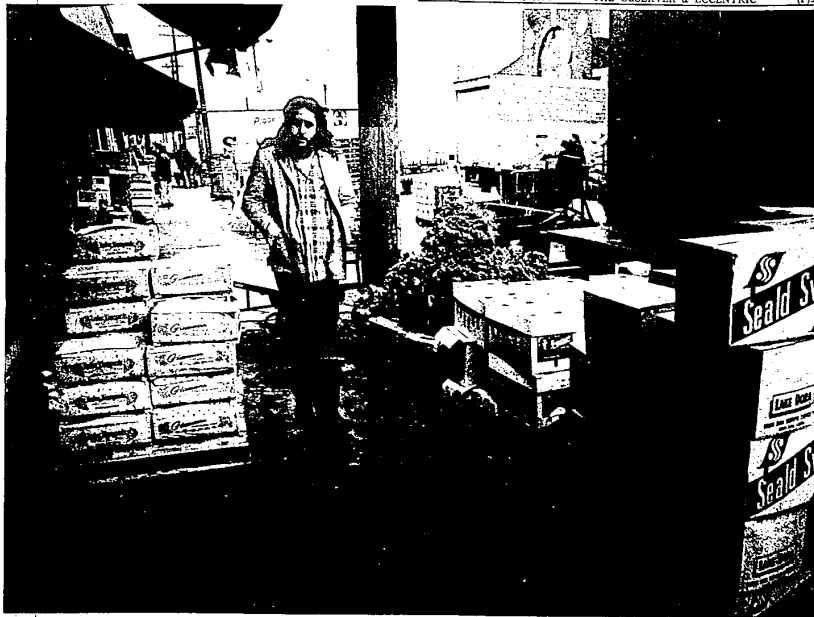




Filling bags is part of the smart shopper's job.



Savings mean looking over Eastern Market's produce early in the morning--before the rush (Photographed by Harry Mauthe)

Shoppers fight back at rising food prices

By JACKIE KLEIN

Would you believe you can buy \$7.74 worth of fruit and vegetables for \$4 in these inflation-plagued times?

Soaring food prices are getting everyone down. But a group of volunteers in the John Grace School area are doing more than griping.

The idea for a food co-op was brainstormed last December by Thomas Frommeyer, director of the Southfield Social Services Department and frustrated shoppers.

Madelaine Barrett, 26651 Shawasssee, co-ordinated the Southfield Food Co-op which was launched in the spring with 60 member families.

Membership has mushroomed to 150, and the waiting list is growing. Plans are to start another co-op in the northwest section of the city.

IT'S 6:30 A.M. Wednesday, and three trucks travel through the dawn-darkened streets to Detroit's Eastern Market. One of the drivers is Lou Laurentian who receives free groceries and gas money for his weekly efforts.

Buyers Linda Tytar and Phyllis Paccocco are the other two drivers who also shop, check prices and load and unload tons of food each week.

They scrutinize the produce in the stalls, hunting discriminately for top quality merchandise. Eastern Market wholesalers greet them with "Good morning!" in Polish, Italian, Greek and Yiddish.

The women purchase food with the combined \$4 per member advance payments and use a comparison shopping list from five supermarkets, prepared by volunteer shoppers.

The trucks return at 10-15 a.m. to the VFW Hall on Nine Mile Road, just west of Telegraph Road, with almost two tons of groceries for \$503.20.

VOLUNTEERS divide the fruits and vegetables into paper bags, two per customer. Co-op members arrive at 12:30 and pick up their \$4 bargains.

Mrs. Tytar explained what goes into the 262 bags and how much money is saved.

"We paid 21 cents for rutabaga which was unavailable in the stores," she said.

"Broccoli is 69 cents in the market, and we got it for 41 cents. The store price of celery is 49 cents, and we paid 33 cents."

The cucumbers are selling two for 39 cents in the markets, we purchased

two for 46 cents. The "not much good to lousy" lettuce you pay 33 cents for in the market, we sell for 33 cents and it's top quality."

THREE POUNDS of dry yellow onions cost 79 cents in super markets, and coop members get them for 21 cents. Michigan potatoes at 60 cents for five pounds in the stores are sold for 35 cents.

Three pounds of small delicious apples, 88 cents in stores, go for 24 cents. D'anjou pears, 39 cents a pound, are sold for 10 cents a pound to co-op shoppers.

Bananas, 19 cents a pound, are sold for 13 cents and tangelos, six for 79 cents in the stores, sell for a co-op price of 26 cents.

"We figure the 131 families we shopped for this week each saved \$3.74," Mrs. Tytar said.

"All of the members don't order groceries every Wednesday, but they do it at least twice a month. If they skip a month, their membership is dropped."

"Each member gets the same items, and they can't trade a rutabaga for a head of lettuce unless they swap among themselves. The shoppers bring their own paper bags be-

cause—at one cent a piece whole-sale—we can't afford to buy them. Plastic bags are donated."

The group could use more volunteer buyers Wednesday mornings, more truck drivers and donations in lieu of service, Mrs. Tytar said. Volunteers work on a rotating basis each month.

Volunteers buy their own produce, but they get first crack at the surplus table where they can purchase larger quantities of food, including meat and cheese, Mrs. Barrett said.

MABEL TOTH is in charge of special orders, purchased in wholesale quantities and sold at bargain prices.

"One customer bought a whole loin of beef and figured he paid 95 cents a

pound for sirloin and porterhouse steaks which are selling for astronomical prices in the stores," Mrs. Toth said.

Special orders include Longhorn cheese, sausages, hot dogs, frozen beef patties and whole lunch meats in large quantities.

"You've never tasted better beef liver or chuck pot roast,"

"Special meat orders are comparison shopped and, though store prices are subject to change, you can save a lot of money buying in quantities," Mrs. Toth said.

BARBARA IGNASH is in charge of comparison shopping of produce. Five women go to five large supermarket

chain stores at the beginning of each week when prices change. They mark all the prices, and Mrs. Ignash compiles them on shopping lists for the co-op buyers.

Josephine Ledbetter, the bookkeeper for the group, devised her own system and does a fantastic job, said Mrs. Barrett.

The kitchen is busy on Wednesday with volunteers weighing and packaging produce and special orders.

A major benefit, Frommeyer said, is that the project has brought the John Grace area neighbors together in an enthusiastic effort, not only to fight inflation but to help each other.



Class trips still popular

(Continued from page 1)

Monroe, the trip would probably be approved," said Lewis Schulman, assistant superintendent of schools in Farmington.

The main criterion for the trip is that it be of recognizable educational value, and have relevance to classes the student currently is taking.

Destinations such as the Bahamas, Jamaica and Europe were not deemed of proper educational value, besides actually placing schools in positions of possible liability.

"What would happen if the travel company folded and the students were stranded in Europe? It has happened before," Schulman said.

"Trips overseas have become very exclusive, with fewer and fewer students and their parents willing to spend the money, he explained.

"IT'S NOT a proper thing for schools to support, and students by and large felt that way, too."

Nevertheless, senior trip planning is in full swing in Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison high

schools. But the initiative comes from the students and their parents, who are careful to emphasize that point.

"No matter how much we stress this, if they hear my name and (my involvement in other class activities), they naturally think the school is involved," said one student planner.

"The travel company we're dealing with sent flyers to all seniors. Someone's parent found one, and complained to Mr. Schulman, saying, 'I thought we weren't going to have any senior trips anymore.' We're doing this on our own."

She also expressed uncertainty regarding the actual meaning of the school board ruling.

"This is a trial period we're in right now. No one knows how far the ruling goes. We don't know the exact wording or what it means, even though we had it explained to us at the beginning of the year."

"We don't know; maybe they'll tell us we can't do it, but we don't know until we try."

HARRISON STUDENTS are planning a seven-day trip to Freeport Is-

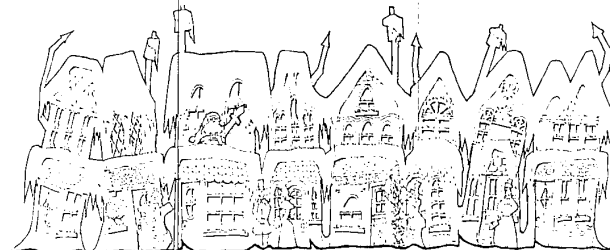
land in the Bahamas, beginning June 12. The trip will cost \$209, and it's not certain how many students will go along.

North Farmington students surveyed last fall showed interest in trips to Disney World, Toronto, Colorado and the Bahamas. The survey was conducted by word-of-mouth.

Trouble is, the planners aren't sure how to get to interested students without going through the schools in some respect. The travel company has offered to set up a meeting with the seniors, but aren't sure who and how many are interested.

Any senior trips are at best in only nebulous propositions. No one seems to know how many students are actively participating or how many are waiting interested, on the fringes. School personnel are scrupulously avoiding the slightest contact with the planned trips.

And school administrators insist they are not punishing their students, but attempting to take a more responsible and reasonable tack in protecting students' and the taxpayer's money.



Santa's Here

10:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Daily
11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Sunday

in his Village in Crowley Court. Christmas is for Kids at Livonia Mall. Free gift to each child, souvenir pictures available, Kiddie rides, even an old-fashioned Merry-Go-Round. Santa has a special surprise for the first 200 kids to visit him daily.



There's something for Dad and Mom, too!

A glassblower with his fragile crystal creations; an outstanding artist with his miniatures, Roger Mason; also, a potter, and Tasco the Caricaturist (after Thanksgiving)

We even remembered big brother and sister with original screened T-shirts, and the Pixeland Diggers for their amusement.



Livonia Mall

7 Mile at Middlebelt

Starting Friday-Open 'til 9:30 p.m. Sunday 11-6 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SHOP
TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS
WHEN OUR CLERKS
HAVE TIME TO BE
EXTRA ATTENTIVE!