

# It's pennies saved — and dollars earned — at the produce co-op

By SHIRLEE IDEN  
Yes! They have some bananas and almost every other kind of fruit or vegetable you can imagine.

The Local Produce Co-op, formerly known as the Southfield Co-op, is offering values most people would find it impossible to refuse.

"You get two bags, one of fruits and one of vegetables each week for \$1.50," said Helen Piazza of Southfield.

A typical vegetable bag may contain potatoes, onions, celery, a cucumber, green peppers, tomatoes, parsnips and spinach.

"The variety will vary each week according to what is a good buy," Mrs. Piazza said. "Some weeks we even get corn on the cob."

The co-op has been in existence for over four years and operates each Wednesday from the VFW Hall at Nine Mile west of Telegraph. From noon to 1 p.m. about 100 member families come to pick up their bags.

Many of them, like Mrs. Piazza and Juanita Miller, also of Southfield, are active volunteers who help in the various operations of the co-op.

Mrs. Piazza purchases produce for herself and her husband Vern. They have lived in Southfield for nine years and are new members of the co-op. "My children are grown, but I always have fruit ready for when my grandchildren visit," Mrs. Piazza said.

A 25-YEAR resident of Southfield, Mrs. Miller has belonged to the co-op

for two years. "I buy just for myself and my husband Fred," she said. Both women are active in the workings of the co-op and are currently working at getting new members.

"The more members there are the more we can save," Mrs. Piazza explained, "because we buy in bulk."

The co-op is a completely volunteer operation in every phase of its activity.

"Volunteers work for about 2½ hours each month at the VFW Hall," Mrs. Miller said. "The executives of the group work much longer but that's not required of everyone."

Each member pays a one-time membership fee of \$1 and then can virtually depend on racking up dollar savings each week they participate.

"Members have to buy at least one order each month but they may buy as much as two orders a week," said Mrs. Piazza. "We save people a minimum of 30 per cent on their produce and frequently more."

Special orders are taken for meat, cheeses and breads with certain minimums required. Everything, including special orders, is paid for in advance.

A careful record of purchases and other financial matters is kept by a volunteer bookkeeper. Even the driv-



ers who go to market in a volunteered truck are unpaid.

"NOBODY GETS paid," said Mrs. Piazza.

The co-op opens each September and closes in May. "Everyone has their own gardens in the summer months," Mrs. Miller said.

Each Wednesday morning the volunteer drivers and buyers go to the produce terminal on E. Fort in Detroit.

"We buy from the same people the big supermarkets do," said Mrs. Piazza. "We have comparison shoppers who go to the supermarkets every week so we can arrive at the value of our bags."

Co-op members come to the VFW Hall with their own shopping bags to pick up their purchases.

"We have to weigh a lot of things and people even bring the scales and help us do that," said Mrs. Miller.

Another feature of the co-op is the weekly display of what they call their "surplus table." One week they may feature sassafras root and another week, pineapples. "It's usually some kind of a luxury item," Mrs. Piazza said.

Basically, the co-op members don't know what will be in their bags, only that it will be much more than they could buy at a regular produce store or market.

"They also know that it will be top quality and very fresh," Mrs. Miller said.

The enterprise is non-profit; the active members make it go by being willing to work at it and by scrounging for such things as ballpoint pens to save a few cents.

With the recent freeze in Florida and prices already high for anyone's budget, membership in such a co-op is attractive to many.

Membership is open to families in every area who may be interested.

For information call Helen Piazza at 335-9740 or Juanita Miller at 338-2318.

It's like money in the bank when you belong to the local produce co-op where savings add up to several dollars each week. (Photos by Jack Margolis)



Waiting for her mom to complete her weekly produce shopping, Angela Wallace of Southfield shows her restlessness.



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## Art Association to honor faculty

Stained glass work by a local artist will be exhibited by the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association at 8 p.m. on March 4.

The association will also honor its 1976-77 faculty members at a public reception and opening Feb. 26 in the BBAA Gallery, 1516 South Cranbrook

at 14 Mile in Birmingham. The exhibit will run through March 20. Following the opening, the faculty members and their guests will be hosted by the association staff and board of directors at a casual supper.

The local artist, Mrs. Vera Sattler of Southfield, will show her stained glass as part of a new program which will introduce six members of the faculty and their work to the public. The artists will review their current work and discuss how their art has developed over the past few years. At the same time, jewelry by Charlotte Quinn of Birmingham will be displayed.

Mrs. Sattler was trained to do stained glass work in Europe and has continued her craft here. Among her commissions was work on the windows at Beth Achim Synagogue in Southfield.

The program, which is free, grew out of an idea by students curious to know what goes on inside the heads of artists when they create.

This year's faculty exhibition was organized by BBAA staff member Marilyn Derwenskus, a watercolorist who is gaining a considerable reputation herself. Her works, along with plextiglass painting by Leslie Masters of Troy, will be displayed at 8 p.m. March 18. Mrs. Derwenskus will be assisted by Nancy Kott and Julie Dawson, both of Birmingham. Fred Nordick of Gallery 22 in Bloomfield Hills will direct the installation of the show.

At 8 p.m. on Friday, March 11, the sculpture of Sergio DeGustai of Detroit and fiber sculpture by Carolyn Hall of Birmingham will be on view at the BBAA Gallery.

BBAA faculty includes 56 members whose work represents a wide variety of media: Clay, sculpture, metals, enamels, fibers, batik, collage, photography, printing, drawing, watercolor, acrylic and oil.

The BBAA Gallery is open free of charge to the public Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call 644-0866.



### Cardiopulmonary

Farmington Hills Junior Women's Club sponsors a three-hour demonstration on cardiopulmonary resuscitation March 23 at Farmington Hills Community Library. Michigan Heart Association personnel will conduct the class and answer questions beginning at 7:30 p.m. The session is free, but registration through Sandy Donlon, 851-4928, is necessary.



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