

WEST-MEETS-EAST FEAS

Pamela Johnston

he Community Mercantile sponsored a Tofu-Chili Supper on Sunday, February 20, at the Community Building. The evening included a slide show by John Stitz of Fanshen Farm on farming in the People's Republic of China. The whole wheat berries and flour, corn and corn meal, soybeans and soy flour presently carried by the Community Mercantile were produced by Fanshen Farm.

In part, the supper was an attempt to educate people about tofu, a product of soybeans. There was a display table with information about and samples of soybeans and soy products; along with hand-outs of the recipes for items in the menu and instructions for making tofu. Tofu was a major ingredient in several of the recipes: the chili, three kinds of dips, and cakes with frosting. Other items included crackers, celery, carrots, alfalfa sprouts, milk, and herbal teas.

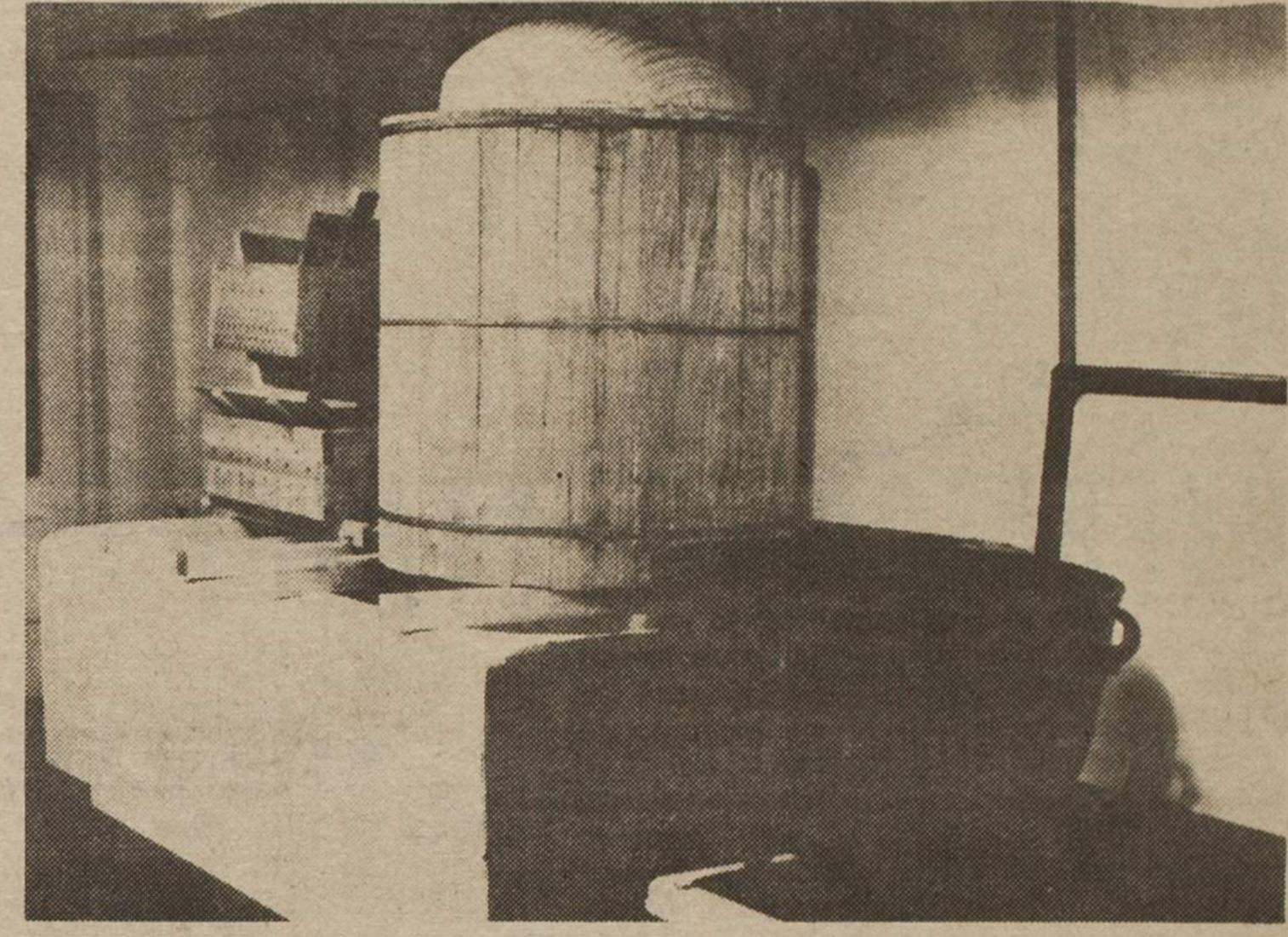
John Stitz of Fanshen Farm gave an interesting talk and slide show of two trips to China he made with a group of Kansas farmers. John explained that the major emphasis in Chinese agriculture is on increased production. Through extensive irrigation of dry areas and drainage of low, boggy areas, the Chinese are making more and more land available for food production. In a span of one growing season, a field yields two and sometimes even three crops (double and

triple cropping). This is made possible by starting the seeds in greenhouses and later transferring the tiny plants by hand into the field. Hybrids also have made possible higher yields. For example, the Chinese are experimenting with a cross between milo and wheat. The very sturdy stalk of the milo plant can support a heavier and fuller head of wheat without toppling over and losing much of the yield.

John believes that to understand the Chinese Revolution one must understand Chinese agriculture. The revolution began in the hearts of the farmers. The Fanshen Farm people - Betsy and Duane Evans, and John - named their farm for the Chinese word meaning "roots up," an agricultural term for the practice of turning over the roots in the soil to dry in the sun and kill the weeds. John applies this term to the agricultural revolution in China and believes that we must do the same in America kill the weeds in our agricultural system.

Approximately 150 people attended the Tofu-Chili Supper. The majority were old faces familiar to co-op members, but there were several new faces, too.

The Mercantile donated the leftover food to Sister Kettle Cafe. Whatever money is left after expenses will go either to the co-op's educational or building fund, or to Sister Kettle.



Tofu-making equipment on display in a Tofu Shop in Fayetteville, Arkansas where Thom Leonard, the Co-op's first tofu maker, presently carries on his craft.

A LOCK AT CO-OPBOKS

by Annabelle Nelson and Bob Burford The Co-op is now stocking a variety of cookbooks. The following comments may guide you in selecting the best book to fit .your needs and interests.

Deaf Smith Country Cookbook: This cookbook has a good cross section of simple to follow recipes. It is excellent for people just getting started in natural foods and those becoming vegetarians. The recipes cover a whole range of breads, soups, desserts, main dishes, and children's foods. In addition, there's a section on southwestern recipes. The charts on how much water and time is needed to cook beans and grains with or without a pressure cooker are invaluable.

New Age Vegetari in Cookbook: This is an encyclopedia of healthy foods with an exhaustive supply of recipes. It contains menu suggestions, information about herbs, tables listing food value information, narratives on proteins and vitamins, conversion tables, information on canning -need we say more. Some doubt the quality of all of the recipes, but the information contained in the cookbook is very functional for those trying to learn about healthy, meatless diets.

The Vegetarian Epicure: This cookbook is designed for vegetarians who'd like to try out some high class recipes -- from creamed black mushroom sauce to mushrooms newburg. The recipes are excellent and can serve to teach you some basic cooking techniques, like salting eggplant, letting it stand, and then rinsing it to remove the bitterness. Careful

about the dessert recipes though. They contain a lot of white flour and sugar.

Ten Talents: This book is published by the Seventh Day Adventists, so some may not get off on the pictures or the religious comments. However the nutritional information in this book is excellent as are many of the recipes. It is particularly good for those trying to cut down on the use of eggs and milk. It includes information on herbs, natural food equivalents, food combining, minerals and vitamins, and more. There's no index in this one though.

Diet for a Small Planet: This book is quoted by many for good reason. It provides convincing, well-documented comments on how we can use protein so that the most protein exists for the most people and so that we live in harmony with the earth's ecosystem. This book is really a must for anyone who is concerned about the excesses of the food production methods in our country. In addition, the book is essential for vegetarians to read and to learn how to combine proteins. The recipes contained in the book are somewhat strange, though, and not always tasty. Even so, this book is worth buying for the information on protein.

El Molino Best Recipes: A good cookbook for cookies, breads, cakes, waffles and pancakes. Some of the recipes contain brown sugar and you may want to substitute honey.

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TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE? THAT IS THE QUESTION! Sorry, Shakespeare, but that is the choice facing the Community Mercantile now and in the coming weeks. The Co-op members pictured here are in the midst of a discussion of this topic at the General Membership Meeting held March 11 at the Community Building. This was the first in a series of meetings that will, to a great extent, determine the future of the Co-op. Your input is necessary to make a decision that will truly represent the interests of all Co-op members. Read "Too Late to Classify" and look for signs in the store to stay abreast of the progress and to take your part in it.