

# OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH

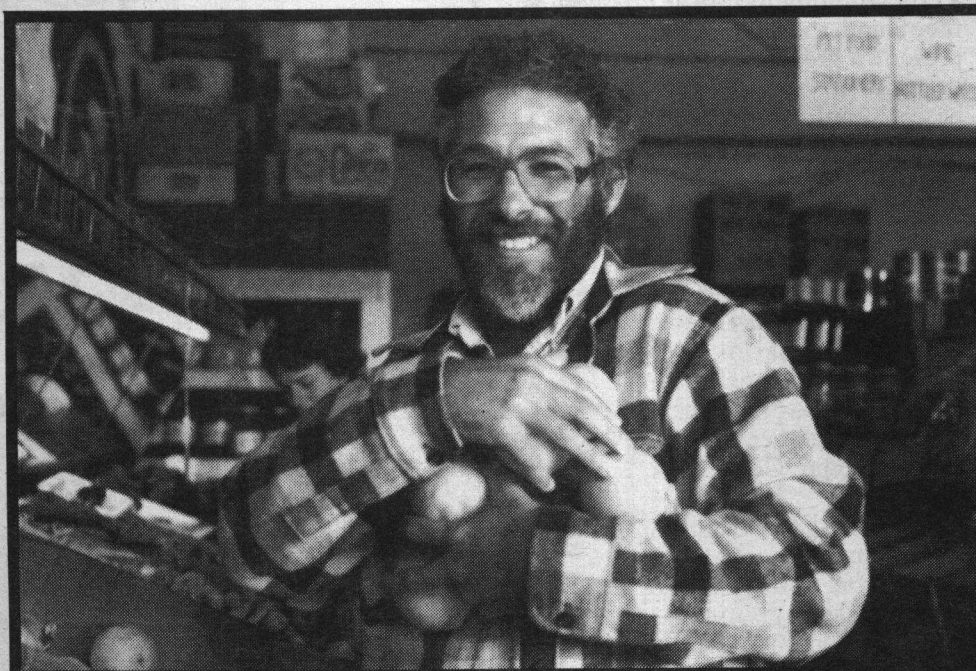
A Publication of USA/Riptide, the Neighborhood Food Co-op, and the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union

## Riptide Collective Success

Santa Cruz is a town with many small businesses. Although we have our share of Safeways and Dennys, the county also has over 6,000 smaller enterprises owned and operated by local people, whose profits and resources stay in our area. University Services Agency (USA/Riptide) has been responsible for the founding of 29 such businesses over the last 12 years; the organization's impact on the area has been significant.

No one can explain what USA/Riptide stands for better than the organization itself. Its Mission Statement reads: "USA/Riptide is a community-based non-profit corporation dedicated to democratically-achieved local self-reliance. To this end, we encourage, initiate, promote, and manage businesses that provide satisfying workplaces while meeting basic human needs—food, clothing, childcare, energy, information, culture."

If you are a Santa Cruz resident you've probably encountered the USA/Riptide affiliate businesses. They range from UCSC's Kresge Food Co-op and the new Porter College Sluggos' Pizza to the Energy Center and Community Printers and Graphics. They also include two daycare centers, a farmers market, and Davenport's La Tienda del Pueblo food co-op. Community Foods and the Whole Earth Restaurant are two other successful businesses previously affiliated with Riptide and recently bought by their workers. Riptide's successes are phenomenal: While new businesses nationwide have only a 10% success rate, 87% of all Riptide-



*As Mayor Rotkin will testify, the co-op movement is no lemon.*

### Mayor's Proclamation

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS

In 1844, twenty-eight weavers in Rochdale, England with \$140 in capital and a set of ideas which have come to be known as the Rochdale principles, launched the first consumer's cooperative and with it a quiet revolution of self-help, and

WHEREAS

Across this country today, people are doing together what they cannot do alone by forming cooperatives, and are sharing responsibilities along with benefits: raising the quality and lowering the cost of living; and working hard for their own and one another's well-being; and,

WHEREAS

Cooperatives meet people's needs efficiently and economically; they help provide housing, food, energy, health care, child care, schooling, legal aid, insurance, banking services, and a host of other goods and services as well as jobs; and,

WHEREAS

Co-ops are institutions which, by definition, are democratically controlled by their member-owners, and are, therefore, ideal organizations for the preservation of democracy; and,

WHEREAS

October is Co-op month in California; and,

WHEREAS

The Ninth Annual California Co-operative Conference will be held in Santa Cruz October 15 and 16 of this year;

NOW, THEREFORE, I,

Michael E. Rotkin, Mayor of the City of Santa Cruz, do hereby proclaim October as "Co-op Month" throughout the City of Santa Cruz and all citizens are urged to learn about, and participate in, the spirit of cooperation as practiced by Co-ops.

MICHAEL E. ROTKIN  
MAYOR

## Credit Union Community Bank

Located towards the lower end of the Mall, the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union occupies a long, narrow cavern that was formerly a natural grains store. Where flamboyant window posters once proclaimed the lowest prices in town for rye and millet in bulk, a discreet notice now informs passersby that The Santa Cruz Community Credit Union "is a savings and lending cooperative, open to all county residents. It is democratically controlled by its members."

"The Community Credit Union is working to promote social and economic change in Santa Cruz County. We recirculate our members' savings within the county. . . .

"In our community development lending, we encourage democracy: the control of the local economy by the people who live here. Our priorities include local cooperatives, worker-controlled businesses, small businesses, non-profits, and organizations for improving the quality of life in the county . . . We invite you to join us."

Obviously, this is not a typical financial institution. Rather, it is a cooperative one, designed to promote thrift and provide loans to its members. Anyone living within the area of the County is eligible to join and take advantage of its financial services.

More importantly, the Credit Union is a cooperative. Regardless of the size of his or her share balance, each member has only one vote in electing the board of directors at the annual meeting.

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# Credit Union

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SCCCU's goals are to provide loans at moderate rates to low-income members, and to keep the community's savings recirculating locally. But while many other credit unions specialize in consumer loans to their members, the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union members have decided to make a more permanent contribution to their community through their lending. Sixty percent of the loan money is directed to community development projects and only forty percent to personal loans. The first priority in community development lending is cooperative organizations, owned by workers and consumers.

The Credit Union has developed a variety of financial services over the last couple of years. It not only offers members a home in which their savings can grow, but members can also obtain money orders and travelers' checks, and the services of a notary public. There are cash withdrawals, direct deposits of checks and payroll deductions. With a special Credit Union membership card, members can get 10% discounts at about sixty participating local businesses. 1982 has seen the introduction of a share draft program, similar to checking accounts at commercial banks. These services have attracted 2,400 people to the Credit Union, and given them confidence in it.

The Credit Union sees itself at the hub of a movement for economic democracy, says Co-Manager Tinka Gordon. It is a cooperative organization itself, in which people are treated equally regardless of their financial assets, and it has a goal of the promotion of other similar organizations, in which local people can control their own economic destiny. "We want to make a difference in our community," says Ms. Gordon. "We want to help people to help themselves by working with each other and with us."