

Food — a burning issue

Feb. 11 - 19 is Canada Food

Students should be concerned about the rising costs of food on campus.

At most Canadian post-secondary institutions, the students who must rely exclusively on the campus cafeteria, canteen dining-hall and vending machines for their fare are often malnourished and economically abused.

This need not be the case: The University has for many years offered excellent vegetarian and natural food fare. Vending machines can carry fresh, packaged unsalted nuts, dried fruit and seeds, fresh juices, herbal teas and whole grain snacks in addition to the inevitable coffee, Mae Wests, chocolate "drink" and sweetened orange juice. Getting control of the situation is simply a matter of organizing.

Good nutrition and attractive presentation at reasonable prices are basic rights of consumers. The fact that catering and vending companies have contracts that exempt them from the obligation to respect and fulfill these rights. If the companies act in a negative manner to a student and organized resistance to provide alternative nutritious and appealing fare at reasonable prices, steps should be taken to ensure that the contracts are not renewed. If the sympathetic companies hold long-term contracts (i.e. those of more than one year), setting up alternative off-campus (but near-campus) dining facilities may be the answer. If this option is resorted to, the legal implications of the contracts should be carefully studied and taken into consideration.

A survey of students, faculty and staff is the first step in a campaign to upgrade campus dining. Do not neglect staff and faculty dining facilities — they can be equally unsatisfactory. Questions should be posed

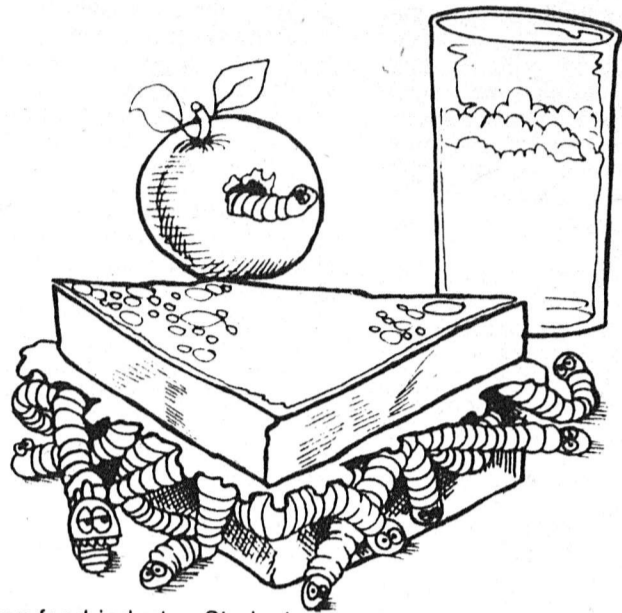


Regarding the content, serving and cost of the fare presently offered. In addition, the more active approach of welcoming suggestions should be followed. The survey reveals that a significant proportion of those questioned are dissatisfied and that alternative fare, the companies involved in campus catering and vending should be approached and acquainted with the situation.

Self-sufficiency is a paper lunch or dinner and a thermostat. The latter come in all shapes and sizes — for herbal, perk coffee, fruit juices, soups and stews. Yogurt and salads stay cool in the smaller refrigerators.

Off Campus

Investigating food off campus, such as frequented restaurants, supermarkets and comparing their prices may make a co-op an alternative. Food co-ops represent a viable alternative to the profit-



making food industry. Students, a fairly homogeneous group with respect to location in the city and income level, are relatively easy to organize.

Some points to remember in forming a co-op are:

1) Members: A small number of members at the beginning is no obstacle to success or growth.

2) Fund raising: Funds will be needed for the first purchases of food. Membership fees or shares will provide a cash base once the co-op is functioning well. A loan may be necessary at first.

3) Suppliers: Investigate local food wholesalers (preferably cooperatives) and compare prices and check on who will deliver. Unprocessed bulk food will likely be cheaper than processed goods.

4) Space: At first a basement or a garage will do. As you grow, check local churches, community centres, schools, etc., for cheap or rent-free space. Equipment like scales, fridges, etc., can be purchased second-hand.

5) Transportation: A truck can help reduce food costs and may be shared with nearby co-ops.

6) Permits: Check local zoning regulations and obtain a business licence.

7) Legal: Check into the legal arrangements necessary to form a co-op. These will govern the formation of an executive and a constitution. Incorporation isn't mandatory but it is desirable.

8) Size: Smaller groups may settle for a permanent weekly food buying club. Larger groups may want to examine store fronts or co-operative supermarket setups.

9) Staff: Membership can usually perform all the necessary duties in operating a co-op, but you might consider hiring staff. Try and still run the co-op though as a workers collective with volunteer help being the backbone of the co-op operation.

10) Coordination: Several co-ops may consider establishing a co-op warehouse or production collective (eg. bakery).

Co-ops whether run by students or other groups, will have to decide on such matters as buying directly from farmers or through a wholesaler, buying

natural foods only or a wider selection, getting involved in food politics (eg. oranges from South Africa), buying junk food or banning it, and getting involved in a wide range of community action or concentrating only on food.

Some groups to contact for advice and support are: Cooperative Union of Canada, 111 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Le Conseil Canadien de la Coopération, Box 58, Station Youville, Montreal; Hub Co-op, 2517 Bowen, Nanaimo, B.C.; Federated Coop Ltd., Box 1050, 402 22nd Street, Saskatoon; Maritimes Coop Services, P.O. Box 750, 123 Halifax St., Moncton, N.B.; Proaction, 451 Daly Ave., Ottawa, Ont.; Fed Up Wholesale, 304 East 1st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.; Coop des Concommateurs de Montreal, 1001 St. Denis St., Montreal; Toronto Federation of Food Coops, 203 Oak St. Toronto.

Campus Daycare Centre

In the daycare programme, check the snacks and meals served. Are they nutritious, balanced, appealing and conducive to life-long good eating habits and attitudes? Or are they sweet and starchy, full of additives and liable to frustrate parents' efforts to establish good eating patterns?

Fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh fruit juices, whole-grain and granola snacks are good snacks — soups, peanut butter on wholewheat bread and yogurt sundaes (with honey, fresh fruits and raisins) can be easily and relatively inexpensively served for lunch.

A nutrition Canada survey found that Canadian children are getting too many calories and protein, and not enough vitamin D and iron. Expanding or modifying the menu to include more vitamin D-enriched milk-based foods such as milk-based soups and puddings will help to correct the former deficiency.

Dried fruit (raisins, apricots, figs and dates) are rich in iron and make good snacks.

Two sources for further ideas are Feeding Your Child, by Louise Lambert-Lagace and The Natural Baby Food Cookbook, by Margaret Elizabeth Kenda. The small amount of effort and reorganization perhaps required

to reorient the daycare fare is well worth it.

In the Lecture Halls

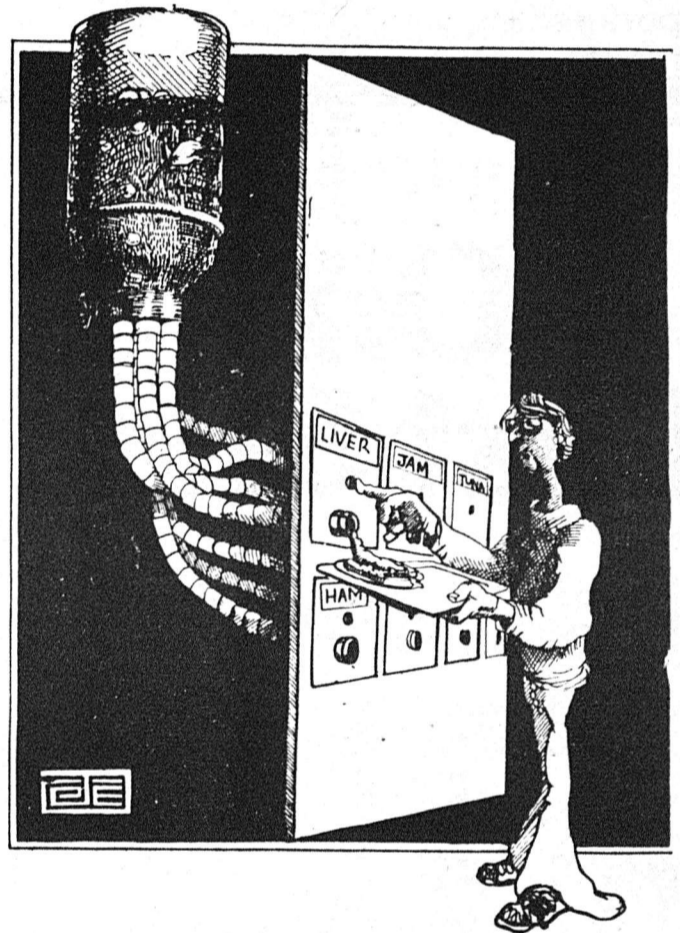
Food issues are relevant in the social science and pure science studies and research. Such issues as consumerism, agribusiness, food oligopolies, world food commodity trade and aid policies can be considered in political science, law and economics courses; the ecology of food production and world food supply in environmental studies and geography; and the effects of the inequality of food distribution in international studies, sociology and psychology.

Food science and community health courses could consider food safety and the faulty North

American nutrition system, as could medical and dental programmes. The issue of the safety of food additives is a question for biochemistry staff and students.

History can be written from the viewpoint of the small farmer and literature can be studied from the vantage point of the human need for and preoccupation with food. Philosophy and ethics are involved in the current debate between the "life-boat" ("us first") and world aid ("help our brothers") proponents.

Investigate whether food research is being done on campus for selfish ends or for an improved nutritional and equitable food resource.



McMaster votes no

OTTAWA (CUP) - The McMaster University board of governors has joined two others in Ontario in rejecting differential fees for visa students. But Lakehead University has bowed to the government.

"Make no mistake about it, the government is calling the shots," said Lakehead vice-president administration Bryan Mason, noting that the university's size and location makes it difficult to absorb the extra costs. "Whether one agrees with

the government is immaterial. They pay the bill," he said. "One can be altruistic, but what does that do for the other 2,700 students (at Lakehead)?"

But, McMaster, along with Carleton and Laurentian will absorb the costs for at least one year.

Rejecting the fee will cost McMaster \$220,000 in 1977-78, or .3 per cent of the total university budget, president Arthur Bourns said.

Thursday, March 3

An Evening with

RY COODER

Guest Artist Paul Hann

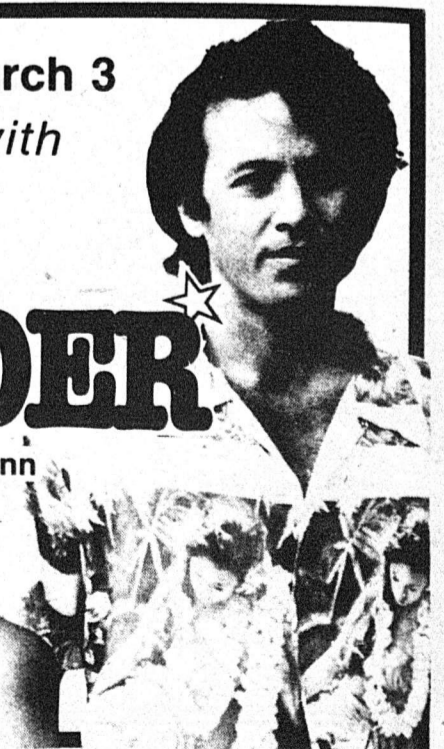
Two Performances

7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

Tickets \$6.00

on Sale Soon

Available at the SU Box Office HUB Mall an SU Concert Presentation



Single Parents

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 9th

7:30 p.m. 14-14 Tory Building

Mr. G. J. Way, Chief Court Counsellor, will be speaking on the topic of "Legal Concerns of Single Parents." Guests are welcome.