

be aware that we, the people they are intending to defend, are having our peace broken and our ire raised by their latest purchase of bigger, louder bombs. Maybe they won't listen. They don't have to. They are the military. But wouldn't you rather ask them to before accepting that? And if they have no reason to pay attention to complaints from a citizen and voter, there are people who do. Our local representatives are there to represent our concerns and interests. David Martin's phone number is 379-9611.

-- Valerie Summer

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## NEW DEVELOPMENT AT COOP. EXT.

There's a new development at Cooperative Extension that ought to be of significant interest to Rural Life Association members. Nancy Grudens, whom many of us have called on, has finished up her VISTA stint. This leaves no void, however, because Steve VanderMark, who has been with the 4-H program for several years, is assuming new duties at Cooperative Extension as a consultant to home and small commercial vegetable, fruit, and flower growers. (Pete Barney will still be working with some other commercial operations, especially those relating to field crops and small fruits.) He expects to do a lot with small gardens and greenhouse operations, particularly--but not exclusively--in the area of pest identification and control.

Steve will continue to work with the 4-H program half-time. He points out, however, that the two programs mesh very well. In the past, for instance, many programs in plant science presented primarily for youth groups have drawn quite a number of adults, because the subject matter is frequently equally interesting to both groups. Besides his work with the youth programs, Steve's varied background should make him a valuable resource person for the homesteaders and gardeners in our group. Before coming to Cooperative Extension, Steve spent some time as a greenhouse manager in a retail operation downstate. He also taught courses in horticulture and natural resources at Delhi. His educational specialty was entomology with a close parallel in vegetable crops. In the course of our conversation, he mentioned greenhouses several times, and I suspect there's a secret (?) favorite interest there.

Incidentally, he also mentioned that, while open to exploring all alternatives in approaching problems--depending on what's appropriate for the situation, he has a definite "learning toward the organic."

Specific programs for his new position have not yet been worked out in detail. One reason for this is a general juggling of duties at Cooperative Extension. Due to new positions and retirements, two people are left to cover three jobs for the time being. Until a newly vacated position at 4-H is filled (hopefully before September), Steve's time and energy will be stretched pretty far. However, it was obvious from our conversation that he is very excited and enthusiastic about his new job and the possibilities it holds for reaching many more people. Some of the ideas he mentioned included instituting a Master Gardeners Program, which would call on experienced local people to act as resource people in their own localities--sort of a Cooperative Extension extension.



A Community Advisory Committee is another idea Steve hopes to get off the ground in the coming year. One goal of this group would be to develop a four to five year plan for this program based on a refined constituent "wish list."

Right now, it's important for those of us in the community who have needs, ideas, suggestions to think them through and give Steve a call at 379-2311 or write it down and send it through the mail. He is very anxious to hear from people and have an opportunity to talk/brainstorm. He also indicated a willingness to come to any of our meetings to talk or present programs. Basically, it's up to us to make our needs known and, together, we'll take it from there.

-- Valerie Ingram

## LABOR COOP UPDATE

In the winter 1982 issue of the NFC Newsletter (page 7) I briefly outlined the formation of a collective labor coop among our membership. Since that time there has been some trading and sharing of work among members, but no real booking of hours. As I think this is a useful idea, I'd like to review the advantages, set down some basic guidelines, and list the names of those who initially showed interest in trading labor. I hope that new members and old members will find this coop useful and begin using it in earnest in the future.

Some of the benefits of such a coop may be listed as follows:

- 1) More efficient utilization of busy and slack periods for different farms within our group.
- 2) It provides an opportunity to become better acquainted with other RLA members.
- 3) Since most people are reluctant to ask for help, but can't afford to hire someone, they end up doing a 2-3 person task alone, often with much difficulty and inefficiency. Paying for labor in "points" would hopefully induce members to be less reluctant in asking for help when they really need it.
- 4) The structure of the coop would easily accommodate everything from large "work parties" to the sporadic single person needed for an hour or two.
- 5) The RLA membership is comprised of people with different lifestyles and different types of farms. The coop would provide an opportunity for members to gain experience doing things they may never have done. Since different people have different skills, members would also have a wider variety of skills available to them.

At this point, I'd like to use the following guidelines to help get this labor coop going.

- 1) Each volunteer worker shall receive one point per hour, regardless of the type of work performed. Conversely, for every hour of work done for someone, that person is debited one point.
- 2) Transportation to and from the work site is the responsibility of the worker.