

Learning From Ecovillages Worldwide

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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Fall 1999 (Issue #104)

Conflict & Connection

Assessing Community Well-Being

Opposing Leadership

Difficult Behaviors in Meetings

*Transforming Conflict &
Enhancing Connection*



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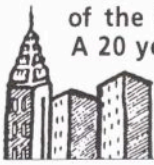
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Ganas' goals are to learn to focus attention, hear and respond. We want to bring reason and emotion together in daily dialogue, and to create our world, with love, the way we want it to be.

Ganas people dream of developing open minds with which to talk together and understand each other better. We want to learn how to give up competitive power plays and cooperate, care, and welcome anyone who wants to join us — with pleasure. Hopefully, if we succeed, whatever we create will be replicable.

The Foundation for Feedback Learning began in 1978. 6 of us started Ganas on Staten Is. in 1979, and we're all still here. Our population has grown from 6 to 75. Most of us are now a bonded, caring, hard working, fun loving, extended family.

People of many races, nationalities, religions, professions, and life views live together at Ganas in surprising harmony. Possibly that is because about half of us get together every day to talk about work, personal issues and anything else that comes up.

We share 9 large, mainly adjacent residences on Staten Island in a racially mixed, lower middle class, suburban neighborhood, a half-hour free ferry ride from downtown Manhattan. Many of us work in our 4 commercial buildings nearby. We renovated all of our buildings ourselves to suit our needs and our pleasure.

Most of the houses are connected by flower and vegetable gardens. We have many trees (some fruit bearing), berry bushes, a small swimming pool, a large deck, and pretty spots for hanging out. It feels rural, although we have views of the Manhattan skyline.

Living space is comfortable, attractive and very well maintained. The food is plentiful, meals are excellent and varied enough to suit most people, including a few vegans. Dinner is served at 7, but anyone who wants to can prepare meals for themselves in one of our 4 fully stocked, well-equipped community kitchens.

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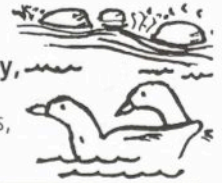
What Ganas does and does not offer is sometimes unclear. *We are not a therapeutic community* and we don't give feedback to everyone. People have to be able to make good use of personal input before we offer it. But we do always try to help if we can.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY IN COMMUNITY WITH INTERESTING & INTERESTED PEOPLE, If you care about good problem-solving dialogue based on truth and goodwill (and want to learn how to do it); If you have sought close relationship with varied people who hear, understand, and care about each other; If you want interesting, valuable work, and you enjoy working productively (or want to learn how to);
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G.R.O.W. II needs competent help during the summer and responsible caretakers during the winter when we're away.

The people who form a new community at G.R.O.W. II will also be invited to participate in Ganas in NYC if they want to.

(Ganas continued)

Recycling is the community's business. Most of our work happens in 4 resale stores called Every Thing Goes. One refinishes and sells furniture; the second sells clothing. The third is a gallery. The original store sells everything else. The shops are all near our houses. They are well organized, efficiently run, and very attractive.

Visitors are welcome. If you want to work in the community, we'll discuss our needs and your skills when you get here. Approximately 40 people work in the businesses and the houses. Full time work is 40 hours a week. This pays all costs plus up to \$300 per mo. and a share of the businesses' profits. Please bring money for your expenses in case you can't work with us.

If you decide to try living at Ganas for a while and don't work with us, all your expenses can be met with one fee of \$500-650 a month. People staying for up to 6 nights are asked to pay \$35 a day and help out some. Visitors coming for longer stays (but less than 1 mo.) can pay expenses at the rate of \$200 a wk.

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

FRONT COVER

Fellowship for Intentional Community board member Betty Didcoct and visitor to FIC Board meeting, held at Miccosukkee Land Co-op, Tallahassee, Florida, November, 1994.

Photo, Michael McIntyre.

BACK COVER

Members and interns at Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, Oregon.

Photo, Lost Valley Educational Center.

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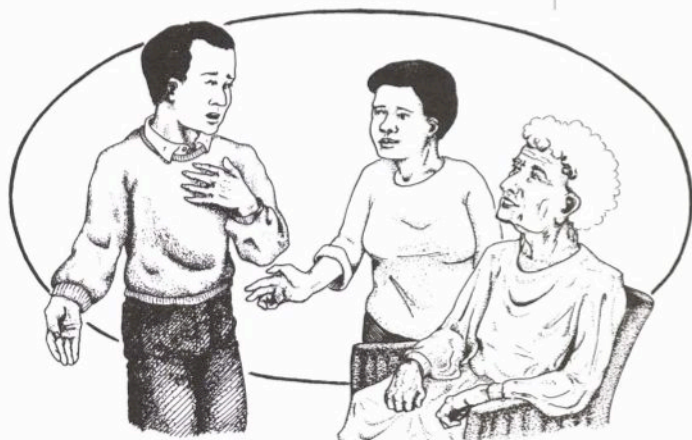
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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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

Walden Two and "Participatory Behaviorism"

Dear *Communities*:

I commend the editors of the "Walden Two" issue (*Summer '99*). The major communities were covered, and Hilke Kuhlmann's analysis piece, "Walden Two Communities: What Were They All About," served to focus upon the primary lesson learned, which is the importance of member involvement in community government. If only B.F. Skinner had paid attention to the historical lessons and philosophical precepts of participatory governance he could have saved us from years of struggle against the authoritarian nature of the Walden Two "plannership" model. Yet perhaps it was precisely our search for an alternative to the theory of "psychologist-kings" that made it possible for us to adopt aspects of consensus theory and process which may have been unknown to Dr. Skinner.

Unfortunately, I feel that Hilke missed an opportunity to draw firm conclusions out of the understanding that she achieved. On behalf of the few thousand people who gave life to the "Walden Two" communities to date (I was a member of Twin Oaks and East Wind for a total of 13 years), I would like to offer that our experiences have proven the value of "participatory behaviorism"—a new form of applied behavioral science which may be seen as a success wrested from Dr. Skinner's failure to respect the human need for self-governance.

Further, I would like to suggest that all of this was recognized in the late '70s when the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) was created. Some of the FEC's seven principles may be considered to be tenets of

participatory behaviorism. I feel that it is unfortunate that nothing was actually said about how our communities have transitioned beyond "Walden Two." Even Paul Chance's Los Horcones article was based on a visit which took place 10 years ago.

The glaring omission of this issue, which really leaves us hanging, is the current status of children and childcare programs at Twin Oaks. Nothing was said about what was learned as a result of our experimentation with our children's lives, as well as their parents' lives. It was in the '70s that change also began in the children's program, with the proposal for a child-adult residence, now called "Morningstar." In the late '80s the program was formally changed, and today Degania, the children's building, is no longer used as before. Instead we have various levels of "shared parenting," where essentially all of the adults in the subsequently built child-adult residences relate to the children living in the building, participating to varying degrees in their upbringing. Other adults not sharing the child-adult residence also engage in aspects of shared parenting.

Whether the model of child-adult residences and the processes of shared parenting, or some other concept, is eventually recognized as the solution to the ongoing challenge of designing egalitarian community, the future certainly holds great potential for continuing our successful experimentation in participatory behaviorism, toward creating a culture based upon the values of sharing, caring, cooperation, and mutual aid.

Allen Butcher

Denver, Colorado
allenbutcher@juno.com

The American Family Foundation Not Anti-Religious

Dear *Communities*:

I write you about the commentary written by an elder of the Aquarian Concepts community, which negatively comments on the NBC "Dateline" program about her group. (*"Seeking Truth in Media," Spring '99*.) While I have no knowledge as to the accuracy of her claims with respect to alleged inaccuracies and selective editing, I do know that her statements about the American Family Foundation are grossly inaccurate. Our organization is primarily dedicated to educating the public about the dangers of destructive cults. Its advisory

board includes religious leaders of various denominations, professionals affiliated with various universities, educators, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, and therapists.

Our organization is not and has not at any time published "anti-religious" literature. The religious leaders of our board would refuse to participate in any anti-religious organization. Further, there is no truth in the statement that Dr. Lewis West "moved on to the American Family Foundation" after 1996. Dr. West was an advisory board member to our organization for over 20 years.

As far as the author's claim of the existence of a "lucrative attack on groups and individuals outside the mainstream," ascribing to us the motive of financial gain is not only false, it exposes the bent of the accuser. Seeking pecuniary gain is not a convincing explanation as to why people help victims of abusive practices.

A plea for tolerance and honesty goes both ways.

Herbert L. Rosedale
President, American Family Foundation
New York, New York

Laird Schaub, Executive Secretary of the publishers of this magazine, the Fellowship for Intentional Community, replies:

We appreciate hearing from you what you found to be inaccuracies in the way Celinas Ruth portrayed your organization in the Spring '99 My Turn column. You mentioned that the AFF has not ever published "anti-religious" literature. While we are not familiar with your literature, we wonder if there isn't a significant difference in how AFF and Ms. Ruth are defining "religion." In particular, we believe she was making the point that some groups AFF labels as "cults" might instead be looked at as people choosing to exercise freedom of choice in religious matters, and the author might have been criticizing your authority to decide for others what constituted a "legitimate" religion. In the spirit of creating dialog and reducing misunderstanding, perhaps there is merit in exploring this possible source of confusion.

Prejudice in Communities?

Dear Editor:

Most of the time I enjoy *Communities* magazine very much and am proud to share it with friends, so it was with surprise and embarrassment that, after I shared the Winter '98 Y2K issue with some Moslem

friends (specifically for the Patch Adams interview), I learned they were offended by what they perceived as prejudice against Moslems in Steve Bjerklie's "The Millennium the Last Time Around"—and after I read it I had to agree! The article states: "In a few years the Iberian peninsula would host the Islamic vengeance of Al-Mansur the Illustrious Victor, consumed with ridding all Spain of infidel Christianity..."

Mr. Bjerklie's implication is historically inaccurate—Moorish Spain was one of the most multicultural and peaceful nation states in all of medieval Europe, and if any vengeful people cast out "infidels" it was the reinstated Christian kingdom that forcibly evicted all Moslem as well as Jewish Spaniards in 1492. While Al-Mansur was himself a notable Moslem "bad guy," Islamic Spaniards were not. Most modern historians have abandoned the Semitic prejudices that gave rise to characterizations of medieval Moslems as a bloodthirsty, anti-Christian population seeking "vengeance." Does *Communities* magazine check its facts? I apologized to my Moslem

friends and of course still support *Communities* magazine. But please ...

Rich Nevins
Anchorage, Alaska

Historic communities columnist Steve Bjerklie replies:

Religious and political factions have pushed each other across Europe since before the fall of the Roman empire. The article, which was meant to contrast the state of the world at the last turn of a millennium with current concerns, focused by definition on a particular moment in history. In that moment, 1000 A.D., Moslems under Al-Mansur were driving Christians from the Spanish peninsula. Later, Christians purged Spain of Moslems—indeed, just as the Serbian government, which claims to be Christian, is now trying to rid Kosovo of ethnic Albanians, who are Moslem. From the evidence of the historical record, it would be disingenuous in the extreme to suggest that Moslems are somehow "worse" or less cultured than Christians. Perhaps community will be the force that finally alters the historical pattern.

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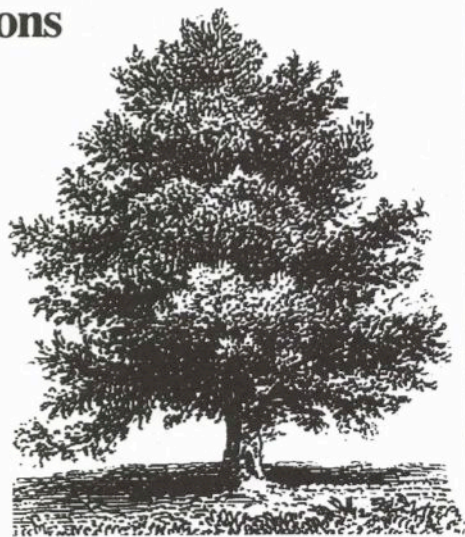
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Communities is a forum for exploring intentional communities, cooperative living, and ways our readers can bring a sense of community into their daily lives. Contributors include people who live or have lived in community, and anyone with insights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

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 non-violently, and to sharing their experiences with others.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Leaning into the Punch *And Learning How Not to Get Hit*

COMMUNITY LIVING IS NOT ABOUT ELIMINATING DIFFERENCES TO find the joy; it's about living joyously with differences. The road to that joy often leads through conflict, not trying to take the bypass road around it. But how can we enter conflict with hopes of avoiding crashes and getting through it well?

Years ago my community had a couple drop in for a visit during harvest season, and a problem came up when the woman felt threatened by the man's demands and asked for our protection. As a nonviolent community we have an agreement to not tolerate abusive or threatening behavior, and we have an agreement about direct communication.

For all that, the man was physically imposing and we didn't know him well enough to know if he'd be violent if provoked, and we didn't know what might provoke him. Worse, he might take out his frustrations on his partner, and who were we to risk her safety? The woman had been in the relationship for years and in one way or another had made her peace with it. The fact that she didn't like his current threats did not mean she was ready to face the overall pattern or even consider leaving the relationship. What to do? This dynamic triggered an avalanche of responses in our community, and we were conflicted about how to handle the conflict.

Intentional communities are pioneering responses to conflict that might address society's more spectacular displays of inhumanity. Rooted in values of cooperation and nonviolence, what do communities have to say to Kosovo, Rwanda, and the West Bank—where unresolved conflict has erupted in violence? What do communities have to offer the stunned population of Littleton, Colorado—where unaddressed disaffection also erupted in violence? How are communities incubators for connection and learning how to work it out?

This issue is filled with stories about some hard-earned lessons from communities facing conflict and making some brave and creative choices. As with almost everything done in community, you will see that people are getting interesting results with a variety of approaches. There are many ways to engage with conflict.

When conflict leads to fragmentation and violence, a predictable sequence follows: frustration with not feeling heard, alienation, a growing sense of hopelessness, breakdown in communication, vilification or dehumanizing of the other, an expectancy of violence—verbal or physical. To get different results, we have to object to this sequence. The essential challenge of cooperative living—which is also the

challenge of world peace—is working purposefully and productively with conflict.

How did my community respond to the aggressive man and the passive woman? In the end we tried several things. Some talked with the woman about how the situation looked to her, and we offered her help to leave what appeared to be an abusive relationship—an offer she turned down. At the same time, another member went to the man and asked for his side of the story. Though he didn't think he was doing anything inappropriate or unusual, we explained our concerns and made it clear that we saw his behavior as threatening and unacceptable in our community.

The hardest part was a large community meeting where we stopped the harvest long enough to process everyone's anxiety about the dynamic. At first the couple was not present—we needed room to explore our own responses and many were intimidated by attempting this in the man's presence. When, after a while, the couple came into the room, we took a deep breath and kept going, involving them fully in the discussion. Because conflict is often linked with aggression, there is always the chance that engagement will only stir things up and make aggression more likely. However great one's techniques and intentions, in the end, you have no control over the other's behavior. The most exciting (and scary) part was maintaining an opening for the man to share his feelings and thoughts. It was essential to our process that we know as much as possible about why he thought his actions were acceptable, and this meant vigilance in resisting the temptation to vilify him.

We left the meeting with an odd mixture of exhaustion and exuberance. While tensions were reduced, it was unclear what result there was for the couple. Both left the meeting in a better mood and we parted company on outwardly good terms the next day, yet there is no knowing if their pattern of domestic violence continued. Still we felt buoyed by the engagement. We looked a tense, potentially violent situation right in the eye and kept engaging: refusing to accept his behavior, and refusing to break off communication. It was one of the most courageous things our community has ever done. Though we don't have any information about the after-effect on the couple, we do know the effect it had on the community. Today we're a little less scared and a little less timid. Today, in our community, a "Kosovo" or a "Littleton" are a little less likely.

Laird Sandhill

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

"Transition & Change," Winter '99. What happens when a community undergoes gradual or sudden change? How do communitarians cope with upheaval from within, or a major outside event? A major shift in leadership, governance, or economic structure? A significant turnover in membership, or the death of a founding member? And ... how have communities changed over the 20th century, and what will they be like in the 21st? *Communities*, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NY 28782; 828-863-4425; communities@ic.org.

"Cohousing," Winter '99. Cohousing is one of the fastest-growing forms of community in North America. What can the communities movement learn from cohousing specifically, and what can cohousers learn from everyone else? Are new cohousing options other than the "Danish model" evolving in North America? What role do cohousing developers play, and how is cohousing helping create a new, "family-approved" image of community in mainstream culture? *Michael McIntyre*, 434 Little Lake Dr., #21, Ann Arbor, MI 48103; 734-998-6275; michael@ic.org.



Art of Community Audiotapes

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

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

**Consensus: Decisions That
Bring People Together**
Caroline Estes

**Six "Ingredients" for Forming
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Diana Christian

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*Carol Carlson, Lois Arkin, Harvey
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COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



Members of **Skywoods Cosynegal** are no longer rocking to sleep to the tune of "We All Live in a Little Wooden Boat," according to member *Stephen Niezgoda*, also known as Step. Members of the small 22-year-old income-sharing community located on the Michigan shore of Lake Michigan have moved out of and sold the wooden boat they built and lived on for more than 20 years. The "Prometheus" sailed out the Erie Canal and down the Atlantic coast last fall. The community's former home will soon be passing through the Panama Canal enroute to her new berth in Vancouver, B.C., where she will be used for whale watching and ecotourism.

Skywoods spent almost 10 years designing and building its passive-solar, energy-efficient home with consultation from the New Alchemy Institute, Rocky Mountain Institute, Taliesin Fellowship, and Cranbrook Institute, among other organizations. Skywoods members designed their home as a Living/Learning Center for what they call a New Age Extended Family—A Neo-Tribal Band. "We didn't have room to grow on the boat, now we have room for our cottage industries, public spaces, private spaces and best of all—more people!" says Step. "We already have some new members, and are eager to add more. We look forward to being just as cozy and 'shipshape' in our new home as we were in our old one." *Skywoods*, 616-894-8870, cosynegal@12k.com.



Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in northeastern Missouri is the subject of a new documentary film, "A Rabbit Dancing," according to member *Tony Sirna*. Seattle media activist *Philip Craft* spent a month

at the community this spring, interviewing members and shooting scenes of Rabbits in their daily lives, cooking, gardening, building, and so on.

At first the Rabbits wished Philip would shoot the film in a few years later when they'd "have more to show," according to Tony. But the filmmaker convinced them it wasn't a "how to be eco" film, but the story of ordinary people who set out to do something about changing the way people interact ecologically with each other and the planet, and how they began to manifest their visions and values. "I wanted to capture them in their infancy," Philip says, "to make a film that would inspire people to follow their dreams. My hope is that after seeing it people will go home and make small changes: create a car co-op, organize tool-sharing in their neighborhoods, build with renewable materials, and so on." He also convinced the Rabbits that their story wasn't just about building with bales or making biodiesel fuel, but also their group process. "A major theme of the film is not only that they're breaking ground in sustainable practices," says Philip, "but they're practicing egalitarian living and consensus decision making—making sure everyone has a say in the future of their village."

Philip is the former producer of "Political Playhouse," a political satire program that ran on Seattle's cable access TV for four years and was syndicated nationally on Free Speech TV and The '90s channel. He is also the author of various screenplays, including the movie "Anarchy TV."

Philip attempted to produce "A Rabbit Dancing" sustainably as well. On a relatively tiny documentary budget of \$10,500 in grant money, he used cutting-edge digital video technology and rela-

tively inexpensive used camera and editing equipment. He hopes to show the documentary at the Sundance Film Festival this winter where it may be picked up for theater distribution and later video store distribution. There's also a possibility it may be sold to various cable TV networks. In any case, "A Rabbit Dancing" will be available on videotape on sometime late this year or early next. For more information about how to order the video: *Philip Craft*, bn629@scn.org.



Members of **CEDAR** community in south-central Kentucky—Center for Ecological Design and Restoration—are now beginning to implement their plans to create a permaculture education center and demonstration site, according to member *Jim Kocher*. Cofounder *Joni Smalle* purchased the 43-acre parcel 15 years ago in order to create an ecological restoration project through a land trust with CEDAR as its main project. The land is in an area of Kentucky with thin topsoil made worse by over-logging and monocropping. *Joni* and member *Liz Hoag* trucked countless truckloads of manure and sawdust to the site for gardens, built swales and other water catchment projects to arrest flooding and erosion, and created a new pond and reclaimed another pond. *Jim* and fellow member *Timothy Hillmer* are building a passive solar cedar pole-building as a new residence. CEDAR members live off the grid and haul their water, by choice. "What we have to offer is the high contrast between the rich and fertile soil of the organic gardens and the water management here and the rest of the land in this relatively soil-poor part

Heard it through the grapevine ...

Send us news of your community's joys and sorrows, celebrations, marriages, births, deaths, events and conferences, members' travel adventures, new land acquisitions, new community buildings, new businesses, losses, breakthroughs or challenges with neighbors or local governments, local ecological difficulties or triumphs. We want to hear from you!

Community Grapevine, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782; 828-863-4425; communities@ic.org.

of Kentucky," says Jim. Known locally as the folks who grow "in that organic way," they've already been able to influence some of their tobacco-growing, dairy-farming neighbors. "If we had soil as good as yours," said one farmer, "We'd be able to grow vegetables here, too." "But it is your soil!" replied Joni. "Some of it's the manure we hauled from your place!" Community members later heard that at least one neighbor had recently begun spreading manure on his tobacco fields. *CEDAR, 590 Pleasant Ridge Church Rd., Edmonton, KY 42129.*



Madison Community Co-op (MCC), a group of 10 co-op houses in the downtown/University of Wisconsin campus area of Madison, Wisconsin, got a birthday present of \$300,000 at about the same time they celebrated their 30-year anniversary in January. According to *Richard-Marie Commander*, Madison offers property-tax-exempt status to

nonprofit landowners. MCC was refused this tax exemption on the grounds that they were "only a lifestyle choice," not the kind of university or government agencies the ordinance was designed for. So MCC took the city to court and won a refund of their last three years' property tax payments.

"Now we have to decide how to spend the money," says Richard-Marie. Besides re-roofing eight of their 10 houses, they're considering developing more co-op housing in other areas of the city, starting daycare centers, or perhaps even starting an affordable, multiculturally diverse cohousing community in Madison. "Affordable housing is a hot issue here," he says. "MCC co-ops (open to non-students), various UW-affiliated student co-ops, and the YMCA and Salvation Army are the only affordable places downtown. City government tends not to accept federal government-subsidized money for housing for poor people downtown, and we'd like to do something to change that!"



Another community celebrating its 30th anniversary this year is **Zendik Farm Arts Foundation**, which recently moved from Florida to 116 acres near Sunnydale, North Carolina. Zendik started out in southern California in 1969, and after many years at their farm in Texas and a year in Florida, moved to their new property in April. They were challenged with moving 55 people, a large herd of goats, and 14 horses to property with only a run-down old house, a large horse barn, a small log cabin, and another small outbuilding. The first month they had no running water, but managed to move the horses in the horse barn, turn the small outbuilding into a goat barn, and move into the house and in the attic loft of the horse barn.

These days Zendik members work sunup to sundown cleaning up the road and paving it with gravel, hauling trash from and renovating the old house, fencing the property, building a second house,

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putting in a walk-in cooler, and building a music room and a dance room. "We're artists and activists," says member *Aera*, "with a dance and theater company and performance troupe. It's our survival and passion and our way of communicating our philosophy to others." Near-future plans include building a bath house, insulating the existing buildings and getting ready for winter. They plan to build more houses some time in the future.



Other community anniversaries in 1999 include, 10-year anniversaries for new age/spiritual **Aquarian Concepts** in Sedona, Arizona; two Messianic communities, **Community in Burlington** and **Community in St. Joseph** in Vermont and Missouri; **Sweetwater Community Land Trust** near Mansfield, Missouri; and rural **Union Acres** near Whittier, North Carolina.

Twenty-year anniversaries include political activists **Bright Morning Star** in Seattle, Washington; Christian activists

Jubilee Partners, near Comer, Georgia; new age/spiritual **Ojai Foundation**, near Ojai, California; Quaker-originated **Santa Rosa Creek Commons**, in Santa Rosa, California; Christian **Shepherdsfield**, near Fulton, Missouri; women's community **Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home**, in Athens, Ohio; and a Camphill community, **Triform Camphill**, near Hudson, New York.

Thirty-year anniversaries include yoga/meditation retreat **Ananda Village** near Nevada City, California; the school-based **Greenbriar Community** near Austin, Texas; rural **Kootenay Cooperative** near Argenta British Columbia; the lay Catholic activist **L'Arche Daybreak** in Richmond Hill, Ontario; rural **Morningglory** near Killaloe, Ontario; Behaviorist-influenced student co-op **Sunflower House**, in Lawrence, Kansas; and urban housing co-op **Twin Pines Co-op** in Santa Clara, California.

The oldest community that we know of celebrating an anniversary is **Whitehall Co-op**, in Austin, Texas—50 years old this year!



Don't forget the **Fellowship for Intentional Community's** next **Art of Community Gathering**, scheduled for November 19–21 in Frost Valley, New York. Besides lots of community networking, workshops will be offered on finding your community; consensus decision making; resolving conflict; visioning, planning, and fundraising; forming new communities, and more, with presenters *Caroline Estes, Geoph Kozeny, Laird Sandhill, Jeff Grossberg, Diana Christian, Paul DeLapa, Tony Sirna*, and many others. For more information: 669-883-5545 or 540-894-5798; gathering@ic.org. Ω



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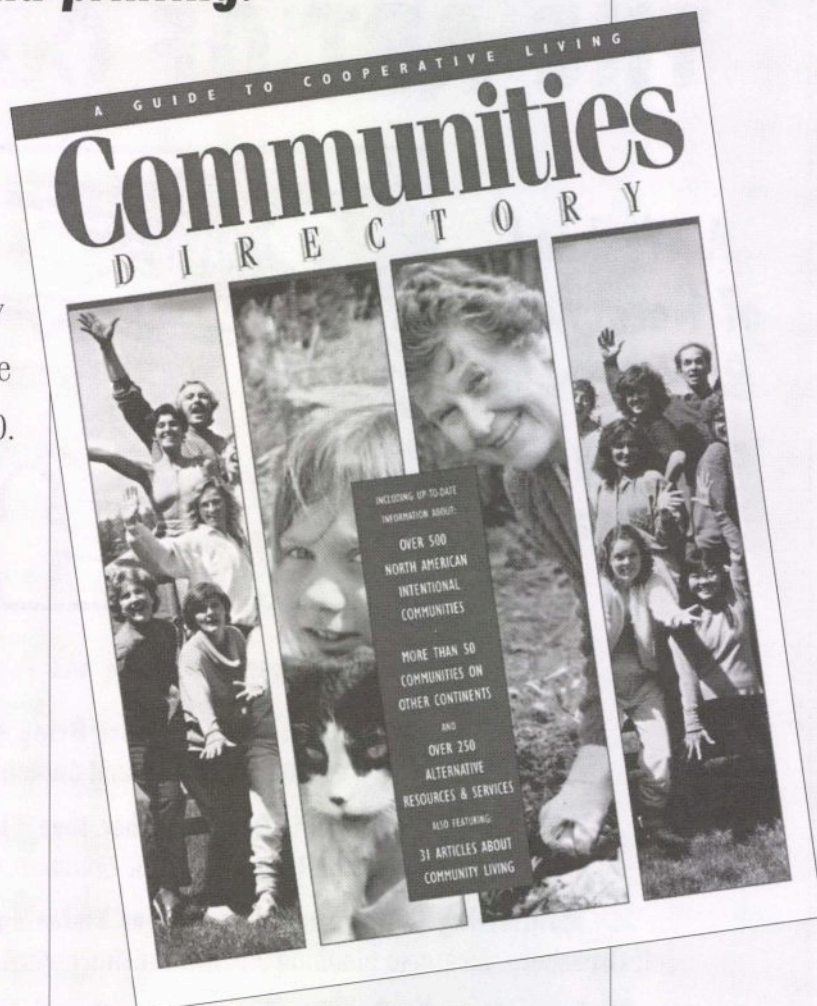
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See order form on page 78.



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Creating More Community in Our Lives

WHAT DOES COMMUNITY mean to you? What gets in the way of having more sense of community in your life? And how can the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) help?

These issues are the focus of the FIC's Community Dialog Project, where people all over North America come together in brief two- or three-hour gatherings to meet and network with each other; to share their visions, goals, and plans for community—as well as brainstorm how the FIC can help them; and to send the FIC a short report on how it went.

Initiated last year and expanded in 1999, the Fellowship's goals for the Community Dialog Project are to create forums for people with passion about community; to keep in touch with the people we serve (you!); to assist local areas by catalyzing local networking; to let people know what we offer; and to create an entry point for new FIC volunteers and financial donations, and to meet new friends.

Twenty-one Community Dialogs were held in 1998, and this year we are aiming for 50. In order to carry out this project, we rely on the efforts of local volunteer hosts—such as yourself—to arrange a time and place, and to do the outreach that brings people together. Some Dialogs happen as workshops at established events such as camps or conferences; others take place among members of ongoing groups that might focus one session on community. Other organizers may invite friends for a potluck supper, or get

members of their church or co-op to meet for an evening to discuss community.

The Fellowship offers support to make hosting a Dialog as easy as possible. Sometimes we can provide mailing labels for your area, or we may know of a contact person living in your area who can help. We send out a kit to every host with tips and suggestions on running a Dialog, along with outreach flyers, a sample session outline, and other materials.

As people began to host Community Dialogs last year, we were delighted to discover that not only did these gatherings offer people a chance to talk about community, often they also offered a small experience of community. Some groups have used the Dialog as a kick-off to continue meeting together and to keep talking and visioning about community.

The FIC would like to see Community Dialogs take place in as many settings as possible: cohousing communities, urban collective households, spiritual groups, land trust communities, student co-ops, food co-ops, dance camps, forming communities, and so on.

If you are interested in hosting one of these events, please get in touch (*contact information below*). Last year over 200 people participated—maybe this year you'll join us! Ω

To receive an organizing kit or if you have questions about the Community Dialog Project, please contact Tree Bressen, Community Dialog Project, 2244 Alder St., Eugene, OR 97405, 541-343-5023, tree@ic.org.

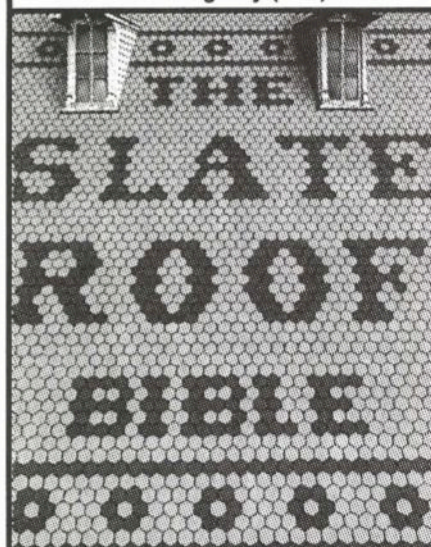


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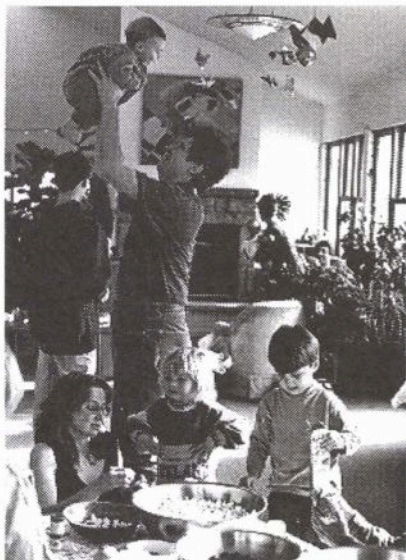
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Tree Bressen, Community Dialog Project Coordinator, serves on the board of FIC.

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Community Lost

IT HAS BEEN ABOUT TEN YEARS since I left the safety, friendship, and sometimes chaos of our attempt at community in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Recently while visiting other members of our now-disbanded group, I was reminded of the intimacy we had shared while going through our unique and, at times, most rewarding experience.

Like a difficult marriage, we had brought together individuals of diverse ethnic, class, and educational backgrounds, with the assumption that past history did not matter to individuals bound together by love and a shared vision of peace and cooperative living. I arrived a few years after the idealism of love and peace was slowly being replaced by a practical need for structure and financial responsibility.

As an ashram following the disciplines of a yogic tradition, we had a structure that served our spiritual development and helped keep us healthy and energetic while living in a rural, physically challenging environment. After six months I felt more energetic and optimistic than I had in years of struggling to make a living at various low-paying jobs. Looking back on this time I have thought that having and sharing a discipline in a supportive environment made living in our community such an empowering experience.

Our demise began with our shift from a relatively strict but open-minded

lifestyle to a monastic structure with close ties to the Hindu spiritual tradition. In this period of transition we lost many of our most talented members and fewer people came for retreats. We attempted to trade our spiritual curiosity for the certainty of an ancient tradition that survived into modern times. We traded the hours of physical labor we had shared together for an ever-growing collection of new tools, vehicles, and computer equipment.

Those of us who stayed believed that we were part of a divine plan; that we would eventually strengthen our faith and catch a glimpse of the larger picture by giving our commitment to something we often could not understand. Even now, looking back at the authoritarian decision making that often took place, I cannot say the sacrifice many of us felt we were

making was so unique. Even in this age of materialism, many people make sacrifices in their personal life: to do social work, to raise a family, to find truth, or to feed the homeless at a shelter. We considered service to be an integral part of our spiritual development.

The idea of community came late to our group and perhaps we were too locked in to and dependent upon the structure we had created to make the changes required for a more honest and supportive environment. We had become heavily dependent upon donations from the East Indian community in this country and had gone further into debt by



Devan Malone now lives in Lambertville, New Jersey.

building facilities for our most successful program, a children's summer camp. We began an attempt to shift to a spiritual community, incorporating the valuable practices of an ancient tradition with popular new age teachings and psychological techniques for self-healing. Some of us felt that counseling was important for personal healing. We began to view our situation as a dysfunctional family trying every trick and therapy to stay together. We were "spiritual," and we reasoned that spiritual endeavors with such good intentions couldn't fail.

My own crisis came when I became convinced that we were not living with integrity. We were becoming a business that was dependent on selling our product to an ever-elusive market of spiritual seekers and those in need of healing. There was a conflict between those with devotion to yoga practices and Hindu spiritual tradition, and those who were becoming more aware of personal healing and perceived

practical needs such as health insurance and an income and a career. Our founder had also died, leaving the burden of a shaky organization to a few well-meaning but inexperienced students. We had no problem coming up with creative ideas to solve our dilemma by calling for help from the Hindu deities we had come to know, sitting through the many meditations and visualizations we had learned from new age teachers, and or sending out huge mailings to an ever-growing list of the uninterested. We were caught up in a wave of changing times. The prosperous Indian community we had worked with through a summer camp program had begun to build their own temples and community centers in the cities where they lived. I believe they had become wary of young Americans who knew the chants and rituals, but were, after all, not born into their ancient tradition. In the drive to become more practical and businesslike we had also eased up on the spiritual practices that many of us had originally come to the community for. Morning meditation became the morning meeting: more efficient but less a source of personal empowerment and group bonding.

As one by one we slowly drifted back

into the world we had once jokingly called "the illusion." We had various reactions to the loss of our shared experience. Some, such as myself, grieved the loss of friendship and lifestyle. Others felt anger and that they had been deceived into believing they were part of a spiritual revolution that was going to bring about a profound change in world consciousness. Still others went into counseling, and tried to figure it all out, while others simply accepted that unique experience and threw themselves in to the world with the intention of creating family, prosperity, and a career.

My ideas of community have, over these last years, slowly evolved with a personal process of emotional healing, intellectual development, and further exploration of the world that many of us have never felt at home in.

It is clear that many people find their community, intimacy, and spirituality by living in a small town

or city, finding a mate, creating a family, reaching out to others of similar interests, working at a challenging, fulfilling job, or joining a church or religious community. Many of these choices seem impersonal and superficial compared to the intensity of the emotional and spiritual experience some of us have had by living in alternative communities. It is unfortunate that, in a time when community is so desperately needed, mainstream culture finds it so difficult to accept lifestyles outside the traditional ones of home, family, and city.

Even after these last few busy years of learning and, perhaps, accepting that there are many levels and types of communities to fit into, I still feel a sense of loss. Having gone through counseling, accumulating all major credit cards, buying a new vehicle, getting closer to finishing a college degree, and being blessed with loving, intimate relationships, nothing has matched the feeling of being part of a healing and nurturing community of like-minded individuals. I honor those who have become and those who attempt to become more fully empowered by the experience of community living. Please continue the challenging, important work of building community. Ω

**After six months
I felt more
energetic and
optimistic
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Of Course We Have Conflict (Here's How We Handle It)

WHEN I ARRIVED AT EAST Wind I thought I was in heaven, and of course there is no conflict in heaven. This lasted five days before I got yelled at for cleaning the TV trailer while someone was trying to watch TV. Suddenly I was out of heaven, having to deal with conflicts and a variety of different communication styles. East Wind is abundantly creative in the ways it handles conflict. Our most common first reaction is to avoid the person one had a conflict with. However, in community this is difficult because the offending person refuses to disintegrate into nothingness but keeps popping up in front of our face, morning, noon, and night, whether we're in a work area, the music room, or down at the swimming hole, until we can't stand it any more and reach out for reconciliation—alienation hurts too much.

Last month my mother came from Israel to visit. After she left a friend said with a smile, "We found out who messed up the kitchen: It was your mother!"

"How dare you accuse my mother? Where is your evidence? My mother is a clean woman!"

"You're yelling at me!" my friend responded. "How dare you yell at me!" She fled. Two days later I sat next to her at lunch. She admitted that she had been mistaken about my mother, but the way I

reacted overwhelmed her and she couldn't respond. "You see," she said, "In my family everybody yelled all the time. I can't handle yelling. You can call me names, but I freeze when people yell at me."

"So, how should I react when I feel hurt by you?" I asked. "I don't want to feel oppressed by your vulnerability."

"Anything goes but yelling."

"Okay, I'll add you to the list of friends who can't tolerate yelling. I'll find another way to let you know." This conversation allowed us to come up with a broader understanding of who we each are, and how important we are in each other's life.

When I first came to East Wind I had all the answers. Now I have less

answers and more tolerance and compassion about situations and opinions different than my own. You could say I am taking the course, "Healing Wounds through Conflict." My more expansive understanding is my reward for sticking it out in community and continuing to reach out and make a new friend, someone who only a while ago seemed so different from myself.

FEC COMMUNITIES ARE INCOME-sharing, which means our members are financially interdependent with each other. Twin Oakers, for example, must make decisions about how they use their



Avievaah Bezilla grew up on a kibbutz in Israel. She has lived at East Wind for three years.

shared resources with 100 other people. Having less individual autonomy about finances and decision making can raise difficulties that wouldn't arise in the life of one person or a family.

In most communities, the closer-knit the group, the more opportunity it has to explore differences and learn how to find the growing edge of cooperation through conflict resolution. In community, conflict often emerges in what appear to be minor disagreements. Often these are symptoms of deeper differences.

Moving into problem solving mode too quickly can resolve the obvious issue on hand without finding out what's really going on. Acquiring the skill of learning to listen with your whole being, not just your head or your gut, requires patience. The anger around dirty dishes may be

about a certain person in the community who hasn't yet learned what it means to live without a mother or wife. Simply creating a rotating schedule of who cleans may not help to explore the imbalances in our expectations of the conditions in which we live together. This is a relatively obvious example.

The more involved people are with each other on many levels, the more convoluted those interactions become. Where does one draw the line between isolation and freedom? How about interdependence and codependence? These are the rich challenges that community living offers.

How a community deals with conflict can also be revealed by who leaves, and why. Communities that learn to deal with conflict well make much more appealing long-term homes. How does a community balance the needs of the whole with the needs of the individual? Some communities make rules to cover various issues, but often the rules are just as much objects of contention as the problems they were attempting to allay.

I ASKED FEC MEMBERS TO SAY HOW their communities handle conflict. Elke Lerhman writes about Sandhill Farm.

"At Sandhill we have regular meetings, typically once or twice a week, to check in with each other and discuss the issues that

arise. Every member at home is expected to attend and participate. Anything is acceptable to talk about, from angst to apples. We make time for everyone who wants to say what has been happening for them, what they're thinking about, how they feel, whatever is on their minds. We have the intention of caring about each other, and creating in microcosm, a new society based on understanding, compassion, and thought. To rise to the challenge of bringing out the conflicts, exploring

their deeper meaning and addressing them we have to draw on a reservoir of belief in the goodwill of both ourselves and others. We also have to remember that these people are our friends with deep philosophical beliefs akin to our own, even if the surface looks soooo different! We strive to be interested in perspectives different from our

own, and are committed to hearing each person's point of view. Then we can construct a more complete picture in order to take care of people's various needs.

"At Sandhill one-to-one time is valued. Having individual check-ins at the meetings allows everyone the opportunity to find out about each other. From there it is personal choice to reach out in friendship or not. We believe we're cultivating an atmosphere of loving concern. What affects one affects all. Being a small community of about a dozen, this is an undeniable truth! For the past six years we have been devoting a week out of the year to retreat. With the help of an outside facilitator, we look at some larger issues, discuss our values, prioritize our projects, and reconnect as individuals and as a group."

VALERIE RENWICK-PORTER WRITES from Twin Oaks.

"Trust-building is quite different in a community of five or 10, such as Sandhill or Skyhouse, for example, than in a community of 100 such as Twin Oaks or East Wind. At Twin Oaks, we use a variety of conflict resolution tools. The most interesting one in recent years has been 'Trapeze,' a twice-weekly group that met at Twin Oaks for over five years. Based loosely on the Ganas community's Feedback Learning method, Trapeze gave

**"You're yelling
at me!" she
exclaimed.
"How dare you
yell at me!"**

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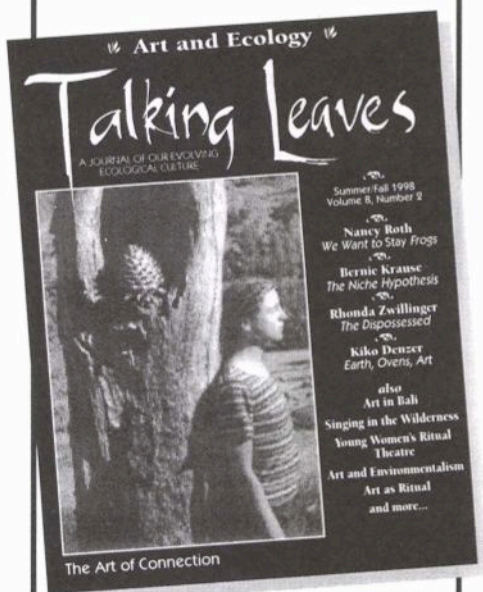
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members an opportunity to work out conflict with the help of a supportive yet honest group of people. (The name was chosen because group founders wanted to take risks, make themselves vulnerable, and feel the exhilaration of the experience.) Two members in conflict could have a group mediation, or perhaps the group would help one member of the conflict think well about the situation, his or her role in it, what could be done differently to change it, and so on. The group was open to any member interested in participating; in general, participation meant being willing to hear feedback about oneself as well as putting out insights about others.

"Twin Oaks also takes other paths towards conflict resolution. We have a pool of members who can do third-party facilitation to help to people in conflict have a mediated meeting. We have more formal community structures designed to help prevent but also deal with conflict. These include community meetings on issues of significance to Twin Oaks as a whole, a 'discussion board' where proposed policies are posted and members have a chance to give their written input and respond to other people's input. On occasion we have brought in an outside (that is, clearly neutral) facilitator for a particularly sticky situation where overall trust was low."

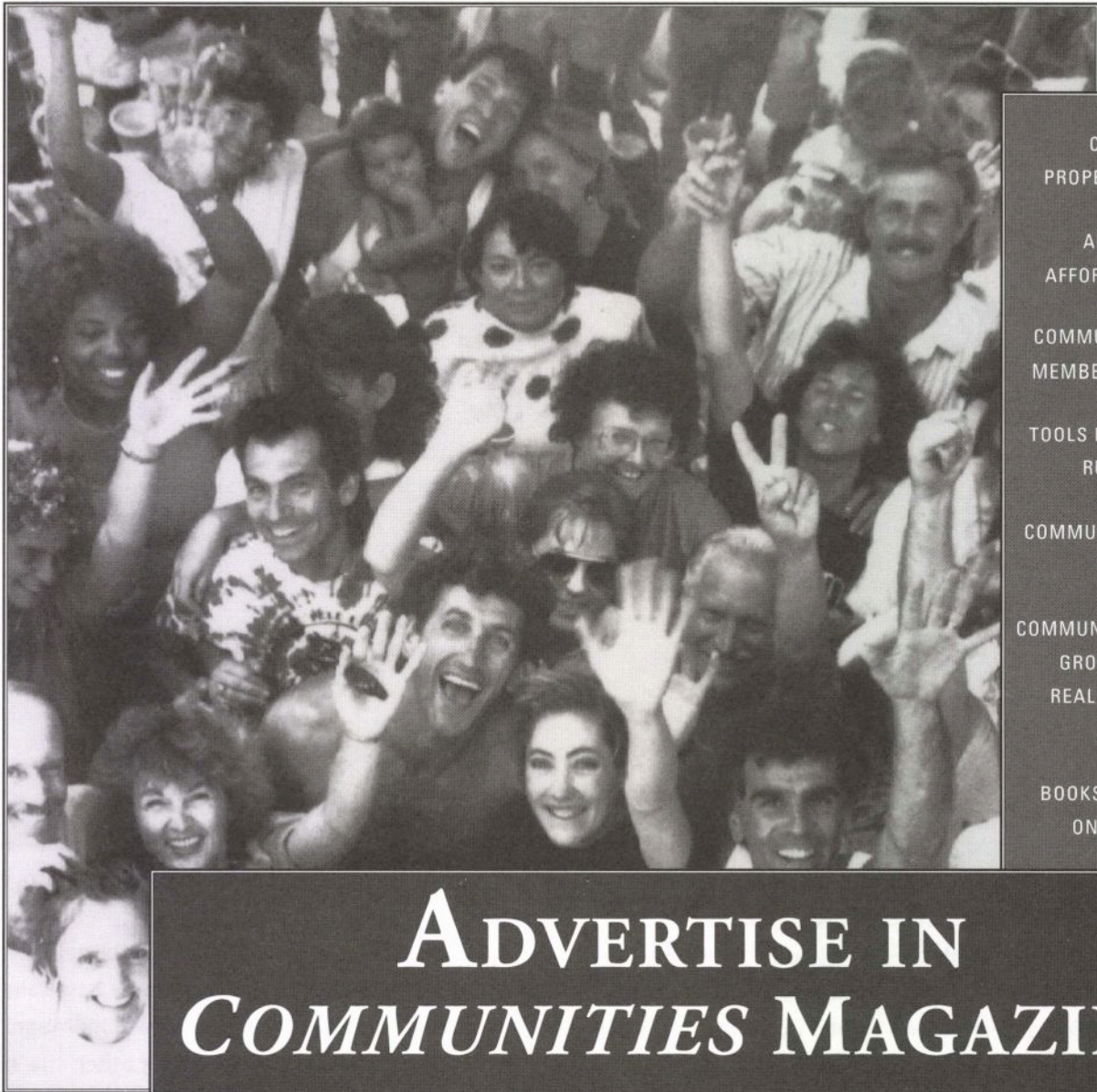
JON DUMONT DESCRIBES THE JOLLY Ranchers and Seattle Beacon Hill House, both in Seattle.

"The Jolly Ranchers are a small family-style community. Therefore, you can run but you can't hide. We have a commitment to dealing with conflict as soon as it becomes apparent. To that end we have weekly house meetings that sometimes stretch late into the evening.

"Perhaps more than some communities we spend time trying to hash out notions of correct action. That is, we think of communication in its ethical, or existentialist terms. Though the world is maddeningly subjective (what is good music?) we nevertheless have no choice except to try to come to agreement about our shared reality: for instance, 'What time is it?' or 'Did you or did you not mow the lawn?' or 'Are you angry with me right now?' If we can't agree on the answers to these questions we cannot

proceed in any effective manner. Similarly we try to come to agreements about ethical ways to bring a complaint to another person and also about the ethical ways to receive a complaint from another person. Along with that we try to reach agreement on all sorts of internal cultural norms concerning work, diet, recreation, cash expenditure, and so on. What is right livelihood? How much car use is too much? What kinds of diets are sustainable? Do we have a television? We try hard to create an environment where there are no conversational taboos. Now might be the time to mention that we are not completely successful in any of these endeavors, and that at times we experience disheartening failure. Nevertheless, we remain committed to the project. We have become more methodical over time—we are more articulate and in more agreement about what our project is.

"A couple of years ago one of our founding members, a man, became increasingly insistent about his advocacy for polyamory (many lovers) as a lifestyle. Several women began to think that he wasn't hearing their requests that he respect their boundaries and began to feel afraid. We spent many hours on this subject both in house meeting and in smaller groups. The women never stopped feeling unsafe. It wasn't that the man was physically aggressive in any way but that his attitudes seemed vaguely predatory and perhaps misogynous. For his part he believed that he had made some changes but that people didn't see them. He also seemed to think that he held knowledge (the 'truth' perhaps) that the rest of us were too prudish to consider and that he was being punished for his beliefs. We never were able to satisfactorily resolve these issues and the man eventually left the community. He left feeling ostracized, bitter, and misunderstood. We were still in process when he chose to leave. Perhaps given enough time we would have been able to resolve this conflict. Not dealing with it would have lead to chaos and perhaps dissolution of the community. We did the best we could. We're proud that we addressed these complex issues head on, at length, and with optimism and compassion. We learned a great deal about ourselves and each other. We gained skills that have helped and will help in future conflicts." Ω



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Conflict & ...

FROM THE EDITOR

WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED IT. PEOPLE WHO'VE LIVED in communities know conflict is an expected, inevitable part of community life.

Some believe that communitarians serve as living "mirrors" for one another—what I don't like in myself (but maybe don't recognize consciously yet) is exactly what exasperates me about you! And that conflict in community—and the learning from it—offers an opportunity for faster-than-normal spiritual and emotional growth. Laird Sandhill of the Fellowship for Intentional Community even goes so far as to say that knowing how to deal well with conflict is *the* most important contribution communities can make to the wider culture.

So, conflict is good. But what do we *do* with it?

A handful of generous, open-hearted people sat down and wrote articles about what they've seen work especially well in community settings. The outpouring of genuine good will in these articles was especially noticeable, leading me to speculate that whatever these folks have been doing to heal conflict in themselves is working!

I was especially struck by one theme that seemed to pulse through many of the articles—that by intending to

connect with people in the midst of struggling with them, we can solve anything.

In his moving article about their transformation from deadlock to affection ("Living Naka-Ima at Lost Valley"), Larry Kaplowitz reveals that community members are making their relationships with each other the most important thing they do together.

In his poignant, highly personal story of sexual abuse at Light Morning and its resolution ("A Healing Impulse"), Robert Foote shares how a method of listening deeply with a wide-open, compassionate heart—no matter how grievous the offense—can transform people's lives.

And Miki Kashtan ("Nonviolent Communication: Transforming Conflict and Enhancing Connection"), suggests that telling not only what we're feeling during a conflict, but also the often-overlooked needs that give rise to those feelings, help connect people at the heart—like a wave of empathy streaming across what moments before was an unbridgeable gulf. This model encourages connection first, and with that, solutions to problem issues seem naturally to follow.

Other authors approach discord by suggesting we take responsibility for how we make ourselves feel the way we do (rather than assuming someone else "made" us feel that way), and how we interpret someone to be a certain way (rather than assuming they "are" that way). This tends to make our "opponents" more willing to hear us—and, to connect with us. Scott Shuker of the Lama Foundation offers this advice ("The Tao of Speaking and Listening"), as does Bill Moffett, who describes how Oakshade members show each other how they'd best like to be approached with requests or feedback ("Support and Challenge at Oakshade").



Iris Tocher and Joan Valles offer a remarkably candid look at Goodenough community dynamics ("Opposing Leadership"), showing how people are learning to take responsibility for the underlying emotional issues that give rise to friction with their leaders.

Rob Sandelin counsels that no matter how difficult

someone's behavior or destructive its results ("Working with Difficult Behaviors in Meetings"), we focus only on the behavior and how we'd like it changed, not on what's "wrong" with the person. And what causes conflict in community in the first place? Helen Stevenson believes its our differing expectations about common issues.

And lastly, Robert Rhodes ("How It Is to Be Forgotten, and to Forgive"), touches on the political and spiritual disputes among Hutterite colonies. In matters of dissension, he tells us, Hutterites rely on faith and Scripture to "admonish, counsel, discuss, and always, go forward with patience and never with rancor."

This is one of the most engaging issues of the magazine it's ever been my privilege to edit. I hope you enjoy it. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian, editor of Communities magazine, lives in a small forming community near Asheville, North Carolina.

Connection



Lost Valley members have committed to making their relationships with each other the most important thing they do together.

LIVING 'NAKA-IMA' AT LOST VALLEY

BY LARRY KAPLOWITZ

NAKA-IMA. THIS PHASE HAS BECOME AN invocation of a way of being that has subtly and profoundly transformed our community here at Lost Valley.

For us, "Naka-Ima" invokes honesty, a willingness to be seen, and an intention to connect deeply. It reminds us that we can free ourselves of whatever we are stuck in, and that being free, clear, and connected is a choice that we can make any time, regardless of circumstances.

But it wasn't always that way.

A little over five years ago my wife Karin and I moved to Lost Valley Educational Center, a rural intentional community in Dexter, Oregon. We came to the community in a time of major transition. For the previous year things had been going well, and a tight bond had been created among the 10 adult community members. Then abruptly, within the space of just a few weeks, six of them left, for a variety of compelling personal reasons unrelated to the community.

The four who remained were in a tough spot. With the conference season rapidly approaching they needed help, so they called out to the universe, and we new members started showing up. Grateful, they opened their arms to us, accepting pretty much everyone who came. Within a couple of months, 10 new people had joined



Love and intimacy with each other are valued over results and accomplishments.

the community. Those of us who were new had no way to grasp how devastating this turnover must have been to the four original members, who had lost most of their “family” almost as abruptly as if there had been a natural disaster, only to have them replaced by strangers. As wonderful as we may have been, we were not yet family.

For the original four, there was no time to grieve, as necessary as it was. Here, suddenly, were 10 of us; fresh, enthusiastic, full of our own hopes and ideas, hurts and defenses, and relatively short on the kind of experience it takes to make community living work. Lost Valley’s community culture, delicately woven over the previous years, couldn’t survive this onslaught and rapidly unraveled. From the disturbed ground grew misunderstandings, resentments, and conflict.

We have since observed that in an intentional community, as in other natural systems, a certain amount of change is essential to keep the community healthy, vibrant, and evolving. Too much change, however, can disastrously upset the equilibrium, throwing the system into a level of chaos from which it may be difficult to recover.

Within a year, conflict had practically paralyzed us. In our weekly business meetings, where we made decisions by consensus, almost every new idea or initiative, if not

rejected outright, was resisted or undermined, leading the proposal’s adherents to eventually give up in frustration. Some people had become so uncomfortable with each other that they would go out of their way to avoid crossing paths. In our well-being meetings, serious concerns were expressed about “safety.” Resentments simmered but were rarely expressed directly, except in occasional outbursts of anger. At times the tension was so thick we felt like we were choking on it.

Eventually the people who were most at odds with each other left the community, and life improved. But the experience of that year left us hurt, discouraged, and cautious. We retreated. For about a year we accepted no new members. We all focused our energies on our individual areas of interest, and tried to stay out of each other’s way. We often went for months without having our weekly well-being meetings.

Gradually the wounds began to heal, or at least to hurt less. But not without a price; by the summer of ’96 nearly every one of us was frustrated, dissatisfied, and considering leaving. We all agreed that if we were going to survive as a community we needed major change, which meant we would have to face our difficult issues directly.

We decided to form a “core group”—four of us who were willing to meet daily to help move the community

ONE NAKA-IMA TECHNIQUE

"Milling" is one tool that we use regularly at our well-being meetings to keep our relationships clear. We all stand up and "mill around," until each person finds a partner. Each pair hold hands, looks into each other's eyes, and whoever feels moved to speak first, speaks. The other person listens, but does not respond. The instruction for the person speaking is to say whatever they need to say to bring them closer to their partner; to create more intimacy and connection. This may be something they've been holding on to (e.g., "I felt hurt the other day when you ..."), a resentment they've been carrying (e.g., "I'm pissed that you ate the last brownie

and didn't wash the pan"), a judgment about the other person, gratitude or appreciation that they haven't expressed, something they've been withholding or haven't wanted to reveal about themselves, or anything that comes up spontaneously in the moment that makes them feel more open-hearted and connected.

It's important to emphasize that people talk about themselves, taking responsibility for their emotions, opinions, and judgments, and that the person listening doesn't answer, agree, or disagree, but just lets it in. This is not a discussion, but an opportunity to give or receive, depending on whether you're the

speaker or listener. When the speaker is complete, the listener says "thank you" and each moves on to find another person. It's fine to come back to the same person later, but only after being with at least one or two other people first. The interactions are generally brief, from 30 seconds to two or three minutes. We usually run this process anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes, or until everyone feels complete. No matter how disconnected, distracted or grumpy we may be when we begin, milling always pulls us rapidly into the present and melts our defenses. We can feel the energy in the room tangibly shift as we do this. Milling keeps the slate clean. —L.K.

in a positive new direction. When this group first met, it was clear that to accomplish anything we needed to be able to trust each other, so we spent the first two weeks of our meetings—many hours each day—saying what we hadn't said to each other, clearing our hurts and resentments, and holding each other accountable for our patterns. Out of this work, a new energy and openness began infusing the community.

At around this same time, I learned that my old friend Deborah Riverbend and her partner Jaime Campbell had been teaching Naka-Ima workshops for the last three years in Nelson, British Columbia, with exciting results. Deborah and Jaime had developed Naka-Ima (Japanese for "here now"), as an evolution of work originated by Bayard Hora and offered throughout the '80s and early '90s. I invited Deborah and Jaime to give their basic Naka-Ima workshop here at Lost Valley.

The workshop was simple and deep. We were to focus on three basic things: recognizing and letting go of our attachments, being deeply honest with ourselves and each other, and choosing in each moment to act from our vision rather than from our "damage." Aside from a brief explanation of these concepts, the weekend contained almost no content or information, but consisted almost entirely of interaction, in various formats.

In the mornings, we each had the opportunity to share about ourselves to the group and let ourselves be seen. We were gently coached to notice and express whatever feelings, sensations, and ideas were coming up for us, and when we had a negative feeling, such as fear, anxiety, anger, guilt, discomfort, or pain, to find the attachment that was underlying the feeling. Once we identified and articulated the attachment (e.g., wanting control, wanting approval, wanting love ...), we were asked to let go of it. We quickly discovered that letting go is a physical, visceral experience that can't be faked. When a person let go, their posture straightened, their body opened, their tension evaporated, and they became luminous; everyone in the room could experience the release. We also discovered that when we let go we were thrust into the present, where our history, our patterns, and our limiting ideas no longer had a hold on us. In that moment we were free; all choices and ways of being were available. We learned that letting go is a choice made moment by moment, not an intellectual process, and that we always have the ability to let go, no matter how intense or adverse the circumstances. We saw how much energy we expended protecting and suppressing ourselves, and how much energy was released when we revealed ourselves.

In the afternoons, seated in small groups, we encouraged



These communitarians seek relationships that help them each become more fully themselves.

each other to share the things we were afraid to reveal: our pain and fears, our vulnerability, our fragile hopes and dreams, our love and affection for each other, and our clarity, wisdom, and vision. We expressed, frankly and directly, what we saw about each other. We delved into our pasts to discover the roots of our attachments and destructive behavior patterns, and as attachments came up (which they did over and over again), we coached each other in letting go. We supported each other in moving into our emotions, surrendering and giving full expression to our anger, grief, pain, and joy. We kicked, we screamed, we laughed, we cried, coaxing each other, through each courageous act of honesty, into the present.

By the end of the weekend, the obstacles we all had in the way of being clear, connected, compassionate, honest and powerful seemed to have dissolved, as if they never existed, leaving a room full of glowing, radiant, loving beings. While we knew that the “glow” would come and go, and that our obstacles, defenses, wounds, and attachments would continue to play havoc with us, our relationship to them had changed. They no longer had the same power over us. We became transparent to each other, and had faith that no matter how much came up we could move through it together and get to the other side.

The ongoing process of transformation has not always

“Letting go” is a physical, visceral experience that can’t be faked.

been a smooth and seamless process. We recognized soon after Naka-Ima that two divergent trends had been developing in the community. Most of us wanted to move in the direction of a more cooperative and shared life together, but felt frustrated because a few other members were desiring more independent lives, and had been phasing back on active participation in the community. As a small consensus group, it seemed that without a change nobody would be able to get what they really wanted. To those of us who held the cooperative vision, it seemed necessary to break with precedent and ask the others to leave, freeing the energy to move forward—we didn’t feel we had enough of a foundation to tolerate that kind of diversity. This was the first in a series of courageous and risky choices that we would have to take to restore our integrity as a community.

With a clear direction to move in, we began discarding our limiting ideas of how we should be together and reinventing our relationships to reflect our desire for intimacy, connection, and cooperation. We took many big steps. To further cooperation, we dropped the jobs and roles that we had staked out for ourselves and created teams. We decided as a group that we would hold responsibility for each individual’s welfare and developed a more shared economic system, valuing all work equally. The line between our well-being and business meetings began to blur—well-being could not be compartmentalized, but was an essential part of everything, and we began taking the time, no matter what we were doing, to stop and address issues, conflicts, and hurts. We made space for each other to have our feelings, anytime. We also began learning and incorporating other tools, such as Re-evaluation Counseling and ritual, and we’ve kept going deeper with each other, ever more freely sharing our visions and struggles.

About a year later we took Deborah and Jaime’s second-level workshop, which gave us additional tools and experience to draw upon.

We’ve continued holding Naka-Ima workshops here at Lost Valley regularly, sharing what we’ve learned with others. Several community groups have come for Naka-Ima, usually facing challenges similar to or even greater than those we faced. They have all left with a renewed sense of hope and possibility, although the outcome has not always been as expected. In one case, several of the community members saw that it was their next step to move on from their community to pursue other visions, essentially dissolving the community.

Assessing Community Well-Being

Symptoms of Being Out of Relationship, Disconnected

To support our intention to keep our relationships clear and flowing, our community brainstormed this list of symptoms of eroding relationships; indicators that trust and compassion are waning and defenses are going up.

- Arguing
- Avoidance
- Backbiting/gossiping
- Bingeing (sugar, drugs, videos)
- Blame
- Chaos at mealtimes
- Chronic lateness
- Cliques/factionalism
- Competitiveness
- Defensiveness
- Depression
- Difficulty coming to agreements
- Drama and struggle
- Eating standing up or in a hurry
- Feeling alone/unappreciated in work
- Feeling of “not enough time”

- Feeling unsafe to express feelings/thoughts
- Going through the motions
- Incompleted projects/lack of follow through
- Injuries
- Isolation/separation
- Kitchen a mess
- Lack of physical touching
- Non-accountability for decisions/passing the buck
- Overcommitting
- Overwhelm/burnout
- Prolonged worrying
- Qualifying our contributions
- Resistance/resentment to service
- Restlessness
- Rushing or hurrying
- Sarcasm/fractiousness/hurtful speech
- Secrecy/covertness
- Sickness
- Sluggishness/heaviness in work
- Speaking over each other
- Superficial interactions
- Suppression of enthusiasm
- Territoriality
- Unclear communication

Over these last few years of working with our own and other communities, we’ve learned some important lessons. We’ve seen that on the surface our conflicts seem to be about ideologies, priorities, and values, all of which seem to come to a head around such charged issues as children, food, pets, and recently, Y2K. When we look a little deeper, we see that the “charge” usually comes from fear, guilt, or resentment. When we look deeper still, we find core attachments: wanting approval, wanting control, wanting love, wanting to be seen. Underlying these core attachments are old hurts, often from the first years of our lives. When conflict arises now, we usually go straight for the deeper layers.

We’ve also learned that the little things in our relationships—the minor hurts, the small resentments, the petty judgments we have about each other—have a subtle yet pervasive undermining effect that severely limits what is possible in our relationships. Even a small degree of mistrust can prevent us from really risking with each other—from revealing to each other our precious, vulnerable hearts. Uncleared, this can quickly spiral downward into deadness, disconnection, avoidance, deeper resentment, and conflict.

The biggest lesson we’ve learned over the last few years is that sustainable community must have at its founda-

tion sustainable relationships—relationships that give us more than they take from us; that nourish, enliven, and inspire us; that are a continual source of energy; and which support us in becoming fully ourselves. When we all open our hearts to each other we transcend our limitations and enter into a different reality. Suddenly, anything seems possible. At Lost Valley we have committed to making our relationships with each other the most



Community members, interns, and apprentices at the Lost Valley entrance, seek sustainable relationships that nourish, enliven, and inspire them.

Indicators of Being in Relationship, Feeling Connected

We also brainstormed this list of behaviors that are natural expressions of relationships in which intimacy, trust, love, and respect are flourishing.

- Activities are exciting/stimulating/important
- Adults and children have important and recognized roles to play in the community
- Appreciation is given more often than blame
- Attractive, competent, healthy people are drawn to us
- Awareness and enjoyment of and interaction with our land
- Beauty is valued
- Calm in the face of crisis or emergency
- Ceremony/ritual/practices that are reflective of individual passions/growth
- Children embraced and included
- Committees meet regularly
- Coordination between areas of activity
- Eagerness to participate
- Emotions are visible/acknowledged/supported
- Freely admitting mistakes
- Generosity
- Gratitude is regularly expressed
- Joyful sharing of resources

- Laughter
- Listening before speaking/leaving a moment of silence after someone
- Lots of touching/physical affection
- Manifesting easily what we want and need
- People freely saying in the moment what they feel/see/need
- People working together without resentment
- Playing music together
- Reaching out to include others' perspectives
- Responsibilities are fulfilled
- Singing, skipping, breathing, whistling
- Socializing freely and regularly
- Spaces are kept clean and orderly
- Spontaneously and easily asking for help
- Spontaneously volunteering service to others
- Taking care of our physical needs (exercise, good food)
- Taking responsibility for our own emotions (not dumping or blaming, being vulnerable, seeing others as allies)
- Visitors/guests feel welcome and comfortable/it's easy for them to fit in

—L.K.

important thing we're doing together, to value our love and intimacy with each other over results and accomplishments, to be courageous and take risks with each other. We continually affirm our intention to deepen our connections. We have become less tolerant of our separateness, isolation, and disconnection.

This has not eliminated conflict from our community. Conflict seems natural and inevitable when a group of

passionate people share their lives together. But we no longer resist conflict, ignore it, or try to tiptoe around it. We embrace it. We've come to see conflict as an opportunity to identify our patterns of protection, to uncover and heal our old wounds and distress, and as an essential step in our growth and liberation as individuals and as a community. We're willing to stop what we're doing at any time when the energy isn't freely flowing to address conflict, get to the root of it, and clear it. We've accepted that this is not an instant process, nor a tidy one. Becoming whole is a lifetime endeavor, and lifelong patterns don't give up the ghost without a fight. Sometimes we fall back on our denial and avoidance for days or weeks until it gets unbearable. But eventually someone always musters up enough courage or annoyance to get up and shout "enough!" And sometimes it gets messy. We stomp and scream, rant and rave, act out like children, let it all hang out. But it never gets boring! Ω

Larry Kaplowitz lives at Lost Valley Educational Center, where he teaches Naka-Ima workshops, and serves as conference coordinator and works with Lost Valley's magazine, Talking Leaves. For information on Naka-Ima workshops: Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; larry@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.



Author Larry Kaplowitz, who brought Naka-Ima to Lost Valley, and his family.



COMMON SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY

BY HELEN STEVENSON

COMMUNITIES OFTEN EXPERIENCE conflict over the same kinds of issues. These often seem to involve differing expectations in a few basic categories:

Space, boundaries

- External, physical boundaries: land ownership and usage; privacy in a shared house.
- Personal boundaries: undesirable physical contact, using or borrowing someone else's personal items.

Health and lifestyle

- Food purchases, preparation and storage, quantity and quality.
- Use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco.
- Who cares for an ill person; who decides what kind of treatment they'll receive?

Time

- Personal and family time vs. community work projects, meetings.
- Scheduling projects/meetings in mornings vs. evenings.

Intensity of Relationships

- Inclusion of newcomers: open-arms welcoming, or "find your own place"?
- Smaller, tighter subgroups of friends within the larger group: people's natural preferences, or "cliques"?

- All members attend all meetings? Or some decisions are made by committees?

- Is there a place for the loner, artist, or introvert?

Structure of Relationships

- Cooperative decision making (such as consensus or voting), or decisions made by one person or a small group?
- Male or female dominant, or no one gender dominant?
- Place of a spiritual teacher or guru.
- Place of elders.
- Place of children.

Response to Problems

- Avoidance of problem, or recognition and working toward a solution?
- What's the method of problem solving?

Care of Tools and Equipment

- Who sets standards for group equipment and care?
- Is there a consequence for someone who gives improper care? Who pays for repairs or replacement?
- Community owned or personally owned tools and equipment?
- Duration of loan of tools or equipment.

Financial Arrangements

- If people contribute money to a community and later want to leave, do they get their money back again?
- Can someone who is leaving sell their house or house and land to anyone, or must the community approve the buyer?
- Envy and resentment, when some members have greater financial assets than others.
- If income-sharing, do members retain personal funds and/or equipment? Does a new member contribute assets, savings, or vehicles? If they leave do they get them back? Who decides on fundable personal needs?

Standards of Behavior

- What are standards of acceptable behavior with each other in the community?
- Standards of acceptable behavior "outside," where it reflects on the community?
- Are there procedures to handle unacceptable behavior?

Care of Children, Animals

- How much control over children's behavior do non-parents have; how much control over animals do non-owners have?
- Can community members request, or require changes in the parents' child-raising style? Can members request or require that pet owners' restrain, fence, or train their animals? Problems with other people's children and dogs often cause the most intense community conflicts. Ω

Helen Stevenson, an activist for 38 years in the community of Argenta, B.C., helped found and taught in the Argenta Friends School, a Quaker high school and "community within a community." Before emigrating to Canada, she helped create the interracial community of Mountain View Homesteads in Tracy, California.

OPPOSING LEADERSHIP

BY IRIS TOCHER AND JOAN VALLES

*Are leaders always at fault?
Or are members sometimes
passive aggressive?*



GOODENOUGH COMMUNITY

Goodenough members acknowledge that working with conflict is a necessary and natural part of community life. Members Pam Jefferson and Tom George.

CONFLICT WITH LEADERS—NOT SO UNUSUAL in intentional communities. For the last several years we've had such conflict in Goodenough Community. Lately, however, we're beginning to see the light.

As a Seattle-based multiresidential group of about 100 friends, our purpose is to develop ourselves as caring people and guide and support each other in serving society. We've been dealing with the conflict of being structured by a dominant presence, our co-founder, Dr. John Lawrence Hoff. John, an interfaith minister, teaches the perennial wisdom and holds a metaphysical stance that can offend people sometimes. This is good—John is always attempting to get us to find our own inner guidance, and knowing where we don't agree helps us do this. Nevertheless, it hasn't been easy for us to see that the resistance some of us have to John is only partially due to disagreeing with his viewpoints. More often it's due to our projecting our issues onto him or responding passive aggressively to someone who "forces" us to look at our lives differently. Doing the work to resolve this conflict seems to be a necessary and valuable karma yoga.

We are beginning to see that in opposing John, and in opposing other community leaders, we are not necessarily devaluing leadership, his or ours. For example, because authentic consensus decision making requires

that each of us share our perspectives, when we don't say what we're really thinking or feeling in a meeting—perhaps because we may feel it's not "nice" to disagree with others—the subterranean resentment we feel because we didn't speak out can undermine any decisions we make. John has helped us considerably to accept the presence of conflict (in this case, disagreeing with each others' opinions), and support leadership, his or ours, to develop a true consensus born of many viewpoints.

John has asked us to support him as we would any friend and to identify with his work: developing a demonstration, non-residential, intentional community organized and resourced to develop conscious

people in loving relationships and bonded families who are interested in helping improve society.

Our community began more than 30 years ago as a collaboration among leaders of the human potential movement in the Pacific Northwest. For many years our primary expression was an annual week-long human relations laboratory that gathered people together to grow, learn, and play. In 1981 we incorporated as the American

Association for the Furtherance of Community; in 1986 we became a covenantal organization; and in 1994 instituted a three-tiered membership system honoring the fact that some of us had different levels of interest and involvement.

We have always intended to be both a caring, healing environment and a learning/training laboratory. A core of leaders, mostly friends and colleagues for more than 15 years, has developed a philosophy of community living which is expressed in a school, a church, a variety of courses and workshops, and in books and other educational materials.

Our current conflict, which began in 1992, is focused on an unfinished negotiation between John and ourselves about how we might pay him for his ongoing work with us. We have periodically attempted to deal with this situation and have managed to come to various solutions, but we have not been able to sustain our resolution of the underlying dynamic of tension among subgroups that differ over the amount of compensation we should pay him. One way this lack of resolution manifests itself is that since our attempt to emotionally and financially invest in John and begin an employment contract with him—always a lengthy process at best—we still have no signed contract.

Our deepest insights about conflict are just now beginning as a result of a recent learning experiment, the Mental Health Initiative. We offered this 16-week course, which ended in early May, through our school, the Private School for Human Development. During this course, professionals in the mental health field guided a group of 35 of us through assessments from the DSM-IV (the standard reference for psychiatric evaluation), readings from transpersonal psychology and other perspectives, and small and large group discussions. The people who took this course have helped the rest of us open our eyes and see how as individuals and as a group, our emotional issues—primarily being overly dependent, or engaging in avoidant, anti-social, and passive-aggressive behaviors—have contributed to what has been our history of passive aggression and unresolved issues with our leaders.

We don't see ourselves as unusual in this; rather, we recognize these same patterns in our society. We know ourselves to be doing pioneering work about the forces that can prevent our creating a more life-affirming sustainable community.

During this most recent experiment, we began to recognize how we have unwittingly opposed John, and some of us have expressed guilt about that. But we still have not had much energy for the next move, which would be asking John how we could join him in carrying the responsibility for community life and well-being. It appears we still need to raise our consciousness about the malevolence we sometimes harbor in our subconscious minds, and to do something about it.



LEFT: Goodenough Community co-founder, Dr. John Lawrence Hoff.

BELOW: Developing caring people who guide and support each other in serving society is the community's purpose. (Left to right) Jim Tocher, Joan Valles, Bruce Tarls, Iris Tocher.

ALL PHOTOS: GOODENOUGH COMMUNITY



This comes up, for example, around scheduling meetings. We announce meeting dates well ahead of time. One or two people on a team "forget" the meeting or make other plans, assuming that they aren't important to the process. But subconsciously, they are angry and don't want to be told what to do with their time. They don't renegotiate ahead of the meeting, and so let down other people who may have been depending on their



ABOVE: Members of this non-residential community live throughout the greater Seattle area, and help each other with projects, such as this hot tub.

RIGHT: Member Phil Stark, helping with the hot tub project.

point of view for an important decision or process.

What we have come to as individuals and as a group is that our emotional woundedness has kept us from enjoying community life. And whenever we don't enjoy this life, we often act out against it. We have had to confront how hard it is for us to emotionally invest in the community, and how much easier it is to withhold, in spite of the huge cost such withholding has on our relationships and our organization.

We have been working recently on developing a new vision for the Goodenough Community. We find that the deeper we explore the core of our conflicts, the more creativity we have for our vision. Our energy is beginning to move again.

In any case, it appears we cannot avoid conflict in community. Nor do we wish to, since the experience of "pain in relationship"—the core definition of conflict—is an aspect of raising our consciousness, our awakening. Any community must learn that acknowledging the pain in relationship is a necessary and natural experience of working out a life with each other. Most conflict in our community is not related to organizational decisions, but simply to personal mistakes,



unfortunate timing, and inadequate communication.

As we have learned over many years and most recently through the Mental Health Initiative, interpersonal and organizational conflicts often emerge from the conflict within ourselves. For instance, our heads are full of unpleasant inner dialogues, which give rise to interpersonal grumbling and resistance to authentic communication. We have found that if we talk out the inner dialogue, we are less apt to act out inner conflict and are more able to join with one another. With such learning aids we slowly acquire the ability to not identify with our inner conflict or impose it on others. We simply acknowledge that although we are disturbed by aspects of the question at hand, our deepest desire is to understand the other person's viewpoint—and to make our own view known.

As for managing conflict in general, we now use two or three people who help us deal with conflict. We chose people with a non-anxious presence and an ability to neutralize negative energy in a gracious manner. More recently, we have selected someone skilled in working with people and trusted by almost everyone to fill the role of ombudsperson. She and her committee help people hear each other and deal with each

other's issues. In the past few weeks, we have seen the importance of working through our denial that *stress and conflict is inherent in leadership by anyone*. We are even now feeling more compassionate toward John and Colette Hoff and their leadership and finding ourselves more understanding of the pain and joy in each of us as leaders. Ω

Iris Tocher, a member of Goodenough for 18 years, a former city council member and environmental/ERA lobbyist, has come to believe that "the only thing that goes anywhere is community." Community is also the avocation of Joan Valles, a seven-year Goodenough member and former newspaper editor now with the Physics Department at the University of Washington.

A HEALING IMPULSE

Moving Toward an Open-Hearted Community

BY ROBERT FOOTE



Myra (left) and Lauren (right) agreed to share their story. With Puck, Myra's pet ferret, in the backyard.

ROBERT FOOTE

S EVEN YEARS AGO, OUR DAUGHTER LAUREN WAS SEXUALLY molested by a man who was both a close friend and a longtime member of our community. Her best friend Myra, who lived in the neighborhood, was also molested. The abuse of these two girls by Adam (not his real name) rocked our community, *Light Morning*, to its core.

Our immediate concern was for Lauren and Myra. My wife Joyce and I wanted to sweep them up in our arms and hold them until all the pain and confusion went away. This parental impulse was quickly followed by feelings of shock, disbelief, blinding anger, and disgust. We were also seized by a sudden fear of the dark, brooding forces that haunt the human psyche, causing people to do unthinkable things. Still later came another feeling—a strange, aching grief for the irretrievable loss of innocence.

Then we discovered, somewhere in this swirling cauldron, a surprising compassion for Adam. He, too, was suffering. Consumed with guilt, shame, and self-contempt, he found himself facing the terrifying prospect of up to 40 years in a state penitentiary.

Our empathy for Adam wrestled with the rage we felt at his betrayal. Lined up on the side of empathy were all the values upon which we had been building our lives and our community for the past 20 years. The inner struggle, however, was fierce. It felt, in the shimmering heat of that moment, as though we were competing in a qualifying event for some sort of spiritual Olympics.

But this is not the story of that struggle, nor of its outcome. Time passes and wounds heal. Yet not all wounds heal completely. The traumatic stress of a severe emotional injury often lingers on, long after the surface wound has mended. It awaits a deeper healing.

Last fall I went to a Vipassana meditation retreat in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, wanting to strengthen

the meditative practice that Joyce and I share. Midway through the 10-day course, I experienced a brief interval of bliss. Past and future dissolved, leaving only quietness and beauty. Into this unusual stillness came, for want of a better word, a vision. It arrived unannounced, unexpected, and fully formed. It was the complex choreography of a “dance” that would bring deeper healing to all those who had been wounded by the abuse.

I became aware of a startling symmetry—the girls needed to vent their long-repressed and volatile feelings, while Adam needed a profound exercise in empathy. These two needs, I suddenly realized, dovetailed perfectly. Accompanying this realization was a visual impression that Lauren and Myra’s “confrontation” with Adam should be the culmination of an inward-spiraling series of encounters that would include the girls’ parents and some of our concerned neighbors.

There was also an understanding that the sessions should be conducted by Daniel Little and Cécile Green (whom Joyce had previously met at a communities conference at Twin Oaks),

using a technique that they facilitate called Open Hearted Listening.

Even insights can be distracting to one’s meditative practice, though, and I reluctantly set the images aside. While driving home from



Robert and Joyce Foote chose to follow Robert’s insight about healing an old community wound through an Open Hearted Listening session.

Chapel Hill, however, they ripened into a compelling impulse, which soon took on a life of its own. What follows is an account of how this healing impulse unfolded during the late fall and early winter of 1998.

Coping With Betrayal

This past May, several months after the events in this story transpired and seven years after the abuse, I asked each of the main participants, one at a time, to share their experiences. The first interview was with Lauren and Myra. We walked out to Myra’s back yard (accompanied by Puck, her pet ferret) and sat down on the grass with a small tape recorder.

MYRA: After the abuse was uncovered, when I was eight, I felt more angry toward myself. Almost like it was my fault. I knew it wasn't, but those thoughts came up a lot. I didn't understand the situation. All I knew was that I wanted to punish Adam somehow. I didn't know whether I wanted to punish him for something I did wrong or something he did wrong.

LAUREN: I felt basically that he was this friend of mine who had lived in my community for as long as I can remember. And I felt betrayed. Like, "Why the hell did he do that?"

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JOYCE: The processing we did with Lauren after the abuse went well. But we had no way to gauge what was going to happen when she got into her teenage years. We intuitively felt



Light Morning's new community building, still under construction, was the site of the healing session.

that much of what she had experienced would be a time-release capsule and would be triggered by the onset of puberty.

That turned out to be true. About a year and a half ago, an angst or a

hostility toward Adam started showing up that hadn't been there before. It was as though Adam could do no right. Something was obviously brewing, and we weren't sure where it was going to go.

ABOUT OPEN HEARTED LISTENING by Daniel Little and Cécile Green

OPEN HEARTED LISTENING IS A SIMPLE, PRACTICAL METHOD for developing empathy. It offers an opportunity for two or more people to navigate through difficult issues to a place of mutual compassion and connection, once they have learned the technique and have agreed to use it in their relationships.

The process has three steps. First, someone who is in emotional distress (called the "speaker") asks the person who may seem to be causing their distress (the "listener") if they are willing to listen with an open heart. This sets the stage for the practice of Open Hearted Listening, by invoking the previously made agreement.

In the second step, the speaker tells his or her story, while the listener receives it and then reflects or "mirrors" the content of the story back to the speaker. All the details (who, what, where, and especially how it felt) are fully shared and accurately mirrored.

Then begins step three. Here the listener sets aside defensiveness and attempts to "walk in the moccasins" of the speaker. The goal is to develop and express an understanding of how the speaker could feel the way he or she does. Speaker and listener work together as allies, sharing new information and making suggestions

about how the validation process can work better, until an empathetic link is established and the speaker feels validated.

The "mirroring" aspect of this process resembles the practice of active listening. Yet the real magic and mystery come from the final step, successful validation, as both people share the emotional reality of the one in distress. It is not about making one person right and the other wrong. It is about the emotional healing that comes from genuine empathy.

We have been interested for several years in the potential application of Open Hearted Listening to the network of relationships in communities. We believe it is well suited to preventing and resolving conflict in any relationships which are based upon commitment and a strong desire to grow. Ω

Daniel Little and Cécile Green gratefully acknowledge Don and Martha Rosenthal, creators of Open Hearted Listening, for their training and support. Daniel and Cécile are available to facilitate Open Hearted Listening and other related techniques with couples as well as community members. They can be reached at littlegreenfolk@hotmail.com.

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MYRA: Last fall, I definitely felt angry. I had stuff to get out that hadn't come out yet. And I didn't know if it was ever going to come out, if I was ever going to be able to talk about it.

LAUREN: I had a lot of anger, but it was buried. I had put it down. But about a year ago, it was starting to come back up onto the surface.

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JOYCE: When all this first hit the fan, back in 1992, I knew that if I was going to be of any use to Adam as a support person, I had to give full expression to my sense of betrayal and disgust and just my rage at someone hurting my child. Anyone who has children, they know what this would feel like. To have someone that you've lived with and loved and trusted harm your child is a huge betrayal.

I was able to get those feelings out, even though it was hard work. And it turned out the way I had hoped: I was able to offer him my support. But I had to keep doing it. I had to keep mentally bringing him before me (both at the time of the abuse and at various times since) and vent my feelings over and over again.

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ADAM: I discovered, after the abuse, that my community was basing its response upon a fundamental, almost unspoken premise: a refusal to participate in our throwaway society, a society in which relationships are disposable. To choose instead, when the deeper dimensions of a relationship challenge us to let go of some dearly held attachment—to choose to face that agonizing struggle, rather than avoid it by throwing away the relationship.

That is precisely the challenge that I presented to Light Morning. Were you going to ditch me, the way the rest of society ditches a sex offender?

That's what we do. We bury them under the jail. We give them sentences that are astronomical. Because no one wants to identify with that struggle in their own lives.

The alternative is for each of us to claim an extremely ugly side of ourselves. To see my offense as something that is not outside the realm of human nature. Society says, "You're a monster," if you do what I did. I know that I am not a monster. Yet at the same time, I know that what I did was horrible.

This community rose to the excruciating challenge that my behavior presented it with. And I was



Light Morning co-founder Ron Hassell.

met with something different than what society offers sex offenders. Dramatically different. I discovered that the people in my community were choosing to not make their relationships with me be disposable.

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DANIEL: The Chinese word for "crisis" means both danger and opportunity. That's conflict in a nutshell. There's the potential for danger, for an antagonistic, polarized situation. Yet there's also an opportunity, if people have the willingness to engage

with each other in a new way. It's about creating a loving, empathetic connection, based upon a desire to see and appreciate another person's perspective. Especially that person's emotional perspective, which may be volatile.

But if two people, or a community, have a container or safety net and an agreed-upon process that they know and can use in their relationships, then anything is possible.

A Perilous Opportunity

To appreciate the elegant simplicity of the impulse that arrived last fall during the meditation retreat, one must have at least some appreciation for the complexity of the situation we were facing. Adam, for example, has been in a relationship with Myra's mother since before the abuse, which was understandably aggravating a tumultuous mother-daughter relationship.

After moving through the judicial system, Adam embarked upon a lengthy therapy program for sex offenders. Later he returned to the neighborhood, where everyone was aware of his problem, and renewed his friendships with the members of Light Morning community, including Lauren. Myra, on the other hand, hadn't seen Adam since the abuse. Her father and stepmother were convinced that complete isolation from the person who had abused her was the best path toward healing.

During the summer of 1998, some of our neighbors were beginning to voice deep concerns about the festering emotional wounds and their effects upon the girls. One friend sent Adam an incendiary, frontal-assault letter.

This simplified sketch hints at the emotionally charged environment into which the Chapel Hill impulse was introduced.

CÉCILE: It felt like both an honor and a tremendous opportunity to be asked to help the community use Open Hearted Listening as the next

step in their healing journey. It was also a big stretch to apply the tool that we had been using primarily with couples to a completely new situation, and with teens, who were outside the age range we normally work with. Some of the relationships were quite estranged and had very little of the commitment that an intimate partnership has.

DANIEL: For me there was definitely a sense of excitement, that was also tinged with fear. It was a high-octane issue.

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MYRA: I said “Yes” to this process in order to confront Adam with my feelings. To give me a chance to look at him, and to show him how disgusted I am. To tell him in person how much he hurt me and how I will never be able to trust him or feel any type of regard toward him.

LAUREN: I wasn’t that interested when the session with Adam was first suggested. But I knew it would be good for me in the end. So I did it.

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ADAM: Committing to the Open Hearted Listening sessions was both a responsibility and an obligation. Beyond that, it felt like an indebtedness, some way that I could at least start to scratch the surface on the debt that I owe to the community and more specifically to the girls and their families. It was an opportunity being held out to me for some partial redemption.

I was concerned initially for my own vulnerability. I didn’t know the facilitators and felt that I might be viewed, in their eyes, the way society views a sex offender, rather than from a more enlightened perspective. It was hard for me to trust someone I didn’t know.

Consequently, I was afraid. It was a selfish fear: I didn’t want to be beat



Since fall of 1998 the community tripled in population; young children are once again laughing and playing at Light Morning.

MARLENE HASSELL

up any more. I had been working, ever since the abuse, on trying to allow myself to feel vulnerable. That was one of the ways in which I was sick. In certain areas, I was unable to feel vulnerable. Therefore I lacked empathy for vulnerable people, including the victims of my crime: your daughter and Myra. I would block those feelings.

In the years since my crime, I had been making some progress. And I became afraid that with my new-found vulnerability I would be smashed by the same people I had smashed earlier, without adequate moderation. There was a sense of taking a risk.

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DANIEL: Adam was concerned that the girls’ anger might be used to punish, and that the process wouldn’t be reciprocal. That he would get dumped on and would not be able to offer his perspective on the situation.

CÉCILE: We responded to his concerns by educating him about the process. Because from the outside, that’s what it looks like, especially in

this situation, where Adam was only going to be listening. From the *inside* of the Open Hearted Listening experience, however, it doesn’t matter who’s doing the listening or the speaking. The healing opportunity is there for both people.

So that was an important concept to convey to him. But of course it was *only* a concept. It wasn’t until

he began to learn the process, and practice it, that he realized its potential. Then he began to feel okay.

Learning to Listen

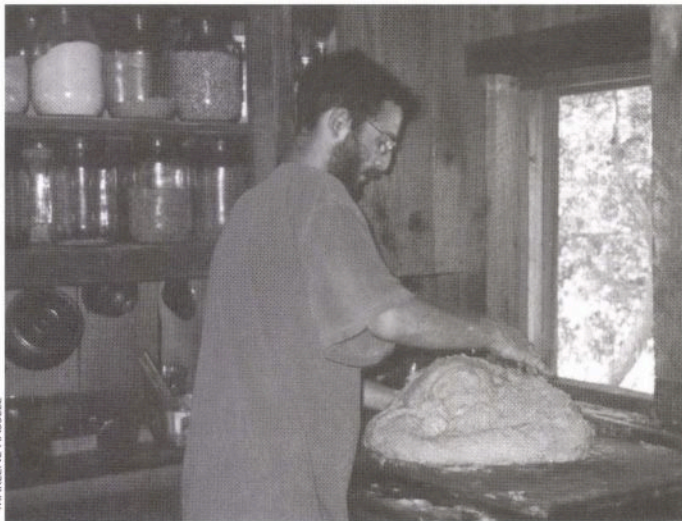
Once everyone had agreed to participate, the stage was set for some training in the core elements of Open Hearted Listening: speaking, mirroring, and validating.

CÉCILE: Our basic strategy was to present the material, demonstrate it, and then have each person practice both the listening and the speaking. Part of our job as facilitators was to address the girls’ need to be heard, and also Adam’s concern that he wouldn’t just get dumped on.

In order to do that, we first had to train Adam in what his role would be, and to feel confident that he would be able to validate the girls’ feelings. If we had come to the conclusion, after the training, that he hadn’t really been able to validate, we would have either postponed his session with the girls, or canceled it. We couldn’t take these girls to a vulnerable place and not have him be able to do the process correctly. That was our first benchmark of safety.

To safeguard Adam, on the other hand, we had to lead Lauren and Myra to an understanding of what Open Hearted Listening is and is not. There was a very delicate balancing act here because of the issues they were bringing, because of their age, because of how long their feelings had been blocked. We had to help them access the intensity of their feelings, but also help them understand that this was not a dumping ground.

DANIEL: One of our major goals was to help everyone realize that Open Hearted Listening is a practice



While Light Morning members have been deeply affected by their healing session, daily tasks still call. New member Michael LaRoche.

within a larger framework of attitudes which help make it work—attitudes such as being willing to play our edges, to stretch into places that are uncomfortable, and to choose to be loving and caring, again and again.

CÉCILE: Another touchstone is that it's not about being rational or being right. Healing happens when there's an *emotional* connection, when the emotional body is given a place to be.

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MYRA: The listening part of the training was hard. My dad and I did it together. I wanted to yell back at him when he said something, because I knew that if I *didn't* yell back right then that I'd forget what he said. Then I realized how hard it would be for Adam to sit there and listen.

LAUREN: I found the training sessions quite boring, actually. (*Laughs*) Maybe next time they could be geared more toward younger people.

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CÉCILE: It was difficult to bring this process to people who are just exiting the childhood consciousness. It's hard to get to a place of empathy for another person. It was a big stretch for the girls to take this on.

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ADAM: The training helped me realize the importance of experiencing my own power. There's a fear that if we know our power we will

abuse it. I believe the reverse is true: that it is the feeling of powerlessness which leads to the abuse of power.

I discovered that power is based in the heart. It very much matters to people how I feel about them. It very much matters to me how I feel about them. The recognition that it matters is a discovery of my power.

Some of the training focused on learning to express anger, but that hasn't been my problem. My problem has been using anger as a mask, to help protect me from feeling vulnerable. When something made me feel uncomfortable, I would immediately become angry, instead of

looking at *why* I was feeling uncomfortable. So instead of feeling any of the vulnerable emotions, like sadness or fear or grief, or even being *aware* of them, I would feel angry instead. Open Hearted Listening helped me move toward the roots of my feelings.

ROBERT: How were you feeling as the session with the girls drew near?

ADAM: At first I was impatient. I had a high level of anxiety, not knowing what the outcome would be. Then I caught myself being self-absorbed again. I realized that my own anxiety must be far less than what the girls were feeling. *They* were the ones who deserved compassion and support. How could they find the courage to confront the powerful adult who had abused them?

ROBERT: It's striking, isn't it, how even getting *ready* for Open Hearted Listening stirred up the same dynamic that caused the abuse in the first place—myopic self-absorption.

ADAM: Absolutely.

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JOYCE: In the weeks before the session with Adam, I could feel the girls' sense of anticipation rising, of finally being able to get it out. My confidence kept rising, too. I thought, "It looks like they can handle this. With each other's help, maybe they can get it out."

A Courageous Encounter

After the training, and after the facilitated sharings between Adam and some of the neighbors and parents, the day finally came for the session with Adam and the girls. It was scheduled for early afternoon, in our new community shelter. Nervous energy rippled through the air.

Lauren and Myra came up from our house, where they had been psyching
(continued on page 58)



Members of Lama Foundation in New Mexico try to take responsibility for their emotions instead of assuming that other people “cause” their feelings.

THE TAO OF SPEAKING & LISTENING

BY SCOTT SHUKER

AT LAMA FOUNDATION, WE OWE OUR 31-YEAR longevity to conscious communication and effective conflict resolution.

Don't get me wrong—we're not perfect. Many of us can be just as stubborn and critical as anyone, making conflict resolution so necessary. Our focus is to smooth out those rough edges, soften our intensity, and lighten up for increased harmony. We feel we succeed when we respect and validate all our differing views while still maintaining our boundaries and making others accountable for their actions and behaviors.

Interpersonal challenges present themselves daily, whether in work, at meetings, or through common interactions at meals or other social activities. There's always

someone around to push my “little kid” button. (And if that person leaves the community, I can guarantee you someone will take his or her place.) That's why it's so crucial to deal with these issues as quickly and effectively as possible when they arise in order to avoid deep and long-term resentments.

Words have power, therefore it is critical to choose your words mindfully and with compassion. The best way to get someone to hear you is to respect their feelings. Here are some suggestions from our experience on how to speak responsibly.

Own your stuff. Take responsibility for your own feelings and don't assume another person is the cause. He or

she may simply be a trigger for your negative feelings about someone in your past or conditionings from childhood.

Speak responsibly. Don't assume another person is really as you see them. Using statements that take responsibility for your interpretation of what you experience, such as "I see you as ..." or "I experience you as ..." instead of "You are ...," are important in taking responsibility for yourself. Speaking this way shows respect for another person's experience and does not undermine their value as a human being.

Avoid projecting. Don't burden someone with invented facts. That person may have a totally different experience than you have. Express your own truth from your own experience. Responsible speech helps keep you from projecting your stuff onto others.

Validate the other person. Whether another person's facts are true or untrue, their view is still worthy, as long as it's not a projection. Invalidation of someone else's experience only increases anger and conflict.

Listening to one another is truly an art, taking as much practice as playing guitar or painting. It is the key to understanding. Many do not know how to listen, and project their inner conflict outward on others, blaming them for their hurt feelings.

Listening well can also be challenging and sometimes downright painful, especially when hearing something negative about yourself. Hearing another person's truth takes just as much responsibility as speaking your own. Here are some of our methods for becoming effective listeners.

Listen "for." By putting your own notions and judgments aside, you can assimilate information from others more effectively and with greater comprehension.

Avoid listening "in the First Person." This is the most limited view, which occurs when you can't fully hear someone because you're convinced you're right or you are mentally formulating your next response. This is not "listening for."

Listen "in the Second Person." This is listening from another's point of view, putting yourself in their shoes. By remaining in Second Person, you can truly hear where another is coming from without judgment. This position requires the most patience and lack of ego.

Listen "in the Third Person." This is the broadest view, ideal for consensus decision making. It encompasses a holistic perspective, taking all sides into account without

bias or suballiances. It is how a facilitator or skilled meeting participant would listen in a meeting. Listening "in the Third Person" allows for more effective problem solving and solution finding among a whole group of people.

Don't get caught up in someone else's projection. Don't let others get away with projecting their truth and expectations on you. If you recognize this (i.e., someone begins their sentence with "You are ..."), call them on it and express your feelings about it. Projection serves no one.

Wait your turn. Whether in a group discussion or a one-on-one conversation, listening well involves not speaking when someone else is still talking. There is nothing that communicates disrespect more blatantly than "talking over" someone. Consider asking, "May I respond?" to be sure the other person has finished talking. When someone "talks over" in group, a skilled facilitator will immediately stop the discussion and ask for more conscious listening or take a break in the discussion.

When necessary, get mediation. Mediation is at the heart of conflict resolution. If two people or groups can't settle a matter themselves, a mediator can help them hear better by serving as an impartial mediator. This keeps behaviors such as "talking over" and projection in check and offers an unbiased view for both parties to reflect on.

Find solutions. Ask the other person what they need to resolve the situation and see if you can accommodate that need. Be honest—sometimes you can, and sometimes you can't.

My biggest lesson living here at Lama has been learning that we are all reflections of each other—that what I find distasteful in another is what I reject in myself. I've learned that through communicating responsibly I can express myself honestly and respect another person's value and validity. I can see another's point of view and look at where I may need to change or let go for the greater good. I see these techniques as a model for a world caught up in blame, irresponsibility, and punitive treatment. I suggest trying these methods in your community when the harmony meter dips too low. Ω



Scott Shuker, a resident at Lama Foundation in New Mexico, is a regular contributor to Communities magazine.



Farming is the primary occupation of Hutterite Colonists. Women in a North Dakota colony, c. 1940–1950.

HOW IT IS TO BE 'FORGOTTEN,' AND TO FORGIVE

BY ROBERT RHODES

TWENTY YEARS AGO, A West German journalist came to Alberta and wrote a popular book about the Hutterites, the 500-year-old communal Christian group to which I am a convert.

Michael Holzach, who lived a year in two colonies before returning to Hamburg, termed us “the forgotten people” because our colonies seem so remote, though numerous, and because the kinsmen the Hutterites left in Europe seem to have all but lost any memory of their descendants, or their whereabouts.

The Hutterian Brethren live in more than 400 colonies in the U.S., Canada, Japan, and Nigeria, and have been pursuing the ideal of Christ-centered community of goods for nearly half a millennium. Born of the Reformation, our model is the church at Pentecost, when the

earliest believers lived with “all things common,” as told in the Book of Acts. We are largely an agrarian people—seen as aloof, black-clad farmers who eschew the liberties and fitful lusts of what we airily term “the world.” We are often confused with the Amish, though we embrace technology with buoyant, unblushing zeal. Four years ago, my family joined a Hutterite colony in Minnesota. The reasons for this are as diverse as they are deep; and despite the fact that we did not, could not, know what we were getting into, the community has been all that we could realistically wish it to be. It has been the answer we were seeking.

The Hutterites have virtually no mission outreach—the colonies in Japan and Nigeria were started by natives in those lands—so it was entirely up to us whether we joined. After nearly two years of residence here, a time in which all surprises and hesitations were expected to reveal themselves, this is what we did, leaving careers and money behind, and giving all we had—namely ourselves—to the community.

And thus, by this simple (and yet extraordinary) transaction, we lost our shadows, all evidence of our burdensome pasts, so to speak, and became forgotten, too.

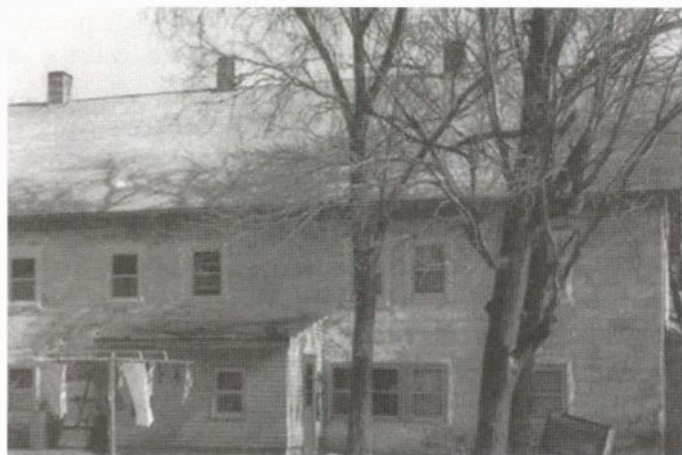
THE HUTTERIAN CHURCH HAS been affected in recent years by serious spiritual and political disputes, to the extent that one might not consider it a wholly unified entity anymore. This comes as something of a surprise to some people, who think they see in our closed, standoffish ranks something indestructible, or at least unreachable. Instead, because of the fresh and distinct fissures within it, the church is more like a cracked mirror now—reflecting much the same image as before, but with countless warps and variations. While here one might encounter a very strict, traditional community—

nearly airtight in its isolation and dedication to old ways—over there might be another group with progressive ideas about outreach, education, and varieties of spiritual experience. Both are Hutterite colonies, but perhaps with little life or substantive fellowship in common.

Sometimes, as anyone who has ever tried to draw together diverse people with differing ideas can attest, the better solution in a case like this is simply to let events take their course, and to wait. As Christians, we should be no

strangers to waiting for the guidance of God, and this is the course our communities often find themselves on. It has been this way throughout our half-millennium of living as communities in Christ. Still, the issues that challenge us daily are there, and do not go away. This, in turn, can lead to a vacuum that can be very hard to navigate, spiritually and temporally, even for the most patient believer.

Some colonies just were not ready to, say, school their children beyond eighth grade—much less into college as some are doing now. Others, often because tradition dictated, rejected the idea of English-language services, even when some members did not fully comprehend the archaic German our sermons and hymns are written in. (Many do, of course, and



ROBERT RHODES

TOP: The first Hutterite residence house built in North America after Hutterites arrived from Russia in 1874. Bonhomme Colony, South Dakota.

BOTTOM: Most Hutterite Colonies are located in the prairie states of the northern US and southern Canada. A residence house at Starland Colony in Minnesota.

find these old writings in their original tongue deeply edifying. As one who knows them only in English, I can attest that these 300-year-old sermons are writings of the rarest sort.) The list of disputes is long, however, and involves issues far more subtle than these. Though I was not present when any of this took place, we are still involved in a sense, and we definitely live in the uproar's aftermath. But whenever people are gathered together like we are, uproar is often part of the territory, or can be, because we are all human. Indeed, just as we feel God commanded us to live in community, so we must live openly and honestly with one another—in the openness of the heart of Christ, who draws all of us together. This means resolving our peculiar

oppositions as Christ would—with patience and with equanimity.

ONE BENEFIT OF HAVING SUCH A long and difficult history as the Hutterites is that we are no strangers to solving our own problems. Our age-old “Chronicle” is full of fissures deeper and even more destructive than those we are enduring now. And of course, the terrible, deadly persecution our forefathers faced, being pushed from place to place and, in the most frightening cases, imprisoned and even killed for refusing to accede to the orders of the state churches, would cause most of us to blanch with sheer terror. Even if we are not so terribly beset now, we can still learn much about finding

We give those in offense every chance to change or repent.

a way together from our communal ancestors. An example, from around 1770, illustrates how our Hutterite communities still might approach an interior, potentially very destructive problem: with direct dialogue, a unified and understanding grasp of the conflict, and by giving those in offense every chance to change or repent. As we shall see here, a great measure of patience was the ideal.

In this case, a devout and gifted Hutterite brother, Mathies Hofer, found himself at odds with the church in Russia over a number of diverse issues. Among many other matters, Mathies objected to personal, private prayer, saying it was immodest and that communal prayer should be preferred exclusively. He also objected, at various times, to greeting unbelievers on the road or in town, singing while at work (though even he eventually came to embrace this practice), and, on another occasion, to silent prayers of thanksgiving following the Lord’s

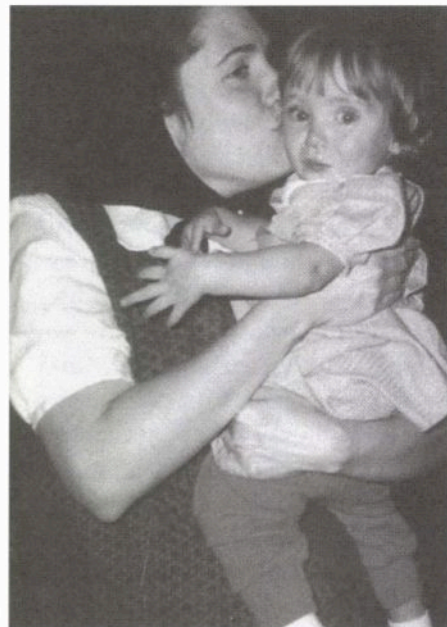
Supper, a practice we still keep. He also advocated, at different times, rising in the middle of the night for communal prayer, and working on Sunday afternoons, even if it was not required. When questioned about these issues, Mathies wrote long letters justifying his views, epistles typically filled with complex and generally erroneous quotes from the Bible.

Meanwhile, those who did not support Mathies’ innovations begged him to change and to find his way back to God. Unmoved, he began to accumulate a small following among the communities, and thus his ideas began to threaten more than just the stability of the individual people.

Thus, after orderly discussion and dialogue failed to settle the matter, the church acted, and Mathies was sent away from the fold amid much sadness and pain.

This, it should be noted, was a step virtually unheard of in the communities in those days, and almost nonexistent today as well. Generally, conflicts like this are settled long before such action becomes necessary, or desirable.

Of course, things are different now, and Mathies Hofer’s story is a bit shopworn to apply anymore. Or is it? For even if we might deal with far different issues than these today, the human dynamics of a Hutterite community are virtually unchanged. Most of us who are here have such an abiding, unshakeable belief in community and peacefulness and are so well-versed in the means of “getting along” that it seldom comes to blows like these. In days gone by, the dedication to community was tempered and made whole by persecution; today, the example of those who went before inspires and settles our desire for the sharing of all things. Our sense of togetherness is so strong that anything that threatens it is



The author’s wife, Duann Rhodes, with their daughter Lydia.

often very quickly repelled or set back into its place.

Our church relies on Biblical instruction in dealing with conflict, from admonition to individual counseling with brothers to, in more serious cases, dialogue with the entire community, or with leaders from other colonies. In some cases, the community might choose to impose church discipline on one who is in offense, also in keeping with Biblical instruction. More often, though, the repentant one asks for this form of “shunning,” so that he or she might reflect on their offense and find firmer ground on which to stand in the community. In the meantime, the one in repentance continues to live and work in the community, and to receive the same support that all others are given. The person might take his meals apart from the others, and listen to church services in a separate room from the community, but that sister or brother is never just cut off, without hope, support, or the chance to reunite in good faith.

To the outsider, this might appear harsh. Yet sin is harsh, too, and this discipline imposed by the church is gentle compared to other



ROBERT RHODES

The feed mill at Starland Colony. Unlike the Amish, Hutterites use the latest farming technology.

punishments one might receive in the world, and based wholly in the love of God. None of this ever happens, though, before brother speaks to brother, or before the one in conflict comes forward himself and expresses his concern. Sometimes, it need go no further; resolution can often be reached quickly with simple discussion. In other cases, a very long time of waiting and reflecting might ensue. With Mathies Hofer, we should note, this time of patience and struggle lasted more than 10 years before Mathies left the community. In small things, of course, it is terribly easy to forgive, to recollect ourselves, and to continue on our path of human imperfection, strengthened (we can hope) by the experience. In greater things, though, the process can be much more painful and trying, and the outcome murkier. But the process is always the same: admonish, counsel, discuss, and always, go forward with patience and never with rancor. Christ, we must remind ourselves, showed everyone love, even his enemies.

Admonish, counsel, discuss, and always, go forward with patience and never with rancor.

AT ONE TIME, I THINK, SAY, 50 years ago, I would have felt differently if I had joined a colony. Because the Hutterian Church was less fragmented then, even if it was beset by various inner turmoils—precursors of our current struggles—I think I would have felt much more of a link with my contemporaries. Now, many of us look even more to the example of our brothers from other centuries, who sought together for the same kind of communal, Christic spirituality. This is where we all must look, if we are to endure and carry our form of Christianity into the age to come. This is so much like all churches, too—broken, hurt by disunity. But because of the communal nature of our life—a life spent in close quarters and where the right hand is always aware of the left—the tension of conflict is sometimes palpable, even painful. Our brokenness can even overwhelm us, leading to colonies split down the middle on seemingly trivial issues. The result—not that it is a bad one—is that I view myself as a member almost exclusively of my own community, which in turn is part of something rather rarefied called the Hutterian Church. This, on its own merits, is part of the greater body of Christian believers. Is this what our Christian identity is supposed to amount to? Who can say? But if we are asking the question, the answer must not be so predictable. We need only look at other churches, those in the world, to see the burdens and conflicts and separations they are beset with. By comparison, our worries seem small.

However, this is only my faith in the corporate—if dynamically diverse—sense. In the personal, far

more spirit-centered realm, I am foremost a child of God, apolitical in every way, who has tried to vanish into the heart of Christ by living, apart from the world, in a Christian collective—body and soul, goods and spirit, lock and key. I am truly a man without citizenship in this regard—and also, most radically, a bit of an isolationist, because in terms of simple numbers, there are very few who have chosen the identical path. By being a Hutterite, I have become—or through daily transformation seek to become—a man without a shadow, part of the greater reflection of God, of the love of Christ. And that is all I am—an unfulfilled expression of a mysterious God: a God with a broken church, and all too often, of a forgotten people with a fragile but enduring spirit. Ω



Robert Rhodes is a former daily newspaper journalist from Arkansas. He served as managing editor and editorial page

editor of the Northwest Arkansas Times, where he reported and commented on the news for 11 years. He now lives with his family at Starland Colony, a community of the Hutterian Brethren near Gibbon, Minnesota.



Oakshade, a small cooperative household, shares this Victorian home on a tree-lined street in West Philadelphia.

SUPPORT & CHALLENGE AT OAKSHADE

BY BILL MOFFETT

*How do you like—
and not like—
to receive feedback?*

AT OAKSHADE, OUR SMALL GROUP HOUSE IN West Philadelphia, as in many communities, people offer support for each other to grow, meet personal goals, and understand themselves. We also challenge each other in exactly these same areas. We can—and sometimes must—zoom in and support someone through a short-term crisis or challenge someone to change his or her behavior. This is seldom easy, but it's usually a path to growth.

The way I define “challenge” does not necessarily imply conflict, although that may happen. Challenges can involve different kinds of issues and different scales. Sometimes they are phrased as questions (especially personal questions); sometimes they're phrased as requests. A challenge to my personal growth almost certainly must come from someone whom I know cares about me to be effective. Such a friend, for example, might say, “Are you ready to work on your feelings about being poor at sports in school?” On the other hand, a challenge to some aspects of my personal behavior, might only require the most superficial sense of shared community interests to be effective. For example, if someone challenges me by asking, “Please close the piano keyboard lid after playing,” my mental response might be, “We live together; it doesn't matter to me; I'll do it to keep her happy.” Either of these challenge statements could lead to a conflict. But, depending upon the people involved and how they handle it, neither statement necessarily will cause conflict. In community, a challenge of either kind could come up; and the latter, more superficial challenges come up often. Any community could benefit by becoming more conscious about how its members make and respond to challenges.

Oakshade is located in a neighborhood of large, 19th-century Victorian houses. We have five members: two men and three women, ranging in age from 30 to 50. Our most senior members have been here since the house was founded about 12 years ago; our newest members have been here about three years. We have house meetings about six times a year and use consensus decision making. We have, over the years, developed many house procedures and systems for getting day-to-day tasks done: recycling, washing dishes, maintaining security, paying bills, and so forth.

From time to time, someone fails to keep our agreements in a way that seriously affects other members. At this point we engage in some form of supportive challenging. For example, we've decided not to have any pets in our house and we communicate that to any prospective new members. Since this agreement is in writing and every member knows it, people move into Oakshade with expectations based in part on the No Pets rule. However, one time one of our members started a relationship with someone in the neighborhood who has

dogs. The dogs came over to visit with the lover. Soon the lover and the dogs were spending the night and occasionally more time than that. The accommodations for the dogs included food and water bowls in the kitchen and travel privileges in the yard and throughout the common areas of the house, including on top of furniture! Eventually we had obtrusive part-time dog residents we had never agreed to.

Another example involves noise. Most of us at Oakshade are early risers. The house is bustling at 7:30 am but likely to be quiet by 10 pm. We don't have explicit quiet hours, but we know each others' schedules. At one point we had a member who kept significantly later hours than the rest of us. Upon coming home from work she enjoyed playing recorded music in her room, as many people do, but it became a problem at midnight. When another member got up and asked her to lower the volume, she complied. But the problem returned the next night.

These two cases present different difficulties in community. In the case of the dog residents, the problem sneaked up on us. There wasn't a clear-cut point at which one of us could say, "Hey, this is not keeping our agreements." In the case of late-night music, we could obtain immediate compliance but not ongoing compliance.

In the face of our need for supportive personal challenging, we developed a process for making challenges both effective and easy (or easier) to hear. Most of us can hear challenges better when they occur in a context of support and trust. If I know that another community member cares about me and thinks well of me, I find it easier to take in whatever comes after: "Something is troubling me and I need to talk to you about it. . . ." On the other hand, stating the same concern against a history of anger and miscommunication may well seem like someone is about to pick a fight and the conversation would be unlikely to resolve anything. Furthermore, if the person making the challenge already knows which communication style will be effective with the listener, the listener can perceive that the first person is making an effort to meet them halfway. That perception may itself be supportive. With this in mind, we decided to give each other guidance about how we preferred to receive challenges.

A few days before a house meeting, we asked each house member to write down a statement: "How I Want to Be Challenged." This could include the kinds of words or phrasing to be used, the time of day, the environment (for example, with other people or alone), whether or not we'd like an opportunity for response, and so on. At the meeting we asked everyone to read their statements and leave the written versions out where we could all see them. Then we asked each person to tell us two possibly imaginary but realistic situations: "One in which you

We had obtrusive part-time dog residents we had never agreed to.

would find a challenge easy to listen to and respond positively to," and "One in which you would find a challenge very difficult to listen to and respond positively to."

Then we asked for a volunteer. One of our members left the room while we invented two short role-plays that would put her through the two situations she had described. We developed a scenario, chose various roles, and decided how to challenge the person in keeping with her statement. Developing the role-play scenario took about five minutes. Then we invited our member back and performed the "easy to listen to" situation role-play. After continuing just a few minutes, we asked her to monitor her feelings: Did she feel supported while being challenged? Could she really hear the challenge? Did she feel we had substantially complied with her "How I Want to Be Challenged" statement? And, most importantly, did she need to make any changes in the statement in light of the role-play? Then we did the "very difficult to listen to" situation role-play, followed by the same debriefing. Each house member went through this process. Some amended their statements about how they want to be challenged. We collected all the statements and now keep them handy.

Here are excerpts from some of our statements about how we like to be challenged:

"Remember that we are all thoughtful, loving people."

Before making the challenge, "be as clear as possible on what the problem is."

"If a problem is between two of us (not the whole house), I'd prefer to discuss it just between the two of us. If we try that and still don't reach a successful conclusion, that's the time to bring in other house members,



BILL MOFFETT

Oakshade members (from left), Ann Dixon, Gihon Jordan, Susan Hatwell, and Bill Moffett.

for example, at a house meeting.”

“If the most important thing is to make sure I understand the problem and if there is a range of possible solutions, don’t attach a solution to the statement of the problem. Solutions can be reached after we both clearly understand the problem.”

“It’s always helpful to own your feelings: ‘You and your guests left a whole pile of unwashed dishes last night. I was really unhappy to find them when I came down this morning.’”

“When possible, include a positive: ‘Thanks for getting those boxes out of the dining room. I’d like to ask you about the remaining stuff in the living room.’”

“Speak for yourself. Your own concern is enough to warrant a good faith dialog on a problem. Don’t bring up the opinions of unnamed others.”

“Give me a chance to respond to one problem before raising additional ones in the same conversation.”

“Ask for a specific commitment: ‘It’s past the deadline that we set for completing this house project. When are you going to do the part you agreed to?’”

“Treat a good-faith response to a challenge with good faith even if it is not the response that you would like. For example, original challenge: ‘Why haven’t you indicated what day you can help plant new trees and shrubs in the yard?’ Response: ‘Not everyone has had a chance to comment on where we were going to put them.’ Good faith treatment of response: ‘I understand your concern with group process, and I want that, too. But I also want to move ahead on this project. How can we answer both concerns?’”

(One member, no doubt elaborating on the idea of including a positive, asked to be given a chocolate bar with each challenge!)

Clearly members could write the statements and

By role-playing together, we shared the risks and learned from each other.

distribute them without the meeting and the role-playing. But by doing the process together, we shared the risks and we learned from each other. The role-playing provided us with a chance to find out how it really feels to be in the situation and to “calibrate” our statements to the person we’re challenging. The “easy to listen to” role-play may turn out to be nothing

more than a rehearsal before the performance, but even the finest musicians and actors rehearse. And, of course, the rehearsal goes both ways: Both the person making the challenge and the person listening get to practice when there’s no real conflict. Some revisions to the “How I Want to Be Challenged” statements came not from the results of the role-plays but from simply hearing others’ statements, generating the “Hey-I-want-that-too” effect.

Successfully supporting someone while you challenge them is like learning to play a musical instrument—the more you practice the better you get. The process we developed is at best a lesson. As with an instrument, most of your achievement comes not from the lesson but from practicing between lessons. It’s worth the effort. Supportive challenging is a skill you can take beyond your immediate living situation to your neighborhood, the wider community, your workplace, or wherever you interact with people you care about. Ω

Bill Moffett, a freelance writer, has lived in small intentional communities for about 20 of his last 25 years, including five years at the Philadelphia Life Center/Movement for a New Society.

ROLE-PLAYING

1. Tell us how you want to be challenged.
2. Think up two realistic situations that could arise: a) a situation in which you would find a challenge easy to listen to and respond positively to, and b) a situation in which you would find a challenge very hard to listen to and respond positively to.
3. Tell us what the two situations are.
4. After you temporarily leave the room, the rest of us will develop a role-play for each situation.
5. When we call you back, we will put you through both role-plays.
6. After each role-play ends we will ask you some questions. Did you feel supported? Did we challenge you the way you asked us to? Do you need to revise what you said about how to challenge?
7. Make any revision that you want, write down the final version, and supply the house with a copy that we will keep available.

—B.M.



MICHAEL MCINTYRE

In the first step the facilitator addresses the whole group about disruptive and beneficial meeting behaviors.

WORKING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS IN MEETINGS

BY ROB SANDELIN

IT'S THE MONTHLY MEETING OF the Glorious Abundance community and you're the facilitator. After the check-in, the group begins to work on the first agenda item, the long-standing issue of what to do about the ailing tractor. During the discussion Mark makes a passionate plea to buy a new one. As other ideas come up, such as various ways to repair the tractor, he interrupts two of the speakers out of turn and counters their ideas aggressively. As facilitator, you remind him to wait until he's

called on. Later, Mark makes a cutting remark about someone. When it's Mark's turn to speak again, he not only discounts and belittles every objection or alternate idea to buying a new tractor, but says he is sick of the whining and will leave the community if it doesn't have enough sense to replace the defective tractor. Since the group can make no further progress on this agenda item, it's postponed, again. Mark then stands up and stomps out of the room, with the parting shot, "We never get

anything done using consensus!"

Communities can offer a wonderful, and sometimes frustrating, diversity of personalities. As the group spends time together, various patterns of meeting behavior will become apparent. Some of these enhance the process of working together and some of them distract, or worse, disrupt or disable the group. As facilitator you have the opportunity to observe and learn about your neighbors' meeting behaviors over a long period of time.

Over several months you can gather useful information about how various people affect meetings. By clearly identifying unproductive behaviors, you can plan interventions ahead of time, so you and the other meeting participants aren't once more disrupted and derailed by someone's poor meeting skills.

Notice I'm talking about "disruptive meeting behaviors" rather than "disruptive people." It's important to remember that individuals who exhibit these behaviors are not bad people, nor do they need to be "fixed." The behaviors of any individual may serve him or her very well in certain circumstances, and a meeting intervention is only needed when certain behaviors serve the individual at the expense of the group. Mark, for example, is a passionate, outspoken person who cares deeply about the community, and feels exceedingly frustrated and thwarted. He simply hasn't learned good meeting skills yet. Your challenge then is to diagnose the exact problem and offer both the individual and the group tools to work with so person's behaviors don't impede your group's functioning.

THE FIRST STEP IS TO OBSERVE AND write down the exact details of the behavior that is causing problems for the group. You can do this as facilitator, but it's much easier to assign other people as "vibe watchers" who will capture the sequences in notes. The more details they can record, the better your success will be in mediating the behavior. Remember, they are looking for behaviors—what the person *does*, not labels of what they think he *is*—so they need to be precise. For example, they could record, "Talked loudly, and interrupted others before they were done" (rather than using labels, such as "Was rude and overbearing again"). Record these behaviors over a period of several meetings. It's also important to note how people react to the person's

Focus on "disruptive meeting behaviors" rather than on "disruptive people."



The second step is to approach the individual privately.

disruptive behaviors. This may feel like a waste of time to some, but clearly documenting problem behaviors will make the next steps much easier. Be sure to capture the date, the agenda item, and the situation in your notes.

Once you have identified the behaviors and observed how those behaviors affect others, ask your note-takers to create a summary description. For example:

"When (loud interruptions of other people speaking) happens, I have seen (frowning, rolling the eyes, grimacing)."

Note that the people involved are not referenced at all, just the behaviors.

Next, as facilitator, take these notes and, out of the meeting, write down one or more alternatives to the behavior, using the following format:

"It would be better if (description of more helpful, alternative behavior), because (reasons for alternative behavior). For example:

"It would be better if (people did not interrupt others but waited until being called on by the facilitator), because (more people would feel 'heard' by the others, and the level of well-being would remain higher in the room)."

If you can't seem to think of any particular alternatives you can do this later, as part of a large group brainstorm in a meeting.

The next step is to combine the two parts into a script of both disruptive and helpful meeting communications. Having such a script will help you as facilitator to analyze the exact problem, the effect the problem has, and proposals for alternatives. The script will help you prepare your intervention and aid you in the steps ahead of communicating the problems to the individual, the group, and help jump-start finding solutions instead of blaming the people who do the disruptive behaviors. A sample script might look like this:

"When someone disparages another member's ideas in the meeting, I have seen that very few other members speak up with other ideas. It would be better if rather than openly dismissing someone else's ideas, we each privately write down what we see as potential problems and then offer this during the part of the meeting where we're seeking solutions. This will keep people open to contributing. We do our best work when we have the most ideas to work with."

You can also do a group brainstorm to list disruptive meeting behaviors (remember, it's about the behaviors, not the people who do them), and capture ideas about what would work better instead.

In working with problem behaviors in meetings I have had success by using a three-step approach. The

first step is indirect: you do not name specific individuals, but use a group brainstorm about making meetings work better. As you brainstorm with the group, include the behavior observations you have made from your script, without referencing any names. Although some facilitators would disagree with this step and insist upon confronting individuals directly with the consequences of their behaviors, I have found that unless your community has a covenant for this kind of direct confrontation, such directness backfires. Very few people can accept direct negative feedback about themselves, especially in a public setting, and more often than not, such feedback results in negative denials and withdrawal. As a first step, then, addressing the problem as a group brainstorm can help ease an individual into awareness of the problems that face the group, and that person can quietly take ownership of the behaviors once he or she realizes the behaviors have been causing a problem. Sometimes just making a person aware is all it takes in order to get a particular behavior curbed. Most people in community want to work together and these good intentions can bring the changes needed. Keep in mind, however, that in the brainstorm it is likely that several issues will be written on the board in addition to the problem behaviors, so the list will be somewhat diluted by all the other issues.

IF THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR CONTINUES, the second step is to approach the individual privately, again with the same information about the behavior from your observation script. Do this in private in as warm and comfortable a setting as you can. It can be helpful if you start the conversation by sharing the goal of making the meetings run really well and your desire to enlist the person's help in making this happen. You want to create a sense of partnership here,



MICHAEL MCINTYRE

Most communarians want upbeat, harmonious meetings. Their good intentions can help bring about needed changes.

not adversity. Then dispassionately explain the behavior you observed, when you observed it, and what you observed that the group's reaction was. It's not a guilt trip and you want to encourage the individual to work together with you to brainstorm ideas, alternatives, and solutions. Leave openings for the person to respond, and offer other perspectives. Be prepared for denial or a negative reaction. If the person responds this way, restate that your goal in the conversation is to work together to build community and make things better, not to degrade or demean someone.

IF SPEAKING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL privately does not create an improvement in the person's meeting behavior, the third step is to involve the whole group in identifying the prob-

lem. But in this case you capture the destructive behavior as it happens, discuss it specifically, and then come up with a group plan. You need to be prepared to halt the group's discussion and ask people to examine what just happened, but only after the person's behavior and its consequences with other people have run their course. This should only be done after private counsel with the individual in which he or she agrees to this, or at least, after letting the person know that you may do this in order to help the group process the issue. You can also do this as part of a summary/evaluation at the end of the meeting if you wish.

In any case, specifically focus on the person's behavior; don't let this turn into a personal attack on the person. This process can be a double-edged sword so you need to have a

plan ready if it gets out of hand. People in the group may feel angry or frustrated and they may want to take this out on the person. Don't let them. Be prepared with an activity to capture the observations and facts, and insist people use "I statements" to express their observations about the person's behavior and their feelings in response to it. If you are well prepared, this clearing will educate the whole group, and provide a framework for future solutions to problems. Capture the energy by brainstorming what people would like to see happen differently in the future, not the problems of the past.

I've found it extremely powerful to have several community mates talking honestly about how they are affected by a behavior and working honestly to come up with solutions. This kind of group work takes compassion and finesse on the part of the facilitator. Some groups hire mediators or family counselors for this work, which can be a really good idea if you are not sure you can make this work.

Some community members may not respond well to any suggestions that they modify their behaviors for the good of the group. In fact, in some cases, trying to intervene may initiate an even larger conflict with

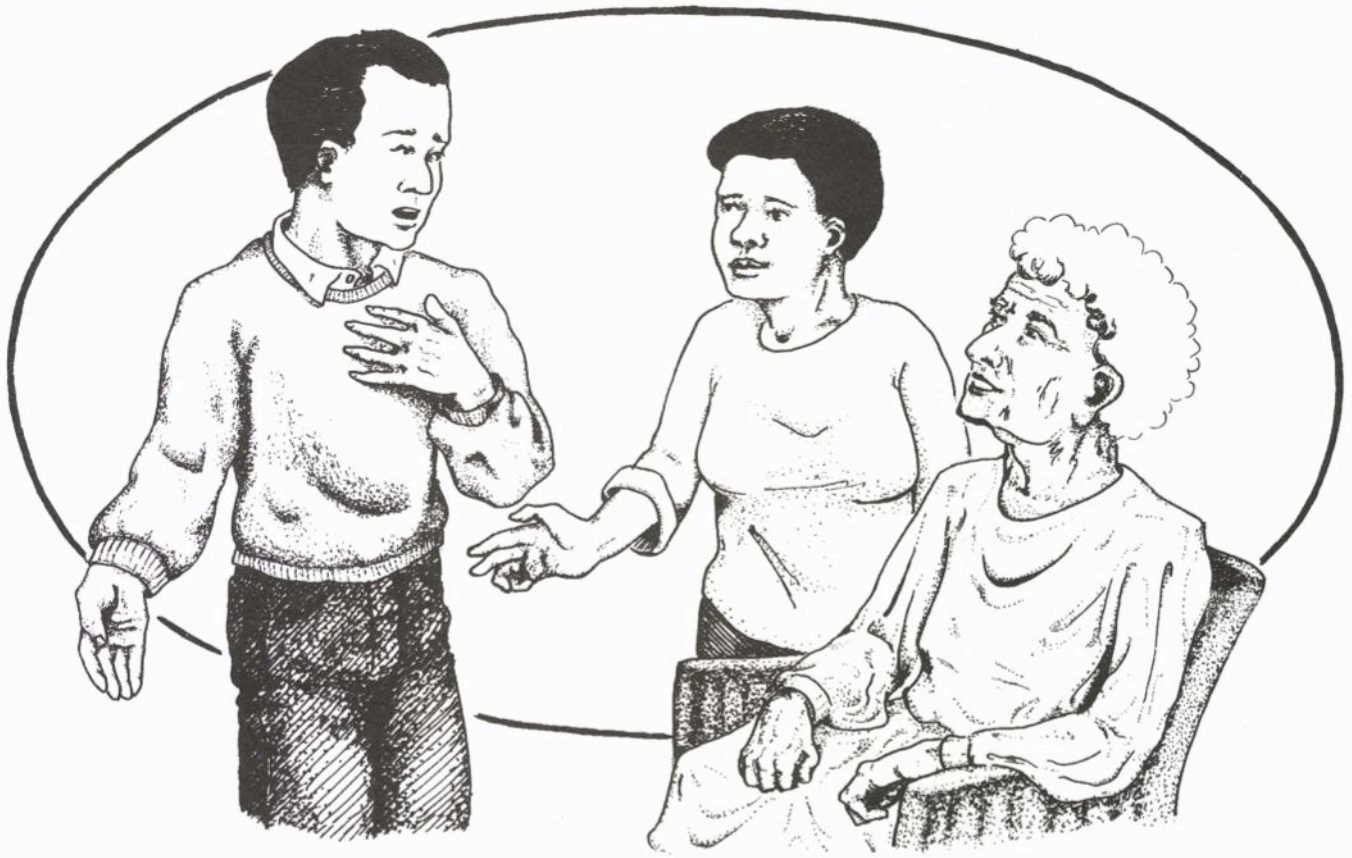
them. As you plan your intervention, be sure to have a fall-back position in mind if this should be the case. Some folks may need considerable emotional healing work which may be beyond the scope or energy of your community to deal with. Understand your group limits for this work, and come up with a worst-case scenario in your planning.

A FINAL STEP IS MAINTENANCE. Behavior patterns are often long-held ways of doing things, and even the most sincere and determined effort to work on disruptive behaviors can slip back into familiar patterns. Positive reinforcement works wonderfully. If a member is working to control angry outbursts, privately or publicly, praise the person for his or her efforts. Personal written thank you notes can have a big positive impact. Sometimes you might be able to anticipate the situation ahead of time in your meeting plan, and then remind the individual in advance of the agenda item or meeting about the behavior. Some facilitators will balk at this because it seems too much like personal counseling. Yet these simple activities take almost no time, and usually produce great benefits for the group and the individuals you work with.

Getting a group of diverse personalities and styles to work together well is a huge challenge and requires planning and adaptability on the part of the facilitator. The reward is a well-functioning group that deals with its problems with respect and integrity, building trust and community along the way. Ω

Rob Sandelin, an experienced facilitator and teacher of facilitators, is a frequent contributor to CoHousing and Communities magazines and cofounder of NICA (Northwest Intentional Communities Association). He lives at Sharingwood Cohousing in Snohomish, Washington.





NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Transforming Conflict and Enhancing Connection

BY MIKI KASHTAN

A MAN, WHOM WE'LL CALL DENNIS, LIVES IN A community, which we'll call Canyon Creek Cohousing. He joined Canyon Creek five years ago with his wife Leah. For the most part relationships within Canyon Creek are friendly and open. But not with Dennis, who has not served on any committee for the past four years. Although until recently he occasionally signed up to cook, his manner in the kitchen was sour and withdrawn. He has been the topic of many frustrated conversations at Canyon Creek.

Jennifer, the original visionary spirit in the community, is particularly upset. She has attempted many times to talk with Dennis about his behavior. Such behavior was not part of her vision, and she is determined to persuade him to participate in community affairs. But with each attempt to get Dennis to join in he has become more defensive and withdrawn. Jennifer, who insists that everyone should contribute to the community, is the most upset. She accuses Dennis of selfishness and dishonesty.

What could help this community?

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) was developed by Marshall Rosenberg 35 years ago in an effort to help people remain empathetic and compassionate, especially in times of conflict or stress. It's now practiced in 25 countries worldwide, and Marshall Rosenberg is called in to use NVC as a mediation tool in strife-torn areas such as Israel, Palestine, Rwanda, and Bosnia. NVC is based on the premise that the more we are aware of our own and the other person's feelings and needs, the easier it is to connect with that person, and that the more we will notice our essential similarities, the more we are able to access inner reserves of compassion. With compassion as the basis of our communication, then, we can more easily resolve conflicts and misunderstandings.

Nonviolent Communication offers not only a set of principles, ideas, and precepts, but concrete, specific tools to assist us with this descent into the heart. Paradoxically, it does not insist that we leap from where we

are now—say, feeling frustrated or judging and blaming—to a nobler, higher state of empathy and compassion. Simply by using the NVC tools, it becomes possible to make a shift in consciousness in which we are far less likely to feel frustrated, or judge or blame others. Instead, we focus our attention moment-by-moment on hearing ourselves and others deeply. When we can do this, our communication becomes open and self-revealing—which increases the chances that we will be heard. More importantly, when we focus our consciousness on what’s most alive in us—what we’re feeling and needing at the time—we begin to master the art of listening with empathy. When two people are able to connect with empathy, fully hearing each other’s actual feelings and needs, magic invariably happens. One or both people experience a shift in intention and attention. This often results in a shift of needs, finding extra reserves of kindness and generosity, or experiencing sudden bursts of creative solutions. Simply using the NVC tools tends to move the person from upset and judgment or blame to empathy and connection. Often, it’s enough for just one person to hear the other with empathy for a shift to start happening.

Briefly, the tools are, 1) describing the behavior or situation we observe in neutral, non-judgmental language; 2) expressing feelings—actual emotions, rather than simply using “feeling” language to mask judgments or criticisms of others or oneself—which allows us to be



“Do you have any idea what’s actually going on for Dennis?”

vulnerable and self-revealing; 3) expressing needs and values; and 4) requesting something—doable actions, rather than states of being. As you will see, these are the tools used by the characters in our story of Canyon Creek.

JENNIFER, FED UP WITH THE GROWING TENSION IN her community, turns to her friend Susanna for help. Susanna has always been a good listener, especially in the last year after she began practicing NVC. Desperate for advice on how to convince Dennis to cooperate, Jennifer invites Susanna to lunch. Susanna listens attentively and then asks Jennifer some questions.

“Are you (*empathy*) feeling scared (*feelings*) because living in community is so vitally important to you (*needs and values*), that you’re worried that without everyone’s

contribution it might not survive?” To her surprise, Jennifer finds that anger melts away and tears well up in her eyes.

“It’s not just that,” Jennifer replies. “Actually I’m realizing as we’re speaking that what’s even more important and devastating to me is that we’re handling this so poorly. I mean, you know, we’re all letting this asshole ruin our lives instead of just ignoring him and getting on with the business at hand. I don’t know exactly what I mean ... It’s bigger than just Dennis.” She pauses, unable to speak. “I was so caught up in my anger that I didn’t even articulate this part to myself.” Susanna smiles.

“So, (*empathy*) when you notice how you’ve been handling the situation (*observation*) what you are getting in touch with is just how sad you feel (*feelings*)?” Jennifer nods, tearful.

“Just because he’s acting this way it doesn’t mean we all have to focus on it and lose track of what’s important to us.”

“So what you really want (*empathy*),” Susanna reflects again, “is to be able to stay true to the values that got you into this community in the first place even if others are not there (*needs and values*)?” Jennifer looks greatly relieved, then asks Susanna for advice on how to handle the situation.

“Do you have any idea what’s actually going on for Dennis?” Susanna asks.

“No. I’m embarrassed to admit it, but up until now I haven’t really wanted to know. I came here hoping that you’d tell me how to get him to cooperate. And some part of me is still hung up on that. But you’re right; it’s so clear now ... I guess I have to change course here and ... but how can I do it? I’m afraid he won’t even talk to me anymore.” Susanna, happy to help Jennifer, offers to coach her on some of the basic principles of NVC before she talks with Dennis.

What happened here? Susanna offered empathy to Jennifer repeatedly by attempting to guess her friend’s feelings and needs, framed as questions. Susanna didn’t ask Jennifer about her judgments of Dennis. Instead, she helped Jennifer see what was giving rise to her feelings. It wasn’t Dennis’s actions. They were simply the trigger events, but the feelings came up in Jennifer because of what was alive inside her—her strong need to stay true to her values and dreams. Even guessing incorrectly, as Susanna did initially, still helped Jennifer get in touch with her need and thus soften her anger. The art of empathy as practiced in NVC is about being able to hear feelings and needs even when they are not expressed in words, as Susanna was able to do with Jennifer. It’s the attempt to understand, to guess, what someone else is feeling and needing, not the accuracy, that makes the empathetic connection to that person.

A few days later, after being coached by Susanna, Jennifer approaches Dennis.

"Dennis, it's been a while since we've been able to talk. I am really heartbroken (*feelings, expressing vulnerability*) that our community has reached this place, and I really want to change that (*needs and values*). We've all come to live here with similar visions and dreams. I've realized that in the moment it's more important to me to get reconnected with you than to have you do more in the community (*more needs and values*). Would you be willing to tell me some of what's been going on for you around all this (*request*)?" Her heart is pounding. This isn't easy.

"I'm feeling scared (*feelings, expressing vulnerability*) about this," she adds. "I'm trying a new way and it's very unfamiliar and vulnerable. It feels better to be honest about feeling scared. And I still would like to hear from you about where you've been about all this (*request*)." Dennis looks at her quietly for a while, and then speaks, with great effort.

"I can't do this now, Jennifer; it's too painful. I don't trust you after all the shit you've given me. But I appreciate your wanting to talk with me. I actually feel a bit relieved knowing this, even though I'm not in a place to respond." Jennifer feels herself wanting to react to his unwillingness to answer her question, and remembers Susanna's coaching. ("Whatever you do," Susanna said, "don't argue or defend yourself, and don't try to fix it for him. Just try to understand where he is coming from.") Jennifer takes a deep breath, and begins again.

"I feel some relief, too (*feelings, expressing vulnerability*). I was afraid you wouldn't even respond to me after all that's happened, and I so much wanted to connect with you again (*needs and values*)." Jennifer realizes that she is feeling more connected to Dennis at this point than she has in quite awhile, but she is also aware that she hasn't really focused yet on trying to understand him. She decides to try guessing at what's happening with him, phrased as a question.

"Are you (*empathy*) uneasy about this (*feelings*) because you really want to be understood (*needs and values*)?" Dennis nods slowly.

"I'm really bitter about this. There's a lot you don't know. No one ever asked. That's all I can say for now. Maybe some other time." He walks away abruptly.

To her great surprise, Jennifer is not angry that Dennis walked away. Instead, she finds herself feeling curious and even sad for the pain that Dennis has obviously suffered over the situation.

Jennifer was able to interact with Dennis in this new way for two reasons. First, she got a lot of empathy from Susanna for her own frustration, which released her own tightness about what she wanted. Second, and largely as a result of that, she was able to approach Dennis with a different kind of energy. Instead of being focused on a particular outcome, she was able to prioritize connecting with him over and above everything else. Although Dennis

was not able to open up completely to her in that interchange, something in what Jennifer offered enabled him to express at least a little of what was inside him, to trust her just an ounce more. When that door opens, new possibilities emerge.

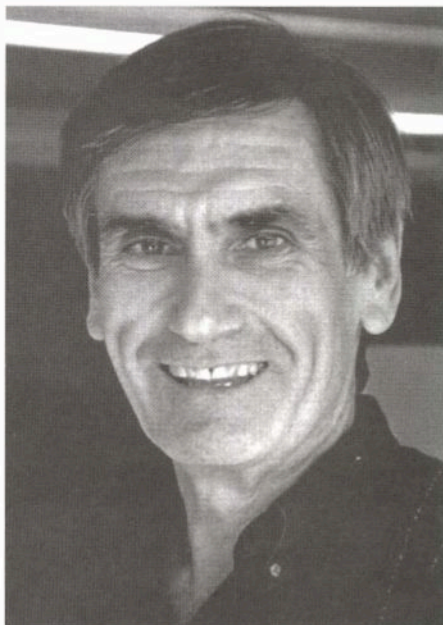
Two days later Leah, Dennis' wife, approaches Jennifer. While she has always liked Leah, Leah has always been distant. Unlike Dennis, Leah contributes a lot to the community, doing all the accounting and dealing with all bureaucratic agencies. But she keeps to herself otherwise.

"Can we talk?" Leah begins, then hesitates. "You talked with Dennis a couple of days ago, and he's ... he's been talking to me. I mean, of course, we always talk. But he's never wanted to tell me, his own wife, what the story is about

not participating in the community. I gave up on it a long time ago. I've felt horrible, because I was so torn. I was embarrassed, and I was also worried about him, and I just didn't know what to do about it. I tried to make up for it by doing more than my share of community work, but it never felt good." Something clicks for Jennifer. At least one piece of the story now makes sense to her.

"Is this why you've been keeping to yourself all this time (*observation*), because you were embarrassed (*feelings*)?" Leah's eyes fill up, and she nods. Jennifer's heart goes out to Leah. She is really curious to hear the rest, touched by the hidden story unfolding before her. Leah gathers herself and continues.

"So, the other night, Dennis said he really wanted to talk with me. It was totally out of the blue. He brought up the issue of the community, and proceeded to tell me what it was that kept him from contributing for the past four years. He said you had talked with him, and how moved he was that finally someone wanted to hear his perspective on it, and that he couldn't bear to tell you, but he wanted, finally, to talk about it with someone. And so we talked about it for a long time. He's still not



Marshall Rosenberg, originator of the Non-violent Communication model.

quite ready to get into it with other people. He's just too uncomfortable, he really doesn't trust. But he knows that I'm talking with you. I want to talk with you about how we can make it easier for him to bring this up with people, because what he has to say is important. And not just for him; I think it's important for the whole community. And I'm also dying to know what you said to him that opened up the dam."

Jennifer downplays her interaction with Dennis, but Leah insists that she must have done some magic. And

so Jennifer tells Leah about NVC and what she has learned from Susanna. Leah gets excited.

"This is exactly what we need here. Let's get someone to come and train us!"

A FEW WEEKS LATER, A DAY OF NVC TRAINING IS SET up. Susanna, and her NVC teacher, Nancy, start out by describing the process of communication, and the four steps, using a variety of examples from daily interactions at Canyon Creek. As the day passes, people get into

How the Nonviolent Communication Model Works

NVC IS A PROCESS IN WHICH WE LEARN, gradually, with patience and compassion, to translate the judgments, preconceptions, interpretations, labels, diagnoses, etc., that we usually hear about ourselves or that we express to others, into the true components concealed within them—our observations, feelings, needs (and values), and requests. Most of us have not learned how to express those directly, but do so in "loaded" language that further escalates any conflict. In the NVC model we listen without fear or guilt, express ourselves powerfully and honestly, and hold with care the needs of others while we do this. The result, usually, is a dialogue in which we experience a sense of personal responsibility and connection with others that generates unexpected rewards in our relationships (including and primarily with ourselves). Each of the four steps in the process differs in important ways from habitual ways of communicating.

1. Observations. These are expressions of situations outside ourselves—usually other people's behaviors or actions—that trigger our reactions. When expressing an observation, in the NVC model we remove our evaluations and interpretations of what the other person is doing and concentrate only on exactly what it is that we see the

person actually doing. It's as if we are a video camera, reporting only on what we can see. A video camera cannot see "assholes," but it can see someone walking faster than me and getting to the front of the line ahead of me. A video camera cannot see "people acting unfairly," but it can see an employer who over the last two years has hired 20 men and two women. A video camera cannot even see someone being angry, although it can see someone who is raising his voice, or someone who is not responding when spoken to.

The NVC model focuses on observations rather than evaluations for at least two reasons. First, simple "video" observations are easier for another person to hear. To prove this to yourself, imagine yourself hearing the messages above before and after the translation, and check how you feel. Second, simple observations make concrete what it is that we are trying to get across to another person, and enable him or her to better understand us.

2. Feelings. Most of us in the industrialized world are often at a loss when we attempt to say what we are feeling, and we easily confuse our feelings with thoughts, judgments, and even observations. We most often confuse feelings with perceptions and interpretations. Although many of us make "I state-

ments," those often don't describe actual emotions. A statement such as "I feel manipulated" or "I feel abandoned" sounds like an "I statement," but actually contains a disguised interpretation of the other person's motives. When hearing a statement like this, the other person is likely to feel defensive, angry, or guilty. What we want to convey is what we are *actually* feeling—the real emotion of sadness, anger, disappointment, and so on—which is always completely our own.

Identifying and articulating feelings is one more step towards achieving the quality of connection the NVC enables. Actual "owned" feelings are much easier to hear than judgments and hidden accusations. And connecting with what we are actually feeling creates more openness and vulnerability in the dialogue, thereby enabling more connection.

3. Needs (and values). In the NVC model, needs refer to what is most alive in us: our core values, our basic human wants, and our deepest longings. Our emotions arise directly from whether or not our needs are being met. As inarticulate as we usually are about feelings, we tend to be even more inarticulate about our needs, as our culture tends to train us to not know what they are. We are often overwhelmed by our

increasingly “hot” issues. Finally, towards the end of the day, Dennis decides to give it a try.

“I want to talk about why I haven’t been participating in the community,” he blurts suddenly. Every eye is on him immediately. Dennis looks around and takes a deep breath.

“And I want to try out this new way of saying things, so bear with me. When all of you guys trashed my proposal for a name for the community four years ago (*attempted neutral observation*), I felt like giving up (*attempted description of feelings*), I felt really disrespected

***“I’m feeling scared.
I’m trying a new
way and it’s very
unfamiliar.”***



needs without even knowing it.

Often, when we first try to express a need, we actually express our image of what we imagine will meet that need. For example, we are likely to say “I need you to pay attention to me,” when in fact what we need is to be valued and understood, and we imagine that getting attention from this person will meet that need. Needs are not about a specific object or person; they are about what’s alive in us. Identifying them is a process of connecting with ourselves and others more deeply. Because our needs are strikingly similar, it becomes easier to connect when we get in touch with this level of our experience.

4. Requests. Once we have identified what it is in the world that stimulates our emotional reactions, and what our feelings and needs are, the last component of NVC is the communication of a request: what we would like to have happen, and who we would like it from. This is where we connect back with taking action in the world outside us. When we learn to separate our requests from our needs, we loosen the tightness in us, and are less likely to express demands instead of requests.

Most of us are so used to focusing on all the ways that our needs aren’t being met, that often it becomes difficult to identify what it is that we really want in the moment of communication. It

becomes challenging especially to find something that is really concrete, specific, and doable. Thus, for example, “I want you to understand me” is not a doable request (because how can anyone know what would register with another person as “being understood”), however, “I would like you to tell me what you heard me say” is doable. “I want you to respect my wishes” is not doable, while “I would like to hear what gets triggered in you when I express my wishes” is. Because the NVC model values connecting with other people over trying to get people to change, we learn over time to concentrate on requests that enhance the quality of connection in the moment rather than requests that are about changing other people’s future behavior.

The process of empathy as practiced in NVC is quite different from the technique of reflecting back to other people what they say to us. Valuable as that is, it is even more valuable when we try to understand what feelings and needs in the other person are giving rise to whatever he or she says. This can also free us from being caught up in believing ourselves attacked, accused, or criticized by the other person. If we can guess what that person’s feelings and needs might be and what they might want, and not focus on what he or she doesn’t like about what we’re doing, then we are likely to

connect with that person more fully. We will also help the person learn more about himself or herself in the process.

The informational content of what the other person says then serves as an entry point into what her or his needs may be. For example, if someone says, “I can’t believe you did this after everything we’ve been through. Why couldn’t you check with me first before making plans with Janet?,” we can empathize with the person by asking, “Are you frustrated and maybe feeling hurt because it’s really important to you to be consulted about plans that may affect you?”

Using the NVC model to connect empathetically with others is not about getting it right. It’s about the attempt. We can be completely off in our guess about the other person’s feelings or needs and still send across the message of wanting to connect with her or him. Also, in times of conflict, it is a gift to ourselves to try to empathize with the other person, because we are then going to be more able to re-connect with her or him. Using the NVC model isn’t something we do as a favor to the other person. It is rather a way to restore that person’s humanity in our own eyes—no matter how angry or scared or hurt we may feel—and thus is a way of giving ourselves back a piece of ourselves.

—M.K.

(another attempt at describing feelings), because I put so much effort into researching the history of this place (attempted description of needs & values) and ...” He turns to Nancy.

“I’m not doing it right! And I can’t think of a request. And that’s not all of it anyway.” Nancy, aware of the vulnerability that Dennis is displaying, smiles.

“Let me try to translate it, Dennis. You’re actually pretty close. At the very least, you are identifying the cause of your feelings in yourself, in your own needs, and you are not labeling other people. That’s a huge step of inner freedom right there. And here’s my translation: ‘When some people in the community told me they didn’t like my proposal for a community name and had a lot of issues with it (observation), I felt discouraged and hopeless (feelings), because I really want the work that I put into the project to be respected and valued (needs and values), and the reaction I got didn’t match that desire in me.’



Author Miki Kashtan (left), with finger puppets to illustrate the NVC language model, with Sacramento Street Cohousing member Lisa Carey.

“Did that capture it, Dennis?”

“Yes” Dennis says. “You put it much better than I did.

And that wasn’t the only time this happened. There were many—”

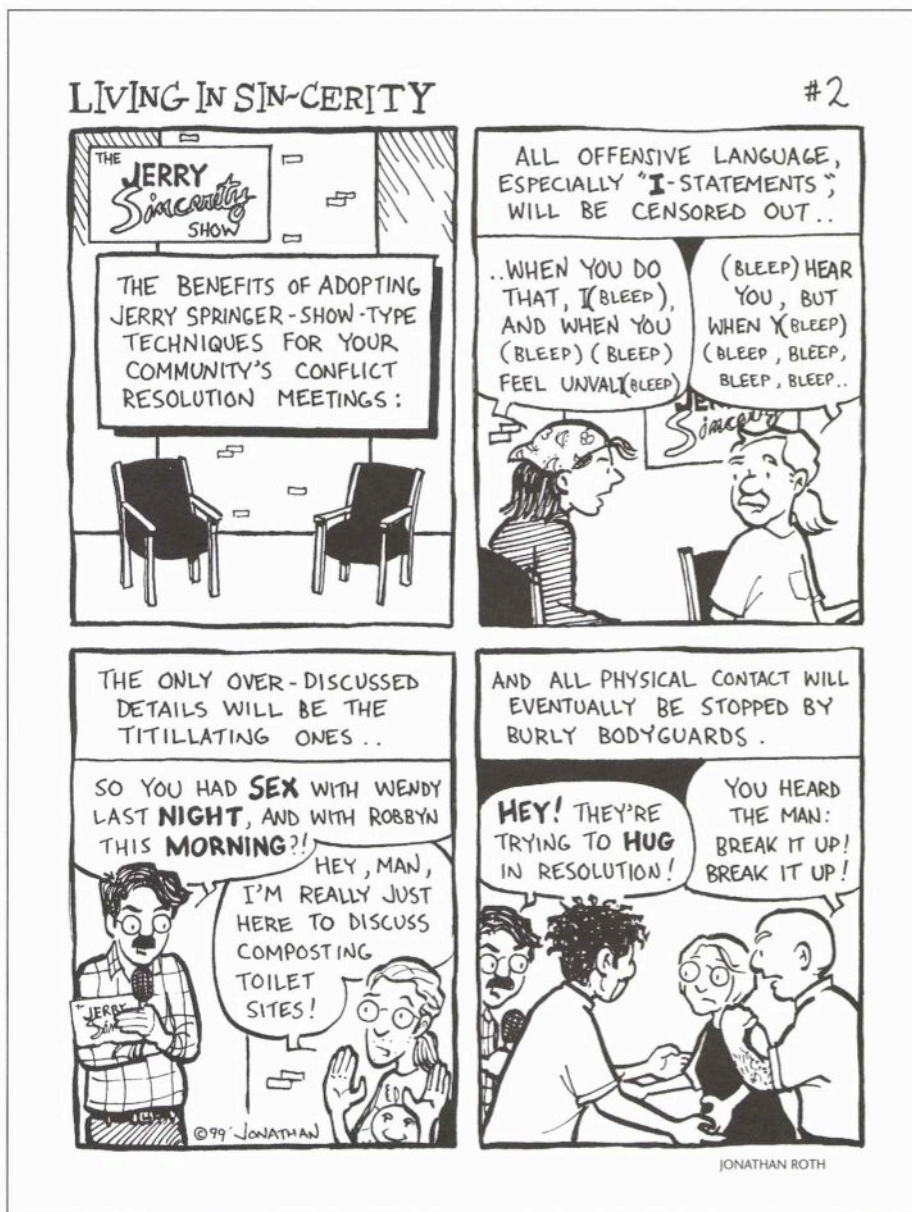
“Wait!” exclaims Nancy. “You just put out something that’s been weighing on you for four years. I’ll bet you would feel much better about it if you got the sense that people were able to hear you. Why don’t you check with whomever you want to see if they really heard you?”

“Jennifer,” Dennis responds without missing a beat, “Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say (request)?”

“Sure,” says Jennifer. “I guess what you’re saying is that you really want to contribute, and you really want your contribution to be valued and appreciated (needs and values), and that when you saw the way we responded to your proposal about our community (observation), and it sounded like other times, too, those needs weren’t met, and so you felt such despair (feelings) that you gave up?”

“Yes, that’s it exactly.” says Dennis. The shift in his expression is so palpable, everyone feels a release of tension.

You can guess the rest of the story. Dennis once again becomes an active member of the community. Nancy returns to Canyon Creek several times to train everyone in the basics of NVC. Those in the



community who really fall in love with the process form an ongoing practice group to master the skills more fully. These are usually the people other community members turn to when conflict arises.

WHILE THE CANYON CREEK STORY IS FICTIONAL, I based it on real events in various situations where I've taught Nonviolent Communication in the San Francisco Bay Area. About a third of the members of Sacramento Street Cohousing in Berkeley took the basic class, and about half of these attend the ongoing Berkeley group. Because only a small number of Sacramento Street members practice NVC, its effect there is more gradual and subtle than I would expect otherwise.



"I've noticed that some of the people learning NVC have been dealing with interpersonal issues and 'hot' community issues in a very constructive way," notes Sacramento Street member Don Lindemann. "In particular, I've been impressed with the efforts that people have made to ensure that we really listen to, appreciate, and digest the many points of view that often come up on any given issue."

I believe an entire community doesn't need to practice NVC in order for the group to benefit significantly. People will experience greater empathy and less conflict, even if only some community members learn the method. But if the whole community makes learning NVC a joint project, the practice can really enhance the sense of community. One of the deepest needs that motivates people to form and to join intentional communities is a desire for more connection in their life. And that, in a nutshell, is what Nonviolent Communication is about. Ω

Miki Kashtan, a certified trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communication, is currently getting her Ph.D. in sociology at UC Berkeley. Since 1988 she has worked with individuals, couples, friends, family members and co-workers, as well as groups and organizations. She facilitates ongoing groups, leads workshops, and teaches classes on NVC regularly. Miki can be contacted at 2005 Stuart St., Berkeley, CA 94703; 510-486-0444; mka@slip.net.

Books, videotapes and other training materials are available from the Center for Nonviolent Communication, PO Box 2662, Sherman, TX 75091; 903-893-3886; cnvc@compuserve.com. In Europe: Orchidea Lodge, Postfach 232, CH-4418 Reigoldswil, Switzerland; +41 61 941 20 60; wasserfallen@access.ch.

NVC in Community

"We have a culture here that is very aware of expressing feelings and using 'I statements,' however, for me NVC fills in the missing part of taking responsibility for our feelings. In day-to-day community life when someone says, 'I'm upset when you do that' I mentally translate that into the person's probable needs, and might ask, 'Are you wanting more consideration?'"

—James Kelly, Findhorn Foundation, Scotland

"Probably the most valuable thing I'm learning from NVC is that empathizing with others does not mean leaving myself out of the picture. That's really important for me when I'm trying to keep my own center and relate to other people at the same time."

—Lloyd Ferris, Sacramento Street Cohousing, Berkeley, California

"I'm excited about using NVC because it helps me take personal responsibility for my interactions with other people and gives me a set of tools for coping when I get my buttons pushed. I can also talk during conflicts in ways that are more likely to work for me; for example, to get something across, to get the person's interest, to get an answer, and so on."

—Mary Carleton, Sacramento Street Cohousing

"I no longer see conflicts as barriers but as 'doorways' to others, especially when I choose to focus on my need to learn about myself and others during a conflict, instead of on my need to be 'right.' Shifting my attention this way has helped me handle community conflicts a lot better."

—Alisa Sugden, Sacramento Street Cohousing

"I find NVC particularly powerful because it goes beyond a lot of other communication techniques which stop at feelings. NVC includes feelings but goes to what I consider a deeper level—needs. I've experienced deeper levels of connection with other people with this than probably another form of communication. Last week I used it with my family and we managed to unlock some issues that had until then seemed forever deadlocked."

—Brad Jarvis, Cardiff Place Cohousing, Victoria, B.C.

Healing Impulse

(continued from page 37)

each other up all morning. Adam walked in from the parking lot. Daniel and Cécile were waiting on the porch. Folks were hugging everyone and wishing them well. For each person involved, it would be a courageous encounter.

DANIEL: We started by getting an agreement on what the format would be. The first part was a chance for the girls to just be angry—to yell and scream and discharge. And for Adam to be able to take that without taking it personally, as an attack. This is somewhat foreign to the formal practice of Open Hearted Listening. Yet we wanted to honor the girls' request to do this, as a way of tapping into their powerful emotions.

CÉCILE: Lauren and Myra stood together. Adam was maybe 10 feet away. The girls were feeding off each other's feelings. I chose to stand with them and offer my energetic support, both through my physical presence and by touching them and sometimes offering words of encouragement.

ROBERT: It was a brave and difficult thing they were attempting to do.

CÉCILE: *Very* brave and difficult.

DANIEL: And incredibly brave willingness on Adam's part, to go through that. I was standing with Adam. I had my hand on his back, behind his heart. We were trying to keep our knees bent and keep grounded. At times, the girls really got their energy going. Adam was breathing hard, but staying grounded. It was very intense, but he was doing fine.

The girls had a certain reluctance. My God, of course! This process was a recreation of the whole situation,

with the girls having to be vulnerable with Adam, their abuser! They were being asked to reveal their innermost being. That's an incredibly vulnerable thing to do. And the whole violation had been about their being revealed in a totally inappropriate way. So considering that it was such a loaded situation, they did great! All three of them did great.

Myra was able to display some real vulnerability to Adam—her anger, and some grief, and a sadness about the breaking of trust. It was good to see that she was able to get to that place.



Daniel Little and Cécile Green, facilitators of the Open Hearted Listening technique.

LAUREN: My karate training helped me get my anger out. It has made me a hell of a lot less shy. Yelling at Adam was like doing a big karate shout.

DANIEL: That's exactly what it was. She went into a karate stance and then the anger came out like a "KEEEAAH" from the gut. It was a little rehearsed, because she was relying on a martial arts form to access her feelings. Yet it worked. It allowed the energy to move, whereas otherwise it might have been too scary.

LAUREN: I felt sorry for the poor bastard. But I also wanted to do it. I just had to think to myself, while we were doing it, "Well, he didn't think one shit's worth about us, when he did what he did. So why do I care?"

MYRA: Daniel and Cécile were *very* supporting during the actual session. They were there for me and Lauren. Cécile was right by us the whole time—hugging us and rubbing our back and telling us to breathe. And Daniel was over by Adam.

LAUREN: They did an awesome job!

•••

ROBERT: Being directly confronted by Lauren and Myra must have reopened some painful memories of what you did to them. How did you deal with that?

ADAM: I couldn't have done it without therapy. The concept of "therapy" conjures up an

image of empathy and compassion for the person receiving it. The therapy that sex offenders get is anything *but* that. My therapy was funded primarily by the Department of Corrections, although the offenders themselves contribute financially. My belief is that the mode of treatment reflects the funding source. Much of it, therefore, was punitive.

But regardless of how punitive the therapy, there was still an opportunity to learn from the experience. What everybody in the treatment program learned, over and over, was to go back to when we were abusing our power. The nitty-gritty awfulness of it. The gut-wrenching, nauseating

aspects of it. And to do it in a way that your feelings are there. That you're not numbing to it.

It wasn't new, therefore, having to regurgitate those memories. So when the girls were confronting me, I wasn't feeling fear. I was respectful of what they were doing. Aware of how much courage it took. I was praying for their strength, because I was responsible for what I had done to them, and I wanted them to move in a healing direction.

Maybe one reason it's called Open Hearted Listening is that when you open your heart and start caring about the other person, the empathy just flows. It's a genuine, heartfelt desire to hear and understand something that I have to assume I *don't* hear and *don't* understand, until they help me. So the girls were helping me hear something I needed to hear, something I didn't fully understand. That I *needed* to understand.

ROBERT: What did you hear them sharing with you?

ADAM: They wanted me to understand how much pain and agony I had caused them. Not just in the past, but in an ongoing way. That they were still struggling, because of what I had done. They wanted to make sure I was not minimizing. That I was not in denial. And part of the reason they wanted me to understand was to make sure that I would never do it again to anyone.

I was surprised that Lauren and Myra came up at the end of the session and hugged me. I might have imagined Lauren doing that in a token way, but this felt like a genuine embrace. I was far more surprised when Myra was able to do it. It was probably the context and the feelings of the moment that inspired her. It felt authentic. It felt like she meant it. Although I don't think she would do it today.

Logs Moving Downstream

One of the unanticipated blessings of conducting these interviews has been the opportunity to re-assess how our children, our community, and our neighborhood are healing from the deep psychic wounds we received seven years ago. It feels like we've come a long way. And that we have a long way yet to go.

JOYCE: I know the Open Hearted Listening sessions were good for Lauren, because the angst and hostility that had been building up and seeping out over the past year and a half dissipated. That was a big relief,



The logs are now moving downstream. Lauren and Myra.

to see she wasn't carrying that edge of hostility around any more. She had the same "clean slate" feeling that I had imagined for her and that I had been seeking for myself during the times when I had needed to blast away at Adam, to keep him current with my feelings.

• • •

MYRA: I came out of the session with Adam feeling relieved. It was like, "It's over. I've gotten all this anger out. I've done it." But an hour or two later I got upset and huffy. Then

I started having the worst nightmares I've ever had in my life about Adam. It brought a bunch of stuff up to the surface, and I was dealing with that for a month or so afterwards. But now I'm having great dreams, although I can't always remember them as well as I wish I could.

LAUREN: I'd *still* like to kick his ass. *(Laughs)* There's a big piece of anger down there that isn't out yet. But a chunk of it got chipped off. Now I'm able to see him without all this anger building up in me. I can get pretty pissed off at him sometimes, but ...

ROBERT: But you don't feel like you're living in your anger as constantly as you were before?

LAUREN: Yeah. I don't feel much anger toward him any more. I was able to get enough out that I feel healthier than if I'd just put it down again and tried to forget it. Because basically that's what I want to do: feel healthier. I don't want this to affect my life that much. But I also know it will probably come up again in a few years, and I'll have to do something else.

MYRA: I don't feel my anger got out when I was just talking to Adam with little punches, because I knew that if I actually did get into it with as much punch as I could that I'd run over and punch him in the face and hopefully knock out all his teeth. So I still have that physical anger. But the training and the sessions did work with my emotions and got things unburied.

I have less of a problem talking to my mom about him now than I did before the sessions. I've come to a point of understanding that I can't make my mom not be with him. I can't separate them with my feelings. So my mom's going to talk about Adam and I can't get mad about that. If she's really in love with him, I've got to stand on the

sideline and support her.

I'm glad I've learned how to use this technique with my family, too. So if something comes up strong inside me and really upsets me, I could sit down and say, "Listen to me with an open heart, dude! I need to get something out and I don't want you to talk while I'm doing it." And they would know what was going on.

• • •

ADAM: The process was amazing. It wasn't complete. Maybe it never is. There are still feelings that need healing. But it was definitely a step in the direction of healing.

The crucial role of leadership should not be underestimated here. Without you being receptive to a vision, Robert, and honoring that vision, and being willing to commit a substantial amount of time and energy to it, this whole healing event would not have occurred. This needs to be acknowledged, because if we're offering something that others might want to emulate, then it won't happen in an environment where there isn't dedicated leadership. Without that, people are going to flounder.

ROBERT: How do you compare Open Hearted Listening with similar techniques you've encountered over the years?

ADAM: At first I equated it with a process called active listening. This is dimensions deeper than active listening, however, both in what it asks and what it offers. It's almost as powerful as what sacred rituals must be to indigenous peoples. We have little understanding of the potency of those rituals, because we equate ritual with something that is old and dead and useless, rather than something that has power. Open Hearted Listening is an active, living, powerful ritual for our times.

• • •

ROBERT: How do you feel about the intuition that led you over to Daniel and Cécile's presentation at the communities conference several years ago, which helped introduce Open Hearted Listening to Light Morning?

JOYCE: People know what they need. I know what I need. And as a long-time member of a community, I have a good sense of its strengths and weaknesses. So I knew that conflict resolution techniques were certainly needed at Light Morning. And it had to be a very loving mode of that. Open Hearted Listening is a loving mode of conflict resolution. It seems to suit who we are.

• • •

ROBERT: It's easy to succumb to a cultural mind-set about the quick fix—some magic bullet or special technique that will solve everyone's problems. But that's naive, isn't it, to believe that a single session will bring complete healing?

CÉCILE: We had arranged for a second session, if the girls wanted it. They got to some good places, yet there was much more that could have been done. Part of my job as a facilitator is to learn how far to push people. Open Hearted Listening is not a magic bullet. It's just a shovel. It all depends on how far you want to take it. It really does come down to people's willingness to use the tool and to explore the universe that this tool is a doorway into. To take responsibility for our own healing.

DANIEL: The sessions were like a healing tonic. They had an effect in the moment, which also rippled out into the future. It would be great if everyone wanted to do this process every month for a year. Then we'd see some *dramatic* shifts.

ROBERT: Perhaps it is only by opening our hearts that we will learn to trust our hearts. And the more we open our hearts, the more open we'll be to the healing impulses and intuitions that flow through them. Like the impulse that came to me last fall in Chapel Hill. Or the inner knowing that guided Joyce to your presentation at Twin Oaks.

I'm deeply grateful that Open Hearted Listening enabled us to break open that log jam of feelings which had been dammed up for so many years. No one waved a wand and made the logs disappear. They're still in the river, thrashing around and thumping into each other. But they're no longer locked up in that massive log jam. They're moving downstream. Ω

Robert Foote is one of the cofounders of Light Morning community, where he and Joyce have lived for the past 25 years. Their daughter Lauren, now 15, is also a member of the community.

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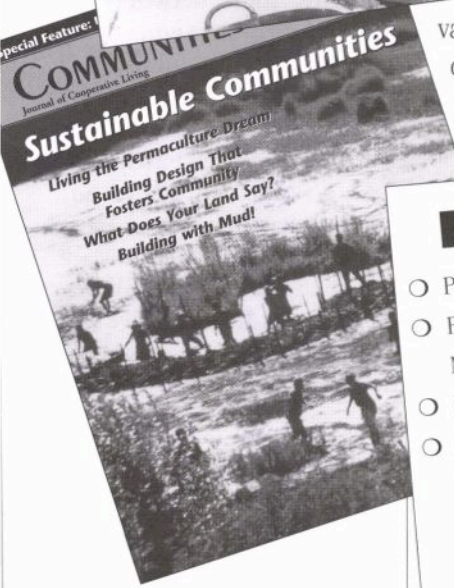
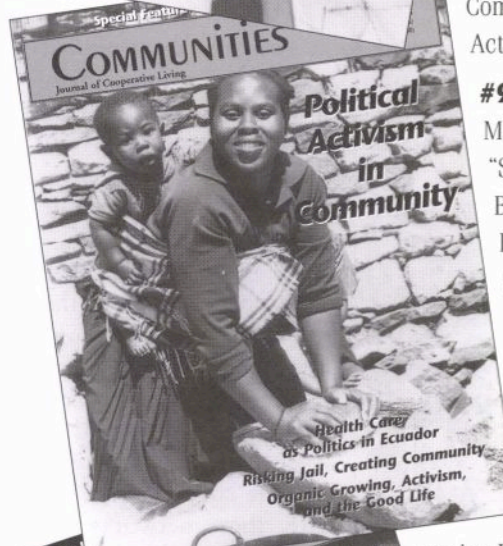
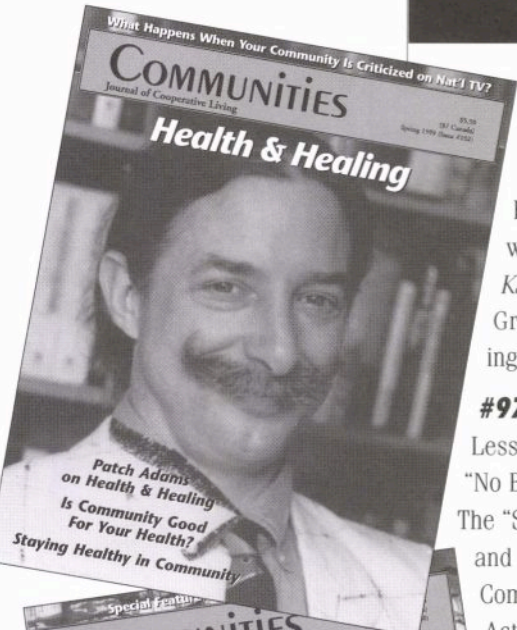
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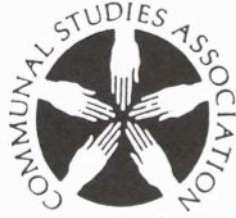
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Learning From Ecovillages Worldwide

IN ORDER TO GAIN A DEEPER understanding of the ecovillage movement, in 1997 we visited 11 intentional communities in Australia, the United States, and Europe. They ranged in size from 16 members to several hundred, and all were rural or semi-rural, enabling them at least to potentially grow much of their own food. None had a specific religious basis, but several embraced some form of universal spirituality. Several were members of Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), and others embodied many of the attributes of an ecovillage, even if they did not see themselves as such.

As we understand it, the term "ecovillage," in essence, means a community of up to several hundred people that meets the material, economic, social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of its inhabitants whilst being in harmony with its natural environment. Ecovillages may

take many forms: traditional intentional communities, cohousing communities, Kibbutzim, African villages, urban neighbourhoods. No communities as yet can claim to meet all the criteria for an ecovillage, but many aspire to do so.

Global Ecovillage Network, designed to foster the ecovillages movement, consists of regional and national networks that share their experiences in creating alternative, small-scale sustainable communities. To date, these networks are largely a phenomenon of the Western, industrialised world, but some Third World communities are already GEN members, and vigorous efforts are

being made not only to promote the idea within the Third World, but also to learn from surviving traditional village cultures. GEN is developing a comprehensive self-audit questionnaire to help communities evaluate their performance as aspiring ecovillages.

ECOVILLAGE JOURNAL



BY MALCOLM
HOLLICK &
CHRISTINE
CONNELLY

Malcolm Hollick and Christine Connelly's study tour of ecovillages was the culmination of Malcolm's 25-year academic career working on a variety of issues about sustainable development. They are now at Foundation Community in Scotland. The full text of their report, "Achieving Sustainable Development: The Eco-Village Contribution" is available on the Global Ecovillage Network Web site; www.gaia.org, and from Communities Bookshelf, FIC, Rt. 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; www.ic.org/bookshelf.

The communities we visited were:

- *Crystal Waters* in Queensland, Australia, a permaculture village with 83 approximately one-acre house lots and a village centre and visitor's area on 640 acres used mainly for conservation and agriculture.

- *Dharmananda Community*, in New South Wales, Australia, which had at the time of our visit 12 adult members and three children in eight houses and a community house, situated on 260 acres of forest, pasture, and vegetable gardens and orchards.

- The *Manitou Institute* in Colorado, which represents the offices of the institute and its small staff, as well as several small religious communities on 40-acre land grants from the Manitou Foundation. While the number of permanent residents of these communities is small, 200–300 people have been drawn to the area in order to be associated with them.

- *Nyland Cohousing* in Colorado, with 42 housing units and about 130 residents (34 children) on approximately 30 acres of common land.

- *Twin Oaks* in Virginia, founded in 1967, with usually about 100 members, on 500 acres of largely wooded land.

- *The Farm* in Tennessee, founded in 1971 on about 1800 acres, with about 180 members and 15 teenagers today.

- *Sirius* in Massachusetts, founded in 1978 on 93 acres, with about 25 adult members and their families when we visited, along with several exploring members.

- *EcoVillage at Ithaca*, New York, a planned cluster of cohousing neighbourhoods. The first residents group, which had moved in less than a year before we visited, has 55 adults and 32 children in 30 houses; the second neighbourhood is currently being planned.

- *Findhorn* in northeast Scotland is large and complex. The total population is probably about 350: around 80 in the Findhorn Foundation which runs spiritual education programmes; two main subcommunities at the Findhorn Bay Caravan Park and Cluny Hill College about five miles away in Forres; and some associated smaller communities.

- *Lebensgarten* in Germany, founded in 1984 with about 130 members in 62 houses and associated community facilities, built originally as workers' housing for a Nazi munitions factory.

- *Plum Village* in France, a Vietnamese Buddhist monastery which attracts thousands of Westerners each year to its extended retreats. The community has about 70 monks and nuns and 10 permanent lay residents located in five "hamlets" established on old farms.

Our interests covered a wide range of issues, including legal, financial, and economic structures; social issues such as membership rules, decision making, and conflict management; and community design, land management, and technology. The tour confirmed our sense that, whilst "green" technologies are very important, the dominant issues are human ones. The greatest challenge for most ecovillages is learning to live and work together

in harmony. Hence many of our findings relate to issues such as creating a caring and sharing community, making collective decisions, and managing interpersonal conflicts. Also of critical importance are legal and financial structures and the development of local economies that are reasonably independent of the mainstream economy.

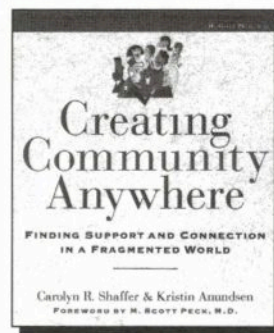
The achievements of the communities we visited are impressive. They all have strengths from which others can learn, but as yet none comes close to fulfilling all the criteria for a full-fledged ecovillage. Nevertheless, if the best features of the 11 communities could be combined, the result would be wonderful indeed!

After completing the study, a friend asked: "What are the 10 most important things you've learned?" After considerable thought we came up with the following points:

1. The most important thing for the future of humanity and the planet is personal transformation. Aggressive, angry, competitive, alienated people cannot build a society that is peaceful, cooperative, sustainable, and just.

2. Of similar importance is the creation of loving relationships with ourselves, our families, the wider community,

The greatest challenge for most ecovillages is learning to live and work together in harmony.



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our natural environment, humanity, and the planet.

3. In order to achieve personal transformation and loving relationships, it is very helpful, perhaps even essential, to meditate. Meditation is a wonderful tool for contacting our inner selves, and developing insight, awareness and mindfulness. It also helps us slow down!

4. Work is an essential part of daily life, and it makes so much difference how we go about it. We were particularly struck by work as "love in action," as practised by the Findhorn Community. Attuning to self, others, our environment, and the work at hand with an attitude of love can transform any task, even cleaning the toilets. Productivity may be lower, but the quality of life and human relationships is far superior.

5. No matter how compatible people are, and no matter how skillful at human relationships, personal conflicts are sure to arise. Learning to deal promptly and effectively with these so that they do not fester is vital to any relationship or community.

6. Decision making is one of the most difficult aspects of community life. We were most impressed by those groups that were able to listen deeply to each other, quietly sharing their concerns, ideas, hopes, and fears. These groups often meditate together to tune in to each other before getting down to business, and again after they have discussed an issue but before trying to reach agreement.

7. A sense of timelessness and patience is vital for creating the kind of community represented by the ecovillage vision. This is not the timelessness of sleep or laziness, but it complements a sense of urgency and mission regarding the future of the planet. This is the laid-back way of the Taoist sage who does nothing, yet everything gets done.

8. The issue of economic independence for ecovillages has grown in importance in our minds throughout our travels. A meditative, low-stress lifestyle that is responsive to natural and personal rhythms is possible only for communities that do not depend heavily on outside jobs for their livelihood.

9. One of the greatest barriers to creating a sustainable way of life and an independent economy is dependence on the automobile. Few of the communities we visited are really tackling this successfully, but ecovillages will fail to achieve their objectives until they do.

10. Many ecovillages are working hard to reduce the impact of their human excrement, but too many are still hooked on the idea that it must be flushed away. The waste of water and other resources needed to create complex treatment facilities can be almost totally avoided by using composting toilets.

So far none of the communities we visited fulfills all the criteria for a full-fledged ecovillage.

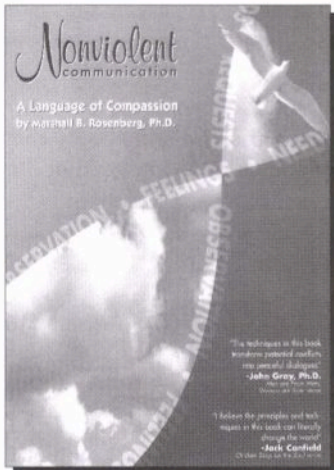
HOW WELL IS THE ECOVILLAGE MOVEMENT doing overall? In some ways very well, and in others not so well. GEN and its associated organisations are being swamped with interest: their challenge is to service the demand. Many new, aspiring ecovillages are being estab-

lished, and many older intentional communities are re-examining their visions in the light of the ecovillage concept. Ideas, information, and experience are being widely shared via the internet, and there is little doubt that this mutual support is boosting morale. On the negative side, there is little sign as yet that governments are willing to amend legislation to facilitate ecovillage developments, and in many places there are substantial legal hurdles. Similarly, mainstream financial institutions are reluctant to lend for anything but traditional developments and businesses.

In our opinion, creating a sustainable society with a high quality of life and culture depends on developing networks of ecovillages which capture the economies of scale and the diversity of large populations without losing the advantages of a small ecological footprint, local autonomy, slower rhythms of life, and loving human relationships. Fully developed ecovillage networks could offer human-scale societies in which each individual is valued, and in which people could achieve their potentials as human beings. Ω

Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.

REVIEWS



Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion

by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Puddle Dancer Press (1999)
Pb., 165 pp. \$15.95

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of the Heart

85 minute videotape featuring
Marshall Rosenberg. \$20.00

Both available from:

Center for Nonviolent Communication
PO Box 2662
Sherman, TX 75091
903-893-3886

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

"YOU SHOULD KNOW," THE AFRICAN translator warned Marshall Rosenberg on their way to a meeting in a village recently split by religious violence, "There will be chiefs in this room who know that others in the room had murdered their children."

Rosenberg, who developed the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process

over the last 35 years, began the session by asking a group of Christian chiefs, "What have you been needing from the other chiefs here that you haven't been getting?"

"Murderers!" they shouted. He acknowledged the men's outrage, and asked them again what they needed from the other side that they hadn't been getting. After more than an hour of repeatedly hearing variations of this question and expressing more rage and anguish, the Christian chiefs were finally able to reveal that what they needed was for the Moslems to allow their people access to more stalls in the marketplace. Rosenberg turned to the other side.

"Could you please tell me what you heard these men say?" he asked.

"They want to kill us!" retorted the angry Moslem chiefs. After the same patient process, with Rosenberg acknowledging the Moslems' emotions and repeating the question, the men were finally able to understand, and then repeat, that the Christians had said they wanted more stalls in the marketplace. Rosenberg repeated the same long process with the other side until the Christian chiefs could were able to accurately repeat what they'd heard the Moslem chiefs say they needed.

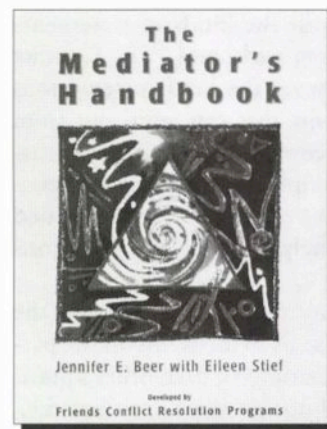
Suddenly one of the chiefs leapt up from the table and railed furiously at Rosenberg.

"He says you've broken his heart," said the translator. "Because if their two sides had only learned to speak this way long ago, they would never have had to kill each other!"

Learning about the NVC method rocked my heart too. Maybe there *was* a process in which people—I—could communicate with others in a way that didn't make bad situations worse. The NVC process involves shifting how we experience ourselves in relation to others and changing our choice of words when we speak. Fortunately, the language change itself helps us feel our relation to others more compassionately. Better yet, the NVC process can be applied unilaterally to de-escalate conflict and connect with *anyone*—including people who've never heard of the process.

The book explains in detail how to use each of the four steps—saying what we observe, feel, need, and are requesting of others (or attempting to understand what

others may feeling, needing, and wanting)—in descriptive, non-loaded language. It explains how—and why—relating and speaking this way can *not* cause a conflict even when discussing a normally conflict-prone issue. I found its sample dialogues—experiences of real people—especially helpful. The video, featuring Rosenberg telling vivid stories like the one above, is not as straightforward a teaching tool, but "fills in" with more personal explanations. Both serve to introduce people to the idea that with this communication method they can shift themselves out of the typical stance of judgment and blame towards others (or towards oneself), and into a framework of feeling connected with and empathetic others, even if that's a brand new experience. It's the kind of information that could change your life.



The Mediator's Handbook

by Jennifer Beer with Eileen Steif

New Society Publishers (1997)
Pb., 168 pp. \$19.95

Available from:

New Society Publishers
PO Box 189
Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X0
CANADA
800-567-6772

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

PROBABLY NO GROUP (IN WESTERN culture, anyway) has focused on mutually helpful ways to solve disputes longer than the Quakers, and *The Mediator's Handbook* arises from Quaker wisdom. One of the first "how-to" mediation manuals available to lay people, it was developed by the Friends Conflict Resolution

Program of the Philadelphia Meeting of the Society of Friends. The FCRP authors are both mediators and teachers of mediation who believe that while professionals can play important roles, we regular folks can learn to use these basic skills in our own lives, too. And if we live in community, we know we'll use them often!

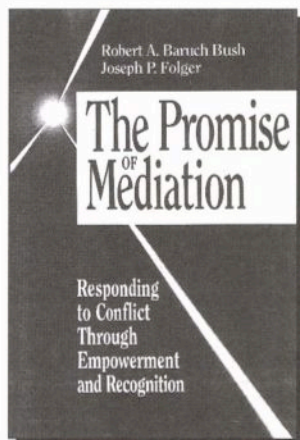
The Mediator's Handbook impressed me as a teaching tool because it conveys the basics in stages, from a first overview to a more detailed overview and finally to specifics on how to do each part of the process. This, and the superb diagrams and typographical design—obviously set up to make it as easy as possible to learn the material—make trying to learn mediation, or just flipping through this book to browse, a pleasure. I found many “gems,” such as the diagram, “The Conflict Core,” which portrays four mutually reinforcing aspects of conflict—inequities, annoyance, disagreement, and competition—with the kinds of statements that arise from each, and “The Conflict Spiral,” showing the kinds of emotions and statements that can whirl out from the original core event. The sample situations and sample mediator's responses—always in neutral, non-loaded language—helped make the situations more real.

Like many mediation teachers, the authors advise us to focus not on the parties' interpretations of each other's motivations, and not on their positions; i.e., “Muzzle your dog,” but on their interests (what the Nonviolent Communication model calls their needs). In fact, another “gem” for me is “the mediator's Mantra,” for when the going gets rough: “*Speak to the person's interests.*” Not, mind you, to what you think is in their best interests, but what they identify as their best interests. And in fact, mediation is not about what you think at all, but what the parties to the dispute think. You're not there to solve their problem, the authors say, but to help them solve their own problem. The acid test of mediator self-control is not to suggest a solution to the problem that is glaringly obvious to you.

While I wished the book had spent more time on how lay people can use these techniques, I think that just knowing some of these methods will help people defuse potential conflict-laden

situations in their daily lives. For that reason *The Mediator's Handbook* may be a wise addition to any community's library.

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.



***The Promise of Mediation:
Responding to Conflict
Through Empowerment
and Recognition***

by Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger

Jossey Bass Publishers (1994)
Hardcover, 296 pp. \$34.95

Reviewed by Helen Forsey

THE PROMISE OF MEDIATION IS A challenging, well-written, and potentially quite useful book for communitarians and others who want to deal creatively with conflict. It provides a philosophical basis and some down-to-earth guidelines, not only for professional mediators but for those of us who find ourselves involved in informal conflict resolution in our communities and organizations.

The authors' basic premise is that conflict resolution is not about reaching settlements, but about enabling people in conflict to build self-respect and empathy so that they can learn to deal creatively and humanely, not only with the dispute in question, but with future human interactions. The practice of this belief is “transformative mediation,” whose goal is to help the parties develop “both the capacity for strength of self”—

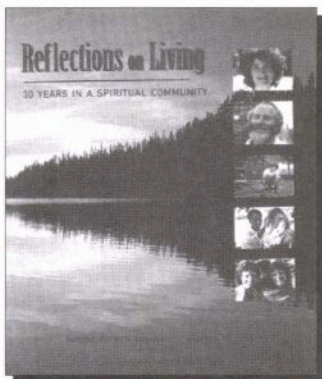
empowerment—“and the capacity for relating to others”—recognition.

Bush and Folger begin with an outline of why they think people in the mediation field need to take stock and shift direction away from most current mediators practice and towards a transformative approach. The field of mediation, they believe, is at a crossroads, and something of enormous value is in danger of being lost. They analyze four “stories” or interpretations of the purpose and effects of mediation—Satisfaction, Social Justice, Oppression, and Transformation. The most common, they say, is the “Satisfaction Story,” a “problem-solving approach,” in which conflict is seen as a problem to be solved, with the mediator trying to bring about a settlement that satisfies the parties. The authors point out serious flaws and pitfalls with this approach, and make a surprisingly convincing case for replacing “satisfaction” with “transformation.” They provide detailed case histories, each with a step-by-step analysis that challenges the reader and sets the critical and creative juices flowing.

I believe the authors' understanding of mediation, its context and potential, overlaps significantly with the experience of many people in intentional communities. Bush and Folger unashamedly frame their argument in broad and idealistic terms, speaking of the need to “achieve a full integration of individual freedom and social context, in a relational social order”—the kind of integration that many seek and find in community. They also note that “if the vision cannot be expressed in a concrete context such as “it remains mere theory.” Quite so. Isn't that exactly why many of us choose the challenges of community living?

Although some of the book's tone and content comes out of academia, this happily does not interfere with its readability or its practical usefulness. It offers stimulating ideas and practical proposals on a subject of immense importance to people who live together, work together, or try to create change together. *The Promise of Mediation* would be a valuable addition to a community or neighbourhood library.

Writer Helen Forsey lives communally in the Ottawa Valley in Ontario, Canada.



Reflections on Living: 30 Years in a Spiritual Community

by Sara Cryer

Crystal Clarity Publishers (1998)

Pb., 304 pp. \$16.95

Available from:

Crystal Clarity Publishers
14618 Tyler Foote Rd.
Nevada City, CA 9595

Reviewed by Scott Shuker

SWAMI PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA'S vision of a worldwide network of spiritual communities—vibrant groups of seekers sharing a the dream of a simple, rural life dedicated to spiritual growth and fellowship—began in the '30s and '40s in his Los Angeles-based Self Realization Fellowship. One of his disciples, Swami Kriyananda (J. Donald Walters), turned Yogananda's vision into reality in 1967 by buying 500 acres in California's Sierra Nevada foothills for a retreat center and monastery. Swami Kriyananda remained the community's guiding force and teacher for three decades.

Author Sara Cryer describes early Ananda members as sharing a devotion to meditation, prayer, singing, and their spiritual master Yogananda, and putting love of God first and creating a life based on the daily practice of spiritual values.

Swami Kriyananda and his followers set out to create a monastic spiritual community, and in the early days men and women became monks and nuns, wearing orange or yellow robes and living separately in the traditional yogic way. But soon Ananda transitioned from a monastery to a householder community, with some members remaining

Halfway Up The Mountain

The Error of Premature Claims to Enlightenment

by Mariana Caplan

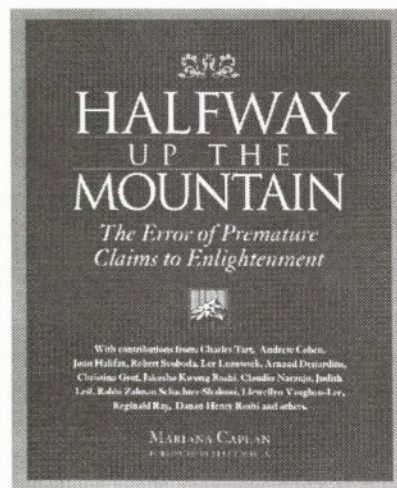
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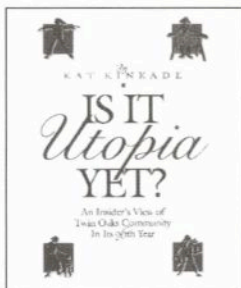
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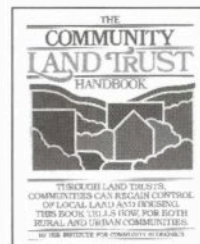


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monastic but most getting married, building houses, and having children—the legacy left for the Ananda of today. Even after a devastating fire in '76, they created many successful member- and community-owned businesses, such as a retreat center, a natural foods restaurant, a natural foods market, and a publishing company. Cryer describes Ananda as surviving through tenacity, vision, and a strong pursuit of spiritual values.

Cryer has captured the tenacity and spiritual vision of Ananda through firsthand accounts of many long-time members. Each contribution is a deeply sincere tale of a search for truth and meaning, the events that led the person to the community, and how he or she has managed through the years. The love of God, nature, and spiritual brother/sisterhood is evident in each contributor's story, creating a vivid picture of life "the

way we were" from the very beginning, and each contributor seems to have no regrets. I found it personally inspiring to feel so much devotion in their accounts, sometimes brief, sometimes intricate and lengthy.

However, for me, *Reflections on Spiritual Living* took reading between the lines, considering that it was written from such a self-consciously positive point of view. The book falls short in its redundancy; each account sounds similar to the last. Sentences along the rough lines of, "I read Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* and my life changed," or "I lived in a trailer with only two water jugs and it was bliss," are typical of most accounts. I found myself skipping through to find a more unique contribution. Though *Reflections* is strong on inspiration, it lacks diversity of perspective, particularly since it contains

narratives written by members present from the community's early days, with no voice given to the community's newer members, young people who were born and raised there, or former members who had left. I'm afraid such consistent enthusiasm is typical of the accounts of many spiritual or religious communities, and I tended to take each story with a grain of salt.

Nevertheless, *Reflections* makes a good gift book or source of inspiration for anyone wanting to understand the evolution of a spiritual community, particularly for those on an Eastern or yogic spiritual path, or for those seeking tales of how a young community learned to survive and thrive. Ω

Scott Thomas Shuker, a former member of the Lama Foundation, lives in San Cristobal, New Mexico.

READERS' FICTION FAVORITES



The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You

by Dorothy Bryant

Random House/Moon Books
(1971)
Pb., 220 pp. \$10.00

Reviewed by Helen Forsey

BY THE FOURTH OR FIFTH PARAGRAPH OF *THE KIN OF ATA Are Waiting for You* I found myself reading a particularly violent scene and wondering if the friend who had recommended the book had lost her wits. But within a few pages, I was captivated.

The Kin of Ata turned out to be a novel of personal transformation, beautifully and simply written. It is a story that intrigues the mind and moves the spirit. It is also a visionary novel of community.

Ata is a small village of people, all "kin," living in utter peaceful simplicity, guided by their dream experiences (which they share every morning). They have no written language, only the most primitive tools, and a lifestyle so frugal that it resembles hardship. Without material riches, they share what they have with each other: food, work, dreams, stories, celebration.

The initially violent protagonist who finds himself in their midst comes from a very different society, one all too familiar to us. As he learns the ways of Ata, he faces choices which change not only his outer life, but his very soul.

The example of Ata embodies crucial values of community in ways that challenge us profoundly. Drawn with the narrator into Ata's communal society, we are shown a different vision of human potential, and a different interpretation of human history. We are obliged to confront our assumptions about technology, comfort, and harmony; about nonviolence, permanence, and death; and perhaps to reexamine the nature of reality itself.

If a community is indeed a crucible in which we learn about ourselves and others, *Ata* is that and more. It is one of those rare novels that can forever change how you see the world. It can serve as a touchstone for nonviolent community, a point of reference for joyful and life-affirming communal values, a reminder of what could be—and perhaps of how to move in that direction.

The Kin of Ata Are Waiting For You is a gem, a classic. Read it, share it, help keep it in print. The Kin of Ata are waiting for you! Ω

Helen Forsey is a member of Lothlorien Farm in the Ottawa Valley.

Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.

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: *Community Calendar*, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782. 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.

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 • Northwest Intentional Communities Association Potluck

Seattle, WA. Third Friday of the month, 6-9 pm. Welcoming people interested in all types of community to share stories, food, laughter. For locations, directions: Emily, emilymail@yahoo.com.

Ongoing • Community Work Exchange Weekend at Sirius

Shutesbury, MA. Sirius Community. Experience community life with work projects, evening sing-alongs or dance celebrations, Sunday Service, meditations, vegetarian food. 72 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-1254; fax, 413-259-1255; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; www.siriuscommunity.org.

Sep 18-19 • Root Cellars, Canning, & Food Preservation

Shutesbury, MA. Sirius Community. Safe and efficient methods of canning, drying (incl. solar drying), and storing fruits and vegetables in root cellars. Sirius Community, 72 Baker Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-1254; fax, 413-259-1255; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; www.siriuscommunity.org.

Sep 18-Oct 1 • Permaculture Design Intensive

Occidental, CA. Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. With Penny Livingston, Brock Dolman. \$850-\$950. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557.

Sep 23-25 • Communal Studies Association's 26th Annual Conference

St. George, Utah. "The Dawning of a Brighter Day: Anticipating the New Millennium, Reflecting on the Closing of the Old," held at Pioneer Opera House. Presentations, papers, banquet, and field trips to contemporary and historic communities in the area, for community members, scholars, and anyone interested in the history and culture of communal societies and intentional communities. CSA, PO Box 122, Amana, IA; 319-622-6446; csa@netins.net; www.ic.org/csa/.

Sep 23-26 • 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; aquarianconcepts@sedona.net; www.aquarianconcepts.com.

Oct 1 • Neighborhood Communities Fair

Seattle, WA. Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Center. 6-9 pm. Speakers include Rob Sandelin and Cecile Andrews. 206-721-0217; www.coneighborhoods.net.

Oct 1-3 • 1999 North American Cohousing Conference

Amherst, Massachusetts. Pine Street and Pioneer Valley Cohousing Communities, co-hosts. Speakers, workshops; conference themes include affordable cohousing and "green" cohousing communities, and plenty of time for singing, dancing, performance, and crafts. \$180, conference events & meals. For more information, *Cohousing Network*; 303-413-9227; www.cohousing.org.

Oct 16-17 • Health & Healing for Year 2000

Shutesbury, MA. Sirius Community. Personal and family health needs for Y2K: dealing w/ potential disruptions in medical care, first aid, herbs, basic homeopathy, Reiki, and other home-health modalities. *Sirius Community*, 72 Baker Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-1254; fax, 413-259-1255; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; www.siriuscommunity.org.

Oct 27-30 • National Association of Housing Cooperatives Annual Conference

Toronto, Canada. "Sharing Challenges and Solutions," with over 50 workshops on training and technical assistance for housing co-op decision-makers and site managers. NAHC, 1614 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2719; 703-549-5201; coophousing@usa.net.

Nov 11-14 • 24th Annual Conference, Society for Utopian Studies

San Antonio, TX. Gathering of college and university professors, researchers, and others studying actual and literary utopian experiments. Alex MacDonald, *Campion College, University of Regina*, 3737 Wascana Pkwy, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4S 0A2; 306-359-1223; macdonaa@meena.cc.uregina.ca.

Nov 5-7 • Introduction to Permaculture

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

Nov 15-18 • Semiannual Organizational Meeting, Fellowship for Intentional Community

Shutesbury, MA. Sirius community. Planning policies, reports, and consensus decision making, by board members, staff, and volunteers for FIC, publishers of *Communities* magazine, *Communities* Directory, and *Intentional Communities* Web Site, and hosts of the biannual Art of Community gatherings. Visitors welcome; call or write for details. 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org; www.ic.org.

Nov 19-21 • Art of Community Gathering

Frost Valley, New York. Fellowship for Intentional Community's lively weekend of how-to workshops and networking with members of dozens of intentional communities as well as authors and contributors to *Communities Directory* and *Communities* magazine; plus Workshops on finding your community; consensus decision making; resolving conflict; visioning, planning, and fundraising; cohousing communities; ecovillages, forming new communities, and more, with presenters Geoph Kozeny, Jeff Grossberg, Laird Sandhill, Caroline Estes, Diana Christian, Tony Sirna, and others. 540-894-5798; alex@ic.org; gathering@ic.org; www.ic.org.

Nov 20-21 • Alternative Economics

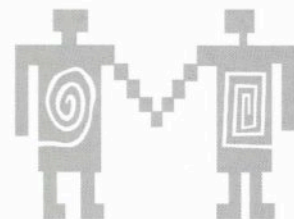
Shutesbury, MA. Sirius Community. Barter, local currencies, LETS, and "usury-free" economics. *Sirius Community*, 72 Baker Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-1254; fax, 413-259-1255; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; www.siriuscommunity.org.

Nov 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; aquarianconcepts@sedona.net; www.aquarianconcepts.com.

Dec 8-12 • Federation of Egalitarian Communities Fall Assembly

Louisa, VA. Twin Oaks community. Delegates from FEC communities plan policy, upcoming events and activities through consensus decision making. Visitors welcome. *FEC*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126.



CLASSIFIEDS



Communities classified ads reach almost 5,000 people who are seriously interested in community. They include:

- any service, product, workshop or publication that is useful to people living in, or interested in living in, communities;
- products produced by people living in community;
- land for sale which may be of interest to people forming communities;
- employment opportunities;
- personal ads.

Please note that the CLASSIFIED DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 1999 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCT. 13.

The Classified rate is \$.50 per word. We appreciate your payment on ordering. Make check or money order out to Communities. Send it, your typed or clearly printed copy with a specified word count, how many times you wish the ad to appear and under which category (you may suggest a new category!) to: Patricia Greene, 31 School St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; phone or fax, 413-625-0077; email: peagreen@javanet.com. If you are emailing me an ad, please include the copy within the body of the letter, rather than as an attachment and be sure to send the check snail mail at the same time.

All other listings can be found in the Reach and Calendar columns.

BOOKS, VIDEOS, AUDIOTAPES

"LOOKING FOR IT" is a two-hour video diary/documentary on communities and the community movement. Patch Adams says, "I was glued for two hours. This tape deserves a wide viewership." Copyright 1995. Send check or money order for \$24.95 to: Sally Mendzela, 36 North Center St., Bellingham, MA 02019. Questions? 508-883-8424; salgal@quik.com.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

HEARTWOOD DESIGN. High-end custom cabinet and architectural woodworking business privately owned at Shannon Farm Community in central Virginia is looking for a business partner. Skills need to range from computer drawings, sales, design and running jobs. For more info contact Jenny, M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST, at 540-989-8787; heartwooddesign@mindspring.com.

CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

GLOBAL CHANGE THROUGH ASCENSION SCIENCE. September 23-26, and November 25-28, 1999. Four-day seminars. 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; aquarianconcepts@sedona.net; www.aquarianconcepts.com.

COMMUNITY DIALOGS across North America, sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), published of this magazine. What does "community" mean to you? What would help you create more community in your life? And how can the FIC 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*, 2244 Alder St., Eugene, OR 97405; 541-343-5023; tree@ic.org.

CONSULTANTS

VASTU VEDIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION. Designing community buildings according to the sacred architectural traditions of India. 515-472-215.

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 700+ property caretaking opportunities each year, worldwide. Some estate management positions start at \$50,000/yr. Plus benefits. Subscriptions; \$27/yr. *The Caretaker Gazette*, POB 5887-1, Carefree, AZ 85377; 480-488-1970; www.angelfire.com/wa/caretaker.

LAND FOR SALE

NEW MEXICO. Wilderness compound, three beautiful homes, views, national forest, meadow and duck sanctuary lake. Five acres, secluded. \$499K. For package with pictures: *Jodi*, 505-831-4881.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. 235 beautiful acres. Rolling hills, oak trees, year-round south fork of Elder Creek, excellent garden soil, wild animals, silence, awesome views, business potentials for self-reliance (recycled lumber available for structures). Two parcels, could share with ambitious, skilled person or sell all. 530-833-0119.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. Prime community property with eco-tourism potential. 80 acres, 2,000 ft. elevation NE of Chico. Creek through length, spring water, two-bedroom home. Will share all or sell part. 530-833-0119.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. ABC Organic Farm. 25 acres loam soil, 12 acres prunes in full production with established market, 13 acres pasture, all flood irrigated, foundations for structure and lumber. 530-833-0119.

PERSONALS

GREEN SINGLES NEWSLETTER. Connecting singles in the environmental, vegetarian, and animal rights communities for friendship, dating, and romance. Membership around the world and around the corner. Since 1985. Free information: Box 69-CM, Pickerington, OH 43147; www.greensingles.com.

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

HEALTHY WHITE MALE, 70+, seeking special woman companion. Trying to form community. *Tennessee*, 411 North 5th, Alpine, TX 79830; 915-837-3060.

NEW HAMPSHIRE MAN, 48, seeks woman partner. Organic farmer with farm, reader, thinker, questioner and eco-village intentional community enthusiast. Visit my extensive Web site, <http://homepage.fcgnetworks.net/journey>; email address: journey@cyberportal.net.

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COMPACT SOLAR "Y2KABIN" florescent area light, sufficient to study/cook. 3"x6"x11". Internal battery. Package includes wire and solar panel. \$294 (\$9.95 US S/H). Solar-powered LED flashlight, 6"x3"x1". 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.



REACH



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.

You may use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad. Note: THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 1999 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCTOBER 13!

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 payable to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy, word count, number of insertions and category to: Patricia Greene, 31 School St, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; phone or fax, 413-625-0077; email: peagreen@javanet.com. (If you email an ad, please include it in the body of your letter, rather than as an attachment, and be sure to send the check snail mail at the same time and note that you've done so.)

You can list your Reach ad for free on our Communities REACHBOOK Web site at www.ic.org.

Suggestions to advertisers: get a larger response by including both address and phone/fax, plus email, 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 Classifieds Dept. and are charged at a \$.50/wd. rate. Please see that column for instructions.

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

ACORN, Mineral, Virginia. We are a young consensus community creating an egalitarian culture that values fun, children, relationships and varied, fulfilling work. We share income from selling crafts, organic farming and occasional outside jobs and work together to build and maintain our home on 72 acres. *Acorn, 1259-CM11 Indian Creek Rd., Mineral, VA 23117; 540-894-0595; acorn@ic.org.*

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.*

AQUARIUS, Vail, Arizona. Visit unspoiled mountain wilderness with great views, weather, safety. Self-sufficient. Ideal for homesteader. Idyllic cooperative, textile-free setting. Weddings, workshops, quests. SASE. *POB 69, Vail, AZ 85641.*

BREAD AND ROSES, Olympia, Washington. We are four women living in a Catholic Worker, intentional community that works with homeless folks (however, we are of varying spiritual beliefs). We run a shelter, soup kitchen and family center. Decisions are based on consensus, nonviolent actions and social justice. We are looking for someone who is dedicated to working with people in crisis situations, and with diverse groups of people. This includes children and people of varying ethnicities, sexual preferences and religious/spiritual beliefs. **PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY!** Bilingual a plus. We offer free room and a living stipend. Queer friendly. Vegetarian/Vegan diets welcome. *Bread and Roses, 1320 8th Ave. SE, Olympia, WA 98501; 360-754-4085; breadroses@olywa.net.*

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... It provides housing 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, Ontario, Canada KOJ 2A0; 613-757-2174; healing@web.net.*

CONCORD OASIS ECOHOUSING, Concord, California. Our purpose is to provide a mini-Cohousing seed source for environmentally responsible community(ies), and ultimately eco-villages, within existing developed areas. Physically, the project consists of 2+ existing units and research quality Straw-Bale Common Structure nearing completion. A unique multi-household flexible floor plan Real Goods Demonstration Program home has been completed. Plans to remodel an existing home are being considered. Acquisition of an adjacent home is under negotiation. Concord Oasis Ecohousing is seeking financially capable core group members with compatible vision to compliment existing owners/renters. E-mail us at mdemaio@juno.com, see our Web site at members.tripod.com/~Oasis_Ecohousing, or call 925-687-2560.



DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. Highly motivated, community and ecologically minded, and experienced group is looking for individuals, families, and communities to help create the ideal rural ecovillage. Our 14 adult and five child residents are constructing off-the-grid straw-bale and cob homes on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. Dancing Rabbit will be a large community with many different subcommunities that interact socially and economically. Our goal is to build a small town that is truly sustainable and socially responsible. Potential living options include DR's first subcommunity, Skyhouse (an FEC community of five adults) and private individual or family homes. We have a close working relationship with Sandhill Farm, a 23-year-old egalitarian community nearby, and are especially interested in other 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.*

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: *www.cfe.cornell.edu/ecovillage*, and contact: *Liz Walker, 607-255-8276; 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 or Frederick, Maryland, with a five minute trip to 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; www.ecovil.com.*

GANAS, Staten Island, New York. Ganas moved to NYC in 1979 with six people (all still here.) Now we're about 75 adults of many ages, ethnicities and life views. Conflicts that arise usually get resolved quickly because we discuss them before they get hot. Our purpose is to learn to exchange truth with love, intelligence and pleasure. Every day about half of us talk together about work, community and personal issues. Some live here and choose not to participate in Ganas process, work or goals. But almost everyone has become part of a caring extended family. Personal feedback is important to us, but it happens only with consent. We live in nine well-maintained buildings with lovely gardens, good living space and excellent food. Our four stores repair and resell furniture, clothing, artwork and much more. People who qualify to work here receive all expenses plus up to \$300 a month and a share of our profits. Others pay all their expenses with \$500-\$600 per month. Long- or short-term visitors are welcome. *Ganas, 135 Corson Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301; 718-720-5378; fax, 718-448-6842; ganas@well.com; www.well.com/~ganas. (See full page ad, p. 1.)*

G.R.O.W.II, Parkville, New York. G.R.O.W. II is a 55-room country hotel, conference center, workshop facility, campground and concert area on 70 beautiful acres in the Catskill Mountains, 100 miles from NYC. We are looking for people interested in starting a new community in these facilities. There is land to garden or farm (if you like.) We will support whatever industry you develop if we can. You might partner in our conference center work. If you want to start your own workshops, we will try to help. In return, you can help us. Ganas people host weekend events during the summer and work in the NYC facility year round. Good people are needed to help in both places. *G.R.O.W. II, 548 Cooley Rd., Parkville, NY 12768; 914-295-0655; or contact Ganas at 718-720-5378; fax, 718-448-6842; ganas@well.com; www.well.com/~ganas/grow2.html (See full page ad, p. 1.)*

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 entrepreneurial 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; www.k.org/laev.*

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, Mulvey Creek Land Cooperative, Box 218, Slocan, B.C. VOG 2C0, Canada; 250-355-2393 (beep) dial #1310; gophertowers@hotmail.com.*

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.*

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. Looking for a community in the Midwest? Columbia is a university town, large enough to offer a wide range of opportunities, small enough to eliminate the commute. Write for more information. 1404 Gary, Columbia, MO 65203; 573-443-5253; terranovac@aol.com.

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. We invite you to visit us. Free visitor information packet. **WE ARE ACTIVELY RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS AND HAVE IMMEDIATE OPENINGS FOR MEMBERSHIP.** 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.

COMMUNITY HOUSES FOR SALE

SOUTHERN COLORADO. Earth Family Farm is seeking community-minded people to buy 35 acres of high (7,500 ft.) mountain desert land. Spring-fed creek, lots of wind and solar potential with alternative energy homes on either side. No electric poles! Root cellar, drying shed, garden site, partially remodeled 60's school bus already on it. \$35,000, will negotiate terms. 719-738-2677; usnick@webtv.net.

UNION ACRES, Whittier, North Carolina. Two-bedroom, passive solar home on 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 Smokey Mountains near plentiful white water rivers and vast national parks and forests. One hour west of the vibrant city of Asheville, NC. \$125,000. K & M, 887 Bear Creek Lane, Asheville, NC 28806; 828-253-8792.





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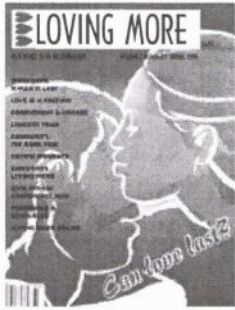
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Live sustainably on our 280 acre land trust! Dancing Rabbit will be a diverse collection of individuals, families, cohousing, and communities working together to create a truly sustainable rural ecovillage. We have 18 members and are seeking more, so write to arrange a visit. Internships are also available. Come help us create a new way of life!

At Dancing Rabbit we:

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- Build our homes off the grid
- Operate a car co-op
- Make diesel fuel from vegetable oil
- Host internships and workshops





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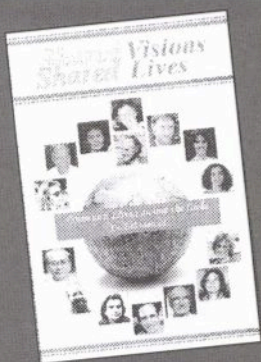
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COMMUNITIES FORMING

ADULT FELLOWSHIP CONDO COMMUNITY, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. Seeking to find or form. Share week-day evening meals with adults of all ages in one common unit, and share unit’s bedrooms for overflow guests. Perhaps hire cook and mower, if desired, but share simple labors such as dishwashing and leaf raking. Total privacy within own condo, but good fellowship with neighbors over common meal, etc. Need expertise from any similar group anywhere. Idea sharing with people liking concept; and possible participants near Philadelphia area. *Sally Thompson, 218 Devon Blvd., Devon, PA 19333-1617; idream@erols.com.* Any encouragement most welcome.

ARKANSAS. A witch, two queers and a hippie would like to form a community in Arkansas. Interested? Write: *Neil Thomas, 9351 McDougall, Hamtramck, MI 48212; 313-874-1837.*

ASH GROVE COMMUNITY FARM AND CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING, Corning, New York. Seeking resident and non-resident members. 607-936-7092; www.agrove.com.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA. Seeking open-hearted, responsible, spiritually oriented people for small, forming sustainable food and energy self-reliant community on 11 rural acres an hour south of Asheville. Individual dwellings and shared households. More info: “Reachbook,” IC Web site: www.ic.org. *Diana Christian, 290 McEntire Rd., Tryon, NC 28782; diana@ic.org.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. I feel that my mission is to be a guiding 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/interfaith community. Those who come will join together in seeking guidance from the sacred, dialoging with one another and seeing how we are led to share what we are given. *Alice Wald, 49-A Two Loch Place, Charleston, SC 29414; 843-763-0213; waldam@aol.com; www.scquakers.org/partners.htm.*



EDEN RANCH, Paonia, Colorado. Seeking members desiring rural, spiritual environment. Sharing labor and resources on planned biodynamic, permaculture 65 acre farm. Ultimate self-sustainability is our goal. Western Colorado mesa, outstanding views and clean air. Local homeschooling 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 landshare (flexible terms available) plus cost of your sustainable home. Visits and tours by reservation, camping and guest accommodations available. \$2 for Information Packet. Visit our Web site at www.edenranch.com. *Eden Ranch Community, POB 520, Paonia, CO 81428; 970-835-8905; woodwetz@aol.com.*

EDEN VALLEY ECOVILLAGE, Willits, California. 1,600 acres. Farmland, woodland, forest, lakes, mountains. Three acre home sites, passive solar homes, two acre farm sites, sustainable micro-economy, personal freedom, right livelihood, permaculture, new job creation, voluntary cooperation, egalitarian living, natural learning/healing environment. *Eden Journal, 20 pages, quarterly, \$7, payable: T. McClure, POB 849, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.*

FLORIDA, WEST CENTRAL. Family interested in starting small community. Presently operating vegetable farm, ornamental tree nursery and farm equipment restoration business. Want to start renewable energy projects, woodworking shop and continue native areas restoration. Other ideas are welcome. Write: *Joe Butts, 4321 Needle Palm Road, Plant City, FL 33565; Call: 813-754-7374; debbutts@gte.net.*

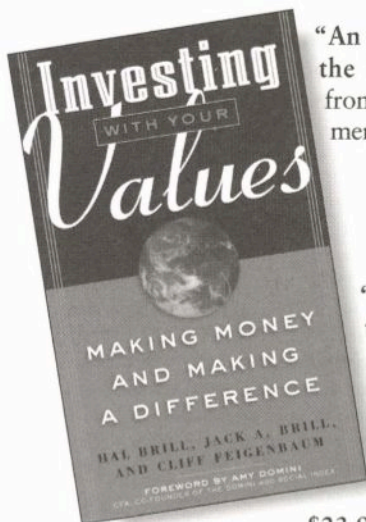
INDIANA. Seeking people to create sustainable living on 166 acres in southern Indiana. Explore new concepts in housing and farm 30 acres biodynamically. *Janelle McKinley, 5454 W. Co. Rd., French Lick, IN 47432; 812-936-7611.*

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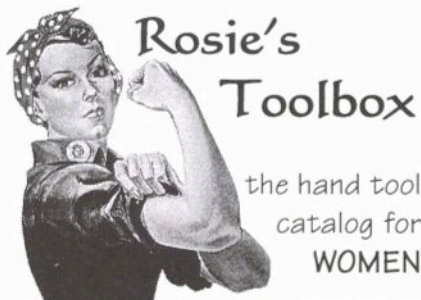
MEADOWDANCE, Southeastern Vermont. Community forming. We emphasize mutual support, community involvement, environmental responsibility, sustainable living, flexible housing and lifestyles, careful planning, work opportunities, creativity, appropriate technology, cooperation and fun. We are currently 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; www.accessdatabase.com/meadowdance.*

MORIAH, NEW YORK. We've found 180 acres for \$250/acre (not a misprint!) on Lake Champlain near Adirondack High Peaks. (One hour by bridge to Burlington, VT.) Couple with practical and community skills seeks eco-partners for bank-free purchase, development, stewardship and community. Possible three-season, off-grid recreational community to begin with campsites, yurts, simple open-air kitchen/bath/laundry; slowly plan year-round homesteading, plus retreat center. Gorgeous views over lake to Green Mountains, 150' frontage on cove, streams, waterfalls with good hydro-potential, large, magical caves, hiking trails, 25 acres fields, good woods and soil, on accessible, paved road, lake-view building sites. Total initial outlay for land, closing, tractor, pole barn, open pavilion, well, outhouse, improving roads, approximately \$70,000. Looking for emotionally mature, easy-going, environmentally and spiritually aware people with \$15-20,000+ to co-invest. Affordable simplicity. 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.*

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR INVENTORS, Virginia. Sponsoring Jules Verne style society and community designed to house thousands. Brilliant engineers, scientists, inventors, business leaders, etc., will lead this Christian society designed to take over leadership of America if Washington, D.C., collapses. Write to: *NIFI, Dept. Community, Box 1465, Seneca, SC 29679.*

NOAH'S ARK 2, Texas. One hour east of Austin. Establishing open-hearted, earth-sheltered, "survival/escape" center for friendly, progressive folks since 1995. *4001 Oakridge, Houston, TX 77009; 713-863-0433; Quddusc@aol.com.*

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.*



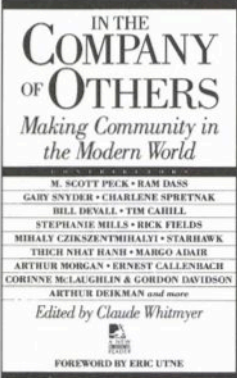
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**In the Company of Others:
 Making Community in the
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PANACEA, Texas. Need help forming community aiding battered women. Featuring productivity. Clothing optional. Welcoming sincere singles (female/male). *Panacea, 411 North Fifth, Alpine, Texas 79830; 915-837-3060.*

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA. If you are interested in sustainability and community, join a core group of committed visionaries who are in the process of designing a permaculture-based community and who believe that we need to seek alternative ways of relating to the planet and each other. *Sharon Boots, 414 Meadowlark Lane, Naples, FL 34105; phone/fax, 941-261-9157; sboots@compuserve.com.*

TURTLE DOVE POND, Jupiter, Florida. Co-op community forming for spiritually sensitive healing artists, singers, dancers and musicians to work and play creatively and harmoniously together on 2.5 sacred acres of blissfully serene and secluded tropical rainforest paradise and wildlife sanctuary. The ever-present goal: to be in a state of Inner Peace always in the Here and Now. Share profits, responsibilities, fruits of our dedicated, loving labor with the world community through high-quality published books, audio and video tapes, live performances, workshops and retreats. Also seeking high-spirited audio-video master, bizness/pr wiz to co-produce inspirational, intergenerational, interfaith musicals. No cig-addicts, meatheads, cults, or negatory scenarios please. Fax resume and brief statement of spiritual/artistic goals: 561-748-5624; *turtledovepond@webtv.net.*

WALDEN TWO, California. Seeking fellow Walden Two enthusiasts. *Mike Ray, 40 Vienna St., San Francisco, CA 94112; 415-585-6079.*

WILD IRIS RANCH, Jenner, California. Small rural community forming. Constructing one large cooperative house, have small cohousing. Gardens underway. Workshops. Home-based artisans, professionals encouraged. Uniquely gorgeous land, embracing ocean, hills, redwoods, big sky; two hours north of San Fran-

cisco. Shared dinners, camaraderie, consensus, tolerance, environmentalism. Three core memberships available: \$15,000+down, serious sweat, occupy Fall 2000. Group mortgage. Not ready yet? Associate members share fun, work. \$25. Brochure with your SASE. Full info \$3. *POB 42, Jenner, CA 95450. Dedanan@sfbg.com.*

WYOMING. We need a few emotionally mature pioneers to join with us to help build our dream of ecovillage on 11 acres of beautiful wilderness mountain property. We are spiritually focused with universal, wholistic outlook, earth-friendly, believing in unconditional brotherly-sisterly love with supportive atmosphere in an extended family living situation. Please let us hear from you! *R. Kelly, POB 41, Douglas, WY 82633.*

PEOPLE LOOKING

MACROBIOTIC WOMAN, 55, wants to cook/live with other "macrobiotics" near Charlottesville, Virginia, San Francisco, Portland or Seattle. *Hunter Glasgow, 5208 Brake Cove Rd., Huntersville, NC 28078; 704-561-2213.*

PRIMITIVE TECHNOLOGIST/creation loving naturalist, Y2K concerned, seeks low-tech community in Minnesota, Wisconsin area. Focus on health, happiness, respect for life, development of skills for living in harmony with Mother Earth. *Steven McCullum, 622 Robinwood Lane, Apt. 3, Hopkins, MN 55305; 612-912-8533.*

RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES. NO MONEY DOWN! We invite you to join our existing businesses and housing—all we ask for is a cooperative attitude and willingness to work hard. Live with others who value equality, ecology and pacifism. For our

booklet, send \$3 to: *Federation of Egalitarian Communities, HC-3, Box 3370-CM98, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; fec@ic.org.*

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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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.
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Join the Fellowship team today!

PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

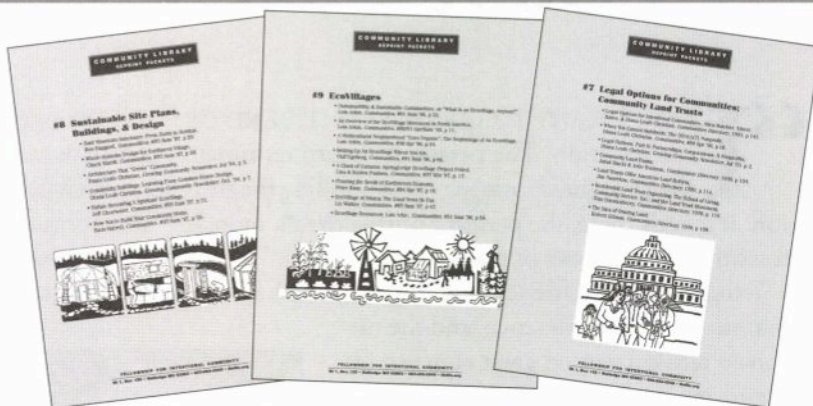
values good communication and cooperative conflict resolution, I'd like for us to come up with a written agreement that gives guidance for how to approach such delicate situations. To me "I don't want to talk about it" is not an organizationally acceptable statement unless it's accompanied by a commitment to work on the problem at a later date. Adding a phrase like "... right now" or "... until after the conference" makes a huge difference because it implies that the person asking has the right to do so, and that the responder will address the situation once their high-priority obligations have been dealt with. That responsibility to respond will often feel like an extra burden to a person in Richard's position, but knowing there's a follow-through agreement in place will usually take the edge off the situation for everyone involved.

Because there was preexisting tension between Richard and Steve, asking them to do a clearing session at the conference might have been unrealistic. However, it's quite reasonable to ask Richard to sit down with a go-between to see if any part of Steve's request is reasonable and workable. Had Richard been able to provide even one tenth of what was asked for, he would have conveyed a very different message than the brick wall he created.

In promoting the virtues of cooperation and community, we need to embody them in the ways we work together and in the ways we communicate. Being willing to talk about it is a crucial part of that work. 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, which will include glimpses of how they make decisions and handle disagreements.

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“I Don’t Want to Talk About It”

“I DON’T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.” END OF conversation. The person trying to terminate the dialogue is insisting on controlling the situation. If it ends there, the person wanting to talk more is left with no satisfactory options. What now?

Two of my good friends were recently stuck in that dynamic during a conference, and the unresolved tension caused great concern for me and most of our mutual friends who were staffing the event. Clearly, power dynamics and a sense of mistrust were involved. Richard, the person saying “halt,” was trying to set limits and take control of a frustrating situation in an effort to preserve his own equilibrium. Steve, the person wanting to talk, felt that Richard’s stonewall technique was cutting off due process and preventing access to information needed by Steve to fulfill his role in the organization.

Steve typically comes on strong about whatever he’s feeling passionate about, and can energetically steamroll people he’s not aligned with, especially someone who cannot or will not clearly and rationally articulate their side in a difference of opinion. Fairly often, a person challenged by Steve feels criticized or judged. Steve has nearly endless energy and attention for following through on things, including tensions that need resolving.

Richard likes to work in bursts of intensity and then take time out to rest, reflect, and relax. When he’s in a good mood and feeling that things are under control, he can be very flexible and accommodating. When there’s a deadline pressure at hand and Richard’s feeling tired and/or worried about keeping to a schedule, he tends to get impatient and to be unreceptive to new ideas or to new demands for doing things not already in the existing plan. He values doing work to resolve conflicts, but doesn’t go at it with the same energy and sense of urgency as Steve does.

At the conference, Richard was very involved in the planning and coordination, and was operating in a high-stress mode. Amid that chaos, Steve asked Richard to

provide extra information to be used for another project. The power struggle was on.

Richard felt critical of Steve for being so insensitive and demanding at such a busy time, and Steve believed that Richard was being defensive and uncooperative. Already stressed, Richard had no energy or patience for “processing” the situation. The more Steve pushed for the information, an explanation, or a mediation, the more Richard felt oppressed by the situation. “I don’t want to talk about it” was Richard’s last recourse.

In the conflict that followed, Steve’s remarks implied, “You can’t do that, you’re obliged to honor our cultural norm to deal with feelings and issues as they come up.” And Richard’s response was, in effect, “I sure can. I know what I’m capable of handling in the moment, and you’re demanding that I push myself beyond my abilities. Besides, there’s no written agreement or policy requiring that we process things the way you think is best.”

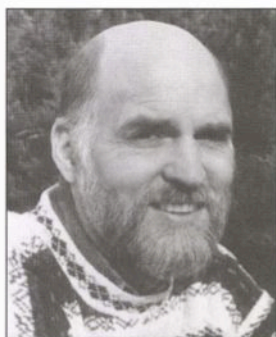
Steve really wanted a mediation, and the neutral outsiders he approached said, essentially, that the issue did need to be addressed, but that it could wait—that the demands and pressures of the event out-

weighed the need to focus on the disagreement or the underlying issue about control of information. The sad fact is that the tension existing then between Richard and Steve made each of them less effective in carrying out their roles during the event, and also cast a shadow over some of the socializing in the off hours.

Unfortunately, in similar situations most groups settle for putting out the initial fires, then are content to leave things unexamined and unspoken. Fortunately, our organization values its process as much as the products, and the issues that surfaced in the Richard-Steve conflict will be addressed the next time we meet—rough edges like these bring out our greatest creativity and growth.

What about next time? Given that our organization

(continued on p. 79)

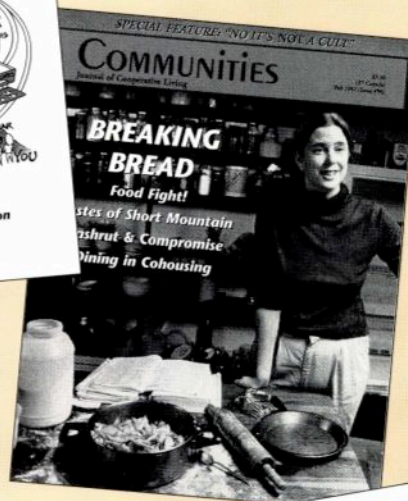
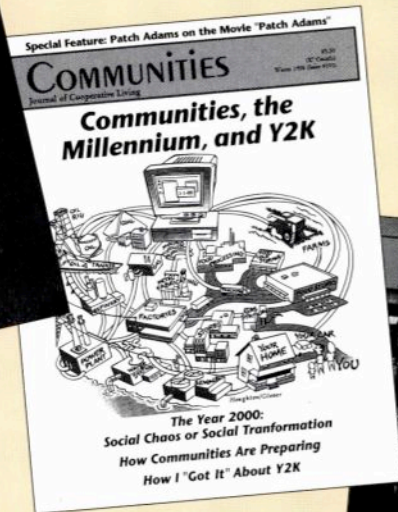
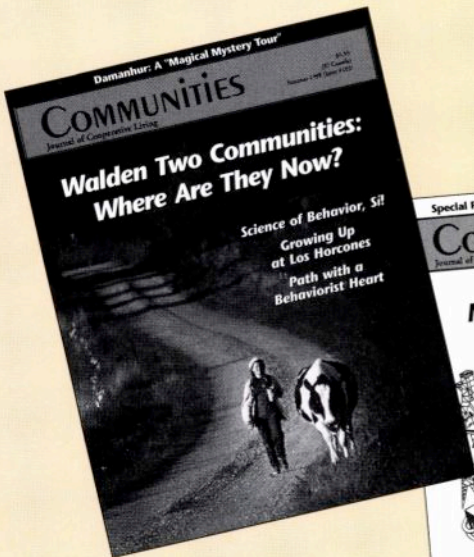


BY GEOPH KOZENY

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The biggest lesson we've learned over the last few years is that sustainable community must have at its foundation sustainable relationships—relationships that give us more than they take from us; that nourish, enliven, and inspire us; that are a continual source of energy; and which support us in becoming fully ourselves.

— Larry Kaplowitz, Lost Valley Educational Center



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