

COOPERATIVE BUYING

Discussion about joint purchasing of equipment and machinery has been sparked in a number of quarters of late. Some of those in the RIA work groups have talked of shared buying as another avenue of cooperative action. The idea is being encouraged by the Potsdam Food Co-op, which is considering different cooperative ventures it might foster or pursue—firewood, fuel oil, auto repair, credit union, insurance, etc.

Some of the items that have been mentioned are a cement mixer, compost shredder, brush hog, bulldozer. There are probably other possibilities also--any kind of machinery, tool, equipment that is prohibitively expensive for a single family to purchase and whose use is intermittent and flexible.

The details of how such a purchase might work would be developed by those who would be involved in the transaction. The Food Co-op or the RIA would serve only as the catalyst to publicize the concept and to bring together any interested parties. How those folks would settle the problems of maintenance, repair, schedule of use, etc. would be up to them.

One such cooperative purchase has already been consummated. Some of the members of one of the work groups went in together on a cement mixer. The best new one they looked at cost \$370. They found a good used one for \$150 and bought that. The motor on it worked, but it needed a new belt. Thus the total expense for each of the five households was a little over \$30. Because these folks are working together on a regular basis, they have developed a certain trust and foundation that enables them more easily to make such a joint purchase and to expect that they can work out any problems of use, repair, etc. But there is no reason why other such groups can't be formed, given that many of us know and trust each other well enough to risk \$30 or \$40 together. And for another group, perhaps cooperative buying together might lead to cooperative working together.

If you are interested in any such cooperative purchasing, make a contact. Ross Kostin and Laurie Davis (344-7066), Valerie Sumner and David Katz (386-4393) and Bill and Carol Sutkus (287-3759) are coordinating connections.

-- Bill Sutkus

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FIRST AID COURSE

The idea for taking a first aid course grew out of the weekly labor co-op, but seems to be a good idea for all of us involved in rural living. Being safety-minded is preventative, but what action do you take in case of an accident or injury?

The American Red Cross office in Ogdensburg organizes Standard First Aid Classes (Basic Adult) for a minimum group of five or six people. Once they have enough people the Red Cross will find an instructor. There is no charge for the course itself, and the only cost is for the book which is \$4.75.

More on First Aid...

It does require a time commitment of at least two to three hours, but could extend over a maximum of three sessions. Exact time and days will be set up once an instructor is found.

If you are interested in signing up for a first aid course for the fall, please call Mrs. Ellis at the American Red Cross in Ogdensburg at 393-2541.

-- Doug Welch

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BLACKSMITHING WORKSHOP

Ken Schwarz will be teaching three blacksmithing workshops of two days each at Little Tree Farm in Rossie the week of October 14. The first class will be the 15th and 16th, the second the 17th and 18th, and the third the 19th and 20th. Unfortunately, there is no Saturday/Sunday class for folks who have only weekends off work. Ken did the best he could working his vacation time around scheduling demands at the Dean Forge in Colonial Williamsburg where he is a full-time blacksmith.

Ken requests that you give some thought to what you would like to make in the class so you can use your time to the best advantage. Don't worry if you can't think of much; with the help of Ken and the books available to look at, you will be able to come up with projects not over your head.

Coal, tools, and steel are included in the cost of \$40 per person. If you have materials or tools of your own, feel free to bring them. Each class will have six students, each with his or her own forge and anvil. That means there are 18 openings. Almost that many people have already show interest in the past few months, so get to me as soon as possible to reserve a place. Reservations will be made only for those sending in \$20 in advance--money needed to provide Ken's air fare and to buy coal and steel.

You are welcome to camp at our farm overnight and to use the well and outhouse. During school hours, when Liz, Mark and Rob are away, you are also welcome to seek refuge in the house. In the past, Ken has shown untiring enthusiasm for these classes and has put in as many hours as students have had energy for--often from 8 to 8. His real pay comes from watching and helping you enjoy blacksmithing.

--John Scarlett, Rt. 2, Little
Tree Farm, Rossie 13646 (324-5635)

