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# Co-ops are an alternative

By Lori Stephens  
Of the Emerald

Home life for University students doesn't have to be noisy apartments or nosier dorms offering a choice of either cooking your own food or eating dorm food. An alternative exists at a student co-op.

A student co-op is an independent, democratic organization, controlled by the students who live in it and existing for their benefit. Its earnings and assets belong to the members.

Janet Smith Co-op and Campbell Club are two such housing cooperatives that have offered Eugene students an alternative to dorms and apartments since 1935.

The student co-op is also a learning experience. Students from around the world and down the street are able to live in an open-minded environment where diverse lifestyles and ideas are as much of an education as academics.

Co-op dwellers come from all nationalities, colors, religions and interest groups. Because of the great diversity, learning to live and work together is an integral part of the cooperative experience.

"A lot of high energy people"

live in co-ops, says Frank Clark, current president of Campbell Club. "I think we've got some do-ers and some people who want to see things done better... life-is-great type people."

Melanie Tarr, who moved into Janet Smith in the summer of 1981, says that she found the co-ops offered "more interaction than apartments, less formality than Greek houses" and were "more controlled than the dorms." After living at "J.S." for two years, she says that some of the best aspects of cooperative living are "that I was able to meet a lot of people... and the willingness to accept other people."

One of the disadvantages of group living, says member Renee Irvin, is "it's easy to do nothing. I find myself just sitting down and talking to people when I should be working... so you can get easily distracted. I think that's both a pro and a con."

Another co-op resident, Diane Arnold, says that the social life is "more family-like yet without the constrictions" and that a large percentage of the members seem to come from large families. "People tend to be average to very good students... and have moderate to liberal attitudes," she adds.

Many foreign students have come to the cooperatives. In recent years, students from Thailand, Japan, Canada, Germany and China have found homes in Janet Smith Co-op and Campbell Club.

A side-effect of co-op life is learning about self-government and responsibility. Positions such as treasurer, membership coordinator, purchasing agent,

and Students Cooperative Association representative develop leadership, and financial and organizational skills that can be applied to future careers. Co-ops "create responsible young adults," Clark says.

Housing costs are affordable for student budgets and typically run about 23 percent to 25 percent less than the dorms. Laundry facilities, daily newspapers, telephones and furniture are all provided as well. Although rent is usually higher in the fall, prices decrease about \$100 each successive term, and most people feel that the benefits are worth the cost.

Both houses elect meal planners who organize lunch and dinner menus, giving consideration to both vegetarians and meat-eaters. Well-balanced, nutritious and sometimes "interesting" meals are prepared, and suggestions for improving food quality are regularly brought before the membership.

Yogurt, granola, sprouts and bread are all made by co-op members and some of the dinners typically include dishes like honey-baked chicken, lasagna, stir-fry, quiche and deep-dish pizza.

"I think people are pretty conscious of what goes into their bodies here. You've got whole wheat bread and granola, tofu and tempeh. It's almost like walking into the '60s," Clark says.

It's not all rap sessions and relaxation, though. There are many jobs to be done to keep the houses running smoothly, and all members pitch in.

A "job lottery" is held at the

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