

# SPECTRUM

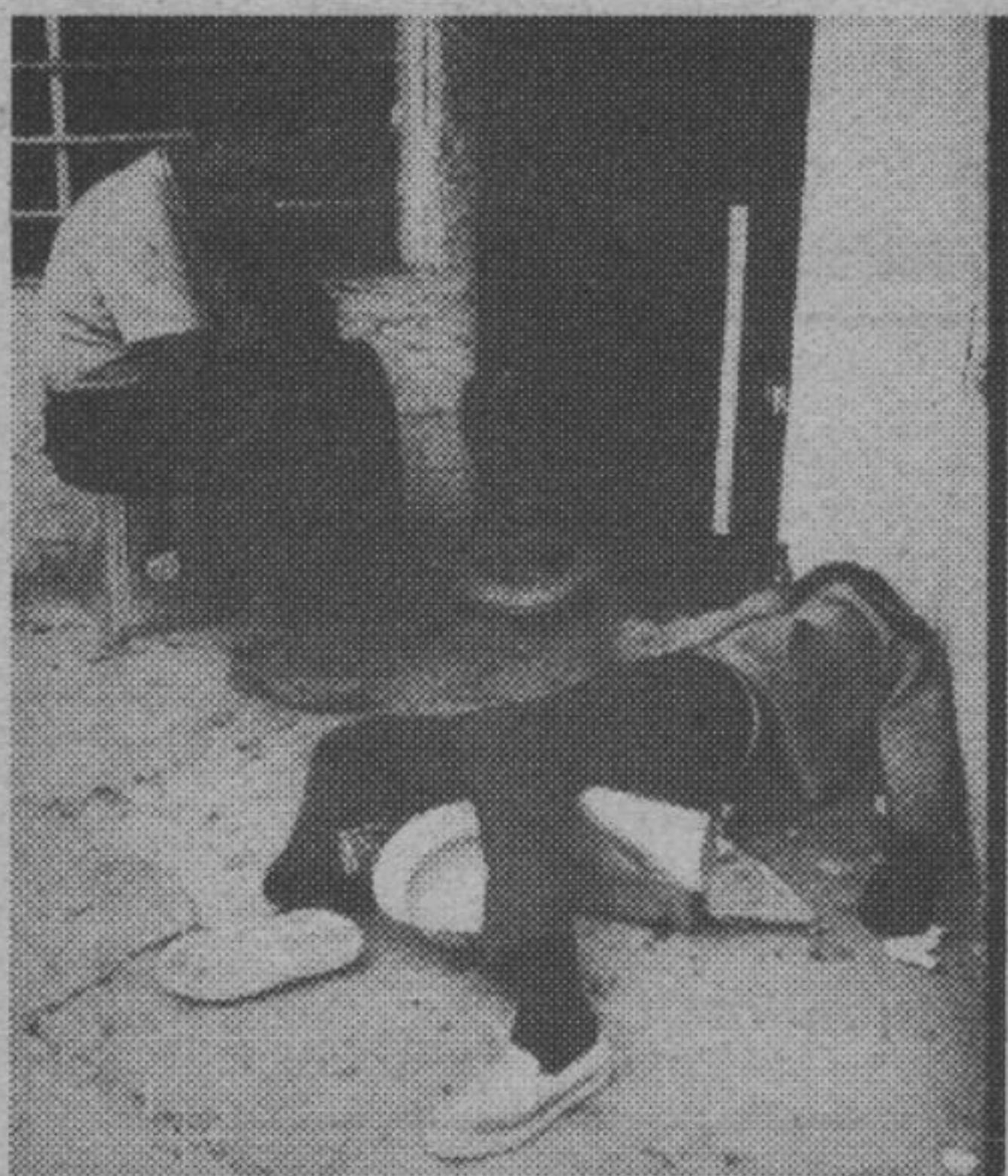
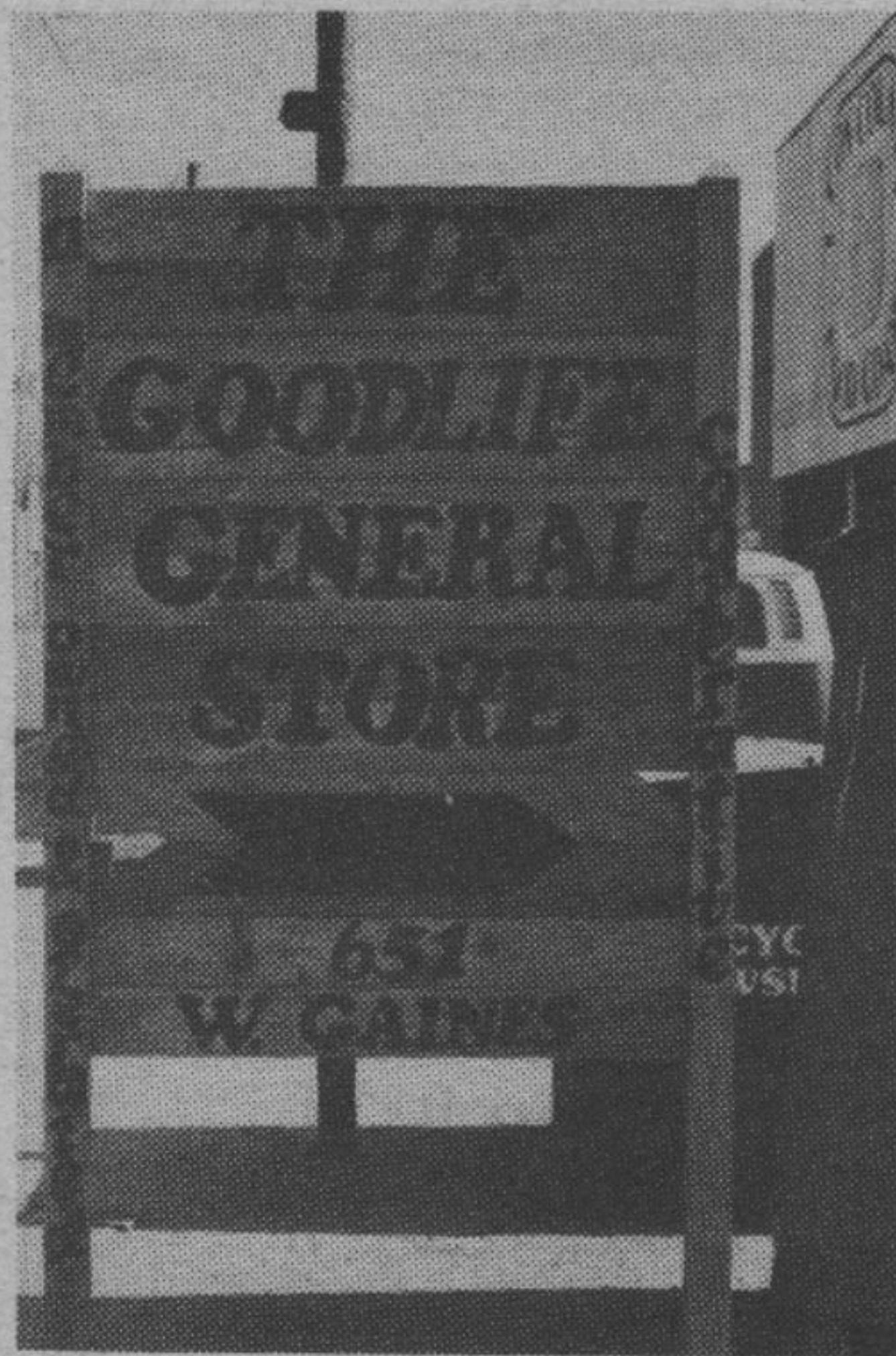
A Cooperative Newspaper for the Tallahassee Community

May, 1984

Issue 44

FREE





## Tallytopia: A Decade and More

by Jerry Johansen

*"Mayday, 1974. The Leon County Food Cooperative opens its doors on a wish and a whim. The shelves are stocked with food worth a grand total of \$268.58. The inventory includes canned soup, five garbage cans of flour and grain, and junk food picked up from railroad salvage. The entire store is but a little larger than the cheese workroom we have today."*

LCFC is ten years old this month. In this brief time, our local food co-op has grown from its humble beginnings to become the largest storefront food co-op in the Southeast U.S.A. The name of LCFC is familiar in communities all over the country; as is our reputation as a center of cooperative volunteerism. Ownership of our building and grounds gives us room to grow and a security seldom found in other operations like ours. In this issue of *SPECTRUM* we celebrate this anniversary as a reminder of how much we have accomplished here, and yet how relatively untapped our potential still is.

I was a newcomer. By the time I arrived in 1977, LCFC was already starting to fill up the full size Gaines Street location. My early memories are of strange foods and a sense of a "clique" that made me wonder if participation was worth it. I held on, taking to heart that, as a co-op, I really owned this place! At the time, *SPECTRUM* was still the *LCFC Newsletter*. Through that I became friends with Tana McLane and Larry Teich. The friendships and adventures that have flowed from this first one would fill novels. I came to Tallahassee for graduate school with leaving soon on my mind. The education I have received through my co-op involvements these past seven years has far surpassed my formal studies in personal usefulness. Where else would a philosophy major get to learn to run a cash register? I doubt now that Tallahassee will ever leave me.

LCFC was a newcomer once too. By 1974, Tallahassee was already known as a center of 'progressive' activity — "The Berkeley of the South". There were already co-ops. Community Literature ran the Book and Record Co-op. The Miccosukee Land Co-op folks were digging foundations. There was already a food co-op too! — the Alumni Village Fruit and Vegetable Buying Club. You can read about some of these things in this issue. Many other stories are still untold, or have been told in earlier *SPECTRUMS*.

In the years since, cooperation between these groups and the people in them helped build our cooperative system further. Co-op Books helped LCFC financially. LCFC provided low cost space first to Looking Forward and then to Good Life General Store. The Land Co-op was and is a primary source for reliable co-op volunteers and supports a wide variety of co-op type endeavors. Canopy Federal Credit Union was given office space in LCFC and, in return, coordinated the member loan program that helped LCFC buy its building. LCFC babies were the stimulus for the Cooperative Early School.

LCFC once had siblings too. Hogtown Granary, the deceased Gainesville food co-op was started by LCFC's parent corporation, Community Interests, Inc. as was Southern Earth Warehouse, an early attempt at co-op wholesaling off LCFC's back loading dock. Then there was Good Life, a stepchild perhaps that may have been better off being formally part of Community Interests.

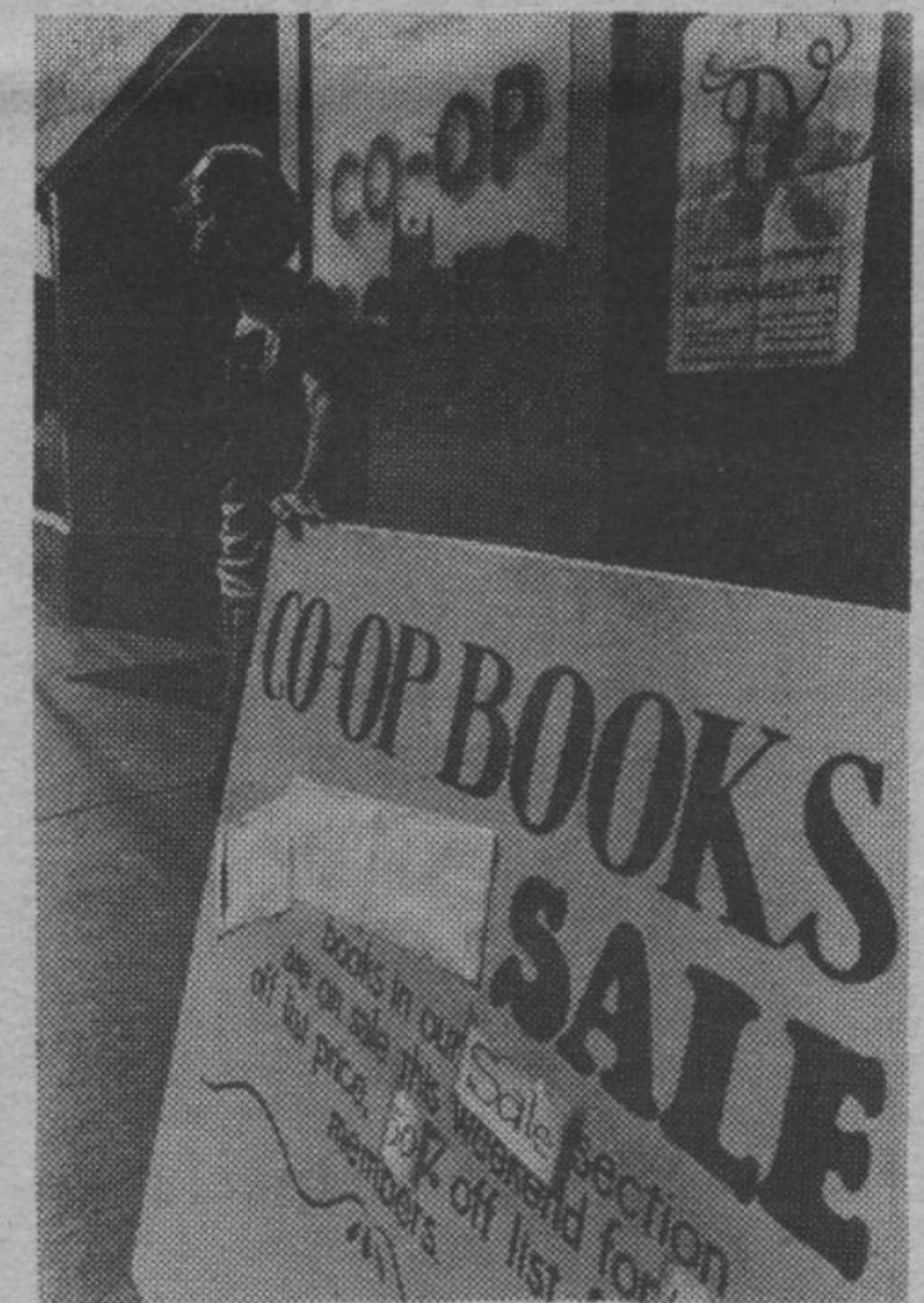
Times change. Once, LCFC's goods were consistently less expensive and in many cases it was the only place certain items were available. LCFC helped build the natural foods market in the area and, as a co-op, kept the profit out to make good food accessible. The grocery industry is different now. Health awareness and food consciousness has come firmly into mainstream America and the big grocery chains are getting into the act. This increased competition contributed to the demise of many southeast co-ops in the last few years. It is ironic that our very success in altering the eating habits of our culture may well threaten our co-op's continued existence as a business.

The perceptive reader may note that this issue has very little about LCFC's current growing pains. Many of you are aware that some consider LCFC in a state of financial crisis. You can read all about these things in *The Latest Tomato* (LCFC's newsletter), on various signs and handouts at the store. In this issue we want to focus on the wide scope of cooperative activity that this area has witnessed in the past decade, and the people that made it happen. After all, a co-op is people. It is the special people here who had the courage to name problems with our society, the vision to create alternative solutions, and the pragmatism to bring this vision into reality. The next decade will show if we have the wisdom to keep it all going. There is much more to our local co-op story; and I will feel successful if some of you are inspired by this issue to record your own co-op memories for future publication. Oral traditions are important.

The LCFC of ten years from now may be as different from today's as today's is from that little Macomb Street store on Mayday, 1974. A co-op exists only to meet its members' needs and people's needs change. Perhaps there will be a much smaller LCFC as part of a multifaceted Community Interests made up of a warehouse supporting neighborhood buying clubs and stores, a transportation system connecting the co-op communities of the Big Bend; even housing co-ops. What we should always maintain, no matter what, is the "village well" function that LCFC serves now.

*"It's an exciting moment. It's an exciting movement. The beauty is that whatever LCFC is... and whatever it becomes... we will have created in unison, with joy, and through cooperation with each other."*

[Quotes from Martha Weinstein-Correia in the LCFC Cookbook.]



See pages 4 & 5 for more on co-ops

# SPECTRUM

A Cooperative Newspaper for the Tallahassee Community

**The Collective —**

Larry Teich, Carmy Greenwood, Frank Brown, Suzy Fay, Linda Miklowitz, Lisa Krehbiel

**Contributors to This Issue —**

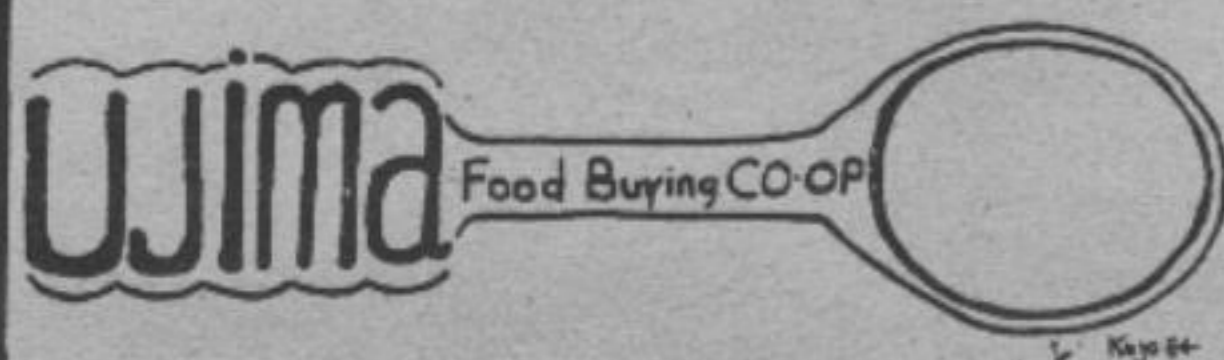
Jerry Johansen, Tana McLane and all the other volunteer writers, artists, and photographers credited within.

Back cover art by Noi

**Ad Sales This Issue — Larry Teich**

Article and announcement deadline is the Thursday one week before our publishing dates. We have an editorial meeting at that time and what is selected for the upcoming issue is agreed upon at that time, with rare exception. Please contact us personally if you cannot meet this deadline, so we can still plan to preview your article. Thanks.

Please address all inquiries: SPECTRUM, 625 E. Brevard St., Tallahassee, FL 32308, 904/224-7222.



**Buying Club**

Ujima is a buying club. It has no store, but rather gathers members to place bulk orders by telephone through the Magnolia Cooperative Warehouse in Atlanta.

The food arrives the week after the order is unpacked and distributed by club members. Since there is no overhead expenses for staff, building or the like, goods are priced at only seven per cent above wholesale. Unlike the fruit and vegetable buying clubs around town, Ujima orders dry goods in bulk.

To find out more call Rod Moorer at 575-5460.

**Speakers Scheduled**

To promote Peace With Justice Week, May 4-13, 1984, Ann Margarita Gasteazoro of El Salvador and Sally Motlanta of South Africa will speak at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of Adams St. and Park Ave. on May 8 at 7:30 p.m. A reception will follow. Their nationwide tour is sponsored locally by the Tallahassee Peace Coalition (TPC) Committee on U.S. Foreign Policy in the Third World which will have its next meeting on Thursday, May 17. The next regular TPC meeting will be on May 14 at the same location with Duncan Murphy speaking on Nicaragua and Honduras. For more details call 222-5845.

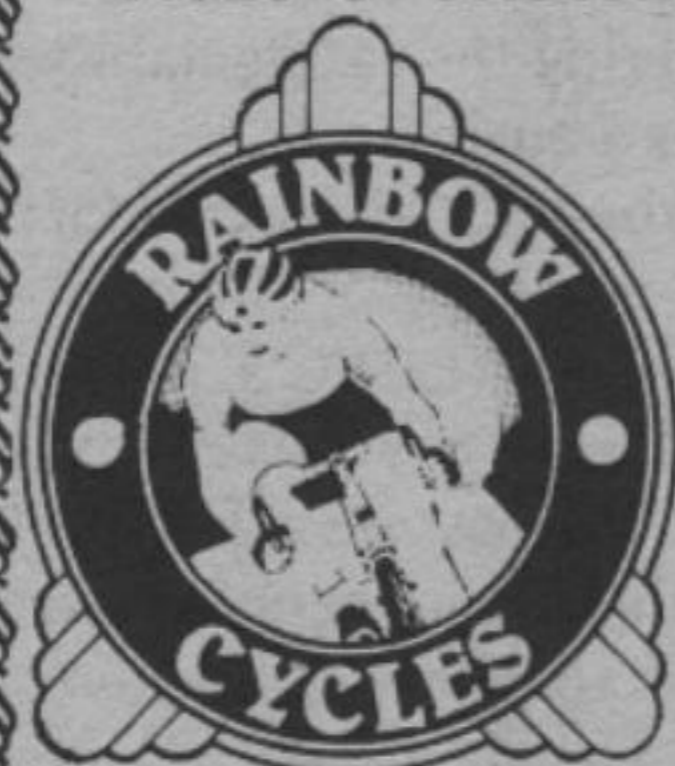
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## community announcements

### Community Glass Recycling

You may have heard that it is possible to recycle glass in Tallahassee. You may have even heard that you can bring old glass to the Leon County Food Co-op.

For a long time several people have worked to get manageable containers to LCFC to start a glass recycling operation. Finally the time has come! Now located in the west parking lot are two large wood and metal boxes and one metal drum waiting to take your old jars.

Save your glass at home. Rinse jars well and remove lids. When you bring them to the Co-op, you'll notice that the glass must be separated into clear, green, and brown glass. Signs show into which container each color goes. Try not to break the glass; removing the container would be difficult and dangerous if the box were filled with crushed glass. If you

do happen to break a jar on the ground, please take responsibility for cleaning the area.

When the containers are full, Capital Recycling will pick them up and leave empty containers. Apalachee Recycle is responsible for the maintenance of this project and receives money from the glass sold, half of which goes to LCFC.

Capital Recycling will buy glass from the public at one cent per pound if you want to make money. We hope the convenience of these containers will inspire many to begin saving glass, just as you now save newspapers. If you have problems or suggestions regarding the project, call us at Apalachee Recycle, 222-1208, or leave a message with the LCFC staff. We want to make recycling as easy as possible so everyone will participate.

### Sister City Exchanges Possible

A local chapter of Independent Communities Ally Now (ICAN) has been formed to establish a sister city relationship between Tallahassee and Krasnodar in the Soviet Union. A successful exchange between Gainesville and Novorossiisk was initiated by Steven and Natasha Kalishman who will be speaking here Monday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the Florida Federal Savings and Loan Building, 601 North Monroe St. (the one with the fountain). Steve met Natasha while he was a merchant seaman delivering grain to the Soviet Union. Natasha had a Masters degree from a Soviet University when they met; now she also has an M.A. in English from the University of Florida.

Exchanges are possible in the arts, athletics, business, education, entertainment, and other areas. Krasnodar has a circus, a large Orthodox

church, and is a state capital and university town. The city is located fifty miles from the Black Sea, where Gainesville's sister city is located.

The Gainesville ICAN group has planned a trip that leaves August 4 from New York and goes directly to Moscow.

Whether or not participants on this trip could establish a sister city relationship depends upon our getting the City Commission to approve a resolution enabling people from Tallahassee to negotiate specific exchanges with the city government in Krasnodar. Gainesville has already exchanged children's drawings and paintings of their hometowns. If you like the idea of exchanges to further knowledge, instead of ignorance, of each other, then please attend the May 7 meeting and encourage anyone you think might like to be involved in exchanges to attend as well. For more information call Dave Felder at 878-6500.

● **Legislative Hotline** ●

The state offers a toll-free phone number for people to call to find out the status of bills, get copies of bills or obtain information on other matters pertaining to the legislative session. It is 488-4371 or 1-800-342-1827.

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# Forche Brings 'Poetry of Witness' by Sherry Rauch

Poetry and politics, good alliteration perhaps, but a combination most poets are encouraged to avoid. Carolyn Forche in her book *The Country Between Us* has not heeded those warnings.

She writes of children "like a supper scrap, /filling with worms," of "mice introduced into women, of men/whose testicles are crushed like eggs." In her notorious poem "The Colonel" she relates the story of a man spilling a bag of human ears on a dining room table.

She writes of what is considered North America's backyard: El Salvador.

For this Forche is labeled political, although she believes there is no such thing as non-political poetry. But what really matters, she writes, "is not whether a poem is political, but the quality of its engagement."

Anyone listening to Forche read her poetry in FSU's Longmire Lounge April 7 would not doubt that it is both political and engaging. It was to be her last reading before an audience for the foreseeable future. She had been in 40 states in the past 18 months and she needed to get back to what she did best — writing.

Forche did not look like the photograph on the front of her book — a classic pensive poet shot of a young dreamy-eyed woman half in shadow. She was, in fact, fatigued, her "round Slovak face" not so round, her hands shaking slightly as she leafed through her poems.

"There are so many I want to read," she said, trying to pick the best ones for this last public reading. She decided to read "San Onofre, California" first. It began:

We have come far south.  
Beyond here, the oldest women  
shelling limas into black shawls.  
Portillo scratching his name  
on the walls, the slender ribbons  
of piss, children patting the mud.

Feeling that "the twentieth century human condition demands a poetry of witness," Forche takes her reader/listener even farther south of the border. In the section of her book entitled "In Salvador, 1978-80", she writes of a Salvadoran poet in exile, a prison where "there is nothing one man will not do to another," and a man, Jose Rudolfo Viera, killed by rightist death squads in 1981:

When Viera was buried we knew it had come to an end,  
his coffin rocking into the ground like a boat or a cradle.

Forche first went to El Salvador in 1978, presumably as a journalist. She was taken to clinics and hospitals, prisons, farms, the homes of American foreign service bureaucrats. In the hospital she dug maggots from a child's open sore with a teaspoon and watched a woman perform a caesarean without a local anesthetic. At one of the prisons she saw men confined in boxes only one square meter large. She soon discovered that 90% of the population was malnourished, and 80% had no running water, electricity, or sanitary services. —See Forche, p. 7

## Paid cashiers, munching ban hoped to erase LCFC red ink

by Linda Miklowitz

For the first time in more than five years, the Leon County Food Co-op will end its fiscal year with a substantial loss of money.

The fiscal year ended April 30. The latest financial statement through February shows the Co-op with a total deficit for the year of \$8,648.

Co-op leaders point to a drop in sales as the immediate cause of the red ink which one Board member characterized as "pretty gross." March sales of \$121,771 were down 12 percent from the same month a year prior, or \$14,416.

In contrast to their normal monthly meeting schedule, the Board of Directors, which has one vacant seat of nine, has met three times in the previous month to keep tabs on the problem. With the recent resignation of treasurer Patience Gaia,

three of four corporate officer positions are vacant. There is also no president or vice president, although these offices are largely ceremonial in function. Even the Board of Directors, however, has no direct control over store operations.

Control is in the hands of the eight coordinators, each of whom specializes in an area of store management, leading to calls from some for a store manager who would look at the total picture.

The Board, reacting to a three-month study of a task force of longtime co-op participants, has proposed several changes to the general membership to tighten controls at the store and perhaps stop losses.

An unspecified number of cashiers at the staff's discretion will be hired at \$3.75

per hour. Assistant coordinators working as cashiers two hours weekly will continue to supplement salaried cashiers, but will be phased out. There have been 65 assistant coordinators working as cashiers.

The paid cashiers, it is hoped, will know the prices better, speed up the line and assure regular attendance. Members won't be weighing and pricing their bulk goods on the honor system anymore. The scales will be moved to the registers to insure correctness. The efficiency of the staff cashiers is expected to balance any delay in weighing.

One issue not addressed is that paying assistant coordinators with food at sticker prices with no markup is actually at below-cost to the co-op, since the sticker

prices do not reflect the cost of sales.

Another change that will affect members directly is the elimination of munching before checking out. Observation was said to reveal that many snacks eaten were not paid for. Eating will be allowed only beyond the registers.

About 70 attended a quarterly general membership meeting held April 29 at Alumni Village and heard a presentation of the task force report and the board's decisions. The members then broke into small discussion groups. The comments reported back to the group at large were mostly supportive. Another meeting was set for May 20th to have more time for in-depth discussion of possible changes such as the work credit structure, membership fees, and the assistant coordinator system.

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# Food Buying Remembering Back

by Pat Seery

The adage is that there are two signs of old age — the first is loss of memory, and I forget what the second one is. Keep that in mind as you read my recollection.

The Fruit and Vegetable Co-op at Alumni village began in January 1972 with 12 buying units. If my memory is correct, Andy and Patti Rissman, who are still in the Tallahassee area, were among the original 12. I joined the group at the meeting of the first pick-up, second collection of money meeting and have been involved ever since.

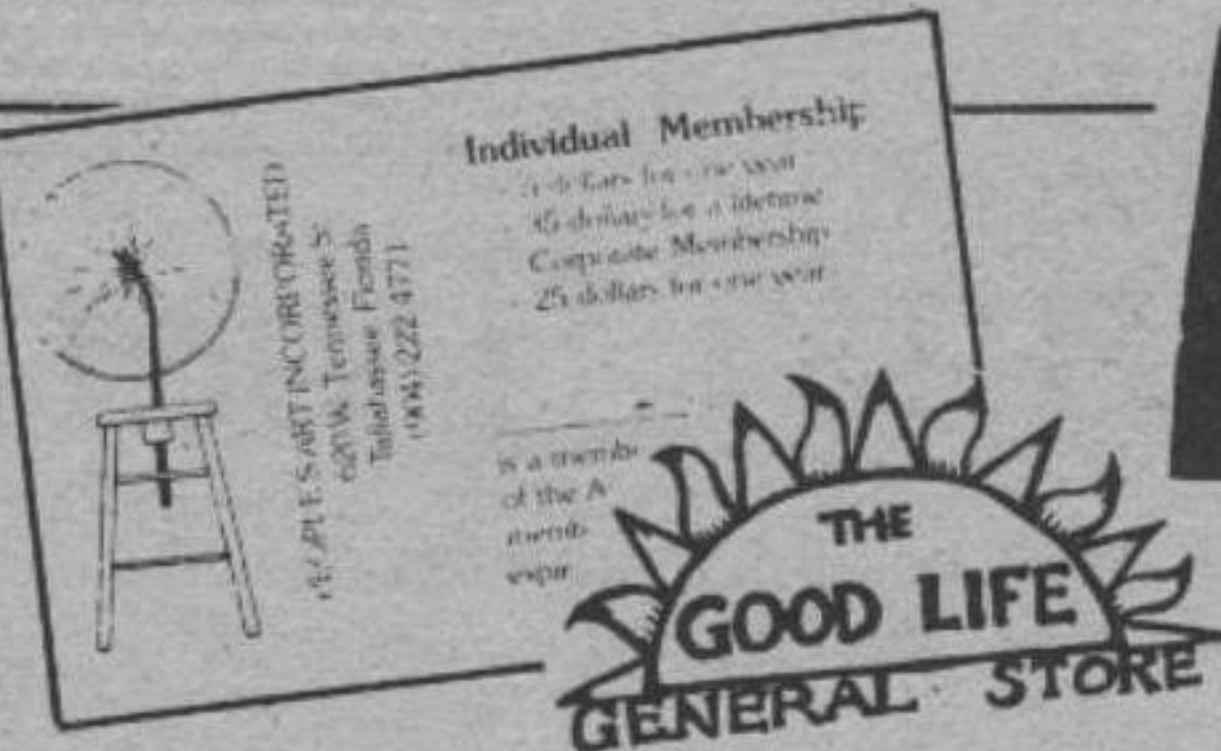
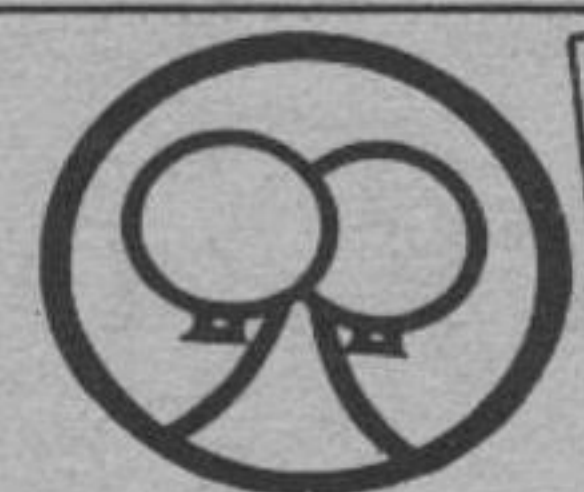
From the original 12, meeting every other week, the participation grew over the next two (or so) years to over 500 orders at one point, whereupon we split the group into two alternating two-week cycles in order to keep the size manageable. That structure is still our design today.

It was shortly after our institution of the alternating two-week cycles that the impulse to begin what is now Leon County Food Co-op began. We were beating Publix and Winn-Dixie prices on equivalent produce by one-half to one-third consistently and it was only a matter of time before the notion surfaced that we

should expand the endeavor beyond produce. To be sure, we had had some people try some bulk buying endeavors in items other than produce, but, though ostensibly successful, they fizzled for one reason or another. It was not until Joe Christy spearheaded the drive and energy that LCFC was formed.

Christy pulled together a group — many of whom were Alumni Village Fruit and Vegetable Co-op participants — and formed a separate entity that is LCFC. It took the stereotypical "thousand meetings"—and gumption and perseverance (what creation doesn't)—but there it was, and here we are!

LCFC opened its doors in 1974 on South Macomb street in the building that is immediately south and west of the Civic Center. It was a one-room operation which expanded over two years into two, and then three rooms. Memberships then, as now, were \$5. The year 1976 saw the big move into the present location. The year 1981, the purchase of the building and parking lots, and now, a \$1.3 million operation. Quite a ten years, LCFC! And now that it's all ours, the work has just begun.



# A CO-OP SAMPLER:



## Journalism A Newspaper of Independent Means

by Tana McLane

As much as I liked "The Big Chill," its characters were not completely recognizable to me. They have no Seventies history, no sense of the issues that were so vital to that decade, which has been called the Decade of Women, and which I would venture to call also the Decade of New Wave Co-ops.

These characters demonstrated during the Sixties. When the war was over and their professional degrees were in hand, they buried themselves in careers which they are just now questioning as the movie begins. I was disappointed that some awareness of political gains made for women and in the areas of the environment, consumerism and economics were not part of their collective experience.

In contrast to them, but perhaps part of this same phenomenon, many of the people I have known in my eight years in Tallahassee experienced extremely busy years in the "public sector" of activism, doing the civic work of serving on various boards, learning to evaluate information and make decisions, and running large alternative institutions. Our awareness also changed and expanded during those years. When we became entrenched in one issue we learned it was connected to others in an intricate web of social injustice and possible solutions. Our co-op work was bolstered when we began to learn of its place in the national (and international) co-op movement, that it was a process going on all over our country, in many different forms. There were buying clubs and large "third wave" storefronts and everything in between.

In 1976, the Leon County Food Co-op was 1 1/2 years old. We were still operating with many of our original coordinators, whom we called storefront managers. We were outgrowing our first storefront, quaint though it was, and plans for moving to our present location were well underway. It was during this time that the LCFC Newsletter was being developed.

Debi Powers and her burgeoning newsletter staff were deep in the production of the first issue when I happened along. Soon after I contacted Debi, I too became part of the process of selling ads, typing copy, laying out pages, procuring art, handlettering ads, finding a printer we could afford (to us, \$50 for 5,000 copies was an all but impossible goal!), and folding-collating-distributing copies hot off the xerox machine.

The Newsletter continued for two years. During that time, it improved technically and editorially. Unlike many organization newsletters, the financially independent Newsletter was also editori-

ally independent. It depended on the participation of coordinators, the board of directors, and the membership for articles, columns, and announcements, but editorial policy was set by the Newsletter staff. Initially it dealt with minutes of meetings, data regarding financial decisions facing the co-op, recipes, and organic gardening. Later we began to publish articles dealing with such issues as nuclear energy and anti-nuclear organizing. We ran into disagreements with decision makers at the co-op over some of these articles and we learned something from those moments — mainly that Tallahassee needed a larger alternative journal in which all the co-ops, political activists and interested individuals in Tallahassee could publish informational and editorial articles vital to building a movement we felt was so important in the 1970s.

In 1978, after we ended the food co-op Newsletter, SPECTRUM began. Two of us had worked on the Newsletter, and we worked with new people we had not met before, laying the groundwork for the new paper. We arranged with a typesetting shop to allow us to put the paper together in their office. We found a printer with a web press and decided to run a tabloid-sized paper.

Six years later, this paper still exists. Most of the original producers have moved on. Some still play a small role in production, and two remain, lending continuity between the paper's origins and its future. Several "new" people have been around long enough to carry the production chores. It has recently changed in subtle ways, due to the change in personnel, and that's the way it should be.

I've always thought the most misunderstood thing about SPECTRUM, something we've had to constantly remind people about, is that this paper is not like others in that it is an empty chalkboard offered again and again to Tallahassee. It has no "editor" per se, though several people function in the role of getting the material edited. It has no staff writers to assign to stories, and is therefore dependent on volunteer writers to determine what stories are worth writing about and to actually turn in the articles. The SPECTRUM Collective is a production collective of volunteers who get together every six weeks to produce a paper that has an eight-year history in this town. There's still time to participate in this community project, and if you haven't seen your name and ideas in print before, well, we're waiting to hear from you.

## Early Days

by Patricia Handschy

From what I remember hearing later, there was a high energy person who was part of the Alumni Village Fruit and Vegetable Buying Club. Being sort of a nuisance, someone decided to channel his energy (like you would a child's — "Here, play with this!") by saying "What about a storefront dry goods co-op?" Lois Bigger and Jeff Thompson were in charge of controlling him. This is probably not a very accurate memory, but who knows?

When I remember the early co-op days, the first thing I think of is the Alumni Village Buying Club, a bag of veggies in my arms. Someone, (Joe?, Lois?, Jeff?) asking me to invest \$5 for a lifetime membership in the Leon County Food Co-op. I didn't. I inherited mine from my mother-in-law who had been talked into it but later had second thoughts.

Another memory is from the first week that LCFC was open: Four metal trash

cans filled with flour, and pop-top cans of soup that the winos bought and drank cold down the street...Joe Christy laughing and doing what he was best at — doing.

Organizationally, the first year (before I started working for pay) was loose. Sometime within the first year bylaws were written, accounting books set up, membership pricing (0%, 15%, 25%, etc.) established, managers "hired" — some were paid in food, some in money and some not at all. One could virtually do what one wanted as decision-making was a collective process. If anyone else liked your idea, you did it!

In those days there was a huge sign in the office that said, "Do it right...NOW!" That was the organization — do it, do it right, and do it right now.

Do it right now...maybe we need to remember that now.

## Learning Sharing Tools, Transportation and Tasks

by Nancy Muller

I live in an intentional cooperative household. The simplest definition of those words is: "a household whose members have common interests and in which property is often shared or owned jointly." Every individual who has lived in a cooperative situation has her or his own ideas of what makes this arrangement work, but there are similarities that run through any experience. People choose to live in co-op houses for varied reasons — to share resources, live inexpensively, experiment, work together, create a supportive home environment together, or just have a place to live.

There are clear, positive reasons why some people have found that a co-op living experience carries them beyond our culture's nuclear family tradition. The underlying aspect of any family is support, and a cooperative experience is often consciously chosen to create support. Building living relationships with friends requires stretching to develop a situation in which all participants can live fully. For some people, the sharing of expenses and tasks can leave them time to explore other aspects of their lives that would not be open to them if they had to spend lots of time maintaining a household by themselves. Sharing parenting among trusted adults not only gives the parent emotional support and more free time, it also gives children more focused attention and options from different people. Friends who live together can pursue shared projects more easily, and the household can act as a focal point for new ideas and high energy. People must stretch constantly, children too. Tools, transportation, and tasks can be shared, thus, less expense and more time to follow interests.

Communication, an essential ingredient in any thoughtful household, may need to be more structured such as scheduled, regular meetings, but many co-op households have not found much structuring necessary to meet their needs. Sharing foods with others

has always been a community experience, and within a co-op framework, a simple meal can become a great feast when shared. Many folks speak of wonderful food sharing experiences, especially when all householders are contributing their individual styles.

For some women, being able to share a living experience with other women is essential. Women often attune to present needs and, according to several women with whom I spoke, listen better to the traumas of daily living. Most people with whom I spoke feel that a female/male balance is ideal. While no men spoke of an urge to live only with men, some women felt that all-women households present more secure, flexible living situations.

While the ideals of cooperative living are obvious, there are problems. The need for privacy, conflicting schedules, and tight physical space are often factors in these households. These problems can be avoided by building or finding dwellings that are less nuclear family oriented — more spread out and even with the private bedrooms separate from a common area. For some people, there is too much constant motion in a household with more than two adults. Needing to communicate with more people to maintain the balance can take much time. For some, there is too much compromising of one's own style to fit in with others.

Everyone I talked to who has lived in a cooperative before would do it again. Some are still flexible enough to want to make a place available and see what happens; others would be more selective and have meetings to determine needs. People would explore many areas such as childcare, schedules, privacy, needs, values, eating habits, projects (and the list goes on); but the two basic questions would be: What are individuals' needs? and To what are individuals willing to commit?

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## Homesteading Turning Toward Town

by Linda Miklowitz

Ten years after its founding, the Miccosukee Land Co-op is still a community, although a somewhat different one. And its founders are ten years older, looking perhaps more middle class than hippie.

"I guess we'd be New Age types out here," observed resident Ed Deaton. Residents have been buying neighboring lots, enlarging their homesteads at the 380-acre site eight miles out on Miccosukee Road from Capital Circle. Of 99 member families, about 70 live in mostly multi-level wood houses concealed amidst the pines and oaks.

Land prices have certainly increased. A one acre lot may sell today for \$5,200. That would cost the buyer \$1,000 down with monthly payments of \$65 and a yearly \$150 assessment for common improvements like road grading. In contrast resident Shirley Moon in 1973 put \$100 down on a \$2,650 purchase of one acre against her father's warning of a "risky investment."

"It was very risky, but it was very fortunate," she said recently at a statewide conference for people who wanted to start land co-ops. "I wouldn't do that now," she said, still pleased with the Co-op, but less willing to take risks ten years later.

The Co-op has become a force to contend with in local politics, although it has used its influence sparingly. Co-op members leaned on the county commission when it planned to locate a landfill near the Co-op and got the site moved. Politicians often visit the Co-op on their campaign swings. A public defender candidate held a fund-raiser at the Co-op community center recently.

In the past year two capital improvements in the common area have given the Co-op the air of a country club. More than \$25,000 in accumulated funds from the Co-op's sale of land to members at a somewhat higher mortgage rate than its own paid for a large community center with a fully equipped kitchen and stage. The unpainted wooden building with its screen windows and exposed beam ceiling, however, pales in contrast to the long, luxurious pool with its gleaming white concrete platform. Co-op residents formed a pool co-op, each family paying about \$750 down with assessments of about \$150 per year to finance the \$35,000 pool. The Co-op plans to add several more families to its rolls before closing the pool membership.

Continuing their tradition of laboring together as they have at work parties at each others' homes, residents worked with professional carpenters in what is compared to an old fashioned "barn raising" of the community center in the Spring of 1983. Residents also dug the hole for the pool.

Families have been changing too. A late baby boom has blossomed. And despite the occurrence of divorces members have not left the Co-op. Many have remarried in different combinations.

More people work outside the Co-op now despite early creation of numerous cottage industries in residents' homes. It's not unusual to find two-worker families commuting to work. And fewer people are growing their own gardens this year than last.

After training and qualifying as a volunteer fire department, Land Co-op members were given their own shiny red firetruck from the State Division of Forestry. Some things, however, never change. The dirt roads are often in advanced states of erosion challenging all brands of shock absorbers. The co-op's tractor broke down, resulting in an assessment to cover the expense. A meeting is planned again to discuss the roads. "We have the same problems as in the community at large — dogs and boundary disputes," said Deaton, the co-op's financial officer.

Describing the Co-op of the future, Deaton predicted fewer people more concerned with outside affairs. The changes may not always be apparent to outsiders.

Miccosukee Land Co-op members wonder about future changes too: Will their children remain there and continue the tradition into the next generation — or will they rebel into suburbia? The next ten years will tell that story.

## Progressing to Tallahassee by Jan Alovus

Living in rural Tennessee was idyllic in the beginning. The first serious crack in the illusion came with the discovery that we were 40 miles downwind from the construction site of what was being billed as the world's largest nuclear power plant.

My brother did a lot of organizing in our area, eventually connecting with the Barnwell demonstrations. He made friends with the Tallahassee contingent and was impressed with what he heard about cooperatives there. When I needed to find a more supportive community, he suggested I check out Tallahassee.

I arrived in mid-Winter, a bit lost and lonely and easily discouraged. One of my first highs was my initial visit to the Leon County Food Co-op. I was weighing some produce when a series of large paintings caught my eye. They were very simple shapes suggesting nuclear power plants, overlaid with imprints of activists who rejected that approach to our energy needs. And yes! There was the one we had done in Tennessee with the prints of my friends and family! I was overwhelmed with a sense of interconnectedness and belonging.

Those feelings intensified in the following months. Working at LCFC, living that Spring at the Miccosukee Land Co-op and discovering the Grassroots Free School all convinced me that settling in Tallahassee would be a progressive move for me. I'm pleased to say, four years later and deeper than ever into the cooperative movement, I have yet to be disillusioned.

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Southeastern Confederation for Cooperation

OMI/M:SCC  
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OMI

Volume B  
Number 4  
May, 1984



GOOD THINGS...

TAKE TIME

## What Is Magnolia Confederation?

**MAGNOLIA:** Southeastern Confederation for Cooperation (M:SCC) is a not-for-profit educational organization centering on cooperative philosophy and economics for members of co-ops in the Southeast and all other interested persons.

We are striving to accomplish the following:

- ★ To educate people in the process of cooperation and the practice of the cooperative way.

- ★ To promote the mutual growth of existing co-ops and the development of new co-ops by sharing skills, knowledge, experience and information.

- ★ To promote ecologically sound production, marketing, and use of goods.

- ★ To engage in other activities to further these purposes.

### WHAT WE DO

We use many methods to achieve our stated goals.

Our resource files contain information on starting and maintaining a wide variety of co-ops and are available to those who contact us. As a network, we act as a central clearinghouse for communications between co-ops and cooperators within the Southeast and those in other parts of the country, including many national groups.

M:SCC exists to manifest International Co-op Principle 6, "Cooperation Among Co-ops." Our two co-op warehouses (Magnolia/Atlanta and Orange Blossom/Gainesville) were formed at M:SCC conferences. Since then, M:SCC has made two loans to Orange Blossom — for a cooler and a forklift. A small buying club now has a cash register because a M:SCC member co-op read in *whIM* that such surplus equipment was needed. The bringing together of needs and resources is what M:SCC is all about.

One of our most ambitious and energetic methods is our regional conferences held periodically (2-3/year) at locations throughout the region. You can read all about our next "rendez-vous doux" elsewhere on this page.

M:SCC member co-ops are part of the **INNER MAGNOLIAN**, a formal monthly communication system within the region. This includes *whIM*, our organizational newsletter that carries current regional and other co-op news of the moment to M:SCC members and *OM!* subscribers.

We also publish **THE OUTER MAGNOLIAN (OM!)** on a less frequent basis. *OM!* is our mass distributed outreach journal which carries co-op educational information and articles on co-op related topics of general interest to cooperators all over the region and throughout the country.

### WHO CAN JOIN?

Most co-op organizations are eligible for M:SCC membership. Stores and warehouses pay an initial \$25 fee and dues of 1/10th of 1 percent of gross sales (that is \$1 per \$1000). Buying clubs pay straight annual dues of \$15. Many co-ops in the region receive the benefits of M:SCC without supporting it as members. If your co-op would like to join M:SCC, or needs more information, please write us at the address above.

Although individuals and non-co-op organizations are not eligible to join M:SCC, you can stay connected to the network by subscribing to *OM!* at the M:SCC address. The price currently is \$6/volume with *OM!* subscribers also receiving *whIM*. Your subscriptions now ensure publication of Volume C this fall.

## COOPERATIVES

BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA



October Is Co-op Month.

## Coming Up

### Magnolia Confederation Conference



**WHEN:** Friday, June 1 to Sunday, June 3, 1984.

**WHERE:** Hard Labor Creek State Park, 60 miles east of Atlanta, GA.

**WHAT:** A gathering of the S.E. co-op network M:SCC Delegate Assembly; Southeastern buying club caucus; Technical Assistance training workshops on: Merchandising; Basic Financial Management; and The Art of Good Meetings. Also a chance to relax and connect with co-operators from all over. Good food, good folks, good fun! Swimming, volleyball, music, and a variety of conversations and new experiences. Come learn and share. Help build the co-op future in the S.E. region. Bring the whole family!

**COST:** \$20 conference fee (\$15 to M:SCC members with fully paid dues) and \$20 per seminar (\$15 to M:SCC members). Make checks payable to M:SCC and send them with the registration form available at your local co-op. If you cannot find one, send the check, your name, your co-op's name, your address and phone number to: Craig Miller, 169 Aviation Road, Marietta, GA 30060. Do this soon please so we can make plans!

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## RUMORS AND LIES!

This is a joint issue of *The Outer Magnolian* and *SPECTRUM*. We did this to bring the whole region this story of a decade of Tallahassee area cooperation, as well as to save time and money, and explore the idea of joint publication. *OM!* will return to its regular format with issue B-5 in time for the June M:SCC conference. If you have anything for publication in that, please have it to M:SCC central by May 21, 1984. If you are interested in a joint issue of *OM!* and your local co-op newsletter, write M:SCC



Those of you who have been to M:SCC conferences before probably need only the information above. Those of you who have not may need a little more explanation. An M:SCC conference gathers folks from all over the Southeast who share a common bond — *cooperation*. Most of us are involved in food co-ops, and the discussions you will have there will no doubt help you when you get back to your home co-op. New ideas and inspiration are the obvious benefits. There is also the less tangible effect of spending a weekend in an intentional cooperative community. To keep our costs down and preparation simple we have developed the *self-serve* theory. We all bring our own food supplies for the weekend, but we prepare them together in great co-op feasts. Group circles serve as our conference communication.

You need not have any "official business" in order to come. The chance to meet and relax with fellow co-ops from all over is the main thing. Discussions are not limited to food co-ops but cover a wide range of progressive, alternative interests.

Come join the growing S.E. co-op network!

## S.E. Co-op Calendar

**June 15-17** — Alternative education conference at Arthur Morgan School, Rt. 5, Burnsville, NC 28714 (ATTN: Joyce Johnson). Homeschoolers, freeschoolers, unschoolers and other interested folks are in the formative stages of a S.E. association for progressive education.

**August 14-18** — Consumer Cooperative Alliance/Alliance of Warehouses and Federations Conference at Ramapoo College, Mahway, New Jersey. An amazing experience. Workshops on all manner of co-ops. Many Magnolians have attended and found it very beneficial. Contact CCA c/o Vellela, 202 W. 107th St., NYC, NY 10025 for more information.

**Halloween, 1984** — Alleged M:SCC Harvest and Barter Fair somewhere between Mobile, AL and Tallahassee, FL.

**Vernal Equinox, 1985** — M:SCC Conference at O'Leno State Park, 30 miles north of Gainesville, FL. Be there!

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*Forche, from p.3—*

The people of El Salvador do not have time for slow change: "Such things as water pumps/ and co-op farms are of little importance/ and take years." ("Return"). The need for immediate country-wide social reform is apparent everywhere, but the Salvadoran military regime and the U.S. government have joined forces to keep the country "stable," i.e., as a favorable climate for U.S. investment. The cost of this stability has been an estimated 40,000 civilian lives over the past several years. Most deaths have been attributed to death squads which annihilate and often torture anyone connected with social change. Included has been Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated while performing mass in 1980, and four American nuns who were sexually abused and then killed.

By 1980, Forche's life in El Salvador was in danger, and she was encouraged to leave the country. Once back in the United States, however, she found it difficult to resume her past life. In "Return," one of the best poems in her book, Forche describes this difficulty to her friend Josephine Crum:

...I go mad, for example,  
in the Safeway at the many heads  
of lettuce, papayas and sugar, pineapples  
and coffee, especially the coffee.

Josephine, who had lived in Latin America for fourteen years, was not surprised:

So you know  
now, you said, what kind of money  
is involved and that campesinos knife  
one another...  
You've seen the pits where men and women  
are kept the few days it takes without  
food and water. You've heard the cocktail  
conversation on which their release depends.  
So you've come to understand why  
men and women of good will read  
torture reports with fascination...It is  
not your right to feel powerless. Better  
people than you were powerless.  
You have not returned to your country,  
but to a life you never left.

Forche read this poem to the Tallahassee audience, unblinking eyes fixed on a point at the back of the room, reciting her poem by heart. Reading her poetry is one thing; hearing her read it aloud is like seeing a painting become three dimensional.

Not all of Forche's book deals with El Salvador. "Endurance" is about her dead Slovakian grandmother, Anna. Anna, Forche tells us, has always been her muse. In her first book, *Gathering the Tribes*, one of the major poems is about growing up with Anna on a Michigan farm. She even mentions her in a couple of poems in the new book, but that was not enough. "I kept hearing her saying 'I want my own poem,'" Forche said, imitating her grandmother's Slavic accent. And so she got one.

In Belgrade...I saw  
my dead Anna again and again,  
hard yellow beans in her lap,  
her babushka of white summer cotton  
her eye lids the hard pits of her past.  
She was gossiping among her friends  
saying the rosary or trying to sell me  
something.

The last section of her book contains only one poem, "Ourselves or Nothing." In this poem her work as poet/witness is at its best. She recounts her relationship with an author who has done work similar to her own. He wrote a book about the Holocaust called "The Survivor."

I was with you even then, your face  
the face of a clock as you swept  
through memoirs of men and women  
who would not give up...  
Once I walked your rooms with my  
nightdress open, a cigarette from my lips  
to the darkness and back as you worked  
at times through to the morning.

The obsession with murder, especially mass murder, is understood by Forche.

Go after that which is lost  
and all the mass graves of the century's dead  
will open into your early waking hours:  
Belsen, Dachau, Saigon, Phnom Penh  
and the one meaning Bridge of Ravens,  
Sao Paulo, Armagh, Calcutta, Salvador,  
although these are not the same.

Forche did not read this poem in Tallahassee. Perhaps it was too long and there wasn't enough time. Maybe she felt she had spoken enough of human atrocity for one night. But I wish she had, for it is in the last few lines of this poem that she directly challenges the reader with these haunting words:

There is a cyclone fence between  
ourselves and the slaughter and behind it  
we hover in a calm protected world like  
netted fish, exactly like netted fish.  
It is either the beginning or the end  
of the world, and the choice is ourselves,  
or nothing.

*The Country Between Us* and Carolyn Forche's earlier work *Gathering the Tribes* are available at Rubyfruit Books on Tennessee Street.

For more information on Forche's trip to El Salvador, see the July/August 1981 issue of *The American Poetry Review*.

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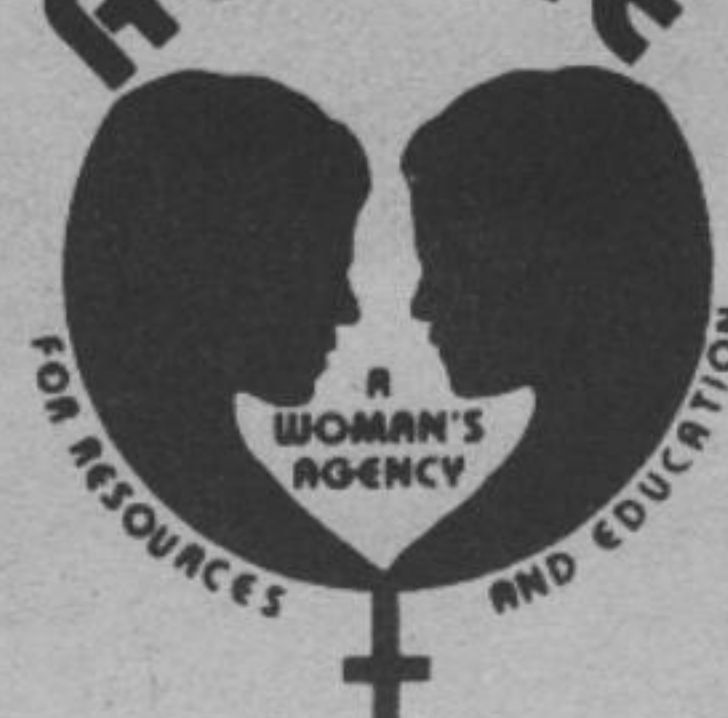
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