

Everybodys' Business

'Shoppers' Advocate':

Is guide accurate?

By DREX HEIKES
Of the Emerald

The Shoppers' Advocate, a pamphlet "designed to provide critical information about grocery shopping to Eugene-Springfield residents" may have inaccurate information.

The pamphlet is the result of a coordinated effort between the Student Action Seminar (SAS), a class offered at the University, and the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG). SAS gathered the information last November and December with the aid of experts in survey and statistical analysis. OSPIRG's role was to make the information available to the public.

The "Shoppers' Advocate" compares the average total price of 56 brand name items found in each of 15 Eugene-Springfield area stores.

The pamphlet states that Big C, Mayfair Markets (three branches surveyed), Albertson's (two surveyed), the 24-hour market, Oregon Foods and the Franklin Boulevard McKays are above average in their prices.

Walmart, Shoppers' Market, Safeway (three surveyed) and Drive 'N' Save have below average prices according to the pamphlet.

When told of the findings, managers of above average price stores were surprised at the claims made by SAS and OSPIRG. Mayfair, Albertson's and Oregon Foods managers claimed their prices weren't any higher than Safeway's. The Big C manager said his prices were in fact below Safeway's.

The biggest discrepancy, however, came from the Safeway manager Oscar Palmquist. He was "very happy" to hear that Safeway's prices were below average, but added that prices weren't determined locally and therefore couldn't be attributed to the local Safeway stores. Palmquist said prices were determined by computer in Portland and were the same for all Eugene-Springfield stores.

At this point it became clear that something was amiss. The "Shoppers' Advocate" lists variations in price totals between all three of the surveyed Safeway stores.

In an effort to clear up the confusion, a price check of seven of the stores was made by the Emerald. 12 of the 56 original SAS brand name items were chosen. The results were:

- Big C \$8.77
- 13th Ave. Safeway \$8.86
- 18th Ave. Safeway \$8.86
- 40th and Donald Safeway \$8.86
- Willamette Plaza Mayfair 8.89
- Coburg Road Mayfair \$8.90

Armed with these figures I called Jan Newton, visiting associate professor of economics and SAS instructor. I asked how it was possible for the Emerald's figures and the Safeway manager to indicate identical Safeway prices, and the "Shoppers' Advocate" to show a two percent difference in local Safeway prices.

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Newton suggested that the 12 items selected by the Emerald might not have been representative of the entire list used by SAS. She pointed out that studies over the past five years had borne out price differences between the local Safeway stores. With this in mind the Emerald rechecked the three stores, only this time used the identical list of 56 items that SAS had used. The result: the price of each item on the list was identical for all three stores, even down to sale items.

One final item needs mentioning. SAS and OSPIRG came down very hard on Big C. Charges of false advertising claims, inadequately stocked shelves and an inferior selection of items were leveled at the store.

Big C manager Charles Chavez feels certain that the SAS researchers were biased in their claims because they were not allowed to check Big C prices. "Large scale price checking is against company policy, not just store, but company policy," he told the Emerald.

The 12 item check conducted by the Emerald, however accurate it may be, did indicate that Big C's prices were below Safeway's, not above. In the opinion of the two Emerald price checkers, the shelves were well stocked and the overall selection of items was comparable to that found in the 13th Ave. Safeway store.

Market ranking—Lowest to highest priced store (percentage of below average brand name items).

Store with below-average prices: Walmart 8.6 per cent, Shoppers' 3.2 per cent, Safeway (18th Ave.) 2.2 per cent, Safeway (13th Ave.) 1.5 per cent, Drive 'N' Save (Hilyard St.) 1.2 per cent, Safeway (40th & Donald) 0.2 per cent.

Stores with above-average prices: Big C 1.0 per cent, Mayfair (River Rd.) 1.2 per cent, Albertson's (Hilyard St.) 1.3 per cent, McKays (Franklin Blvd.) 1.3 per cent, Oregon Foods 1.5 per cent, 24-Hr. Market 2.0 per cent, Mayfair (Willamette Plaza) 2.5 per cent, Mayfair (Coburg Rd.) 2.8 per cent, Albertson's (Oakway Mall) 2.8 per cent. Average marketbasket total: \$34.22

Chart reprinted from "Shoppers' Advocate."

Tenants form WHO for housing improvements

By KATHLEEN GLANVILLE
Of the Emerald

Residents of the University's Westmoreland Village Housing Development have recently formed a new tenants' union: Westmoreland Housing Organization (WHO).

The newly formed tenants' organization will be similar in organization to the Amazon Cooperating Tenants Union (ACT), but, according to Cherie MacGillivray, WHO Steering Committee member, WHO will be a completely independent and separate union.

"ACT representative Doug Brown is acting as liaison between the two unions. We've received encouragement and advice from ACT, but that's the only relationship we've had," MacGillivray explained.

"I felt there should be some type of organization," she said, "I don't see it as militant."

The purpose of WHO are threefold: to disseminate information among the tenants of Westmoreland; to promote improvements within Westmoreland; and to act as the official Westmoreland organization in negotiations with the University administration.

MacGillivray said she had discussed the formation of the union with administration officials and the response was favorable.

"According to Gerald Bogen vice president for student services (the administration would like to see some type of organization in Westmoreland," MacGillivray said. "Evidently, in the past, the University has attempted to set up some type of organization in the Westmoreland project, but, due to lack of support, it never got off the ground.

"Our major problem will be getting people involved,"

MacGillivray said. "We have no burning issue to unite residents here."

MacGillivray referred to the differences which exist between the two tenant unions. The Amazon tenants united last summer in the face of a proposed rent increase and their union, ACT, is supported by a majority of residents.

"We're certainly not organized around the same problems as ACT," she explained. "There is no rent increase planned for Westmoreland next year. Based on the turnout we have had for the first two meetings I would say that not having a cause is unfortunate."

"A real problem will be finding active people who will be here past June to provide some continuity in the organization."

About 35 Westmoreland tenants and three ACT people were present at a preliminary planning meeting.

McCall's tax plan approved by Education Committee chairer

"Governor McCall's school finance plan is the first time that the Oregon Legislature has lived up to its constitutional duty to provide a standard system of schools throughout the state," said Representative Larry Perry (D-Eugene), Chairer of the House Education Committee. Perry spoke Thursday evening at a legislative forum meeting sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers.

Perry, who is serving his second term in the Legislature, heaped praise on the Governor's plan.

"The plan provides massive property tax relief on a widespread scale," said Perry. "Many families will find that their property taxes will drop by as much as 70 per cent under the new arrangement."

Perry said property tax relief would not be limited to homeowners. "The plan provides some urgently needed renter tax relief. The average renter will be allowed to deduct nine per cent of his total rent cost. Low income renters will be allowed to deduct up to 12 per cent," said Perry.

"I'm also delighted with the kindergarten provision of the plan," said Perry. The Legislature added a provision to McCall's original proposal that would provide for full

financing of kindergartens by the second year of the plan's operation.

Perry, an instructor at South Eugene, said that early childhood education was extremely important.

He blasted opponents of the McCall plan who argue that it will reduce local control of the school system. "The local control issue is a phoney one. Each district will receive a given amount of money from the state and the local school boards will have to make the decision on whether to spend it on teachers' salaries or vocational education just as they always have," added Perry. "There isn't anything now that would keep the Legislature from deciding the curriculum of individual districts except the force of tradition. The McCall

plan does nothing to destroy that tradition."

Opponents of the plan have also attached its provision for a business profits tax. Perry said the plan would only affect a few very large businesses because the first \$15,000 of profit are exempt under the McCall plan. "That eliminated about 85 per cent of the businesses in Oregon, and from 15,000 to \$85,000 the tax is only one per cent," said Perry.

Note

Editor's note: Due to technical difficulties, there is no national news page today. We will resume regular daily coverage of national and international news developments as soon as possible.



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