go on forever. Not all register AC's are like that. Most aren't, but it only takes one a day to turn shoppers

off, to "forget" to put a void in the drawer, or to not show up. Only one.

Necessity. As the Co-op has grown, we have had to become more precise with everything. Every accountant and financial advisor we have talked to recommends paid cashiers. They patiently explain we have to control the money at the registers. We know we are losing money from incorrect register running. We have to correct this situation. Either the register AC's have to "clean up" their act or paid cashiers will have to be hired.

Reading this, you may believe I want paid cashiers. Not so. I am one of the avid proponents for a fourth coordinator instead of cashiers. I value my sanity. I know I'm overworked. Every day I come into the Co-op to see projects undone, work to be completed. Most of the time spent by the coordinators at the Co-op involves maintaining the storefront and doing orders. Extra time is used for projects meetings and increasing efficiency. Extra time that we all would have with a fourth coordinator.

Maybe the answer to the necessity of a fourth coordinator or the necessity of paid cashiers lies in a paid head cashier who could do all the work with registers and register AC's that the coordinators now do. This position would decrease the coordinator's work load, but would allow our present system of register AC's to exist. Evaluate the systems and alternatives and see what you think is more necessary. It's our Co-op and for us to decide.

Patricia Handschy

# Footnotes

This Newsletter Special Report was written and produced in order to make available several divergent opinions on LCFC's next big step. Its purpose is to inform **you**, the members of the Co-op, to stir your thoughts, and to get you talking among yourselves. A co-op is one of the few chances the modern world gives us to form opinions and to manifest those things we've all thought about. But you are the fuel for this great machine and you must get started.

The place we need to begin is by insisting that LCFC's Board of Directors be an **active** rather than a passive body of representatives. In the past, the BOD has been elected rather casually, being nominated and elected at the same general membership meeting. They have rarely been required to state where they stand on important issues in the Co-op. So, how can we know they are representing our interest in the way LCFC moves? I feel this is an area that needs clarification.

Another important area concerning improvement of the BOD is the amount of time it generally takes a newly-elected BOD member to become familiar with the issues, the process of BOD meetings, and

to understand even a few of the ramifications his/her vote spawns. A BOD orientation program of some sort seems like a natural courtesy to extend toward these members in order to close this gap between the election and the first effective functioning of a new BOD member. It would also mean that the Co-op itself would benefit from a fully-knowledgeable Board more quickly.

Of course, if you are truly interested in joining the BOD, it would be appropriate to attend several meetings, familiarize yourself with current issues and realize that the responsibilities and activities of the Board will take a fair amount of your time and likely, your energy.

There's not much status linked to the BOD these days. It's been caught in the squeeze by its ambivalence and the obscurity of the bylaws which govern us. Pirsig ("Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance") talks of progress occurring in two basic dimensions: forward progression and lateral drift. LCFC has been in lateral drift for quite awhile. The time has come to tighten up our act and to move forward again.

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