

Newsletter

COUNCIL ON CONSUMER INFORMATION

DECEMBER, 1953

Pamphlet on Farm Policy Heads Discussion Series

The pros and cons of agricultural price supports will comprise the Council's first discussion pamphlet in the "Consumer Issues Series." Edited by Walter Wilcox, agricultural specialist on the staff of the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, the pamphlet will explain the parity price concept, and will try to clarify the arguments for and against price supports. Publication date is February, 1954.

The purpose of the pamphlet series is to discuss problems affecting consumers—especially those problems involving public policy. No pamphlet will attempt to indoctrinate a particular viewpoint. The aim is to show the strongest possible case for and against the policy under review, so that each reader may decide intelligently for himself where he stands. The technique employed in the pamphlets is to set forth the major issues on each problem and present statements from reputable sources showing conflicting views.

What ideas do you have for pamphlet subjects and authors? Send them to the chairman of the Publications Committee, Marguerite C. Burk, 2039 New Hampshire Ave., N. W., Washington 9, D. C.

Pamphlets will also contain bibliographies, and possibly discussion guide notes. They will be about 32 pages in length, illustrated, and written in a popular style. They will be suitable for use as reference material for teachers at all levels, and for student reading at the college and adult education levels.

Each pamphlet will be prepared by a recognized authority on the subject matter, under the general direction of the

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A Message from the Executive Committee

The Council on Consumer Information is a clearing house for the exchange of ideas and information among teachers and research workers in the field of consumer information. The Council has no other purpose. It is both non-profit and non-political. The organization was born at a conference of 21 educators in the consumer field on the University of Minnesota campus in April, 1953.

Need for the Council grows out of the fact that teachers and research workers interested in consumption specialize in many fields, including economics, sociology, psychology, education, natural sciences, home economics, business administration and public welfare. Publications on consumer topics come not only from educational institutions, but also from business, consumer, labor, farm and government groups. It is difficult for most of us to keep abreast of the contributions coming from all these sources.

The Council will try to bring together significant contributions from these many areas by: (1) publishing a newsletter; (2) publishing a discussion pamphlet series with the pros and cons of issues vital to consumers; (3) acting as a clearing house in distributing materials and publications of individuals and other organizations, both public and private; (4) questioning teachers, research workers, and organizations devoted to consumer problems to determine needs for publications and teaching aids; (5) sponsoring an annual conference for informal exchange of information, formal panel discussions of problem areas and courses of study, and demonstrations of teaching methods and materials.

A few weeks ago we mailed leaflets describing the Council program to college and high school teachers of consumer information throughout the country. The following were typical comments in the 2,000 letters and cards we have received: "a good move and one that is long overdue," "I am tremendously interested in the Council," "I have felt the need of such an organization for a long time!" "a very promising organization," "I shall be happy to help out with the work in any way I can."

We are convinced that the Council has great potentialities, but before asking you to join we want you to know more about us. That is why we are sending you this first newsletter, and will be sending you our second letter about March, 1954. We want you to see, too, the merit of our pamphlets in the "Consumer Issues Series." The first one will be released about February, 1954.

Won't you send us your ideas for the Newsletter and for other Council activities?

Sincerely yours,

Eugene R. Beem

Executive Secretary

Newsletter, Council on Consumer Information

Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan

December, 1953

Vol. 1, No. 1

Editor, Marguerite Burk

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* Members of Executive Committee

Exchange of Information, Ideas Is Newsletter Aim

To carry news of interest to all concerned with developing and disseminating consumer information is the purpose of this *Newsletter*. From time to time there will be special columns on (1) research in progress, including dissertations; (2) short digests on recent articles and publications issued by other organizations; (3) lists of "What to Write For and Where;" (4) fresh ideas for consumer teachers. The letter will also contain notes on what is happening to organizations, activities and people engaged in consumer education.

WHAT IS YOUR BEST TEACHING PROJECT FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION?

In the next *Newsletter*, we want to exchange ideas on successful teaching projects at different levels of consumer education. We invite you to send details of your pet projects to Gladys Bahr, Stephens College, Columbia, Mo.

Workshop Studies Economic Education for Teachers

To develop better understanding in economics for the teachers of tomorrow was the aim of the third workshop of the Commission on Economics in Teacher Education, held in New York, August 10-28, 1953. The 45 college professors of economics and education who participated accepted the framework of general education, in terms of its values, and tried to organize economic content into whatever course of study seemed promising.

Five working groups were formed. Group A developed a functional concept of general education, then worked on criteria for selection of economic content. Group B studied the course in principles of economics

Committee on Consumer Research Holds Second Conference

Forty-one research workers from the fields of economics, sociology, psychology and marketing research attended the second annual conference of the Committee for Research on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior in Ann Arbor, Michigan, September 17-18, 1953. The program included papers by W. H. Whyte of Fortune Magazine, "Friendship Patterns and Consumer Behavior," and by Nelson Foote, Director of the Family Study Center of the University of Chicago, "The Autonomy of the Consumer." There was also a panel discussion on the measurement of consumer preferences.

The Committee was organized in September, 1952, to promote research on consumer attitudes and behavior. To achieve this purpose it holds annual conferences, sponsors research projects and serves as a technical advisory staff for individuals and groups engaged in consumer research.

Thus far the Committee has sponsored (1) the preparation of a selective annotated bibliography of research on consumer attitudes — by Ralph B. Bristol, Jr., Yale University; (2) a small scale study of automobile and home purchase decisions — by Ruby Turner Morris, Connecticut College for Women; (3) a pilot study of consumer purchase decisions (on washing machines and sport shirts) to develop methodology and suggest avenues for further studies — by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan.

F. Stuart Chapin, recently retired head of the Sociology Department at the University of Minnesota, is chairman of the Executive Committee, Theodore Newcomb, Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan, is vice-chairman. Lincoln Clark, Professor of Marketing at New York University is secretary-treasurer. Other Executive Committee members are Lois Murphy, social psychologist at the Menninger Clinic, and James Tobin, Associate Professor of Economics at Yale University.

within the general education framework. Group C explored economics in consumer problems. Group D studied ways of integrating the several social sciences into a unified course. Group E dealt with the problems approach to economic education at the collegiate level, emphasizing the development of critical thinking by students.

The Commission on Economics in Teacher Education was formally launched in August, 1952, following a second workshop on economic education in teacher-training institutions. Sponsored by the Joint Council on Economic Education, the Commission helps colleges and universities improve courses and instructional materials for the economic education of future teachers. Arch W. Troelstrup is Executive Secretary.

Consumer Education Study Units Pass Half-Million Sales Mark

Sales of the eleven teaching units in the Consumer Education Study of the National Association of Secondary-School Teachers have passed the half-million mark, G. E. Damon, Director of Field Services for the Association, reports. These teaching units, developed between 1942 and 1949 under the leadership of Dr. Thomas H. Briggs and Dr. Fred T. Williams, are suitable for use in high school consumer courses or for integration with traditional subject matter in such areas as business education, social studies, economics, law and mathematics. Funds for the C.E.S. were provided by private business through the channel of the National Better Business Bureau.

Titles of the teaching units are (1) The Modern American Consumer, (2) Learning to Use Advertising, (3) Time on Your Hands, (4) Investing in Yourself, (5) The Consumer and the Law, (6) Using Standards and Labels, (7) Managing Your Money, (8) Buying Insurance, (9) Using Consumer Credit, (10) Investing in Your Health, (11) Effective Shopping. Each unit, in paper-bound cover, sells for 50 cents, with discounts ranging up to 33 1/3% on orders of 100 or more.

Sales of the units continue at a very brisk pace. Mr. Damon says, "Those who purchased the Study's first teaching units are still purchasing them, and orders for the teaching units and supplementary publications of the Study come from first-time users in a never ending stream of letters. Most of the teaching units have gone into their sixth printing and the saturation point seems as far away as ever."

Among other publications of the C.E.S. is a handbook, "A College Course in Consumer Problems." Although designed to help college and university instructors who are specifically training teachers, others will find helpful suggestions, too. This handbook sells for 60 cents. The above pamphlets and additional information on publications of the C.E.S. may be obtained by writing to: Consumer Education Study, National Association of Secondary-School Principals, 1201 Sixteenth Street N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Do you know other teachers who might be interested in the Council? Please print their names and addresses below, and mail to Council on Consumer Information, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Suggested names and addresses:

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Your name and address:

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Discussion Pamphlets

(Continued from Page 1)

Publication Committee and the authorization of the Executive Committee. Either three or four will be issued each year, to sell for approximately 25 cents.

Among other topics being planned for the "Consumer Issues Series" are "fair trade" laws, current aspects of standards and labels, consumer representation in government, and tariff policy.

Consumers Union Makes First Grant to Council

A grant of \$7,000 to support the activities of the Council on Consumer Information has been made by Consumers Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*. This first grant, for the year beginning July 1, 1953, insures the future of the Council on a modest scale.

The Executive Committee, convinced that improvement in the fact-finding and teaching of consumer information is in the best interests of both consumer and business groups, has sought financial support from both sources. Consumers Union was the first to respond. There are promising leads from business associations which the Committee is now exploring.

The long run objective of the Executive Committee is to achieve matching financial support from business and consumer foundations. When membership in the Council is opened, about May, 1954, an additional source of support will be membership dues. While no final policy has been determined on this matter, the Executive Committee has talked of dues in the neighborhood of \$3.00 per year.

News Notes

Helen G. Canoyer is the new Dean of the College of Home Economics at Cornell University. She was formerly Professor of Marketing and Economics at the University of Minnesota.

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Leland J. Gordon has been granted a one year leave from Denison University to teach economics in the University of Maryland Extension Program in Europe.

* * *

Pauline Beery Mack, formerly at Penn State, is now Dean, College of Household Arts and Sciences, Texas State College for Women, Denton, Texas.

WHAT TO SEND FOR AND WHERE - - -

Bur. Human Nutr. and Home Econ. series, **Facts for Consumer Education**, includes AB32 Tomatoes—10¢, AB54 Peaches—10¢, AB84 Beef—15¢; Supt. Documents, GPO. M662 Helping Families Plan Food Budgets (for nutr. leaders and teachers) 15¢ at GPO.

M661 Guiding Family Spending, Inf. USDA.

BHNHE has a check list available on request for its free and most popular publications.

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics has just issued its first summary of information obtained from the survey of urban consumers' income, expenditures, and purchases in 1950. This information supplied the basis for the revision of the Consumers' Price Index. The release is **Family Expenditures Study**, Bul. 1097, obtainable from GPO for 35¢.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Please send any items you think are important for the column, **WHAT TO SEND FOR AND WHERE**, to Eugene R. Beem, Executive Sec'y, Council On Consumer Information, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Don't overlook the **1953 Survey of Consumer Finances**, published in the Federal Reserve Bulletin. There are also free reprints available upon request to the Federal Reserve Board, Washington, D. C.

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Ray G. Price, College of Education, University of Minnesota, has a **Bibliography of Recent Consumer Studies**, copies of which are available upon request.

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Jessie V. Coles wrote a series of articles describing the study of consumer purchases of dairy products in Los Angeles and Oakland. They were published in **California Agriculture**, monthly bulletin of the California Agricultural Experiment Station, Berkeley, beginning October, 1952. Lately she has been reporting in the same monthly on her studies of bulk and prepackaged fresh vegetables.

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For handy reference, you may want Sidney Margolius' **Consumer's Guide to Better Buying**, now in a revised pocket edition, by Signet.

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Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials, Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn. 1952. 194 pages. \$1.00.

Some Sources of Inexpensive Instructional Materials from Government and Industry. Write to Sam S. Blano, East High School, Denver 6, Colo. 1953. 12 pages, dittoes. No price given.

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Something for Nothing for Your Classroom. Curriculum Laboratory, Teachers College, Temple University, Phila., Pa. 1953. 67 pp., mimeographed. \$1.00

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Using Free Materials in the Classroom. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Education Association, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington 6, D. C. 1953. 16 pp. 75¢. Appraisal as well as guide to the use of free material.

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The latest publication of the Small Homes Council is **Summer Comfort**, Circular Series, G 6.0, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. This is one in a series of informative and illustrative bulletins on small homes. 10¢.

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Do you receive a free Better Business Bulletin? Write for one from the Bureau nearest you. Its reports on exposures indicate that frauds and schemes continue to exist.

* * *

Write Supt. of Documents, Govt. Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. for:

Cat. No. A 1.68;227 **How to Choose and Use Nonfat Dry Milk.** (Dry skim to most of us) 10¢.

Cat. No. 83-1.S Rept. 6/pt.2 **Economic Problems of an Aging Population.** 45¢.

Cat. No. FS 13:115 ½ **Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and General Regulation for its Enforcement.** Revision 4. 20¢.

Cat. No. A1 77.27 **Meat for Thrifty Meals.** 15¢.

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Inflation, a 22 minute color film, jointly produced by Encyclopedia Britannica Films and the Twentieth Century Fund, was released through EBF in May, rental fee. \$7.

* * *

Changing Times, the Kiplinger Magazine, 1729 H St., N.W., Washington 6. D. C., continues to be a valuable magazine for consumers. September issue, for example, contained the following articles: Your Local Taxes; Maybe Too Low; Report on Small Cars; Don't Fall for "Bait" Ads; How to Fit a House into a Budget. The publisher will send sample copies on request.

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Are you all familiar with the **Fact** booklets of the National Better Business Bureau, and the **Better Buymanship** pamphlets of Household Finance? Both series are widely used by consumer teachers at all levels.

COUNCIL ON CONSUMER INFORMATION

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Kalamazoo, Michigan

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