



# The Alumni Cooperator

## Fall 2025



## The Founding Women of **COLLEGE COTTAGE**

The first student housing cooperative was established in 1872. The Women's Educational Aid Association in Evanston, IL pooled resources to purchase a house for the students of Evanston College for Ladies and operated it on a cooperative plan. It was called College Cottage and it stayed in operation for over 100 years.



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The ICC acknowledges and honors the Native tribes who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of the lands our houses stand on: the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Bodewadami.

## Alumni Cooperator

The *Alumni Cooperator* is a yearly publication of the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) at the University of Michigan, a non-profit organization which provides housing and other services to students within the Ann Arbor and wider Washtenaw County community. Contact the ICC office at:

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# From The General Manager



## Brian Donovan's Letter

September 2025

Notes from the Rochdale Attic

I am very excited about recent developments in and around the ICC. We have an excellent group of leaders this year, as usual. Our staff includes many former members with tenure stretching from two months to 35 years.

In the last few years members overhauled the standing rules, established and funded reserves for emergencies, expansion and capital investment, built strong and positive relationships with the city and the university and developed and began to implement a three year strategic plan prioritizing affordability, accessibility, diversity and justice.

Things were pretty grim when the pandemic rolled through Ann Arbor. ICC doubled our longterm debt in 2020 to be able to survive several years of operating at a deficit. Fortunately we were able to significantly reduce the cost of that debt by accessing the Paycheck Protection Plan (\$159k grant) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (\$2M at 2.75% for 30 years) from the Small Business Administration. In 2022, our Finance Director, Ann DesJarlais, secured a 100% property tax exemption from the city. We started budgeting for a surplus in 2023. All of these factors contributed to today holding \$500k in emergency reserves and \$209k in the AK Stevens Expansion Fund.

We actively participated in the City's comprehensive planning process. It appears that the new plan will grant just about everything we asked for two years ago. Current zoning effectively prevented us from expanding for the last 20 years. Those limitations appear very likely to end when the new plan goes into effect. We have had positive meetings with political groups working to "pause the plan" even though we support the plan.

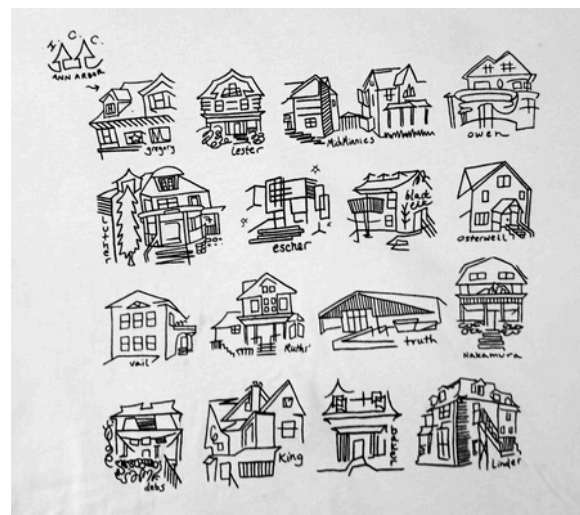
For the last 20 years we prioritized investments to prolong the lives of our aging houses. We passed every city inspection since the pandemic on the first try. Our maintenance team led by Geoff Mayers is amazing!

Since December 2024 we have been working with Pamela Dymond, an alumna of Luchtkasteel in North Campus, to develop a major donor pitch in partnership with the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

**Phase one** uses our existing houses as models for sustainable investments that increase comfort while reducing our carbon footprint and maintaining the deep affordability that promotes our mission to assist members who, but for the ICC, might not otherwise be able to afford to attend the University of Michigan.

**Phase two** establishes a new program at Taubman teaching innovative methods than can cut construction costs by half. ICC is working with the University Administration to become a strategic partner in their 2050 Campus Plan. We met with the Campus Planner over the summer and asked for land in North Campus where we could build a new cooperative. We will have a follow up meeting before the end of the year. We want a new house designed for community living and built using innovative, cost saving methods like we did 55 years ago.

In 2024 the ICC celebrated our 80th year as a cooperative corporation. We are well positioned to continue to grow and thrive for the foreseeable future



# Finding Purpose in Community:

## **A Journey Through Cooperative Living with Susan Caya**

When people ask how long I've been with the ICC, I have to pause and do the math. I started working full-time in 1989 and retired in 2014. But eight months later, I got a call that brought me back—this time to help build something I'd always believed was missing: meaningful alumni relations.

Before I left in 2014, I'd talked with our general manager about how we'd never really focused on alumni. Sure, we sent out the alumni newsletter and welcomed former members when they visited, but there was nothing to truly cultivate and maintain those relationships. We'd started an alumni team to move in that direction, but it hadn't taken root yet.

When I was invited back in 2015 to serve as Alumni Relations Coordinator, I negotiated 16-20 hours a week and set up shop on the third floor. I was literally part-time, permanent part-time—an unusual arrangement with no benefits or contractual agreements. Looking back, I was somewhat removed from the daily life of the organization during those early years. But something shifted around the time of COVID, and I started attending staff meetings regularly. That moved me into a space I don't think people—including myself—had thought about before.

### **Why Alumni Relations Matters**

Now, as I look toward retirement within the next year or so, I have one main goal: to launch a true alumni association for the ICC. For the past three years, I've been visiting my daughter in Oakland, California, which puts me close to Berkeley. I've spent considerable time talking with the staff and board members of the Berkeley Student Housing Co-ops about their alumni association, which has been running successfully for over 20 years with a budget that recently reached \$100,000.

The lesson from Berkeley is clear: you can wrap alumni relations and development functions together very effectively. They have a full-time development officer who does both. Their alumni association board is led by strong, committed women who are deeply devoted to the Berkeley Co-op.

I tried starting an alumni association once before, back in the 1990s with Jim Jones. We didn't know what we were doing then, and without dedicated staff support, it fizzled after a few months. But now I know we can do this. It's going to take devotion and focus, whether it's structured as a separate entity like Berkeley's or kept internal to the ICC. My hope is to bring together the right people—board members, staff, whoever else—to spend time with the Berkeley folks and really understand what's possible.

### **Living the Cooperative Life**

When I think about who should take over this role after I leave, I know what matters most: someone who is genuinely committed to the cooperative movement, not just in theory but in practice. Someone who has lived it, whether as a member of a housing co-op, a credit union, or any other cooperative structure.

I can speak to this from personal experience. From 1995 to 2006, I lived in an intentional community—eleven years of living with others, sharing responsibilities, cleaning communal bathrooms, mowing lawns, caring for animals, and gathering for big dinners once or twice a month. When I first joined the ICC as staff, I'd never experienced this type of community before. But through my work, I began to see what was possible, and my husband Michael and I jumped at the chance to build our own house on community property and live that way.



Living in community isn't always easy. Even though we were all adults in our 30s, 40s, and older—not students—there were always issues to navigate. But the commitment was always to resolve conflicts with kindness and respect. People learned skills from each other. Michael was the bookkeeper and shared his mechanical expertise. We made mistakes together and grew together.

This is why I believe so deeply in cooperative structures. They're about more than just eating together—though that's important too. They're about learning, experiencing, dealing with conflict constructively, and creating opportunities for personal growth and change.

*Continued. See Susan page 23*

# Staff Updates

## Education & Training

I'll be completing my third year as Director of Education and Training. I love my job at the ICC. It brings together my experience teaching in higher education and my tens years supporting co-ops. I emphasize critical pedagogy in my work to inspire members toward integrity and the fulfillment of the ICC's goals.



I'm proud to know that our members are the leaders of tomorrow and that their time in the co-ops will have been the beginning of their leadership journey.

*Pink Flowers*

## House Finance and Accounts Payables Lead

Staff Bio: I was a long-term member of the Inter-Cooperative Council at the University of Michigan, living in Owen House and Baker House with a collective membership term from Fall 2017 until Winter 2024. As the Accounts Payable and House Finance Lead, I support House Treasurers in managing the house accounts across all 16 cooperative houses and works with the VP of Finance and the Finance Department Liaison to develop Treasurer training in accordance with the vision of the Director of Education and Training and the VP of Education. I also am the contact for Member Share Returns as well as handle accounts payable at both the house and organization level.



*Kyle LaChance*

## Member Resources

Lenny (they/them) lived at Black Elk House from 2015-2017, reigning as House President and Board Representative while additionally holding nearly every house officer position at least once (also, check out their mural in the BE mailroom!).



After leaving Black Elk and moving to Ypsi, they've worked at the ICC as a temp Spring/Summer Housing Coordinator in 2017 and moved from part-time to full-time staff as Housing Coordinator from 2018-2022. In their current role, Lenny at a glance manages ICC guff resources. This catch-all role includes management of harm reduction supplies, merchandise creation (we are now screenprinting in house!), annual Co-op Spring Break trips, office chocolate, Education Center bookings, and guff truck usage; they also advise the Marketing Committee, sit on the Emergency House Operations Team (EHOT), offer mediation and conflict resolution facilitation, continuously encourage political education & outreach efforts for members and staff, assist with house re-theming efforts (such as the shift from Lester to Johnson-Rivera House) and work alongside other staff in GuffBA (bulk ordering) efforts. Name a project and Lenny is probably involved in some way!

In 2025 Lenny and their wife, Alyssa, are welcoming their first child, Milo, to their family. Photos to follow!

*Lenny*



*Housing Coordinator Ron Nelson with Katy Gorman*

## Housing

Year 20 (or 21?) of ICC Employment. Special shout-outs to all Luther Haus' alums from 2002-06, especially those across the Pond.

*Ron Nelson*

## Finance Office Liaison

In August 2024, I was hired as the Finance Department Liaison as part of the finance staff restructure. I've been an ICC member for over 4 years now, serving as Luther treasurer in 2021-22, Luther house president in 2022-23, VP for Finance in 2023-24, Linder treasurer in 2024-25, and now living at King House. As Finance Department Liaison, I work with FinCom on scholarships, budgeting, financial reporting, financial policy, and managing current and former member debt collection. I also provide support to the housing department with management of charges and assist other departments and committees with internal budgeting.



*Elliot Baker*

## Communications

Notes from the Rochdale Basement

Shoutout to Brian for letting me borrow their introduction tag :)

11 years in at the ICC and I've maneuvered between every office floor and duties one could expect at a nonprofit. I have landed in the basement moving from a social work & education role to technology & communications.



We have firmly established our Google Non-Profit for management resources connected to our domain. This has allowed for continuity of work and stewardship of our lengthy legacy. Central to Member communications have been a historical pain point. We have worked to address them in a variety of methods, most recently an organization wide Discord server as a second point of contact. Our current project impacts central operations as we move from a long overdue transition from our physical server to the cloud. This transition allows for more streamlined efficiency within the office as we rebuild our network. This will bring the Rochdale office into the fold and allow our amazing telecom coordinator John Simpkins to monitor alongside all of our 16 houses.

The pandemic pushed us forward by needing to connect remotely. Setting up two zoom rooms for BoD/Committee/Team/Operations meetings has continued to be an effective manner to increase member engagement and transparency. This has also allowed us to provide further support to our local community through renting out the Education Center.

While we have made some amazing strides in the 11 years I've been with the co-op, we still have some ground to cover in regards to tech. Office hardware is a struggle as we historically have not dedicated consistent resources. Prior to the pandemic we were able to utilize the University's Property Disposition services to acquire used and outdated computer towers. That was a band aid solution that allowed some time in between turnover amongst staff and the next funding cycle.

Unfortunately that is no longer available as their operations have scaled back and now are sold in large lot sizes. This post-pandemic environment has made remote work and in person connections even more critical. I hope to develop a five year plan to begin cycling through hardware in a more consistent manner. So if you're reading this and wondering why an 80 year old cooperative at one of the country's highest ranked universities is playing catch up in 2025. . . me too. . . me too. . . feel free to reach out if you have any donations :)

*McKinney V Parrish*

## Fundraising and Outreach

I grew up in a house where a doorbell rang throughout the house with a ring code for each family member. I was 9 years old when I created my first work schedule. I'm the ICC's new Fundraising and Outreach Coordinator!



My father, Luther Buchele, was the first paid staff member of the ICC. He credited co-ops for saving the family farm during the depression. I grew up believing that co-ops can provide autonomy and good incomes for workers. I boarded at Nakamura co-op for two years in graduate school and lived briefly at Nak during my third year.

I recently retired early from the federal government, where I worked for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at The US Department of Health and Human Services. I've had jobs ranging from Chief of Acquisitions and Special Projects at OCR, Health Policy Analyst at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, France, to a Chief Operating Officer at the Medicaid Payment and Access Commission. Much of my work has been centered around coordinating projects, marketing, outreach and education, and creating budget justifications and directing operations. I would love to use the skills I've gained to help the ICC grow and thrive.

This job comes at an opportune time for me to blend my long-standing (one might say lifelong...) interest in co-ops with my skills and abilities. I have long been interested in learning more about the operational side of cooperatives. I'm interested in learning about how to use the co-op model to help people succeed. In a time where jobs are going away, small businesses need stability to grow and innovate, and to do this, they need to band together to compete with the large corporations that control the price points.

It is my hope that, with the training I receive at the ICC, I can help bring this knowledge to more people and bring hope to the beleaguered folks living under federal rule in my family's hometown of Washington, DC.

In the coming months, you can expect to hear from me about initiatives that the ICC is working on and why donating to the co-ops can help support and sustain the vision of justice and equity that so many of us came to embody during our years in the co-ops. I look forward to connecting with you! - *Libbie Buchele*



# Keeping the ICC Running.



## A Look at Our Maintenance Team's Work

By Geoff Mayers, Maintenance Director

I'm excited to share what we've been up to and introduce you to the incredible people who keep our co-ops running smoothly.

Our full-time maintenance staff consists of four dedicated team members. I serve as the maintenance director, working to coordinate all the moving pieces within our department and manage budgets, planning, and renovation projects. Audrey leads our RFA (house maintenance request) system, triaging requests and managing solutions. She's also our go-to specialist for appliance repair, pest control, and window repairs. Danny and Derek are essentially our in-house contractors, specializing in drywall, painting, caulking, carpentry work, and window screens – and trust me, we'll never run out of work for them to tackle!

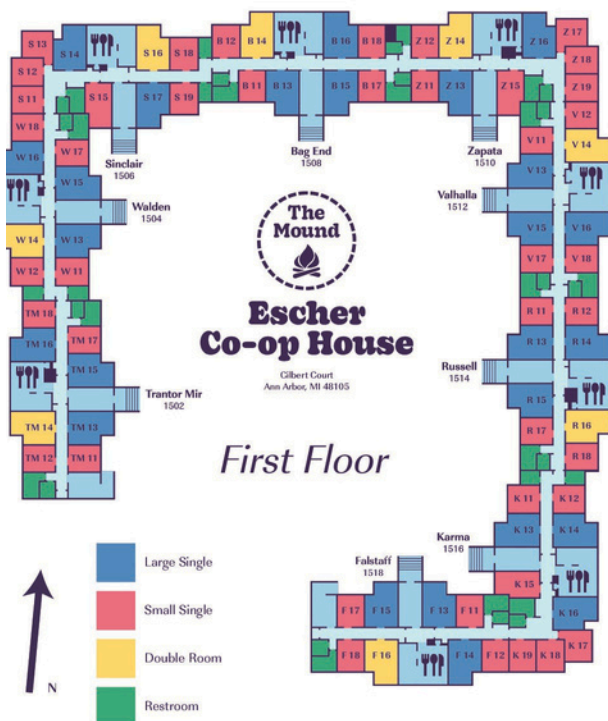
But our team extends far beyond just the four of us. We work closely with contractors who are practically extensions of our team – electricians, HVAC specialists, plumbers, kitchen appliance technicians, and construction crews. We're also in regular communication with housing inspectors, building inspectors, city officials, architects, and engineers, plus all the maintenance managers and other officers throughout the co-ops.



## The Big Project: Escher House Renovation

Since 2019, our biggest undertaking has been the methodical renovation of Escher, one of our largest houses, a massive project spanning seven years. With 150 rooms housing nearly a third of our membership, this building hadn't been renovated much since it was originally built. Our work is focused during the spring/summer months each year while school is out.

The first four years were entirely focused on bedroom renovations – we tackled about 37-38 rooms each year, which was incredibly ambitious. Each room received a complete overhaul: new flooring, radiators, thermostats, light fixtures, furniture, painting, drywall repairs, and window framing. Some of these rooms were in really rough shape, and we're proud to have given them total makeovers.



Year five focused on the exterior of this enormous building. We replaced rotted siding sections and completely repainted the entire structure – a massive undertaking involving painting, caulking, and siding replacement.

The past two years have been about renovating the commercial dining rooms and kitchens in the basement. These spaces serve 165 people and involve major commercial equipment: dish machines, ranges, warming tables, cooling tables, and walk-in refrigerators. We've completely overhauled these spaces including new tile floors, fresh paint, new lighting, and updated equipment. Throughout this process, we've also been replacing aging plumbing valves and piping, upgrading HVAC systems, and installing new lighting and outlets throughout the building.

We're not done yet! Coming up, we need to renovate nine kitchenettes on the upper floors and continue overhauling HVAC, plumbing, and electrical throughout the mechanical rooms. Year by year we're giving the entire facility a needed refresh.



*Escher House, 1500 Gilbert Ct*

This work isn't just about maintenance – it's been critical for recruitment and retention. This house presents unique challenges because of its size and somewhat hidden location, but the renovations have played an important role in keeping it fully occupied.

### The Changing Landscape

One thing I've noticed over my two decades here is how maintenance work has evolved. Students today don't typically grow up learning skilled trades like plumbing and electrical work the way they might have in the past. They're starting from square one, but they're incredibly eager to learn and participate. We've worked hard to build comprehensive training systems, toolbox checkout systems, and web resources to enhance the educational experience for maintenance managers and other house officers.

The co-ops continue to be at the forefront of societal changes, championing new norms and movements, which keeps our community vibrant and forward-thinking.

### Personal Reflection

The ICC has been an incredibly core piece of my life in numerous ways. I met my spouse Laura while living in MichMinnies, and we now have two kids – 12-year-old Harper and 9-year-old Oakley. The co-ops absolutely changed my life for the better, and I hope we can continue providing that same transformative experience for many more students and many more years to come.

We're excited to serve new generations while honoring all the people, contributions, and history that came before us. It's a responsibility we don't take lightly, and one that drives us to keep these incredible spaces in the best possible condition for current and future co-op members.

## THANK YOU to Our Donors

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And thanks to the anonymous donors via ICC's GoFundMe, scan the QR Code above.

# Alumni Team Update

## **Trials and Triumphs, Six Years in Review**

Dear Alumni of the Inter-Cooperative Council:

The past six years at the Alumni Team, and at the ICC in general, can best be summarized by this phrase: “Trials and Triumphs”. We have been hard at work over the few years to better serve you and the ICC! We have grown our Alumni Program by leaps and bounds, and have successfully brought new programs and old ideas into fruition! Change and transition are the main themes of the Alumni Team during these years, and I’d like to give a forest full of pinecones to the Alumni Team Members (past, present, and future) who made all of this possible.

Here are some highlights: In 2019, we planned and held the ICC’s 75th Anniversary Celebration, a three-day-long event that included nearly 80 participants – both Alumni and current Members, which went perfectly – pinecones to all who attended and supported this event! In 2020, we started our Mentorship Program, which also went really well, right before the world nearly “shut down” due to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though Zoom replaced in-person meetings for a couple of years, we didn’t stop our activities. We continued to hold our coffee hours over Zoom, which allowed Alumni from across the country and the world to participate!

At WAM 2021 (also held over Zoom), nearly half of the 60+ attendees were Alumni, which is unprecedented in the history of the ICC. To help our Members who were financially impacted by the COVID pandemic, we supported then-president Julian Tabron’s fundraising drive, which raised over \$25,000 for Members, and we deeply thank all Alumni who contributed to this effort. In 2022 and 2023, we continued to work to plan our future, with more in-person events, and re-starting the Mentorship Program and introducing a program of regular large Alumni events.

In 2024, three very important Member referenda were passed, two of which will bolster the ICC’s Alumni efforts directly. The first calls for the creation of an Alumni Association, to be set up and eventually operated by Alumni like you, and the second allows for an Alum to be a Member of the ICC Board of Representatives, which has shaped our recent efforts.

We also hosted “Co-Op Superstar” Jim Jones to give the keynote speech at WAM. Later that year, we held an 80th Anniversary Celebration event, which was also a huge success! Earlier this year, we started planning for the eventual creation of an Alumni Association, modeled on the Berkeley Student Cooperatives’ Alumni Association (BSCAA). We also hired Libbie Buchele as the new Fundraising Outreach Coordinator (FOC), who will plan and hold fundraising drives for the ICC.



*Left to right: Suneel Joglekar (AT Chair, King House), Kai Saale (Owen House), Susan Caya (Alumni Relations Coordinator, Rochdale), and Emerson Krause (Truth House), from April 2025.*

As we look to the future as a cooperative organization, we realize that, especially in these times, we rely on each other cooperatively to grow and succeed. The Alumni Program at the ICC is all about continual transition, change, and growth. We plan on growing the organization through the re-starting of the mentorship program, the creation of an ICC Alumni Association, and holding more large-scale Alumni events, including our Co-Op Month event (on the same scale as the 80th and possibly the 75th anniversary celebrations) on the weekend of October 24 – 26, 2025, and holding events of this scale annually. After serving as the Alumni Team Chair for an unprecedented seven years, I will be stepping down from my leadership of the Team some time next year, as I also transition to becoming an Alum myself. Leadership of the team in the interim will consist of two co-chairs who will share responsibility for the massive plans we have for the Alumni Program in the years to come.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has been a part of the Alumni Team and Alumni Program at the ICC, including our staff, team members, ICC leadership, and most importantly, you! Your continued involvement in the ICC is what allows us all to grow and to further our cooperative vision for the salvation of humanity! Here at the ICC, we truly stand on the shoulders of giants, and we cannot thank you enough or give you enough pinecones for your dedication to our glorious cooperative ideals!

While these have certainly been challenging times for all of us, we are still continuing to grow and thrive as an organization. We all deeply appreciate the help and support that Alumni like you have given and continue to give the ICC. Now, more than ever, our slogan holds true: Once a Member, ALWAYS a Member!

In Cooperation,  
*Dr. Suneel Joglekar, Alumni Team Chair*

# From Jim Jones

## An Un-Retiring Cooperator

Yes! I'm still alive, and I'm still working with cooperatives!

It's been fifteen years now since I officially "retired," complete with a big retirement party. That was after three years as manager of the MSU co-ops, eight years with College House Co-ops in Austin, fifteen years managing the ICC, and thirteen years (in two different periods) with NASCO.

But, alas, it was a failed retirement. And since that time, I've managed to stay very busy in the co-op world.

I've helped to start the two housing cooperatives for Grand Rapids Alliance of Cooperative (GRACC), holding a combined 38 members. I also purchased a large property with two buildings that houses a new co-op called Polaris, which began full operation in September with 11 members and lots of room to grow.

I also participated in organizing a new co-op development organization, involving both the Inter-Cooperative Council and the Spartan Housing Cooperative at Michigan State, called the Michigan Community Land Cooperative (MCLC). This new organization purchased one of the GRACC houses and is helping to refinance the other, and they are also in talks with groups in both Ypsilanti and Kalamazoo about possible purchases.

In 2013, I produced a film on the Austin cooperatives, called *Many Hands* that can be found on YouTube, and wrote a book by the same name. More important, I finally wrote a fairly comprehensive history of our "group equity" housing cooperative movement, called *Hasten Slowly, and Soon You Shall Arrive*. That book is available from NASCO (look under the Resource section of their website).

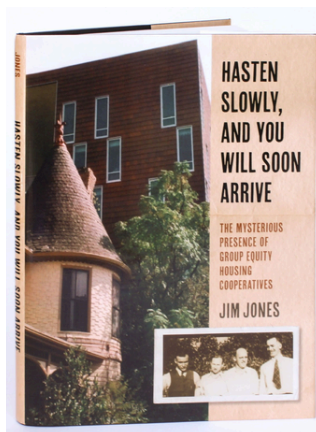
I've also been doing consulting and educational work, the most recent being a workshop at the Spartan Housing Co-op board retreat at the beginning of September.

My wife Linda is the president of the Grand Rapids Food Cooperative, which now has slightly over 1,000 members and is looking for a place to begin operations (I'm also on their site selection committee).

Our son Travis Jones – former ICC president and alum of Minnie's, King, Zeno and Baker – is living in Burlington, Vermont with his wife and daughter, while our son Erik Jones, a founder of GRACC, is currently in the new Polaris Co-op. Both of Erik's kids, Walden and Linnea, were born in the co-ops!



Jim, standing right side, at purchase of Atlantis co-op by MCLC in August, 2025.



Yes, all of this is still fun, but I do fear that at 82 years of age, I'm getting less efficient. But the 100th anniversary (gasp!) of the student co-ops in Ann Arbor is coming in 2032, just seven years away – and I hope to see you all there, at a big celebration!

Jim Jones  
Michigan House 1962-63  
Tri-House (now Baker) 1967-68  
ICC Exec. Director 1984-99

# Alumni News

Many couples have met at Ella Baker over the years, and some have since had kids. The oldest of which is my and Josh Steverman's daughter, Sparrow, who is now 14 years old! Josh and I got married on the roof in 2011; it was a small ceremony with just our immediate families and current Baker housemates in attendance.

*Denise Bailey, Baker*

Since living at Debs and graduating UofM with my Bachelors in Education in 2010, I spent 8 amazing years in Austin, TX. I got my Masters in Social Work at Texas State and worked as a hospice social worker. After meeting and marrying my husband we moved to Columbus, OH where we now live with our 4 year old daughter Eva. I'm a stay at home mom and couldn't be happier in any other "field."

*Aeryn (Nini) Dong, Debs*

The beauty of knowing people across political beliefs and just getting to know them for their values and character in real life.

*Neha Bhat, O'Keefe*



*Renee Ordeneaux, Black Elk, Luther, Mich, Debs, Linder, 1987-1991*

I remember that Minnie's decided to re-carpet / re-model the basement "living" room in... '87? After emptying out all the furniture and before removing the old carpet, we decided to have a party. I don't like parties, but I somehow ended up on the decorating team. We hung emergency glow sticks from the ceiling (very lame). During the party, some folks discovered that you could break them open and spray all the glow goo everywhere (that looked cool in the dark). However, the next day everyone's clothes were permanently stained - and I got a lot of grump about it.

*Miriam Walden (1/2), Minnie's*

Here is a more political story. The year that Dean Baker ran for City Council there was a lot of talk about the high cost of housing in Ann Arbor (as I'm sure there is now.). One of the causes was landlords who re-sold their property every 7 or so years to maximize their depreciation deduction. Some of us economics students sat down and calculated - what if ICC leveraged all its equity to purchase properties and remove them permanently from the re-sale cycle? Our calculations (don't ask me to explain how we did them I don't remember) showed that we could bring down rents city wide by 10% in a few years - and have a long lasting effect. Something to think about...

*Miriam Walden (2/2), Michigan*

Thank you, ICC, for some great memories!

*Melanie, Falstaff*

I ate at Mark VIII, living around the corner at a League House in 1960-1961. I had lived at Victor Vaughn my Freshman year. For some reason, those living at Mark VIII were not



*Kitty Morlock, Vail 1962-65*

keeping the living space, bedrooms, etc. clean. The day I saw my name listed as the person to clean the living space, I refused. The penalty was helping to white wash an outside building, which I did.

*Margery Cleveland, Mark VIII*

Another former member, Mary (nee Van Meter) and I are still married with two children. I live in Dexter, MI, and am a Senior Software Engineer at Phoenix Contact.

*Bill Su, Russell*

I live in Arlington, VA and work in membership engagement for America's Credit Unions (the national association of credit unions, formerly known as CUNA). I've been with ACU/CUNA for almost 17 years and previously worked at the National Cooperative Bank and the National Cooperative Business Association. My experience with ICC helped shape my life and, obviously, my career. I believe in the power of cooperatives to improve people's lives and make the economy work for everyone.

*Rich Dines*

**Update Your  
Alumni Information Here!**



## Alumni News Continued

Here's a brief testimonial: At the oh-so-cerebral University of Michigan, the co-ops taught me how to DO things. Among them are cooking, home repairs, and bicycle travel.

*Martha Retallick, Lester*

Nakamura housemates Brian Armbrust, Kristi Sheffer (Talberg), and Kerri Pepperman have been friends since they lived at Nak in the mid-'90s, marking 30 years of friendship this year!

*Kerri Pepperman, Nakamura*

Currently living in Ann Arbor and working as a psychotherapist in private practice. The ICC was helpful in this journey, as I earned my MSW while living in 2 ICC houses (Ruths' and Baker).

*Margaret Levasseur, Baker*

Been here & there. Did this & that. Designed some wonderful things.

*Rick Cooper, '72 Tri-House*

One day we (by "we" I mean whomever was assigned to do so) brought in the mail (yes in the 1980's we all got paper mail!) and began placing it in each person's mailbox (we had a mail station in the living room). No one knew what to do with the piece of junk mail addresses to "Mr. Steven C. Oophouse."

*Julie (Freedman) Kliever, Stevens*



*Jay Miller and former ICC President Alexis Willthnganz Long*

I'm from Australia and was a resident of Nak House. I took my meals there in 1967, I moved in for 1968 and 1969. While at Nak House my job was Sunday lunch cook. I remember going down to the TV room late on Saturday night to ask someone who would've been watching Star Trek to turn on the turkeys at 2 am. My scanned Nak House photos (from prints) are at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/R9S9bFWgLDdGPunGA>

*Austin Adams, Nakamura*



*An early warm Spring day at Nak House around 1968*

I am 94. My elderly wife is ailing. I cook her meals. I thank God that I learned this in the Co-ops, Owen, Nakamura, Lester.

*Sandy Rosenzweig, Owen*

I am manager of a dental program .

*Professor Maha Eshaq, Owen*

I lived in Ella Baker house from about 2015-18. When I first sought out ICC, it was because I was moving for grad school and didn't know anyone in or near Ann Arbor. Little did I know that this decision would dramatically alter the course of my life for the better.

I have many fond memories of my times at Baker. Cook shifts with Yeon-ju Bae perched over a milk crate to stir a tall stock pot, a Cleaning Day spent draining and raking out the pond out front in sweaty solidarity with others, Sarah Richard's epic homemade pizza and banana bread, and celebrating Diwali with housemates – just to name a few.

After my time at Baker, I decided I wanted to spend the rest of my life in co-ops, and so far I've managed to

succeed in this. I lived in Spring Collective (then Heiwa House), a small co-op in Ann Arbor. I then moved into the Bloomington Cooperative Living community in Indiana, where I resided for about seven years. Now my partners, our toddler, and I are in the process of forming a housing co-op in Boston, MA.

Living in community with others continues to be a boon to my mental health, even with all of the messiness this can entail. It challenges me to put my politics into practice and connects me with people who hold very different life experiences than mine. As a queer and trans person, it is more important than ever to find and create spaces that welcome and celebrate these identities. And in a time of increased social atomization, fascism, and climate change, co-ops are a powerful lifehouse and antidote.

All this to say: Thank you ICC and Baker, for everything <3

*Sam B-R, Baker*

*Continued on page 16*

# House News



## Luther Haus

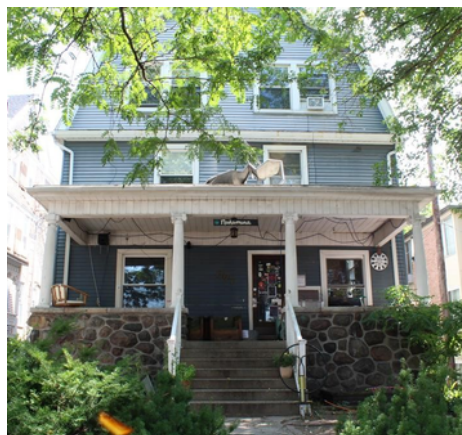
Named after the ICC's first full time staff member of the ICC; Luther Buchele, makes two houses one home by nature of it's passionate members, remarkable parties, and free-spirit. Our house comes equipped with four porches, two swings, a double-decker couch and movie room, a massive backyard with a trampoline, an annual groundhog statue burning, a beautifully painted four-way cup-pong table, and an effervescent atmosphere that forges unforgettable bonds between our members. Luther Haus began as the home for the White Panther Party during the Civil Rights Movement, and the house has never rid of it's fervor for activism, remaining a hub for those dedicated to social justice.



## MichMinnies

Blurple people (named after the house colors blue and purple) take pride in their good food, cleanliness, house traditions, rowdy parties, and diverse backgrounds. We have a lively porch with a swing, a cozy dining

room and living room, murals painted throughout, a basement with a TV + gaming consoles, a backyard with picnic tables and a fire pit, and a lovely group of inclusive and caring house members passionate about music, activism, and having fun. Michigan House, formerly Michigan Socialist House, was the first student cooperative in Ann Arbor, and has been in operation since 1932.



## Nakamura

Nakamura is thriving! We have been a co-op with the ICC since 1948, named after John Nakamura of Congress House. Nakkies spend most of our time on the porch hanging out, drinking fish beer, and doing homework, or in our kitchen cooking up the best meals in the ICC. We just had our first progressive party of the semester, and look forward to many more events!



## Truth

Known for our infamous rock climbing wall, Soujourner Truth Cooperative House is the largest co-op on central campus! We Truthies pride ourselves on repeatedly being the go to house for international students studying here in Ann Arbor. We love to take advantage of our large living spaces to host many social events including our traditional house prog, and gather together as a house for dinners at least four nights a week.



## Escher

Escher House is the biggest co-op in the ICC, with almost 165 members calling it home. The building is a big U-shape made up of nine suites, each with its own kitchen and lounge, which makes it feel like a mix of small communities inside one giant house. Interestingly, Escher is the only co-op that was built for that purpose: to be a co-op. It was originally planned as 18 houses, then started as 9, then 2, before eventually coming together as one big, lively space.

Here are some fun facts about Escher. Most of our members are engineers (about 70%), and there's always a strong mix of international

*Continued on page 16*

# 75th Anniversary of ICC's Incorporation



# Holiday Party 2023



# October 2024 Reunion



## House News Continued

students, creating a unique cultural blend. Daily life at Escher is a mix of cooperative meals, hanging out in lounges, late-night conversations, and even playing crosswordle together.

With its size, history, and energy, Escher stands out as one of the most vibrant co-ops in the ICC.



## Ruths

Acquired by the ICC in the early '90s, Ruths' is relatively young compared to some other houses but adopts a cozy so-called "granny" feel with 12 residents. We foster a comfortable and cozy yet serious atmosphere, prioritizing a clean house, productive atmosphere for doing work and school, and having many fun internal social events. We are tucked away in the Old Fourth Ward with a beautiful porch, two small kitchens, high number of singles, two living rooms with guffly shared streaming services, and a couple of cats!



Ruths House, 2025



## Gregory

We are thriving this year with a lively, welcoming group of Gregorians who continue the house's tradition of fun and community. While we remain substance-free, that hasn't stopped plenty of movie nights, game tournaments, and shared meals in our cozy common rooms. The house is as clean and cheerful as ever, and our community spirit remains strong. It's been a great year so far in our little corner of the ICC.



## Black Elk

We think our house this year is encompassing of a whimsical, crafty vibe. Blelkers are down to try any kindergarten-level art project, and we recently made some slime to play with. We also pride ourselves on having the most cats out of any ICC house! We call them the beasts of Black Elk. Each of our four cats has a unique personality, and when you're feeling down, you can usually find one of our beasts in the living room or study. Their names are Banjo, Cari, Matzah, and Monty. I have included a picture of each cat as well as their self portraits, which were made using oil pastels by Blelker Mackenzie Clark.

## Alumni News Continued

I lived at Osterweil from the fall of 1978 to the spring of 1981, when I graduated from the University of Michigan. Then I spent the summer of 1981 at Michigan House. I had a summer job, with a couple of other co-op residents, doing exterior painting at a few of the co-op houses. Enjoyed living at the co-ops.

*Andrew Hope, Osterweil*

I am fine! I am a semi-retired odd job RN in Beaumont, TX. I graduated from Michigan in Honors Linguistics/Honors Anthropology, then went west to Casper, WY, in 1980. I was there 18 years. I was in Lake Charles, LA, for 3 years, then moved to Beaumont in 2002 following receipt of an inheritance--a long-overdue lucky break! This allowed me to finish my BSN at Lamar. I later went to graduate school at Lamar in public health, earning my MPH in 2016 at age 60--you really never are too old to learn!

My final project, on stage of breast cancer at diagnosis, was published. I have many goals for my life; one of them is to do all the Master Craftsman programs through Embroiderers' Guild of America; I also have a lengthy list of places I want to visit. I returned to Detroit in 2014 for my 50th high school reunion at Cranbrook Kingswood and was most impressed by how much Detroit has been rebuilt. Greetings to all!

*Linda A. Esch, Lenny Bruce*



Barbara Wolf and Ralph Monaghan, late 1940s

# Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera House

Excerpted from *The Michigan Daily*, “Lester Cooperative House to be rethemed as a safe space for QTPOC individuals” by [Martha Lewand](#) February 9, 2021

After experiencing what she described as a hostile environment due to her all-white female roommates in her sophomore year dorm, Lorraine Furtado, a University of Michigan class of 2020 alum, found sanctuary in the Inter-Cooperative Council, a housing cooperative operating numerous houses across Ann Arbor. Though the situation was an improvement, Furtado said microaggressions and hostility persisted.

“I wanted to demand more for myself, and I knew I deserved to demand more for myself,” Furtado said.

So in 2019, Furtado began planning to transform her former home — the Lester Cooperative House — into a safe space for Queer and Transgender People of Color like herself. The ICC co-ops are maintained and operated by the student members who live there, rather than a landlord.

Members of Lester participated in house meetings about re-theming the house. After an almost unanimous vote in favor of re-theming among house members, they brought it to the ICC, where it was later approved in November 2019, according to Furtado.

Members voted to rename the house after Sylvia Rivera, one of the leading activists in the Gay Liberation Movement.

“I cried from joy,” Furtado said. “It was such a beautiful moment to know that my housemates cared about the vision I had. They cared about the community I wanted to create, and they agreed with me about it. And it was so meaningful to know that my housemates cared about a safe space for QTPOC as much as I did.”

The change in making Lester the Rivera House will be effective in Fall 2021. The house, which was previously all-vegetarian, will no longer have any dietary restrictions.

Rivera will operate year-round. They accept applications from any University students as well as other people in the Ann Arbor area who meet the ICC’s eligibility criteria.



Johnson-Rivera House

## In Memoriam

**Dr. Eleanor Laubly M.D.** – Stevens House 1953. Died 7/24/2019

**Ivan Gluckman** – Michigan House 1951-52. Died 10/28/2019

**Dan Palmer** – Mich/ Lester 1951-54. Died 10/14/2024

**Donald Olshansky** – Michigan House 1950-52/ Lester 1952-53 Died 3/23/2019

**Mark Heineke** – Michigan and Minnies 1991-92 Died 7/4/2022

**Jean King** – Lester House 1943-44/ Stevens House 1946-52 Died 9/10/2021

**Matt Herron** – Nakamura House 1952-53 Died 8/7/2020

**Rose Maleport** – Owen House 1951 Died 10/28/2024

**Marilyn Bigelow** – Lester/ Owen/ Stevens 1949-1953 Died 12/14/2024

**Dr. David L. Smith**, Owen 1947-51 Died 5/21/2022

Established the David L. Smith Scholarship Program for Owen House members

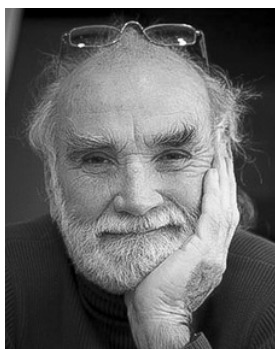
**Norma Clara Barbour** – ICC Director of Membership 1986-94, died 2/2/2022



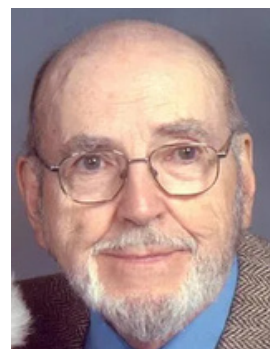
Jean King



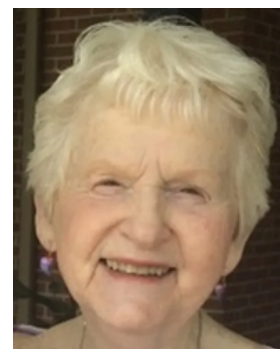
Mark Heineke



Matt Herron



Dr. David L. Smith



Norma Barbour

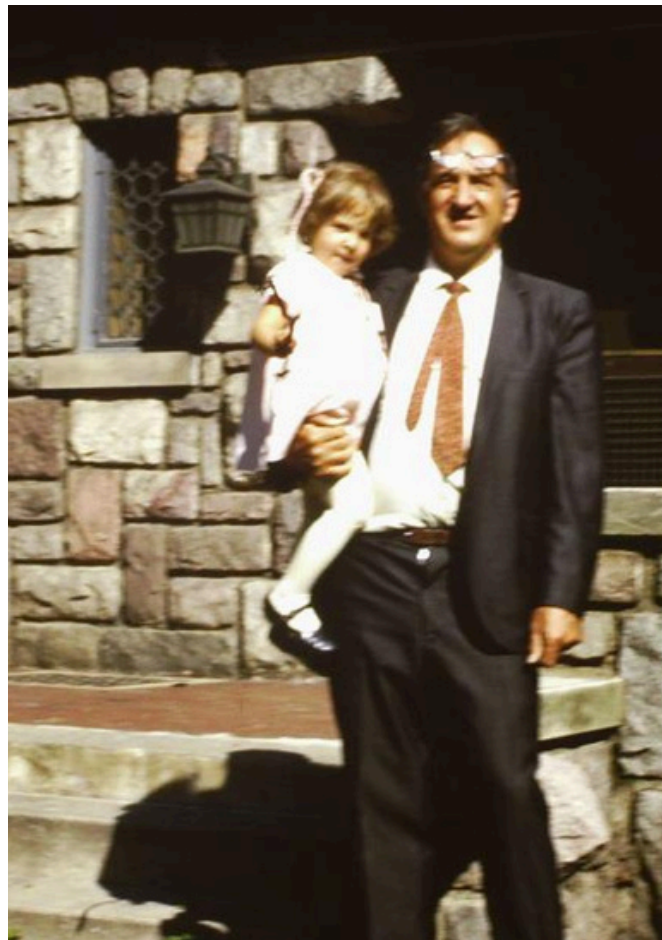
# The Buchele Corner

## Looking Backwards and Forward

Happy 81st year! I grew up in Ann Arbor in the 1970s and 1980s. Aside from a few hot days, Ann Arbor was livable in the summertime. Today, however, it's hot! And our houses can't keep up. Summer occupancy is way down, causing the ICC to raise rates to compensate. We all have also heard stories about the variability of heating in some of the older houses, with some rooms freezing and others boiling.

In 2007, my dad (Luther Buchele) wrote (in what would be his last Alumni Cooperator article) that "because of the huge number of people interested in doing something about global warming and the huge cost for corrective measures, this dilemma presents a cogent opportunity for alumni members of the ICC to make gifts to the ICC. Such a gift would reduce global warming and at the same time help students reduce their room and board costs." He and my mom donated \$500 that year to help with these Environmental Sustainability initiatives, a fund that would later be named in their honor.

The City of Ann Arbor recently passed the Green Rental Housing Ordinance with the goal of reducing utility usage and improving sustainability in Ann Arbor rental properties. We are lucky that we already do many of the requirements, however the average age of our beautiful houses is 130 years. To reach full compliance we'll need significant funds to install at least four new roofs, improve insulation, get more efficient appliances, reduce energy costs, and potentially (depending on funds availability) install central



AC to improve habitability in the summertime as the climate gets warmer.

We are asking for alumni to donate generously to the Luther and Joan Buchele Sustainability fund to build up the reserves needed. The \$500 my parents donated would be \$750 in 2025's dollars. Can you match what my parents donated by donating at least \$750 today? Doing so will ensure that generations of students to come will not experience what so many of us did in the past.

Go to our back page, 24, to see how you can contribute!

## Raising Children In Community.

A few years after joining Great Oak Cohousing in Ann Arbor, we had our first daughter. We love this place because it reminds us of our years at Mich House. Like every new cohousing baby, she was embraced by the community. When sleepless nights left us exhausted, neighbors brought meals and passed her around during a New Year's Eve party so we could rest. As a toddler, she had many extra adults to keep her safe, and later, friends to roam with, inventing their own worlds. Older kids acted as "mother's helpers," and seasonal traditions - Halloween, Easter, even the first big snowfall - were celebrated together.

Unlike my own childhood, where adults were family or teachers, our kids grew up knowing 50 caring adults. They felt comfortable borrowing some eggs or spending long afternoons playing in neighbors' homes. Through shared meals, chores, and

Cohousing has given our daughters a rare upbringing - surrounded by connection, trust, and support. Living "in a fishbowl" taught them to be resourceful, empathetic, and confident with new people. As they grow, they carry with them the skills of cooperation, negotiation, and empathy that community life naturally fostered.

*Willie Northway, Debs, Ruths, Mich*

web: [welcome.gocoho.org](http://welcome.gocoho.org)



# Tales from the Apocrypha

by Jim Jones

Strange tales, rumors and half-truths. What can I say? Over the last fifty years, I've seen and heard many a story that I can't verify with the records, which are usually skimpy at best. And now many of those who told me these stories are deceased or out of contact.

So I must call these tales, collectively, the Apocrypha of the ICC. As with the stories of early Christianity, they were never written down when they happened and have been passed down only as oral history.

Sadly, memories are generally riddled with inaccuracies, and the reader should take these stories for what they're worth: flawed, half-true, and sometimes embellished. But taken as a whole, they constitute a rich and unforgettable backdrop to the history of the Ann Arbor co-ops. They need to be told.

-- Jim Jones

## Keep on Truckin'!

Over the years, the co-ops have collectively owned or borrowed vehicles for food deliveries, garbage collection, joint purchasing and other endeavors. The earliest story that I've heard was from the members of Brandeis co-op in the 1930s, when a hearse owned by the Rockwell brothers was used to buy produce for the co-ops from Eastern Market in Detroit. There were also mutterings about uses at night by members and their dates.



*Brandeis members, 1941. Bill Rockwell, bottom right.*

But perhaps the most interesting tale involves a road trip to Washington, D.C. True, I can't remember whether the vehicle used was the hearse or another vehicle, but the story is better if it was the hearse, and this is a good place to tell it.

Brandeis Cooperative was named for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who was the first Jewish member of the high court. Since the men from Brandeis House were in D.C. anyway, they thought that a visit to the Justice would be appropriate. So, of course, they went to his house and knocked on the door.

Now bear in mind that this was the Good Old Days. Brandeis came to the door, and the men introduced themselves. They told me that initially the Justice was suspicious of them, but he asked them to come in anyway. After a good conversation, Brandeis decided that they were okay. A good time was had by all.

This story about the ICC's truck was written by Luther Buchele, with additions by yours truly:

*When I arrived in September 1951 to take the position of the first Executive Secretary of the ICC, I was*

## Tales from the Apocrypha, by Jim Jones, continued

told that the ICC owned a truck for use of House Managers, garbage haulers, Inter-Cooperative purchasing Committee and lastly for members if there were free spaces on the truck calendar. I learned that earlier the ICC had purchased a touring car and had an ICC trailer to convey garbage, food deliveries, and furniture purchases. The old touring car had been described to me in glowing terms in that it was the ICC first conveyance and the ICC had obtained the Dean of Men's approval to own a truck with student drivers. In those days, students were not permitted to bring cars to school.

The truck when I arrived was sparkling new, I remember it was greenish brown with the words "Inter-Cooperative Council" printed on the right door around the circle pines. Of particular significance to me was that it was painted by a local artist, Milt Kemnitz from my church, who painted signs to keep from starving. In the last 35 years, he was the most financially successful artist in Ann Arbor. I have a large watercolor painted by him of the ICC truck in front of the house south of Nakamura Co-op! Later on his two children were members of the ICC and his daughter worked several years as Maintenance Coordinator for the ICC.<sup>1\*</sup>

Many of the members used the truck to move into an ICC house or to move out. In the summertime members would sign out the truck to go to local beaches. One Sunday, a group signed it out to swim at Bishop Lake, and one of the members, Rusi Singerporia, an Indian student from Owen House while in the water was knocked unconscious by a barrel raft's edge hitting him in the head. The accident was unnoticed by the swimmers and he drowned. About closing time his body was noticed by the life guards and they cleared all people out of the park and found his clothing on the grass but no identification. His Owen House roommate noted his



absence but it didn't seem a big deal. The next day the roommate noticed him gone and came to the ICC office. I called the Ann Arbor police and discovered that a brown male had been found in the lake. One of his close friends and I traveled to the State Police morgue and confirmed that it was our missing member.

One of the problems over the years was members stealing the truck for personal travel. A member of Michigan House was an offender and used it to visit his girl friend in Cleveland, Ohio. He was in medical school and I knew the Secretary of the Med School from my church. I went to see him to complain about the student's unethical behavior. He looked me in the eye and said he was sorry to hear about this, but the medical school admired students who exhibited a kind of bravado that sometimes shocked other people but helped them in tough situations to complete operation or to deal with distraught patients and relatives. This report shook me up, but I knew it was true that timid doctors had difficulties under stress.

The use of the truck was on an honor system wherein the key and gas credit card were readily available to all. In all the time I was Executive Secretary, there was only one violation of a member buying gas on the credit card for his own auto. The truck custodian's job was to keep the truck cleaned up and serviced at all times, since it was a garbage truck as well as for food delivery. He was in charge of truck maintenance, and if the truck was in bad mechanical shape, he had to decide whether to buy a new truck or have an overhaul job. I remember that one member was angry that the truck custodian refused to take the truck for service to a friend of his. He presented a resolution to force the truck custodian to change garages in favor of his friend's.

There were accidents occasionally, fender benders, knocked out tail and headlamps and scrapes. One member ran off the road near Brighton, Michigan and I had to force him to go with me to Brighton to hire a wrecker to bring the truck out of the ditch. I think he was so ashamed that he couldn't live with the thought that he had an accident on a trip that appeared to not be entirely legal.

-- Luther Buchele, ICC Executive Secretary 1957-1985; written August 19, 2002

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<sup>1</sup>Although Luther doesn't mention it, Milton Kemnitz came from a very cooperative family. His father was the first manager of the Ann Arbor Cooperative Society, which ran a grocery store and gas station during and after the Great Depression. It was a loan from the Cooperative Society, co-signed by A.K. Stevens, which made possible the purchase of ICC's first house in 1944. – JJ

## Tales from the Apocrypha, by Jim Jones, continued

*Luther asked me to add a few words about the truck from before and after his 34 years with the ICC. While some of the details are sketchy in my mind, the broad outlines of these details are relatively factual.*

*The ICC houses engaged in joint purchasing even before they owned a truck. Back in the late 1930s and early 1940s, they used a hearse belonging to the Rockwell brothers to drive to the Detroit farmers market and other places where they could find good buys. The hearse was also occasionally used for road trips and dates. It evidently had a small stove of some kind in the back that was helpful when "parking" after a date.*

*Luther mentions the use of the truck for trash hauling, which was necessary until the city began to pick up refuse in the late 1960s. What he doesn't mention is that the position of ICC Trash Hauler was a coveted position, according to several alumni who held the job. The Trash Hauler had to regularly visit all of the houses, which allowed him or her to meet many members of the opposite sex at a time when none of the groups were co-ed.*



*In the late 1980s, the scheduling and keys were centralized into the office after an accident totaled the truck. One of the members, who was very inebriated, borrowed the truck under the old informal system in order to purchase more beer. Unfortunately, Newberry Hall leaped out in front of the truck as he drove along, preventing the purchase. However, staff and board agreed that we couldn't chance any more unauthorized use, and the current office-based check-out system was instituted.*

*Perhaps the truck's closest brush with disaster, at least that I'm aware of, came during a summer in the 1990s, when we were purchasing materials for a maintenance project at one of the houses. A couple of members of the Summer Work Crew put a barrel of plastic sealer in the back of the truck and headed back to work on the freeway. It was a hot day, and they had the back window of the truck open for ventilation.*

*Suddenly there was a problem on the road ahead and they had to break. The quick deceleration caused the barrel to come crashing through the open back window, open on impact with the front dash, and spray the opaque contents all over the front windshield. Fortunately, the driver was able to safely come to a stop, but the results could have been deadly. And oh, what a mess to clean up!*

*Today, as many people are more conscious of the need for conservation of resources, there are examples in Canada and other places of "car cooperatives," which allow community use of vehicles. That the ICC has had such a system in place for over 50 years is quite remarkable, though it is often taken for granted and is little known outside of our membership. Once again, the innovative student cooperatives are way ahead of the pack.*

*-- Jim Jones, ICC Executive Director 1985-1999; written September 1, 2002*

## Those darned Socialists

The first true housing co-op in Ann Arbor was, of course, the Michigan Socialist House. Started in 1932, the first house was on Ann Street near the current location of the City Hall. The house is still standing, although it's now considered a single family home and occupancy is limited to six unrelated people under the city's zoning code. Even walking by the house will give you a sense of history, and it's well worth the effort.

## Tales from the Apocrypha, by Jim Jones, continued

Originally, all the members lived slept in the attic and used the rooms below for studying. They filled the house like sardines to keep the costs manageable – over 20 members, I believe. At one point, they tried to house some members in the unheated garage, but that was too much for the city to tolerate, even given the tolerant views of the Depression era.

The attic, of course, was a firetrap. Only one stairway, no fire escape, and a long way down. Jerry Reese, ICC president in 1947-48 and a Michigan House member, told me that there was a rope hanging in the big tree out front for use in case of fire.



After publishing *In Our Own Hands*, the history of the ICC in 1994, we received several interesting letters. First we heard from a fellow named Charles Orr, who was in his 90s and living in Switzerland. He wrote:

*As a co-founder of the Michigan Socialist Club (Fall 1930)...and as a kind of godfather to the Michigan Socialist House (1932), I can recall the early days of these pioneer institutions.*

*It started with the Round Table Club. I recall that during my first years on the campus, from 1925 to 1928, there was such a club which invited students... to discuss some topic of the day. I may have attended once. I think that the discussion was preceded by a short introduction or formal presentation. At the end of my junior year, I left to see the world. I returned to Ann Arbor in October 1930 -- just too late to enroll for the fall semester... This left me with time on my hands, and I attended a meeting of the Round Table Club...*

*I had been working in the League of Nations in Geneva along side an Italian Swiss socialist, who "worked on" converting me. He lent me a copy of George Bernard Shaw's Intelligent Women's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism. My attraction to the moral case for socialism was confirmed when, in the summer of 1930, I visited Germany, where many friends were socialist sympathizers.*

*[Leonard] Kimball [another member of the Round Table Club] and I decided that what students needed was not a discussion club, but an active association which could help solve their urgent bread-and-butter problems. The great depression was starting to bite hard, especially in the automotive heartland, which was hit harder than anywhere else in the world... Ann Arbor was flooded with hundreds of unemployed would-be students. There were not enough jobs even to earn one's board.*

*Our first decision -- about November 1930 -- was to change the name of the Round Table Club to the Michigan Socialist Club, with the aim to promote activities to help poor students. I believe that the idea to set up a cooperative rooming and boarding house was already expressed by Kimbal or me. In any event it was implicit in our plans and was discussed at an early meeting of the Socialist Club... The idea of a cooperative rooming house was an immediate hit and brought us a number of eager members. But that was necessarily a long-term perspective.<sup>2</sup>*

2 *Socialism at the University of Michigan -- The Early 1930s*, a paper by Charles Orr, January 1933, from the author.

He told us that the meetings leading to the founding of the first co-op were in his aunt's rooming house on South University, east of Washtenaw. He thought that meeting in a rooming house led to the idea of a co-op, which would rent the whole house instead of individual rooms.

Orr was a fascinating guy who had returned to school after traveling widely. He never lived at the Michigan Socialist House, but he knew its first residents and was able to talk about many of the early problems. Apparently there were interpersonal difficulties that caused the group grief after the first year, when some of the key figures moved out:

*Among the early members of the Michigan Socialist Club most eager to establish a cooperative house, I remember four -- all of whom became founding members and first inhabitants of the Michigan Socialist House, in 1932. They were the Kuehne brothers, Sher Quereshi (from India) and Zelden Cohen...*

*I can furnish one detail. As sometimes happens in communal living, a bitter split soon developed...*

*In the early months of the Michigan Socialist House, such a feud developed over the rivalry for leadership -- the Kuehne brothers on one side and Sher Quereshi on the other. At that time I was rooming at my mother's house with another student from India, named Tarini Dinha, whom I had met in 1929 or 1930 in Geneva, where we both were working in the League of Nations. One evening Dinha brought me word of trouble at the Socialist House. I was shocked. We decided to go at once to try to mediate the dispute. I, as one who had a certain standing in the Socialist community, and Sinha, as a fellow Indian who was also an active socialist. It was a long walk from South U. past Washtenaw to 335 East Ann Street, and I was very tired, but we did it. All in vain. The split occurred.<sup>33</sup>*

Then we received another letter, from a fellow whose name is now lost to time. He said that *he* was the founder of the Michigan Socialist House in 1932, and he gave us the address where he lived. Unfortunately, that house (on South State as I remember) wasn't where the Socialist House was located, and his name wasn't on the registry of members in those early years -- which we still had thanks to Luther Buchele's great hording instincts.

What was he thinking of? Clearly, he had been a part of something significant, but it wasn't the Michigan Socialist House. We do know that the Socialist Club started a second house that didn't last too long, but that was at a different location too. Something called the Vanguard Club started a house at 807 State Street (where Nakamura is now located) in the late 30s, but I don't think that was it either.

With great unease, I filed the letter and tried to pretend that I hadn't received it. Sometimes, when there's no real information to explain a story, we have to pick and choose our versions of reality. This version of our beginnings didn't fit, but I've often wondered what lost history it might represent.

The early Michigan Socialist House was closely connected with other "socialist" efforts. The Ann Arbor Cooperative Society had recently been started, dealing with group purchases of coal for heating, and then with groceries and even an automobile service station.

One day a woman was talking with me about growing up in Ann Arbor. She said that her mother was involved with the new grocery co-op, and when she was little they would visit the Socialist House to get food from the basement, which was acting as a storage center for the store.

One founder of the Socialist House named Shar Quraishi went on to start the Michigan Cooperative Boarding House, later called the Wolverine Eating Co-op. The co-op was first located in Lane Hall, which was then owned by the Student Christian Association. Although SCA and the Lane Hall program focused on social justice issues, there was some tension over the

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3 <sup>3</sup> *Op. Cit.*, Charles Orr, pages 5-6.

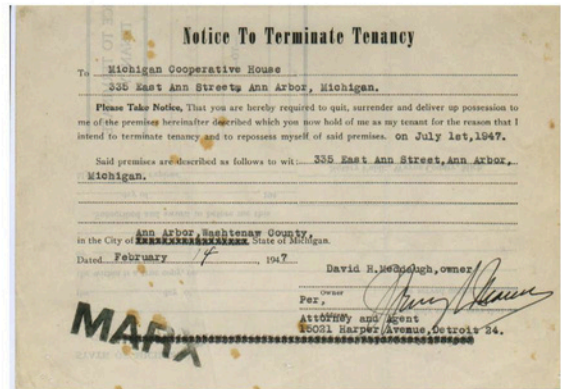
## Tales from the Apocrypha, by Jim Jones, continued

relationship of the eating co-op to the socialists, which led Quraishi to partially dissociate from the co-op house – and probably led to the name change. The University acquired Lane Hall in 1936, which may have led to the co-op leaving those quarters and purchasing a building across State Street. At its peak before World War II, there were around 500 members in the co-op.

### And then came the Christians

Members of the early Socialist House often gloat about its low cost: \$2 per week for room and \$2 per week for food. That was very low, even for co-ops in the 1930s. What they often forget is that one of their former members purchased the building and kept the rents well below market.

That became increasingly difficult after the end of World War II. As the veterans returned to campus, university enrollment mushroomed and investors purchased the old student rooming houses as investments. Finally, the former member who owned Michigan House couldn't wait any longer to cash out. He sold the property in 1947, and the co-op was evicted. Someone stamped the eviction notice with a big rubber stamp, leaving an image that said simply, "Marx."



Before the sale, Michigan House had been a part of the ICC but wasn't very active. Many in the other houses, which had different origins, considered Michigan House to be "not a real co-op" because it had selective membership. The tension between the Michigan House and the others was somewhat perpetuated by their "godfathers," Prof. A.K. Stevens on the Socialist side and Rev. "Pick" Pickerill on the other.

In any case, with the eviction came an existential crisis for the members of the Michigan House cooperative: either the ICC would buy them a new house, or the co-op would cease to exist. Tarik Ataman, a Turkish student at Michigan House became involved with the new ICC Housing Committee:

*I was elected chairman by the committee when I volunteered to replace the missing representative of my house. The housing committee's work having never been defined we restricted our job into looking for a house to buy...Lester House not having decided to have a member, the 5th man was an ex-officio member from Mich House. The member from Stevens House also was not seen.*

*When it was apparent that the committee was not working satisfactorily and had not seen any houses and as time was running short, I took the matter in my hands and organized a one man committee consisting of my self. I answered every ad on the paper and got in touch with every owner and realtor that had anything to sell. At the end of two weeks a house was considered half way suitable and shown to others but we never got around to buy it. At the end of three weeks a house was judged very desirable and best buy to me, was shown to 9 ICC members who approved. The deal never came through because of the objecting of certain members on account that we had agreed to buy it only for 500 dollars less than the asking price. While ICC was debating...the house was sold for \$500 more. I resigned because I felt that the Board had no basis to judge the price without seeing that particular house and also the other houses on the market.<sup>49</sup>*

<sup>49</sup> Report on Housing Committee by Tarik Ataman, Chairman, Spring 1947.

## **Tales from the Apocrypha, by Jim Jones, continued**

Despite Ataman's threat to quit the committee -- or perhaps because of it -- a house was found soon after his memo was written. Located at 315 N. State, the new house was perhaps even oversold to the members in the excitement of the hour. A purchase agreement was signed by Ruth Bluck, ICC President, on May 29th. A report from the Housing Committee was glowing:

*The house can actually hold 38 people, but 36 was recommended to the Personnel Committee, since room for adjustment is considered necessary.*<sup>510</sup>

A complete list of the work needed to renovate the house was made and the University was contacted for their approval. (Interestingly, the ICC had forgotten about University approval when they purchased Osterweil the year before and were forced to ask for permission after the fact. They were determined not to embarrass themselves again.)

They also worried about financing, since bank loans were hard to come by. The seller was willing to offer a land contract for the house, but the University felt that 6% interest was too high and demanded that it be reduced to 5%. The University was willing to loan the ICC up to 60% of the value (not enough) or to refinance all of the ICC houses to come up with more money (not enough time). Lou Cote, a Mich House member who also served as ICC Accountant -- today we would call him Treasurer -- had reservations about University assistance under any circumstances. In June of 1947, he wrote:

*The University offered to lend us money and this was recommended greatly by the deans... It is doubtful that we could swing this deal at present, and if it was possible, I feel that it would endanger our independence from the University and would recommend that we carry on with the banks or private concerns and let the higher interest be a tribute paid for freedom, however tenuous, from the University's control.*<sup>611</sup>

The sale price of the new house was \$21,000, with a down payment of \$4,500. \$2,000 came from Michigan House savings, and the balance was raised from individual loans. In November, the land contract was replaced by a loan from the Ann Arbor Bank (now First of America Bank) at 4.5% interest. Somehow, we did it.

After the new house was purchased, the grateful Mich House members began to take on a leading role in the ICC that has continued to this day. Significantly, there were only two ICC presidents from Michigan House before 1947, but ten out of seventeen came from that group in the following decade.

### **Michigan House Takes Charge**

In the fall of 1983, I sat on the grassy mound of the North Campus courtyard, eating lunch with Tarik Ataman and Lou Cody. In 1947, Ataman became ICC president, the first to come from Michigan House after its purchase. Cody, also from Michigan House, was the ICC Treasurer. Together, they managed to set the stage for much of what came later in the ICC.

It was summer of 1947, and the ICC had not only acquired a new home for "Mich" House, but also established an ICC Housing Committee to look for other property.

But Ataman and Cody realized that there was a problem. Property prices were rapidly increasing as speculators bought up the old houses around campus, and inflation was likely to continue. They realized that if each house paid for its own mortgage and taxes, every newly purchased house would cost more than the last. But this was just the financial system that was in

<sup>510</sup> Report on Inspection of new house on 315 N. State, ICC Housing Committee, July 24, 1947.

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<sup>11</sup> Quote from Lou Cote. Source lost -- probably the *Cooperator*.

place, and the members in the older houses were likely to resist any move to subsidize the new purchases.

So, as they told me, they equalized the rates in the summer, when most people were gone. Not a very democratic approach, they agreed, but it worked. When the members came back in the fall, they accepted the change as a given. And it was this change that enabled the ICC to purchase all the houses that came after without members in newer houses paying more than members in those purchased earlier. Ataman was particularly proud of his summer end-run.

Then Lou Cody told me another story that still has me scratching my head.

One day, he said, he was down at the County Courthouse when he overheard some staff talking about foreclosing on a co-op house. He said that when the house was purchased, it incorporated and assumed ownership under its own name, and now their failure to pay the property taxes was leading to foreclosure.

Cody said that he went directly back to the house and got the ICC checkbook. He then returned to Courthouse and paid the taxes. Then the ICC, in a panic, agreed to transfer the property to their name to prevent such a thing from happening again.

So far, so good – but this is when things get confusing. Cody told me that the co-op in trouble was Stevens House, but this simply isn't true. After hearing this story a couple of times over the years, I looked through all the records and saw clearly that Stevens House, purchased about three years earlier in 1944, was indeed held by the ICC and was never incorporated separately.

So what happened? Cody couldn't have made this up – it was simply too big of a story to be imagined. I pondered and pondered, but I never could figure out what he was remembering.

Then, about twenty five years after I first heard the story, I thought of a possible (or maybe even probable) explanation. It wasn't Stevens, it was Owen. At the time Cody was treasurer, there were only three houses owned, not including Michigan House. Stevens and Owen both were purchased in 1944, and Osterweil was added in 1946. Of those, only Owen could have been the group that Cody bailed out.

From the beginning, Owen's purchase was a fluke that doesn't fit neatly into the narrative of ICC expansion. Just three years before Cody became Treasurer, the ICC incorporated and scrapped together every cent it could beg, borrow or steal to buy Stevens House. In that same fall, Owen House lost its lease, and the ICC didn't have enough money to help them as well.

Luckily, an anonymous donor came to the rescue, providing the down payment money to buy the house on a land contract (that donor, I later learned, was the father of a former Owen House member). Nowhere in our records can I find evidence that Owen House was incorporated, with the sale in their name, but I believe that this has to be the case. If so, this would be the first and only case of a student co-op in Ann Arbor owning its own property, but the consolidation of ownership under the ICC would constitute an important precedent in shaping our culture.

Good for us.



*Tarik Atamin, ICC President 1947*

# ICC Alum Turns 100

**Jeanne Tozer Keresztesi is Celebrating Her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday This Year! December 2<sup>nd</sup>**



*Jeanne and a friend, before the invention of Twister*



*Jeanne*



*Herman C. Hudson  
(Search him at Indiana University)*



*Michigan Socialist House in the mid-1940s*

Jeanne Keresztesi turns 100 on December 2, 2025. She started at the University of Michigan just as World War II was ending and the G.I.s were all coming home.

She began dating one Herman C. Hudson. When she brought Herman to her place, she was informed that since he happened to be Black, he was not allowed there.

Herman told her about his Michigan Socialist House and ICC's open membership policy – considered truly radical at the time.

So Jeanne moved to A.K. Stevens House in 1945 and then Muriel Lester House.

"It was the happiest time of my life. ...The friendships I had were just so meaningful. They still are!"

**"The friends I made there lasted all my life."**



*Jeanne Tozer Keresztesi with daughter Cate King in Jeanne's home in Ann Arbor*

## Susan

*Continued from page 4*

### **Celebrating Our Community**

This brings me to our upcoming celebration. October is Co-op Month globally, and this year the International Co-operative Alliance has declared it the International Year of Cooperatives. This isn't just about our country—it's about recognizing that around the world, from Europe to Japan and beyond, people share our common foundation of cooperative structures, ethics, and history.

We're celebrating this month with an event that brings together both current members and alumni. We want everyone to understand what we have in common with people around the world: working together to benefit each other in structures that don't put anyone before anyone else.

### **A Life of Service**

For me, the only point of being a human being is to

benefit others. That doesn't mean you can't take care of yourself or live your own life. It just means that in the end, whatever skills you have should benefit others—even if it's just smiling at a stranger on the street.

The cooperative movement embodies this principle perfectly. I have to say, I've absolutely enjoyed every moment of working for the ICC. There were rough spots, certainly, but I've never had any real complaints. I've always felt incredibly blessed to have this job. The ICC has many, many years of amazing work behind it, and I couldn't have asked for a better way to spend my career.

This is what I want for whoever takes over this role: to understand that this is one of the best opportunities they'll have for personal fulfillment because they'll be benefiting others every single day. It's not about ambition or climbing ladders or making more money than the person next to you. It's about serving other human beings in a way that actually works.

The reality is there are ups and downs, but in this organization, the downs are always erased by the ups. And that, to me, is what makes cooperative living not just sustainable, but truly worthwhile.

# Thank You Donors!

Donating to the ICC is easy! Click on <https://icc.coop/alumni/make-a-gift/>. You can specify which of these funds you want your donation to go to. Unrestricted donations enable the ICC to channel funds to where they are needed most.

Options for giving:

The ICC channels donations into different funds. The A.K. Stevens Development Fund assists with **expanding the amount of affordable student cooperative housing in Washtenaw County.**

The Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund **assists members who face economic obstacles in securing housing.**

Major maintenance goes to our Capital Investment Reserve, to be used for **major renovations at our houses** and large critical maintenance projects.

The Luther and Joan Buchele Sustainability Fund **channels donations towards projects to make ICC's houses to more efficiently and cool & heat our houses and reduce our carbon footprint, .**

The Alumni Program Fund monies are used to **support the production of this publication, alumni events and fundraising efforts.**

The Joy Project join us **supporting the continued success of Johnson-Rivera House's cultivation of a QTBIPOC safe space at the ICC.** The project will be 8 weeks long during the summer, and participants will live and cooperate together in the house for its duration.

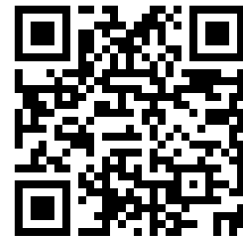
**Online:** One-time or recurring donations can be made at [icc.coop/alumni/make-a-gift](https://icc.coop/alumni/make-a-gift/).

**Legacy:** Past members have made generous gifts to the ICC in their wills or living trusts, honoring the cooperative spirit by creating scholarships and endowments.

If you're interested in including the ICC in your will, we can happily provide you with our Tax ID number.

**By mail:**

**Alumni Relations Coordinator  
337 E. William St  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104**



Scan the QR Code to  
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