



Oberlin Student Cooperative Association

Alumni Newsletter 2010-2011

Letter from the President

Hello, Alumni !

As we draw close to the end of another year of operation (our 61st!) we have quite a bit to reflect on. Our organization and its members have continued to confront the unique challenges of running a student co-op with ingenuity, enthusiasm, and – when necessary – grit. With fewer than two months left in the semester, we can look back on our work this year with a sense of accomplishment and the knowledge that we learned a lot along the way.

OSCA continues to be a vibrant organization whose reputation attracts new members and the interest of others in the cooperative movement. We continue to fill our nine co-ops to full capacity (currently 626 members) and our Winter Term Co-op program drew a record number of participants this January. We sent nearly twenty-six OSCA members to the NASCO Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan last November to learn about the other co-ops in North America, and we networked with co-ops in places like Portland, Oregon, Austin, Texas and Berkeley, California. Meanwhile, progressive-minded students from several college campuses across the country have contacted us to ask how they can follow our model and start student co-ops of their own.

Individual co-ops are still demonstrating their spirit, their creativity, and their love for community and good food. Harkies play games of intramural soccer against other dorms, a fierce sight in their body paint and colorful clothing. Members of Tank take pride in their excellent special meals, and Pyle members in their bread and desserts. Keep members still jam on the porch all evening long.

During Food Week in mid-March, the co-ops teamed up for an all-OSCA bake-off and made a host of scrumptious desserts with locally grown apples. Last year during our rent negotiations with Oberlin College, we agreed on a plan to exchange Old Barrows Co-op (which the College has wanted to close due to maintenance costs) for a new grocery-based co-op in Fall 2011 in the “language maze” complex that contains the Spanish, Third World and German program houses. As of now, the plan to open this new co-op has been deferred until Fall 2012 to allow more dialogue between OSCA and the College and also between OSCA and the residents of the three program houses. Members have been highly involved in brainstorming how the co-op might work and many have expressed enthusiasm for the possibilities that a new co-op offers.

Also impacting plans to open the new co-op are a series of food safety issues that arose in a few of our dining co-ops earlier this year, attracting the attention of the Lorain County Health Department. It's unlikely that we will obtain the license to operate a new co-op kitchen until these issues are addressed. However, our cleanliness and operations staff has been unflagging in their efforts to improve our kitchen environment and have made great steps toward resolving the problem.

Meanwhile, OSCA members look toward our future. The long-range planning committee, in conjunction with our sister corporation, OSCA Properties, continue to research the possibility of creating a community-based grocery co-op or buying club. The OSCA Properties Board is in the process of selling its off-campus property, Fuller House, and finding new ways to achieve its goal of community development and cooperative education. Last year we celebrated our 60th anniversary with a host of events that included "OSCA Prom". OSCA Prom was so popular that we're gearing up to for it again at the end of April. Rest assured that OSCAns will turn out in large number in their best – and funkiest – attire.

Our outstanding student staff and employees have again gone above and beyond to make sure that our organization runs as smoothly as possible. Sid Stech, our new Business Coordinator, completed her first year of work for us and Arlene Muir, our Office Assistant, completed her second. Our Food Safety Advisor, Rachel Beiser, and our Financial Manager, Iris Hunt, have continued to devote their full time and energy to our success. Thanks for the great work, everyone!

As a parting thought, I'd like to sincerely thank all of you, the alumni who have continued to show interest in our organization and spread the ideals and the energy of OSCA through your pursuits in the outside world. It is an honor and a privilege to serve an organization whose alumni have shown such a sustained commitment to their ideals.

In Cooperation,
Dylan Rees
OSCA President 2010-2011

A Letter from the Alumni Team

We are sending you this newsletter as a way of updating you on the activities, future plans, and stories of this year's cohort of OSCAns. It is our hope that they will amuse or interest, or at the very least remind you of your time spent in the co-ops.

This year has been one of shake-ups and new opportunities for OSCA. This semester there was no Alumni Coordinator, so instead a collaborative team of the two Education Coordinators, the Theory History Coordinators, and the Membership Secretary have been working since March to collect articles and interviews for the publication. Unlike in years past this newsletter is electronic only, accessible via the OSCA web site, to both reduce paper waste and make the Alumni Newsletter more widely available. We've also begun planning for the Alumni Picnic, which looks to be a blast! There will also be tours conducted by the Education Committee of all the co-ops so people can see the changes that are taking place.

Other Alumni related events for the future include Oral Histories with the Theory History Coordinators and Co-op Historians and a call to once again submit to the OSCA Alumni Listserv.

We look forward to seeing you in May!

Yona Koch-Fienberg, Kat Lamp,
Toby Irving, Lucy Smith, Rae Eaton

Make yourself a part of OSCA History!



The Theory & History Coordinators will be collecting Oral Histories at the Alumni Picnic. Stop by and share stories, rumors, myths and memories with interested co-ops.

