

**What Happens When Your Community Is Criticized on Nat'l TV?**

# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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(\$7 Canada)

Spring 1999 (Issue #102)

## *Health & Healing*

***Patch Adams  
on Health & Healing***

***Is Community Good  
For Your Health?***

***Staying Healthy in Community***



# **Communities Directory**

**Now in a revised second printing.**

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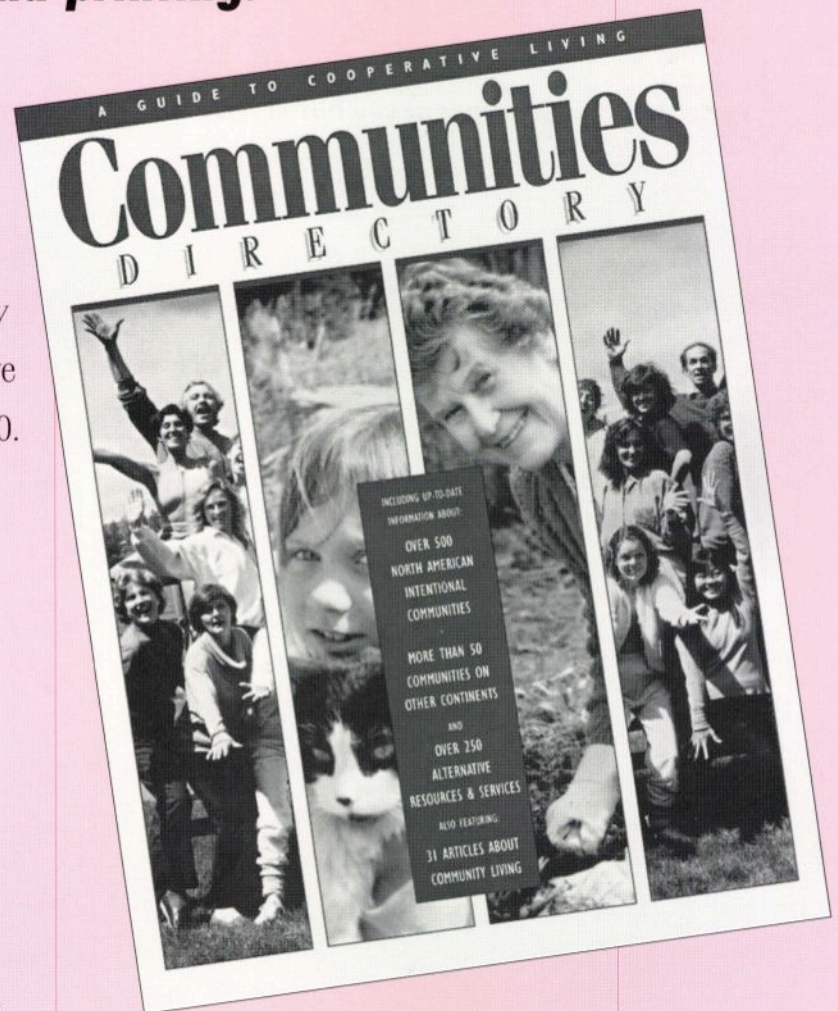
Easy to use, it includes maps, cross-reference charts (sorted alphabetically and geographically), and an extensive index for finding communities by areas of interest.

Thirty-one feature articles cover various aspects and issues of cooperative living.

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Published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities.

*See order form on page 78.*



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**—Kirkpatrick Sale,**

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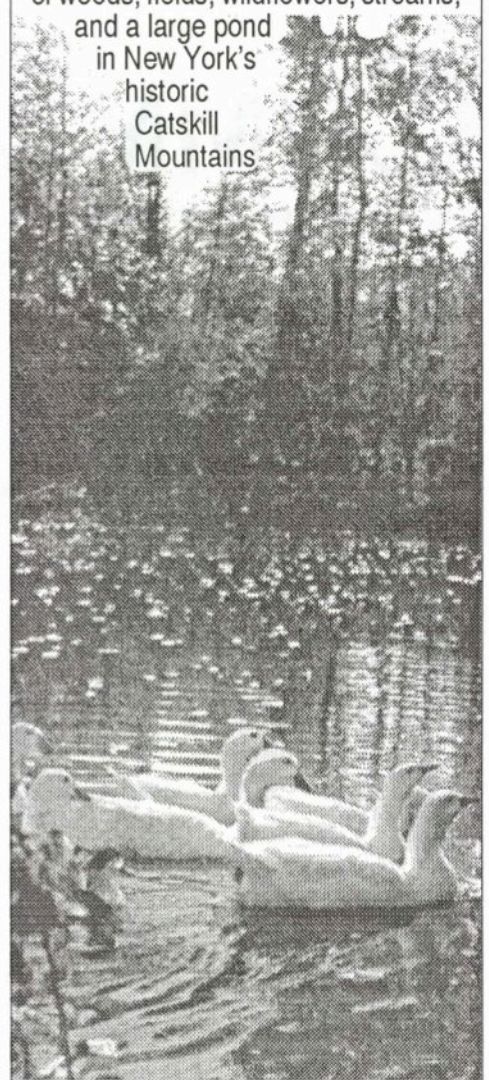
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# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

## FRONT COVER

Physician and clown  
Patch Adams of  
Gesundheit! Institute.  
Photo:  
Gesundheit! Institute

## BACK COVER

At Camphill Ballytobin  
community, Kilkenny,  
Ireland.  
Photo: Gypsy Ray

## FOCUS

### HEALTH & HEALING IN COMMUNITY

#### 30 FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

##### Community Is Healing

*Blair Voyvodic, M.D.*

#### 33 "Things Co-exist"

Experiencing illness, and warmth and connection in New View Cohousing.  
*Dana Snyder-Grant.*

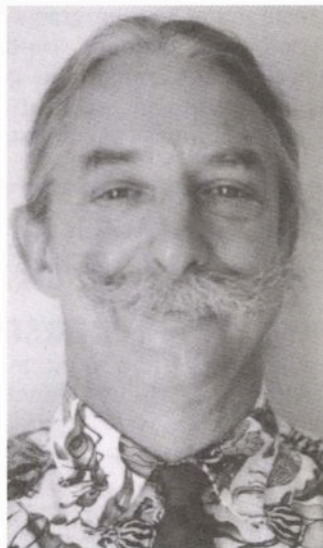
#### 34 A Circle of Care

Family and small-town community health care inspires . . . intentional community health care.  
*Kathy Blomquist, R.N.*

##### • About Gesundheit! Institute

#### 37 Patch Adams on Health & Healing

Clown/physician *Patch Adams* tells why malpractice insurance ensures poor health care and how community living encourages good health. Interviewed by *Diana Leafé Christian.*



#### 40 Taking the Leap of Faith

Even in overcrowded lives, caring for the well-being of others in community can bring unexpected energy and joy. *Sandra Greenstone and Clinton Greenstone, M.D.*



#### 42 Community Medicine Chest

How do communarians keep themselves healthy? In an informal survey *Diana Leafé Christian* gets a glimpse.

- Healing Communities
- Health Resources in Community

#### 46 The Quilt

*Madelaine Roig* discovers that the search for community and the search for health are one and the same.

#### 49 Loving to the End

*Mel Leasure's* intensely personal story of how incurable illness and an unimaginable need for selflessness led to transformation, unconditional love, and greater community.

- The Journey Home

#### 53 "Everyone Feels Useful Here"

Photographer *Gypsy Ray* shows us the healing heart of an Irish Camphill community.

#### 58 Healing Ourselves at Home: Favorite Books

*Audrey Hassanein* suggests health books for empowering ourselves at home.

## FEATURE



22 **The Art of Community**

24 **Mother & Father**

Sometimes you can go home again.  
Fiction by *Ruth Latta*.

## COLUMNS

13 CREATING COMMUNITY WHERE YOU ARE •  
*CAROL PIMENTEL*

**The Hope Street Gang Forever**

17 FELLOWSHIP NEWS • *BETTY DIDCOCT*  
**Communitarians as Y2K Activists**

20 FEDERATION UPDATE • *KAT KINKADE*  
**Health Insurance is a Peach!**

60 MY TURN • *CELINAS RUTH*  
**Seeking Truth in Media: What  
Happens When Your Community  
Is Criticized on National TV?**

80 PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN •  
*GEOFF KOZENY*  
**Toxic Emissions, Toxic Omissions**

## DEPARTMENTS

4 LETTERS

7 PUBLISHER'S  
NOTE

10 COMMUNITY  
GRAPEVINE

66 REVIEWS

68 CLASSIFIEDS

70 COMMUNITY  
CALENDAR

71 REACH

# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

## SPONSOR OF THIS ISSUE

Audrey Hassanein

## EDITOR

Diana Leafe Christian

## GUEST EDITORS

Blair Voyvodic, M.D. (*CommonGround, Ontario*)

Madelaine Roig (*CommonGround, Ontario*)

## DESIGN DIRECTOR

Paul DeLapa

## LAYOUT

Lansing Scott (*Meridian House*)

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Billie Miracle (*WomanShare*)

Jacob Stevens (*Dancing Rabbit*)

Rick Tobin

## PHOTOS

Sypko Andrae, Jillian Downey,

Gypsy Ray, Heidi Read

## PROOFREADING

Julie Van Pelt

## REACH ADS

Patricia Greene

## BUSINESS MANAGER

Marty Klaif

## DATABASE MANAGER

Velma Kahn (*Abundant Dawn*)

## CIRCULATION MANAGER

McCune Porter

## EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Paul DeLapa

Betty Didcoct (*TIES Consulting*)

Laird Sandhill (*Sandhill Farm*)

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# LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities magazine*, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782. Your letter may be edited or shortened. Thank you!

## Praise for "Y2K" issue

Dear *Communities*:

Your winter '98 issue ("Communities, The Millennium, and Y2K") is perhaps the most important publication on Y2K yet. As Laird Sandhill says, for communities it is the "Opportunity of the Millennium," and as guest editor, Monique Gauthier says, "The answer to Y2K is community." There is no better source of information on how to build intentional communities than *Communities magazine*.

Bill Ellis

TRANET Newsletter

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Dear *Communities*:

Just finished reading your most timely review with Patch Adams in the new issue. It was excellent, as was the whole issue; it's done more than anything else I've seen to convince me that Y2K is a serious issue

Tim Miller

Lawrence, Kansas

## Thanks for "Patriot Survivalist" article

Dear *Communities*:

I read "Patriot Survivalists on an Idaho Mountain" (*Fall '98*) closely several times and could not find anything objectionable in it. In fact, the discrepancy between the article and the editorial sidebar truly sounded like the publishers were the ones fearful and intolerant of differences. I myself probably wouldn't feel bonded to

other members of a community simply because I'd bought a piece of property, signed a covenant to uphold the US Constitution, and contributed financially to maintain the common roads. But maybe for some that's a big step towards creating a sense of community. I'd like to know why the US Constitution figures so strongly in their criteria for membership: is there something deeper here that wasn't directly expressed? But these don't seem valid reasons for questioning whether the group had a legitimate place in a magazine about communities.

It is clear to me that most Americans don't know their neighbors, have too little time for friends and family, and are losing their sources of physical and spiritual connection. And everywhere people are responding with creative alternatives, often to create much smaller, self-reliant communities bonded by a common ideal. But the ideals that bond people vary widely, and we middle-class, mostly white "hippies" are not the only ones creating alternatives. Although I personally may not like the alternatives that some groups propose and wouldn't embrace them myself, I see great value in having contact with them. Together we create a stronger political force that reminds the industrialized system that not everyone wants to live that way. And—we might learn something from each other. So thank you for running the piece on the survivalists. In the future, I hope to hear more of their voices, as well as those of religious fundamentalists.

Yiscah Bracha

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear *Communities*:

Congratulations for including the patriot survivalist community in your Fall issue. I can understand your apprehension about including it, not because of the community itself, but rather because of most people's perceptions. I suspect that most *Communities* readers, like myself, probably came out of a liberal, Leftist tradition, with certain stereotypes about those "Rightist," conservative, patriot survivalists. If we are truly to be open-minded, then we must not react in knee-jerk fashion, but rather examine each community on its own merits. We must not assume that owning a firearm or being "armed" (still a legal right in this

country) is equivalent to endorsing violence. I think it's time to drop the labels "Right," "Left," "liberal," "conservative," etc., and realize that, in the present situation, there are many points of convergence. With an open dialogue, we may all have an opportunity to fill in the gaps in our own narrow points of view with new information. Through this dialogue we will all benefit.

**Elyse Awazu**  
Chicago, Illinois

### More From the "Political Activism" Issue

Dear *Communities*:

Thank you for the recent issue "Political Activism in Community" (Fall '98). I found it comprehensive, except for one important omission. Communities owned and operated by a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization have strict limitations on political involvement. According to this IRS code, no substantial part of a 501(c)(3) group's activities may "carry on propaganda, or otherwise attempt to influence legislation" and may not "participate in or intervene in (including publishing or distributing statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office." Any readers considering incorporating as a 501(c)(3), including religious communities, may find this relevant.

**Barbara Lourgos**  
Glen Ivy, Corona, California

Dear *Communities*:

In the "Children in Community" column in the Fall '98 issue, Daniel Greenberg tells us that community children enjoy and benefit from having access to people of different ages, take advantage of and thrive as a result of being able to learn various real-life skills, and like to have a role in making decisions which impact their own lives. I am curious to know whether any communities have recognized the conflict between the vision implied in this description, and the set of values at the basis of our most prevalent child-rearing practices. For example, compulsory education is based on extreme measures of coercion. Some of its assumptions: 1) Children won't "learn" unless they are made to; 2) Someone, preferably an "expert," must make

sure they are learning the "right" things at the "right" time; and 3) The "right" kind of knowledge" resides mostly in books and computer databases, and is compartmentalized, fragmented, and often alienating.

Have any communities taken measures to break out of such molds?

**Racheli Gai**  
Tucson, Arizona

Dear *Communities*:

In response to Stephen Kapit's letter recommending that forming communities should not borrow money (Fall '95), while I understand his point, most of us don't have the means to pay cash to buy land and build a house. Paying cash would be ideal but not realistic. I, for instance, would have to save for decades, and I don't want to wait that long to live in community. If we must borrow money to live in community, that's okay; at least we will be doing something positive for ourselves and our children.

**Lee Moore**  
Franklin, Tennessee

### Promoting Cults

*Selected articles from recent past issues of the magazine, like those referred to below, are available on our Web site: [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org).*

Dear *Communities*:

In the article, "Religious Intolerance—Not 'Cults'—Is the Problem," by Catherine Wessinger ("Intentional Communities and 'Cults,'" Fall '95), are you insinuating that the groups listed that were called "cults" are not cults?

Destructive cults do exist. Go into one particular religious group and ask about the evil alien that cast certain highly conscious people into volcanoes that were blown to bits with H-bombs, and how destructive emotional patterns then attached themselves to these people and how the group's all-knowing founder was the first human to ever realize this—give me a break! If a new convert knew this was creation theory that the church was based on, they'd would walk right out. Or go in and ask what the cost is—approximately \$350,000 to get through all their courses, etc. The other cost is family, friends, and anyone who disagrees with the group.

The article quotes the American Psy-

the event

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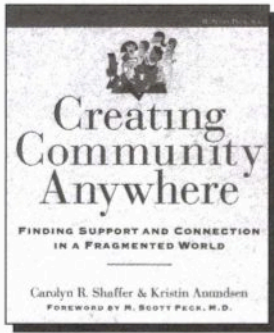
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chological Association as rejecting "the theory that a religious group can brainwash its members and reduce them to uncritical zombies." Brainwashing refers to a process perpetrated by military enemies; mind control is a whole different thing, done by someone who claims to be your friend. These groups use mind control, absolute manipulation. Please take a look at the criteria of what constitutes a cult. It appears the author has mixed cults with non-cults in your essay.

UFO Viki

Dear *Communities*:

"Religious Intolerance—Not 'Cults'—Is the Problem" and "What Really Happened at Waco" (Fall '95) are very disturbing articles. Having spent many months as a slave in a Faithist concentration camp, I find this type of cult apologetics disturbing. Unless you have been in one of those "alternative communities," you have no idea of the sheer insanity that goes on day in and day out. I find the phrase "FBI assault" a very disturbing assessment of the events that transpired at the Waco compound. I have seen the Christian Rights video about how the tanks supposedly set the compound on fire. According to the full, uncensored videotape of the same incident on "60 Minutes," what the Christian Right video claims is a flame thrower is actually the reflection of light hitting a piece of siding on the side of the building. Perhaps you think all those gallons of gasoline David Koresh, not the FBI, poured all over the place was some type of insect repellent? Or, does *Communities* magazine recommend pouring gasoline on your floors and carpets?

This type of disregard for the obvious is what led to the Jonestown massacre, the Solar Temple deaths, and the Heaven's Gate suicides. Where are your articles on destructive mind control? Where are your articles on critical thinking? Some of these

groups are very dangerous. Not every "alternative religion" is the victim of a slanderous attack by the media or an anti-cult smear campaign. Some of these groups deserve to be labeled "destructive mind-control cults." And no amount of cult apologetics by your organization is going to change the fact that people's lives were destroyed.

I find these articles shameful, by any standard.

**Charles W. Walker**  
Former cult survivor

*While there is no question that some groups engage in practices and hold beliefs that others find disagreeable—even abhorrent—author Catherine Wessinger's point is that there is no evidence that such groups hold their members against their will or through mind control.*

*We fully support individuals exercising critical thinking when evaluating intentional communities, especially when considering one as a possible home.*

## From Renewing Subscribers

Thank you! Your magazine is truly fabulous!

**Zoe Collier**  
Mill Valley, California

What a great magazine!

**Richard Allen**  
Novato, California

Fabulous job. Keep up the good work!

**Mark Silver**  
Oakland, California

I loved your "Art of Community" weekend in Willits, California.

**Inger W. Easton**  
Colton, Oregon

## Corrections to "Political Activism" issue

In the Fall '98 issue, "Political Activism in Communities," we inadvertently omitted the names of Guest Editors Vicki Metcalf and Gordon Sproule (Twin Oaks) from the masthead. We apologize!

The correct e-mail address of the Plenty Organization is plenty1@usit.net, and Web site is <http://www.plenty.org>.



### Communities Editorial Policy

*Communities* is a forum for exploring intentional communities, cooperative living, and ways our readers can bring a sense of community into their daily lives. Contributors include people who live or have lived in community, and anyone with insights relevant to cooperative living.

Through fact, fiction, and opinion we offer fresh ideas about how to live cooperatively, how to solve problems peacefully, and how individual lives can be enhanced by living purposefully with others. We seek contributions that profile community living and why people choose it, descriptions of what's difficult and what works well, news about existing and forming communities, or articles that illuminate community experiences—past and present—offering insights into mainstream cultural issues.

We do not intend to promote one kind of community over another, and take no official position on a community's economic structure, political agenda, spiritual beliefs, environmental issues, or decision-making style. As long as submitted articles are related to the theme of community living, we will consider them for publication. However, we do not publish articles that 1) advocate violent practices, or 2) advocate that a community interferes with its members' right to leave.

Our aim is to be as balanced in our reporting as possible, and whenever we print an article critical of a particular community, we invite that community to respond with its own perspective.

### Submissions Policy

To submit an article, please first request Writer's Guidelines: 290 McEntire Road, Tryon, NC 28782; 828-863-4425; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

### Advertising Policy

We accept paid advertising in *Communities* because our mission is to provide our readers with helpful and inspiring information—and because advertising revenues help pay the bills.

We hand pick our advertisers, selecting only those whose products and services we believe will be helpful to people interested in community living, cooperation, and sustainability. We hope you find this service useful, and we encourage your feedback.

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### What is an "Intentional Community"?

An "intentional community" is a group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. Most, though not all, share land or housing. Intentional communities come in all shapes and sizes, and display amazing diversity in their common values, which may be social, economic, spiritual, political, and/or ecological. Some are rural; some urban. Some live all in a single residence; some in separate households. Some raise children; some don't. Some are secular, some are spiritually based, and others are both. For all their variety though, the communities featured in our magazine hold a common commitment to living cooperatively, to solving problems nonviolently, and to sharing their experiences with others.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE



# Minding Your Peace and Cues

## *Searching for the "Whole" in Holistic Health*

**I**'VE LIVED IN COMMUNITY FOR 25 YEARS—ALL WITH ANN SHRADER, whom I met in college and with whom I've been building community ever since. Four years ago, she discovered a lump in her left breast.

It turned out to be cancerous and our community got an unlooked-for opportunity to find out what we were made of. Annie was lucky—the cancer was detected early, surgery eliminated it, and there has been no recurrence. The community was also lucky—we pulled together around Annie's health challenge and we didn't lose her.

On the one hand, the community was there for Annie when she needed it—just as we intended. On the other, why did she get sick? As a community, we pride ourselves on quality of life and right livelihood. Having a long-term member get cancer shook our self-confidence, and we went through some soul searching as we looked for cues about how this could happen. This is a tough issue, and opens up a cornucopia of questions about what health is and how we access it.

We wanted something beyond the allopathic definition: absence of disease. Something pro-active and holistic. Something that went beyond the traditional markers of diet, weight, heart rate, cholesterol level, percentage of body fat, and so on. We think social integration and a sense of belonging are important to health. We also value the balance of work and play, rational and intuitive, active and reflective, body and mind. We suspect spiritual development is a factor—but how do you measure it? What about emotional maturity (how much, for instance, is the stereotypic lack of emotional awareness among men related to that gender's lower life expectancy)? Where does a sense of purpose and self-worth fit in? How essential to health is regular physical touch?

And there are subtler levels still. At the time that Annie's cancer was uncovered, she had been struggling with uterine fibroids for years. While not life-threatening, fibroids are highly uncomfortable and do not tend to go away. She tried controlling them first with diet and exercises, yet conditions worsened. Afraid of surgery, Annie put up with the increased discomfort in preference to a hysterectomy. It was the cancer that brought this to a head.

Forced to make a choice about treatments, Annie chose a mastectomy (in lieu of radiation therapy or hoping that a lumpectomy would be adequate). The surgery went so well that she chose to have a hysterectomy six months later. It is interesting to reflect on how the cancer helped her deal with the fibroids. And on how her body may have played a role in demanding her attention to what she was avoiding.

We began to see that there were levels of health that the community had not



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*Caroline Estes*

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*Geoph Kozeny*

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*Jeff Grossberg*

**Raising & Educating Children in Community**

*Diana Christian, Elke Lerman, Martin Klail, Judy Morris*

**Conflict: Fight, Flight, or Opportunity?**

*Laird Sandhill*

**Consensus: Decisions That Bring People Together**

*Caroline Estes*

**Six "Ingredients" for Forming Communities (That Help Reduce Conflict Down the Road)**

*Diana Christian*

**Building a Business While Building Community**

*Carol Carlson, Lois Arkin, Harvey Baker, Bill Becker, Judy Morris, Ira Wallace*

**Legal Options for Communities**

*Allen Butcher, Aiy'm Fellman, Stephen Johnson, Tony Sirna*

**We Tried Consensus and Got Stuck. Now What?**

*Caroline Estes & Laird Sandhill*

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been addressing. There was plenty of room to be more humble about our assertions that community living is necessarily healthier. While we easily agree that we want the community to support each member's health, it is not at all easy to define what "health" is. Perhaps the best we can do is to agree that health is complex and we're better off casting a wide net and maintaining an atmosphere of inquiry.

While recognizing the limitations of what we know, there are still some things to be said about the link between health and community. Some examples:

- **Sense of Pace.** Almost from the beginning, we recognized that rural community living happens at a slower pace than life in the urban mainstream. I can still remember attending a family reunion a few years after moving to the country and being amazed at how fast everyone spoke. It took me a couple of days to figure out that everyone else hadn't sped up—I had slowed down. It was jolting to see that my prior sense of "normal" was really frenetic.

Even living in the city, groups can create islands of sanity in the sea of urban chaos. Often this is done by seasoning dinners with homemade conversation, instead of serving up food fast (not to mention fast food), hustling through dinner to make room for favorite TV programs.

- **Sense of Place.** Holistic health also comes from a heightened sense of where you are. It's embedded in the aphorism, "There's no place like home." In today's transient culture, most of us don't have the context and sense of belonging that comes from a deep connection to where we live, from making steady deposits in place and reinvesting the dividends.

By learning the natural rhythms at our place, we know that celebrating our community's land anniversary (the first weekend in May) is the perfect time for the first bonfire of the year—warmth will have finally returned to northern Missouri ... and the mosquitoes will still be a week away.

- **Sense of Peace.** At its best, community offers the opportunity to integrate one's life—balancing work, home, and play in a way that one aspect is not sacrificed to another. With balance comes peace, and the ability to focus without distraction. This can mean a great deal when the focus is health and healing.

In income-sharing communities this can show up even more strongly. When Annie was recovering from surgery, she could rest at home and the group easily shouldered her work load, just as if she were on extended vacation. Through community support Annie was able set aside a full load of day-to-day responsibilities and attend fully to her healing. She was reintegrated into the work scene bit by bit as her capacity increased, and the burden did not fall unduly on any one individual.

Even in groups that do not share income, pulling together to support members in need is a common practice.

- **Sense of Peas.** Many communities pay close attention to diet. To the extent that there's truth in the phrase, "You are what you eat," we prefer not to think of ourselves as junk food, or empty calories. If we desire to be people of substance, we must supply ourselves with food of substance. At my community, we address this directly by growing 80–90 percent of our own food. If someone tests anemic at our place (and we've had plenty of practice with pregnant women over the years), we try first to correct the imbalance with sorghum, beets, and spinach, rather than with iron tablets.

While such a commitment to growing one's own food is probably beyond what most people are willing to consider, it's increasingly possible to locate local, wholesome sources of the oats, peas, beans, and barley of which we partake.

- **Sense of Please.** Finally, there is a therapeutic value in developing a sense of civility and graciousness. It comes from fostering a group sense of service, and connection to other. Community is the aggregate of links among members, and it is just one more step to extend connectedness to those whose lives the community touches.

Years ago, the county sheriff called up one bitter January night asking if we'd be willing to put up a near-frozen hitchhiker. We fed him hot soup and fresh bread, and he slept for two days bundled on the couch near to the wood stove. Then we drove him to Kansas City and he got back on the road. While we've had no contact with him since, we're convinced that such random acts of kindness increase the web of health for us all.

We do what we can, and try to give a little more than we take.

Laind Sandhill

### COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

"Walden Two Communities," Summer '99. How communities inspired by Behaviorism, B.F. Skinner, and the book Walden Two have fared. Guest Editors, Deborah Altus, Hilke Kuhlman, and Tom Welsh.

"Conflict and Healing Conflict," Fall '99. Is conflict natural and inevitable in community? What is the nature of community conflict; how do some communities heal conflict? If, as some say, conflict actually reflects people's underlying childhood woundedness, how can we heal emotionally as well as resolve community conflicts? When can the community handle it, when should they seek outside help? *Communities*, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782; 828-863-4425; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

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# COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



Esteemed San Francisco community activist, mediator, and teacher of nonviolent conflict resolution, **Gil Lopez** died on July 3, 1998, of an extended illness. He was 64. During the '60s and '70s, Gil served as Director of the Roxbury Neighborhood Employment Center in Boston, and co-founded the Malcolm X Foundation. He later joined the Community Boards Program of San Francisco as a mediator, and over the years with that organization he was known as a gifted

peacemaker and tireless volunteer trainer and mediator. In 1987 he formed the dispute management consulting firm of Lopez/Hopson & Associates. Gil served as a board member of the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR) and the Northern California Mediators Association. He was honored by the Stratmore's *Who's Who Registry of Business Leaders* and by special proclamations of the Boston City Council and San Francisco's Mayor Willie Brown. (Also a singer-songwriter, in 1956 as a member of the Tuneweavers he co-authored and sang the hit single, "Happy, Happy Birthday Baby.")

According to friend and colleague Fred Cook, Gil was a great believer in strong neighborhood and organizational communities and consciously worked to strengthen each of the many communities in which he was involved. Cook writes, "Gil's ability to encourage each of us to confront our most difficult challenges and private truths was the hallmark of his compassionate mentor and leadership

style. Gil Lopez leaves a rich legacy of caring, giving, and activism. Most of all he showed us what was possible in being a man—tender, deeply caring, smart, powerful, creative, wise, and humorous. He will be deeply missed."

To contribute to any of the many projects Gil Lopez supported, contact *Elma Ondrey*, 510-843-6514, or *Fred Cook*, 915 Cole Street, Suite 250, San Francisco, CA 94117; [dreambody@igc.org](mailto:dreambody@igc.org); 415-861-1711.



The emerging global concept of ecovillages got a boost last summer in Australia, according to *Max Lindegger*, cofounder of **Crystal Waters** ecovillage in Queensland. In July he participated in a planning session hosted by the local council, with the local mayor, council members, town planners, engineers, and representatives from the Australian Environment Department. "Here the politicians," Max says, "ably supported by the technical team, presented



## Stephen Gaskin Running for President in 2000

*In November Stephen Gaskin, founder of The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee, announced his candidacy for US president, advocating universal health care, campaign finance reform, marijuana decriminalization, education, and curbing corporate control. Here are excerpts from his campaign announcement. NOTE: Communities magazine and its publisher, the Fellowship for Intentional Community, do not make political endorsements; publishing this announcement does not constitute an endorsement of Gaskin's campaign or positions.*

**FLU ("FOLKS LIKE US") LIBERATION FRONT.** It is time to take a new look at our society and to see if it still stands for the same thing. We have to redeem it and then fix it. ... Laws are changed and amended at the behest of lobbyists for special financial interests, sometimes to close loopholes, and sometimes to open them. ... If a lawmaker wants to up the ante on marijuana smokers he can propose a law that puts marijuana in the same category with heroin. This is scientifically untrue but has been made legally true in almost all jurisdictions.

We are asked to believe that having insurance companies suck billions of dollars out of the health care system doesn't make it more expensive.

We are asked to believe that the videotape of Rodney King being beaten by the police is not clear evidence of police riot and racism.

We are told that nicotine is not addictive, that selling guns into the population doesn't escalate violence, and that justice is not for sale in spite of the clear evidence of millionaires walking away untouched from capital crimes.

We are told, by doctors, that we have "the best health care system in the world," even though our medical system is one of the most unfair and most expensive in the western world and leaves 40 million people uncovered.

We are told that poverty and other social circumstances have nothing to do with the crime rate and that it is just coincidental that one in three young Black men go to jail.

We are told that marijuana causes violence and that it is addictive, has no medical or economic uses and that it causes brain damage, impotence, and men to grow breasts.

We are told that the prohibition against cannabis is because of its extreme danger, even though it has been proven safer than aspirin and less addictive than coffee.

We are told that the extreme sanctions against cannabis are to protect the public and the country, much like burning a

their own vision for a botanical garden, a display centre with alternative technology, and an ecovillage. I could not believe my eyes or ears, witnessing civic leaders in this conservative area calling for permaculture, ecovillages, wind power, and healthy building materials. Believe me, if politicians on this side of the black stump start to talk like born-again permaculturalists the times they are a-changing!"

In late August, Griffith University near Brisbane announced that construction would soon begin on Australia's first ecocentre, a \$1.8 million facility designed to help promote sustainable development by demonstrating alternative technologies such as solar power, greywater recycling, composting toilets, recycled timber, and low-energy appropriate technology systems.

"We are not fooling ourselves into believing that any of these proposals will be 'fully featured,'" says Max, "but it will make our task of getting other ideas into the mainstream much easier." *Max Lindegger, Global Eco-Village Network (GEN)*

*Oceania, 59 Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny Qld 4552, Australia; +61-7-5494 4741; Fax: +61-7-5494 4578; lindegger@gen-oceania.org.*



Members of **Abundant Dawn** community in rural Floyd County, Virginia, are investigating plans for a new pond as well as composting toilets and a constructed wetlands as an alternative to flush toilets, septic tanks, and leach fields, according to member *Velma Kahn*. They've selected the sites for their first two areas of clustered housing, and the site for a new yurt. The community has decided it will spring for infrastructure costs such as access roads for existing subcommunities or "pods," such as **Dayspring Circle** and **Tekiah**, and any new pods that may join. They are also working on a financial policy to require incoming pods to make a monetary investment in Abundant Dawn roughly equivalent to those made already by Dayspring Circle and Tekiah. In

August of last year they finally closed on buying their land, after living there since May 1997.



In October, **WindTree Ranch** near Tucson, Arizona offered its first workshop on making buildings from cement and recycled newspaper. Fibrous cement buildings have the same high insulation factor as straw bale, according to Mike McCain, workshop leader and inventor of the fibrous cement process, but are much lighter, cheaper, and more versatile. According to Jacqui Omi Zaleski, the community's goal for 1999 is to complete nine small buildings and sell enough organically grown vegetables to meet the mortgage. In December they turned on their new solar/wind/generator hybrid power system. "Unless you have lived for two years out in the wilderness without power," says Zaleski. *WindTree Ranch, RR 2 Box 1, Douglas, AZ 85607; windtreerh@aol.com; 520-364-4611.*

Vietnamese village to save it. The prosecutors are instructed to get the people that are under suspicion to make a plea-bargain to save the expense of a jury trial. This is to protect the Judge and the court from any legal repercussions for playing fast and loose with your rights.

Five-hundred-thousand people are in jail for marijuana. People have 20, 30, and even 50 years of prison time for having or selling cannabis. When the crime is so minor and the punishment so unreasonable, one is forced to look for deeper motives. I have come to believe that it is not the proscription of a substance but the systematic oppression of a certain kind of people. Hippies—by which is meant any committed liberal person—are considered undesirable and are to be banned, interdicted, harassed, discouraged, arrested, and pee-tested. It is a blatant use of police power to frighten and intimidate millions of people into giving up a heartfelt spiritual practice and lifestyle.

There are probably 25 million marijuana smokers in the US alone, as well as millions more who if not smokers now, are still sentimental about it. The oppression to which I refer is for the purpose of keeping these millions of people off balance to minimize their political power. All those 500,000 pot smokers doing time are out of the political process, present but not able to vote. The urine test is the loyalty oath of the 1990s.

Marijuana is not the problem. Cocaine and heroin are

causes of great social damage. No one robs liquor stores or turns tricks to buy pot. People don't do desperate things for pot because it isn't addictive.

My idea in running for president is to put the subject of reefer law on the table and to make the debate public. I thought I could be as much of a pain in the rear as Ross Perot, but for a good cause.

### My Platform

1. Universal Health Care. Everyone gets taken care of while we argue about the money.
2. Campaign Finance Reform. The airwaves belong to the people. The networks will give up enough time for the people to run their elections, free.
3. Decriminalize marijuana and give amnesty to all simple marijuana prisoners who are not involved with guns or hard drugs.
4. Let's educate the kids now and argue about the money later.
5. A corporation is not a person.

All the Best,  
Stephen  
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Mike Forster, a member of the **Findhorn Foundation** community in Scotland and scholar of intentional communities is offering an online course in Community

Studies. Designed generally for anyone interested in intentional communities and specifically for social science students, it has a social psychology/sociology orientation. You'll find it at <http://www.findhornbay.demon.co.uk/csonline/>. Ω

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  - Waldorf, Montessori & Falmouth Academy
  - large scientific & cultural community

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# The Hope Street Gang Forever

**T**HEY DIDN'T PLAN IT. IT WASN'T an intentional community. It just sort of happened that early in the 1970s, one by one, six families moved into the neighborhood three blocks above Grand Avenue near Cal Poly (the University of California at San Luis Obispo). Six families who grew from neighbors into friends and from friends into ... ? They searched for the words to describe their remarkable bond. "A tribe," someone said.

"We were like a tribe, like extended family," they all nodded. "We all kept an eye on all the kids. They could come and go freely among all our houses and we knew they were safe. You never worried about it or kept tabs or anything, if someone's kid was with you all day, you just knew that next week it would be the reverse, or that family would be over helping you with a project. It wasn't structured, we didn't talk about it, we all just knew that's how it was."

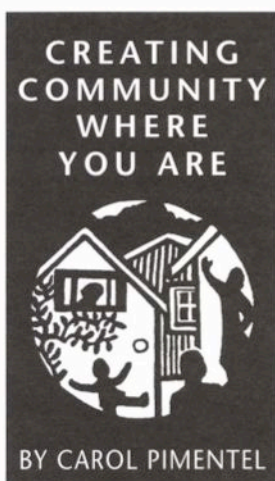
They shared other things as well. "Someone was always working on their house in those days," said one of the men. "We had a couple of architects among us,

and we'd stand all around and look at the job, and someone would suggest, 'You know, if you did this, you could do that.' We all participated in all the house remodels."

They helped each other with ideas and also with the projects themselves. "Remember jack-hammering the pond in the yard?" (Laughter all round.) "You didn't have to have all the tools. Among us we had all we needed. Someone had a table saw, someone else had clamps. There was lots of help and support."

"There was always community food, too. Remember when the Swearingens were leaving for Sweden while their house was still under construction and it came down to the wire? We all came over for a three-day blitz. Someone made a big pot of chili and we filled a trash can full of drinks and everyone helped, it was like a barn raising."

"That's right," recalled Meg Swearingen. "I remember getting into the car at the last minute, saying, 'Sorry we have to leave, but we've got a plane to catch,' and as we drove away we looked back to see



*Carol Pimentel was lucky enough to have been raised on a similar block in west Los Angeles in the 1950s, which led her to believe that the world is a safe place where you can expect to be welcomed, loved, and assisted; you can always have as many moms as you need; and if you don't have a big brother, you can always adopt one.*



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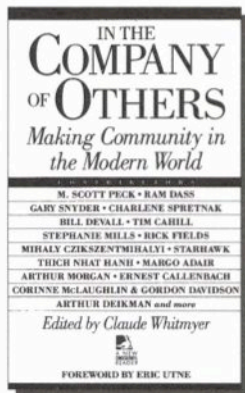
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## ***In the Company of Others: Making Community in the Modern World***

Claude Whitmyer, Editor

Contributions by M. Scott Peck, Ram Dass, Thich Nhat Hanh, Arthur Morgan, Geoph Kozeny, Kathryn McCamant & Charles Durrett, Corinne McLaughlin & Gordon Davidson, and more...

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the Hope Street Gang swirling around our house with everything left wide open.”

“And we waved them off, and then finished the painting,” chimed in someone else. “Remember, we gave them Hope Street Gang T-shirts as they were leaving.”

Certain events began to take place. The potlucks started one Fourth of July when it was decided to just have fireworks right there instead of schlepping all the way to the beach in the traffic. “We figured this was our territory, so we closed off the end of the street with a ladder and had wonderful time. And then we did January First and Jon’s chili.” It evolved from there. “We created events: New Year’s Day, Easter egg hunts, Labor Day, Fourth of July, Christmas. We shared our child raising, and for my kids ‘family’ means this family. I still have to explain to my blood family why we have Thanksgiving with the Hope Street Gang.”

The Hope Street Gang also comes together during difficult times. Most of them have been married for over 30 years, and when the one divorce happened, it was painful for everyone. “We asked ourselves how it could happen when we all had such strong family values. We had talked of a 25th wedding anniversary together. The divorce devastated us.” There was great grief, but no sides were chosen. The Gang tried to reach out to both parties and when the man involved chose not to be included there was hurt, but it ultimately made things easier on everyone.

“We’d always pull together our resources. When Ron’s dad died while they were in Europe, Rich got the call, then he called Don and Don tracked Ron down in Denmark.”

The Hope Street community also embraced four other families who lived nearby. “Our family didn’t actually live on Hope Street, but we participated,” recalled Marilyn Hoffman. “The four of us lived in the Jenkins’ back room when the city sewer backed up through our house on Hathway, and we returned for about two months when our house was being reconstructed. The best part was, we took turns cooking dinner!”

They took care of each other then, and

still do. “Last June Rich’s back went out,” said Sally Equinoa. “I called Linda (a nurse) in the middle of the night and she talked me through what to say to the doctor. The next day she brought over equipment, love, and advice.”

Another added, “For my 24-year-old daughter’s recent surgery, these were the people she wanted around her, who’ve been part of her life so long. They were her visitors, sent cards, and were there for her recovery. It meant everything to her.”

“All my emergency numbers were always Hope Street numbers,” summed up one of the kids.

What was the mix that produced this magic and idyllic feeling of safety, trust, sharing, and family among neighbors, kids and adults?

After long discussion five factors seemed to emerge: children, shared values, being in the same life stage, the unique physical characteristics of that particular block, and the stability of the neighborhood.

All agreed that the children were the glue. Marty Jenkins, first on the block, recalled the beginnings. “In 1973, this big moving van came and I saw a tricycle. I ran out and asked, ‘Who are you, and whose is the trike, and can she play with my three-year-old daughter?’” Ultimately there were 10 little girls within two to three years of each other.

“And then we entered with two boys, who brought basketball and skate boarding,” put in Linda. “When called for, the boys could wear tutus as well.”

They all went to Pacheco, a small cohesive neighborhood school. The children walked to school together, then separated, each to join their own classrooms and friendship groups. “There wasn’t a Hope Street lunch table or anything.” But they returned home to each other’s companionship and moms at home. The street would often be blocked off with a ladder and a sign saying “kids at play” creating a child-oriented environment a block long.

“We were fortunate, many of the moms were lucky enough to stay at home or work part time, so it was like having day care all up and down the block. Our kids were so comfortable with each other and in any of these houses.”

## ***What produced this magic and idyllic feeling of safety, trust, sharing, and family among kids and adults?***



There was lots of creative play, enhanced by access to so many adults. One of the moms who was an artist once helped each child to make a fabric square, and then sewed them all together into a beautiful handmade hanging as a welcome gift for a new Hope Street baby.

"We were really like one big family," said Linda. "When we moved in, my seven-year-old son was enchanted on encountering his first baby. The baby's mother allowed him to take her one-month-old, and just watched from her doorway as this seven-year-old boy carefully carried the infant down the block to show to me. There was such trust."

How was it from the kids' point of view? Was it smothering to have so many parents watching you all the time? "No," smiled Inga Swearin-gen good naturedly, spokesperson for the younger generation. "It was just like a tribe for us kids. All these parents in all the houses, and there was always a play to perform, peanut butter and jelly to eat, a window to break. Someone was always around, there was always someone to play with, and you were never lonely. When we were growing up we didn't think of it particularly, it was just a great life. But when we talk about it now, we realize it really was special and we want to bring our kids up that way." In fact, one of the older girls has moved back from Santa Cruz with her husband so that her two children can be raised in San Luis Obispo.

The families grew up together along with the kids. "When it was milk and cookies, dress up and fantasy, everyone was involved. Same with football and ballet. When it was time for rock and roll, we went through that together, too." For a time the kids didn't want to attend Hope Street parties. "Oh yeah, that was our junior high stage," said Inga with a wry grin. "We were too cool to go to the parties. But now it's so fun to get together again!"

"We were quite diverse, coming from different backgrounds, religions, and parts of the country, but what we shared in common were core values: We were all totally committed to children, home, and family." There were two families on the block that never became part of the circle.

"They had very different values and different ways of child rearing. They ignored their kids; one of the children would show up at one of our houses asking for something to eat, or would be seen walking to school on a cold day without a jacket. Our children were never invited into those homes. It was sort of sad, and the kids were brats. Needless to say, we felt no kinship with those families."

Hope Street itself has unique physical qualities that create a sense of openness and safety. At the corner of Henderson

and Hope there is a large dip and the street narrows into almost a lane, then dead ends, forming a sort of cul de sac. This natural car-slowing feature and lack of through traffic creates lots of safety for tents, street play, and skateboards, and no one comes in without being seen or

noticed. The small houses are in close proximity to each other, forming almost a circular insulated feeling. You walk out the front door face-to-face with your neighbors. People see each other in front yards, greet each other leaving and returning home, and tend to congregate. (All these factors, by the way, are deliberately planned into the site plan of cohousing communities, which intentionally create a physical layout that will bring people together and keep cars to a minimum.)

Apparently the street had worked its magic in earlier decades as well. Some of the children discovered that in the 1950s another group of families living on that block had also called themselves the Hope Street Gang, further evidence that physical characteristics of a place can create a space especially conducive to community. "Hope Street had both chemistry between the people and serendipity in the physical character of the place. We recognized it and cherished it, but I've often wondered if we would have been so close on a block with more traffic."

The fifth factor was the stability in the neighborhood. "I lived in a similar neighborhood down south," volunteered someone. "Also with lots of young families. But there, someone was always moving in or out. You didn't have the history together that we had on Hope Street where we lived together for eight, 10, 13 years as our kids grew up."

**"Hope Street  
is still our  
roots and  
our family."**



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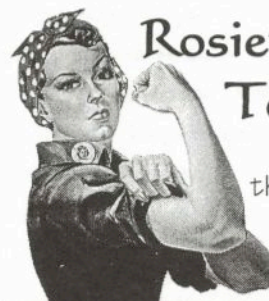
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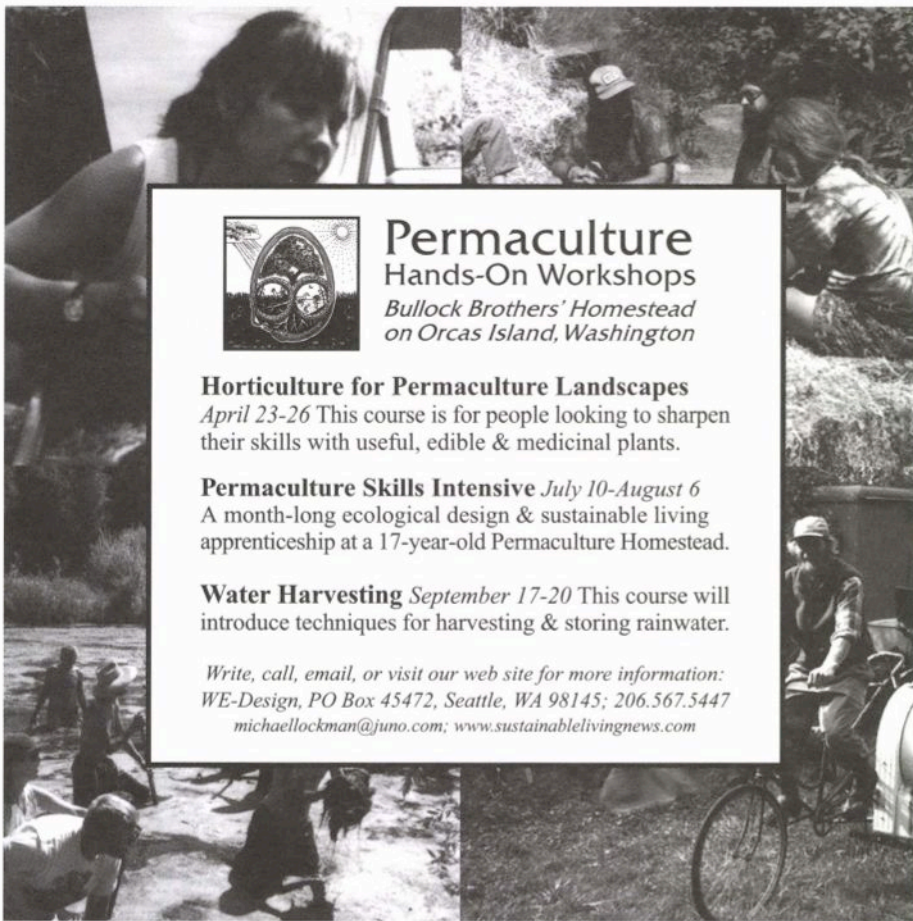
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Eventually, just as they had moved in one by one, each family moved out of the neighborhood. Why did they move? For physical space requirements, new activities that Hope Street couldn't accommodate (like teenage girls longing to own horses), and for one family who regretted having to leave the area they loved, a job far away from the danger of Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. Partings were difficult, but the neighbors helped each other move out as well, of course. "We'd take care of the kids while the parents packed, then help with the packing and clean up as each family left," mused somebody.

And now that they live separate lives in different neighborhoods all over the county? "Hope Street is still our roots and our family. We really care about each other and all the kids, and want to celebrate each others lives. We've celebrated two weddings of Hope Street kids now and we have three babies in the next generation."

These feelings were echoed by the younger generation. "Now that I've grown up, I've made a lot of new friends elsewhere," Inga said. "Now my friendships are around my interests, like music. The Hope Street kids were so diverse, we don't necessarily share the same interests, but you can always come back and know there's love there, like family. And when we get together now, we're genuinely interested in what everyone's doing, seeing kids having kids, marrying, seeing who we've all become."

They still celebrate the major holidays of the year, with one family taking responsibility to host each event. "We know we'll get together through the year. The events give us an excuse get together and stay in contact with that underlying support structure."

"So, Hope Street is a place, an environment, and it's also a state of mind," summed up Don Swearingen. "The community extended to people who shared that sense of family. We've taken it with us, and although we no longer live there, we're still the Hope Street Gang." Ω

*Reprinted with permission from HopeDance: The Magazine About Making a Difference in SLO County (Central Coast California) (Jan/Feb '97). For their special issue on communities, send \$3 to POB 15609, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406; hopedance@aol.com.*

## Communitarians as Y2K Activists

**T**HE WINTER '98 ISSUE OF *Communities* focused on the Y2K (for Year 2000) problem. Stated simply, the Y2K challenge refers to the computer problem created by using two rather than four digits to represent the year. As a result, unless the software is modified, most computers with time-sensitive software programs will recognize the year "00" as 1900 instead of 2000. This "glitch" can result in anything from severe mistakes to the total shutdown of whole computerized systems—including those that produce, distribute, and manage our food, water, public utilities, finances, air and land transportation, government, health care, defense, and so on.

As I become more informed and read summaries of the information by highly credentialed and reasonable people, certain things become clear to me:

1. *Something* will happen.
2. No one (not even experts) can accurately predict what will happen.
3. We can prepare to deal with what

could possibly happen if we act together prudently and soon.

Those of us with interest and experience in community building are in a unique position to influence the preparation for the bump, no matter how serious we think it may be. Here's what we can do:

1. Become informed and help others become informed. Many are not yet taking Y2K seriously—dismissing it as merely prophecies of gloom and doom or millennialist fantasy. I often hear people say, "To respond is just to act out of fear." But con-

sider this: If we learn that freezing weather is on the way and we want to protect the tomatoes in our garden, we go out and cover our tomatoes. If it freezes, our tomatoes are nicely protected. If it doesn't freeze, our tomatoes are still fine. Did we act out of fear or prudence? It is clear that the "weather report" is predicting an upcoming disturbance. How do we want to respond? (See *Resources*, p. 19.)



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*Betty Didcoct, a longtime communitarian and former board member of the Fellowship for Intentional Community, teaches workshops on the consensus process and consensus facilitation for communities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. She can be reached at [betty@ic.org](mailto:betty@ic.org) or 360-221-3064.*

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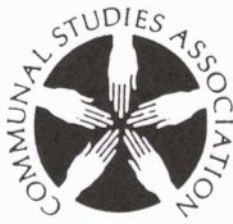
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2. Assess how prepared you are in your own home/intentional community. Where does your water come from? Will it continue if you have no electric power? Do you have a heating source that does not require electricity? For how long? What food supplies do you have stored? If you require essential medicines or equipment, are you prepared if you cannot get replacements for a while? Are your financial documents in order? Do you have hard copy of financial records? The list can go on and on ... (For a list of things to consider, check out <http://cassandraproject.org/home.html>.)

3. Organize in your wider community. No matter how mild or serious various sources predict the outcome, many experts have suggested developing community as a way to prepare: Get to know

your neighbors, their needs, their resources. Organize locally. Use your community building skills to bring people together. Organizing can start with the process of locating the assets, skills, and capacities of residents, citizens associations, and local institutions, and working with the emergency preparedness agencies. (An excellent resource is *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, by John Kretzmann and John McKnight, ACTA Publications, 800-397-2282)

4. Decide what you would do if people showed up on your doorstep. People may see intentional communities as likely safe havens if the situation gets bad. How do you want to (or not want to) prepare for this possibility? Explore your "shadow side." How do you honestly feel about sharing when you may not have enough

## The Y2K Problem

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMING, STORAGE SPACE WAS LIMITED AND costly, and the two-digit system saved precious resources. In most cases, program designers believed that those systems would be replaced with newer ones by the turn of the century.

The problem itself is not beyond our ability to solve, but the time we have to solve it is too short and the deadline is not flexible. The metaphor which has been meaningful to me is this: If I gave you a shoe box full of marbles, a rag, and some polish, then asked you to polish each marble by Saturday, you could do it. You have the skills, the right equipment, and the time to accomplish the task. If I showed you the whole Grand Canyon filled up with marbles asked you to polish them by Saturday, you couldn't ... and that is the magnitude of the Y2K issue.

The problems are scattered through literally billions of computer instructions in mainframes, minicomputers, personal computers, and computer-controlled devices. The average American encounters over 2,000 of them daily in everything from ATMs to elevators, automobiles, and coffee makers.

The problem cannot just be solved simply by each company, bank, network, business, or computer owner fixing their own software (even if many were not already seriously behind schedule). Because computer code is linear, like dominoes, and computer and data systems are inter-linked all over the world, failures in even a few systems are likely to have a "cascade effect," shutting down other systems in other areas "downstream." While the United States is in the forefront of dealing with this problem, many experts point out the massive shortfalls in meeting the deadline. Other countries, especially those in the Second and Third Worlds, are hopelessly behind. Worldwide, the cost to address the problems is estimated at \$600 billion. Many cannot afford the cost.

No one knows how serious or long-lasting Y2K-related problems will be, but based on the information available, it appears that everyone's lives will be touched. Predictions range from a mild bump, to a major recession/depression, to the end of daily life as we now know it. —B.D.

for yourselves? What is enough for you? Are some of you "hoarders," "conservers," "sharers"?

5. See Y2K as an opportunity. The good news is that Y2K has made many of us think about how dependent we are on the unseen systems of infrastructure which support our lifestyles. Whether we

experience minor inconveniences or catastrophic social upheaval, we will benefit greatly from building trusting relationships with our neighbors and cooperating to make the most of our resources. Together, we can build a stronger community and improve the real quality of our lives. Ω

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

*Awakening: The Upside of Y2K*, Judy Laddon, Tom Atlee, & Larry Shook, Editors. (The Printed Word, 1998) \$10. 4327 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 92203; [http://www.co-intelligence.org/y2k\\_breakthrough.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/y2k_breakthrough.html)

*Time Bomb 2000: What the Year 2000 Computer Crisis Means to You*, Ed Yourdon. (Prentice Hall, 1998) \$19.95

*Y2K Personal Survival Plan Handbook*, Michael Annis. \$15.95

*Y2K Citizen's Action Guide*, available from The Utne Reader at their Web Site: [www.utne.com/y2k](http://www.utne.com/y2k)

### WEB SITES

<http://www.tmn.com/y2k/>

Good summaries of the problem from Y2K activist Douglas Carmichael.

<http://cassandraproject.org/home.html>

A wealth of information about the how-to's of preparation.

<http://www.yardeni.com/>

Ed Yardeni, an internationally respected Wall Street economist, helped bring Y2K to government and corporate attention originally.

<http://www.csis.org/html/y2k.html>

Center for Strategic and International Studies produced the informative broadcast on CSPAN last summer.

<http://www.y2ktoday.com/>

News reports and statements from government and other officials.

[http://www.garynorth.com/y2k/search\\_.cfm](http://www.garynorth.com/y2k/search_.cfm)

The most catastrophe-oriented of the lot, but with good information and good links by Remnant Review editor Gary North.

<http://www.year2000.com/>

Good archives and book list.

<http://www.resilientcommunities.org>

Site by Robert Theobald invites people to co-create the quality of life they want.

<http://www.josephproject2000.org/>

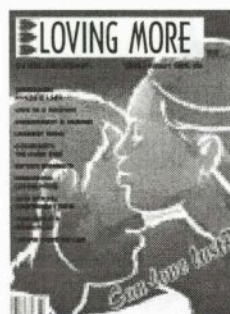
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<http://www.y2kwomen.com>

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<http://www.y2kcommunity.org/>

Links community organizing efforts around the country.



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## Health Insurance Is a Peach!

*The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) is a mutual-support organization for a dozen North American communities that value income sharing, nonviolence, participatory decision making, and ecological practices.*

**H**OW DO WE PAY FOR EXPENSIVE health care? It's a question that often comes living in community. Many communities leave it up to individuals and families to cope as best they can, but in egalitarian communities there are no private incomes, and health costs come out of the general budget. This means that the community's decision-makers have to decide where to draw the line on the amount and kind of care the group is willing to pay for. While all of the FEC communities have been doing this since their inception, about 10 years ago some people started worrying about communities being hit with really major costs that might take more money than they had or could spare. The end product of this worrying was a joint health care plan that all the FEC member communities could join, giving them a substantial amount of protection.

The plan is called PEACH, an

acronym for "Preservation of Equity Accessible for Community Health." Laird Sandhill, the author of most of this program, had fun with acronyms all the way through. He is currently our "PIT" (Person Into Technicalities), and several of us are MELBAs, some of whom belong to the BASKET. I can never remember what these stand for.

Here's how PEACH works: Each community contributes \$10 per member per month to the fund. The fund is invested and earns interest; rules exist about what kinds and amounts of claims may be made on the money; each community must pay a \$5,000-per-incident deductible before PEACH kicks in. This is not technically insurance, by the way. It's just a bank account that we operate

according to our own agreements.

We have a rule that protects the fund: We will never pay out more than half the available funds, regardless of how large the claims might be, so that a nest egg always remains for rebuilding the fund and maintaining the plan. So of course there are still some worries about the possibility of a community member getting really sick and needing, say, expensive

### FEDERATION UPDATE



BY KAT KINKADE

*Kat Kinkade, a founder of Twin Oaks, East Wind, and Acorn communities, is author of Is It Utopia Yet? (Twin Oaks, 1995) and A Walden Two Experiment (Quill, 1972). She lives at Twin Oaks.*

kidney dialysis. Even PEACH funds might not be able to cover all of that, and we'd have heavy decisions to make if that occurred. Regular health insurance, on the other hand, costs so much that it would take an inordinate proportion of our income, and we just aren't wealthy enough, so we take the chance.

A lot of other health care needs are covered, though, and at higher proportions and with less red tape than an ordinary insurance policy would allow. We can afford to pay 90 percent of a covered expense, for example, partly because nobody is making a profit off our health plan, and partly because we trust each other most of the time to be sensible in what we pay for. We also have a major protection from abuse in the fact that each community has to come up with the \$5,000 deductible before making any claims from PEACH funds.

Unlike insurance policies, the PEACH plan is not prejudiced against previously incurred illnesses. We don't have to be, because instead we make the coverage gradual. When a member first joins one of our communities, PEACH starts accepting monthly payments from the community for that member, but for the first two years of that person's membership, health cost claims for him or her are only partially paid. This protects us from the possibility that someone who is quite sick might be allowed to join a community just to get PEACH. A two-year wait and a high deductible should discourage that.

So far we haven't had any claims that have strained our resources. Over the years, PEACH has helped to pay a small handful of claims—a broken limb, a heart attack, breast cancer surgery, and radiation treatments.

The money doesn't just sit in the bank in the meantime. We lend it out to people and organizations that seem to us worthwhile. So far all the people we've invested in have made regular, prompt payments.

Individual friends of ours who don't live in FEC communities have sometimes asked if they could get under the PEACH umbrella and get that amount of protection, but we have to say no. In fact, the

plan is not designed to protect individuals, but communities. PEACH is offered only to communities that assume health care costs of their members.

Some members of the larger FEC communities, back when we first thought up this plan, were uneasy about the obvious fact that the big communities were making the biggest payments but the smallest communities have just as much right to cash in. Some said, "We could do this by ourselves, so why get involved with small communities?" Eventually, however, generosity prevailed, and groups of all sizes can join the plan, as long as they qualify in other ways. So far none of the smaller communities has even made a claim.

Do we recommend the PEACH idea to other groups? I think we do, however, each community would need to write its own agreements that would fit its own philosophy. Ω

**We can afford to pay 90 percent, partly because nobody is making a profit.**

  
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# THE ART OF COMMUNITY



SYPKO ANDRAE

*ABOVE: Keynote speaker Carolyn Shaffer*

*RIGHT: Over 270 people attended the Art of Community conference at Christ's Church of the Golden Rule community. Participants came from 16 states and 43 intentional communities.*



JILLIAN DOWNEY

*People of all ages had fun at the gathering.*



JILLIAN DOWNEY

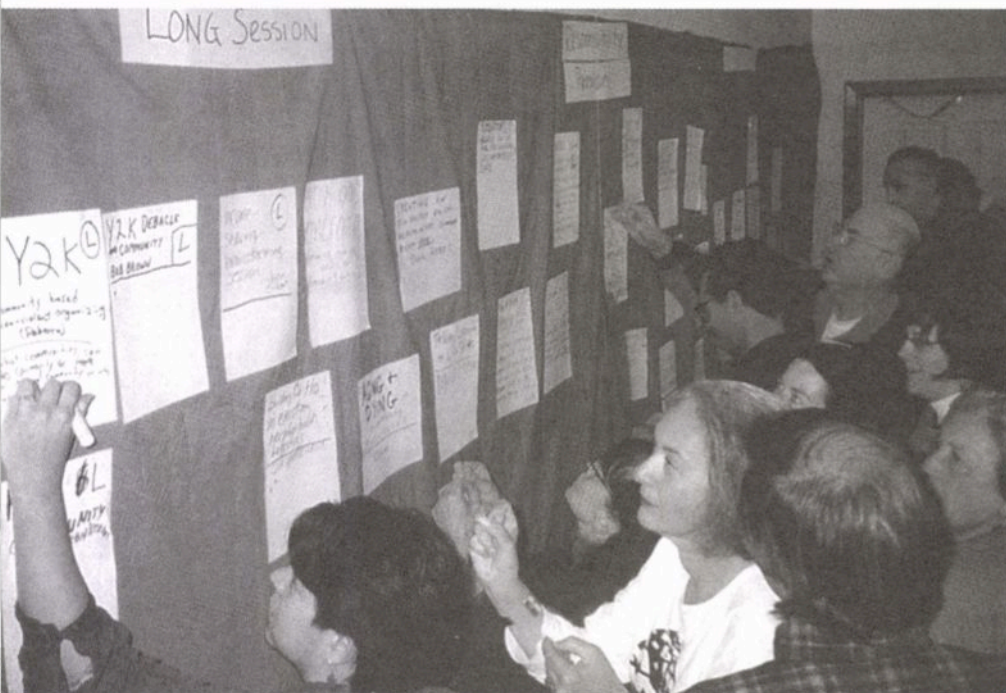




LEFT: Workshop participants soaked up information from experienced presenters on topics ranging from visiting and finding communities to conflict resolution.



LEFT: Art of Community staff and volunteers had a great time too. (Left to right) Mary Schoen-Clark, Rick Appleby, and plenary session co-hosts Paul DeLapa and Betty Didcoct.

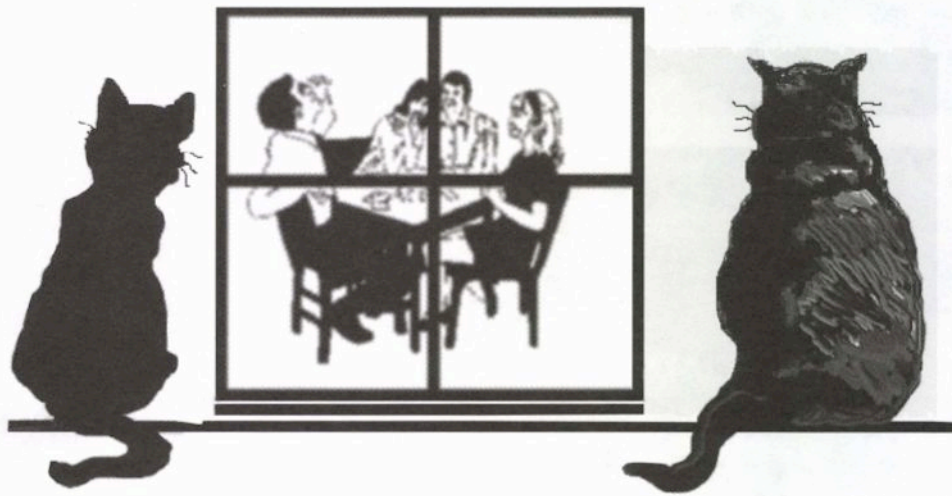


ABOVE: "Making friends and contacts" was given as one of the favorite aspects of the event. Workshop leader Kathryn McCamant, left, is the architect who, with her husband Charles Durrett, helped bring cohousing to North America 12 years ago with their book *CoHousing*.

ABOVE LEFT: The "Open Space" networking was one of the most popular events at our November 1998 Art of Community event. Here, people choose the special-interest groups they'll attend.

**"LET'S GET PEOPLE TOGETHER,"** WE SAID A WHILE BACK, AND began hosting Art of Community gatherings around the country. People enjoy themselves immensely at these gatherings, as you can see from this event last November at Christ's Church of the Golden Rule community in Willits, California. Approximately 280 people attended, primarily from northern California, but also from 15 other states. Most participants were members of existing communities, people seeking communities to join, and people in the process of forming new communities. The "Open Space" networking sessions were among the most popular events, as well as keynote speaker Carolyn Shaffer, and workshops on visiting and choosing communities, consensus decision making, conflict resolution, visioning and fundraising, forming new communities, ecovillages, cohousing communities, and more. A benefit auction, lots of singing, and a Saturday night dance rounded out the event.

The next Art of Community gathering will take place in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on June 4-6, sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community and MidAmerica Housing Project. Cost for the weekend is \$150-\$50 sliding scale. To join us in the fun, contact [fic@ic.org](mailto:fic@ic.org); 660-883-5545; FIC, Rt. 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563.



## MOTHER & FATHER

*Sometimes you can go home again*

BY RUTH LATTA

**K**ATIE EMERGED FROM BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING at the funeral home, made for a bus shelter bench, and wiped her tears. It wouldn't do to arrive at Darren's high-rise office looking a wreck. Dinner with Darren and the theatre afterwards was supposed to get her mind off her father's death. In a minute, she would hop on the bus and be whisked away to downtown Toronto. Striding in, swishing her expensive coat, her body language would tell Darren's sexy secretary: "Back off, he's mine."

Ten years earlier her women friends oohed and aahed over her boy-toy, Darren, 26 to her 36. Now those friends had faded away. So had the magic with Darren.

She gazed at the old brick houses across the street. Twenty years ago she had lived in a similar house, "The Cabin." Situated near the university, it had housed herself, Ron, Melanie, Jodie, Carlene, and of course, Mother and Father. She smiled, recalling how the cats often joined her in her attic room, excited by birds on the roof outside. Father's fondest wish was to kill a plump pigeon. Mother just lay on

the quilt and worked her claws in the fabric, purring like a lawn mower.

Katie missed cats. Darren didn't like hair on his three-piece suits.

He said: "How about a nice goldfish?"

Not as funny as jokes with the old gang. She never saw them nowadays. Katie should have phoned Jodie long ago, but Darren didn't like Stan, Jodie's husband. A "typical babyboomer," he called him. Was Melanie still in England? What of Carlene? Living with her latest boyfriend, probably.

And here was Ron, coming down the steps of the funeral home.

Ron? Her mind was playing tricks. But who else walked with such perfect posture?

She was on her feet, running in high heels.

"Ron! Ron."

He turned. Still gorgeous after all these years.

"Katie!"

She puffed up to him.

"Ron. It's wonderful to see you."

"You're looking wonderful too. And prosperous."

He still wore a tweed jacket over denims, as in student days.

She nodded toward the funeral home. "I was at bereavement counselling. My father died two months ago."

"I was paying my respects to a friend." He could read her thoughts. "Not my partner, but another member of the gay community. I've been to so many funerals." And after a brief pause, "Did you know Carlene has AIDS?"

Katie gasped. "I didn't know," she whispered. "Where is she?"

"A hospice. I see her regularly, but there's little response any more. She's semi-conscious."

"Oh, my God. That's awful." They spoke of their old housemate. Katie asked about Ron's job. He was still at the library, his hours cut back. He asked about her work, then: "Still with Darryl?"

"Darren."

"Cute guy. He didn't take to me. He knew right away that we don't play on the same team."

She laughed. "You exaggerate."

Seven or eight years earlier, she and Darren had joined her old friends for brunch. Afterwards, Darren said her friends were aging hippies.

"Darren and I are workaholics," she told Ron. "It's been difficult to find time to attend these bereavement sessions. Let's get a coffee." Her heart thumped. She didn't want to lose contact with her old friend so soon.

Looking around, they saw no restaurants. He glanced at his watch. "I have to be somewhere promptly at 4:30. Could we do lunch sometime? Your treat though, cause I'm skint."

They set a time and place just as her bus came along. She looked out the window. Ron watched her go, smiling.

"YOU LOOK BETTER." DARREN REFILLED HER GLASS of chardonnais. "Grief counselling must be helpful."

She shrugged. Although she'd done it anyway, Darren had objected to her visiting her dad's sickbed, arguing that it was time-consuming and costly, and she normally only saw her dad once a year. How dare he sympathise now?

Funny. It took the stroke, and her father's speechlessness, to make her wish she could talk to him. After her mother's death and his early retirement, her dad devoted his time to fishing. They hadn't had much to talk about.

"Good news," Darren announced. "I got the big account. So, shall we buy the condo?"

"Let's wait awhile." If she were to move downtown again, she'd prefer an older house, like the one her "intentional family" had rented. Sentimental! You couldn't go back.

Eating her calamari, she recalled spaghetti suppers in the old kitchen at The Cabin, with children's art on the walls, drawn by Ron's practice-teaching students during his teachers' college year.

Around the table, they would proofread Melanie's thesis.

"Thanks, guys! If I get that scholarship to England, you can all come and visit me." So far as Katie knew, none of the old gang had. The family had never proofread Katie's own thesis, because she never completed it. Instead, they comforted her when her academic advisor quit, leaving her high and dry. At the same round table

---

***The best way of coping with his grief, he thought, might be to help someone else.***

---

they held a family conference, called by Jodie after her boyfriend Stan proposed.

"Should I marry him? I want the truth."

Among the reasons "for," was Jodie's unhappiness in teaching. Stan would give her a new role: wife and mother. To Jodie, children were little no-neck monsters. Stan, however, wanted them.

"Marry him," Katie blurted. "Work out the details later. Remember, housework is relatively easy. I wish someone would marry me."

"If we're both single when we hit forty, we'll get married." Ron's eyes twinkled. "We'll spend our old age together."

"It's a deal!"

"Could we get back to my problem, please?" Jodie demanded.

Carlene, putting on eye make-up while waiting for her date, voted No.

"So many gorgeous men in the world! Don't confine yourself to one!"

The cat known as Mother strolled into the kitchen, rubbed against Jodie's legs, and meowed. They all laughed.

"Ignore Mother," said Melanie. "What does she know? She's spayed. Father is neutered."

Drinking wine, they got sillier. They decided Jodie should talk things through with Stan.

"If you say no, you can always stay on here. We aren't going anywhere," Ron said.

But Ron was the first to move out. He quit teachers' college, believing that the straight world would never accept him in education, and switched to library school. Melanie

got her scholarship to England. Jodie married Stan. Katie, with her stalled thesis and no job prospects, phoned her father and asked him to stake her to a college course in computer programming. Computers were fairly new then. Soon her financial problems were over. She loved her work. She dated some, but told her friends she was going to become the man, career-wise, that she had once wanted to marry. And lo and behold, when she quit looking, Darren appeared.

Since Darren didn't like Ron, she was glad she would be lunching with her old friend alone.

A WEEK LATER, WHEN SHE ENTERED THE RESTAURANT, Ron was sipping coffee.

"Remember Jodie's stag party at Slippery's?" he began, as she settled across from him.

"Slippery's Bar and Grille! You mentioned it in your toast to the bride. That really annoyed Jodie's mother. 'We've had entirely too many references to that pub!'"

This reminiscence unleashed a flood.

"Remember when Jodie and Stanley took the cats to live with them? Father bounced into the car and perched on the headrest to enjoy the drive."

"Mother hid under the sofa and had to be coaxed out with salmon."

"Such sweethearts!" Katie exclaimed. "I wanted to take them, but my new apartment was too cramped. I wonder how they are."

Ron's brows arched. "Probably they're happy in that big cat house in the sky."

She sighed. "The years have flown by!"

"The cats were great," Ron conceded. "Mother cuddling up against me at night gave me the nerve to quit teachers' college."

A young waiter approached their table, eyebrows raised.

"It was so relaxing, drifting off to sleep with Father lying on my abdomen!"

Smiling up at the waiter, she explained that Mother and Father were cats. "Five of us formed an 'intentional family,' and someone said a family needs a mother and father."

"They wanted me to be father, but I wasn't the type," Ron chipped in.

"Father was grey and fluffy. Part Persian. Mother was black with a touch of rust in certain lights."

"Ah ... would you care to order?" asked the waiter. Afterwards, Ron leaned forward.

"Remember that time on the bus?"

Katie nodded. "You said: 'I'm going to ask Dr. Beane about getting Father neutered.' The elderly woman ahead of us nearly fainted."

"Remember that food store check-out line? I'd been away, practice-teaching, and asked what was new. You said: 'Nothing much, except that Mother has started shitting in

the window boxes.' The woman ahead of us put her hands over her little girl's ears."

They laughed. "I miss cats," she sighed.

"Stephanie has a yellow cat, Garfield. She claimed it followed her home."

"Stephanie? Have you gone straight, Ron, after all these years?"

"No, I'm still waiting for you. Remember? Only you picked Dagwood—er—Darren. Actually, I found Mr. Right, too, only ..." His voice faltered.

"I'm so sorry."

"Evan died two years ago. Incidentally, I test negative. Safe sex. After he died, Carlene asked me to move in with her and her mother and her daughter Stephanie."

Ron had bumped into their old housemate at a meeting



***Carlene was propped up in bed, very thin, her skin transparent.***

for friends of people with HIV. The best way of coping with his grief, he thought, might be to help someone else, so he accepted Carlene's invitation to move into her mother's old house near the campus. Cutbacks in student grants had reduced the elderly woman's rental income. Disabled with arthritis, Carlene's mum found it hard meeting her mortgage payments. Ron's rent kept them hanging on.

"We live day to day. Carlene can't last much longer. Stephanie is ten. If they have to go into public housing later, I don't know if a grandmother and granddaughter constitute a 'family unit.' It's a worry."

He glanced at his watch. He had to leave promptly at 2:00, to pick up Stephanie from school and take her to visit Carlene.

Over the meal, Katie turned the conversation to happier subjects. Had he seen Jodie lately? Ron had contacted her to tell her of Carlene's illness. She sent flowers weekly.

"She said she'd love to get together with the old gang. Melanie is coming back from England."

"Let's all have lunch here next week!"

He nodded. "Fine. I'll phone them. It will take my mind off Carlene." He rose to go.

Katie's heart pounded. She had her car, and the afternoon free. But how could she face Carlene? How could she deal with another terminal illness? As Darren would say, "Who needs it?"

She blurted, "I'll drive you."

His face lit up. "Thanks."

"THERE'S NO PARKING," KATIE SAID, AS THEY APPROACHED their destination. "I'll wait in the car."

"There's a spot!" Stephanie shot a skinny arm past Katie and pointed to a car just pulling out. Katie parked.

"Aren't you coming in to see Mummy?"

Katie swallowed. How could she refuse? She gripped Ron's hand.

Her discomfort was soothed by smiling staff, walls with pictures and mementos, and soft music. Spring flowers bloomed on Carlene's window sill.

Carlene was propped up in bed, very thin, her skin transparent. Her smile and greeting were the same as ever. One minute she was conscious, then she drifted off. Holding Ron's hand, Stephanie kept talking to her mother. Katie went to a waiting room down the hall, where, five minutes later, she was joined by the little girl.

"How do you know my mum and Ron?"

Katie began a once-upon-a-time story about the five roommates and the cats at home in The Cabin. Stephanie was delighted.

"I'd like another cat, but Grandma says we can't really afford Garfield."

When Ron reappeared, Katie drove them both home.

"Won't you come in?" Stephanie asked. "Grandma always likes to meet Mum's friends." Touched, Katie begged off. There wasn't time, not if she wanted to get home before Darren.

A FEW DAYS LATER, RON PHONED TO SAY THAT Melanie and Jodie were on for lunch.

"I'm anxious to see how time has treated our siblings, so to speak," Ron drawled, as she manoeuvred through traffic. "I wonder if Jodie is still as hot for Stan?"

Katie, who was nervous, cast a grateful glance in his direction. He always tried to make her feel better. The memory of the passionate pair made her chuckle.

No one who lived at The Cabin would have objected if Jodie had taken Stan up to her room, but instead, she preferred to play out their courtship in the communal living room. Night after night they sprawled all over each other, breathing heavily, pretending to watch TV. The others muttered that it was their living room too. It was embarrassing to come in to catch the 10 o'clock news and find them engaged in near-sex on the sofa.

When Melanie suggested to Jodie that she and Stan take it upstairs, Jodie had looked shocked, protesting, "I don't want to look cheap!" They laughed.

"Do you remember the time we tried to give them a taste of their own medicine?" Ron asked.

Katie giggled. The effort had failed. She and Ron had decided, at one point, that Jodie must be unaware of how her intimacies with Stan embarrassed her roomies. They decided to show her. One late afternoon, when Jodie was

due home from school, Katie, fully clothed, lay down on the hall carpet. Ron, also clad, positioned himself over her. When the door opened, they began to pant and squeal. "Oh, Ron!" "Oh, Katie!"

"You two are ridiculous!" Jodie snapped, walking around them to hang up her coat.

Katie, on Ron's arm, entered the restaurant laughing at the memory. Their friends were already at the table. She would have recognized them anywhere, though Jodie's hair was a paler blonde, and Melanie's dark curls were frosted now. They embraced and began catching up on things.

"None of you ever came to see me in England. Well, it's too late," Melanie informed them. "I'm back for good."

Her tenure at her British university counted for nothing here where she was starting over as a part-time lecturer, an entry-level job. Why had she left England, Katie wondered? Melanie told stories about her love of the countryside and new English friends, but eventually homesickness for her family brought her back to Canada.

She sighed. "Do any of you know of a place I could live, with reasonable rent? I can't stay out at my folks' farm indefinitely. My family is very understanding, but I can tell I'm crowding them. They had to stand in line for the bathroom as it was, even before I got there."

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***"You three could make a real difference in that kid's life."***

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"I'm looking for a place, myself," Jodie said. "I'm leaving Dr. Stan."

The others listened as she spoke of her early years of marriage, guinea-pigged by fertility experts. "Raging hormones and miscarriages kept me in a state for years. I wasn't fit company. That's why I never phoned you all." After a hysterectomy, she threw herself into volunteer work and tried to ignore Stan's affairs. She was afraid to leave, until she told herself that a woman who could raise thousands of dollars for charity ought to be able to find some way to make ends meet. She looked from Melanie to Katie to Ron. "I really missed all of you. If only we could go back in time." Then she was fumbling for a handkerchief. Katie handed her a napkin, as her own eyes blurred.

Ron stepped in. "Stephanie really enjoyed Katie's cat stories. She pressed me for more. I only told her things fit for young ears. The point is—you three could make a real difference in that kid's life. She has no one but her grandmother, and me. No extended family. No aunts."

Jodie bit her lip. "I've never been good with kids, but,

out of friendship for Carlene, I'd like to do something for her. Would Stephanie like to go shopping?"

"I'd like to help. Would her grandmother object to someone she didn't know befriending her granddaughter?" Melanie asked Ron.

He shook his head. "She'd be grateful."

Melanie pulled out a daily planner.

"Let's draw up a schedule for visits to the hospice and things to make life easier for Stephanie and her grandmother," she announced.

"She'll have three fairy godmothers," Ron remarked.

"And one fairy godfather," Katie quipped. They rolled their eyes and put their heads together.

DRIVING HOME, THE PLANS ECHOING IN HER HEAD, Katie felt energetic. Home ahead of Darren, she put water on to boil for pasta, and was chopping vegetables when he came in. His expression told her something was wrong.



***The door jerked open abruptly.  
Ron was there, wild-eyed, pale.***

"Something wonderful happened today," she began. He held up his hand.

"Katie, I have something to get off my chest. I can't live a lie any longer."

He dropped his bomb. He and his secretary were involved.

"It's purely physical. It has nothing to do with us. It's just that you've been so preoccupied. You won't let your father go. You're stuck in the past. It's as if we're moving in different directions."

Katie looked at the knife, then at the boiling water. She set down the knife, switched off the stove, grabbed her purse, and left.

Fighting her way through traffic, she decided she knew what was wrong all along. Darren was simply too young for her. Almost without thinking, she drove to the neighbourhood where Ron lived with Stephanie and her grandmother. Parking out front, she slowly climbed the steps and rang the doorbell.

The door jerked open abruptly. Ron was there, wild-eyed, pale.

"Katie! Carlene's mother called me from the hospice. Carlene is gone. I want to go there, but Stephanie isn't back from Brownies yet. Could you stay here, and break the news? And ... can I borrow your car? I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Of course." As he vanished into the street, she sank into a comfortable, worn chair in the living room. On a shelf was a framed photograph of an elderly woman, a grinning, freckled Stephanie, and Carlene, in healthier days. She looked at the fireplace, smiling, remembering the way they hung up huge outsize stockings at Christmas, including two little ones for Mother and Father. One year, Carlene hung up a pair of sheer black pantyhose. Katie began to cry.

With her head buried in her hands, she became aware of something soft and warm rubbing against her leg. A yellow cat, tail arched, opened his pink mouth in a meow. Moments later he was on her lap, purring loudly.

Ten minutes later, a car door slammed. Feet pounding up the steps.

"Hi, I'm home!"

Katie, with the cat in her arms, met Stephanie.

"Hi, Katie. Where is everyone?" No sooner were the words out of the little girl's mouth, than she guessed. Her face crumpled.

Katie took the child in her arms. Stephanie raised her teary face.

"What will happen to me?"

Katie told her about the plans to help Stephanie and her grandmother. Then another idea dawned. Suppose they recreated the "intentional family" with Stephanie and her grandmother and all lived together again? Really, it would just be taking the "aunts and uncle" plans one step further, and would solve all their housing problems. There was even a cat. Perhaps they could change his name to Father. And get a female and call her Mother. Ω

*Ruth Latta writes fiction and teaches writing in Ottawa, Ontario.*

*Note: we preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.*

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# Community Healing

**M**Y HOPE FOR THIS HEALTH AND HEALING ISSUE is to show that not only is there a connection between community and healing, but that having a strong sense of community is heal-

ing in itself. Living in intentional community is usually motivated by a desire for more meaningful connections. It is the personal experience of community that most clearly relates to health. I use a broad definition of "community" here, meaning a sense of belonging. My community is the people with whom I feel at home. It is the intentional commu-

nity CommonGround in rural Ontario, where I live with other people. It is also the village we live near and the small, rural hospital where I have worked for

the last seven years. And it is the Gesundheit! Institute in West Virginia, whose far-flung troupe of social-change players have become my dear friends through our joint adventures in sustaining joyful service. For anyone, whether living in intentional community or not, our personal sense of community is made up of those aspects of our lives where we feel connected with others.

Encouragingly, there is strong scientific evidence of the connection between community and healing, much of which is described in Dr. Dean Ornish's

book, *Love and Survival* (see review, p. 66). Of all the many influences on our health, interpersonal relationships are not only a factor, but increasingly are

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR  
BLAIR VOYVODIC, M.D.



Guest Editors Blair Voyvodic (left) and Madelaine Roig (center) of CommonGround in Killaloe, Ontario. CommonGround member Wendy Simmons, right.

COMMONGROUND



being recognized as the most crucial factor. One study showed that people who felt loved in their marriages had one-third the number of ulcers than those who did not. And another showed that people who said they did not have anybody that could help them out if they were sick or broke had three times the risk of premature death from all causes than those who knew they could get help if they needed it. And, even better, it also works the other way. Giving support has equally beneficial results. People with AIDS who began helping at a volunteer agency lived twice as long as those that did not. The people who continued did not need to be convinced to keep doing the volunteer work because once they got started, the good feeling of satisfaction was enough to keep them going. The increased life span was a side benefit. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine* also recently published two articles demonstrating that good social support is the most predictive indicator of someone's chances of avoiding a second heart attack, more so than a person's cholesterol level, measurable heart function, amount of exercise, or whether or not the person smokes or has diabetes.

But even as this tells us that there is a positive connection, how does it work? Clearly there is not a direct link. Unfortunately, having loving relationships can not guarantee good health. Life is too complex and mysterious for that. Just as in gardening, we can influence but we can not control. We do our best to provide a positive environment and then hope for the best. Living with a positive sense of community is fertile soil for good health. With it, each step that we take to promote health adds to our chances of a bountiful crop. But to claim guaranteed results is dangerously like playing God.

We can guess at the correlates. It's likely that people manifest healthier behaviours, such as

eating better, when they're with other people. They also tend to do more "self-correcting" with a higher degree of social interactions. Living with other people usually results in getting feedback that can serve to steer us back on track if we're behaving in ways that we don't realize are unhealthy. Health problems can also help to create a stronger sense of community. (Mel Leasure illustrates this poignantly

in his account of how family and community rallied around his wife during the last years of her life, p. 49.) And, one of the few positive effects of the AIDS epidemic is that, for many, the "gay scene" became the "gay communi-

ty" as people were forced to rely on and care for each other.

But I believe there is more than this behavioural cause and effect. Healing is more than these statistics. Your life matters to the other people in your community. Like it or not, their lives wouldn't be the same without you. And somehow, your body's cells know the difference.

Here's an example of how what someone believed in her heart became what was real for her body. Years ago a friend who lives in a neighbouring intentional community was diagnosed with a particularly aggressive form of breast cancer. We got to know each other as I listened to her story and tried to draw out her priorities in facing this challenge. In this setting, as physician and friend, I see my role as an interpreter, helping people make sense of the medical information that has been thrown at them and upon which they are expected to make decisions. Once she announced, "I can't die, I have a child to raise." It had come clear to her that her mothering made dying an "emotional impossibility." Because she is an herbalist I assumed she would scorn conventional therapies. But in fact she saw radiation treatments as "healing universal energy" that would stream through her body. And she

***Of all the influences on health,  
interpersonal relationships are  
increasingly recognized  
as the most crucial factor.***

bounced back remarkably after the treatments, with minimal side effects. Despite her oncologist's dismal prediction, she thrived, even with the cancer. And with her herbs and other remedies, she continued to thrive until years later. When her son was old enough to be on his own the cancer spread to her brain and bones. At that point, she realized her son's need for her couldn't keep her alive any more and she must find her own reason to live—which she did. And which she celebrated, by spending the winter in a small village in Mexico, with cancer, and having a great time! I would not say her story is typical, but I would say that my experi-

ence witnessing many people face life-threatening illness has taught me that they generally do far better than expected when they can access a passion that connects them to life.

I have a hunch about how this connection works. From 20 years of doctoring and living in community, I believe that the key element is when we can share the stories about what matters to us. When we do this it creates a delightful kind of intimacy that affects our whole being. Both telling and listening to these important stories is reviving. Reading the birth stories recounted in the book *Spiritual Midwifery* (see review, p. 66) is deeply touching to anyone who remembers the miracle of birth. And, in some way still mysterious, being touched by these stories nourishes our bodies with an inspiration that is as vital as food. As goose bumps rise on our skin, it's as if our cells perk up and respond with, "This is worth living for!" Such passion for life is the most powerful alleviator of suffering I know of.

But when I'm sick, I want a cure! Can we cure disease? The answer is: "Much less than one would hope." In a few specific cases medicine or other techniques can have a direct, significant effect on health, such as with infections and a few cancers, for example. However, for the majority of illnesses, the

techniques we use have only partial influence. This is one reason why drawing on a variety of approaches, including those of mainstream as well as complementary medicine, often works better than only using just one approach. I frequently see people struggle with the fact that we aren't much further along than when Voltaire said, "The role of the doctor is to amuse the patient while Nature attends

to the cure." Like the weather, we talk about what "cures" us, and try to predict and respond as best we can. I say this honestly, not cynically. I still do everything I can come up with, medically or using complementary

therapies, to aid a person's health. But it's vital to me to remember that what is most important is that I enter into community with the people who come to me with illness. I try to let them know that I am present with them, that their well-being matters to me. I try to help them understand what is happening, what they can do about it, and offer what I can to help. As Sir William Osler advised, "To cure sometimes, to relieve suffering often." The key is the willingness to enter into relationship which is the foundation of community. This is a noble, fun, and creative calling. It keeps me thrilled to be alive and part of the human community.

And that is healthy. Ω

*Guest Editor Blair Voyvodic, M.D., lives at CommonGround, a developing community dedicated to inspiring creative healing, in Killaloe, Ontario. He enjoys trying to make the world a better place, including bringing good cheer to his work in the emergency room of his local community hospital. His e-mail: healing@web.net.*

*Guest Editor Madelaine Roig, M.A., M.F.C.C., is an artist, psychotherapist, and writer who also lives at CommonGround. Her e-mail: visionwk@web.net.*

***Sharing the stories about what  
matters to us creates a  
delightful kind of intimacy that affects  
our whole being.***

Dana Snyder-Grant,  
center, at New View  
Cohousing.



NEW VIEW COHOUSING

# “THINGS CO-EXIST”

BY DANA SNYDER-GRANT

**M**Y EYES FEEL HOLLOW. MY HEAD FEELS LIKE A bowling ball. Throbbing. The sides of my face feel like someone has beaten me up. My legs are made of lead. I plod through my day. This isn't a new flare-up; it's the recurring symptoms of multiple sclerosis. I remember the words of my first neurologist from 17 years ago: "This, too, shall pass." Her optimism calmed me then and I want it to now. It's five o'clock. I lie down, in preparation for dinner at my neighbor's at 6 p.m., a weekly event in our neighborhood at New View Cohousing. When I awake, the house is quiet. I call out for my husband. No response. Has he left for dinner? I turn and look at the clock: 6:46.

**Sometimes what matters most are the simple things—a child's laugh, the hug of a friend.**

Suddenly I notice that I can move my head without fatigue. My body feels at peace. My body is my own, no longer trapped in a spider web of tight muscles and aching joints. I get up and dress in a daze. I move slowly, not entirely trusting how well I feel. I call my neighbor Marcia, ask if there is any dinner left.

"Plenty," she says.

When I walk into Marcia's home, I see friends talking, laughing. Children play. My very young friend, Sam, sees me and grins. I tell myself that I will go over and give him a hug later. I want to yell, "Everyone, I'm okay. Come talk with me. I can engage with the world." Marcia interrupts my silent soliloquy as she gives me a hug.

"Wait here. I'll get you a plate of food."

I follow her into the kitchen where an array of Mexican

food awaits. She puts two enchiladas on my plate, rice and beans. Marcia seems to know just what I need. She senses my feeling that I have just risen from the dead. Neighbors and friends fill the living room and kitchen. I spot an empty seat at the dining room table and go there. I am amazed that my head and eyes are still clear. I smile for the first time in three days. My husband sees me from across the room, comes over and gives me a hug.

"I'm okay. It's gone," I say to him with pleasure. He smiles.

The evening continues for me in a serene sort of way. I stay seated; friends come over to chat. They greet me with warm smiles and hugs. I feel their love. Did they know I was not feeling well? Later, I realize that it was I who projected love, feeling comfort with a body I can trust for now, with my ability to simply appreciate the warmth of friends. Sometimes, in a life with an illness like MS that brings unpredictable hours of sensory puzzles and bodily fatigue, what matters most are the simple things—a child's laugh, the hug of a friend, the hearty taste of black beans. One conversation I have that night is with my friend, Sue. She learned the day before of her friend's death from breast cancer.

"I'm doing okay," she tells me. "I've cried. Things co-exist." She pauses and with tears in her eyes, repeats, "Things co-exist." Yes, things co-exist, I think later, walking home with my husband. The memory of pain, knowing its tentacles are just around the corner, exists. And so does the soothing pleasure of the evening. Ω

*Dana Snyder-Grant lives with her husband Jim and their cat, Kugel, in New View Cohousing in Acton, Massachusetts. She is a social worker and freelance writer.*



*Having fun and connecting with people is a prerequisite for health at Gesundheit! Institute.*

**I** MOVED TO GESUNDHEIT! INSTITUTE community in West Virginia in 1993 to help manage the volunteer program. As a forming community committed to integrative healing, we are working through abundant challenges. How do we steward our land? What appropriate technology will we use? Who makes decisions, who makes peace, who makes love to whom? Can we model these complexities with the simplicity necessary to stimulate a sustainable lifestyle? How do we bewitch all of this with fun and delight? Can we forgive ourselves and others for the first, second, and 300th mistake? Trying to answer these questions as we design our village cluster has become an invigorating creative journey. Our volunteers keep reminding me how differently rich we can be and still behold what is good and most kind.

I was raised in a circle of health-care professionals. My great-grandfather, grandfather, and great uncle were doctors; both grandmothers, a great aunt, and my mother were all nurses. I almost broke away from my heritage at high school graduation, to prove some sort of independence, but my mom offered a sensible heart-to-heart. "Honey, nursing provides a job you can take with you anywhere." "Your grandmothers would be so proud."

My notions of genuine community are rooted in this rural, Midwestern culture of Hallock, Minnesota, the predominantly Scandinavian town of 1,000 where I grew up. Through family and friends, from baptism to graduation, I formed a belief system about myself and the world that I have only lately fully realized and honored. Seeded in my Scandinavian heritage are an array of virtuous words to live by. Trust. Believe. Work. Dedicate. Help. Cooperate. I didn't grow up feeling victimized by society. Surrounded by a community of caring people, I grew up feeling fundamentally curious about society's design. My

## A CIRCLE OF CARE

BY KATHY BLOMQUIST, RN

motivation to act is influenced by what's right, not by what's wrong. I did become a nurse and those grandmas were indeed proud. Through the years, these sincere, hard-working, loving women shared stories about our profession; stories about the people they cared for and the children they birthed. In many cases, I knew these people or their families two or three generations later. My grandmothers witnessed this small community's cycle of lives with a caring and connection that I'm now realizing held an amazing power of its own. It's what Dr. Dean Ornish described in *Love and Survival*: love and intimacy are at the heart of why we become sick or well, sad or happy, why we suffer or why we heal; feeling isolated leads to illness and suffering; experiencing love and intimacy, connection and community, leads to healing. (See review, p. 66)

Countless people in my home town have approached me to comment on the care they received years ago from my family. "Every time I see your grandma in the store, I'm reminded of her kind and sure presence while I was in the hospital." "Your mother was so good to our family after dad died." "I can still count on that grandma of yours for care and attention." I began to understand the healing power of knowing someone in the context of family and community connections. This common ground of experience cannot be reduced to a quaint, charming idea of small-town living. I think it is the vital thread of health and well-being that is sought by everyone on their healing journeys.

Dean Ornish notes that "healing" and "curing" are not the same. Curing is when someone's physical disease gets better; healing is the process of becoming whole. This process includes accepting ourselves as we are and accepting our neighbors as they are, with our common ground and our differences. Community, as I first experienced it, allows a group of

## About Gesundheit! Institute

**G**ESUNDHEIT! INSTITUTE IS AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNITY WITH A vision to provide an environment for learning the skills necessary to make community, family, and personal well-being alive in each person's life. We believe that introducing a compassionate, generous, fun-spirited community into our society through the practice of medicine will bring us back to the heart of the healing process—the making of healthy relationships. Much more than a hospital, the Gesundheit community in West Virginia will be a

microcosm of vibrant life, integrating art, education, fun, and friendship with health care.

Our main onsite work in West Virginia has been to look after what we have, restore what we can, and finally, introduce new elements into well-functioning systems. So far we have completed a four-level 6,500 sq. ft. multipurpose workshop, a three-acre lake, a two-mile woodland trail, made multiple renovations of the existing farmhouse, built tool sheds



*The dacha, a residence for Gesundheit staff.*

and a three-season dwelling for long-term volunteers, and begun preliminary landscaping and organic gardens. Last year we began constructing a new six-person dacha (a Russian country cottage) to house permanent staff; it should be finished this fall. Our main focus, along with stewarding our physical environment, has been delving further into the ongoing development of our human design—meaning how we all interact when we come together to work and play and live.

The purpose of our volunteer program is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual foundation of Gesundheit and to generate an extended community committed to perpetuating joyful service

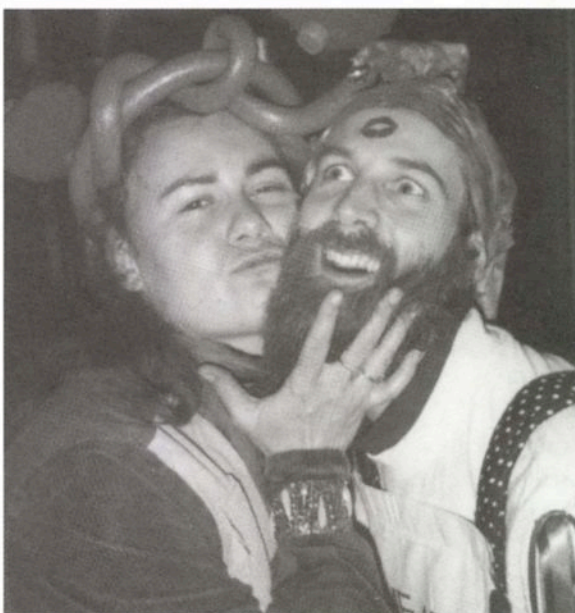
Our small staff hosts two-week work camps throughout the summer. Through such shared living we invite volunteers to participate in making community on a daily basis. Our hope is that they will continue to put their ideals to work in their home communities. We do this three ways: through the physical tasks of maintaining and consciously designing the natural and built environments; the individual's tasks of sustaining a dynamic level of fitness in body, mind, heart, and soul; and the group's task of creating a cooperative process amidst unity and diversity.

To learn more about our work, contact Gesundheit! Institute, HC 64, PO Box 167, Hillsboro, WV 24946. Ω

people the chance to ride these waves together, particularly when they are committed to a particular place. At Gesundheit, where we live in close proximity daily, we get to observe each other's patterns of behavior and thought. We have the chance to be our genuine selves, our full selves, our whole selves. Taking these chances with friends in our kitchens and our local grocery stores gets to the heart of our deep-seated need to connect and belong. At Gesundheit I'm relearning that healing is not only prescribing medicine and therapies, but working together and sharing in a spirit of joy and cooperation.

When I first came here, I knew so little about what I had leapt into. What made me do it? Now I know that the forgotten seeds of my childhood were ready to sprout. With a tenacious belief in the essentially good, kind, and compassionate, I discovered that here I could express myself even further. Promoting dialogues about these issues with Gesundheit volunteers has become a constant experience. While chopping onions in the kitchen we may begin a conversation about problems in health-care delivery, and by the time our soup is ready, we've moved onto the dining porch and uncovered each others' deep personal beliefs. Hopefully we continue our exchange, sharing disgusting habits, pet peeves, and mischievousness. That's the real joy and the core of the healing with the hundreds of volunteers we host and our ongoing community building. People come here inspired by our vision of compassionate, fun health care. Although they don't yet find the straw-bale walls of an up-and-running hospital, they receive the kind of hospitality that has almost been forgotten. Our credo: "Be bombastically nice, make intimate friends, welcome a motley stranger, and run with fun." I love this quest.

We want to take vibrant community living and build a place that brings fun, friendship, and the joy of



PHOTOS: GESUNDHEIT INSTITUTE

ABOVE: Creating the ecovillage infrastructure to support the hospital.

LEFT: Kathy Blomquist and Guest Editor Blair Voyvodic.

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***Healing is not only prescribing medicine, but working together and sharing in a spirit of joy and cooperation.***

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service back into health care. I realize I am just now beginning to understand what health care really is. In the process of thinking about my family's beliefs and values, I feel more whole and fully alive as a unique being because of the new family and community spirit that surrounds me. I believe this is gen-

uine healing—what health care is really about. Ω

*Kathy Blomquist has lived on the Gesundheit landsite in West Virginia for six years managing the volunteer program and scheming community design. She has accompanied Patch Adams on four clown tours to Russia.*

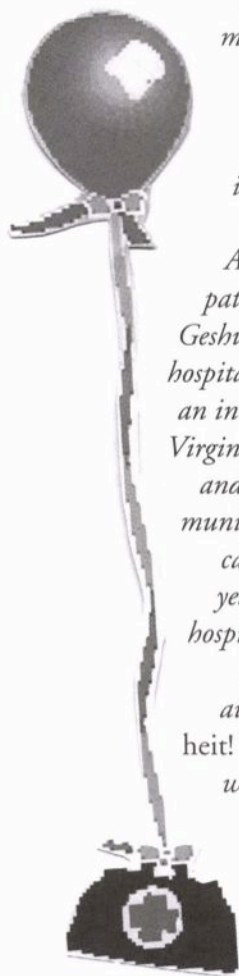
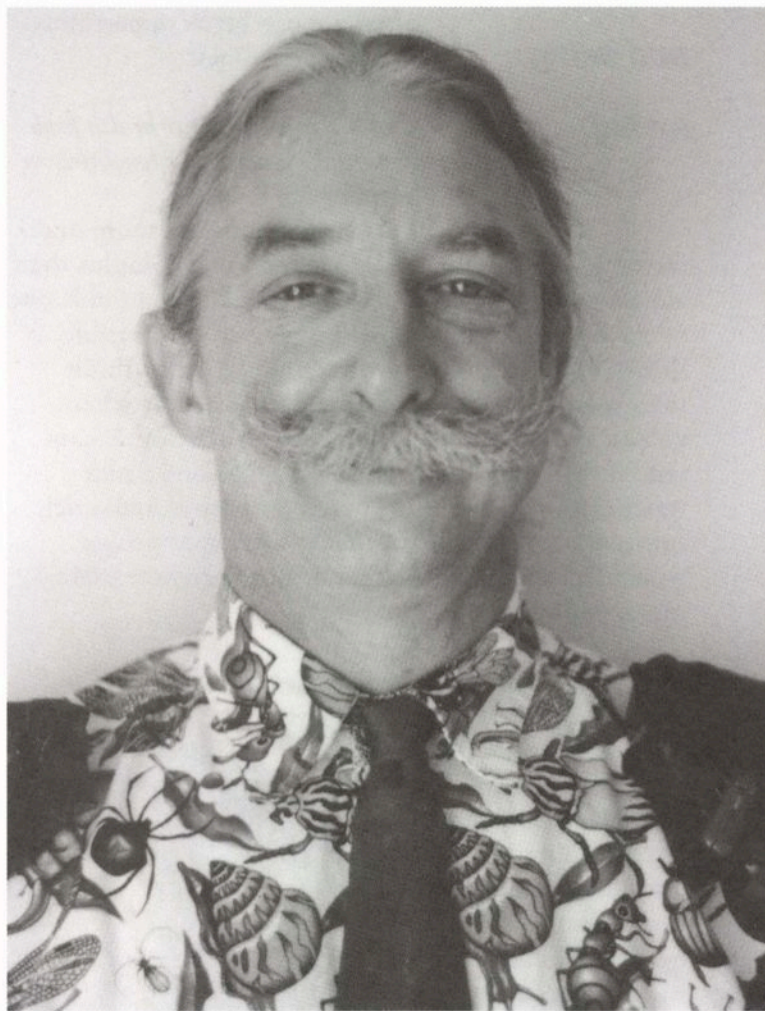
# PATCH ADAMS ON HEALTH & HEALING

INTERVIEWED BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

*Patch Adams, M.D., the hero of the movie "Patch Adams," starring Robin Williams (nominated for Golden Globe Awards for Best Picture and Best Actor), is a physician, clown, inventor, actor, dancer, social change artist, and former communitarian.*

*Almost 15 years ago he stopped seeing patients to raise money full time for the Geshundheit! Institute, a planned 40-bed hospital that will offer free medical care in an intentional community setting in West Virginia. From 1971 through 1979 Patch and colleagues at the Geshundheit community in Virginia provided free medical care to 15,000 people. For the last 14 years Patch has led groups of clowns to hospitals and other institutions in Russia and the former Soviet Union. He is author of an autobiography, Geshundheit! (Inner Traditions Press, 1993) and, with cartoonist Jerry van Amerongen, House Calls (Robert Reed, 1998).*

*Part I of our interview, "Patch Adams on the Movie 'Patch Adams,'" appeared in the Winter '98 issue.*



**DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN:** *I understand you feel that community itself is integral to the therapeutic environment. How so?*

**PATCH ADAMS:** I believe community is at the very core of eliminating fear in our society. If we could eliminate fear, we'd go a long way towards being a much healthier society. In my experience, the core of most people's fear is not feeling a sense of belonging. We panic over our future, and so buy life insurance, health insurance, car insurance, malpractice insurance, all of that garbage. And we have

**What people  
need most for  
a sense of  
well-being is  
being loved  
and being  
loving.**

such an alienating society—well described in the world's literature of the last 100 years about people being lonely. And it's certainly my experience that people are lonely. And community gets at the very core, or can get at the core, of that need to connect with other people. It's true that just because people live geographically near each other doesn't mean they're not going to be lonely. But living in community offers a much better opportunity to reduce loneliness.

**DLC:** *Are some of our health problems and ailments just loneliness in physiological form?*

**PATCH:** I think we're more multifactorial than that, that life is much more complex than almost anyone wants to admit. I think alienation is one of the horrible things; boredom one of the horrible things; fear one of the horrible things. And I think these are present in most people. In a society where money and power are gods, and we have people convinced that what they want are BMWs and Rolex watches as compared to a bunch of friends and a rich spiritual or artistic life, it makes sense that people would feel that way, whether or not they were exercising or eating well.

**DLC:** *You intend the *Gesundheit!* Institute's hospital and community to exist in a completely different paradigm than that of mainstream society. What do you have in mind for it?*

**PATCH:** Certainly we want health care to be free, we want not to use health insurance, we want to not use malprac-

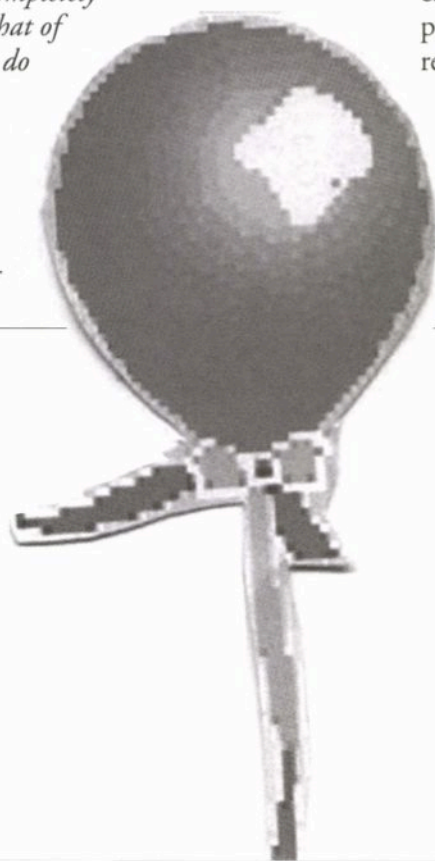
tice insurance. We want to live with our patients. We want to be the first fully interdisciplinary hospital, combining all the healing arts. We want to be the first "silly hospital" in history. We want to fully integrate medicine with performing arts, arts and crafts, agriculture, nature, education, recreation, and social service. We want our initial interviews with patients to be three or four hours long, because we want, ideally, our patients to become deep personal friends with us for life. We'd like our hospital to be a model ecovillage.

**DLC:** *You are firmly opposed to malpractice insurance. Why is that?*

**PATCH:** There are so many reasons; whatever I say will be incomplete. I don't like mistrust. As soon as you carry malpractice insurance you're in effect telling your patients, "I'm afraid of you and I don't trust you because I'm afraid you might sue me." So you live your entire professional career in fear and mistrust. Many doctors are afraid to do procedures or stop doing parts of their practice, because they're afraid they might get sued. And because malpractice insurance makes it easy to choose a scapegoat if something goes wrong, you can't build good teamwork among health care professionals. Most malpractice suits are thrown out of court, but before that happens it's in the public that some health professional is being sued for malpractice, and many divorces have occurred because of the stress around a malpractice suit and the length of time it takes to resolve it. Many people drop out of medicine entirely because of malpractice. The cost of care has skyrocketed because of malpractice insurance. How many more reasons do you need?

**DLC:** *Do you advocate a particular health care modality? Where do you stand in the ongoing debate between holistic medicine and conventional medicine?*

**We want  
to be the  
first "silly  
hospital"  
in history.**





**PATCH:** Well, there's not really a thing, "conventional medicine," or a thing, "holistic medicine." They are just terms being thrown around. I'm for every person who wants to help people be healthy or ease their suffering in some way. I'm interested in that help being in a context of generosity and compassion, not in a paternalistic, arrogant context of, "I know the answer, and if you have money you can get the answer." So I'm for modalities that care about people. I think the caregiver is the most important factor, and that the tools are just little tools that the caregiver might or might not be able to use.

**DLC:** *So you think healing is related to the energy of wishing someone well; that healing is more likely to occur when there's a good relationship between doctor and patient?*

**PATCH:** Oh, of course. Imagine somebody denying that! Everything is better with intimacy. There's not a single thing that goes better without intimacy. Intimacy, love among people, enhances every single thing.

**DLC:** *Intimacy and friendship are extremely important to you?*

**PATCH:** Well I can clearly state that what matters to me the most, head and shoulders above everything else, are my friends, and the experiences I have had with new and

old friends. And with people, in general.

I actually don't like to think of anyone as a non-

friend. So I like to see

the world as my friends. No strangers. And as a physician for 31 years I can say that there's no disease ever that projects the depth of suffering that loneliness does. It's clear to me that of all the things people need for a sense of well-being, what they need most is a sense of being loved and being loving. Enjoying human relations. I cannot fathom loneliness because of how easy it is to make human connections. And I understand how it is we live in a society where almost everyone is lonely.

**DLC:** *How would you like things to be different? What would our ideal society be like, in your view?*

**PATCH:** Certainly there would no violence. It would be a peaceful, funny world. A return to full interrelatedness with plants and animals. Where life is an ecstatic moment for people, regardless of whether they were sick or well. Certainly a deep sense of interdependence among all people. Everybody feels connected ... no strangers. If there were a unit of exchange like money it would be insignificant relative to what matters in people's lives. And no

large discrepancy between those who have more things and those who do not. Certainly service, love, and fun would have the same place that money and power do today as the things that people would pursue with avidity. The arts would have a center focus in our lives. People would find such a wonderful way to live with each other that instead of having two weeks off a year, maybe they'd have "two weeks on" a year. I think an "ecovillage" is just a term for one of the early stages of the kind of society I'm describing. Ω



Patch believes community is at the core of eliminating fear. Here, with "joyful service" cohorts at Gesundheit.

To contact Patch Adams, or to send any tax-deductible donations for the free hospital: Gesundheit! Institute, 6855 Washington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22213; 703-525-8169; [www.well.com/user/achool/](http://www.well.com/user/achool/). If you'd like to volunteer at the site contact Gesundheit! Institute, HC 64, Box 167, Hillsboro, WV 24946.



*The whole gang at Sunward Cohousing.*

# TAKING THE LEAP OF FAITH

BY SANDRA GREENSTONE, WITH CLINTON GREENSTONE, M.D.

**I**N OCTOBER, NESTLED IN AN UPSTAIRS BEDROOM of our dwelling in Sunward Cohousing Community, I gave birth to our fourth child, a son. Starting with a community-wide baby celebration several weeks earlier, we experienced a constant stream of caring gestures bestowed upon our family. Community members quilted a beautiful baby quilt; people ran errands or picked up groceries; warm meals arrived at our doorstep every other night. This support definitely made my physical recovery much easier. But even more so the care and sense of interconnectedness I feel here brought much warmth and healing to our post-birthing time.

I spent several days recovering upstairs in my room. From the window I watched my other children playing with friends and being cared for by other adults they know and trust. As I lay in bed I overheard caring voices asking my husband about our well-being. Pulling myself in from daily business and the requirements of commu-

nity living, I gained a whole new appreciation of how deeply my family is surrounded by warmth and how much I care about all the people here. It more than ever affirmed our decision to live here.

It took us three years to decide to move into Sunward Cohousing. My husband is an Anthroposophically oriented holistic doctor and I'm a practitioner of Process Acupressure. As healing practitioners caring for others who also care for young children, we had to ask ourselves how much we might have left to give. We were already experiencing friends, neighbors, and family members coming to us for advice about healing and alternative therapies. To preserve our family life, we had to learn to set boundaries. Would we experience increased demands and expectations if we became part of a community? Would our time and energy be spread even thinner? And what would we be missing if we didn't become part of the community?

We decided to take the leap, and were one of the first families to move into Sunward. It seemed that the greatest potential for meaning and purpose for our family's future would be to include the well-being of a larger community in our hearts and deeds. It took courage and trust that community living would also nourish our family, and that we could set boundaries if necessary. We also had to trust that we would make the time and energy to positively contribute to the community with our already overflowing plates.

We have been at Sunward half a year now, grappling with these issues of boundaries, community service, preservation of family, and a sincere desire to help others with the practical aspects of healing. This has ultimately given birth to an exciting and unexpected project.

Last year while we were packing to move to Sunward I had an undeniable urge to address the remedy closet. I took several precious hours to sort, label, and reorganize a mountain of remedies, ointments, thermometers, herbs, bandages, Tylenol, compresses, and two decades of experience with healing. It was a grueling process that included heated discussions with my husband as we slowly combined our ideas about what to include. What emerged was a very simple and practical healing kit designed to live in our kitchen cupboard at our new home.

After the move several families asked us to help them create a healing kit of their own. Suddenly, in the last trimester of my pregnancy, I was inspired to write a few pages as a guide to go with the kit. The project took on a life of its own, to say the least. I found myself writing, night after night, asking myself where all of this energy was coming from. Community members helped by watching the children, reading rough drafts, and asking for recommendations on the best care for cuts, bumps, and bruises. It became much more than a practical guide, addressing meaning and illness, community, purpose, and personal transformation. "Healing at Home" became 125 pages and was completed a few days before I gave birth.

Through the process of confronting our fears and having the courage to follow our hearts and move into community, something was born that we could never have planned, giving our family more energy and direction that we could ever have imagined. This project has provided us an answer to some of our questions about how we could positively serve our friends, our community,

and the wider world. We gave a copy of the guide and healing kit to interested neighbors, donated one to the common house, and decided to self-publish the guide and produce the kit for wider distribution.

I liken our becoming involved in this project to the process of healing and illness. When first confronted with pain, uncomfortable symptoms, fevers, and injuries, our first inclination is often to just get rid of them. They conjure up fear of the unknown. But when we embrace the symptoms and fears a deeper healing becomes possible and creative energy is unleashed. True healing allows for the possibility of transformation toward wholeness and a greater sense of interconnectedness with others. Medications, commonly prescribed drugs, and even alternative remedies are often necessary, but they can merely assist in the healing process at best.

For many people symptoms can also carry a memory or deeper need for balance and healing in their emotional, mental, and spiritual lives. Illness can provide an opportunity to go inward and pay attention to that delicate balance. Illness can invite us to ask new questions and wake up to new parts of ourselves. Making a change in the dynamics of a relationship, clearing an old belief pattern that no longer serves us—these are some of the ways we can free up stuck energy and make room for more joy, creativity, vitality, and sense of purpose in our lives. The unexpected and miraculous birth of our healing kit project is one example.

This healing potential is magnified greatly in the greater context of community. The feeling that we are interconnected, that our presence or absence counts, that we belong, gives an even deeper meaning to the healing process. Our vitality and well-being matter because we are ultimately here to be of loving service in this grand process of human evolution. It is to that end that we strive toward wellness. Ω

*Sandra Greenstone has spent most of her life healing from a potentially life-threatening illness, and is a certified practitioner of Process Acupressure. Clinton Greenstone, M.D. received his medical training at Yale. They live with their four children at Sunward Cohousing in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

*Their healing kit and guide, *Healing at Home: Reclaiming the Healing Process*, are available from *Healing at Home Resources*, PO Box 1301, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 734-996-9502; [healing@adeptsys.com](mailto:healing@adeptsys.com); [www.adeptsys.com/healing](http://www.adeptsys.com/healing).*

***By having  
the courage  
to follow  
our hearts,  
something  
was born  
we could  
never have  
planned.***



JACOB STEVENS

# COMMUNITY MEDICINE CHEST

## *How Do We Keep Ourselves Healthy in Community?*

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

**“WHAT’S THAT THING?”** asks three-year-old Walter, wide-eyed.

“A kombucha mushroom,” answers Amina, lifting a slimy, pinkish-beige round pancake-looking thing from a large dish where it floats in light brown tea. “This is the mother mushroom, and this,” she says, separating a smaller, thinner pancake from beneath it, “is the baby.”

“And,” she says, twinkling at Walter, “I’m going to eat it!”

Well, actually she drinks the tea-based elixir it floats in, which is rich in nutrients that reputedly do everything from boost the immune system to detox heavy metals.

Our small forming community

near Asheville, North Carolina, uses an array of alternative methods to keep ourselves healthy. We eat simple, whole-foods meals, along with a slew of supplements and herbs. We sprout clover for enzymes and ferment sauerkraut for beneficial flora. We’re big on essential oils, treating cuts and burns with lavender, infections with oregano, upper respiratory conditions with eucalyptus.

A mile away, friends at a forming community of Sai Baba devotees rely primarily on “G-Jo” Acupressure, a self-administered deep massage of various acupuncture points to stimulate healing and “bring near-instant relief of pain,” according to member Michael Blate. They also use Sanjeevi-

ni, a prayer-based healing system from India involving spiritual diagrams or yantras to effect healing. They sometimes supplement these with homeopathy or Bach flower essences. “We’ve looked into almost every alternative out there,” says Michael, “and these are the most effective modalities we’ve found.”

Do most communities use similar non-mainstream methods to treat illness and keep themselves well? Are the values that bring us to community in the first place the same that inspire us to choose alternatives to the drug and medical industries?

“Keeping ourselves healthy is really tied to our original purpose,” says Rose Kelley of Miccosukee Land Co-

op. "We came back to the land 25 years ago partly from the sense that we need to take care of the environment and take care of ourselves—and not by using the drugs, chemicals, and pesticides of mainstream culture."

Miccosukkee Land Co-op and the nearby communities of Sunrise and Miccosukkee Woods are home to about 350 people in a rural area outside Tallahassee, Florida. For 25 years many of these communitarians have actively supported their local worker-owned food co-op. They also help each other whenever possible with health information or outright treatment. Some members are lay experts in herbs or homeopathy; one is an acupuncturist; many practice Reiki or are massage therapists. When not seeking help in the community, most communitarians usually see chiropractors or homeopathic MDs.

Some people try to exercise together daily; others take long walks together on the many trails winding throughout their pine and cypress forests and swamps. Their most significant health project, however, may be the survey they're completing on health and aging. Most community members are now in their 40s and 50s. Looking 10 to 15 years in the future, they're asking themselves if they might like more cooperative shared housing or a system of community-based home health care.

"Creating a plan for how we can help each other in the future," says Rose, "helps give us a feeling of safety and well-being now. And that's good for our health!"

Eden Valley Lifestyle Center is a Seventh Day Adventist health and teaching center near Loveland, Colorado. The primary purpose of this Christian community is to train young Seventh Day Adventists from other countries, or those about to embark on missionary journeys overseas, to set up clinics and share their vegan diet and use of natural remedies with others.

"We believe physical needs must be

met before we can address spiritual needs," says Eden Valley teacher Carol Bearce. "People need to be healthy and well fed and know how to take care of themselves. This has been a special calling of our denomination since 1865."

Besides eating no animal products, Eden Valley members include a high

**For sore throats  
they use  
"Russian penicillin"—  
grapefruit juice  
and fresh-pressed  
garlic.**

percentage of raw foods, including wheat grass and sprouts, and avoid coffee, sugar, and vinegar. They take white willow bark instead of aspirin, and use charcoal, internally and externally, to absorb toxins and reduce pain, for example for an abscessed tooth or stomach ache. They apply local clay for insect bites and arthritic pain, and take bentonite clay internally for cleansing. For children's earaches they use garlic oil; for sore throats and colds they like "Russian penicillin"—grapefruit juice and fresh-pressed garlic.

Hydrotherapy is their treatment of choice for many ailments and most aches and pains, usually in the form of alternating hot and cold showers or baths; heated, moist compresses; brisk rubdowns with an "ice mitten"; or trigger-point massage with ice.

"The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit," says Carol. "We believe that living a healthy lifestyle is a privilege and a way to honor God, taking care of oneself and helping others

take care of themselves."

These stories were typical of the groups I spoke with in an informal survey of health practices in intentional communities. Most ate organic, whole-foods meals—many were vegetarian or vegan—and take supplements, herbs, or homeopathic remedies to prevent and cure disease. They prefer alternative healing to conventional medicine—chiropractic, acupuncture, or homeopathy as well as Reiki, Shiatsu, Jin Shin Do, Cranio-Sacral Therapy, osteopathy, and laying-on-of-hands.

Members of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center/Sowing Circle community in Occidental, California, for example, grow hops and California poppy for tinctures in their lush organic garden. They see chiropractors, acupuncturists, osteopaths, massage therapists, or Shiatsu therapists. They use herbs and supplements mostly preventatively—echinacea, goldenseal, and Vitamin C—and lately, Yin Chao, a Chinese patent-medicine formula to knock out colds before they start.

"I'm one of the Yin Chao converts," says member Brock Dolman. "I keep a box of it around all the time."

"We pretty much use herbal medicine for everything," says Stephen Buhner of Gaian Contemplative Community near Tum Tum, Washington. Author of *Sacred Plant Medicine* (Roberts Rinehart, 1996) and *Sacred and Herbal Healing Beers* (Siris Press, 1998), Stephen teaches herbal medicine workshops nationwide.

"We've revived the nearly lost art of making herbal beers, a thousand-year-old European tradition," he adds. "You get great patient compliance when you have to take your medicine in beer," he adds with a laugh.

Members of Springtree community in rural Virginia eat organic food from their large garden, and most are vegetarian. They've all studied massage and the community owns a massage table. Almost everyone uses Vitamin E, takes garden-grown echinacea for colds, and

seeks out the community herbalist when needed. In their 50s and 60s, most community members have health insurance through their jobs. For years a well-respected local nurse practitioner was their primary health-care provider. But when she began doing mostly alternative, holistic modalities they stopped going—their health insurance covered only conventional practices and they could no longer afford it.

“Fortunately, we’re all pretty healthy now,” says member Evelyn Edson.

“But when we first came here 28 years ago with a lot of young children, we passed around every disease you can imagine,” she adds. “And almost every member of the other young, struggling communities we met back then were also always sick. We finally figured out that, besides the kids’ diseases, we had to get serious about kitchen sanitation. No matter that it wasn’t ‘politically correct’ or ‘counter-

**“We finally figured out that we had to get serious about kitchen sanitation.”**

cultural’ back then, we got a dishwasher with an extra hot-water cycle, and made everyone wash their hands. We became quite hygiene-conscious when preparing food and stopped passing everything around.”

Getting help from “in-house” holistic healers was another common theme I found. The five members of Gaian Contemplative Community include a professional herbalist, a midwife, and a nutritional chef. An acupuncturist and therapeutic masseuse are the primary healers for Woodburn

Hill Farm in rural Maryland. La Tierra community, with seven families near Sebastopol, California, boasts a nurse, a nurse-midwife/physician’s assistant, and an acupuncturist. Members of Abode of the Message, a Sufi community near New Lebanon, New York, place themselves on the “healing list” to receive absent-healing treatments from specially trained initiates in the Sufi Healing Order. Members of Earthaven community near Asheville, North Carolina, utilize Red Moon Herbs, a community-based business selling tinctures, salves, vinegars, and oils, run by members Corinna Wood and Jessica Godino, and the Carolina Center for Metabolic Medicine, run by member Jim Biddle, a holistic doctor.

What? Communitarians sometimes use Western medicine?

Sometimes yes and sometimes no.

“We don’t have an allergy to regular medical doctors,” says Evelyn of

## Healing Communities

**F**OR SOME COMMUNITIES, PROVIDING AND teaching health care is their primary purpose. Heartwood Institute, for example, a community and residential school in Garberville, California, offers deep-tissue massage, Swedish massage, Polarity Therapy, Shiatsu, Somatics, yoga, T’ai Chi, movement therapy, herbiology, hands-on healing, hypnotherapy, breath work, trigger-point therapy, and neuromuscular therapy. Founded 20 years ago with the vision, “personal healing for planetary transformation,” Heartwood now has about 45 staff and work-exchange students and about 45 short-term students. The community’s Wellness Clinic stocks herbs and recommends herbal remedies or suggests various dietary practices or holistic therapies.

“We like to think we provide an environment for people to work toward a deeper level of wholeness,” says resident Mikhael Smith.

Contact: Heartwood Institute, 220 Harmony Lane, Garberville, CA 95547; 707-923-5000.

Harbin Hot Springs near Middletown, California, also offers guests and residents an abundance of holistic health services—massage, Shiatsu, WATSU or water Shiatsu, Integrative Bodywork, Cranio-Sacral Balancing, foot reflexology,



chiropractic, and private yoga sessions—as well as their mineral-rich hot springs. Most of the 150 people who live in the community are staff for the hot springs and spa or the community’s School of Shiatsu and Massage.

Residents get two free monthly treatments of any modality, pay a minimal rate for additional treatments, and can also attend the daily yoga classes at no charge. An on-site Chinese herbalist is available to residents and a small health food store on site serves residents and guests.

Contact: Harbin Hot Springs, 800-622-2477; in California, 707-987-2477; www.harbin.org.

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, Massachusetts is a former yoga ashram which became a retreat and healing center in 1995 after its founder, Yogi Amrit Desai, resigned as spiritual director. The now smaller 27-person community, along with dozens of non-residential volunteers who belong to the wider Kripalu community, can host up to 450 guests.

Kripalu offers healing services and periodic classes in massage, Shiatsu, reflexology, acupuncture, CranioSacral Therapy, Kripalu Bodywork, and Kripalu Yoga, as well as Ayurvedic cooking and raw juice fasting.

When ill, Kripalu members use the services of the center, as well as specific yoga practices and fasting.

Contact: Kripalu Center, PO Box 793, Lenox, MA 02140; 800-741-7353; www.kripalu.org. —D.L.C.

Springtree. "We'd go to an MD for a broken leg, and I have."

"With our dispensary of over 300 herbal remedies it's pretty much 19th-century medicine around here," says Stephen of Gaian Contemplative Community. "We'd only use conventional medicine for a serious trauma, such as getting hit by a truck."

Not all communities I called were up to their ears in echinacea and goldenseal.

"We get Alka-Seltzer Plus in the economy size," reports Mary Shoen-Clark of Hawk Circle Collective, a six-person activist community near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "And Nyquil in the double pack." Hawk Circle members get flu shots, and try to remember to take multi-vitamin supplements. Each person has his or her own general medical doctor, Mary added, but as community members usually can't get an appointment when they need one, they use Insta-Care, the after-hours drive-up-window clinic at the local hospital.

"It's the MacDonalds of health care!" she says, laughing.

"The single factor that has helped our community stay the healthiest, besides eating vegan," says midwife Pamela Hunt of The Farm community near Summertown, Tennessee, "is our woman-run primary health care clinic and midwifery service." Early on a group of Farm women identified several mothers who had natural healing ability and got them trained as midwives. The midwives expanded their skills to provide prenatal, postpartum, and infant care, and got further professional training in treating simple ailments and diagnosing more serious conditions for referral to doctors. The midwives became proficient in diagnosing bladder and throat infections, appendicitis, and upper respiratory infections. They ran a professional lab for 22 years, doing their own cultures and gram stains, as well as simple hemacrits, urine tests, and strep tests. They took Emergency Medical Technician training, learning

how to put in simple stitches and check for concussion.

"We can take care of whatever's wrong 80 percent of the time," says Pamela.

"I can't say enough about how important it is, and how much money it saves," she adds, "to have people right in your community who know how to handle health care. Healing isn't likely to occur in these big impersonal health-care organizations where

### ***They learned how to put in simple stitches and check for concussion.***

the doctor doesn't know and maybe has never met the patient. For healing, you need personal contact; you need to know each other."

"I am keen on exploring how to bring health and well-being as a focus into our community culture, how to tap the healing potential of community," says Cornelia Featherstone, resident doctor of Findhorn Bay Holistic Health Centre and co-author of *Medical Marriage: The New Partnership Between Orthodox and Complementary Medicine* (Findhorn Press, 1997). The

Centre offers Findhorn residents and others reduced fees for medical consultations, a health library, an annual "Health Overhaul" service, and monthly treatments for relaxation and stress management.

"We have a saying here," she adds, "A caring community improves your immunity."

"In the last six years we've had a high proportion of natural home births at Findhorn, many of them under water. On two occasions we have reclaimed the dying process as well. We nursed one of our elders with 24-hour care for three months; another passed on quickly and her next-of-kin allowed us to keep the body at home and lay it up ourselves. We kept a vigil, bought a coffin, drove our deceased member to the crematorium, and held a very personalized service and ritual.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be involved with such fundamental, deeply connecting moments in community life," Cornelia adds.

While I can't claim this small sample is representative of all intentional communities, it seems clear that for many communitarians "alternative" health care is just plain normal, and mainstream medicine an "alternative," rather infrequent choice. And now, if you'll excuse me, I gotta go press some acupuncture points and mix up pineapple juice and fresh-pressed garlic! Ω

*Diana Leaf Christian is editor of Communities magazine.*

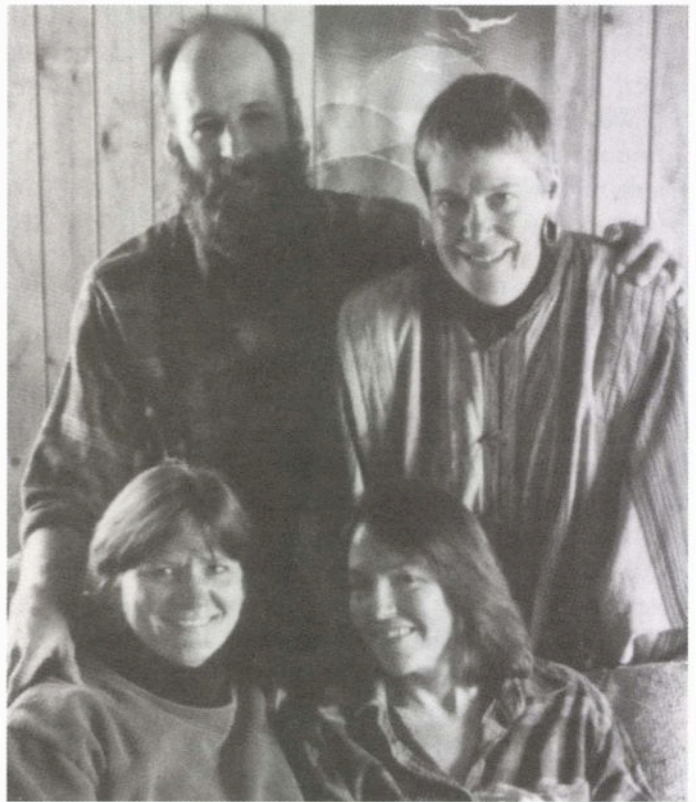
## **Health Resources in Community**

- G-Jo Acupressure, free mini-course: [www.g-jo.com/points.html](http://www.g-jo.com/points.html).
- Eden Valley Lifestyle Center: 6263 NCR 29, Loveland, CO; 970-669-7730.
- Herbal classes with Stephen Buhner of Gaian Contemplative Community: [Trishuwa@aol.com](mailto:Trishuwa@aol.com).
- Red Moon Herbs, Asheville, NC (Earthaven-affiliated): 828-236-0777.
- Carolina Center for Metabolic Medicine, Asheville, NC (Earthaven-affiliated): 828-252-5545.

Do you have a health resource in your community? Let us know! *Communities*, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

# THE QUILT

BY MADELAINE ROIG



*CommonGround Community's purpose is to "inspire creative healing." Madelaine Roig, lower right.*

**F**OR THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, I HAVE BEEN pondering the relationship between health and living in intentional community, struggling with how to describe it. Today, it struck me that my experience of the two had become one. My current definition of health is "an integrated existence." My definition of community living is the same. An integrated existence, in my view, is one in which all the parts of one's being are being called forth, used, and expressed in harmony with all of the constituent parts of everyone and everything to which one relates.

Indigenous cultures are now being looked to as models of an integrated existence. Anthropological and psychological studies show that indigenous people often have a strong sense of who they are because they are part of a tribe, a greater web that includes people of all ages—and which often includes ancestors, animals and plants, spirits, and the sun, moon, and

stars—and recognizes that the essence of life is this interconnectedness.

We are tribal by nature, but we've lost our connection to tribal living. I believe this "dis-ease" of the 20th century underlies all other disease: the splitting off from the whole, the fragmentation of modern life, the myth of self-sufficiency. It's like tearing branches off a tree and then expecting them to grow. The branch dies and the tree suffers. We are a culture obsessed by notions of freedom and autonomy, yet the price we pay is our very lifeblood.

I saw this fragmentation in Los Angeles where I practiced psychotherapy for 20 years. I saw a lot of misery—physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual. Because many of my clients were educated, professional, attractive, and seemingly successful, they often couldn't understand the source of their feelings of isolation and loneliness, their vague yearnings for "something more." I



came to see that, irrespective of age, gender, or station in life, certain basic human needs, if unmet, lead to a state of soul impoverishment. These seem to be as follows:

- the need to belong;
- the need to be seen;
- the need to feel safe;
- the need to have a home;
- the need to have intimate connections with others, both physically and emotionally;
- the need to have a connection to one's environment, to one's culture, and to nature;
- the need to know one's place in the larger picture,
- the need to have purpose;
- the need to work and to contribute; and
- the need to create.

My work involved helping people identify these needs and find ways to meet them. The problem was, how to do that within a culture that didn't recognize or support those essential needs? Another problem was that addressing each need individually made it too compartmentalized. My own life exemplified this: I was constantly running between things, going here to do this, doing this to support that, supporting that to have this, and so on.

I believe community living is closer to tribal living, and can fill core human needs. It's the closest I have come to living an integrated existence, as well as being the most inclusive experience of health I've known. I liken the search for an integrated existence to a patchwork quilt: an array of shapes and colors, textures and patterns waiting to fit together to make a whole; a thing of beauty; something to wrap oneself in.

For 25 years I have been collecting pieces for my life-quilt, rearranging the squares, finding the right places for some, struggling over others, searching for answers,

fits, satisfactions. I had pictures in my mind of how I wanted it to look, but there was no wedding square, no smiling children to stitch on, no road leading to a house on the hill. Around the edges there were the faces of my family, many good friends, and many clients. There were dark squares of years of infirmity and much solitude, as well as bright ones—the artwork I turned to for healing and sanity. The whole center was empty, an open space for my relationship with Spirit, as well as the creative void, the place from which I observed life, listened, and waited.

When I arrived at CommonGround community in the winter of '97 I wasn't looking for intentional community. I needed a place to live, and they had room. It wasn't my intention to move to a small town in eastern Ontario and share land and a house with people I didn't know. Nor had I planned on helping create a healing and retreat center. But after spending a beautiful sum-

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### ***Living in community is healing because it's fun.***

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mer visiting a friend on her farm and meeting a lot of very nice people, I simply didn't want to return to L.A. I was ready and willing to start a new life here, whatever that might mean.

My first year of living communally was like walking into the wilderness and finding a large quilt, with some squares already in place and many areas still blank. I came with my little quilt-in-progress, not even sure I wanted to incorporate, but willing to see which pieces and patterns might fit with everyone else's. There were



*CommonGround community in wintertime.*

four of us living in the house my first year, and four more involved in the community who lived nearby. Three of us in the house were completely new to communal living, along with one veteran communitarian. We had plenty of discussion about our overall design—a process we affectionately called “hash and slash.” It wasn’t an easy transition; I didn’t just sail in and everything fell into place. We had our share of conflicts.

I can’t begin to list all the ways living at CommonGround has been healthy for me. Dwelling on 115 acres of beautiful land in close relationship with nature is a source of daily pleasure and serenity. Health promotion is a core value here, integral to our community purpose: “inspiring creative healing.” There is built-in support here to become healthier, which still leaves plenty of room for chocolate, or a beer after a hard day in the fields. We just built a spa in our new construction for our planned retreat and health center, and we’re near completion of our sauna, Jacuzzi, and massage and movement room—an affirmation of our commitment to healing and renewal for ourselves and our guests.

Living in community is healing because it’s fun. It’s fun sharing tasks, projects, and visions with others, whether it’s peeling potatoes, drawing up building plans for a new space, or cranking out a new brochure. Collaboration, laughter, and play transform work, and if it isn’t fun, it isn’t sustainable. We often ask ourselves, “Are we having fun yet?” If the answer is “No,” we get down to the serious business of trying to make it so.

Living at CommonGround is healthy for me because I have a place to dance, and people to dance with. Living with people I like, respect, enjoy, and have come to love is unquestionably healthy for me. Giving and receiving hugs, telling the small stories, sharing dreams, difficulties, and triumphs, having cups of tea in front of the fire—these are all the little daily miracles that make communal life a joy for me, and worth putting up with the stuff that’s hard. For there is no question it requires a lot of energy and willingness to be in relationship. It’s

a lot of work. (For awhile last year our relationships were so strained that we started calling ourselves an “intense-tional community.”) I have found living in community is an opportunity to work on communication and negotiation skills, learn healthy boundaries, create “functional” families, and embrace diversity—but it isn’t always easy.

***My life and my daily activities are congruent with my whole self.***



*Is community living like tribal living?*

However, it seems that I’ve begun living an integrated existence here, as my life and my daily activities are congruent with my whole self. I have the space to explore and express my zillions of subpersonalities; I have work that I believe in; and because the constant pressure to make more money is not present, I can be more present, putting my energy and attention into what matters most to me. I am not squandering my resources to meet my needs indirectly, nor am I having to engage in practices which run counter to my values. I am thrilled about living in a community that is committed to leaving a lighter footprint on the Earth, perhaps the most healing aspect of all.

As this year came to a close, with some members moving onto their own land and a new member joining on a trial basis, there was a sense of one cycle ending and a new one beginning. After a year, I have a pretty good idea what I’ve gotten into. I believe I’m starting to see the picture within the picture within the picture that is emerging, and I think it’s time for me to start stitching down my squares. Ω

*Madelaine Roig, M.A., M.F.C.C., is an artist and psychotherapist living at CommonGround Community and Healing Retreat Center in Killaloe, Ontario. She is co-Guest Editor of this issue. E-mail: visionwk@web.net.*



Community members knew Lois Leasure as a happy, cheerful, caring person, particularly with children.

## LOVING TO THE END

BY MEL LEASURE

**A**FTER ALMOST 50 YEARS OF marriage, my wife Lois and I began to argue and fight more and more. When she began to exclaim, "How come I'm always wrong!" I had to stop and wonder what was going on. We agreed to attend a week-long spiritual conference which offered time to help to figure out what was happening. It became apparent that she could no longer remember mutual agreements we had made with each other, as well as community agreements here at Common Ground in Virginia, and I learned that I could not expect her to live up to current agreements. (*Editor's note: Common Ground in Virginia is not related to CommonGround in Ontario.*) Things smoothed out between us, but it put a burden on me I wasn't prepared for. As I began to take on more and more responsibilities, I found out I was not as patient as I thought I was, and that anger and resentment were much closer to the surface than I believed was possible.

The first major tragedy occurred when Lois was fired as Director of the local Literacy Program, which she had initiated and spent four years developing. She was devastated, and became filled with anger and resentment, for she was not aware of her deteriorating memory and couldn't understand the program director's decision. Deterioration speeded up. It was then we discovered Lois had Alzheimer's Disease. I read volumes about the illness and talked endlessly to people, learning that it was going to be a long difficult haul. How do you live with a situation where there is no hope, and which seems to stretch out to infinity? It turned out

to be seven years of constant companionship plus two and a half years of round-the-clock care.

My family of four grown children and my community of 11 and I decided early on that we would see Lois through to the end. No way could we afford the \$50,000 or so per year for professional care, so we turned our attention to Lois and to what could be learned out of the experience for ourselves, our family, and our community.

Increasingly, I felt that my personal life was being squeezed out of me as more of my time, my energy, and my attention was steadily demanded. I was not at peace with myself until I made the decision to give up my personal life completely, not fight the demands, and turn to totally living my life in service to what life Lois still had to live.



*Lois Leisure in 1987.*

One of the things we learned was that when your memory goes your ability to learn and to rationally adjust goes. Your ability to do things you have always done goes. You can't play the piano anymore, can't do your needlework anymore, can't separate fact from fiction in movies anymore, can't share experiences anymore, and can't be helpful anymore. You don't know what is happening to you and when told, you forget, so the tragedy happens to you

***Increasingly, I felt that my personal life was being squeezed out of me.***

over, and over, and over again.

For the person with the illness, it also means a slow, steady loss of dignity and self control and a steady rise of emotions: mostly being scared, scared, scared. But sometimes it means total frustration, anger, and violence. Sometimes Lois was terribly hurt when she attempted to show kindness and helpfulness and was asked not to because she just couldn't do even the simplest things anymore.

For the caregiver, it means learning that the person has lost control, is not responsible, and cannot help what he or she does. It means asking endless constantly changing questions as she regresses backwards through her life experiences. Is she back in her job years now? Is she back in her child-rearing years? Is she a teenager? A child? An infant? And it means figuring out how to respond

## The Journey Home

FOR MOST OF HER SEVEN DECADES LOIS WAS A CHEERFUL, happy, loving, caring person, particularly with children. At the beginning of her illness, when confronted by others about her loss of memory she felt persecuted: "Why are they doing this to me?"

A few months later, when it became obvious even to her that she could no longer do the things she had always done, she would ask, "What's happening to me?" When told she had Alzheimer's Disease, that it was incurable, and that she would one day die of it, she was devastated. It took some weeks to accept it. Then she'd ask, "Are you going to leave me?" When I assured her I would share her life to the end, she would quiet down with a kind of stoic veneer. When her memory became so bad that she forgot all of this we would have to go through these conversations over and over and over again.

When Lois became almost completely incapacitated

she would ask repeatedly, "What's going to happen to me? I don't want to die!" At this point the local hospice began to offer invaluable help in taking care of her and of ourselves.

A few weeks before the end when we could no longer communicate by talking, Lois would often go into a kind of trance and use single words as a kind of mantra for as long as an hour or more. We learned that silence meant "No," and nodding the head or smiling meant "Yes." We also learned that she was constantly listening for long-departed loved ones calling her to "come home" again. She wanted to go.

At the end her mantra was "How?" "How?" "How?" We finally figured out this meant, "How to die?" After slowly and repeatedly telling her that death would happen all by itself and would be a calm, peaceful experience, she relaxed. She stopped eating or drinking, although we used a medicine dropper to moisten her lips. Six days later she died. —M.L.

***While this is a tremendous challenge,  
it is also one of the greatest  
opportunities in life to grow.***

to, "I want to go home," when she left home 50 years ago, and, "I want my mother," when her mother died 20 years ago. It means learning to adapt to knowing that she will soon regress further and you must start all over again.

While this is a tremendous challenge, it is also one of the greatest opportunities in life to grow. You can learn what satisfaction/happiness is as compared to joy/happiness. And you have to learn how to ask for help and to get regular time off, knowing that if you don't it can destroy you. We learned the saying, "Alzheimer's is also a caregiver's disease."

I learned to set aside most of my rational side and live almost completely from my intuitive side. I learned what it means to be a mother, a nurse, and a cook. I learned to love. I learned how to manage a schedule with lots of other people, as toward the end it amounted to three full-time jobs. And I learned how such total focus on service can pull a family, a community, and a church toward unity as you share such a burden.

I learned that when the mind is gone, the emotions are still there, but with no center of control, and all the patient's emotions, except fear, are triggered by others. Fun, laughter, caring, and love, if brought in and shared, can make the patient's life as pleasant as ever, for a time.

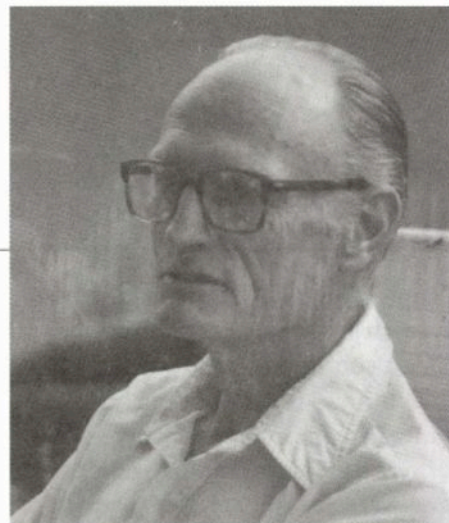
And I learned, finally, that when both the mind and the emotions were gone, as all awareness was eroded away, Lois was still there. She could not speak to anyone; she could not express feelings anymore (except negative ones); but she was still there. At the end she did not eat anymore, did not care about soiling her-

self anymore. She was busy dying. There was no pain though she had lost 50 pounds. She just wanted to die, for she had apparently made contact, with open arms and a smile, with her father, who had died 30 years before, and her sister, who had died 12 years before. She was happy, smiling often, and paying little attention to us. She was ready to join the next life. After a short period of difficult breathing, with her family around her, she died.

Of course we had all known for a long time what was coming and could prepare. First, about eight weeks before she died, we prepared and held a Living Memorial service with the whole family and community in her presence. Lois sat back in a recliner chair in our living room and each one came over, sat beside her, held her hand, and told what she had meant to them. There were many laughs and many tears. It was a happy, beautiful, satisfying time for all.

Next, we spent six weeks planning a home funeral service, a home body-preparation service, and a home burial service, all of which took place within 24 hours of her death. All these were for the family and community. The funeral service was held in our living room. Each brought a token to place in her open homemade wooden casket and explained their remembrance. The lid was ceremoniously nailed to the casket, and we proceeded outside to bury her on our homestead site. It was all very touching and beautiful, especially for our children, who were so close to her.

A home funeral had not occurred in the county for over 20 years, so much time was spent checking the



*Mel Leasure didn't find peace until he gave his own life up entirely to care for Lois.*

law and clearing with all the bureaucracies, both legal and medical. A week later we had an open public memorial service at the Friends meeting house, held in the manner of Friends. Maybe half of the about 100 people attending spoke in remembrance of Lois. The whole experience could not have happened without the wonderful help and support of our Quaker meeting (the local Quaker congregation) for over two years and the county hospice for over six months, as well as our many other friends.

But the story does not end here. Dying of Alzheimer's is a very different experience than most other diseases for those who grieve and live on. It is not a sudden death that hits you like a brick and leaves you devastated. Instead it's a sadness and grief that builds and builds and slowly engulfs you over many years, and at the end leaves you completely wrung out. Recovery does not come easily nor quickly.

After giving up your life to another, one whom you have known intimately for 57 years, when the person finally dies it leaves you in a totally empty hollow void. What saves you is that all the things you have left undone for years now seem like a mountain of tasks to take care of. It also saves you that once all the

people who have left you alone for years discover you are free they begin to ask you to participate again.

But now you are not the same person and cannot pick up where you left off. I have found that you do not discover who you are, but that who you are is a result of the decisions you make. If you are not your mind, though it is part of you; if you are not your emotions, though they are part of you; and if you are not your body, though it is a part of you, then you must be what is left, what we call the soul. And if you have a chance to start over and to live another 20 years, life becomes exciting again as

you let your soul make the decisions about who you become.

If you only know about Alzheimer's Disease from the media, it seems to be just a tragedy, but it doesn't have to be. It can also be a wonderful growing experience for both you and your community. But it must be understood that the care giving can't be done alone; for the last two years or more it requires at least three full-time people. For our community, growth came as a result of caring and working together for an extended period of time in a close, intimate situation.

I recognize that this experience

may be unique now, but again, it doesn't have to be. Approximately 10 percent of those over 65 now have Alzheimer's, almost 50 percent of those at 85 now have it, and that in about 12 years the average life expectancy will reach 85. Our experience says that the experiences of death and dying is as valuable as the experience of birth and marriage. Perhaps we all should be thinking and planning ahead now. Ω

*Mel Leasure has been a member of community for 45 years and is a founding member of Common Ground Community in Lexington, Virginia.*



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- August 6-14 Village Design Permaculture Practicum \$600-800
- September 27 October 2 Building with Earth and Straw \$500-600

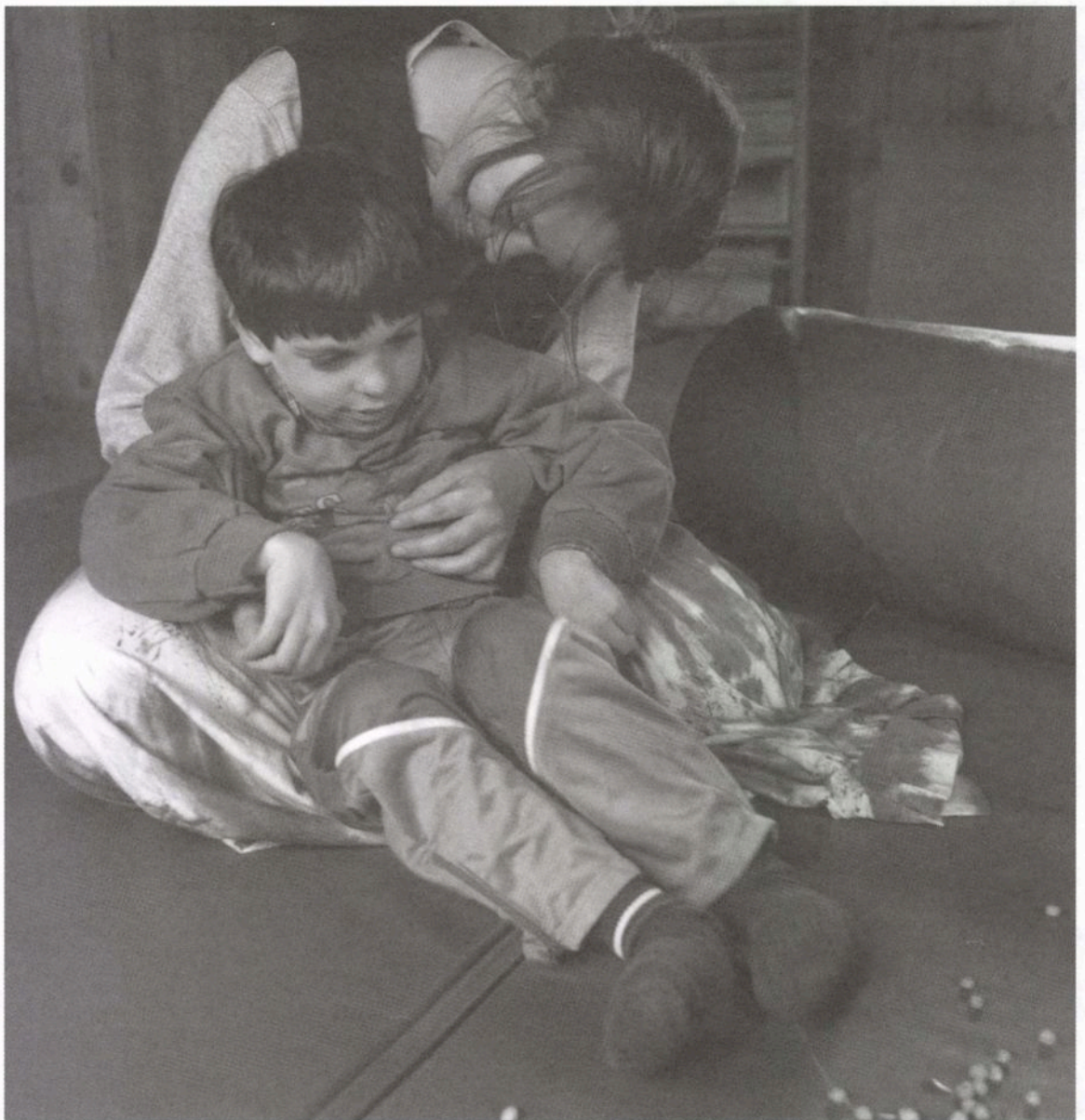
828-298-2399 \* [culturesedge@earthaven.org](mailto:culturesedge@earthaven.org)

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# EVERYONE FEELS USEFUL HERE

PHOTO ESSAY BY GYPSY RAY



*Anya with Nicky,  
Camphill  
Ballytobin.*

**I**T IS MID-AUTUMN IN IRELAND. THE DAY IS BLUSTERY BUT SUNNY, which means the drive to County Kilkenny is glorious. I arrive at Camphill Ballytobin and head to the kitchen.

Despite my shyness I have always felt at home here. Over the five years these photographs were made I have come and gone with long intervals in between. The community changes but remains stable. I am always welcome.

The kitchen is toasty. A resident, George, brings over peat to stoke the stove. Hot water simmers in stove-top kettles. Two others are at the sink washing



breakfast dishes. Two more labor over a recipe for mayonnaise. I sit at the table where large yellow onions, fresh out of the garden, are framed by sunlight. I start helping to clean and chop onions for the midday meal.

Leaving the warmth of the kitchen I encounter Nicky, who rarely utters a sound, going with the other children to a classroom for lessons. Living in a Camphill community means that this child is not denied the possibility of under-

standing his surroundings nor the company of peers. George catches up to me with a plastic camera around his neck so he and I can go off observing, possibly making photographs. The path we take goes from the restored old farmhouse to the two newer houses, then through the large, lush, well-worked vegetable garden. Another resident, Aine, joins us as we visit the young calves and four pigs.

Camphill communities are self-sufficient, cooperative



*LEFT:  
Most people with  
special needs at  
Camphill  
Ballytobin are  
children.*



*RIGHT:  
Oscar and  
George. All who  
can work help  
with the tasks  
of this rural  
farm  
community.*

living situations for people with special needs and their caregivers, called co-workers. Camphill Ballytobin is part of the worldwide Camphill movement inspired by Austrian educator Rudolf Steiner in the 1920s, with approximately 85 communities in 18 countries. Ballytobin was founded in 1979 in the rural County Kilkenny. About half of its 70 to 80 residents have special needs that require care. Most of the of them are children but a few

are in their twenties or thirties. People with special needs often do work tasks along with the caregivers and are included in community life to various degrees, depending on their ability. "Everyone feels useful here."

Ballytobin has strong ties with the wider community. Recently they hosted a program to foster independence in talented people with disabilities by pairing them with professional artists for two years. The artistic results of

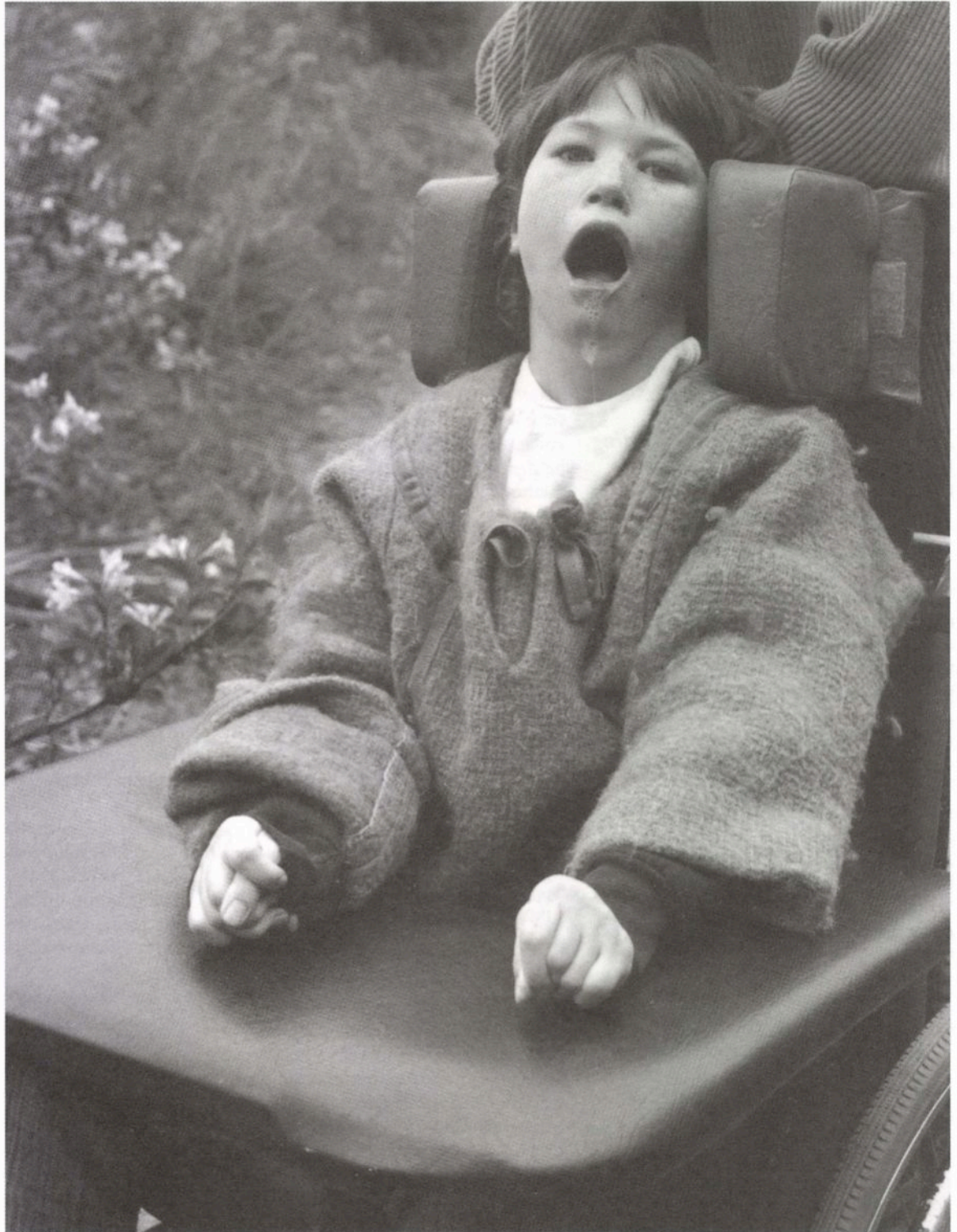


this program were exhibited in the nearby city of Kilkenny. Ballytobin has also hosted an international conference of people who have worked with innovative arts programs for people with disabilities.

I see this connection to the wider world as quite positive. It creates a sense of belonging, so essential to life, which makes the community itself stronger internally. I first visited Camphill Ballytobin through one of these

arts programs. Like all communities, Ballytobin struggles. Nevertheless, the lives of most people coming here are enhanced by living purposefully with others. Most caregivers come for a period of one year, arriving from various countries around the world. Some return to their regular lives; others return to work with people with disabilities in their own countries; others opt to remain in the community. Each time I have returned I'm heartened

LEFT:  
Brenda,  
Camphill  
Ballytobin.



RIGHT:  
Naomi, in her  
chair. This child  
attends school  
and other  
activities with  
her peers.

to see a core group of co-workers, as well as many new people giving what they have to offer. The motivation to contribute is not monetary payment but well-being.

It is now December. The drive home is a quiet one in the dark late afternoon, the rain splashing against the windshield. I've just said my goodbyes, but I'll be back. Once again I'm leaving with a few more photographs and a warm heart. Ω

*Gypsy Ray, a photographer for 18 years now specializing in documentary portraits, lives in Santa Cruz, California and Ireland. Her photographs have been featured in Library of Congress collections. She teaches photography at Cabrillo College, in Aptos, California.*

*For more information about Irish Camphill Communities, write Camphill Ballytobin, Callan Post Office, County Kilkenny, Ireland.*

# HEALING OURSELVES AT

BY AUDREY HASSANEIN

*Bookshelves are bulging with books on home health-care these days, making it increasingly difficult to choose wisely. Which to buy on a limited budget? Which to browse or borrow from a library? Which can we not live without? Here are some of my favorite home health-care books. They've proven invaluable for myself and my family, as well as for members of our forming community. They're available in most bookstores or libraries.*

## **Prescription for Nutritional Healing**

**James F. Balch, M.D. and Phyllis A. Balch, C.N.C.**

Avery Publishing Group, 1997  
Pb. 600 pp.  
ISBN 0-89529-727-2

WIDELY USED, WIDELY AVAILABLE, AND comprehensive, this large volume blends recent scientific research with traditional treatments. The emphasis is on dietary planning and nutritional supplements to prevent and heal disease. The authors rate the recommended supplements for each condition as "essential," "very important," "important," or "helpful." Their careful explanations of disorders, alphabetically arranged from Abscess to Yeast Infection, along with useful appendices, index, and bibliography, plus the 80-page introduction, "Understanding the Elements of Health," make this an excellent nutritional reference work.

## **Dr. Koop's Self-Care Advisor**

**C. Everett Koop, M.D.**

Time-Life Medical Health Publishing, 1996  
Pb. 336 pp.  
ISBN 0-9644119-1-1

THE FORMER US SURGEON GENERAL steers us clear of current extremes—from rushing to the emergency room when we don't need to, to trying to self-cure with inappropriate self-care, but offers comfortably humane allopathic advice. After a chapter on emergency and first aid, he organizes 300 of the most common health concerns mainly by body part. He lists signs and symptoms, what to do first, when to call for help, how to prevent the condition, and hotlines, organizations, and even videotapes. "The Body Illustrated" comprises 16 clear color plates, virtually a beginner's anatomy course. Three pages detail drug interactions and combinations to avoid. Suggestions for

keeping health records include making "genograms" or family health histories which could be useful to communities. This book helps us become fully informed participants with health professionals.

## **Spontaneous Healing**

**Andrew Weil, M.D.**

Alfred Knopf, 1995  
Pb. 309 pp.  
ISBN 0-679-43607-3

SPONTANEOUS HEALING IS DR. WEIL'S sixth book. One of the most important voices in medicine today, Dr. Weil has helped introduce natural and preventive methods in medical schools. He advocates nutritional supplements, and in this book's eight-week program for optimal healing power he calls for Vitamin C, Beta Carotene, Vitamin E, and selenium, among other nutrients. He also recommends garlic, ginger, and various herbal tonics. It might prove an interesting community project to try the optimal healing program for eight weeks. It includes diet changes, walking and fasting, plus inspiring mental/spiritual suggestions.

## **Vibrational Medicine: New Choices for Healing Ourselves**

**Richard Gerber, M.D.**

Bear and Co., Santa Fe, 1996  
Pb. 601 pp.  
ISBN 1-979181-28-2

HERE'S A WEIGHTIER BOOK ON HEALTH and healing. *Vibrational Medicine* is widely used as a textbook, yet reaches beyond the physical to the mind and spirit. Dr. Gerber's healing paradigm bridges gaps between science and spirituality, explaining how working with subtle energy fields can contribute to healing. He provides evidence and insights to interest skeptics as well as advocates. Within a strong theoretical and historical context he dips into holography and herbs, electronic technology and reincarnation, acupuncture and radionics, therapeutic touch and crystals, and much more, leading up to planetary evolution and new definitions of health and wholeness. Vibra-

tional or "energy medicine" is offered here as the spiritual and medical practice of the future.

## **The Encyclopedia of Alternative Health and Natural Remedies**

**Michael Endacott, Editor**

Carlton Books, 1996  
Hb. 320 pp.  
ISBN 1-85868-217-7

ENDACOTT IS THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR for the Institute for Complementary Medicine, a United Kingdom national healing organization, linked with the establishment of college courses, occupational standards, and evaluation of scientific trials of alternative treatments. The beautifully illustrated encyclopedia is a resource for choosing alternative therapies; each is described as supporting or replacing more orthodox forms of care. These include homeopathy, iridology, polarity and color therapies, naturopathy, chiropractic, osteopathy, Rolting, yoga, dance, the Alexander technique, psychotherapy, hypnotherapy, meditation, visualization, music, autogenic training, aromatherapy, reflexology, acu-puncture, acupressure, Shiatsu, T'ai Chi, and Chinese herbs. A brief bibliography lists useful health organisations in the US and UK in this truly encyclopedic presentation. Perhaps the most useful six pages are the diagnostic charts cross-referencing 29 modalities with 72 common ailments.

## **The Way of Herbs**

**Michael Tierra, C.A., N.D.**

Pocket Books, 1990  
Pb. 378 pp.  
ISBN 0-671-72403-7

THIS REPUTABLE HERB BOOK EFFECTIVELY blends Asian, European, and Native American healing traditions, with detailed uses and dosage for more than 140 western herbs and 31 important Chinese formulae. One chapter explains useful tonics and mixtures for such generalities as "sleep" and "nerves"; another describes the eight common therapeutic uses: stimulation, tranquilization,



# HOME: FAVORITE BOOKS

purification, tonification, diureses, sweating, emesis, and purging. Overuse of herbs can be dangerous, so I was glad to read the final chapter, "Cautionary Notes on Herb Use." If you can do without illustrations this is a good basic choice.

## *The Complete Medicinal Herbal*

Penelope Ody Dorling  
Kindersley, 1993  
Hb. 192 pp.  
ISBN 1-56458-187-X

EACH OF THE 120 HERBS IS FULLY ILLUSTRATED, with details of its chemical makeup, as well as the part of the plant used and instructions for how to use it. "Home Remedies" groups ailments under body systems, life stages, and action; for example: headaches, birth, pain. Each chart has a column of cautions. More than 250 safe treatments are given for alleviating common complaints, including children's illnesses and herbs especially suited to the elderly. Dorling suggests making a herbal first aid kit and tells which few remedies are worth buying to keep on hand and which more likely to be available in the kitchen, fields, or gardens.

## *The Wise Woman Herbal: Healing Wise*

Susun S. Weed  
Ash Tree Publishing, 1989  
Pb. 295 pp.  
ISBN 0-9614620-2-7

HERE'S A FUN READ, WILDLY WHIMSICAL, vividly original, full of herbal wisdom and recipes. The author describes three traditions of healing. Alternative practitioners, who often think in the heroic tradition, present themselves as saviors, and provide prescriptive rules, say: "Trust me!" The AMA/insurance approved tradition, which is scientifically trained, intellectual, analytical, geared to testing and measuring, and good if something is clearly broken, says: "Trust our technology!" The holistic tradition, which focuses on integration and nourishment, insists on uniqueness and interconnectedness, and also is the most

ancient form of healing, encouraging change, self-love, and growth, says: "Trust yourself!" You'll find preparation and uses of "green allies and deep roots," alphabetically listed from burdock to violet. We dip into her herbal pharmacy—picking, drying, foraging, buying, and making remedies including teas, infusions, decoctions, syrups, tinctures, oils, and ointments.

## *Healing with Homeopathy, the Complete Guide*

Wayne B. Jonas, M.D. and Jennifer Jacobs, M.D., M.P.H.  
Time-Warner Books, 1996  
Pb. 349 pp.  
ISBN 0-446-51869-7

IF YOU NEED AN INTRODUCTION TO the theory and practice of this safe, gentle, and inexpensive form of energy medicine in one volume, this is your reference. Dr. Jonas, the Director of the Center for Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, is also a highly trained and recognized classical homeopath. His first 120 pages offer a clear exposition of homeopathic theory, though it's concise and readable by all; the rest is a practical overview for using remedies for everyday health problems and accidents. The appendices are informative, and include a resource guide and a summary of clinical research on homeopathy, together with research and general bibliographies.

## *The Family Guide to Homeopathy*

Andrew Lockie, M.D.  
Prentice-Hall, 1989  
Pb. 463 pp.  
ISBN 0-13-306994-X

THIS IS MY MEDICAL "BIBLE"—THE ONE book our family and community cannot do without. Dr. Lockie, who practises in Scotland, has provided us with a reference work that not only includes nutritional and lifestyle advice, but also clearly explains how to use homeopathy in conjunction with allopathy (mainstream medicine). A system of symbols advises when to call 911

or when to see a physician. This is the only book that I recommend one order sight-unseen without fear of disappointment, as so much is packed into these pages: first aid, diets, exercises, symptoms, and natural solutions. Short on theory and long on practical medical and homeopathic knowledge, this is a most useful book even if you just plan to use a few basic homeopathic remedies.

## *The Complete Family Guide to Homeopathy*

Christopher Hammond, M.B., B.S.  
L.C.H.  
Penguin Books, 1995  
Hb. 256 pp.  
ISBN 0-670-86157-X

IF YOU FIND THIS BOOK, BUY IT. SINCE homeopathy is much more widely known and practiced outside the US, some of the best homeopathic literature originates in other countries, like this one. *The Complete Family Guide* will help get you started in using the somewhat complicated and sometimes intimidating modality of homeopathy. Dr. Hammond gives 25 remedies on colored charts, correlated to hundreds of symptoms. These remedy pictures are an introduction to the method used by homeopaths, who take detailed symptom reports in lengthy intake sessions. Unlike mainstream medicine, in which a cough is a cough and a fever is a fever, homeopathy individualizes the choice of remedy from a vast *materia medica*, and the choice depends on mental, emotional, and physical symptoms. This book covers the range of symptoms and remedies to be found in a large kit of around 80 homeopathic remedies. The full-color *materia medica* section is clear and easy to grasp. This may be the best homeopathic book available if you live in a rural community far from holistic health-care resources. Ω

*Audrey Hassanein, who was born in England, is involved with a forming community in south Texas. She formerly served as Information Consultant to the Environmental and Medical Advisor of the World Bank. With a keen interest in holistic health and complementary medicine, she is Sponsor of this issue on health and healing.*



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## Seeking Truth in Media

### *What Happens When Your Community Is Criticized on National TV?*

*In "My Turn" readers share ideas, opinions, proposals, critiques, and dreams about community living. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the publisher, staff, or advertisers of Communities magazine.*

**O**N FEBRUARY 24, 1998, NBC's Dateline program aired a one-hour segment, "True Believers,"

which focused on and severely misrepresented Gabriel of Sedona, the leader of Aquarian Concepts Community in Sedona, Arizona. This occurred because several months earlier our community had agreed to be filmed by the Dateline program when they told us they wanted to focus on why Americans are choosing to lead alternative lifestyles and live in community. Aquarian Concepts is a global-change, educational, religious order focused on serving humankind by bringing expanding revelation to the world. We were happy to share our community story with the American public.

The show began with Jane Pauley offering 30 million prime-time viewers "an inside look that may fascinate and trouble you." Then, Dateline interviewer John Larson stressed, "An important point to

bring up before we move further into our story, and for you to think about over the next hour: Just when does a religious group become something else? Something like a cult?" Viewers were asked to look at the abuse of power and control in the hands of one individual in the group, the charismatic leader, Gabriel of Sedona. NBC began their docudrama showing body-

bag scenes of the Jonestown and Heaven's Gate tragedies, suggesting this could happen with their target in the show, the religious order Aquarian Concepts Community.

In actuality, NBC Dateline's fictionalized drama was preceded earlier in the evening by a promotional "trailer" depicting Gabriel of Sedona in a photo-

graphic background, while pictures of Charles Manson and Jim Jones were shown in the foreground, all the while suggesting viewers stay tuned for Dateline, airing next, to get the scoop on America's latest potentially dangerous "cult" leader.

What happened in the production of this Dateline segment? Why did their final footage end up so distorted? Although we can only surmise, we believe that the producers first manufactured a script—a mold—into which they poured ingredients



*Celinas Ruth is an attorney and an elder in Aquarian Concepts Community. PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; <http://www.aquarianconcepts.com>.*

(so-called "cult" experts, apostate former community members, hidden camera footage, and suggestive questions and video clips) to produce their desired final product.

We believe NBC manipulated the show to boost their ratings in the annual February Sweeps, luring their audience by playing upon their fears related to prior religious community tragedies. "The popularity of the 'cult' stereotype indicates that there is a pre-existing disposition to accept such stereotypes in American society," reports academic researcher James R. Lewis (*Syzygy: Journal of Alternative Religion and Culture* 3:1-2 [1994]).

Lewis continues: *It should be possible to uncover some of the factors behind the receptivity of contemporary society to negative, stereotyped images of minority religions.*

*... [O]nce a stereotype has been accepted, it structures our perceptions so that we tend to notice information that conforms to our image of the stereotyped group, and to neglect or forget other kinds of information. What this means is that as soon as the label 'cult' has been successfully applied (i.e., accepted as appropriate by outsiders not directly involved in the conflict), the information that the mass media gather is selectively appropriated so that almost every item of data conforms to the stereotype about 'cults,' thus effectively marshaling moral support for the person or group locked in conflict with a minority religion.*

We believe that in Dateline's segment, "True Believers," NBC's intentions to misrepresent became clear. Throughout that drama, Dateline strategically lied and distorted information to mislead their viewing audience in an attempt to disparage Gabriel of Sedona, his wife and community co-founder Niánn Emerson Chase, and the members of our community and religious order.

Of the approximate 65 hours of video and audio footage that Dateline had collected in their visit to us (including a three-and-a-half-hour interview with Gabriel of Sedona and his wife and community co-founder Niánn Emerson Chase and an estimated 50 hours from hidden cameras),

less than five minutes of clipped quotes were used in "True Believers." This raises a number of issues. Particularly, why didn't Dateline's reporters, who went "undercover over a three-month period," uncover any secrets in our community, despite John Larson's claim about "how the community operates when it believes TV cameras are not around."

Dateline chose to blatantly ignore Aquarian Concepts Community's information given to them, including an outline of the structure of the religious order and authority. The fact that Gabriel of Sedona and Niánn Emerson Chase work in conjunction with more than 30 elders and assistants, whose role it is to design as well as to implement policy, was not addressed. Dateline omitted that Gabriel of Sedona and Niánn Emerson Chase

function much as ministers do and counsel in a similar fashion, as do the community's elders.

Additionally, Dateline deliberately selected dialogue from its footage to make the viewers believe what we know is not true: that Gabriel of Sedona makes all the decisions and "controls" the lives of "the Aquarians"—a new term coined by Dateline to refer to our members.

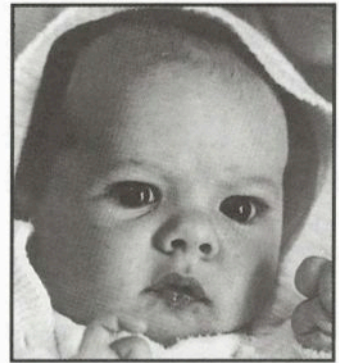
Note Dateline's technique: *... take the first step into Gabriel's world ... Gabriel was warm, friendly ... another side of Gabriel emerges ... Gabriel's control over the Aquarians ... Gabriel has purchased, or been given ... Gabriel assigns members to live ... Gabriel can home school these children ... Gabriel's influence extends further ... on Gabriel's advice ... Gabriel's divine approval ... Gabriel's encouragement ... step deeper into Gabriel's world ... whether Gabriel intends to control ... Gabriel sometimes separates children ... Gabriel tells women their destiny is ... this New Age guru can convince people ... Gabriel shows all of the warning signs ... coming to Sedona, to Gabriel, looking for answers ...*

Clips of hidden camera footage and dialogue were spliced together and aired to portray Gabriel of Sedona as angry, unloving, and unfriendly. The first dialogue with hidden camera footage of Gabriel of

**Dateline told us they wanted to focus on why Americans are choosing to lead alternative lifestyles and live in community.**

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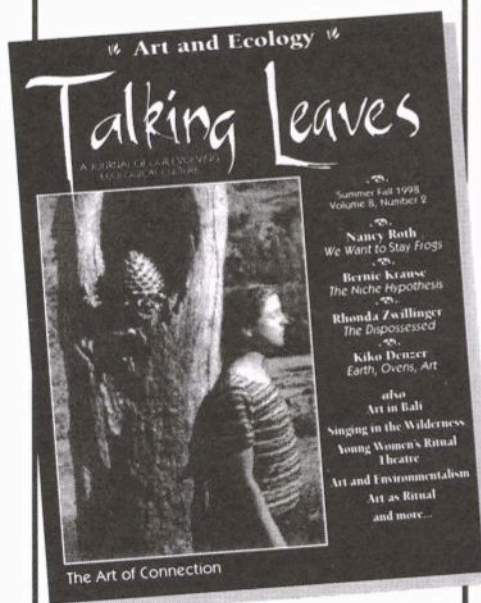
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Sedona was described in voice-over by John Larson: "Then suddenly, the friendliness appears to fall away. Another side of Gabriel emerges. A member of the group has apparently questioned why Gabriel doesn't do all the hard labor in the community garden with all the other members."

Dateline's filmed, spliced dialogue of Gabriel of Sedona was this: "Me going over there and shoveling dirt is not the highest use of my talents and abilities right now, believe me. Some of you have too much freedom. Thus again that's the problem. Where does leadership say, 'Don't do that!'"

Gabriel of Sedona's unspliced response from the audio tape was actually as follows: "Me going over there shoveling dirt is not the highest use of my talents and abilities right now believe me. And if I have my own way I would much rather be over there shoveling some dirt, getting some exercise. It pains me that I don't get enough physical exercise. ... [31 lines later] Let me ask you a question. Have I ever called you up personally and made you do anything, forced you to do it that day? Don't you have the luxury all of you to go and to take a nap when you want to? Because if you don't, let me know, and I'll make sure you do ... because God is your God, not me. Do I tell you what videos to watch? Do I put into your hands which ones you should or do you have a selection?... You have perfect freedom to go see that junk. Some of you have too much freedom, thus again that's the problem. Where does leadership say, 'Don't do that!?' When does leadership come in and stop you from hurting yourself just like I would my children ...?"

In the first part of Dateline's hidden camera quote of Gabriel of Sedona, he spoke of working where God wants him to, as opposed to what he would like to do, as an example of humility and discipline. In the second part of the quote, Gabriel of Sedona spoke of the community members' freedom to watch junk videos or movies, and he questioned the role of leadership to prevent individuals from hurting themselves. No one had "apparently" questioned Gabriel's work in the garden as NBC Dateline interviewer John Larson suggested. NBC Dateline misled

their 30 million viewers and misrepresented what Gabriel of Sedona said in order, in our opinion, to portray him as a "cult" leader with ill intent and selfish motives, to sensationalize Dateline's story.

In another segment the dialogue from the hidden camera was described in voice-over by John Larson: "Then the man who claims to be the wisest soul on the planet scolds the group and anyone who might criticize him."

**These distortions caused viewers to send hate mail, even some death threats, over the ensuing weeks.**

Dateline quoted Gabriel of Sedona's dialogue like this: "Oh you want to test me? You want to go out and go one-on-one? Great, send me a note and we'll do it. Choose the weapons. You bad enough? Let's do it."

But Gabriel of Sedona's words from the audio tape actually were these: "There has to come a point when the rebellion has to end, in your

life and in the life of the planet. ... I can be very father-circuited if I have to. ... What side of me do you want in your life? Oh you want to test me? You want to go out one-to-one? Great, send me a note and we'll do it. Chose the weapons. You're bad enough, let's do it. ... Test me. Is that going to prove anything? Nope. You know the story of Gentle Eagle? One of my lives as an Apache. ... [28 lines later] Gentle Eagle made a wrong decision. I never should've asked him [the soldier] to come out into the field of battle to face me one-to-one. What would I do now? I'd have to decline your offer to have one-to-one combat with me. ... Because Gentle Eagle lost his life. ... That's how easy it is to make a wrong decision, thinking you are making the right one."

Gabriel of Sedona's quoted dialogue discussed ending rebellion in our lives. He used himself and his past life decisions as an example. He suggested that he could be very father-circuited and thereby challenge someone to fight one-to-one. He later said that he would decline an offer to have one-to-one combat. Gabriel of Sedona never "scold[ed] the group and anyone who might criticize him," as John Larson claimed.

We believe that in order for NBC Dateline's producer, Joe Furello, to create the dialogue he wanted, Dateline dubbed in a voice-over of John Larson to twist the



dialogue of Gabriel of Sedona into something it was not. These distortions caused viewers to believe John Larson and to send hate mail, even some death threats, to Gabriel of Sedona over the ensuing weeks. You can imagine the amount of personal pain and anguish Gabriel, his wife, and children feel over these public distortions and personal attacks.

While some say that it is not the job of journalists to promote peace, it certainly is their job to promote understanding. Journalists today have an even higher responsibility before them as technology has made them accessible by millions via the push of a button. Our perceptions of good and evil in the world around us are influenced by the deluge of information presented to us on TV and radio and in the newspapers and magazines we read. Today's commentators and journalists need to take hold of that awesome personal responsibility.

In 1998 the *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed commercial broadcasting as the most powerful political lobby in the country, hands down. In academic and theological arenas, it is well known that our once seemingly public format, our "independent" press, now most often presents a cloaked critique or commentary disguised as factual news. The media artfully uses its platform to shape the minds of its audience and public opinion. Tabloid journalism, using covert news-gathering techniques, has become the norm, and that is no accident. But just because media distortion has become rampant does not legitimize it. People are affected, including those who are the target of the attack and those viewers who are agitated by the bombardment of falsehoods and deceptions. A dysfunctional society is but one result from such ignoble morals and ethics.

Recognizing that the media are far from naïve, the bigger question remains: Why did NBC Dateline suggest that Gabriel of Sedona tries to "attract people who may have no idea what they're getting into"? Why did they suggest that this "seemingly innocent religious group can become dangerous"? Is it simply because sensationalism sells better than truth?

Or does the media have a policy of opposing those outside of mainstream religion? Dateline's choice of "experts" in their attempt to discredit Aquarian Concepts Community's religious leaders suggests the

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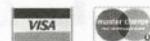
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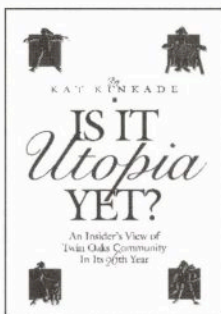
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latter. One such "expert," Louis West, remarked about Gabriel of Sedona, stating, "That guy is as phony as a three dollar bill, and you can tell it right away."

Both West and Carl Raschke, the other NBC Dateline "expert," currently serve on the Editorial Advisory Board for the American Family Foundation (AFF), who publishes anti-religious literature under the guise of being "anti-cult" literature. These publications include *Cultic Studies Journal*, *The Cult Observer*, and *AFF News*.

Some members of the AFF Advisory Board, including West, were also members of the former version of the Cult Awareness Network (CAN). CAN originally formed in 1974 as a "deprogramming" center, and it opposed religious freedom at the time West and other AFF Board members were affiliated. Many of West's former CAN associates have been convicted of multiple felonies and have extensive criminal records, including charges of false imprisonment, rape, and kidnapping.

In 1996 the old CAN was fined one million dollars for their part in a deprogramming and declared bankruptcy. Since then the Cult Awareness Network has been entirely reconstructed, with all new leadership, personnel, and motives. The new CAN educates people about alternative lifestyle choices and upholds religious freedom. Hence, as CAN was revamped, West and cohorts moved on to AFF and other organizations that would continue to support their lucrative attack on groups and individuals outside the mainstream.

Based on these facts and others, it is clear that NBC Dateline's presentation of "True Believers" as factual information was abusive and unjust. Simultaneously Dateline created a strong prejudice against those individuals targeted in the show and caused serious repercussions for them, their families, and our society at large. Today's justice system offers such victims the typical recourse: seeking monetary compensation via attorneys and the courts. Recent media legal battles have charged fraud, negligence, trespass, theft, invasion of privacy, and defamation, depending on the facts of the case. But even in those cases where monetary damages are awarded, the question remains: How does this address the irreparable harm done to someone's character and the shattering effects on

many families? Can financial measures assuage the fears in the hearts of these people? They cannot. Therefore, the consequences of media abuse are taken most often by victims like a dose of poison with the hope that it isn't fatal.

Some years ago the Federal Government, with the aid of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), attempted to create a sense of fairness in broadcasting to prevent deliberate news distortion. The Fairness Doctrine, which required licensed broadcasters when covering controversial issues of public interest to provide a reasonable opportunity to present contrasting viewpoints, was repealed in 1987. The remaining regulation related to private parties is the Personal Attack rule and requires a licensed broadcaster to notify and provide an opportunity to reply: "When, during the presentation of views on a controversial issue of public importance, an attack is made upon the honesty, character, integrity, or like personal qualities of an identified person or group, the licensee shall ... transmit to the persons or group attacked: (1) notification of the date, time and identification of the broadcast; (2) [a] script or tape (or an accurate summary if a script or tape is not available) of the attack; and (3) an offer of a reasonable opportunity to respond over the licensee's facilities." (47 C.F.R. § 73.1920 [1998])

However, chances of retribution are bleak. There are few avenues of recourse and even fewer of them offer clearly defined remedies.

Thus it comes as no surprise to us from the survey, "News Junkies, News Critics—How Americans Use the News and What They Think about It," that what bothers people most about journalists is their insensitivity to people's pain (Newseum Survey by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, February 1997).

Today's journalists and the US news media are facing a choice: Live up to your responsibility or face the consequences. Our world is changing, and the media, the lens through which we view, cannot help but be refocused in the process. We offer these thoughts as a hand in solidarity to those ethical-minded dissenters like us who recognize that, in the blink of an eye, the news media may feel the response of a united audience against their distortions. Ω



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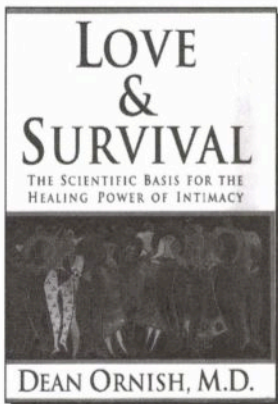
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# REVIEWS



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by Dean Ornish, M.D.

Harper Collins (1998)  
Hb, 260 pp., \$25.00

*Reviewed by Blair Voyvodic, M.D.*

*LOVE AND SURVIVAL* OFFERS LOTS OF good news for communitarians about health, along with novel information about how to improve it. Dean Ornish is a respected cardiologist who first gained public attention when he demonstrated scientifically that heart disease could be reversed. Until then, the best that medicine could do was slow down the progression of the disease. Dr. Ornish's therapy to reverse heart disease was a rigorous combination of medical treatment and lifestyle changes—diet, yoga, exercise, and meditation.

Clearly the author is a research scientist at heart. His second chapter offers an excellent review of the scientific evidence correlating the number and quality of our relationships with people with the development (or lack of development) of disease. It turns out that being connected to other people probably makes you physically healthier than if you lived alone. This may be a consolation the next time you're feeling frustrated in your relationships with

others, such as having to negotiate through yet another community meeting in order to agree on an issue that would be simpler to decide on your own. Just remember, almost any kind of connection is healthier than none.

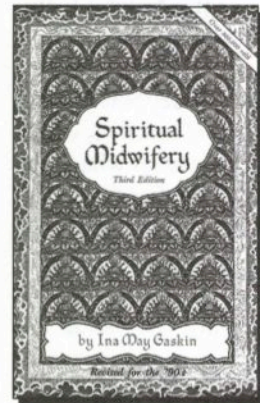
But the really encouraging news is that the better the quality of your relationships, the bigger the boost it gives your health. Now there's proof that feeling loved and loving is good for you. That in itself shouldn't surprise anyone, but the surprise is in the degree of benefit—we're not talking about 3 percent differences. One study for women with advanced breast cancer divided them randomly into two groups that got the same medical treatment, but half participated in a weekly support group for one year. Four years later, the women in the support group had lived twice as long as the other women—and were the only ones who had survived the disease. Similar results have been shown for other cancers and other diseases. If there were any treatment, medical or otherwise, that could offer a 100 percent increase in longevity, it would be hailed as miraculous. But it's difficult to market the "treatment" of caring friendship, as there's no profit to be made. The spread of this good news will need to occur by word of mouth in the grass roots, as you certainly won't hear about it from those who promote advances made by drug companies.

Dr. Ornish goes on to suggest how to make positive changes in your relationships. His "Pathways to Love and Intimacy" offers good tips, geared, however, to mainstream men in mid-life. You may need to translate here.

His excellent last chapter, "Dialogues on Science and Mystery," presents a survey of interviews with most of the leading thinkers and researchers in mind/body medicine. The experts in this comprehensive overview give brief summaries of their work in a readable, conversational style.

The author's writing style is more researcher than poet, especially as the book is aimed at mainstream readers with only an average level of emotional awareness. Also, his self-revelation chapter seems weak in comparison to those of other writers who may be less caught up in issues of success and prestige. Also, I wish Dr. Ornish had gone into far more detail on one of my favourite forms of relating, joyful service (helping for the joy of doing it), with its tremendous and contagious health benefits.

If you want to convince someone that a holistic approach actually makes a difference, or if you just want good data to help your mind make sense of what your heart already knows, *Love and Survival* is well worth reading.



## *Spiritual Midwifery*

by Ina Mae Gaskin

Book Publishing Company (1977; Rev. 1990)  
Pb., 480 pp. \$16.95

Available from:

The Mail Order Catalog  
PO Box 180  
Summertown, TN 38483  
800-695-2241; catalog@usit.net

*Reviewed by Blair Voyvodic, M.D.*

*SPIRITUAL MIDWIFERY* LITERALLY changed my life. In 1979 when I was travelling around checking out different kinds of intentional communities, a pregnant friend planning a home birth introduced me to the book with glowing admiration. In it communitarian Ina Mae Gaskin presents the insights and experience that she and other women developed over the years of serving as midwives for The Farm community, beginning with their original bus caravan from San Francisco to Tennessee. The first half of the book offers brief, journal entry-like descriptions—"amazing birth tales"—where we have the opportunity to briefly step in as quiet witnesses to this crucial and dramatic moment in people's lives. Reading these stories I was filled with awe and respect. The more I read, the more I knew that I wanted to have this kind of intimate connection bringing me into people's lives.

The second half of the book provides detailed, straightforward, accurate, and readable information on pregnancy and

birth. This impressive hippie/com-munitarian do-it-yourself home birth manual is actually better than any obstetrics textbook I've read. All the technical information about pregnancy and birth makes more sense when presented respectfully in the context of birth as the amazing miracle it is. Along with Ram Dass's book, *How Can I Help*, I would love to see *Spiritual Midwifery* become required reading in standard medical curriculum.

Looking back now, 20 years later, I am reminded of how "far out" *Spiritual Midwifery* seemed at the time, with its frequent descriptions of auras and its typical '70s hippie language and style. What impressed me was not that it was my style, but a style that seemed authentic to these loving, dedicated women. Rather than conform to medical convention during the precious moments of birth, they learned as best they could from medicine and used their own good sense to create birthing practices that were right for them. And, impressively, it worked. The rate of complications and cesarean sections among births at The Farm were, and are, far lower than those of hospital births. Not only did the approach of Farm midwives make birthing feel better for the people involved, it also turned out to be healthier for the mothers and babies.

One of the last chapters, "Especially For Doctors," offers two stories that explain why the author often felt that obstetricians were uncompassionate, if not inhumane. In one hospital stillbirth a baby died from an umbilical cord wrapping around her neck. The cold, stark contrast of this story with those of The Farm's warm, loving home births was gripping. The sadness of the event, made more poignant by the metal and fluorescent surroundings and the physician's harsh treatment of the mother and stillborn child, had me sobbing. Reading this back in 1979, it seemed clear that if medicine were going to change, not only should health care professionals become more compassionate, but more compassionate people would need to go into medicine. By the time I finished the book, I knew I wanted to be a doctor. Nine months later, I was headed for medical school. Thank you Ina Mae, for this other birth you helped assist. Ω

*Blair Voyvodic, M.D., Guest Editor of this issue, is a physician and communitarian in rural Ontario, Canada.*

## Untouched: The Need for Genuine Affection in an Impersonal World

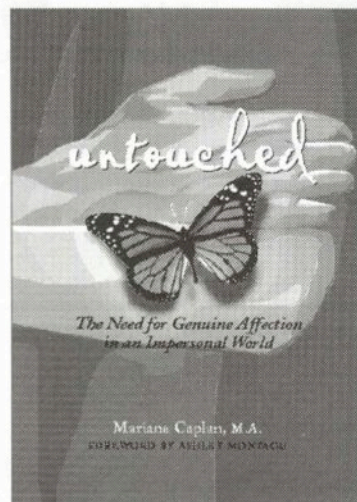
by Mariana Caplan

This uncompromising and inspiring work exposes the personal and social consequences of decreased physical affection. **Untouched** offers positive solutions for countering the effects of the growing depersonalization of our times.

*"To all of us with bodies, in an increasingly disembodied world this book comes as a passionate reminder that: Touch is essential to health and happiness."*

Joanna Macy

HOHM PRESS • 384 Pages • \$19.95



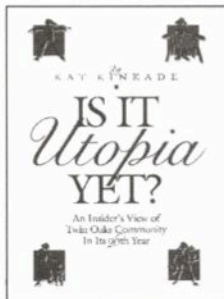
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## Community Bookshelf

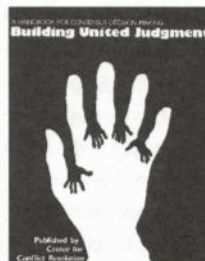
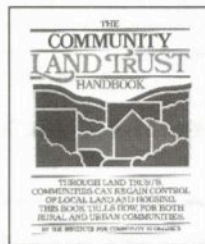
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Community Bookshelf  
East Wind Community  
Tecumseh, MO 65760



[www.crl.com/~eastwind/bookshlf.html](http://www.crl.com/~eastwind/bookshlf.html)

# CLASSIFIEDS



Classifieds are for anything by, for, or related to communities and community living. Send for info on how to place an ad. Patricia Greene, 31 School St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; 413-625-0077; [peagreen@javanet.com](mailto:peagreen@javanet.com).

## COMMUNITY PROPERTY FOR SALE

**JOIN DESCHUTES COHOUSING** at Tumwater Rock, an urban cohousing community in Tumwater, Washington. Minutes from state Capital campus in Olympia. Midway between Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. Option on six-acre undeveloped wooded site on bus route in older neighborhood close to schools, shops. Site design nearly completed. Clustered housing; shared open space includes meadow, woods. We value affordability, diversity, collaborative decision making, sustainability. 360-786-8265; [info@deschutescoho.org](mailto:info@deschutescoho.org); [www.deschutescoho.org](http://www.deschutescoho.org).

**HOME FOR SALE** in intentional neighborhood, Eugene, Oregon. Be part of a dynamic and supportive living environment by purchasing this beautiful, finely crafted home with exquisite details and finishes. Highly energy efficient, it utilizes straw bale construction with passive solar and radiant floor heating. Low toxic materials, hand troweled plaster and stucco, 3 bedroom, 2 bath, carport, atrium, balcony, plus detached studio. The neighborhood consists of twelve families in single-family dwellings. 985 Tiara, Eugene, Oregon 97405; 541-302-3397; [jackandmae@earthlink.net](mailto:jackandmae@earthlink.net).

**TWENTY-ACRE ORGANIC FARM** in Southern

British Columbia fronting on pristine Kootenay Lake. Currently operated as a resort with three large cabins (six units), four+ bedroom log house/B&B, two barns, orchards, pasture, gardens, forest and beach. Spectacular mountain views. US\$350,000. PO Box 1438, Kaslo BC, VOG1M0; e-mail, [osomasco@hotmail.com](mailto:osomasco@hotmail.com).

**FOR SALE:** Two-bedroom passive solar home on a four-acre wooded lot in an intentional community. Vaulted ceilings, stone porch, European tile floor, wood-burning stove, radiant floor heat, six-inch walls, Pella windows. Nestled in the Smoky Mountains near plentiful white water rivers and vast national parks and forests. One hour west of the vibrant city of Asheville, NC. Call 828-497-7897, or write to K & M, 336 Heartwood Way, Whittier, NC 28789.

## CLASSES, WORKSHOPS

**GLOBAL CHANGE THROUGH ASCENSION SCIENCE.** March 25-28 and May 27-30. Four-day seminars. Learn about the structure and foundation of a successful community. A relationship with the Universal Father a must. Community based on Fifth and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation. *Gabriel of Sedona/Aquarian Concepts Community*, PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; [acc@sedona.net](http://acc@sedona.net); <http://www.aquarianconcepts.com>.

**COMMUNITY DIALOGS** across North America, sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), publisher of this magazine. What does "community" mean to you? What would help you create more community in your life? And how can the Fellowship for Intentional Community help? Community Dialogs are occurring in many towns and cities across the continent; your area could be next. People come together for a discussion to explore these and other topics, visioning what kind of world we are dedicated to creating and how to get from here to there. For more information, contact the FIC's project coordinator: *Tree Bressen*, 1259 Indian Creek Road, Mineral, VA 23117; 540-894-0595; [tree@ic.org](mailto:tree@ic.org).

## COMMUNITY CONSULTANTS

**VASTU VEDIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION**—offering building design services aligned with ancient Indian architectural traditions. 515-472-2157.

**HEAL COMMUNITY CONFLICT.** Have you seen such intense emotional reactivity in community that no one communicates clearly, feels heard, or gets their needs met? Learn powerful, effective skills and tools, drawn from Holotropic Breathwork, Dr. Lori Gordon's Pairs Training, and other communication methods to separate the emotional "stuckness" and hidden assumptions of old wounds from current-day community issues. Learn practical skills to communicate cleanly, negotiate conflicts fairly, get everyone's needs met, and create loving, sustainable relationships. You don't have to lose yourself to live in community! Will travel. Johanna Johnson, MA, LPC. 303-604-6770; [skygarden@earthlink.net](mailto:skygarden@earthlink.net).

## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

**LONG-TERM-STORAGE HERBS, PLANTING SEEDS,** spices, teas, and more, specially prepared to last indefinitely. Send \$3 for catalog (refunded with first order) to *The Self Sufficiency Store*, 775 Yellowstone, #147, Pocatello, ID 83201.

**TIRED OF FIGHTING?** Guide and workbook on managing conflict. Written by mediation trainer. Send \$10 to Environmental Resolutions, 58 Irvin Street, Kitchener, ON N2H 1K8 Canada.

**COMPACT SOLAR "Y2KABIN"** fluorescent area light, sufficient to study/cook. 3" x 6" x 11". Internal battery. Package includes wire and solar panel, \$294.95 (\$9.95 US S/H). Solar-powered LED Flashlight, 6" x 3" x 1". Sturdy, sealed, all-weather design. \$29.95 (\$5.95 US S/H). *Startronics Solar Lighting*, 63065-D Sherman Rd., Bend, OR 97701; 800-811-1985; 541-317-1271; [www.Startronics-Solar.com](http://www.Startronics-Solar.com).

**LOW PHONE RATES.** Earth Tones, the environmental phone company, is nonprofit owned and operated—100% of our profits go to environmental work. Satisfaction guaranteed. [www.earthtones.com](http://www.earthtones.com), or see our ad on page 65.

## BOOKS, VIDEOS, AUDIOTAPES ON COMMUNITY

"LOOKING FOR IT" is a two-hour video diary/documentary on communities and the communities movement. Patch Adams says, "I was glued for two hours. You've done a great service for the communities movement. I think your goal of wanting people to come away from their viewing wanting more, has more than been met. This videotape deserves a wide viewership." © 1995, Sally Mendzela. Two-hour VHS. To order, send check or money order for \$24.95 to *Sally Mendzela*, 36 North Center St., Bellingham, MA 02019; 508-966-5822 (w).

## MAGAZINES, NEWSLETTERS

**WHY PAY RENT, OR MAKE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS,** when you can live rent-free? *The Caretaker Gazette* contains property caretaking/housesitting openings, advice and information for property caretakers, housesitters, and landowners. Published since 1983. Subscribers receive 600+ property caretaking opportunities each year, worldwide. Some

## Directory At Work

Observant readers will have noticed that the Directory Update column is missing this issue. Our Directory team (now hard at work creating the millennial edition *Communities Directory*) has received a surge of corrections to contact information for listings in the current edition, and it has not been possible to verify all of this information in time for inclusion in this issue. We apologize. We are still trying to figure out the best way to deliver the changes, and will announce our plan in the next issue—either we will print a large Directory Update column to bring everyone to current, or we'll create a special printed supplement available upon request. In addition, we will post all of the corrections on our Web site [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org) in the coming weeks. Stay tuned.

estate management positions start at \$50,000/yr plus benefits. Subscriptions: \$27/year. *The Caretaker Gazette*, PO Box 5887-i, Carefree, AZ 85377; 602-488-1970; <http://www.angelfire.com/wa/caretaker>.

### COMMUNITY OPENINGS, LIVE-IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**SEEKING COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Camphill Special Schools - Beaver Run. Community and school for children with developmental disabilities, seeks houseparents, and young people for childcare (who will receive Camphill Curative Education Seminar training). Ideal for young people seeking a different experience in a beautiful, 77-acre woodland community with music, art, drama, festivals. 1784 Fairview Rd., Glenmoore, PA 19343; 610-469-9236; [camphill@compuserve.com](mailto:camphill@compuserve.com).

**SEEKING TEACHING INTERN** for small alternative community school in Birdsfoot Farm community. Work with an experienced teacher, with 10 students, grade K-8, in one-room schoolhouse, beginning in fall, 1999, for room and board, stipend, and training. For more information: *Steve Molnar*, Little River Community School, 1263 CR 25, Canton, NY 13617; 315-386-4852.

**FULL-TIME, ON-SITE DIRECTOR:** 60-year-old non-profit organization with mission to teach peace, justice, ecology, and cooperation, seeks candidates for Center Director, to oversee all aspects of summer camp and retreat center in rural southwestern Michigan. Administrative and supervisory experience necessary. Summer camp and cooperative experience helpful. Seasonal positions also available. *Search Committee*, Circle Pines Center, 8650 Mullen Rd., Delton, MI 49046; fax, 616-623-9054; [circle@net-link.net](mailto:circle@net-link.net).

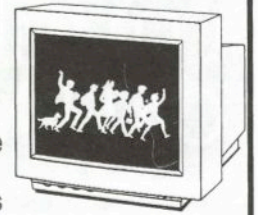
### COMMUNITY PERSONALS

**CONCERNED SINGLES** links compatible, socially conscious singles who care about peace, social justice, racism, gender equity, the environment, personal growth. Nationwide/International. All ages. Since 1984. Free sample: Box 444-CO, Lenoxdale, MA 01242, or <http://www.concernedsingles.com>, or 413-445-6309.

**INTELLIGENT, AWARE, SELF-RELIANT**, handsome, active guy, Believer, seeking naturally pretty, trustworthy, health/fitness-oriented, sweet lady, 22-44, as friend/partner to share interests, goals, business/homestead preparedness operation, whole grains, herbs, travel, much more. Will provide for needs, transportation, share preparedness resources in exchange for cooperation and honesty. Mail-order, computer, and all practical skills appreciated. Please send photo, interests, references, phone number, questions, and goals. (Caretaker/helper position also available for able man.) *Steve*, c/o Doves Farm, Kunkletown, PA 18958.

**D.W.M., 51, N/S**, degreed, eclectic, romantic, honest, humorous, interested in travel, walking, nature, contra dancing, chocolate. Seeks friends-first, marriage-minded woman. *Rich*, 424 Little Lake Dr., #22, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103.

## The CoHousing Video Neighborhoods for People



This 22 minute professionally produced video clearly explains the CoHousing concept, its Danish roots, and why it is appealing to those who live there. Full of interviews with CoHousing residents and images of daily life in many US communities. It is the perfect introduction for orientations, giving to friends, parents, government officials, and lending institutions. It should be part of **every** community's library. **\$40.00** (plus \$4.00 s&h)

Please make out check (in US funds) to **RMCA** and mail to:  
**RMCA - 1705 14th Street #160, Boulder, CO 80302**



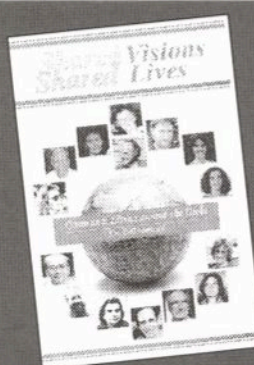
### MARSH COMMONS CO-HOUSING

## Live in Community in Arcata, California

Arcata is a culturally rich university town, with a Green Party city council, nestled between ancient redwoods and Humboldt Bay on California's north coast. Our site, bordering a wildlife sanctuary, is a short walk to town center. With homes now under construction, we'll move in May 1998.

Four homes are available (\$170,000-\$180,000), built from certified sustainably harvested wood from surrounding forests and recycled furnishings where possible. Our multi-level design allows abundant views and natural light. Internet provider in commercial side of common house will be installing a community-wide intranet.

**Peter Starr, 707-822-9178, [startrak@northcoast.com](mailto:startrak@northcoast.com)**  
**<http://www.northcoast.com/~startrak/welcome.html>**



## SHARED VISIONS, SHARED LIVES

*Communal Living Around the Globe*  
**Dr Bill Metcalf**

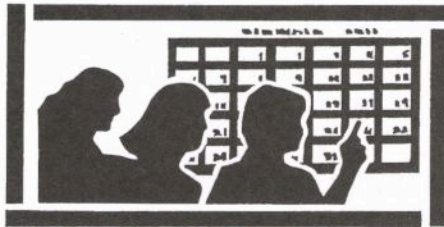
This book is about utopian communal living around the world in the 1990s. Here we have real people giving very frank and personal accounts of what it is like to live communally today, to be born and reared, to have children, and face death within a communal group. They share their challenges, their failures, their successes and their dreams.

The 15 communards from all corners of the globe whose stories appear in this book have lived communally for an average of 30 years. This book, with its many illustrations, has the quality of an exciting story book as well as giving the student of communal living a wealth of fascinating detail and information.

ISBN 1 899171 01 0 • Price US\$13.95/CAN\$19.95 • 192 pages

Findhorn Press Canada • Tel/Fax 604-879-3942 • [email.whittam@unixg.ubc.ca](mailto:email.whittam@unixg.ubc.ca) (Trade Orders from New Leaf of Bookpeople)

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



This is a calendar of:

1) events organized or hosted by intentional communities;

2) events specifically focusing on community living;

3) major events with significant participation by members of the communities "movement."

Most of these events occur with some regularity, so this calendar is a fairly accurate template for what to expect next year. Events listed as "hosted" are generally scheduled at a new site for each meeting.

Please send us suggestions about what we might include in future calendars. Also note that the Fellowship publishes a quarterly newsletter (free to FIC members) that includes announcements of and reports about similar events. Information about joining the FIC can be found on p. 78.

Please send calendar items & related correspondence to Communities, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782.

## Ongoing • Internships & Apprenticeships in Sustainable Living

Dexter, OR. Lost Valley Educational Center. Intensive community experiences focusing on organic gardening, permaculture, appropriate technology, ecological living skills, personal growth, community living, and more. LVEC, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; LVEC@aol.com; www.efn.org/~lvec.

## Ongoing • Internships at WindTree Ranch

Douglas, AZ. Through July '99. Internships in permaculture-style alternative building with renewable energy, organic market gardening, becoming Y2K- prepared. WindTree Ranch, RR 2 Box 1, Douglas, AZ 85607; windtreerh@aol.com; windtreeranch@theriver.com.

## Mar 25–28 • Global Change Through Ascension Science

Sedona, AZ, Aquarian Concepts Community. Successful community living, based on Fifth and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation w/Gabriel of Sedona. Aquarian Concepts Community, PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; acc@sedona.net; http://www.aquarianconcepts.com.

## Apr 9–11 • Introduction to Permaculture

Occidental, CA, Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. \$275–\$225 sliding scale. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557.

## Apr 16–18 • Natural Building with Cob and Straw Bale

Summertown, TN. EcoVillage Training Center at The Farm. With Howard Switzer. PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-4324; fax 931-964-2200; ecovillage@thefarm.org.

## Apr 23–May 1 • Fundamentals of Permaculture

Summertown, TN. EcoVillage Training Center at The Farm. With Patricia Allison, Peter Bane, Albert Bates, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Chuck Marsh, Keith Johnson. \$600 incl. meals & dorm lodging. PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-4324; fax 931-964-2200; ecovillage@thefarm.org.

## Apr 23–25 • Organic Gardening Intensive

Occidental, CA, Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. \$275–\$225 sliding, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557.

## Apr 23–26 • Horticulture for Permaculture Landscapes

Bullock Brothers' Homestead, Orcas Island, WA. Propagation (grafting, cuttings, layering); plant ID; guild plantings; greenhouse & nursery protocols; fertilizers, with Douglas, Joseph & Samuel Bullock, Michael Lockman, & guest instructors. \$350 (\$335 before 3/1) includes tent space & home cooked meals. Bullock Workshops, c/o WE-Design, PO Box 45472, Seattle, WA 98145; michaellockman@juno.com.

## May 9–22 • Permaculture Certification Course

Heartwood Institute, Garberville, CA. Penny Livingston, Brock Dolman, instructors. \$850 (\$800 before 4/20) incl. camping, organic vegetarian meals. Mikhael Smith, 707-923-5000; 220 Harmony Lane, Garberville, CA 95547.

## May 25–30 • Introduction to Natural Building

Occidental, CA, Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. \$650–\$550 sliding scale. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557.

## May 27–30 • Global Change Through Ascension Science

Sedona, AZ, Aquarian Concepts Community. Successful community living, based on Fifth and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation w/Gabriel of Sedona. Aquarian Concepts Community, PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; acc@sedona.net; http://www.aquarianconcepts.com.

## May 28–Jun 2 • Advanced Permaculture/Village Design

Summertown, TN. EcoVillage Training Center at The Farm. With Patricia Allison, Peter Bane, Albert Bates, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Chuck Marsh, Keith Johnson. \$400 incl. meals & dorm lodging. PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-4324; fax 931-964-2200; ecovillage@thefarm.org.

## Jun 4–6 • Art of Community Gathering

Cedar Rapids, IA. Sponsored by Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) and MidAmerica Housing Partnership. For community seekers, communitarians, and other members of cooperative groups. Inspiring group circles and dynamic networking opportunities. Experienced workshop leaders (Carolyn Estes, Laird Sandhill, Geoph Kozeny, Paul DeLapa, Jeff Grossberg, Diana Christian) on finding your community home, decision making and consensus, conflict resolution, visioning and fundraising, forming new communities, and more. Sliding scale fee: \$150–\$50. Art of Community, Rt. 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org.

## Jun 4–6 • Gourmet Soyfoods Cooking

Summertown, TN. EcoVillage Training Center at The Farm. With Dorothy Bates, Louise Hagler, and Barbara Bloomfield. PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-4324; fax 931-964-2200; ecovillage@thefarm.org.

## Jun 6–12 • Natural Building and Permaculture Convergence

Lama Foundation, Taos, NM. Sponsored by Permaculture Drylands Institute, Lama Foundation, and *The Last Straw Journal*. Help rebuild Lama community and learn sustainable timber harvesting; timber framing; straw bale, cob, straw-clay, adobe, and stone building; earthen plasters; appropriate technology; permaculture design principles; renewable energy systems; ecovillage design; and more. \$550 (\$500 before 4/30). Permaculture Drylands Institute, PO Box 156, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

## Jun 8–14 • Seventh Annual Birth Gazette Midwifery Conference

Summertown, TN. The Farm. Conference theme: "Activism in the Midwifery Cause," with Barbara Katz-Rothman, Ina Mae Gaskin, Marsden Wagner, Katsi Cook. 42, The Farm, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-3798; midwives@thefarm.org.

## Jun 18–25 • Farm Experience Week

Summertown, TN. EcoVillage Training Center at The Farm. PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 931-964-4324; fax 931-964-2200; ecovillage@thefarm.org.

## Jul 7–Aug 18 • Permaculture Work Study Program

Earthaven Village, Black Mountain, NC. Six-week immersion experience in building permaculture systems from the ground up, w/Mollie Curry, Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh, Patricia Allison, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Keith Johnson. \$1800 incl. meals & camping. Culture's Edge, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-298-2399; culturesedge@mindspring.com.

## Jul 9–11 • Organic Gardening Intensive

Occidental, CA, Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. \$275–\$225 sliding, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557.

## Jul 9–17 • Fundamentals of Permaculture: Village Design Practicum

Earthaven Village, Black Mountain, NC. Peter Bane, Chuck Marsh, Patricia Allison, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Keith Johnson. \$800–\$550, incl. meals & camping. Culture's Edge, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-298-2399; culturesedge@mindspring.com.

## Jul 10–Aug 6 • Permaculture Skills Intensive

Bullock Brothers' Homestead, Orcas Island, WA. Month-long hands-on ecological design & sustainable living apprenticeship and certification course on 17-year-old working permaculture farm, with Douglas, Joseph & Samuel Bullock, Michael Lockman, & guest instructors. Mapping, water systems, greenhouse operation, plant propagation, food forests and orchards, wetland restoration, wildcrafting, natural building, solar water heating, solar electricity, ecovillage design. \$1750 (\$1575 before 4/10) includes tent space & meals. Bullock Workshops, c/o WE-Design, PO Box 45472, Seattle, WA 98145; michaellockman@juno.com.

## Apr 10 • Northwest Intentional Communities Association/Northwest Cohousing Spring Gathering

Snohomish, Washington. Held at Sharingwood Community. Rob, 360-668-2043; floriferous@msn.com.



# REACH

## COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS



*Reach is a regular feature intended to help match people looking for communities with communities looking for people. As the most up-to-date and widely read clearinghouse available to you, Reach reaches those who are seriously interested in community.*

*Please use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad. Note: THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER 1999 ISSUE (OUT IN JUNE) IS MARCH 15!*

*The special Reach rate is only \$.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$.50 per word thereafter) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? We offer discounts for multiple insertions as well: \$.23 per word for two times and \$.20 per word for four times (and you can even make changes!) If you are an FIC member, you can take off an additional five percent. Please make check or money order out to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy to: Patricia Greene, 31 School St, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; phone and fax, 413-625-0077; e-mail: peagreen@javanet.com. (If you e-mail an ad, be sure to send the check snail mail at the same time and tell me you have.)*

*Suggestions to advertisers: get a larger response by including both address and phone/fax, plus e-mail, if you have it. If you require a financial investment, target your ad to people with financial resources by letting readers know what's required. Caveat to readers: never, but never, drop in on any community unannounced!*

*Listings for workshops, land, books, products, etc. including personals, belong in the Classified Dept. and are charged at a .50/wd. rate, so please see that column for instructions.*



**ABUNDANT DAWN COMMUNITY, Floyd, Virginia.** Our home is 90 acres of beautiful, diverse land, nestled in a bend of a river in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We envision a community of several mostly autonomous subcommunities or "pods" (like the small groups dolphins travel in.)

Each pod decides its own membership, financial, and housing arrangements, within the community's standards of ecologically sound practices and democratic decision making. Pods cluster their homes on 1-3 acres each, leaving much of the land habitable for wildlife. While we have no unified spiritual path, we do make time regularly for sharing deeply with one another and for bringing interpersonal issues to light. We are living in (fairly civilized) temporary homes, finishing our land plan, and preparing to build our dream. Membership is open to singles, couples, and both traditional and non-traditional families. We also welcome the possibility of an already-formed group joining us and becoming another pod. To learn more: 439 Valley Drive NW, Floyd, VA 24091; [abundantdawn@ic.org](mailto:abundantdawn@ic.org).

**ACORN, Mineral, Virginia.** Do you enjoy hard work and building relationships? Five-year-old egalitarian community welcomes visitors and new members. We share income and make decisions by consensus. Varied work scene includes production crafts, agriculture, cooking, accounting, cleaning, and many other jobs. *Acorn*, 1259-CM10 Indian Creek Rd., Mineral, VA 23117; 540-894-0595; [acorn@ic.org](mailto:acorn@ic.org).

**ADIRONDACK HERBS, Caroga Lake, New York.** Three cooperative farms. Get equal land ownership shares for equal work. Medicinal herbs, appropriate technology, wilderness location, sailing. 882 State Hwy. 10, Caroga Lake, NY 12032; 518-835-6887, 518-762-6228; [herb@klink.net](mailto:herb@klink.net).

**AQUARIAN CONCEPTS, Sedona, Arizona.** Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1986. Currently 100 members full-time. We love children. International flavor. New Millennium Destiny Reservists Administration. God-centered community based on teachings of The URANTIA Book and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation—The Cosmic Family Volumes as received by Gabriel of Sedona. Clean air, pure water, organic gardens. Starseed Schools of Melchizedek (all ages) and healing environment which includes morontian counseling and other alternative practices. Gabriel of Sedona and the Bright and Morning Star Band with the vocal CD "Holy City," and Future Studios with art, acting and video productions. Planetary Family Services, including light construction, stone masonry, landscaping, cleaning and maintenance,

teepees and yurts, computer services, elder home care. Serious spiritual commitment required to be part of the religious order. Student commitment also available. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; [aquarianconcepts@sedona.net](mailto:aquarianconcepts@sedona.net).

**AQUARIUS, Vail, Arizona.** Idyllic, unspoiled, steep, isolated, 100 percent solar ranch with all modern conveniences. Ideal place for retirement. Seven-mile jeep trail to the school bus, an hour to Tucson. Wonderful weather allows textile-free living. Private shelter \$150/mo. Describe your life and ideals in detail. Include SASE. POB 69, Vail, AZ 85641.

**BREITENBUSH HOT SPRINGS, Detroit, Oregon.** We are a wilderness retreat and conference center owned and operated by an intentional community, organized as a worker-owned cooperative. Breitenbush is surrounded by old growth temperate rain forest, one of the last of its kind on Earth, and possesses the highest concentration of thermal springs in the Oregon Cascades. We have a variety of hot tubs, natural hot spring pools, a steam sauna and all buildings are heated geothermally. The work and business ethic is one of stewardship; caring for the land while insuring accessibility of the healing waters to all who respect them. Breitenbush hosts events involving human potential: meditation, yoga, theater, dance.... Breitenbush provides housing and a variety of benefits for its staff of 40 to 60 people. We are looking for talented, dedicated people in the areas of housekeeping, cooking, office (reservations, registration and administration), maintenance, construction, and massage therapy (Oregon LMT required). Breitenbush's mission is to provide a safe and potent environment for social and personal growth. *Breitenbush Hot Springs*, Personnel Director, POB 578, Detroit, OR 97342; 503-854-3320.

**COMMONGROUND, Killaloe, Ontario.** Our 115-acre farm is ideal for permaculture, eco-village development with clearings surrounded by forest, small pond, organic garden, restored log farm house, barns. Currently three adults living on the land with six others nearby. As a diverse, fun-loving group of visionaries, artists and healers, we share a commitment to inspiring creative healing. We offer workshops and retreats integrating mainstream and natural medicine with earth-based spirituality and creative expression. We have built a "healing space" including sauna, hot tub, bodywork/counseling room and art studio for our use and income source. Looking for enthusiastic, motivated, responsible, queer-friendly, service-oriented members with skills, experience, and resources to contribute to our collective sustainability. RR 4, Killaloe, British Columbia, Canada KOJ 2A0; 613-757-2174; [healing@web.net](mailto:healing@web.net).

**DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri.** Highly motivated, community and ecologically minded, and experienced group is look-

ing for individuals, families, and communities to help create the ideal rural ecovillage. We're starting construction on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. Dancing Rabbit will be a large community with many different sub-communities that interact socially and economically. Our goal is to build a small town that is truly sustainable and socially responsible. DR's first sub-community, Skyhouse (an FEC community of five adults and one child) has a close working relationship with Sandhill Farm, a 23-year-old egalitarian community nearby. We are especially interested in existing community groups joining us. We've got the ideas, the energy and the land, all we need is you! Contact us now to arrange a visit. 1 Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org.

**EARTHAVEN, Black Mountain, North Carolina.** Tired of dreaming of sustainable living in community? Take the leap! Join committed visionaries actively engaged in the creative design dance of healing our world. We are a permaculture-based intentional village seeking a responsible alternative to the challenges we face as a species. We welcome committed families and individuals to join our circle. Free general info available. For in-depth infopak and six newsletters send \$15 to: Earthaven, POB 1107, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-298-2399; info@earthaven.org.

**EAST WIND, Tecumseh, Missouri.** A 75-member Federation of Egalitarian (FEC) community, est. 1973. Located on 1,045 acres of land in the Ozark foothills of southern Missouri. The topography is heavily forested and scenic. Like other FEC communities, East Wind members value ecological awareness, equality, cooperation, and nonviolence. Personal freedom is important to us. We enjoy flexible work schedules, incorporating choices from our successful businesses and domestic labors. Write or call East Wind Community, Box CM-R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; visit@eastwind.org.

**ECOVILLAGE COHOUSING, Ithaca, New York.** A great place to live! We are creating an environmental village that will be composed of several cohousing communities integrated with a working farm and education center. As an experiment in sustainable living, we already inspire visitors from around the world. We are seeking new members to join our second neighborhood group (SoNG), which plans to begin building in 1999. Come see our beautiful 176 acre site near a vibrant college town. Stay overnight in our first neighborhood, a lively community of 30 families, share a meal in the common house or visit our 9.5 acre organic farm. EcoVillage welcomes you! Check out our website at: <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/ecovillage> and contact: Liz Walker, 607-255-

8276; [ecovillage@cornell.edu](mailto:ecovillage@cornell.edu); EcoVillage, Anabelle Taylor Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY 14853.

**ECOVILLAGE OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, Northern Virginia.** Imagine living on 180 acres of beautiful rolling land with mature trees, incredible vistas, several streams and easy access to the Potomac. Think about living in a convenient location whether working in Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Frederick, Maryland with a five minute trip to the train line, bus, and major roadways. Enjoy a dynamic, environmentally sensitive community where you know your neighbors yet are afforded the balance of privacy. Become part of this unique neighborhood that combines the principles of an ecovillage and cohousing community. Find out more: 1726 Shookstown Rd., Frederick, MD 21702; Grady O'Rear 301-662-4646; [ecovil@aol.com](mailto:ecovil@aol.com); [www.ecovil.com](http://www.ecovil.com).

**JOLLY RANCHERS, Seattle, Washington.** We are a small (three core members, guests, two dogs, and several cats) family-style community on an urban site with two houses that both need work (but are quite liveable unless you're Leona Helmsly!). Our long-term goal is to move to a more pastoral setting somewhere in the Northwest. We believe that the U.S. of A. is one broken down, alienated place to be, and that small groups of dynamic individuals might be able to hold back the dimming of the light. We spend some of our time working out communication strategies which are honest, direct, and kind. We also eat, sleep, work, and play. We are looking for prospective members who are committed to consensus, money sharing, right livelihood, sustainability, intimacy, and fun. Irreverent sense of humor a plus. Call or write for information: Jolly Ranchers, 2711 S Elmwood Pl., Seattle, WA 98144; 206-322-8071.

**L.A. ECO-VILLAGE, Los Angeles, California.** In process, near downtown. We seek friendly, outgoing eco-coop knowledgeable neighbors. Auto-less folks preferred who want to demonstrate and share low-consumption, high-quality lifestyles in an interesting, multi-cultural, high-visibility community. Spanish or Korean speaking helpful. Lots of potential for right livelihood, but must be initially financially self-reliant. Possibility of summer/fall group internship. Call or write: Lois Arkin, 3551 White House Place, Los Angeles, CA 90004; 213-738-1254; [crsp@igc.apc.org](mailto:crsp@igc.apc.org).

**LOCUST GROVE FARM, Southeast Ohio.** Income sharing "children of the Earth" community practicing Native American spirituality. Organic and Native American farming, free-range poultry, and publishing businesses. Provide staffing for Resilience Institute, a retreat center offering workshops on self-reliance, Native spirituality and sustainable farming. Rustic woodworking business envisioned. Learning antique Indian ways of living in harmony with the Earth. Simple technology: non-electric homes, wood heat,

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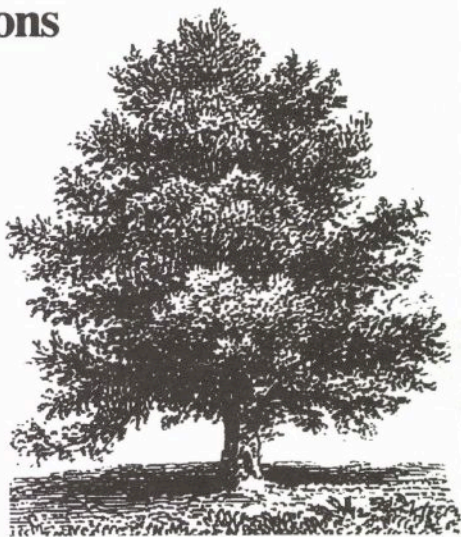
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food self-sufficiency, no tv or radio. Electric computers and office technology in our business area. Community school planned. Omnivorous Native diet, no smoking. 160 beautiful acres, farmland and forest in Ohio's least populated country. We share two low technology houses; plan small non-electric cottages. Farm with tractor, plan horse power for local trips and field work. If you have read Tom Brown, Jr. and Stalking Wolf, you know what we're about. If not, read Grandfather, The Journey and The Search, available from most libraries. If you are willing to live extremely close to the land and are a dedicated "child of the Earth", send \$2 for information packet. Singles, couples, families welcome. *Locust Grove Community, 26328 Locust Grove Road, Creola, Ohio 45622; 740-596-4379.*

**MULVEY CREEK LAND COOPERATIVE, Little Slocan Valley, British Columbia.** For people interested in living harmoniously with nature and humans. 235 acres of forested wilderness adjacent to the Valhalla Provincial Park. Pure creek water, off-grid, rich soils, wildlife, part of the vibrant alternative culture of the Slocan Valley. Children welcome. Values: personal growth, nondenominational, environmentally conscious, egalitarian, sustainable agriculture. 12 homesites, 7 taken, currently at \$30,000 Canadian each. Please write or call: *Laara Kapel, G8, C55, RR1, Winlaw, BC, Canada V0G 2J0; gophertowers@hotmail.com; radio phone 250-355-2392, Code 1310, eves. 6-8 pm.*

**POTASH HILL COMMUNITY, Cummington, Massachusetts.** On 115 acres of woods and pastures in western Mass., 25 miles west of Northampton, a five-college town. 13 privately owned two-to-five-acre lots ranging from \$23,000-\$30,000 surrounded by 60 acre land trust. Community building and sauna. Six households established. Educational facility including large stone house equipped for group dining, plus three workshop/studio buildings for sale to community members. Our fundamental principle is to establish and uphold harmony, cooperation, creativity, and reciprocity of support. We value personal autonomy, relationships, business, the arts, natural healing, education, gardening, celebration, and fun. We foresee a community of independent thinkers with the initiative to take responsibility for shaping their lives and their community. SASE to: *Neel or Deborah, 9 Frazier Lane, Cummington, MA 01026; 413-634-0181.*

**RACHANA COMMUNITY, Redmond, Washington.** We are an intentional community near Seattle that is committed to diversity, harmony and conscious living where everyone wins. Secluded, rustic Community Center, small private lake, acres of pristine country living, indoor pool, hot tub and much more. We are presently looking for several adults who would like to live in a loving communal situation. For more information, call 425-868-4159.

**REDWOOD, Los Gatos, California.** A small cooperative community (10-15 people) to provide an extended family for our children and ourselves. Located 20 minutes from Silicon Valley or Santa Cruz, the property is 10 acres with large house, shop, pool, sauna, hot tub, orchards, redwood grove and large organic garden space. Share vegetarian meals in common kitchen. Interests include yoga, singing, clothing-optional lifestyle, drumming, high-technology, spiritual exploration, children, and living simply. Share in community may be purchased or rented. *24010 Summit Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033; 408-353-5543.*

**TERRA NOVA, Columbia, Missouri.** Low consumption lifestyle in a quiet neighborhood of a university town. Our close-in location makes it possible to walk, bike, or bus to the downtown and campus area for employment or for cultural and political events. We own two houses and an adjoining one-acre lot slowly being transformed into organic garden, orchard, and wildflowers. As houses that border our land come up for sale, we hope people with similar values will buy them. We gather daily for meals (mostly vegetarian) and twice weekly for meetings (using consensus). Working through personal differences and challenges, we value learning about ourselves and



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each other, and wish to create deep, joyous friendships. We are queer friendly. Please contact us to arrange a visit. 1404 Gary, Columbia, MO 65203; 573-443-5253; terranova@aol.com.

**TRILLIUM COMMUNITY LAND TRUST, Jacksonville, Oregon.** Ecovillage in the Siskiyou Mountains seeks individuals, couple, and families to join as stewards and apprentices. Trillium, founded in 1976, is 82 acres of wild river canyon, organic gardens, meadows, ponds, cabins, workspaces, community house, and ridge-top wilderness views. We are educators, artists, activists; land stewards rebuilding our community and inviting responsible vegetarian folks of high integrity who share our vision and goals. Join us in hosting workshops, retreats, gatherings, and university residential program. Hour drive to Ashland. Live in harmony with Spirit, the seasons, and each other to build a beautiful and better world for all. Please send detailed letters of introduction to: *Trillium Community, Box 1330, Jacksonville, OR 97530; trillium@mind.net.*

**TWIN OAKS, Louisa, Virginia.** It's not Utopia yet, but it's a pretty wonderful place. Twin Oaks is 100 people income sharing on 450 acres in rural Virginia. We invite you to visit us! We grow much of our own food, run several community-owned businesses and don't use money internally. We offer a wide range of work from building our buildings to bee keeping, indexing books, making tofu and gardening. Our members enjoy a flexible work-schedule, a mix of ages living together, living lightly by sharing resources, and very little homophobia or sexism. Our values include cooperation, non-violence and participatory government. Free visitor information packet. *Twin Oaks, 138-R Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; twinoaks@ic.org; www.twinoaks.org.*

**FEMINIST EDUCATION CENTER, Athens, Ohio.** Seeks more residential staff, short- or long-term. Rural land trust on 151 acres only 20 minutes from Ohio University, Hocking College, and other intentional communities. *SASE. Susan B. Anthony Memorial UnRest Home, POB 5853, Athens, OH 45701; ad965@seorf.ohiou.edu.*

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## COMMUNITIES FORMING

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**BRITISH COLUMBIA.** Back to the future. From our ancestors we will learn to serve HIM, serve our Mother Earth and care for our neighbors, providing what we need for Life, as the pioneers did. Whether you are single, single parent or married, if you would like to join our small, family-like, self-sufficient, rural community, write to: *Bill, POB 1103, Grand Forks, BC, Canada VOH IZO.*

**CENTRAL CITY COHOUSING, Sacramento, California.** We are planning a 14-

unit, urban infill cohousing community on downtown land currently owned by the City Redevelopment Agency. We need four more households before we can complete a development agreement. Our community will be at 10th and T, just five blocks from Southside Park Cohousing and within easy walking distance of the capitol, the light rail, a year-round farmers' market, and downtown shops and movies. Contact: *Pat Mynka or Robert Osborn, 916-442-4232; robert.osborn@mci.com; http://www.mother.com/~slancy/COHOUSE.HTM.*

**CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.** I feel that my mission is to be a guilding force in developing a community where sages of the Sacred can sit, side by side, open to the Transcendent, desiring to be co-creators in universally valid solutions for our theoretical and practical human problems. Seeking group of up to nine families/individuals to begin Quaker spiritually-based community in Charleston area with goal of developing a center where sages of the Sacred can gather. Enriched by a natural healing environment, those who come will join together in seeking guidance from the Sacred, dialoging with one another and formulating actions that lead to the batterment of our earth and its people. The community will be charged with becoming keepers of a sacred place as we invite and welcome sages of the Sacred from around the world. Conferences and retreats will be ecumenical in nature and aimed at listening for God, allowing our various perspectives to move us toward solutions that are greater than our individual wisdom. As a community serving and participating with other seekers, we will make decisions by consensus and have a balance between private and community life consisting of meals, work, worship, dialogue, reflection, celebration, etc. Desired community skills include: builder, gardener, grounds keeper, cook, librarian, religious studies, computer, administration, etc. *Alice Wald, 49-A Two Loch Place, Charleston, SC 29414; 843-763-0213.*

**COHOUSING COMMUNITY PROJECT, Columbia, Missouri.** We will cluster about 20 private homes around a common house to facilitate sharing and social interaction. In such a community, we feel more connected to other people and more committed to things beyond ourselves. We believe Columbia, a progressive university town, is an ideal location. We hope to build in '99. *5316 Godas Circle, Columbia, MO 65202; 573-814-3632; http://cohousing.missouri.org.*

**ECOHEALTH, Upstate New York.** Eco-minded healing community forming in spring 1999 around spa, conference, health care and wellness center, offering state-of-the-art alternative therapies for degenerative diseases, as well as programs for fitness and general well-being. We are located 1-1/2 hours north of NYC on 100 majestic acres overlooking

Hudson Valley. Seeking residents with idealism, enthusiasm, lightness, and a spirit of service, plus skills such as healing arts, building, organic gardening, permaculture design, and/or related abilities. *Ecohealth, HC64, Box 60BB, Grange Hall Road, Oneonta, NY 13820. 800-268-3259; at@earthling.net.*

**EDEN RANCH, Paonia, Colorado.** Forming community seeks members desiring rural, spiritual environment. Sharing labor and resources on planned biodynamic, permaculture 65-acre farm operating under Limited Liability Company, Bylaws and Agreements of Respect. Ecovillage concepts leading toward ultimate self-sustainability. Western Colorado mesa, outstanding views. Local home-schooling coop available. Future community businesses planned, your ideas welcome. Diversity in thought and age; consensus decision-making results from mutual respect and trust. Approximately \$15,000 (flexible terms available) plus cost of your sustainable home. Visits and tours by reservation, camping available. \$2 for Community Plan. *Jim Wetzel, Nancy Wood, POB 520, Paonia, CO 81428; 970-835-8905; woodwetz@aol.com.*

**EDEN VILLAGE, Mendocino County, California.** 1,600 acre planned, self-sustainable ecovillage community. Egalitarian living, learning, healing environment, 84 three-acre homesteads, \$24,000 (\$300 down/\$300 monthly.) Passive solar homes, lakes, meadows, forests, permaculture. The EDEN JOURNAL, 20 pages, 4 times/yr. \$7 payable to *T. McClure, POB 849, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.*

**FLOWERING DESERT COMMUNITY, Tucson, Arizona.** We're committed to the creation of a new culture based upon equality, voluntary cooperation, individual freedom and mutual support. Our values include deep communication, supportive feedback, lasting friendships, individual responsibility, freedom of choice in relationship styles, ecological awareness, health awareness and, last but by no means least, happiness, joy, and fun! We want to learn how to live together and love each other no matter what our differences, and we're intent upon freeing ourselves from the ways in which our culture has become stuck. *Flowering Desert Community, POB 44110, Tucson, AZ 85733; fldes@iname.com.*

**LIBERTY VILLAGE, MARYLAND.** A hot meal cooked by someone else, impromptu parties, playmates for young and old, a helping hand. Having friends doesn't have to be a hassle. A modern-day village combines the best of community and privacy. Maryland's first Cohousing development features 38 clustered houses with interesting common house designed by the residents. 16 acres open space of meadows, woodlands, gardens and orchards. Footbridge to 105-acre community park featuring softball, soccer, tennis, and basketball courts. Located 8 miles east of Frederick, convenient to Washington, DC, or Baltimore in rolling country. House prices

range from \$130,000 to \$220,000. Handicap-sensitive units available. Construction is underway with first move-ins scheduled for spring 1999. Visit our Web site at [www.LibertyVillage.com](http://www.LibertyVillage.com) or call 800-400-0621.

**MORIAH, NEW YORK.** We've found 180 beautiful acres for \$200/acre (not a misprint!) on Lake Champlain near Adirondack High Peaks, one hour from Burlington, VT. Couple with multiple practical and community skills seeks eco-partners for bank-free purchase, development, stewardship, and community. Three-season, off-grid, recreational community to begin with camping, yurts, cabins, simple kitchen/bath/laundry pavilion; eventually year-round homesteading plus retreat center. Stupendous views over lake to Green Mountains, 150' frontage on cove, streams, waterfalls with hydro-potential, large caves, hiking trails, 25 acres field, good woods and soil, paved road, lake-view building sites. Initial outlay for land, closing, tractor, pole barn, well, outhouse, improving roads, \$60,000. Harmony with spirit, land, water and each other. (Fun, too! Have sailboat, other sailors welcome!) *Patricia Greene/John Charamella, 31 School St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; 413-625-0077; peagreen@javanet.com.*

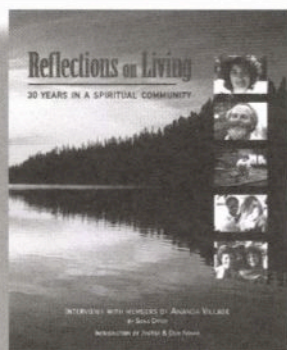
**MORNING STAR RANCH, Austin, Texas.** Group forming to buy land (target area 100 miles NW of Austin,) for urban refugees, recreation and spiritual restoration gatherings. Children included. Nature loving, mutual support group, cabin raisings, and Y2K refuge contingency. Also possible: retreat center, sustainable demonstration project, resident homesteaders. Individual and common ownership. (Name of project may change.) Contact *Susan Lippman, 8901 Chisholm Lane, Austin, TX 78748; 512-291-9838.*

**NAMASTE GREEN, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire.** Pagan/poly/permacultural participational, egalitarian, inspirational. *373 Peacham Rd., Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776.*

**NESS, Hermon, New York.** 100 acres forested Adirondack foothills. Currently three individuals with varied interests who are gaining clarity on guiding principles. We strive to be good stewards of the land and relate well to each other. A broad, extended community of friends and acquaintances offers many opportunities and is the real foundation of our life together. Long-term guest space sometimes available, especially to those dedicated to simplicity and awareness as spiritual disciplines. Write: *Ed Goldstein, 381 Hewlett Rd., Hermon, NY 13652.*

**NEW ENGLAND.** Family interested in starting FEC community in New England. *Bob 413-528-5414.*

**NOAH'S ARK 2, Texas.** One hour east of Austin. Establishing open-hearted, earth-sheltered, "survival/escape" center for



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## The Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage



1 Dancing Rabbit Lane  
Rutledge, MO 63563  
[dancingrabbit@ic.org](mailto:dancingrabbit@ic.org)  
[www.dancingrabbit.org](http://www.dancingrabbit.org)

### At Dancing Rabbit we:

- Live where we work
- Use appropriate technology
- Grow our own food
- Build our homes off the grid
- Operate a car co-op
- Make diesel fuel from vegetable oil



## Live Sustainably...

...on our newly acquired 280 acre land trust! Dancing Rabbit will be a diverse collection of individuals, families, cohousing, and communities working together to create a truly sustainable rural ecovillage. We're seeking new members, so write to arrange a visit. Internships in gardening, biodiesel, and ecovillage design are available. Building begins in spring.

## Northwest Intentional Communities Association



Communities networking  
WA, OR, ID  
Intentional Communities  
and Cohousing.

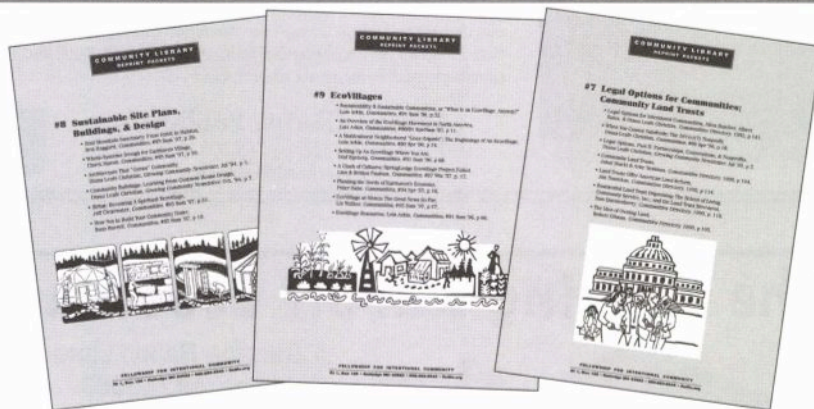
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Community Library Reprint Packets offer 22-32 pages (six to 12 articles) of relevant, practical, information—the best we could find on specific topics of community living—taken from back issues of *Communities* magazine, the *Communities Directory* ('91 & '95), and *Growing Community Newsletter*.

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**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.** Homeschool family developing our homestead with organic fruit and nut tree orchard on Mattole River. Worked extensively on land/stream restoration, sustainable logging for building and firewood. Developed solar/hydro energy systems. Would like community of families sharing gardens, homesteading, etc. Many possibilities. Our vision is to share our place with people interested in learning to live sustainably, developing interdependence on each other and the land. Two-bedroom cottage available for homeschool family with future hope of buying into homestead site. *Robie and Gil, 1901 Dutyville Rd., Garberville, CA 95542; 707-986-7787.*

**REJENNERATION, Jenner, California.** Forming on five knoll-top acres in an ecologically diverse coastal canyon with stunning views about one hour from Santa Rosa, CA. One house, some outbuildings and a garden have been built. We are looking for partners (\$10,000 min. down) to build (sweat equity) and live in the second, larger co-op household. Values include earth stewardship, earnest work, simplicity, and a respect for diversity. Shared meals. Call or write including some personal history and a SASE for date of next open house: *Box 42, Jenner, CA 95450; 707-632-5458.*

**SOUTHERN VERMONT** (Brattleboro area) community forming. We emphasize mutual support, community involvement, environmental responsibility, sustainable living, flexible housing and lifestyles, careful planning, work opportunities, creativity, appropriate technology, cooperation, and fun. We are currently searching for land, meeting one another and doing extensive planning. Persons of all ages, races, creeds, orientations are welcome. Rural location, but not isolated. We are working to build a community where we can work and live together in a fulfilling and sane manner. Write or call: *Luc Reid, 100 Park Blvd., #72-D, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; 609-616-8340; community@accessdatabase.com; http://www.accessdatabase.com/community.*

**WALDEN TWO, California.** Seeking fellow Walden Two enthusiasts. *Mike Ray, 40 Vienna St., San Francisco, CA 94112; 415-585-6079.*

**WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.** Creating small (8-10 people), sustainable, food and energy self-reliant community on 10+ acres with house and garden in rural rolling hills an hour south of Asheville. Seeking open-hearted, responsible, spiritually oriented people to join us. Individual dwellings and shared households. *290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782; diana@ic.org.*

## PEOPLE LOOKING

**FRIENDSHIP FOOTPATHS:** Family (kids 7 and 3) researching co-creation of caring community in relatively rural setting. Organic gardening, orcharding, sustainable building and energy, permaculture, creative, alternative child-education, sharing and learning with friends. Two locations of interest: riparian AZ/NM, NC mountains. *Heather Watrous/Michael Fishbach, 1318 Keith Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; 919-967-8621; fishdaya@aol.com.*

**WE HAVE A FANTASY**—to escape the maddening crowd. Nature, music and fun-loving N.J. couple with infant desperately seeking simpler life somewhere in rural America. Would like to match our enthusiasm with that of a few other creative, thoughtful, non-religious, non-conventional, passionate, profane, fun-loving, friendly folks. He, 46; she, 36. Occupations: piano-tuning/repair, massage, swim instructor. Interests/hobbies: creative sewing, cooking, music/dance, mushrooming, skinny dipping, violin-making, vegetarianism. Looking for: self-sufficiency, growing food, raising son with nature, peace of mind. We wish to talk with, meet, eventually join forces with other couple(s), or others similarly motivated to decide where/when/how fantasy becomes reality. If picture painted strikes chord, please write or call. Talk is cheap. *Matt Reese/Sharon Steiner, 605 State Rd., Princeton, NJ 08540; 609-497-0729.*

**MALE NEW AGER, 42.** Seeking a spiritual community. Also seeking a brother and/or sister companion on the path to Light, who is interested in exploring and travelling to communities and sacred sites. I have no car. I am into Celestine Prophecy, Kryon, the goddess and Star-people networking. *Tim Kepner, 2841 N. Front St #2, Harrisburg, PA 17110; 717-234-4721.*

**SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY SOUGHT** by mature woman with Tibetan Buddhist practice. I welcome responses from all sincere, compassionate people living in intentional communities where spiritual values are of primary importance in daily life. Very experienced in cooperative living. *Joy Vronsky, 517 Moraga, Piedmont, CA 94611.*

## INTERNS WANTED

**TRILLIUM COMMUNITY LAND TRUST, Jacksonville, Oregon.** Wilderness sanctuary ecovillage in the Siskiyou Mountains offers internships with optional academic credit through Dakubetede Environmental Education Program's (Antioch University) Natural History of the Dakubetede Wilderness; five science credits and/or community studies, three social studies credits. Internships offered each season with three-month minimum commitment. Feel the power of the wilderness while learning organic gardening and permaculture, straw-bale building, pond restoration, hydro-electricity. Help host events/gatherings, live in Place and celebrate community. Cost: \$500 for three months, academic credit extra. Send detailed letter of introduction to: *Trillium Community Box 1330, Jacksonville, OR 97530; trillium@mind.net.*

**MAHANTONGO SPIRIT GARDEN, Pitman, Pennsylvania.** Internships in pantheist, non-Christian, spiritual retreat center for gay men in central Pennsylvania. Room and board in exchange for work in garden, orchard, building projects. Write: *Brother Johannes, M.S.G., Pitman, PA 17964.*

**SUNRISE RANCH, Loveland, Colorado.** Located in the foothills of the Colorado Rockies, we are looking for people interested in living and working for a season in a spiritually-based community. Room, board and small stipend.

Background check and references may be required. For details, call 970-679-4251, or write: *Lou Rotola, Sunrise Ranch, 5569 North County Rd. 29, Loveland, CO 80538.*

## RESOURCES

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**INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY SEEKERS' NETWORK** of New England records "Seeker-to-Seeker" contact information. Active networking will resume shortly. *15 Marcus Rd., Sharon, MA 02067; 617-784-4297; DonBr@att.net.*

**INTERESTED IN JOINING A BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY?** We'll put you in touch with former members of the Hutterian Brethren/Bruderhof. *Peregrine Foundation, PO Box 460141, San Francisco, CA 94146; 415-821-2090.*



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Mail this form with payment (by March 15 for Summer issue) to:  
**Patricia Greene, 31 School St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370**

# FIC MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE, & DIRECTORY ORDER

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The FIC is a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities across North America. The Fellowship:

- publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- built and maintains the Intentional Communities site on the World Wide Web

<www.ic.org>

- hosts gatherings and events about community.
- builds bridges between communities and the wider culture.
- serves as an information clearinghouse for all aspects of community—for individuals, groups, and the media.

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- our quarterly newsletter
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- invitations to board meetings and other activities.
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#102

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## PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

them to act in a way consistent with their own understandings, values, and priorities. They need to know that you are ultimately interested in their well-being and growth. And that you support their choices—even if they are making what you perceive to be mistakes—trusting that they will learn from the experience. The point, after all, is to share insights and to suggest options for moving ahead in life, to grow wiser and more effective over time, to achieve greater fulfillment both individually and collectively, and, in the end, to make the world a better place.

One of the biggest challenges we face is that so many topics are taboo (except, of course, as gossip—when the person being talked about is not present). Typical taboos: money, sex, relationship problems, and any area where you are second-guessing some-

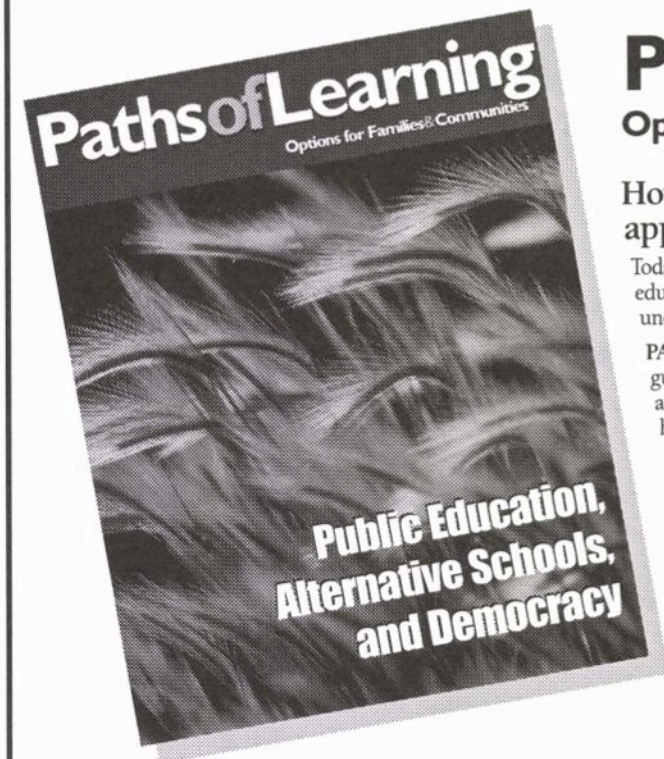
one's decision-making abilities—for example, criticizing someone's parenting. If you can provide a sympathetic ear in such cases, your presence will usually be appreciated, and often you'll be helping. However, if your so-called support comes across as a critical judgment or an affirmation of the person's inadequacies, it's not likely to be appreciated—or even heard.

Instead, I suggest you strive to be a thoughtful and trustworthy friend who is willing to pose awkward questions when that is what's called for. And don't just blurt out a remark and evaporate—be prepared to stick around for an in-depth discussion that will help shed light on the subject. Far too often our blurtings are delivered with a blast of emotion that obscures the issue and makes the situation worse.

In our culture it's often considered rude to bring up deeply personal questions, but I believe that's exactly what we need. Bringing up personal issues

probably became taboo in the first place because it was most often done poorly and painfully—but we don't need to be prisoners of mistakes from our collective past. Talk it over with your friends, and create a context where it's okay to experiment with giving constructive feedback. How else are we going to learn to effectively ask questions like the one I'm asking you now? "When you give feedback and support, do you get the results you want?" Ω

*Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 26 years, and has been on the road for 11 years visiting communities—asking about their visions and realities, taking photos, and giving slide shows about the diversity and vitality of the communities movement. Presently, he is producing a full-length video documentary on intentional communities. His best friends all enjoy asking and answering deeply personal questions.*



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**PATHS OF LEARNING** is published in May, October, and January. Subscriptions cost \$19.95 for the three issues. For more information and a sample issue, phone 1-800-639-4122 or write to Paths of Learning, P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733. <http://www.great-ideas.org/paths.htm>.

# Toxic Emissions, Toxic Omissions

**S**AYING TOO MUCH CAN DESTROY A RELATIONSHIP. Saying too little can undermine your sense of integrity and erode your spirit. The resulting tension, whether from acts of running off at the mouth (“emissions”) or withholding opinions (“omissions”), can produce social and biochemical toxins that can literally eat away at your friendships and your innards.

Today most people seem to gravitate toward one extreme or the other regarding what to say, when, and to whom. Where’s the happy middle ground? Almost everyone has a list of taboo topics, and each person’s list varies depending on the audience and the circumstances. Many feel it’s “polite” to err in the direction of not saying much—“if you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” An opposing camp contends that to “withhold” is destructive—that to act with integrity you need to share anything and everything that comes to mind.

I grew up in a polite culture, and experienced how limiting and alienating that could be. In reaction to that conditioning I went through a phase of trying to “tell it all—always,” and discovered how limiting and alienating *that* could be. Both styles have their strengths and their weaknesses. I’ve found precious few people or communities that have managed to strike a happy medium.

I believe that in the long run it’s better to err in the direction of saying too much—noting that without adequate information, we are hampered in our efforts to affect meaningful change and are doomed to repeat many painful mistakes that are otherwise avoidable. However,

if we merely spew our gut reactions with no regard for how the information will be received, we are likely to experience alienation and strife rather than cooperation and community.

Sure, the person you are venting at (or about) can choose to set aside his or her preconceptions and defensiveness to look for the grain of the truth in what you’re saying. But if that’s not how the person responds, it’s important to ask yourself, “Why am I sharing this information? Is the way I’m going about it producing the results I desire?”

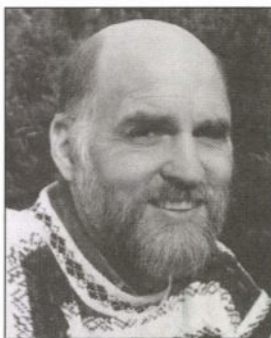
If your answer to the first half of the question—the “why” part—is, “I’m sharing this because I have concerns, suggestions, opinions, or appreciations that might improve my relationship with this person and my/our effectiveness in the world,” then you get a gold star.

But if your answer is more like, “Because I need to vent my feelings,” or, “Obviously this person is on the wrong track here, and I need to help them see the error of their ways,” then you’re not nearly as likely to find a sympathetic audience. I suggest you consider revising your approach based on a re-evaluation of your long-term goals and objectives.

And if you are unable to get your point across—regardless of your purity of intentions or clarity of insight—then your approach is neither constructive nor effective.

The key to giving effective feedback is to nurture a sense of mutual trust and support, to make space for your friends to see things differently, and to encourage

(continued on p. 79)



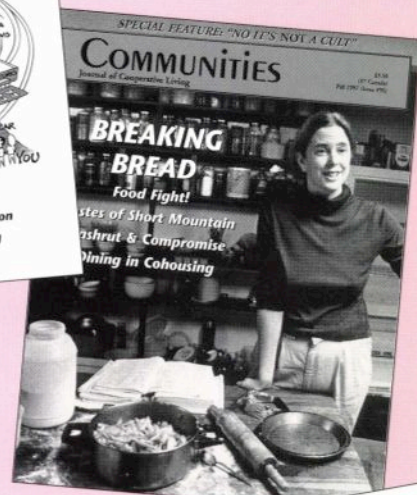
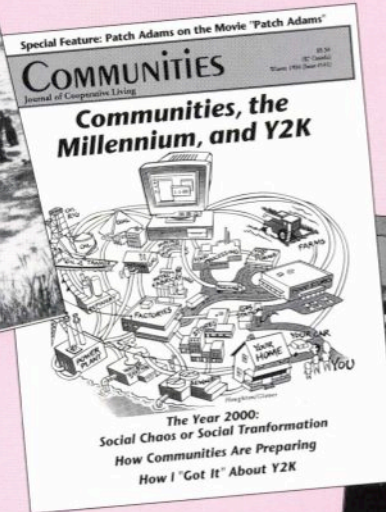
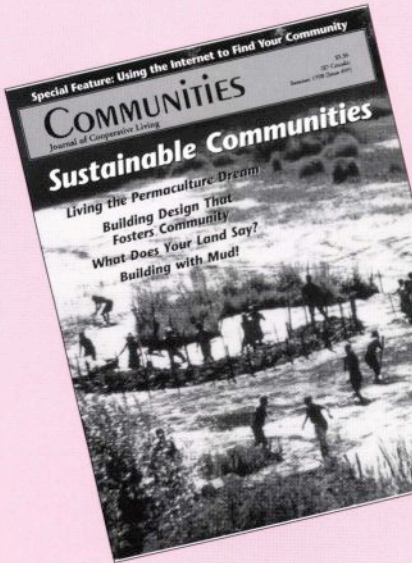
BY GEOPH KOZENY

***A thoughtful,  
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to pose awkward  
questions.***

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*“Strong scientific evidence exists  
for the connection between  
community and healing.  
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on our health, interpersonal  
relationships are not only a factor,  
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