

WEEK-END OUTINGS FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

of the
HYDE PARK COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

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Since 1951 members and friends of the Hyde Park Cooperative Society have enjoyed week-end outings at some camp site near Chicago. The purpose of this activity which is under the sponsorship of the Education Committee, is to provide an opportunity for co-op families and friends to get to know each other better by playing, eating and discussing co-op problems together.

The Hyde Park Co-op does not own a camp. This permits us to shop around with a great amount of flexibility. In the past twelve years we have used three camps less than 100 miles from Chicago. Within this distance short week-end outings are possible.

The first camp we chose was primarily for Boy Scouts who were accustomed to barracks, hard mattresses and dormitory living. In spite of minor inconveniences, everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. A great amount of time and effort went into the planning of well integrated programs, and we found that as long as the activities continued at a small camp it was possible to keep the group together for an organized program.

After three years at this location we moved to a Y.W.C.A. Camp, which proved to be a decided improvement. The Committee continued to plan interesting and informative programs which attracted more and more members. Four years later, we discovered the George Williams College Camp at Williams Bay, Wisconsin, just a 2½ hour ride from Chicago. Since 1958 our summer week-end outings have been held at this location, and two years ago, by popular demand, a winter week-end outing was added to our program. Approximately 100 adults and as many children usually attend one or both outings.

To enable more families to attend, the Co-op subsidizes the third and subsequent child in each co-op family at the rate of \$2.00 per day or \$3.75 for the week-end. Non-co-op adults pay \$1.00 more and there is no subsidy for their children. Furthermore, reservations are not open to non-members until two weeks before the outing. This action was taken by the Education Committee with board approval in order to give co-op members the first choice of cabins and rooms allotted to us. Even so, many non-members "join the ranks."

Reservation and cancellation problems at times can be nerve-racking! Previously we have accepted a small deposit, but we are now insisting that full payment accompany all reservations. If the person or family cancels before the deadline, refunds will be made. After the deadline, however, no refunds will be granted unless additional reservations are secured to make up for the cancellations.

The programs have varied from year to year. Sometimes we have used our own members in discussion groups, and prominent speakers for more formal presentations. However, because of the shortness of time over the week-end and the recreational aspect of the program, it is becoming more and more difficult to maintain interest in any kind of formal co-op education. As time goes on, we are doing less and less of this type of formalized program. Nevertheless, the week-end get-together of members and friends provides an opportunity for informal and spontaneous discussion of all kinds of co-op problems. In addition, the give-and-take of eating together and playing together, results in a community of interest which carries over into our regular co-op activities during the rest of the year, and this is certainly a part of the educational process.