

Finding New Community Members

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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Winter 1999 (Issue #105)

Transition & Change

*Hard Road to Accountability
Death and Rebirth at Skywoods
Communities in the 21st Century*



THE COMPLETELY UPDATED, ALL NEW COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

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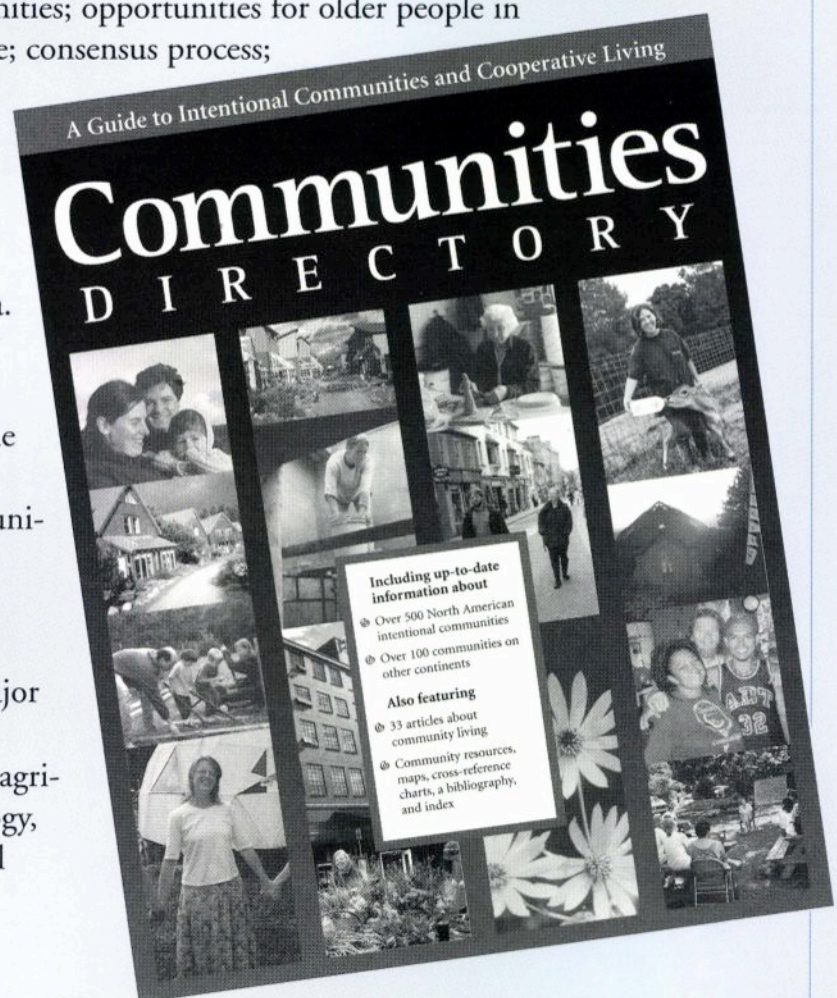
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The Foundation for Feedback Learning began in 1978. 6 of us started Ganas on Staten Is. in 1979, and we're all still here. Our population has grown from 6 to 75. Most of us are now a bonded, caring, hard working, fun loving, extended family.

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.

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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

Members of 100 Mile House in the days before the changes beginning with the death of their leader, Martin Exeter, in 1988. Photo: 100 Mile House.

BACK COVER

White Lake, near Skywoods Cosyngal in western Michigan. Photo: Skywoods Cosyngal.

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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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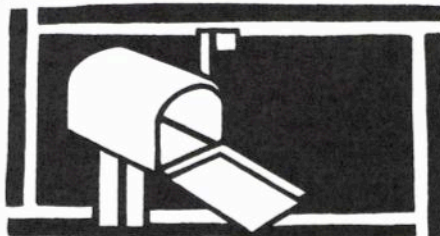
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LETTERS



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

About "Conflict & Connection," Fall '99

Dear Editor:

The "Conflict and Connection" issue is great. This is valuable information and understanding for all of us regardless of our approach to the future. This hard-earned experience should not be lost. We urge you to repeat this type of issue as often as you can gather sufficient material.

Bill and Jo Holden
Bellflower, California

Dear *Communities*:

I would like to correct an inaccuracy in the editing of one part of my interview with Joyce Foote in the article, "A Healing Impulse" (*Fall '99*). Your edited version indicates that Joyce repeatedly brought "Adam" before her mentally to vent her feelings. This was *not* a mental confrontation. What Joyce (and others of us in the community) did, just after "Adam's" abuse of our daughter—and periodically over the years since—was to bring him before us *in person* and express our outrage and sense of betrayal.

This direct, personal, and highly emotional sharing of our wrath was a key ingredient in our ability to also stand with him through his trials. It enabled us to keep seeing him as a person with a serious, deeply-rooted problem, rather than as an abstract phantom created by our fears and our unexpressed feelings.

Robert Foote
Light Morning

Dear *Communities*:

Thank you for your article, "A Healing Impulse." As the mother of a survivor of

sexual abuse, I am shocked by Myra's mother's behavior. How could a mother remain with the man who had done such a thing to her daughter? I'd like to tell Myra that she doesn't have to "support" her mother in such a heartless decision.

Name withheld by request
Louisiana

Dear *Communities*:

I admire Light Morning community and its members, especially Myra and Lauren, for being willing to go through the Open Hearted Listening process with an issue of such magnitude. However, I take issue with the editors of *Communities* and all concerned for allowing "Adam" to remain anonymous, and with him for not having the guts to show his face. Is his vulnerability so fragile, while the girls' is so strong, that, unlike the girls, he can't allow his real name and photo to be used? For decades we have exposed the victim and protected the perpetrator when it's a crime of sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence, and even in the communities movement, it seems we continue.

I also feel very angry that Myra's mother would continue being in relationship with a man who molested her eight-year-old daughter! Talk about myopic self-absorption. To Myra I say, "You *do* have a right to feel angry when your mother talks about 'Adam,' and you *don't* have to support her relationship with the man who molested you. You may have to *allow* it, but you don't have to support it." Myra says she still has a lot of anger. I wonder how much of it may be toward her mother. Once again, as in the larger society, so often the mother supports the molester, denying the need for support of her molested daughter.

In both of these issues we see the preservation of the abuse of power of the adult over the child. When will we completely honor our children?

Lynn Hicks
Full Circle Farm
Silk Hope, North Carolina
slhicks@quik.com

It was our editorial decision to not use the real name of the man; neither he nor the author suggested it. Everyone in their neighborhood knows who "Adam" is and what he did, that he's served time in jail, done massive therapy, has apparently come to an

understanding of how overwhelmingly destructive his actions were, and has apparently taken responsibility for pursuing a path of healing. Many people find it difficult to not seek ongoing punishment for men who have sexually abused children. Light Morning community didn't want to do that, and we didn't either.

Is Consensus Arduous?

Dear Editor:

While I enjoyed the article "All Aboard" in the Summer '99 issue, I found the author's accounts of protracted, argumentative decision making painful to read. While I am working from scant evidence, it seems clear that the residents of the bus were using a decision-making process that might be called "informal consensus," also known as "everybody sits down until we all agree, and I don't care if it takes all night." This kind of decision-making process frequently produces unsatisfying compromises, is often contentious and frustrating, can steal vast swaths of time from otherwise productive people, and in my experience has turned off an enormous number of people to cooperative decision making.

One alternative is C.T. Butler's "Formal Consensus" method, a well-structured, time-proven process that is not difficult to grasp or learn, and that addresses the kinds of problems that make informal consensus more onerous. Its proposal/concerns/resolution structure goes a long way toward preventing meandering discussion, and preventing the contentious debate that arises from failing to see the legitimacy of one another's concerns. The time limits allow a difficult issue to be set aside for reintroduction later, once everyone has had time to think, and this often moves resolution forward much more effectively than drawn-out debate. Facilitators can help keep discussions on track. Agendas help prioritize issues so that you don't argue about what color to paint the bathroom until 1 a.m. before talking about your new membership policy. Provisions for unresolved concerns help to clarify how to implement and live with an agreement that everyone consents to but not everyone likes. The structure and focused approach shorten the time to informed, consensual decisions. There are other benefits, but I hope

this conveys the basic idea. Informal consensus is a very difficult way to run anything; Formal Consensus is often an excellent decision-making process for constructive, cooperative groups of people.

"On Conflict and Consensus" is a document that describes Formal Consensus in detail, yet is fairly short and easy to read. I recommend it highly. It can be found on the World Wide Web at www.ic.org/pnp/ocac/index.html.

Luc Reid

Meadowdance Community
Plainfield, Vermont
luc@meadowdance.org

Kibbutz Lotan

Dear Editor:

I was moved by Yiscah Bracha's stirring article about Kibbutz Lotan in southern Israel (*Summer '99*). I have been closely connected with Lotan since its founding in 1983 and come regularly with my family to spend summers there. My wife and partner Ruth Sohn and I are rabbis and teachers, and we come to the kibbutz where we teach Jewish Studies and spirituality to the members and volunteers there. We taught there during the summers of '96, '98, and this past summer, but we were not on the kibbutz during Yiscah Bracha's time there in 1997. Her article successfully captures the sense of spirituality, innovation, drive, and willingness to take risks that characterize Lotan. It is indeed a "crazy" place, in all the positive senses of the word, and thank goodness it continues to attract exceptional and sometimes somewhat odd people who continue to add wonderfully to the dynamic nature of the community.

What the author did not fully describe, however, was the very strong and stable human foundation at Lotan. The members and residents there are quite open about their dreams and fears, their aspirations and frustrations. Such openness is part of the sense of community and trust that is exuded by the place. They articulate their frustrations and disappointments, but that should not be misconstrued as losing the dream. Their dream evolves as the community evolves. But unlike most kibbutzim today, the members of Lotan decided not to give up the core communal social and economic values that so characterized the original



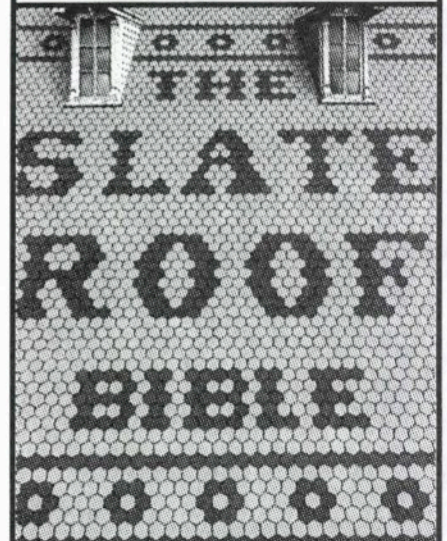
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kibbutz movements. In fact, what I find so inspiring about those who call Lotan home is that, unlike most of us, they have consistently applied their dreams and values to their daily lives. The results are tremendously inspiring. They still have a housing shortage, but they are about to begin building their next generation of houses using ecologically viable straw-bale construction that is excellently suited for the desert. And they have a waiting list of individuals and families who want to come to Lotan and apply for the long process required to become full members of the community. The kibbutz is thriving socially, culturally, and even on the verge of getting there economically. The responsible social and communal values of the place may keep it from becoming economically rich, but it certainly is rich in spirit. Our children and we can't wait to get back again for our next extended visit.

Reuven Firestone

Hebrew Union College/
Jewish Institute of Religion

Health and Healing Issue (Spring '99)

Dear *Communities*:

Your issue on health in community (*Spring '99*) reminds me of my own experience. I live in Tui, a 15-year old intentional community of 25 adults and 15 kids in New Zealand. Two years ago I was hospitalized in a coma with Acute Intermittent Porphyria (AIP), a rare hereditary condition, and very nearly died. It wasn't until much later that I realized the degree to which my Tui family rallied around me. Somebody was with me 24 hours a day for six weeks in the hospital. I have never experienced such immense unconditional love from so many people. Over the following months I regained health and stamina in the nurturing arms of the community despite several relapses. I feel so grateful, and so blessed. (By the way, I've done a fair bit of research into AIP, and I would be happy to share with others the alternative methods I found for dealing with it and eventually preventing recurrent attacks.)

I also found your Y2K issue very interesting (*Winter '98*). Without knowing what other communities are doing, Tui seems to have taken a similar stance, addressing Y2K fears and choosing to take

a more empowered, creative approach. Now we see potential disruptions as another big step toward a more sustainable lifestyle. Living in an area that triples in numbers at the end of the year (our summer), we looked at the possibility of people being drawn to us because of our sustainable lifestyle; however, we realized that we would be better off channeling some energy toward raising the broader community's awareness about all the different possibilities that may arise at that time. We have instigated some good public meetings, inviting representatives from the local police, bank, council fire brigade, and civil defense to come and speak about their level of preparedness. Very interesting, as they got plied with questions they were ready and not-so-ready for. It feels good to be extending out into the greater community like this.

Lisa Lane

Tui Community
Takaka, New Zealand
freelife@voyager.co.nz

Y2K

Dear *Communities*:

Your magazine deals pretty much with the middle and eastern states having communities open to people. Do you know of any communities in California within 300 to 500 miles from San Francisco that would welcome myself, my dog, and cat for five or six months, until the brunt of Y2K settles down?

Suma

Oakland, California

Please check the Communities Directory (libraries, bookstores, the FIC at 540-894-5798) for northern California communities, or our Web site, www.ic.org, for listings of communities with openings in that state. (By the way, our Reach ads [p. 72] are available to communities all over North America, not just certain regions.) Most communities are likely seeking long-term members who resonate with the community's vision and values, rather than people who would want to join them temporarily to seek safety from potential Y2K disruptions, but you can always ask. Good luck.

Communities Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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

Submissions Policy

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

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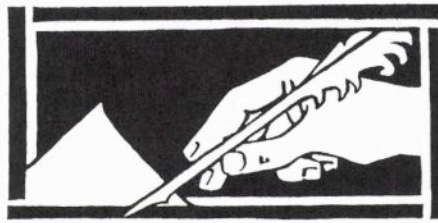
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What is an "Intentional Community"?

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



Community—Life in the 'Exacts Change' Lane

A Father's Journey

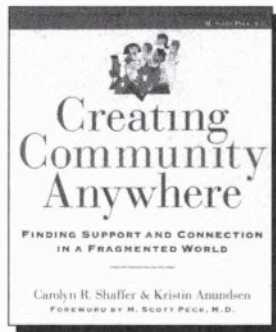
THIS FALL, IN THE SPAN OF A WEEK, I WITNESSED MY 18-YEAR-old son go off to college, my 12-year-old daughter leave home for boarding school, and Annie, the person I started community with 25 years ago, leave the farm for a four-month sabbatical to explore options. Suddenly I was an empty nester. Four months ahead of the millennium, I was getting more change and transition than I was looking for.

It reminded me of a T-shirt I saw last spring proclaiming, "Shift Happens." Whether we're ready or not.

Just before my son left for college, he and I went canoeing for 10 days in northern Saskatchewan. We've done a major outdoor experience each summer since he was 14 and it's been a great ritual for us. This year was special. His life opportunities are accelerating and there's no knowing if he'll find the time to return to the woods with me again. So I savored it. The long drive north. Changing drivers at midnight and being awed by shooting curtains of green-white-pink northern lights across half the sky. The rush to get on the water and past the first portage, where the motorboats can't follow. Hearing the loons' haunting tremolo. Inhaling the blue-gray curls of pine smoke from the campfire. Appreciating that we were far enough removed from humanity's indiscretions that we could safely drink the water we glided upon.

I have been canoeing since I was nine, and it has great meaning for me, this connection with nature and self—something I'm thankful for the chance to share with my son. Of course, there was change there, too. More roads, more dams, more fire burns. Nonetheless it's gorgeous and enduring. We had five days in a row without seeing anything larger than a pelican or a bald eagle. This year, I created openings for my son to practice the arcane arts of paddling stern and portaging the canoe using the shoulders while leaving the hands free. Rites of passage. I even let him read the map, a task I'm usually tenaciously protective of.

Up there the world is reduced to basic elements: water, sun, wind, trees,



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rock. And one's consciousness. For eight hours a day we paddled, negotiating wind, rapids, and complex turnings of the route and our minds. There can be something terrifying about being alone with yourself for eight hours. My son and I don't talk much while we paddle, yet we're together.

MY KIDS' LEAVING HOME REMINDED ME OF MY LEAVING FOR college 32 years ago ...

I went from a mainstream life in suburban Chicago to a small college in rural Minnesota, with no personal cars, no off-campus housing, and very few TVs. I lived in the dorms for four years, happily immersed in the nutritive stew of student life. The combination of stimulation and support I serendipitously found in that accidental community eventually led me to intentional community.

Today I still live in the rural Midwest. Still live without a TV, without personal cars, and in housing I share with others. Most important of all, I still have that precious combination of stimulation and support. I have community.

While there is a general misconception that communities are mainly established to hold the gates against change—to repulse the apostate and profane—mostly the reverse is true. Mostly communities are agents of change where we're actively experimenting with social and economic structures, trying to find sturdy innovations that can be exported back into the wider culture.

I am simultaneously drawn toward and frustrated by the social challenge of community. Where better to puzzle out the meaning of change and discover the best attitudes with which to face it? I am profoundly grateful that I can sort through transitions with my community family. Where the nest is never completely empty.

Of course, there is a Trojan Horse quality about community living. Even as people are drawn to groups of caring folks to help one another cope with change imposed from outside (such as tornadoes, the arrival of a WalMart in town, or the election of an arch-conservative public official), it is the very nature of groups to carry within them a Pandora's Boxful of surprises and internal challenges (struggling with members' depression, surviving relationship break-ups, arguments over who's doing less than their share of the cleaning, and existential questions like how many dogs are too many). Life in community is life in the change lane. Don't pick it for the peace and quiet.

I think we need to be with our kind to sort through the tea leaves and sift through the ashes for the deeper meanings and portents of our lives' major events—births, deaths, and the lesser transitions, like kids leaving home. To be an anchor as we open up to the sea of feelings that well up during transitions. To face the fear that we are experiencing something that separates us from everyone else. The fear that once we go there, we may not find the way back. To wrestle with the dragons of irrationality made conscious.

These days I talk with my son about mutual funds as well as having mutual fun, and we swap stories about the mysteries of intimacy. We are tentatively making the transition from father/son to peers. (These changes take time to be digested. I can vividly recall the strange mix of pride—Isn't

he smart?—and sadness—Soon he won't need me any more—the first time he taught me a new word: “crepuscular,” describing activity at the edge of day and night.)

For years now, I have read to my daughter before she goes to bed. We did this right up until she left home. I used to think this ritual was mainly for her, to have a richer connection with her father, and a calm time together at the end of each day. Yet I struggle with the absence of that connection. I see now that I needed it at least as much as she.

In speaking with Annie during her time away, we draw sustenance from naming certain experiences of the life we have built together: the shifting quality of the evening air as summer gives way to fall; the smell of sorghum cooking on a misty fall morning; the way our bodies know how to negotiate the house at night without lights; coffee on the couch in the pre-dawn. Such simple things evoke so much if you know the language of place.

AT THE DAWN OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM, IT IS NOT SO EASY TO tell if the way is getting lighter or darker. Well into the Information Age, much of our fast-paced future will be shaped by our relationship to technology. Still, our greatest potential for managing life's dizzying choices is in understanding the connections between ourselves and our environment, and there are subtleties of integration here well beyond the capabilities of zippy hard drives and a disciplined stream of electrons. As my son might point out, we are in crepuscular times, and I believe it is community's particular challenge to learn and model a full-throated response to the transition and change all around us.

Closing my eyes, I am back in Saskatchewan, paddling with my son. My favorite memory of this year's trip is watching him in the bow as I pause to adjust my glasses. Though we've never talked about it, he knows that canoes ride much more gracefully when both paddlers stroke in unison. Without turning around, he immediately senses the break in my rhythm and adjusts his stroke to reunite with mine. We are one, and he tells me plainly, without words, I am aware of you and know how to make a team. As a father who has raised his son in community, I am at peace.

Laird Sandhill

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

“Cohousing,” Spring 2000. 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? Guest Editors Michael McIntyre and Rob Sandelin.

“Community Glue: Song, Dance, & Celebration,” Summer 2000, and **“Learning in Community,”** Fall 2000. Contact *Communities*, 290 McEntire Rd, Tryon, NC 28782; 828-863-4425; communities@ic.org.



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COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



Wulf Zendik, 79, cofounder of **Zendik Arts Community**, passed away on June 19, at the community's new site in Mill Spring, North Carolina. A man of the arts, he owned an integrated jazz club in Los Angeles in the '40s; lived and wrote on the Left Bank in Paris in the '50s; and in the U.S. in the '60s wrote, played music, and directed underground theater. His article, "Don't Go," which first appeared in the *L.A. Free Press*, was translated into five languages and apparently widely affected draft-age youth at home and soldiers in Vietnam, many of whom wrote him as a result. In 1969 he and his wife Arol Wulf started the community, then called Zendik Farm, in Southern California. Originally a place for artists to live and work outside of commercial constraints, it later became a place to provide youth with an alternative to mainstream culture. Over the last 30 years Zendik Farm has provided many youth a community home as well as a creative outlet, through its magazine, rock bands, dance groups, and performance troupes. Zendik's Web site observes in tribute, "Wulf Zendik was a loving man, and was dearly loved. He was a warrior." The community's Web site: www.zendik.org.

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.



The summer gathering of the **Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA)** was held August 20–22 at **River Farm**, near Deming, Washington. Twenty communities from four states gathered for a weekend of sharing their experiences, according to NICA activist and Sharingwood Cohousing member **Rob Sandelin**. Topics ranged from the ever-present group process and kids in community issues to getting the work done, how to find/start a community, income sharing, group marriage, and many others. River Farm was also holding their annual Herb Festival. "The mix of the two events offered great opportunities for participants," says Rob.

Next summer's NICA community gathering will be held in Oregon. Any Oregon communities with good meeting space who would be willing to host 40–60 communitarians and seekers for a weekend in August, are asked to please contact NICA at floriferous@msn.com or 360-668-2043.

By the way, NICA's **Intentional Communities Resources Pages** won recognition from Online World, a nonprofit Internet group that catalogs Web sites, as one of the best resource sites on the Internet. "The intuitive layout" and "depth of resources" were what impressed Online World's judges. If you are forming a community, or looking for ideas to resolve your community issues, the ICRP is a ever-growing compendium of founders' wisdom, resources, and experiences. You can access this library at www.infoteam.com/nonprofit/nical/resource.html.



Great news for aspiring ecovillages. **Living Routes—Ecovillage Education Consortium**, a new nonprofit organization (involving, among others, *Jeff Clearwater* and *Dan Greenberg* of **Sirius** community) just received a start-up grant from **Gaia Trust** to create university-level programs teaching sustainability skills in ecovillages worldwide. "The programs will teach skills ranging from organic gardening, alternative building technologies, appropriate technology, and healthy food preparation to the history of community in American society, consensus decision making, and strategic planning," reports staff member *Jeff Grossberg*. "The programs will be academically rigorous, while utilizing such innovations as small group learning communities, mentoring, and individual study and research."

Several members of the new Living Routes team have successfully carried out such programs in conjunction with the **University of New Hampshire** and **Pacific Lutheran University**, taking students to such international communities as **Findhorn**, **Auroville**, and **Plum Village**, as well as **Sirius** and the **Ecovillage at Ithaca** in the United States. Living Routes hopes to use the educational programs to help develop ecovillages; for example, in having students create and monitor research projects into such diverse issues as solar hot water systems, ecological wastewater treatment, permaculture food production, alternative transportation systems, social systems (decision making, conflict resolution), and developing village-scale businesses. They also hope to network universities interested in pursuing such programs with each other, and ecovillages with each other, working closely with the **Global Ecovillage Network**.



Vegans in Community is a new organization that helps vegans find appropriate communities to visit and possibly live in, and to help vegan-friendly communities reach out to these community seekers. Their Web site has been up and running since summer 1998, but so far relatively few communities (or vegans living in community) have listed themselves; most seem not to know about it yet, according to Web site host *Billy Ray Boyd*. He especially encourages vegans in non-vegan

communities to list themselves, so seekers can get a “vegans-eye-view” of the community and how its diet and lifestyle might affect them. www.ic.org/vegan/.



Every fall professors, academics, and other interested folks gather at conferences on the topic of intentional communities, past and present:

- On September 23–25 the **Communal Studies Association (CSA)** held its annual conference, “The Dawning of a Brighter Day,” among the red rocks of St. George Utah—“an absolutely gorgeous setting,” notes *Don Janzen*, CSA Executive Secretary. Two highlights were the keynote address by Martha Sontag Bradley, author of *Kidnapped from That Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists*, and a tour of that small communal Mormon Fundamentalist town (pop. 5,000), now called **Colorado City**. “Mayor Daniel Barlow gave us a history of the community and the raids, and pointed out the sites on our bus tour,”

reports CSA President *Regina Siegfried*, AFC, of Ruma Community. She especially noticed the women’s attractive calico prairie dresses with long skirts and long sleeves, and elaborate, beautifully braided hairdos. “The children looked really healthy and happy,” she notes. According to CSA member *Tim Miller*, Colorado City may be the largest intentional community in the country. CSA: 319-622-6446; csa@netins.net; www.ic.org/csaf.

- The **Society for Utopian Studies** met November 11–14 in San Antonio, Texas, for their 24th annual conference, for professors, researchers, and others studying actual and literary utopian experiments. The Society for Utopian Studies also publishes the *Utopian Studies Journal*, 314-516-5849.

- The **Center for Communal Studies (CCS)** at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, Indiana, held a seminar, “The Millennialism of America’s Communal Utopias,” October 17–19 in New Harmony, Indiana. Speakers included members of **Pandanaram Settlement**, a Christian community near Bedford, Indiana.

CCS will also host an international gathering, “New Communities for the New Century: Answers for Retirement and Ecology,” April 2–6, 2000, also in New Harmony, with speakers *Albert Bates*, of **Ecovillage Network of the Americas** and **The Farm** community in Tennessee and *Declan Kennedy*, European director of **Gaia Ecology Network** in Europe and **Lebensgarten Ecovillage** in Germany. CCS information: *Donald J. Pitzer*, dpitzer@usi.edu; 812-464-1727.

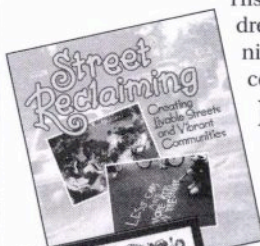


Cohousers got together October 1–3 for the **1999 North American Cohousing Conference**. The event was held for the first time in actual cohousing settings: **Pioneer Valley Cohousing** and **Pine Street Cohousing** in Amherst, Massachusetts, so participants could experience first-hand what life in cohousing is really like. About 220 attendees chose between two tracks: one, “Living in Cohousing,” for those already living in cohousing, included presentations on Getting the

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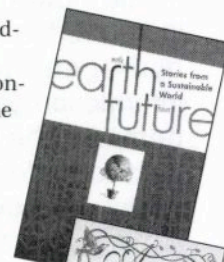
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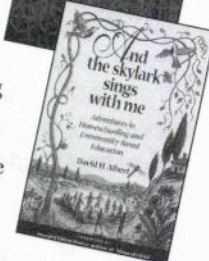
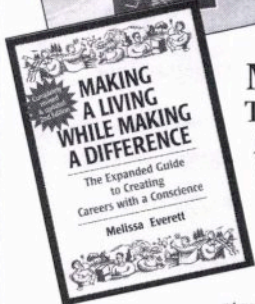
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Work Done, Community Meals, Conflict Resolution, Raising Children in Community, and Resales in Cohousing. The second track, "Getting It Built," for those involved in the planning and development stages, offered presentations in Finding the "Perfect" Location, Working with Professionals, Creating the "Social Community," Sustainable Building Practices, and Financing and Affordability. Many took the bus tour of two Boston area cohousing communities, **Cambridge Cohousing** and **New View Cohousing**, and the under-construction **Pathways Cohousing** in nearby Northampton.

Participants stayed as guests of cohousers in approximately 40 individual households in Pioneer Valley and Pine Street or in tents on both sites. They helped prepare meals, addressed building design and site planning issues at both locations, and visited with community members about the ins and outs of creating and living in a cohousing neighborhood. So the event would be experiential as well as educational, there were many opportunities for singing, performance,

and hands-on activities, as well as an auction and a talent show.

"It was a great gathering," reports *Michael McIntyre* (**Sunward Cohousing**, Ann Arbor, Michigan) "Good networking, a fantastic and fun talent show, a wonderful chance to experience cohousing life in the various work details, generous hospitality by the two host communities, and skillful conference organization by *Mary Kraus* (Pioneer Valley Cohousing), *Bruce Coldham* (Pine Street), and *Zev Paiss* (**Nomad Cohousing**). The auction raised \$5,600 for the conference presenters, **The Cohousing Network**."



The 1999 North American Cohousing Conference was sponsored by **The Cohousing Network**, an organization that promotes cohousing throughout North America. Organized several years ago but expanded in 1998 to a national scale by executive director *Zev Paiss* of **Nomad Cohousing** (Boulder, Colorado) and

Cohousing magazine editor *Don Lindemann* of **Sacramento Street Cohousing** (Berkeley, California) and other cohousing activists, the nonprofit Cohousing Network hopes to "educate, connect, inspire, and evolve systems for sharing living experiences specific to the cohousing lifestyle." Besides hosting their biannual national conference, The Cohousing Network publishes *Cohousing* magazine, and hosts the Cohousing Network Web site, www.cohousing.org. *The Cohousing Network*, PO Box 2584, Berkeley, CA 94702; 303-584-3237.



The first-ever **Rainbow Family World Gathering** is scheduled for Australia, March 6–April 4, 2000. For information on location, travel, and so forth, see www.worldgathering.org. The annual summer **Rainbow Gathering** in North America will take place in Montana or Idaho June 8–July 10, 2000. For info: www.welcomehome.org.

While making international travel plans related to communities, keep in

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mind that the next **International Communal Studies Association (ICSA)** conference, "Communal Living on the Threshold of a New Millennium: Lessons and Perspectives," will be held at **ZEGG Community** in Germany June 25-27, 2001, with a post-conference tour to nearby urban and rural communities and ecovillages. *Bill Metcalf*, *Communities* magazine's own "Community Living Worldwide" columnist, is ICSA president this year. If you'd like to present a paper at the conference, please send a 100-200 word outline of your ideas to Bill at w.metcalf@mailbox.gu.edu.au, or write *c/AES, Griffith University, Nathan, Q. 4111, Australia*.



Closer to home, the **National Association of Housing Cooperatives'** annual conference, "Sharing Challenges and Solutions," took place October 27-30 in Toronto, offering over 50 workshops on training and technical assistance for housing co-op decision-makers and site managers. 703-549-5201; coophousing@usa.net.



Educational activities for communarians and others will be held at the **Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm** in Tennessee this spring: "Grantwriting Basics," March 19-20, *Jennifer Volpe* and *Albert Bates* of The Farm (\$325); "Solar Installations," April 10-15 with *Sue Turtle* of Earth Advocates and Solar Energy International (\$600); "Permaculture Fundamentals," April 22-30, with *Peter Bane*, *Chuck Marsh*, and *Patricia Allison* of **Earthaven Community** in North Carolina (\$600); "Natural Buildings (Straw, Cob, Round Pole)," May 20-22, with *Howard Switzer* and *Albert Bates* of The Farm (\$325). Course fees include tuition, meals, and lodging. For more information: www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.html. *EcoVillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483; 615-964-4927; albert@thefarm.org*.



If your community or organization would like to make a public commitment not to use products made from old-growth products, **Co-op America** asks that you sign the following pledge. It reads:

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They ask organizations taking the pledge to fax the pledge along with the community name, address, fax and phone numbers, and email address, if applicable, to 202-822-8471. For more information: www.woodwise.org; www.coalition4bc.org; 800-58-GREEN.

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 - large scientific & cultural community

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The 210-acre **Nature's Spirit Community**, about an hour west of Greenville, South Carolina, has begun clearing the site for their new meditation center, according to founding member *Carolyn Vaughan*. Their planned 600-sq.-ft. round Peace and Harmony Center has been designed to highlight and honor the cycles of nature. For example, the building will sit on legs on a shallow pond, with a roof window that, when open, will allow rain to flow through. At sunrise on winter and summer solstices the sun will shine straight through the building, through cleared paths in the woods and strategically planned glass doors on opposite sides of the building. "It will be a physical representation of the spiritual core of our community," says Carolyn. "And it might take a long time to get built, but that's fine. We've been fortunate in having some really generous donors who believe in what we're doing. If communities can connect with people of like mind who

have financial or other resources or simply building skills, even if they don't want to live in community themselves, they can participate by helping the community get built."

The two-year old community now has six resident members and two interns. "Our vision is a world that values the diversity of all life and provides for its sustainability by living in harmony with nature and spirit," says Carolyn. "Our purpose is the expansion of consciousness, and to live in harmony with nature and spirit."

Using John Jeavons' bio-intensive gardening method in their two garden areas, they grow organic food for themselves and their community business, selling herbs and salad mix to restaurants and markets in Greenville and Atlanta. Sixty percent of their garden is also compost crops which they turn back into the Earth. "We want to be a closed system so we don't have to import materials from the outside," says Carolyn.

Since they moved to the property they've built two off-grid houses for two founding couples, a passive solar greenhouse, a straw-bale power house for the solar system's batteries and inverter, a root cellar, and a crescent-shaped straw-bale "Temple of the Tools"—the latter two structures designed and built by architecture students from nearby Clemson University. For more information: 864-944-6992; naturespirit@worldnet.att.net; www.naturespirit.org.



Two new cohousing communities have broken ground and started construction in Washington state. **Bellingham Cohousing** began construction of a 33-home cohousing development in the historic Fairhaven district of Bellingham. **Ciel Cohousing** group (soon to be renamed Duwamish) has broken ground on a 23-home cohousing neighborhood in West Seattle. Both groups still have a few homes available. For details on Bellingham Cohousing: www.bellinghamcohousing.org; 360-671-10986; on Ciel/Duwamish Cohousing: www.boutell.com/ciel; 206-766-8911.



In August the nut-butter business at **East Wind Community** in Tecumseh, Missouri hit an all-time production record, shipping out 120,909 lbs. of cashew, peanut, and almond butter, according to sales manager *Anna Young*. Business is booming so much, says Anna, that they're installing a second production line, and have already purchased their new nut-butter roaster.



Community afficianados in the Southwest are in for a treat at the next **Art of Community** gathering, to be held at Ghost Ranch in northern New Mexico, May 19–21, 2000, sponsored by the **Fellowship for Intentional Community**. The FIC chose Ghost Ranch for its interest in environmental stewardship and strengthening community. Meet people who care about strong communities, people building cooperative groups, communitarians, and community seekers, along with workshops on consensus, conflict resolution, vision & planning, forming new communities, and much, much more, with such community veterans as *Caroline Estes, Jeff Grossberg, Laird Sandhill, Geoph Kozeny, Diana Christian*, and more. *Art of Community, Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge MO 63563; 660-883-5545; gathering@ic.org; www.ic.org.*



"With a motley crew of home-schoolers and autodidacts we are producing a book online about the future of learning," says *Bill Ellis*, publisher of **T.R.A.N.E.T. Newsletter**. The group intends to include case studies of learning communities and a chapter on "the future of communities and what our future learning society might look like." Intentional community activists who would like to contribute are invited to send an introduction and/or a comment on the future of learning communities or communities in learning to CCL-LLCs@onelist.com. More information is on the T.R.A.N.E.T. Web site: www.nonviolence.org/board/messages/5804.htm.

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'You're Not Just a Customer ... You Own the Place'

SO SAID BILL BECKER, CEO OF Sunrise Credit Union. This spring it became official: membership in the Fellowship for Intentional Community carries with it an automatic invitation to join the Sunrise Credit Union (SCU). State chartered in Colorado, the credit union was launched in April 1997 and already has about 200 members and \$1.7 million in total assets.

SCU is headquartered in Loveland, Colorado, at Sunrise Ranch, a flagship intentional community for the Emissaries, a non-sectarian spiritual organization started in the '30s. SCU was originally conceived to serve the financial needs of Emissaries worldwide, with the following mission: *Sunrise Credit Union provides financial services to its members with the intent of promoting the expression of integrity in money matters and by affording its members, their families, and associates an opportunity to accumulate savings and access credit on fair and reasonable terms, to facilitate the work of these people in the revelation of exemplary quality of character in the world.*

Anyone who is a member of the Emissaries has been able to join the credit union since the beginning. Now, anyone who is a member of FIC has the same privilege. If a community is an institutional member of FIC, then any member of that community can join SCU. Alternately, people can be individual members of FIC and gain access to SCU membership without a community affiliation.

Unlike a bank, a credit union is a non-profit owned by the depositors, and is run democratically (each member has a vote in selecting the board of directors). In the

case of SCU, it is run by people familiar with and supportive of community. Hence their invitation to FIC to become a class of membership. What do you get as an SCU member? A full menu of services:

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The SCU selected Bill Becker—who is both a long-term member of Sunrise Ranch and, since 1995, the FIC Treasurer—to become their new CEO this summer, right after the Fellowship was approved as a class of membership in the credit union. Sometimes everything just blends together.

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Laird Sandhill is the Executive Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community.

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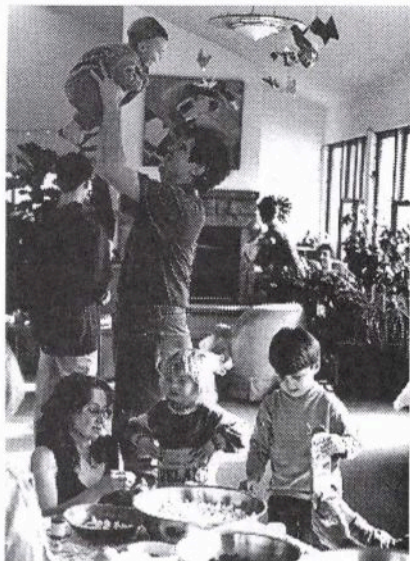
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'On a Desert Isle'

IN SEPTEMBER 1808 AN AMERICAN ship, *Topaz*, was cruising the South Pacific when its crew sighted an island not marked on their charts. To their amazement they were hailed in English by light-skinned Polynesian youths from a boat. *Topaz* had, unwittingly, solved one of the sea's great mysteries—what had become of the mutineers of the *Bounty*?

Eighteen years earlier the *Bounty's* men, led by the mate, Fletcher Christian, had mutinied against the infamous Captain Bligh, and had cast Bligh and those loyal to him adrift in the open sea. Bligh had survived, so the story of the mutiny was widely known. Christian had taken the *Bounty* to Tahiti, where some mutineers stayed. Nine other mutineers, along with six Tahitian men, 12 Tahitian women, and a baby, sailed into the vast Pacific to disappear from sight.

The *Topaz* crew had found Pitcairn island, and the fate of the 28 people who had arrived on the island nearly two decades before.

Pitcairn, just two miles long and one mile wide, had been sighted by Europeans only two or three times before when the *Bounty* mutineers selected it as their refuge. Because the vessel could not be concealed from any other passing ships, the mutineers had stripped it of everything useful and burned it. Escape was now impossible. *Bounty* mutineers and Tahitians would sink or swim together.

But of the 15 men who had clambered ashore in 1790, only John Adams was still alive in 1808 when the *Topaz* arrived: a

lone rooster surrounded by hens. With one exception, all the men had died violent deaths. From the start the tiny community could not and would not cooperate. Petty jealousies arose among the men, principally over women. Problems were magnified by their cramped living space and the impossibility of anyone's getting far enough away from those they came to hate. Violence broke out, and two Tahitian men were killed in 1791. On one

day in 1793 other Tahitian men murdered five mutineers, including Fletcher Christian. The last Tahitian men were then killed by the remaining mutineers. In 1794 the Polynesian women tried to kill the remaining adult males. In 1798, after discovering how to make alcohol, one man killed himself in a drunken binge. Another man still fought over women, although by that

time there were more women than men; he was killed by the two remaining mutineers. One of these died of natural causes in 1800, leaving Adams to his estranged and lonely life. To put it mildly, this was a community that hadn't worked out well.

Thirty years later, in 1838, a visiting ship's officer devised a constitution for Pitcairn Island, and under its regulation the islanders settled to a more placid way of life. Although the island was evacuated in 1856, its residents returned in 1859. Generations later, Pitcairn remains inhabited by around 50 people, many with the last name "Christian."

In 1817, a few years after the *Topaz* rediscovered Pitcairn and the fate of

HISTORIC COMMUNITIES



BY STEPHEN A. ROYLE

Stephen A. Royle is senior lecturer in geography at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland. He became interested in communalism through living near the Amana Colonies while he was a visiting professor at the University of Iowa, and has visited several kibbutzim in Israel.

Fletcher Christian and his men, another British military man, William Glass of Kelso, Scotland, contemplated life from an isolated island where he also led a community. Although most likely he had not known the dismal story of the *Bounty* mutineers, Glass had taken a different approach, creating a communal society with a cooperative lifestyle. His island community did witness unpleasantness and one suicide, but certainly not the murder and mayhem of the equivalent situation on Pitcairn. Glass's way was essentially practical—a social organisation that suited the special circumstances of island life.

This island was Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic Ocean, about midway between Africa and South America. Uninhabited when first discovered in 1506, its first long-term resident was an American, Jonathan Lambert, who moved there in 1810 and declared himself its owner. However, he and two companions had gone by 1812, leaving behind Thomas Currie as the sole resident.

After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 the allies had imprisoned the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, on the next island north, St. Helena, and took over other islands in the South Atlantic to prevent the French from using them as a base for any rescue attempt. In 1816 the British Navy set up a garrison on Tristan da Cunha. They soon realised the improbability of rescue being mounted from that isolated spot and left after only one year. Unfortunately the soldiers had had trouble surviving on these tiny islands, even with military rations to live on. The story of the Tristan garrison's existence was one of incompetence, with the soldiers almost starving. To make matters worse, the British Navy lost a ship sent to help evacuate the Tristan garrison in 1817, and 55 men drowned.

The evacuation might have left Tristan da Cunha without inhabitants again, as its former sole resident, Thomas Currie, had died. But Corporal of the Marines William Glass, in spite of his bleak experience when garrisoned there, chose to remain, and even brought down his wife and children. The departing navy left Glass with surplus military stores, includ-

ing livestock. He and his family were joined by Samuel Burnell and John Nankevil, who had worked on Tristan for the Navy and who had bought Thomas Currie's worldly goods.

The four adults and two children faced the challenge of making their lives together in isolation. Their solution was to form a communal society. Before the navy departed, Glass and the others drew up a social contract to establish their community, "the Firm":

We, the Undersigned, having entered into Co-Partnership on the Island of Tristan da Cunha, have voluntarily entered into the following agreement:

**The original
ideals of total
economic equality
had lasted only
four years.**

1st, That the stock and stores of every description in possession of the Firm shall be considered as belonging equally to each,

2nd, That whatever profit may arise from the concern

shall be equally divided,

3rd, All purchases to be paid for equally by each,

4th, That in order to ensure the harmony of the Firm, No member shall assume any superiority whatever, but all to be considered as equal in every respect, each performing his proportion of the labour, if not prevented by sickness,

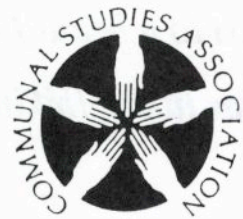
5th, In case any of the members wish to leave the Island, a valuation of the property to be made by persons fixed upon, whose valuation is to be considered as final,

6th, William Glass not to incur any additional expense on account of his wife and children.

Glass and Burnell signed; Nankevil, who was illiterate, made his mark; and the document was witnessed by three naval officers on November 7, 1817.

Burnell stayed three years. Then, after voyaging to South Africa to sell oil and skins from seals for the Firm, he blew the takings in a bout of debauchery and fled to England. Despite Burnell's desertion, numbers in the community on Tristan increased as passing seafarers such as Alexander Cotton discovered that by remaining on the island they could become partners in a sealing business in a land without hierarchical authority.

By 1821 there were 10 partners in the Firm. Disputes had begun to appear, but these were difficult to resolve under a



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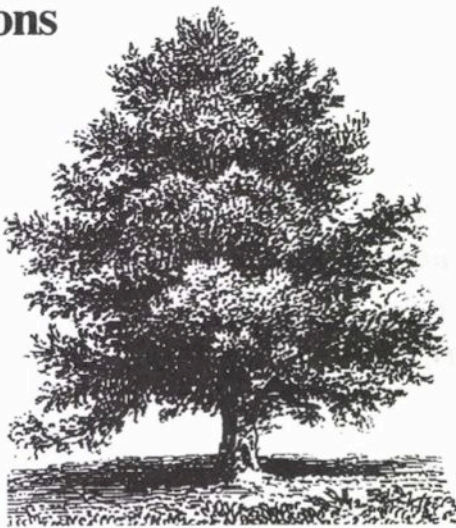
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charter outlawing authority. To bring stability the group prepared a new contract, witnessed by a shipwrecked officer. Under the new agreement, land, animals, and equipment were considered the property of the two original settlers, Glass and Nankevil. Any newcomers had to pay to use any land, stock, or equipment. However, any products of the land or sea, and profits from these sources, were to be held in common "as long as the People continue to Work at the same." Glass was described as "being at the head of the Firm" and was specifically required to allot each person their daily duties:

For the purpose of causing all to do their best for the general good, which will be the means of insuring peace and goodwill among the people, as well as benefiting the Establishment, in which all are concerned.

The original ideals of total economic equality had lasted only four years. However, at least the principal of profit sharing remained—and no one had been murdered. By 1823 the seal population on which the Firm depended was so decimated that sealing was no longer an option. Another disaster struck in 1823 when the Firm's ship sank off of Cape Town, and the business took a turn for the worse. Nankevil and others moved on, leaving only four men, including Glass, and two women as the isolated residents. Others arrived, including Thomas Swain. By 1826 the population was up to 14.

However, with five bachelors, the lack of women was a problem. The situation was resolved when five African women from St. Helena, sent down ostensibly to work as servants (probably for appearance's sake), all immediately married the five bachelors. In 1836 Dutchman Pieter Groen stayed on to marry Thomas Swain's stepdaughter. In 1849 Andrew Hagan, an American captain, jumped his own ship to marry one of Glass's daughters. Most of the Glass daughters married American whalers and the family remained of European origin, in comparison to the African-European families descended from the St. Helena brides. This racial distinction may have been important to the first settlers, even given Glass's communal ideals, as none of Glass's 16 children married any of the 19 part-African children of Alexander Cotton or Thomas Swain.

Tristan, now with settled family groups, became more of a natural society than a

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cooperative business, and the original contracts fell into disuse. The islanders continued to see themselves as equals, however. Glass's theoretical monopoly of ownership was not recognised, although he was always held in regard, being given the honorific title, Governor Glass. He died in 1853. Soon after, most of his family and many others left, reducing the community to four families.

Alexander Cotton was then seen as the leader until his death, at which time Pieter Groen, now called Peter Green, assumed the role. The distant British authorities considered appointing Green as magistrate, but he always demurred at formal elevation. In 1876 a visiting officer, Captain Brine of the *Wolverine*, reported that ... all were on good terms with each other and ... there was no recollection of any crimes and misdemeanours having been committed. This satisfactory state of manners among a society so peculiarly situated is probably due in some degree to the existence of certain unwritten customs and rules. [They had been written, but this fact had been forgotten.] Any cases of discipline are usually referred for the decision of Peter Green, but practically the community act as a simple republic, and are bound by the customs enforced by common consent.

In an example of Victorian racism, Green's position as leader was seen as natural by a Captain Bosanquet of *H.M.S. Diamond*, who in 1875 reported Green as having a "greater force of character, being a European, than the rest of the community who are half-castes ..."

Despite Glass's original communal ideals, envy and greed resurfaced, coexisting with the cooperative tradition. One of

William Glass's sons-in-law, Andrew Hagan, resented Green's social dominance. Other islanders resented Hagan and the whole Glass clan for their wealth. Hagan had taken that family's stock when the rest of the clan left and, contrary to the society's traditions of equality, continued to amass cattle until he owned half the island herd. Tristan's economy had reverted to subsistence and each family acted independently, but there was an important, if occasional, opportunity to sell meat and vegetables to passing ships. On these occasions families took turns supplying ships' stores and the profits were shared, although private sales or barter with individual seafarers was allowed. However, once he controlled much of the livestock, Hagan, supported by two Glass men who had returned,

started supplying both ships' stores and individuals. This brought Hagan into further conflict with Green. Towards the end of the century, particularly after a spectacular rescue of shipwrecked mariners, Peter Green became famous, even meeting royalty, and he was presented with a portrait of herself by Britain's Queen Victoria. Hagan could not cope with his rival's distinction and slit his wrists in 1898 at 82. Green died at 94 in 1902.

After the dissolution of the Firm, and Hagan's breaking with the cooperative tradition, each family fended for itself. The island had a council, and matters of common concern were often decided informally after church. Other forms of cooperation remained necessary. When needing extra labour, islanders "called hands" and neighbours would help without charge, receiving free meals. Islanders also jointly built the church in 1922-23.

The islanders continued to see themselves as equals.

FURTHER READING

On Tristan da Cunha:

Peter Munch (1971) *Crisis in Utopia*, Longman: London.

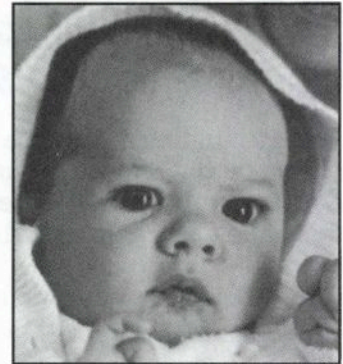
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Stephen Royle (1997) "The Inside World: Tristan da Cunha in 1875," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 23.1, pp. 16-28.

On Pitcairn:

Trevor Lummis (1997) *Pitcairn Island: Life and Death in Eden*, Ashgate: Aldershot.

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Another example of cooperation involved outlying islands, particularly Nightingale Island, which Tristan islanders visited annually to take seabird eggs, capture young petrels to render down for cooking fat, and collect guano for fertiliser. This expedition could not be attempted by individuals alone, as the foragers required each other's labour, so Nightingale produce belonged to them all. Other cooperative activities included boiling sea water for salt and collecting driftwood for fuel.

Cooperation was also maintained in regard to the sea. Islanders had dinghies for inshore work but longboats for longer journeys, requiring a large crew. In 1885 the longboat put out to meet a passing ship with which islanders wished to trade. Tragically the boat and its 15 crew were lost, leaving only three able-bodied men on the island. This catastrophe emphasises that crewing was necessarily a communal activity, the importance of which overrode social divisions. Greens crewed with and died with Hagans, despite the antagonism between the old men; descendants of William Glass and Andrew Cotton rowed and died together even if Glasses never married Cottons.

Today, Tristan da Cunha's 300 residents are supported by crafts, philately (issuing stamps for collectors), and fishing. Agriculture is now largely a hobby activity. The big money earner is a fish factory and, although owned by a South African concern, it plays a community role because virtually every islander works there when processing takes place. Fishing, principally for crayfish, is organised cooperatively, with most men going out together on those rare days when waters are sufficiently calm. Traditions of equality appear to be maintained—yet a contemporary fish factory manager was aware of resentments in fellow islanders.

Unlike cooperative societies motivated by religious or social ideals, Tristan da Cunha's was a practical response to the needs of a small population under difficult circumstances. The island's strict communalism broke down as soon as opportunities for individual advancement became available, though cooperation in certain activities continued to be necessary. The Tristan community was not perfect—but compared to what happened to people in similar circumstances on Pitcairn—it was actually rather successful. Ω

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Meadowdance members, many of whom first met on the Internet, at their September 1999 week-long gathering. Author Luc Reid, front.

MEADOWDANCE

FINDING NEW COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Part I

BY LUC REID

“COMMUNITY STARTS WITH A HANDFUL OF visionaries,” observes Rob Sandelin, a member of Sharingwood Cohousing and a founder of Cedar Village community. “And of those visionaries there’s always a smaller handful that stand up and say ‘Let’s go do this!’” Each community I spoke with for this article made the distinction between people who start communities and those who join later, once the community is built. Rob calls them “founders” and “settlers.”

Founders need to have the vision to see and believe in the home they are building; further, they have to have the will and the courage to dive into that vision and build it. That narrows the field of potential founders a great deal, but in a sense the settlers are just as important, at least for a community that wants to grow to any size. There comes a time when a community doesn’t have the same pressing need for devoted visionaries. At that time, it needs rather to grow and stabilize with more members who may not have the fire in them to found a community, but who resonate with the ideals of the community and are able to make it their home.

This article is about how to attract new settlers or cofounders, as gleaned from the experiences of six very different communities. Ganas (New York) and Sharingwood Cohousing (Washington) are both large communities nearly 20 years old. Ganas has both urban and rural sites while Sharingwood is semi-rural. Dancing Rabbit (Missouri) and Eden Ranch (Colorado) are new rural communities already on their land, each with a few members to start. Meadowdance (Vermont) is a two-year-old forming rural community planning to break ground in April, and Cedar Village (Washington) is a newer forming community that expects to take some years to create itself and doesn’t have land yet.

BEFORE YOUR COMMUNITY CAN SEEK NEW MEMBERS, it’s essential to have a clear idea of what you are—and what you are not. Ganas was founded to provide a life setting that could focus on a system called Feedback Learning, a method of promoting and improving communication among individuals. This central theme not only acts as a powerful “glue” to help make the community cohesive, but also attracts new members.

“In the beginning, we didn’t even think of ourselves as an intentional community,” says Susan Grossman, one of Ganas’ six original founders. “But more and more people just kept coming.” Ganas now includes some 75 residents in nine houses clustered together in a Staten Island neighborhood, plus a 72-acre resort facility in the Catskill mountains of New York. All six founders still live at Ganas, and Ganas’ membership continues to experiment with Feedback Learning.

Other communities won’t have as straightforward a

characterization: Meadowdance and Cedar Village, for example, are most easily described by a short list of values and criteria. Regardless, communicating the essential character of your community makes people understand who you are, and understanding will help filter out people who don't fit, as well as help attract the ones who do.

If you aren't able to encapsulate the most important things your community is about in a sentence or two (often called a vision statement), stop and consider whether you have a clear enough vision to promote yourself yet. Promoting yourself without such a statement may bring you people who have very different visions from yours.

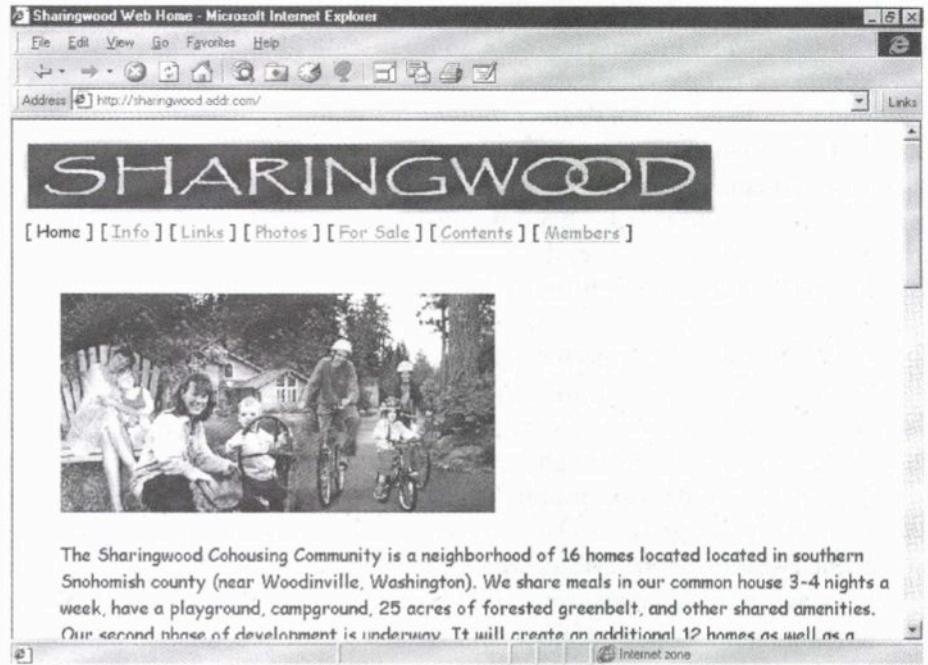
In the beginning, says Nancy Wood of Eden Ranch, "our community information seemed to be too generic, and we attracted a lot of people who didn't seem to be a good match. Since then we've become more specific: We've refined our requirements and membership process to better attract the kinds of members we're seeking." These refinements have included much more detail about their community vision, bylaws, and membership process, as well as more specifics in ads and other publicity materials.

It's also important to know what your goals for growth are. In promoting Cedar Village, Rob Sandelin describes plans for at least eight founding partners, each of whom would have strongly pertinent skills and priorities. He and other Cedar Village founders are willing to wait until they find people with these skills and priorities, even if it takes years. At Meadowdance, the community I'm involved in, we're shooting for 20 founding adults plus 15-20 children by move-in, an aggressive goal. But once we move onto our land, we expect to be seeking only about five new members (adults and children) each year.

Dancing Rabbit doubled in population in its second year and had to temporarily stop taking on new members, says member Jacob Stevens. "For the coming year, we certainly expect to grow more again. Our hope is to grow quickly, but to temper that with some gradual social integration."

"WE HAVE A GOOD FLOW OF VISITORS," SAYS SUSAN Grossman of Ganas. "We like it." She estimates that on average they see two to three visitors a week, although only one or two out of a hundred might actually end up living at Ganas. The community seems large enough and

"We've gotten more attention from our Web site than any other single thing we've done."



The home page of Sharingwood Cohousing's Web site.

social enough to benefit from so many new faces, but contrasts their experience with that of Eden Ranch, which Nancy Wood estimates has hosted 150-175 visitors over the past four years. This is with only four members in residence so far, two of whom are still provisional members. All four of the newer communities I called reported "seeker exhaustion" to some degree. Cedar Village has even stopped looking for active members until after the end of the year. Both Cedar Village and Eden Ranch mentioned hearing from many seekers motivated by Y2K fears and concern about other potential catastrophes, and both communities have found that such seekers tend not to be a good match.

"We spend most of our time talking to people who never become members," reports Rob Sandelin at Sharingwood, an experience shared by many communities seeking new people. He points out that because they're a cohousing community (where homes are for sale on the open market), community members cannot usually be as particular in seeking new people as intentional communities of a more integral kind. And Sharingwood has had its share of problems with members. One family there had financed its house purchase through a loan shark, who later foreclosed. Then he owned one of their community homes. "It sent us all into a high mode of panic,"

says Rob. In the end, Sharingwood was able to convince the new owner that no one who wasn't interested in the Sharingwood community itself would buy his house, and a community-oriented family finally did buy it.

The best way to help attract the potential members you'll want and deflect others is to provide plenty of pertinent information about your community, especially about its core values. In this area, Web sites shine. Says Rob Sandelin, "The Internet has been an interesting filter, because the people who learned about us from our Web site seem to be several degrees more savvy about communities than the average seeker." Sharingwood has even received email from people who said they had filtered themselves out; that is, they'd decided they weren't interested, simply because they'd gotten a good understanding of the community from its Web site.

EVERY COMMUNITY I INTERVIEWED FOR THIS ARTICLE has an Internet presence of some kind, although that was not a criterion for inclusion. They ranged from Eden Ranch's few paragraphs of straight text hosted on the Fellowship for Intentional Community's Web site to the information extravaganzas of Dancing Rabbit, Sharingwood, and Meadowdance. Meadowdance also maintains a large in-house site for core group participants, including building plans, maps and pictures of land, biogra-

All four of the younger communities reported "seeker exhaustion."

phies, and other information too specific to be pertinent to the casual seeker but of great interest to the new participant. In a sense, our public Web site serves as a first point of contact, our Membership group as the second, and our private Web site as the third.

We request that new participants in our email-based discussion group read through our "Frequently Asked Questions" document so as to be more or less current on the main points of our group. What we find is that the majority of people who contact us have already read it in its entirety—sometimes several times. In this way we save ourselves a great deal of work distributing information to and answering questions for new participants, of which on average we see about two each week. The greatest limitation of this approach is that we have to make a concerted effort to provide much of the same information to non-Web participants who ask for information through the mail.

Dancing Rabbit has had similar experiences. "We've gotten more attention from our Web site than from any other single thing we've done," says Jacob Stevens. He points out that they couldn't possibly reproduce all of the information they have on their Web site on paper, and on the site people can delve into whatever they're interested in. But he adds, "We also want to provide good information to people who don't have Web access."

MOST OF THE COMMUNITIES mentioned have classified or display advertising of some kind, and most place ads in *Communities* magazine. Said Nancy Wood of Eden Ranch, "*Communities* attracts people seeking communities to start with, whereas if we advertised in a publication like *Mother Earth News*, we'd have to describe what an intentional community is."

Sharingwood has different priorities for advertising, as it is less demanding socially and more demanding economically than some other forms of intentional community. "Cohousing is generally based on private home ownership, so it's a pretty high bar," says Rob Sandelin. He also noted that the audience for Sharingwood was

Dancing Rabbit economics

Part 2 (of 3): Money

by Jeffrey Harris

In the last March Hare, I described some general properties I hope the Dancing Rabbit Economy will eventually have. In this article, I'll focus specifically on money. Americans are bombarded with ideas of what money is by popular culture. American culture tells us in no uncertain terms that money IS time, it IS power, it makes the world go round, and it's the one thing that EVERYBODY wants. We pour our lives into earning it, it helps us make other people do things they wouldn't otherwise do, we see it everywhere in the world around us, so we should all want money, too.

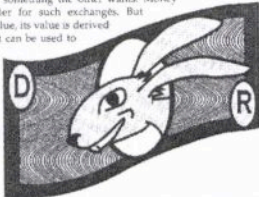
It's not that these things are basic to the nature of money. Far from it. But these concepts are inextricably linked with money, and it takes a lot of conscious effort to separate them from the useful and important things about money.

Fundamentally, money is a medium of exchange, a system of carrying information about value. Money is important because it allows two people to trade even if only one of them has something the other wants. Money becomes the value placeholder for such exchanges. But money itself has no intrinsic value, its value is derived from the degree of trust that it can be used to acquire the things you want.

US currency is implicitly trusted in large part because of the network effect, i.e. everyone is already using it so I guess there's no harm if I do too. Another reason US currency is trusted is that it is legal tender. This means that everyone (in the US) is legally obligated to accept it at face value. So everyone in the US is forced to trust the value of US currency. The combination of the fact that almost everyone trusts it and that it can acquire almost anything makes our currency system extremely powerful.

Until this century, US currency was trusted for another reason, it was backed by gold. Another word for this is that it was funded. A funded currency is an agreement saying that the currency can always be exchanged for some specific valuable. Again, for the currency to be valuable, the issuing body must be trusted. It is important to note that the dollar is no longer backed by gold, so it is quite possible for a currency to be successful without being funded, but funding can certainly help establish trust in a currency.

I want DR residents to trade with one another and the local community as much as possible. I'd like to see DR build a currency system that is trusted by the community, but completely optional to participate in.



Multiplying like...

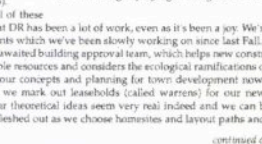
by Jacob Stevens

It's an old joke around here already. Still, as analogies go this one seems all too apt. Yes, we're multiplying like rabbits around here as we've added eight new members (including three children) in the past month, and we're considering membership for more. This doubles the number of our members just this past winter, and we also have numerous interns and visitors here now. The new members are Kurt and Alline, a couple in their 40s from California; Deborah and John and their three boys, newly arrived from Little Rock, Arkansas; and Tony/Kalen Prince, who's been visiting Sandhill and DR for the past several months (see page 10 for his bio).

Integrating all of these new folks into life at DR has been a lot of work, even as it's been a joy. We're finalizing our lease agreements which we've been slowly working on since last Fall. We had to convene our long-awaited building approval team, which helps new construction projects find sustainable resources and considers the ecological ramifications of the building designs. Also our concepts and planning for town development now have to be put to the test as we mark out leaseholds (called warrens) for our new members. Suddenly all of our theoretical ideas seem very real indeed and we can begin to see our village being fleshed out as we choose homesteads and layout paths and roads. It's

continued on page 11

Sean and Angus playing in the garden cart



The arrival of Kurt and Alline, complete with jugglers!

Newsletter, Dancing Rabbit.

	Ganas	Sharingwood	Eden Ranch	Dancing Rabbit	Meadowdance	Cedar Village
Classified ad in magazine	X		X	X	X	
Larger display ads	X					
Web site	X	X	X	X	X	X
Word of mouth	X	X	X	X	X	X
Local/regional publications	X	X				X
Media coverage	X	X	X	X		
Flyers		X			X	X
Events and gatherings		X				X
Communities directory	X	X	X	X	X	
Community involvement	X		X			
Presentations		X				X
REACHBook on FIC Web site			X		X	
Workshops, retreats, etc.	X					
Newsletter		X		X		

Methods communities mentioned in this article use to get the word out. (Includes only methods that have already been used in each community.)

fairly local. “We didn’t figure very many people were going to move here from Los Angeles.”

Most of the communities in which members are already living on their land have had significant media exposure. Ganas has been the subject of two articles in the *New York Times* and one in the *Village Voice*, among other publications. After a *Times* article, says Susan Grossman, they had a flurry of inquiries. “More local people think of intentional communities as rural. They were surprised to find out about a sizable one in New York City.”

Media attention has come in all forms for these communities. Dancing Rabbit, for example, has been the subject of a five-minute TV news spot as well as an independent video documentary, and Sharingwood was the subject of a feature on National Public Radio. Several of these communities also have writers in their ranks, who have placed articles about their communities in local or regional publications. Sharingwood members have written a variety of articles for local publications, for example, *Northwest Baby News* and *Ecological Wisdom*. “Depending on what the magazine or newsletter was, we sort of tailored the articles,” says Rob Sandelin. For Sharingwood, that also meant that the writer needed to “promote the concept of cohousing first, before describing the community.”

Sharingwood has had unexpectedly good results with fairs and gatherings. Rob Sandelin and other cohousing activists in the Seattle area helped organize a cohousing fair that ran for several years, advertised widely through flyers. The first year, Rob says, it was “packed” due to a feature in the local Sunday paper, but subsequent years were also busy. “The cohousing fair had kind of a carnival atmosphere at times,” says Sandelin. He describes tables of organic produce, an art teacher with a bag of projects for children, and music, among other attractions. He was surprised at how effective events like these and ecological events such as the Sustainable Seattle conference have been for Sharingwood and other Northwest cohousing groups.

Other tools these communities have used include in-person presentations and slide shows, Reachbook ads on the FIC Web site, listings in the FIC’s *Communities Directory*, workshops and retreats, flyers, and word of mouth.

THERE’S NO WAY TO BE CERTAIN HOW PEOPLE WILL respond to your promotional efforts; you can always do more if you’re not seeing enough new prospective members or scale back if you’re hearing from too many. Nancy Wood of Eden Ranch expected much faster growth in the first couple of years, and was particularly surprised when friends who were initially very interested dropped out. “At first,” she says, “we had a lot of friends who were so enthusiastic they said, ‘if you build it, we will come.’ So we built it, and it scared the hell out of them. We realized that all of that energy was mainly for us to get off our butts.” She adds, “We have agreed now that it will just grow as the universe provides.”

Yet all of the communities mentioned here, Eden Ranch included, get a regular flow of inquiries and seekers. Most of the communities have information packets they can mail or email to seekers, as well as designated members who communicate with inquirers and potential new members. In short, it is good to be prepared for many inquiries and few real matches. Put out the good china, but don’t wait to pour the wine.

Finally, please consider how effective a good membership process can be in getting the people you want. Ideally, this kind of process really helps filter out people who are not a good fit for a particular community, and helps welcome and orient people who are. This is really the

bottom line. It's not so much about attracting many people, but attracting those you're really going to resonate well with over many years to come. The poet Robert Frost wrote, "Good fences make good neighbors." I prefer to think "good neighbors make good neighbors." Ω

Part II, in the Spring 2000 issue, will cover specific techniques for each of the many ways your community can attract new mem-



bers, and the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

Luc Reid, who lives near Philadelphia, is a father, communitarian, computer programmer, and sometime writer and musician. He can be contacted at luc@meadowdance.org.

About Our Sample Communities

Ganas. In 1980, six members of the Foundation for Feedback Learning moved to Staten Island, New York, to found an income-sharing group focused on using and learning about Feedback Learning, a system for improving interpersonal communication. Nineteen years later, Ganas has a population of about 75 living in nine clustered houses, plus a newly purchased rural property in the Catskills, intended to become a retreat center. Ganas realizes much of its income from community-owned retail stores that focus on different aspects of recycling and reuse. It has recently turned its attention toward expanding its membership, in part to help develop its stores and retreat center.

Ganas, 135 Corson Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301; 718-720-5378; www.well.com/~ganas; ganas@well.com

Sharingwood Cohousing was founded as a place for people to live in private homes that share some cooperative elements in 1982, but it wasn't until the first homes were being built in 1988 that they first learned about cohousing, and realized that that was what they were doing. At the time of this writing, Sharingwood consists of 17 houses, some serving as homes for more than one household, and they will have grown to 20 houses by December 1999.

Sharingwood, Snohomish County, Washington; 360-668-1439; sharingwood.addr.com/; sharingwood@yahoo.com

Dancing Rabbit is designed to be an ecovillage "community of communities," encompassing multiple intentional communities and individual families. It was founded on 280 acres by a six-member income-sharing household called Skyhouse, which moved to Dancing Rabbit's current Missouri location from Berkeley, California. Dancing Rabbit emphasizes ecological sustainability as its central value, and has energetically embraced alternative technologies such as straw-bale construction and biodiesel fuel.

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, 1 Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; www.dancingrabbit.org; dancingrabbit@ic.org

Eden Ranch. Nancy Wood and Jim Wetzel founded Eden Ranch on 65 acres in Western Colorado in 1995. Since that time they have clarified their vision and now have grown to two full members, two provisional members, and one supporting (non-residential) member. They emphasize spirituality in a natural setting, permaculture, sustainability, diversity, and consensus.

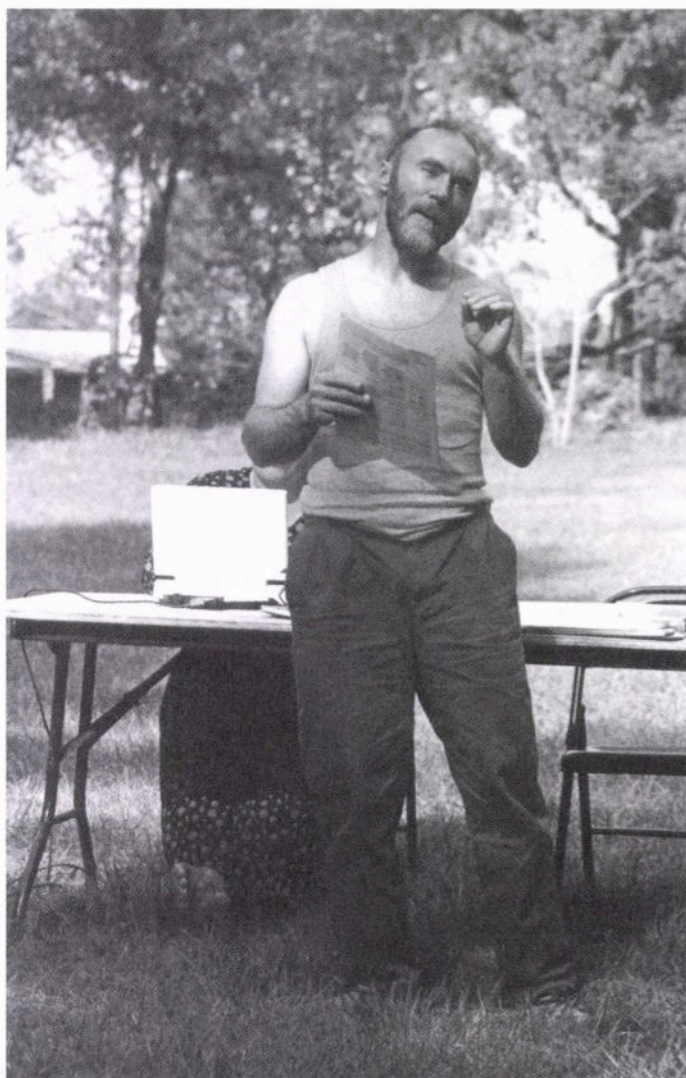
Eden Ranch Community, PO Box 520, Paonia, CO 81428; 970-835-8905; www.edenranch.com; woodwetz@aol.com.

Meadowdance is a core group of 20 people forming an intentional community on 165 acres of undeveloped land in central Vermont. Children, ecology, mutual support, fun, and diversity are key themes. Meadowdance's economy is based on a full-time in-community work requirement for all able adults, but the community does not place restrictions on members having and using supplementary private income earned outside of this work requirement. The group expects to begin construction on the community building (which includes some housing) in April 2000. The first community business, a software testing firm, has already begun.

Meadowdance, c/o Luc Reid, 100 Park Blvd. #72-D, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; 609-616-8340; www.meadowdance.org; info@meadowdance.org

Cedar Village, in its early stages and dormant until after December 31 of this year, seeks to start with 12-14 founders with strong skills and experience in sustainability and related issues. The group places emphasis on social values, such as the importance of children, economic values, such as the development of an internal community economy, and strong ecological values. Cedar Village envisions itself as a long-term project, developing at its own pace into a permaculture-based retreat center.

Cedar Village, 22110 East Lost Lake Rd., Snohomish, WA 98296; www.infoteam.com/nonprofit/nica/cedar.htm; floriferous@msn.com.



At the FIC's organizational meeting, Miccosukkee Land Co-op, 1994.

MICHAEL MCINTYRE

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN COMMUNITY

BY PAT WAGNER, WITH RAJAL COHEN

LEADERSHIP IN A COMMUNITY CAN COME FROM A desire to serve people, to help them achieve their goals, to let them share in your knowledge, to lean on your strengths, and to learn from your flaws. At its best, leadership is transparent, a living lesson that is willing to turn itself inside out.

Community leadership is also about seeing big visions, taking big risks, making hard decisions, influencing others to take the journey with you, and accepting large, public failures and successes with grace. Successful community leadership can create a place or state of mind where people seriously care about each other's well-being and act on those feelings.

When you enter into the practice of community leadership, it can feel like a trip to a new world. The good news is that you don't have to leave the mainstream empty-handed. The dominant world cultures sometime appear to have evolved only inhuman, heartless, and destructive ways for people to live and work together in close quarters, but there are good existing social practices to learn and apply, and not just from indigenous cultures.

"Civilization" refers to the structures and customs that support the healthy interaction of individuals, without defaulting to some of the worst characteristics of our species. Properly practiced, it creates a safe haven for the stranger. It makes it safe to be a little different, a little weaker, a little smaller, or a little poorer, without being preyed upon, physically, emotionally, spiritually, or financially, by the leaders or the other participants.

One benefit of civilization is that it can make it easier to attract and sustain diversity in intentional community, a chronic issue in a contemporary movement that in our country has been uncomfortably homogeneous. When community members forget the formal civility of rules, community can deteriorate into a place where emotional reactivity rules, and the ugliest of tribal attitudes can prevail. People feel anger and fear toward the stranger, and they justify attacking people outside their tribal circle: the newcomer, the interloper, the person who does not match the righteous model or the litmus test for politically correct thinking.

On the other hand, civilization becomes a bureaucracy when the rules overshadow the goals of an organization or society. We are all familiar with the feeling of frustration and stagnation that arises when people in leadership forget that they are there to serve creatively and intelligently, and focus instead on enforcing a rigid set of rules. Large corporations and government institutions abound with examples.

In the last 30 years, I have had the opportunity to watch, hear, and experience many kinds of community: the magazine staff managing the business as a consensus-based, worker-owned collective; the women's choir looking for diversity without tokenism; the inner-city street

school challenging the authority of a racist school system; the high-tech company eliciting the best ideas from every employee; the neighborhood setting up a crime watch. In all these cases, the leaders who worship rules, fail. The leaders who worship no rules, fail. The leaders who practice daily courtesy, and who use rules only as tools to reach the goals of health, joy, and productivity, tend to succeed.

I see at least three ways of manifesting leadership: through legal power, through authority, and through influence. I will describe what I mean by these terms, and how using “civilized” practices in each case can help community leaders create a good and loving place.

Legal Power. Whose name is on the mortgage? Who signs the checking account? Who is voted onto the committee that decides if a probationary member of the community gets to stay? What keeps that committee from becoming a law unto itself? My experience has been that communities get into big trouble when members are unwilling to accept the fact that legal power is a bottom-

line, non-negotiable reality.

Be ruthlessly honest from the beginning about who owns the power.

For example, I have witnessed the disintegration of several small rural communities over ownership of the land. While the decision-making structures of the communities were egalitarian in theory,

the deed-holders could hijack the process when they disagreed with a decision being made, by taking unilateral action based on the power of the deed.

In other cases, the deed is laden with every community member’s name. When trouble hits, most rural courtrooms don’t have enough square footage to hold all the lawyers who are dragged into these disputes. You can find the remains of some of these communities throughout rural North America, sometimes with the “winner” living in isolation or with a few remaining “followers.”

The best protection against these power plays is to be ruthlessly honest from the beginning about who owns the power, and to put safeguards into place to protect the community. I encourage communities to revisit the thousands of years of contract law and the systems of checks-and-balances that arose from the truth that sometimes even a nice person will seize power.

A practical approach is to have community members consider what they would need to do to protect the community if a well-beloved leader were taken over by a



The Art of Community gathering, Christ’s Church of the Golden Rule, 1998.

being from another planet. How could the community transfer power smoothly? A good lawyer, well-versed in mediation and arbitration, will have lots of good suggestions.

Authority. When we acknowledge a leader’s authority, we express our willingness to defer to that person’s judgment. Usually, someone in authority has the right to act or make decisions without consulting others.

Many cultures have strict hierarchies that do not allow people to earn authority based on their demonstrated wisdom, courage, humanity, vision, intuition, accomplishment, and so on. Instead, authority is conferred based on gender, race, age, position and title, credentials, education, tenure, or wealth. This is one of the many reasons that people of all backgrounds and in all times have fled from established hierarchical societies to intentional communities: They don’t want to put up with the pervasive societal issues of rank and status.

However, our species is very conscious of rank and status, and we are fooling ourselves if we think we can escape these issues so easily. In any human culture you study, past or present, you will find that certain classes of people are valued and respected more than others. In some cultures it is based on gender, in some it is based on age, in some it is based on wealth. In many cases (such as that of the widowed woman in India or the female infant in China) being someone of low status might be tantamount to a death sentence.

Many contemporary intentional communities have consciously or unconsciously reinstated authority as a method of leadership, with much of its old baggage. Sometimes it is explicit: You can only serve on the finance committee if you have been part of the community for five years (tenure). More often it is covert: Let Pat handle the mortgage company, schedule the cook teams, purchase the new water system—she does it so well.



At the Whole Being Weekend, 1986.

Deferring to another person's judgment is not always a bad thing, and it can be a very efficient way to run things, but even "good" authority can stifle creativity and diversity. This is one reason why it is sometimes hard to integrate newcomers into established communities. It is easy for fresh eyes to perceive the authority issues. When the newbies challenge what to them seems the arbitrariness of the decisions and the covert government that run the place, the longtimers are shocked. The longtimers don't see that they have set up a leadership system that pools the authority—and often the power—into a few hands. It is like explaining water to fish; they have lived in it too long to notice it.

Civilization knows about authority. Western civilizations, during the last several hundred years, have tried to create strategies for prying some of the authority away from the hands of a few, not choosing to rely on the generosity only of the rare spirit who looks at the newcomer and says "Your turn," without being first asked to share. From term limitations to cross-training to job-sharing to affirmative action, civilization is trying to give everyone a shot.

One risky but effective way to crack through the authority barrier is to give everyone a chance to manage and lead, even if they don't do a good job. Communities can have mentoring programs that switch around people with different skill sets, with the idea that everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner. Everyone gets to run meetings, even if it is not efficient. Everyone gets to design menus and cook dinner and, short of brain surgery, everyone gets to do most, if not all, of the many technical tasks that helps a community run. No one gets to be the only person who knows the computer system,

the greenhouse system, the day care system, or the cabinet-making system. If you are really that good at it, teach us all. This might mean some meetings will run slower, some dinners won't be as tasty, and some seasons the squash will be a wash. The alternative is to breed pockets of control, under the whitewash of "effective leadership."

Influence. Influence is where healthy leadership finds its energy and light. It may be all you have to move other people to action in a community when you don't have legal power or authority, and it is an important part of what enables an acknowledged leader to be effective.

Civilization knows influence as exquisite manners under fire. "I know we are enemies, but here, eat." People of influence are those who are able to treat the stranger with the same warmth and kindness with which they would treat a cherished friend. When we think of the best image of a civilized person visiting other cultures, we see someone who respects other people, learns their stories and what is important to them, and treats them with honor.

Contrary to what some people think, courtesy is not a set of rules written by white Europeans. All over the world there are customs of hospitality, generosity, and politeness. While the details differ (in some places it is rude to take your shoes off indoors, in others it is expected), the underlying sentiment is the same: Be respectful and attentive, and observe the customary ways of expressing your regard for the dignity of others.

Over and over again, I have witnessed the precious gifts that occur when everyone in the community chooses to make courtesy and kindness a priority. Conversely, I have witnessed the damage that is done when someone thinks they don't have to be kind and good, because they don't "feel" like it that day, or year, or because they consider good manners to be "artificial" or "dishonest." These are often the same people who think *they* should be influential, because they are smart, or rich, or right.

The truth, like it or not, is that good manners are more influential than being right. This means treating people well, no matter how you feel, and no matter how much the other person's behavior angers you. It means listening to people respectfully, and stopping to reflect before expressing your own response. And yes,

Put safeguards into place to protect the community.

sometimes it means refraining from saying what you'd love to say, out of anger or spite or hurt. (Nobody said it would be easy!) If you practice this discipline consistently, your community will benefit, and so will your leadership.

Warning: As Miss Manners is fond of pointing out, everyone is a fan of etiquette when it is somebody else's behavior that needs correcting. However, this discipline loses its power when it is used to criticize others. It gains power when it is simply practiced.

THERE ARE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES THAT COME along with a share in the leadership in a community. Primary among these are time and energy: taking time to learn about issues, and investing energy in building relationships with the other people in the community. Without this investment, it is difficult (if not impossible) to develop the clear communication necessary for effective group decision making.

In some communities, I have seen what happens when some people like the physical setting, the cost savings, and the proximity to other people, but are not prepared to participate in the other pieces of community life, such as shared meals and decision making.

One possible result is that the community may deteriorate into a simple housing co-op, where the people who want more leave. Or, people may stay, but become chronically angry with each other. Then, with some bitterness, a few people take on more and more of the management and decision-making work. Of course, this sets up the classic tragedy: People who don't want to help build the community, spiritual brick by spiritual brick, are still furious when a decision is made without their permission.

Knowing upfront that this bricklaying is a required part of the community process can filter out people who want to share in healthy leadership without doing the work to earn it.

FLUID, INFLUENTIAL LEADERSHIP WILL BLOOM IF THE overwhelming majority of participants in a community decide that they will do more than their share. If each person is giving and accepting help, the energy created can part oceans.

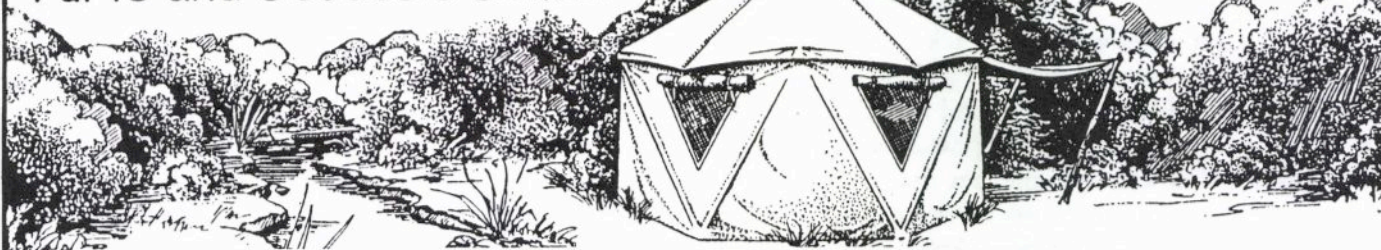
There will be times when decision making will default to a smaller group, or even one person. In a healthy community, I won't mind if someone else gets to lead. If there is a framework of rules to protect me from negative power and authority issues, I trust I can take a turn at leadership, if I choose. If I work at the uncommon courtesy that is the hallmark of great civilizations, I will make it easier for my community members to share the leadership duties with me, and trust me in turn to lead well. Ω

Pat Wagner codirects Pattern Research, a training and research firm in Denver, teaches in the Master's of Community Leadership program at Regis University. She also provides training and consulting to nonprofits, community-based organizations, religious organizations, and conventional workplaces, such as hospitals, universities, and libraries. Pattern Research, PO Box 9100, Denver, CO 80209; 303-778-0880; fax, 303-722-2680; pat@pattern.com; www.pattern.com.

Rajal Cohen, a founding member of Abundant Dawn Community, was Articles Acquisition Editor for the 2000 edition of the Communities Directory and teaches the Alexander Technique for a living. POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; rajal@ic.org.

Discover the Affordable Alternative Living Shelter

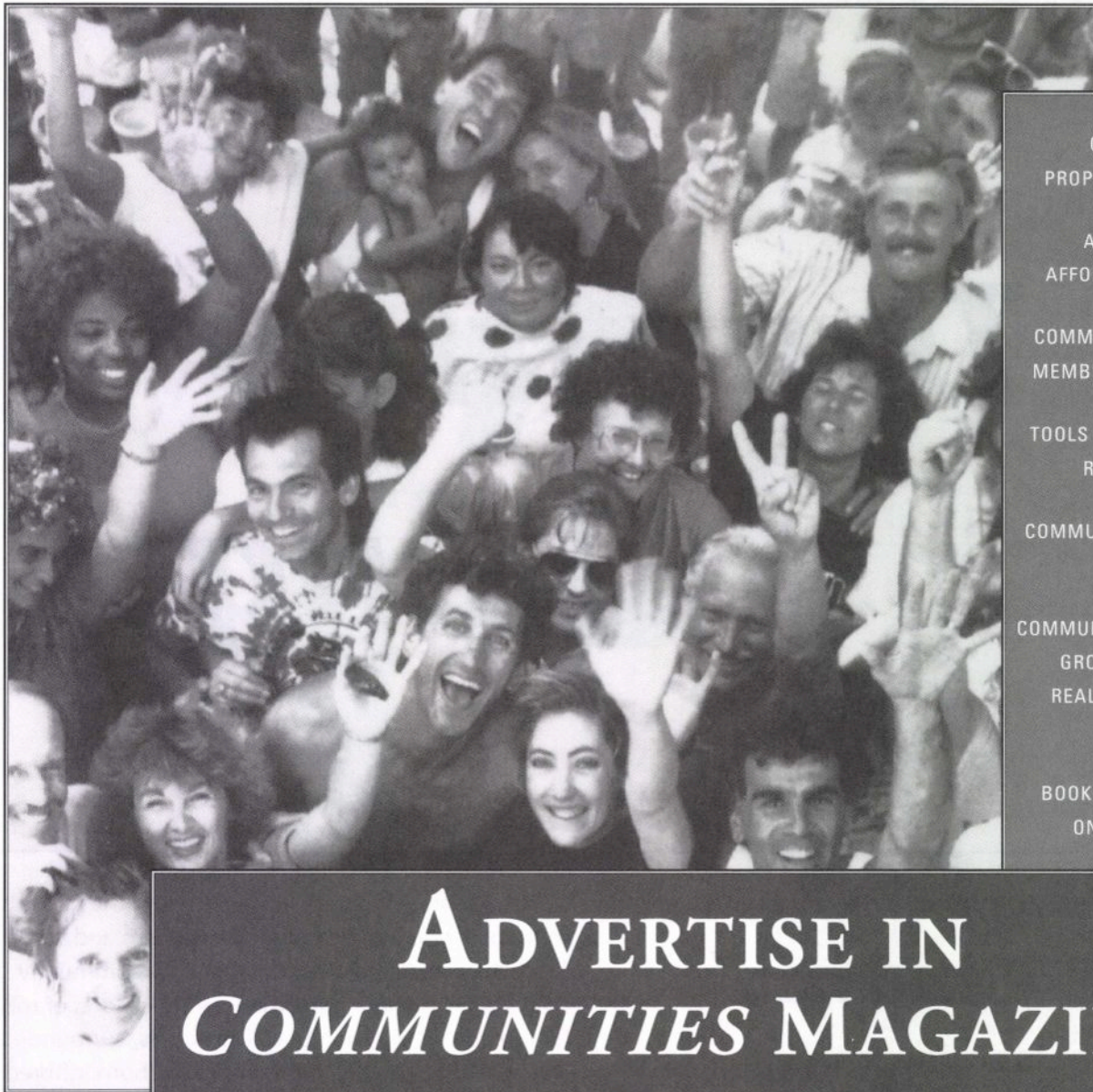
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Transition & Change

FROM THE EDITOR

'Get Ready ...'

FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS I LIVED IN A SMALL FORMING community in the high desert of Colorado; my community mates and I lived in a trailer (I slept in a tent) and spent most our waking hours building our dream house. We lived in a great rural neighborhood of scalloped rimrock hills and sagebrush, surrounded by fine rancher folk who raised horses, cattle, buffalo, and even llamas and ostriches. We only got 10 inches of rain a year but we had a stream in a cottonwood grove. Winters were cold but sunny, and spring gales so fierce they once ripped our storage building right over the cliff and nearly took two of us with it. We learned how to clamber through barbed-wire fences without getting stuck, climb rocky cliffs without surprising rattlers, shoo neighbors' livestock back to their own spreads, and enjoy hickory-barbecue picnic suppers out under deep blue skies and peachy-gold sunsets. None of us dreamed we wouldn't all grow old together in that sunny and dry Western land.

But a short year later I'm writing from the cozy attic room of a woodland cottage in the green and verdant foothills of western North Carolina. My community mates and I live in a great rural neighborhood of rolling hills, shady woods, and bucolic pastures, surrounded by fine country gentry who raise Arabian thoroughbreds and backwoods homesteaders who raise organic zucchini. We get 36 inches of rain a year, do our best not to track bright red-orange mud into the house, and constantly fight mold in the basement. Winters are pleasant and mild; our falls and springs are filled with cool soft air and weeks on end of unbelievable color. We've learned how to garden in red clay with more bugs than we ever thought possible; talk slower, say "y'all," and visit awhile with folks behind the counter before conducting business in town (a friend just called and asked about living in the South; I said I didn't reckon it'd affected me none); and enjoy settin' on the porch under the whispering sun-dappled trees of a lazy afternoon. There's no reason for us to think we all won't grow old in this warm and fertile ... But wait! What am I thinking?

We have no *idea* what the future will bring. Our small forming (changed) community with its five (mostly new)

**Communities change.
We might as well get good at it.**



Our gang, celebrating the day we set the well pump. (Left to right) Rosetta, Amina, Diana, Ken, with friends Rob and Eddie.

pioneering members with a (transformed) vision and (different) covenants, now dwelling on a different part of our planet should tell me *something*. What did we used to say? "The more things change, the more things stay the same." My community life—your community life—could change faster than you could whistle Dixie.

And what then?

In this issue we look at what happens when a community undergoes gradual or sudden change. How it copes with upheaval from within, or a major event from outside. And ... as we approach the change in millennia, we look at how communities have changed over the 20th century, and what they might be like in the 21st.

Reading these stories, one thing leaps out for sure. Communities change—it's natural, it's expected, we can't keep it away. We might as well get good at it.

Jonathan Greenberg recounts what happened after the small community of Light Morning suddenly tripled in size. Stephen Niezgodá, writing from the wild shores of Michigan's inland sea, describes the transformation of Skywoods Cosynegal as its membership dwindled and its

founder passed on. Then there's Hof Marienhöhe in Germany. As Michael LaFond reports, this community endured fascism and a world war, got commandeered

and stripped by enemy troops, and had their country's political-economic identity pulled out from under them—twice. Special thanks to Anne Blaney, who not only describes the massive changes that took place at 100 Mile House several years ago, but adds how she sees those same changes quite differently now. Changes upon changes ... followed by changes.

Some of my all-time favorite communitarians share their hopes, visions, and future prognostications for communities in the new century. And Tim Miller, our "unofficial historian," tells us how North American communities have radically changed over *this* century.

Well, these are the treats in store for you in the following pages. And now, I'm fixin' to go downstairs and get me some supper. I'll see y'all in the next millennium.

Enjoy this issue, hear? Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.



JACOB STEVENS

ADAPTING TO ‘OVERNIGHT’ CHANGE

BY JONATHAN GREENBERG

LAST WINTER LIGHT MORNING UNDERWENT AN amazing transformation. Over the course of a few months we shifted from being a community of five adults and one child to 14 adults and five children. I’d like to tell you our story thus far.

Light Morning, originally planned as a community about the size of an extended family, was formed back in 1973, partly as the result of channeled readings that brought cofounders Robert and Joyce together with Marlene and Ron. In the 1970s and 1980s others joined them, and some stayed for many years. But with the exception of Tom Hungerford, who had retired to Light Morning in 1985 (see “*Choosing to Age in Community*,” *Winter ’95*), they all had moved on, often staying in the area as friends and neighbors. When I first visited in 1995, believing that Light Morning had become a “closed community,” I couldn’t imagine why such a closely-knit group of people would consider risking significant change in structure or membership.

Indeed, if it hadn’t been for Joyce’s restless search for a larger, fuller experience of community, Light Morning

might have continued down the likely path of a handful of friends growing old together. In 1991, Joyce drafted plans for a new community building that was five times larger than the current one. It took her three years of lobbying and some occasional despair before the other members could offer more than a humoring smile. While they recognized the need for a larger structure to contain the ever-growing neighborhood functions that the community hosted—a part of its overall vision—finding the finances and energy kept the dream from leaving the drawing table. However when Joyce added an elder-care room to the plans, thereby attracting the funding for materials from her mother, she suddenly had a workable proposal. With some reluctance, Robert agreed to honcho the construction, and with mostly community labor and the expectation of strong neighborhood involvement, they broke ground in the spring of 1995.

By the fall of ’97, after three years of construction and community energy directed to this all-consuming project, and with neighborhood celebrations and dances already being held in the recently roofed living room,



participation by neighbors began to wane. Clearly it would take more community members with a daily need for the building to generate the motivation to complete and care for it.

Just after Thanksgiving that year, Robert put down his tool belt, deciding that it was time for him to switch focus. With construction at a standstill for much of 1998, the community entered a pivotal period of introspection. The empty, partially finished shelter posed the question of whether this project would merely become a hollow shell for unfulfilled dreams.

Fortunately in 1998 Robert picked up his pen, creating a survey of core values, which he circulated to all members, friends, and neighbors of the community.

"I was trying to get people to explore the paradox of having to hold on and let go at the same time," he recalls. "We wanted to know what we were willing to let go of and what we would hold onto tenaciously."

Joyce was tickled. "Having Robert on board was a huge lift," she explains. "We had always been open to new members, but after having 500 visitors our first summer we took a passive approach to putting the message out."

With Robert's added support she felt it was time to try something radically different.

It was in 1995, during the time when Alan, another visitor, and I first began staying at Light Morning, that Joyce first came up with the idea of a "renewal crew."

"In the past, people visited us one at a time," she says. "What if this time a whole group of people came at once and 'leveled the playing field,' so to speak? This would provide some companionship and support to the new people during the painful transition time while also giving them a sense of clout to compensate for not having seniority. Of course, I never expected that once we got 'the renewal crew' they'd become the majority so quickly."

I was surprised to learn that I had influenced this shift in openness at Light Morning, through my seven months of working on building, gardening, and kitchen projects.

"It was great to have a familiar new person around who is inspired about changes while also demonstrating a respect for and understanding of the community's traditional values and purpose," she reports. "It made a huge difference in our level of trust."

It was clear to me, however, that

***I returned to
find the
community
inundated with
new residents.***

before I joined a community in which the other adult members were all my parents' age or older (I was 26), I would need more indication that a significant amount of younger members would be similarly welcomed. So I set out in 1998 for a farming apprenticeship at another community with the promise to stay in touch and return with a clearer sense of commitment and personal vision.

Much to my surprise, Robert accompanied Joyce to Twin Oaks' Communities Conference in September of



“I don't like living this closely with 22 other people.”

that year, even introducing Light Morning during the “meet the communities” event. Meanwhile, the prospect of potential Y2K disruptions accelerated preparation at Light Morning. As Joyce explains, “Y2K for me was just a convenient excuse for doing what we were already wanting to do, just sooner.”

Returning to Light Morning later that fall, I found the community inundated with interested new residents. I was quickly recruited to play the role of “bridge person.” As fall turned to winter, we found ourselves spending an increasing amount of time in meetings discussing values, ideas, and plans.

This process culminated in a meeting with all interested potential new members on New Year's Eve, 1998. The question of pets became the deciding issue. Light Morning had considered itself a wildlife sanctuary for much of its history: a rabbit nursing its offspring in the front lawn was not an unusual sight. Now it faced the dilemma of accepting residents with dogs and cats. Though no final resolution was reached about pets per se, the depth of sharing and listening and the commitment to an ongoing communication process allowed Light Morning to embrace the New Year with a new perspective. It would accept new members. Cofounder Marlene had often said in the past, “I was always mostly interested in the channeled readings; this community stuff is Joyce's thing, not mine.” But that night, she excitedly announced, “For 25

years we've been supposed to be doing community—now we're finally going to really do it!”

Daniel and Cécile moved in the following week, and over the next six months the population explosion began. Michael and Jessica and their children Lexi and Sekai left their comfortable home in a nearby city and moved up the mountain in April, with Michael now making a 45-minute commute to his job. Jessica's sister Heather and her son B'Austin soon joined them in their cramped, four-room quarters, a former guest cabin. In May, after months of procrastination, Alan moved in. And in June, Richard, an old friend of the community and former resident from 20 years before, moved in only days before his son Jacob arrived to spend the summer.

Though “the foundation crew” may have had two-and-a-half decades to prepare psychologically and spiritually for change, adjusting to a massive upheaval that took place over only a matter of months has been another matter altogether. Perhaps no one felt this more intensely this summer than Tom, who at one point announced at a meal: “I don't like living this closely with 22 other people. It is nothing personal to all of you, but I'm not used to it and at this point in my life I just don't want to.” That day Tom courageously expressed what every one of us has felt at some point this year.

“Perhaps the greatest challenge facing all of us is staying awake to the parental roles we older members so easily fall into,” Joyce explains. “Transferring a sense of ownership and responsibility and remaining patient is no easy feat. I knew a lot of my stuff would come up, but that doesn't necessarily make it easy to do.”

I have found that joining an established community has tremendous benefits as well as a shadow side. Having the infrastructure in place and not having to start from scratch is a huge relief, since drawing on the experience and knowledge of older members has kept us from having to reinvent the wheel. And older members are able to watch their dreams be adopted, further developed, and preserved for future generations. However, there is also the tendency for us newcomers to take traditions and values for granted, and it can be trying for older members as they watch their creations occasionally get trampled. Take the blueberries, for instance. For years the six members would share the previous night's dreams while grazing in the blueberry patch for breakfast. “If 15 additional people—including four kids—now start snacking on those bushes, how do you maintain that experience?” asks Joyce. Even more

challenging for Joyce, who has worked devotedly to create an aesthetically pleasing and welcoming environment at Light Morning, has been to trust others to eventually appreciate and help maintain the gardens and unique dwellings that helped generate the magical energy that attracted them here in the first place.

"In community people are challenged to go through the same process of evolution that occurs in life, only hopefully at an accelerated rate," Robert believes. "The author Steven Covey outlines going from dependence to independence, and then with enough maturity, to interdependence. We are trying to foster an environment where residents, old and new, naturally desire to help meet the needs of others as well as their own. This takes time and patience to evolve."

The adjustments for new residents have been equally trying. Already there's been some turnover. Heather returned to life in a nearby city. Alysia, who grew up as a neighbor, and her partner Scott, have pitched their tent on the land. Many of the new residents have never lived with primitive rural conditions, for example, without hot running water and unlimited electricity, let alone lived closely with a group of mostly strangers. The camaraderie arising from so many of us experiencing this together has certainly helped.

New residents are also often faced with the challenge of finding their place in an established organizational

This was demonstrated when Cécile's plans to begin a greenhouse project and flower business were vetoed because of community concerns.

"It was definitely frustrating to have my creative gifts stalled by community process," Cécile admits, "but knowing that I am also one who has too much on my plate, I also admire anyone who forces me to slow down. Ultimately, it is the relational process that interests me, and I still have questions and concerns about how decisions get made here."

Adjusting to having more kids at Light Morning has been a stretch as well. It's humbling to watch our children as they mirror for us the struggles of learning how to share, making collective decisions, and resolving conflicts. I clearly remember summer afternoons well spent by parents sitting around in the grass processing difficult dynamics with their kids and exploring different parenting styles.

With more than one child now at Light Morning, it takes greater coordination and cooperation to create a nurturing environment for all. Until last year, teenager Lauren was a lone voice complaining about boring adults having boring conversations and doing boring things. Now she is joined by more voices clamoring for more fun and a better life. This is good for all of us, though the ruckus it creates can be disruptive to the social needs of adults.

We have therefore created both a parents' and allies caucus as well as a kids' caucus. In fact, the kids' caucus reported a list of concerns and requests at our most recent meeting that included both the desire for a collective, structured homeschooling program as well as that we build them a tree fort. As individuals and families learn how to think and act more communally, we will hopefully find more time and willingness to create such a rich educational, playful environment—for everyone.

Another challenge new residents face is taking time to get to know the community before making big decisions. For many of us, this struggle with patience plays out in housing issues.

This year we managed to cram everyone into the available temporary vacant living structures already built, including some rooms in the new community building still under construction. Under these strained conditions one can easily make the mistake of prematurely wishing for or expecting to have the more hospitable accommodations and lifestyles that older members worked hard for years to develop. Fortunately, the founders never fail to remind us that for their first

Some new residents have significant personal debts and other special financial needs.



structure. It takes time and willingness to learn how to recognize the often blurry line between personally projected and actual issues of power and authority. In joining community, especially a well-established one, an individual necessarily surrenders at least some autonomy. Only with time does one begin to experience the paradoxical fact that this surrendering represents a possible doorway to greater freedom.

two years, winters included, they lived in tents.

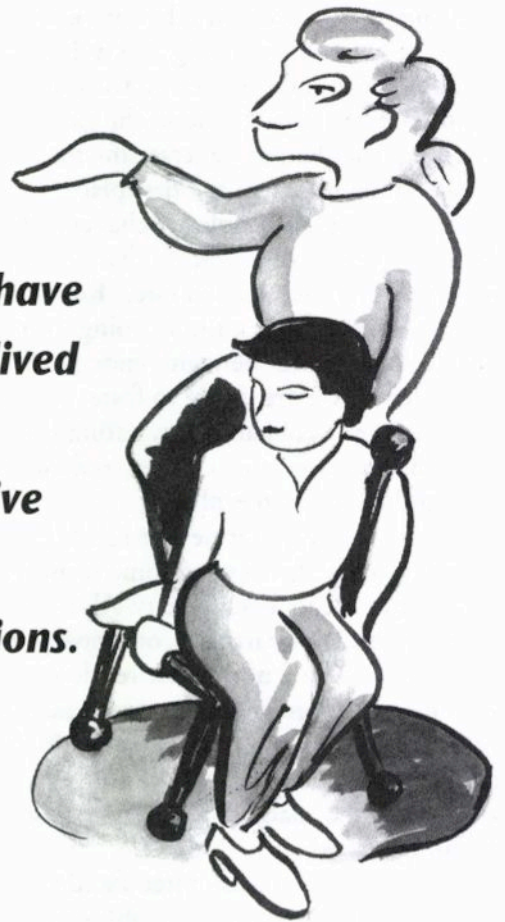
Focusing on completing the community shelter first has been a creative way to slow people down and let them get to know each other and the community while working together towards a common goal. This has entailed some personal sacrifice. For instance, ever since they first came to Light Morning, Michael and Jessica have been anxious to build a clean new home because of their son's respiratory condition. The community, however, has always been clear about not letting new residents build during their first year. For Michael and Jessica to come to the same conclusion for themselves took the process of moving in and recognizing the work ahead of themselves and others just in adjusting to community. They now hope to break ground next spring after the community kitchen, dining, and living spaces are moved to the new building. We have found that given time, space, and some gentle coaxing, people will find their own way to the path that considers everyone's needs.

This trusting process is being tested even further as we now begin to examine our financial/labor structure. Historically, Light Morning has tried a whole gamut of systems, including income-sharing and highly structured labor organization. Finally, after years of adjusting, the community had settled into a system in which people chose their own personal level and mode of financial contribution and worked in the areas of their passion. Being a small group of people who all knew and trusted each other eliminated the need for more structure.

Integrating new people into such an amorphous system has been problematic, to say the least. We needed to find some kind of starting point until people got their bearings. We therefore have asked people to contribute \$100 per month, with half going to the community budget and the other half spent for the community according to the individual's discretion. Labor has continued to be a self-defined contribution. Unfortunately, this has led to resentments, with some people working more on community projects and others more on personal projects. In the past when this occurred, the newcomers who began to see the whole community as their home tended to remain at Light Morning. At that point they contributed labor with passion, and a balance was met. We're still working this out, however, and there's no clear resolution yet. One complicating factor is that some new residents have moved in with significant personal debts to pay off and other special financial needs. The challenge is therefore finding positive ways of helping people grow into a mature understanding of and relationship with the community—psychologically, physically, and fiscally.

We are currently exploring what has and has not been working thus far in terms of finances and labor for the community and individual households. We hope to adjust the current system as it evolves into something

Many have never lived with primitive rural conditions.



more equitable that better reflects community values. It is possible that by simply incorporating more discussion, openness, and feedback in our system we will get most of the way to making things run more fairly and smoothly. We ultimately would prefer a system that relies more on communication and trust than rules and regulations.

Making decisions with a larger, more diverse group raises similarly deep and difficult questions. Now, as in the past, Light Morning used a variation of the consensus decision-making process: Smaller decisions are often decided by individuals ("focalizers") who take on specific areas of responsibility; larger decisions that directly affect everyone are decided by consensus by core members ("caretakers"), people with significant experience with and investment in community concerns. For example, traditionally people exploring Light Morning go through both a visitor period and a resident period before growing into a caretaker role. Thus, the unwritten policy has been that residents and long-term visitors have some input but less decision-making power until they grew into a more permanent committed relationship with the community. However, with so many new people becoming residents all at once, the playing field has shifted.

This was illustrated recently as some members expressed concerns around the extended visit of Scott and Alysia. Only the older members of Light Morning

had been consulted on the decision to invite Alysia and Scott to continue as tent visitors. At the time it seemed unnecessary or inappropriate to include others in this process. However, later other residents felt disenfranchised and were concerned that decisions that greatly affected their lives and comfort at Light Morning might be made without consultation. Judging from difficulties with the earlier decision process, presumably new residents will be much more included in future decisions about long-term visitors. However, it will take time to address the broader issues of leadership, power, and control at Light Morning.

With these and other challenges, the process of adapting to “overnight” change has begun.

“At some point I realized that many of the old systems we had developed over 25 years were not going to make it,” Joyce notes. “They might be useful until people got their bearings, but new systems were needed for the long-term.”

It’s exciting to watch these new attitudes and systems taking shape. For example, after a period of chaos, we realized we needed a better communication system. Community meals had traditionally been a time for both intimate sharing and bringing up business items. However, with nine more adults and four more rambunctious children sitting down to eat, it now takes a lot more conscious effort to sustain a group conversation. After a difficult period of disconnected and disruptive meals we are now all making a conscious cooperative effort to create an environment of sacred space and intimacy—the core of Light Morning’s high value on “common table.”

Our meals are also testimony to the gift of new people recognizing the value of something old that works. Revitalizing our daily group interactions at mealtimes affords us the luxury of requiring only monthly business meetings. Although these meals cut heavily into traditional nuclear family time, the common table creates an atmosphere of group intimacy that we cherish.

Other new practical solutions are also starting to take shape. We are learning to utilize caucuses to explore issues, and to present proposals at meetings, thereby hopefully creating an efficient system to solve problems and make decisions. Similarly, we are starting to develop written communication systems that can reach many people with many different busy schedules.

The realm of interpersonal dynamics has become even more essential. Here old members have valued new energy in adopting Daniel and Cécile’s contribution of Open

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Hearted Listening, a technique involving active listening and validating. (See “About Open Hearted Listening,” Fall ’99.) In the spring Daniel and Cécile conducted a one-day workshop for community members that was useful training in the technique as well as a wonderful bonding experience.

I’m writing this at the end of August. Although we’re finally moving ahead again on finishing the new community building, much more remains to be done. Faced with the unknown challenges of Y2K and a too-small old community building, the goal is to move into an insulated though unfinished new one by December. Robert is once again the overall coordinator of this daunting project, though this time with much more community participa-

tion and shared leadership. How gracefully we succeed will largely depend on the extent to which new residents step into focalizing roles, take personal responsibility for a community project, and practice the truth of interdependence.

Similarly, it remains to be seen which members of the current “renewal crew” will deepen into more long-term and committed caretaker roles at Light Morning. Even with all its frustrations and challenges, I feel that the experiment we have undertaken this year has been rewarding. As we maintain our trust and commitment to this path, I feel confident we will succeed. Ω



Jonathan Greenberg, originally from Montreal, has lived at Light Morning for 18 months total, after spending three years as an apprentice on an organic farm.



SKYWOODS COSYNEGAL

ON THANKSGIVING DAY OF 1998, our founder Phil Johnson passed on to another dimension. Even though we had been together at Skywoods Cosynegal* for 20-plus years and were founded on consensus and egalitarianism, Phil was more than a founding member. He was our charismatic soul, and our significant elder. We were all resource and refuge for each other, but Phil was our rock—the glue that kept us together.

Our journey began when eight of us, most of whom had met at Michigan State University, came together in the early 1970s to build and live on a 63-foot wooden boat in

western Michigan. Our original plan was to take the vessel out the St. Lawrence Seaway and across the Atlantic Ocean to do art and research in Europe. After a few years together we decided we needed a home base for our work. On a river-fed lake that empties into

Lake Michigan, we bought five acres of land (where we later built our home) on a beautiful wooded point, surrounded by water on three sides and rising 60 feet above the shore. Our boat, “Prometheus,” became the guardian of the north shore, sharing both sunrise and sunset with the seas and the sky. We became known as “the boat people” to many, and to some old

DEATH & REBIRTH AT SKYWOODS COSYNEGAL

BY STEPHEN NIEZGODA



*Cosynegal is a term we constructed: Co—Cooperative, Communal, Consensus; Syn—Synergistic, Synthetic; Egal—Egalitarian.)

TOP & BOTTOM: Two faces of the inland sea, as viewed from Skywoods’ shoreline.

salts, in awe of our years of summer and winter live-aboard status, the only real sailors on this part of the lake.

We who live close to the sea eventually realize a special empathy with the fragility of life and of human constructs, and the ever-present possibility of change. Here, nature forewarns of the great storms of November long prior to their awesome heights. Soft whispers in the upper lacements of the great oaks, gentle winds in the white pine and hemlock, gulls screaming in the distance, and boats straining lightly against their lines portend the first diminutive surges of a distant Titan. The sea's formidable force and our direct dependence on her exhort us to seek out harmonious interaction. We learn to live with and through the stormy symbols of change, to be consciously accountable, and to extend nurturing sensitivity.

When we first came together, Phil, along with his wife June, had begun designing and building the boat that would continue to be our project and home for the next 20 years. He was also working on his doctoral thesis, "Collective Consciousness." His dissertation on the social/philosophical grounding of community was our immersion/intensive in the conceptual underpinnings of community. Building the boat and writing the dissertation both required full participation and an intense amount of cooperation and processing. The boat was relatively large, but quarters were tight considering eight of us lived together in a floating construction site. We ate together, slept together, learned together, grew together, and grew *together*.

These projects were both our womb and offspring. We were learning new lifestyles and life skills. As an income-sharing, polyfidelitous community family, we were trying to move beyond ego, defensiveness, resentment, jealousy, scapegoating, and traditional role models. Through these early years, Phil was not our leader, but our facilitator and coordinator. It

was not an easy role for anyone to be bosom companion and wise elder simultaneously. He did not insist on being in the center of things, but he did insist on being involved. What Phil believed and modeled was that community ran on the fuel of enthusiastic participation. Perhaps his loss was so great because his presence was so strong.

Our family credo of cooperative, synergistic egalitarianism carried us into and through Phil's disease process. Traditional allopathic medicine offered us no plan other than pain relief. We came to rely on Essiac Tea, a traditional Ojibway herbal,

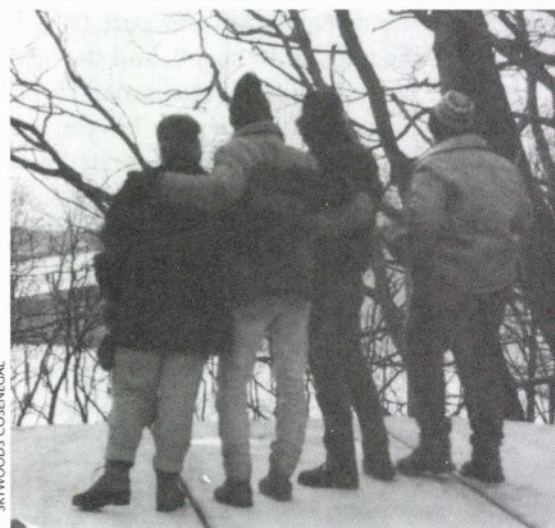
We were trying to move beyond ego, defensiveness, jealousy, and traditional role models.

and the local hospice organization. Both helped immensely.

As his illness progressed, we increasingly relied on our own strengths and resources. Martha, a registered nurse who had worked with cancer patients, was able to apply her knowledge and experience to specific healthcare issues and cut through the medical red tape. She provided knowledge, insight, and strength of soul that was invaluable. Having recently been through a similar cancer-hospice dying-at-home situation with my mother, I was relatively familiar with both patient and caregiver roles and their changing dynamics. A midwife friend had introduced me to the concept of midwifing death as an integral part of life during my mother's illness. That lesson proved

to be essential to my ability to remain centered and make sense of this dynamic process. Linda, another original family member who was away in graduate school and teaching in Kansas, returned frequently (risking her assistantship in the process) to give Martha and me a much-needed break in our exhaustive schedules. Jim, a new member, also helped frequently with all the other day-to-day duties that allow a family to care for one of their own at home.

Phil brought centeredness and acceptance to the situation. He was not angry, bitter, or resentful. He was primarily interested in living a life of



As an income-sharing, polyfidelitous community family, Skywoods' members hoped to move beyond ego and defensiveness.

quality and integrity to the end—and in taking care of us and our community. We gave each other the gift of honest and open sharing of visions of the future: our thoughts on life after death. This was perhaps the most demanding, yet most freeing of all of our caregiving activities. It required each of us to confront the fact that our world was going to be decidedly different, and that we were going to need to change to adapt to new circumstances.

Phil's attention to detail prompted him to make certain that our community's financial and legal affairs

***We were all resource and
refuge for each other,
but Phil was our rock.***

were in order. In spite of our long-standing personal commitments and individual written agreements, we had never formalized our arrangement. Legal agreements, which we had formerly viewed as restrictive and indicative of a lack of trust, suddenly seemed necessary. With a fair expenditure of energy on our part (which Phil could hardly spare), and the help of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities and a friendly lawyer, we were soon officially incorporated as a community, an institute, and a trust. As a primary caregiver, I would crab at Phil that he needed to rest and relax, but in true Promethean fashion he would say that having all business taken care of would allow him to relax. Right up to the end, he saw himself as a part of us; taking care of us was a way of taking care of himself. That close bond and vision of identity and interdependence was at the core of a life that we had all forged together. Nothing made our life principles so clear as Phil's death.

With our legal transformation complete, other changes began to unfold. My perception of death, suffering, and timing underwent a significant revision. I once believed that it would be preferable to die instantly from a heart attack or to simply not awaken one morning. Cancer seemed too slow and painful. However, thanks to the excellent care and wonderful support of our family and the hospice, Phil was able to live his final days at home alert and pain-free. As the disease progressed, Phil came to rely as much on our energy, strength, judgment, and nurturing as we previously had relied on his. The duration of

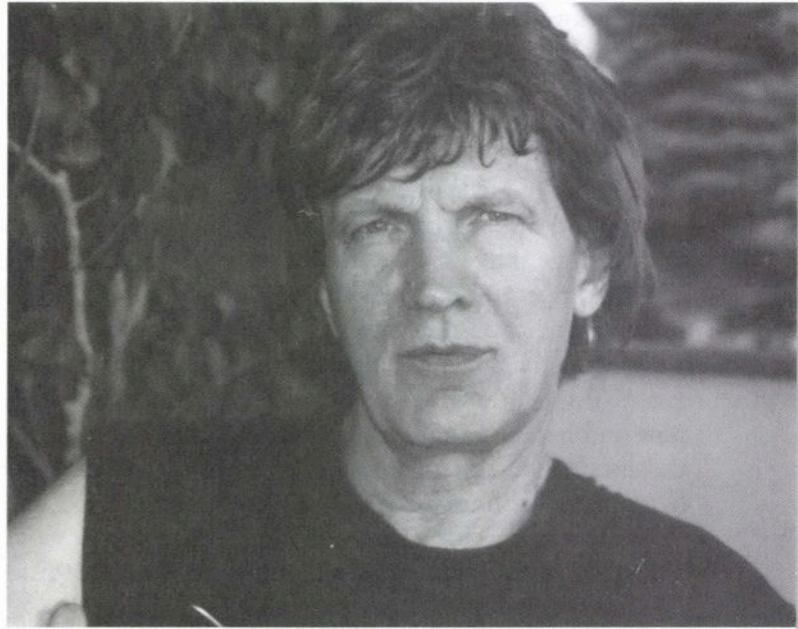
the dying process made a profound impact on me. Phil was diagnosed and dead within five months. While this was a very short time, it did give us all a chance to spend quality time together and to say and do the things we sometimes took for granted but often never quite got around to. That opportunity was a gift of the disease and its gradual evolution.

The five-month time frame also allowed us to finish the library in our new home: caregiving during the day, working on the library at night. The library, with its view west over the inland sea and the sunset—and its collection of the wisdom of the ages—was Phil's long-envisioned "dream space." Through his tenacity (I didn't think he would live long enough) and our determination (16-hour workdays on end) we were able to finish the room while he was still with us. This was a parting opportunity to demonstrate our cooperative, synergistic, egalitarian motif. Phil saw it as his parting gift to us; we saw it as our gift to him. Both were true.

We moved Phil, along with his hospital bed and medical equipment down into the library on a Monday—his birthday. As I write this I get teary

remembering the joy, sorrow, and knowing that stuck in all our throats that day. It was symbolic and we knew it. Three days later, early on Thanksgiving morning, Phil sat up, gave me a clenched fist salute and said, "Thanksgiving! I made it! Now I'm tired and I want to rest." He never woke up again and died at sunset—a characteristically poetic farewell.

When we first realized that Phil was fatally ill, we had all looked at each other and said "Now what?" Soon we were not going to be able to ask that question of the elder we had learned to rely on. Instead, each of us was going to need to stretch and grow into new roles and new skills. Significant change was both an exciting opportunity and a potential threat to our illusions of security. I must admit that I was personally upset by this change.





OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: *Phil Johnson, 1931–1998, “our charismatic soul, our significant elder.”*

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: *The eight Skywoods members lived onboard the 63-foot Prometheus for 20 years.*

ABOVE: *Skywoods members built their energy-efficient home specifically for community life, with facilities for family, conferencing, cottage industries, libraries, research, and gardening.*

Over the years our numbers had dwindled from eight to three. On the boat, we did not have room to grow, and in building our house on land, our “Living, Learning, Working Center,” we kept ourselves “too busy” to engage in outreach. This scant attention to actively recruiting new members was a course of action I felt uneasy with at the time, and in retrospect, wish we had handled differently. Our belief had been, “if you build it, they will come.” However, ignoring outreach was akin to putting a light under a basket. Over the years we built an increasingly beautiful and sustainable physical structure, but now needed the people to fill it. Phil’s illness and impending death made this particularly clear.

As one of the original community members from 1975, I had joined the

community because I did not want to be part of what I’d considered bourgeois American culture. I wanted to live with other people in an income-sharing, non-possessive, creative, responsible lifestyle. Now, 20 years later, I found myself surrounded by an almost embarrassing amount of physical and material resources and a disproportionately small number of fellow travelers. With a certain amount of shock and incredulity I found myself asking, “How did this happen?”

I believe that each problem contains the seed of its own solution. Usually it is a question of nurturing and allowing the process to unfold. In like manner, I believe that frequently our character assets are the same as our character defects. The difference is one of proportion and balance. I say these things to make clear that I do not regret our past or wish to darken it. I simply want to grow from greater understanding drawn from our past experience. Phil used to say, “Wisdom is knowledge in perspective.” Our experiences through the years have given us a fair degree of perspective which will hopefully transform into the wisdom to keep ourselves in balance and continue to grow as a community.

Following Phil’s illness and death,

Phil was primarily interested in living a life of quality and integrity to the end.

we reflected on and reevaluated our community path and priorities, a process that is still unfolding. We are still grappling with new images of self, community, relationships, and definitions. As we are trying to remain open to the opportunities for growth in our dilemma, and serenely allow it to lift and unfold, certain structures begin to present themselves as landmarks. We agreed that our first commitment was to creating community and nurturing a new-paradigm family. In this light, we tried to examine possible obstacles to our course and to assess ways of correcting for them. We identified four critical areas:

1. Outreach. In the past, we seriously neglected this facet of our lives. We originally felt we needed to work on our own group and personal issues before we could shed much light for others. Twenty years later, with a fair amount of that learning curve under our belts, we feel that our experience can be a valuable resource for ourselves and others. We also felt uncomfortable with the role of evangelist, believing that our lifestyle was one of attraction, rather than promotion. Even though we still believe this, we now understand the need to be more public, actively network, and make connections. If

we want to grow, we need to stand in the light.

2. Select for Emotional Maturity. In the past, we had not always chosen community members who possessed a high emotional IQ. We had believed that community was a healing context—that love and understanding could overcome any obstacles—stretching ourselves to prove this point to ourselves and others. The results had ranged from discouraging to disastrous. We had relied on others who had not known themselves well enough to be relied upon. We did not realize that our particular community lifestyle was for those who wanted it, rather than those who needed it. In embracing the concept of “selecting for emotional maturity” (from the “Six Ingredients” workshop at a recent FIC Art of Community conference) we have embraced a different vision of our lives in community. This probably means we will grow more slowly, but hopefully with more stability.

3. Proximity to “Middle America.” We had intentionally located close to mainstream America because we believed that it was important to demonstrate the viability of intentional community as a new form of expanded family coexisting within the predominant culture. We believed that if our vision was to push the paradigm shift, we should focus on that neglected and large population, “Middle America.” The decision to move into an area combining rural agriculture, small town, and vacation homes has resulted in many challenges of zoning, image, and information. It would have been much easier to locate in either some “hip” center or more remote area. Over the years we have frequently wondered about our decision to try to create an oasis in such a dry environment. A major transformation over the last year has been in our willingness to raise our public profile. After 20

We are still grappling with new images of self, community, and relationships.

years of hard work (and social change) we have established ourselves as a valued resource in the community and a harbor and refuge for others. Many locals now see us as a legitimate family.

4. Sex and Money. These internal family issues were particularly difficult hurdles for prospective new members. (This was supposed to be a new paradigm, right? Who said it was going to be easy?) While income sharing and non-possessive relationships have been at the core of our family values since our formation, they have been formidable obstacles to our increase in numbers. Although they are principles we still believe in and aspire to for ourselves, we realize that they might not be for everyone. Our current thinking is that we need to embrace and celebrate diversity within our own community. The essentials of this new form expanded family seem to include sharing, openness, honesty, nurturing, support, expansiveness, innovation, and creativity. These expressions may take many forms. We may have some folks sharing income, and some folks sharing expenses. We may have some polyfidelitous, polyamorous, monogamous, or even celibate folks. We believe that our community can and will evolve in response to the people involved.

WHERE DOES SKYWOODS COSYNEGAL go from here? We increasingly ask ourselves this question. Our first answer was to continue to finish our Living, Learning, Working Center and to extend our networking and outreach efforts. We wrestled with the issue of how important it is to live in “our” community, or whether we should move to join a larger one. Our answer—for now—is to try to grow here. It seems a shame to leave a place as beautiful as this that has been researched, designed, and built from the ground up specifically for community life. We have facilities for family, conferencing, cottage industries, libraries and research, organic gardening and orchards—low maintenance, energy efficient, soon-to-be-wind-powered, and paid for.

Having said all this, the gentle spirit of community and the process of social creativity have recently taught us one important lesson: to remain loving and open, to trust life unfolding of its own accord and to be willing to make changes when necessary. Ω

Stephen Niezgodka, a founding member of Skywoods Cosynegal, is a designer, woodworker, gardener, and permaculture teacher. His community welcomes inquiries. Skywoods, PO Box 4176, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444; cosynegal@i2k.com.



MICHAEL LAFOND

Over the past 71 years Hof Marienhöhe's farmers have restored the land to fertility.

THE MANY LIVES OF HOF MARIENHÖHE

BY MICHAEL LAFOND

WHEN VISITING HOF MARIENHÖHE (MARY'S Hill Farm), a German Biodynamic farm community in an area of rolling hills, lakes, and pine forests, I am struck by the beauty and incredible variety of its sights, sounds, and smells. Marienhöhe, about 50 kilometers southeast of Berlin, is a small gathering of buildings woven into a green tapestry of about 80 acres of forest and 200 acres of cultivated fields. The community has 30 permanent residents, including elderly people and 15 children. Its fields are rich with wheat, rye, potatoes, carrots, oats, sunflowers, and a variety of other crops, as well as a substantial vegetable garden and fruit trees. About 30 cows and the same number of pigs, as well as horses, sheep, doves, bees, dogs, and cats also live here. Local wildlife is especially abundant in the area, with deer, hedgehogs, badgers, and increasing numbers of pesky wild pigs. Marienhöhe is a living demonstration of the Biodynamic concept of a "healing agriculture."

Marienhöhe's experimental nature is reflected in its biological waste treatment system and solar power via rooftop PV panels. Farm work has intensified and diversified to include a bakery as well as cheese and dairy processing. Aside from feeding themselves, Marienhöhe residents distribute a wide range of seasonal fruits and vegetables, dairy products, herbs, meats, baked goods, and flowers through sales at their farm store, two food co-ops, a weekly "eco-market," and several natural food stores and distributors in Berlin.

Marienhöhe's history, however, has been dramatic. The 71-year-old community has persevered through potentially annihilating external circumstances that intentional communities normally never encounter. The oldest German Biodynamic farm still in existence, Marienhöhe has survived not only the Nazi regime and World War II but also the tyranny of the former East German government. Its challenges didn't end in 1989, however, when the Berlin Wall fell, as the community's

integration into West German political and economic systems meant yet another fundamental restructuring.

Marienhöhe founder Erhard Bartsch borrowed money from friends and purchased the Marienhöhe farm in 1928. His aim was to pioneer a demonstration model of Rudolf Steiner's then-new Biodynamic farming movement, which was a response to negative trends such as soil loss and declining food quality. (Steiner was the originator of the Anthroposophical movement.) Bartsch, an Austrian-German who learned directly from Steiner, rapidly established himself as one of the leading figures in Biodynamic farming after the publication of his own book in 1927, *The Agricultural Crisis*. He was personally so inspired by the potential of Biodynamics that he chose Marienhöhe especially because of its sandy soil, windswept, overgrazed fields, and

**By 1941 the Nazis
had declared
Biodynamic
farming illegal.**

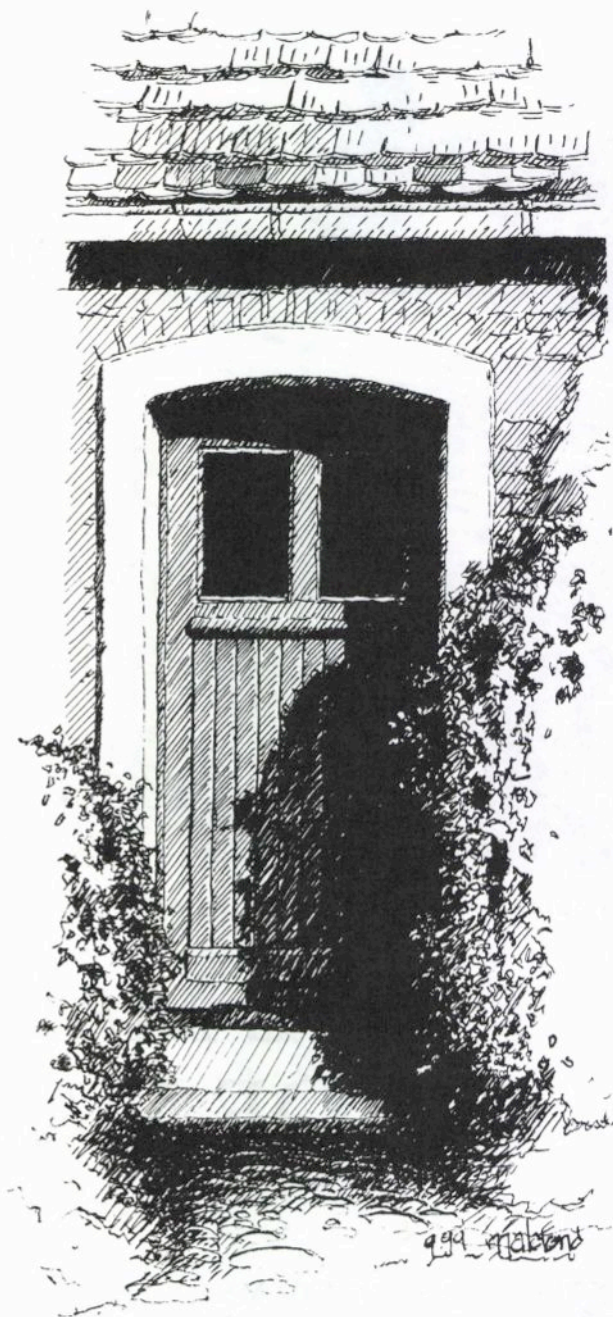
relatively little rainfall, to prove that Biodynamic farming practices could heal and restore the land and grow healthy food as well. With the zeal of new converts, he and others at Marienhöhe carried out Biodynamic agricultural experiments, documenting their results and debating

them with others in Biodynamic publications and at conferences and workshops they organized.

Unfortunately, just as Marienhöhe and the Biodynamic movement were establishing themselves, so was the rising specter of German National Socialism. Although Bartsch, as a Biodynamic spokesperson, made some compromises with Biodynamic farming methods to protect Marienhöhe and the movement, by 1935 the Nazis had made explicit Anthroposophic activities *verboten*. By 1941 they had declared Biodynamic activities in general illegal and had confiscated Anthroposophic publications. That same year they threw Bartsch in jail, but released him after six months and allowed him to return to Marienhöhe to live under house arrest.

During World War II the Nazi government exploited all privately owned farms for "German national objectives," and as elsewhere, Polish nationals and others were forced to work at Marienhöhe. The German front line shifted back and forth across this landscape several times, with Marienhöhe under the alternate jurisdiction of German and Soviet troops. Members of the Soviet Army took food from Marienhöhe for themselves before their final victorious march into Berlin in 1945. By then all farm animals had been eaten, or driven away or killed by artillery fire, and much of the land shelled and buildings damaged or destroyed. The lives of the Biodynamic farmers at Marienhöhe were spared and they were allowed to keep their land, in part because of their positive relations with war-time workers.

After the war came a time of slow rebuilding at Marienhöhe and elsewhere in the Russian-occupied zone. In the late



MICHAEL LAFOND

1940s Bartsch and others attempted to reestablish Marienhöhe as a demonstration center for Biodynamics, but this effort was frustrated by newly forming politics. While Nazis and war had essentially paralyzed the Biodynamic movement, communist ideologues finished it off in the emerging East Germany.

Farms over 100 hectares were expropriated by the state, and so Bartsch fought to hold onto Marienhöhe by selling some of the fields. He also used new East German law to his advantage as he declared a right to retain the land as a foreign national, and especially as a recognized victim of Nazi persecution.

Still, it was obviously an uphill struggle to pursue Biodynamic farming at Marienhöhe in the developing political climate, and in the late '40s Bartsch left the country to take care of Wurzerhof, a Biodynamic farm he owned in Austria.



He was able to convince some others to take up the challenge at Marienhöhe in the 1950s. One was Heinz Hellmuth-Hoppe, who was bold enough to move from West Germany into the Soviet-controlled East. (He and Nora Hoppe, who also moved to the farm then, still live at Marienhöhe now.) Erhard Bartsch died in 1960 and his brother Hellmut Bartsch moved to Marienhöhe the same year.

The intensifying Cold War led in 1961 to the Berlin Wall and the dramatic Iron Curtain that isolated East from West. In the following years the community successfully avoided a forced collectivization of its land—again the farm was saved through its Austrian ownership by the Bartsch family. Virtually all farms in East Germany were collectivized, as the government believed food production would be more efficient if farms were larger, industrially run operations, but the East German government's interest in Marienhöhe's sandy hills was apparently not that great.

Although Marienhöhe was tolerated during that period as a sort of eccentric enclave, its Biodynamic farmers were forced to turn over relatively large amounts of hay, eggs, potatoes, rye, and other crops to the government. For years the farmers struggled with inadequate or failing equipment and lived with hunger as a constant threat, while the land suffered from over-exploitation. The forced regular payments of crops were eventually relaxed in 1967, oddly enough due to the intervention of an East German farm administrator who had learned about Biodynamic farming while a prisoner of war in the United States.

In some ways the decades under East German rule were

similar to those under Nazi rule: Anthroposophic and Biodynamic activities were highly discouraged and continued more or less underground. Still, a network survived with Marienhöhe functioning as one of the only sources of Biodynamic information and preparations for hundreds of gardeners in the East.

Through Anthroposophic networks Marienhöhe maintained a reputation as a small alternative sphere that existed outside of the highly controlled and repressive East German society. Many young East Germans spent their summer vacations working at Marienhöhe, some of whom eventually settled there in the 1980s.

Marienhöhe has long been carving out its own path—whereas the community held out as an island of private enterprise through many decades of socialism, when absorbed into western capitalism under German Reunification, Marienhöhe took a step in the other direction as it reorganized as a nonprofit and maintained its communal economy.

The transition from socialism to capitalism meant that while Marienhöhe gained a range of freedoms it also had to restructure to comply with much stiffer German and European agricultural regulations. Significantly, this also meant learning to compete in the marketplace with well-established farms in former West Germany and other European countries. In general, the West was happy to see the East as millions of new consumers, but not as potential producers and competitors.

Erhard Bartsch's children, who inherited Marienhöhe, were living in West Germany at the time of German Reunification. True to their father's dream, they donated the farm in 1991 to the newly created Marienhöhe Nonprofit Association for Biodynamic Farming, Cultural Initiative, and Rural Social Therapy. At the same time, Marienhöhe residents created a new Farming Association to assume responsibility for day-to-day business matters. Its nonprofit bylaws state that Marienhöhe cannot be sold and that it must be biodynamically farmed. The Farming Association assumes financial liability and helps insulate the community and its land from possible economic disaster.

Finally, in the 1990s, Marienhöhe farmers were able to pick up and continue the experiment of the late '20s and early '30s with an openness and freedom not possible during the intervening decades. Still, the sudden annexation to western society was a bit much for some who moved to Marienhöhe for its peace and quiet, and its distance from political hierarchies and regulations. For decades Marienhöhe

They struggled with inadequate or failing equipment and hunger as a constant threat.



MICHAEL LAFOND

Over the decades Marienhöhe farmers have transformed an ailing landscape into a healthy one.

work planning meeting, and occasional gatherings of the nonprofit association: Here the entire community handles larger issues, such as current construction projects and significant social and financial questions.

Droughts of recent years have sent many area farms into severe debt or bankruptcy; however, Marienhöhe has fared relatively well thanks to a broad diversification of crops, and the extra energy its

farmers expected to see only good friends coming up the small dirt road; some were overwhelmed with all of the attention they began to receive. In the 1990s the peaceful enclave once again became a destination, not only for Anthroposophic individuals and groups, but also for journalists and tourists who began peering into the community's doors and windows on a regular basis.

The vision guiding Marienhöhe today can still largely be credited to Rudolf Steiner and Erhard Bartsch and their insights in the 1920s. Nowadays, however, no single dynamic person leads the farm, and no one clear vision is followed. People now living and working at Marienhöhe are there for various reasons, and only loosely sharing a common ground of Biodynamics and Anthroposophy.

The community's permanent residents are joined by guests staying anywhere from a few days to a year, including younger interns and apprentices. Marienhöhe's members are all paid the same small allowance each month. While long work days begin with a regular morning meeting for a discussion of the day's tasks, other meetings include a weekly

farmers take to observe and respond to changing climate and soil conditions. People at Marienhöhe are convinced that they continue to weather the challenges thanks to their Biodynamic methods, such as the special preparations added to the fields on a regular basis.

Coming years will bring further challenges; for example, ever-greater competition from international agribusiness networks, and ever-lower prices for food products. Still, Marienhöhe farmers have a good foundation to build on and they've always known they were in it for the long haul. Over the decades they've transformed an ailing landscape into a healthy one and have created an attractive environment both for the older generation and the children now playing happily in its courtyards and fields. Ω

Michael LaFond, a longtime community activist, social ecologist, and sometime artist, lives in Berlin, Germany. He recently completed his Ph.D. on sustainable local communities at the University of Washington in Seattle. He can be contacted at binerlin@zedat.fu-berlin.de.

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

IN THE 1920S THE AUSTRIAN RUDOLF STEINER INTRODUCED THE principles of Biodynamic agriculture, which, along with Waldorf schools and Camphill communities, is an expression of Steiner-based Anthroposophy, itself an integrated spiritual and scientific overview of nature and the humanities. Biodynamics, also known as "Demeter" farming methods (after the goddess of fertility), aims to heal and restore the natural environment as well as produce an exceptionally high quality of food. Biodynamic farmers work with the movements of the moon and planets in addition to the energy of the Earth when planning sowing and harvesting times, and add special "Biodynamic preparations" (combinations of uniquely processed herbs, animal manure, and mineral substances) and compost to their

soils and plants, in order to build humus and improve soil and plant vitality.

Biodynamics intentionally develops both ecological and social communities. Local energy, water, and other systems are understood to be organic and not just mechanical. The farm community itself, in combination with local resources, is altogether seen as an organically developing, living organism, influenced by both material resources and dynamic life forces. Biodynamic farming emphasizes that humans bring cultural aspects of identity and form to the local, natural systems of plants, animals, and minerals. Through farming and other local activities, people make use of the potential energies of a place, developing cultural landscapes and in the end producing food and culture.

For more information: www.demeter.net; www.demeter-usa.org; www.biodynamics.com. —M.L.



Exuberant members of 100 Mile House in the days before the reorganization following Martin Exeter's death.

THE HARD ROAD TO ACCOUNTABILITY

BY ANNE BLANEY

THIS MY PERSONAL STORY about making spirituality accountable, as well as the story of my life, my communal family, and my home.

In 1974 my young daughter and I joined a spiritual program called Emissaries of Divine Light, or EDL, which included communal living as part of its operation. EDL's mission is to "carry forward a work of spiritual regeneration of mankind." Its founder, Lloyd Meeker, who wrote and taught under the name of Uranda, presented a re-articulation of Christianity, emphasized that spiritual transmutation was not only possible, but essential for all mankind.

A worldwide organization, EDL had rural communities in various countries plus numerous smaller, city communal homes where members lived this philosophy. Although it was optional, most members shared in a collective economic base, receiving a monthly stipend, with most money going to the organization both locally and internationally.

Initially there were two major communities, Sunrise Ranch in Colorado, and 100 Mile House in British Columbia. Sunrise was founded in 1945, and took shape under Uranda's charismatic leadership. Martin Exeter, a titled British lord, founded the 100 Mile House Emissary community in the late 1940s. After Uranda died in 1954, Martin assumed the leader's mantle and stewarded the development of both communities, continuing as EDL's spiritual leader until his death in 1988. Martin's style was authoritative and attractive, disciplined and decisive, pragmatic and practical. The Emissary ranks grew extensively during his leadership. Twelve communities were established around the world, and hundreds of people came from other alternative lifestyles to join the Emissaries.

After joining EDL I lived for four years in an Emissary communal home in Toronto, Ontario. I loved the spiritual strength of this well-established

network, the rich teachings of Uranda, and the weekly spiritual talks by Martin, in whom I found a kindred spirit. I also found a close-knit community for my daughter and me, where I worked as home staff. Other members worked in a variety of jobs outside the home, and we pooled our income. We offered our philosophy and way of life through public gatherings, spending time with people, and by sharing a vibrational healing service called “attunement.”

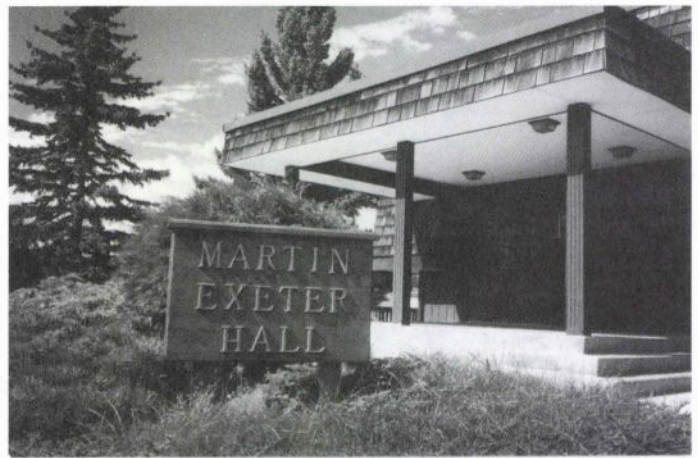
Emissary members were basically middle class, drawn to the inspirational philosophy. Many lived communally, but not out of preference as much as a sense of mission. Living in the Ontario group required considerable adjustment on my part. Naturally, we all came with various kinds of immaturities, and, unfortunately, many of us didn’t address them very well. At the time, overemphasis by many of one Emissary philosophy—seeing personal issues as a lesser part of a more important cosmic mission—led to our avoiding personal work. In the process, we were also neglecting another core Emissary philosophy: that whenever individual immaturity and dysfunction arise within the context of conscious spiritual living, they need to be acknowledged, faced, and released.

The other new members and I agreed that the Emissary beliefs rang true, and we helped each other through our culture shock. Although there was individual opportunity to do so, many people failed to address dysfunctional patterns. Often we rationalized that the importance of the true work precluded attention to the more personal matters and needs. Some simply took shelter in the temporary security and comfort of communal homes and community; others understood and embraced the challenge of ongoing personal purification and renewal.

In spite of the lifestyle compromises, I found it worthwhile because I could pursue a spiritual direction

RIGHT: Martin Exeter was revered by many Emissaries as a gifted spiritual leader. The meeting facilities named in his honor at 100 Mile House.

BELOW: Most community tasks were assigned along traditional gender roles, but not always.



within a safe setting for my daughter. Over time EDL leaders encouraged me into leadership, and I eventually became the female leader for Emissaries in Toronto.

An intimate home setting was a high priority for Emissary communities, both for the spiritual well-being of residents and for those who were attracted to us. A sense of home facilitated healing and spiritual growth. We experienced ourselves as a global family, one where, as in one’s biological family, we weren’t always friends but were undeniably and intimately connected. Martin Exeter, through twice-weekly addresses, was for many a strong father figure: masculine, self-contained, disciplined, and visionary. Born an aristocrat, Martin was a quiet person who earned my respect by his

intelligent, unswerving attention to spirituality. His laughter could fill a room. I was very fond of him.

One of Martin’s themes was personal responsibility, but I could see a gap between theory and practice in many of us. The developmental chasm between learning to obey and learning to lead is often a difficult one to bridge, and because obedience is part of spiritual discipline, EDL

The Emissaries expected obedience, and the organization ran smoothly.

expected obedience, and the organization ran smoothly. A healthy subculture of individuality and friendship flourished, although at times it felt that individual attempts to take on personal responsibility were hindered by the hierarchical structure. I strongly believed that individuals could know power through their spiritual awareness, organizational structure being secondary to one's personal power. As is often the case in collectives, it took real strength of character to maintain one's individuality. I accepted that challenge.

In 1981 my daughter and I moved to the larger Emissary community at 100 Mile House, British Columbia, the home of our leader, Martin Exeter. There I found members similar to me: young and interested in spirituality.

Perched on the edge of the town of 100 Mile House, of which Martin was the main pioneer and landowner, our community was a small village of individual homes with about 125 people of all ages, with some founding members still resident. There were large organic vegetable gardens, barns, poultry, beef and dairy cows, and goats. The large communal kitchen, dining room, and chapel were the hub of activity. As in Ontario, residents either worked at home or were employed in Emissary and other businesses. Most received a stipend.

Our hierarchical governance stemmed from our spiritual design of leadership. Management, and the governing bodies that provided leadership in day-to-day affairs, derived from a template of leadership that had evolved over many years around Martin's spiritual direction. Martin was unquestionably at the top, followed by men who were his spiritual assistants. Spiritual leadership was designed to be based on spiritual stature, though various peculiarities and immaturities were also apparent. On one hand, leadership followed bloodlines through Martin's son,

Michael, and included members of Martin's immediate family. On the other hand, numerous men and women drawn to the community became primary figures in the core of the community and within the governing body of EDL worldwide.

Because participating in any power structure wasn't too appealing after my earlier leadership stint in Toronto, I chose positions such as caring for the children so that I could focus on being a mother. I made childcare my

Where personal issues were suppressed, tension swirled beneath the surface.

career, with many children passing through my care. I also entered into relationships and was thriving personally, but wondered if I was "copping out" from leadership responsibilities. I was content with my life though aware of that discrepancy.

In Emissary leadership culture, women played important roles, but almost always as supportive to male "points of focus," as we called them. Martin was always accompanied by two powerful women, his wife and his secretary. These women provided leadership to women, but women always deferred to the males' positions. Likewise, work roles were based on the traditional male/female roles, with some exceptions: A few men cooked or cared for the children. This was different from the larger cultural trend towards equality of the genders, and this part of the Emissary culture was without doubt at odds with the rest of society. There was discomfort about it, particularly among the younger members.

In many ways women carried the bulk of responsibility for communities—on committees, heads of departments, and so on—and they proved tenacious in their duties. At home the women held power in their

more traditional roles. However, unrecognized as equals, some women leaders tended to covertly dominate where they could.

Particularly in the larger communities, women developed their own subculture. At 100 Mile House the friendships between the women were close, even across the generations, and we shared in occasions that I still remember as exceptional, such as ceremonies around life passages.

In work and community settings I

observed many of the same the rivalries and competitiveness that would be present in a small town. As what also happens in small communities where everybody knows everyone very well, there was a good deal of gossip, though clear communication, communion, and community were encouraged. I believe the gossip was trying to serve a few purposes: attempting to solve myriad interpersonal complexities and conflicts that arose; letting off steam from the pressure of a lifestyle that demanded spiritual growth; or relieving the pressure from the close community life.

Often this communication was circular, self-defeating, and inept. Two tendencies prevailed: denying one's negative or critical reactions, including reactions to the power structure, as being one's own spiritual immaturity; and ignoring (rather than dealing with) any behaviour we considered inappropriate. Where personal issues were suppressed, tension swirled beneath the surface. What was available were the spiritual teachings, advice, and counseling that emphasized the need to assume an identity that transcends and deals with issues from that perspective. For some this was either not possible, they were not

ready and willing, or they were not fully aware that there was an option.

Sometimes someone else's action or words required a strong response, and sometimes that strong response was not heard. At times it seemed futile to challenge the power structure because that meant challenging Martin's leadership. Martin was so respected and influential that few ever questioned his directives, leaving him, it appeared, accountable only to God. The unconscious extension of this

The changes began subtly.

pattern throughout the organization made it difficult to develop healthy channels for constructive criticism. Following the adage "Judge not" can make people either deaf or silent—or cause them to learn discernment—and this is both a choice and a dilemma that has to be faced by each individual. Sometimes the results of facing this dilemma were satisfactory; sometimes they were not. Where individual choices are understood as "accountable only to God," clear communication is sacrificed.

Meanwhile, everyday life was full. Three daily meals were prepared for the community, dishes washed, rooms cleaned, cows milked, repairs and renovations done, and children cared for. As well, there were Martin's talks to be transcribed, classes offered to visitors from all over the world, choir and orchestral practices and, when I could fit it in, my own social life. Within our highly structured life, we still had room to move. We initiated study groups, aerobic classes, and skiing. Involvement in the adjacent village was possible, if we wanted.

Sexuality, being called "the highest form of worship," was intrinsic to spirituality in Emissary philosophy. Compared to larger society, we had liberal attitudes: some open marriages, a modest open-mindedness towards homosexuality, and open

communication about sex. Our overall pattern, however, was serial monogamy, traditional marriages, and heterosexuality. Ideally, sexual relationships were undertaken after consulting with an Emissary leader, although this didn't always happen and advice wasn't always followed.

There were occasions when the cloudiness around power transgressed into sexual misconduct. Some were wounded by such occurrences, while many were unaware they had

occurred. After initially receiving "advice" from leaders, I chose to incorporate the

spiritual component into my sexuality, but to proceed at my own discretion. As a group, we Emissaries were scrutinized by onlookers so we took care to be discreet. So, while unmarried couples would sleep together, there was a lot of "night travel." Eventually, singles objected to this secrecy and began living together openly.

There were about 20 children in the group. Raising a child in a communal setting is both a blessing and a perilous journey. I insisted on my daughter and me having our own personal circle of friends where we could talk freely, where there was the space to name inconsistencies in the community, react, and develop coping strategies. Martin's theme of personal responsibility inspired me in my role as a mother. Significant men entered my life and acted as father figures to my daughter, while other children became her siblings. I was at home in this active, communal world. Spiritually, I had found my place. I had chosen to participate in a unique social experiment, and I was delighted to continually grow as a result.

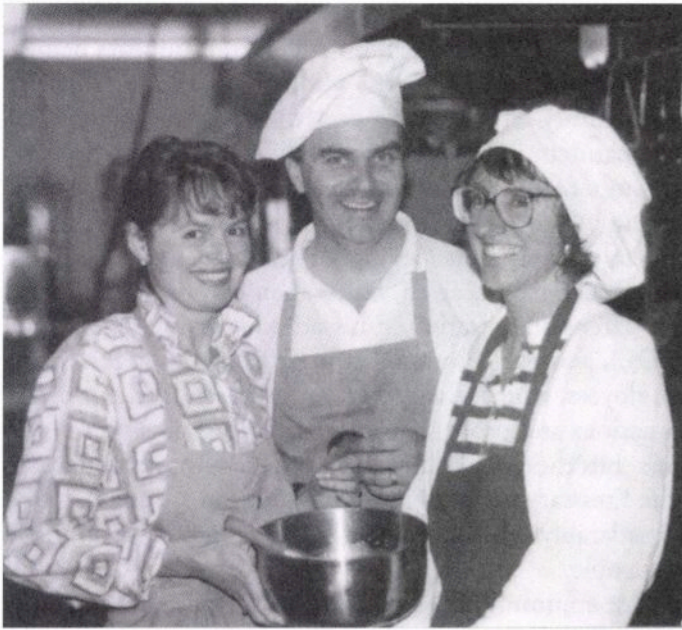
Martin Exeter died in 1988. Because death and grieving were not yet in our vocabulary, there was no particular understanding about what that might mean. Like youngsters with illusions of immortality, essentially we denied anything had

changed. Personally, I suspected that everything had changed, and I anticipated that there would be a new, albeit rough, cycle ahead. But outwardly it was business as usual with Michael Exeter, Martin's son, taking his father's place.

The changes began subtly. In response to the growing demand from the younger members that we reach out further into the larger world, the weekly spiritual services became more eclectic. Yet something was lacking, and interest in them waned. Some people attempted to articulate these lacks, but their input didn't find ready acceptance. Martin had never brooked contention with the spiritual direction he led, and he held the reins of the program and its original intention tightly. Now, 11 years after his death, I have come to believe that Martin's steadfastness carried more wisdom than I understood at the time.

Our collective refusal to respond to change was a life-threatening blow to the heart of our organization. It was a shock when people began to tire of communality, and began to think of their financial futures. In our community, those working off the property wanted to keep their salaries while those at home wanted their contributions to be equally respected. I supported the "user-pays" system, believing that such a change was inevitable, given the real demands for autonomy. Even though this change could undermine our communal spirit, it was a gamble which we could not avoid. Perhaps losing Martin had led to a loss of confidence in our collective project, or maybe times were just a-changing?

In retrospect, I now believe that what was required of the spiritual leadership was to pause, to reiterate, to reestablish the decades-old purpose. Such a choice would have been understandably difficult to carry out in the face of demands for change, while at the same time people were themselves dealing with change at



After Martin Exeter died, many people at 100 Mile House began taking meals at home. Author Anne Blaney, right, when most people ate in the community dining room.

the deepest levels. The new processes that were being introduced to assist in our affairs needed to be closely resonant with and wisely integrated into the original Emissary vision if the program were to succeed. We often missed that step of careful integration.

This change in priorities was viewed with suspicion instead of being incorporated into a new value system. Now the spell was broken. People moved away, with awkwardness on both sides; 20-year friendships ended in grief. There was no overview that we were so used to hearing from Martin. We had to make it make sense, ourselves! Many members felt abandoned but couldn't admit it. It was like a number of marriages dissolving all at once. With the fuzziness of accountability, it was difficult to know whom to blame, and it was painful to face one's own compliance with a system now revealing its flaws.

Responding to our dilemma, some members sought help by exploring psychological tools. Individually and in groups, we at last began the arduous process of resolving buried issues

and dealing with our present grief. Not everyone was interested, and understandably, many chose to leave and to salvage their personal lives. A new vocabulary was born within the Emissaries, including the word "anger." As there had been no preparation for this transition, our leadership struggled in its efforts to hold the community together.

As we gradually and painfully brought our truths into the picture, leadership began to look very different, being no longer one person, but many persons. I, along with others who stepped forward, played an increasing role in this process. I was on the Provincial Board of Directors where we wrestled with emergency measures. Ironically, our "great organization" lacked exactly that—organization! We were challenged to rebuild with true accountability and with leadership based on spiritual discernment and a variety of fledgling skills. At times, our community meetings were filled with anger and confusion, so we employed instructors to teach us consensus decision making. As the income for our self-sustaining economy disappeared, we scrambled for solutions, and the user-pays paradigm was the only resort. We hired a General Manager who introduced a plan that essentially laid off most of our volunteer, stipend-paid staff. Those leaving were given a period of grace to find jobs, facing reentry to the employment market, often after decades of working within the Emissaries. They showed resourcefulness, often

borrowing from relatives so they could move on. Each month brought a new wave of departures, while our elected governing body was repeatedly demoralized by further loss. There was a high burnout rate. I was running our communal kitchen and doing my part to sustain morale in what was still my home. It was a rocky time!

One of my hardest choices was to assume authority to do something about the downward spin which was enveloping us. Did I even want to? It was difficult to not judge what others were deciding for their lives, but to do what I needed to do, and to understand what had happened. Perhaps because what was at stake was my daughter's and my home, or because I deplore a victim's stance and didn't want to throw away 20 years of my life, or because I still wanted to accomplish something with a group of people, and here they were, or what was left of them, I decided to stay and see it through. Ω

That's not the end of the story ... please see next page.

Anne Blaney, a manager at 100 Mile House community in British Columbia, has lived in Emissary communities for 25 years.

Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.

An early version of this article first appeared in Shared Visions, Shared Lives. In recent years, Anne has had opportunity to reconsider the events and their implications, and feels that the older version is inaccurate and outdated. This version of the article has been revised to incorporate some of her recent thinking.

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More Change ... 100 Mile House & the Emissaries Today

BY ANNE BLANEY



Author Anne Blaney, in her days as caregiver for children. Now she's an administrator at 100 Mile House, and a Trustee of the Emissary organization internationally.

TODAY THE EMISSARIES ARE DRASTICALLY DIFFERENT than in 1988, with all communities being much smaller. Most who left the 100 Mile House Community remain disconnected from our organization, but maintain friendships with individual members. This schism remains uncomfortably unresolved to me.

Our 100 Mile Community now operates on a market system with residents having jobs and paying for community services received, rather than working to support our parent organization, Emissaries of Divine Light (EDL), and our community. Some residents are Emissary employees, while others work in town. EDL relies on donations and profits generated from business endeavors, but these are still insufficient, so cutbacks continue. The Emissary network province-wide has shrunk considerably, while our 100 Mile Community is now 50 people.

Our community is still economically, legally, and spiritually linked to the larger Emissary organization, which has itself weathered a major transformation. I believe this link holds an essential clue to the continuing viability of this local community. Being actively part of the international program and with its spiritual leadership is proving to be a real means of reconnecting with the Emissary purpose for the 100 Mile community. Likewise the connection with our sister community, Sunrise Ranch, offers an opportunity for both communities to build cohesion. To that end I ran as a Trustee for the International Emissaries and am currently beginning my second term.

The international program has made considerable progress in consolidating the overall organization by revitalizing its original purpose. We have blended elements of the old—our 67-year legacy—with the new—our organizational expertise and technology. Our weekly spiritual services are now teleconferenced, often internationally. These connections, useful in deepening spiritual experience, have rejuvenated our 100 Mile Community.

Our International Congress meets twice yearly at our various communities in the US and Canada, and other special gatherings are either connected to a Congress or convened at other times during the year. Our educational program, now changed, is active internationally. The Attunement Guild continues to offer training to many people. Recently the Emissaries received numerous enquiries as a result of our being mentioned by Neale Donald Walsch in his book, *Conversations with God, Book Three*.

In British Columbia the Board of Directors has hired an Executive Director who employs staff like myself as managers at 100 Mile Community, and we operate a conference and retreat center in the Emissary facilities. Those who live in our community rent their houses from EDL. Food is no longer prepared by volunteer members,

but by members who are hired. Mostly it is our seniors who use this food service. Most residents choose to eat in their homes—something new for people who have eaten communally for 20 years. We also have spontaneous potlucks, or sometimes someone simply cooks and invites company. There is a growing desire to eat together more regularly.

For awhile after Martin's death we resembled a neighborhood more than a spiritual community, but over the last three years our previous communal bonding has resurfaced. I believe this is because we have cared for our "spiritual core," as some of us have stepped forward and offered to specifically focus on and be responsible for our weekly spiritual services. Because we are now paying more attention to how we can share our spiritual roots, our substantial experience, and our friendship, many have responded, generating a natural network of friends with this same interest within and beyond the community.

With a renewed confidence, we are viewing our long-standing friendships in an appreciative way, and have welcomed new people to the community, mostly families. Our flower gardens, which had declined for a time, have been revitalized; we've completed major painting of buildings; we're using the barns for chickens; two horses are about to arrive; and we planted our first communal garden this year in addition to the individual family plots—all organic of course. We meet regularly to discuss and plan for emergency preparedness, families with children plan dinner and movie nights, and some of our seniors volunteer at the front desk. Complementary spiritual practices are happening too, such as regular meditation sittings and nearby sweat lodge opportunities.

Although we haven't used it much, an ethics team is available to deal with conflict. Many members have received ethics training over the years. Trained facilitators are sometimes used for conflict resolution, usually in employment situations. I know the training I received has assisted me in convening various meetings in the community. But largely these modalities are seen as adjuncts to our primary spiritual interest.

After Martin's passing, and up until about four years ago, I went through many dark times of wondering whether the spiritual compulsion that drew me to this spiritual teaching and to living in community was going to remain the central focus in my life through the Emissaries. Now, because of the ongoing revitalization of our whole organization and my own desire to place spirit at the center, that question has been answered. I had been thirsty in the middle of an ocean of opportunity! Our worldwide spiritual and organizational resources are present and available; we see both as two aspects of one thing. This realization simply had to be seen anew, in

spite of the dramatic changes we experienced, both personally and collectively. Taking the long view, my individual spiritual hunger outweighed momentary prevailing sentiments that it was all over. And I found to my joy that I was not alone.

The experiences of the Emissary network are not unique. Many people have experienced changes far more difficult than ours. I've learned that it is best to live in spiritual intentional community only for the highest of

I had been thirsty in the middle of an ocean of opportunity!

reasons. Community is empty when there is no passionate purpose or active vision—the overriding reason for community in the first place. There must be a reason that offers inspiration when living in community feels futile. When that purpose is present, and it involves offering service, community may then offer many gifts in return for the gifts we each offer community.

I believe change is part and parcel of life. Hopefully our experience identifies that which remains changeless in the midst of change. And if the Y2K phenomenon materializes as widely predicted, all of us will face changes in our usual comfortable lifestyles very soon, the ability to deal easily with change will be imperative. As individuals and a network of communities, the Emissaries have had a dramatic head start! Change is everywhere, and we can be sure there is plenty more to come. Ω

Author Anne Blaney, now a Trustee of the International Emissaries, wrote this update in October 1999. For more information about The Emissaries, visit the Web site, www.emissaries.org.



I ASKED SOME OF MY FAVORITE community activists what changes they predict, envision, or hope for in communities over the next 100 years.

Some believe more will be attracted to communities because they're so ... juicy.

FUTURE VISIONS

Community Life in the 21st Century

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

"ON A LONG ROAD TRIP, I ENDED up staying at a household that seemed to me to point the way to the future," recounts Stephen Gaskin, founder of The Farm community in Tennessee.

"The crew of this one-story tract house included a 41-year-old entrepreneur who produced concerts and music tours, a young couple in their thirties, a few floaters who seemed to live on the couch and in the spare rooms, and a man and a woman who worked in the daytime downstairs in the office complex with multiple computers and telephones and work stations. Six cars and two vans with trailers were parked out front.

"There was a hot tub, a stereo, nice furnishings. It would have been a complete hippie scene except that no one dressed like a hippie and everyone had nice cars and clothes. It reminded me of Alvin Toffler's book *The Third Wave*. These people were held together by their mutual business interests and their mutual friendship and love of partying. Everyone in the house had their own cell phone and they worked all day long.

"Snacking, arranging hotels and transportation, booking tours, sending out for food, flirting, calling newspapers and radio stations,



fielding calls from bands on the road, hot-tubbing, and deciding where to go out for the evening took up all the time without boredom.

"I saw right away that if I was going to hang out with these people, I had to participate. If no one else got the phone, I had to answer and take and deliver correct messages. If someone's cell phone was ringing, I had to take it to the right person. Anyone who came to visit had to do the same thing. Furthermore, when my door was knocked on at one in the morning I was expected to be ready (I was) to get up and get in the hot tub with the two girls who had met my wife and wanted to talk about midwifery.

"I thought these guys and gals were great. Their lives, their fun, their work, and their living were a seamless whole. They lived well, large, and kindly. They were more efficient than a larger and more formal company because they were so tight and friendly with each other. I thought they were a commune of the future."

"I SEE AN EVOLUTION TOWARDS more community—a growth—the more deliberate the better. The more deliberate, the more the trend will stick," observes Chuck Durrett, who with fellow architect Kathryn McCamant introduced the concept of cohousing communities to North America in 1988 with their book *Cohousing* (Ten Speed Press).

"If you believe, like I do, that as a species our most basic responsibility is to create a viable society, then there is no doubt that community is key—a viable society where we rec-

ognize each other's needs.

"The common denominator of the thousands of people that I know who live in cohousing, for example, is that these folks believe that it's more readily possible to live lighter on the planet if they cooperate with their neighbors, and their lives are easier, more economical, more interesting, and more fun."

"IT'S ALL GOING TO BE ABOUT coming home—home to family, friends, and community," notes Mary Schoen Clark, founder of the Mid-America Housing Partnership in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, which creates affordable housing and housing co-ops. "It will be a revival of sorts, not just in intentional communities, but of the essence of community found in the concept of neighborliness and sense of place."

Some feel an increasingly untenable way of life will drive more of us to community ... and to community neighborhoods.

SO SAYS DON LINDEMANN, EDITOR of *Cohousing* magazine. "A heightened awareness of the destructive and alienating effects of our consumer culture will finally lead to a social and cultural sea change, a widespread understanding that we must come together in our local communities to assure a viable future for ourselves. Our atomistic and fragmented social universe will finally coalesce into a network of self-governing but interdependent and mutually cooperative neighborhoods ranging in scale from a few dozen to a few hundred residents. These will be neighborhoods

They lived well, large, and kindly.

where a sense of belonging and social responsibility is reinforced by abundant opportunities to interact, face to face, with people who share, literally, some common ground.

"After a decade or two in which we further test the limits of disembodied 'virtual experience' through computer technology, most of us will finally realize that there is no substitute for old-fashioned communication, mutual support, and the ever-deepening relationships that arise among people who share space and common problems. This will lead to ever-greater interest in cohousing and other housing innovations, but in addition we will have a vast network of high-tech but down-home, human-scaled and locally controlled community centers that provide a kind of 'common house' for neighbors who do not actually live in a dwelling configuration with classic cohousing-type features. (After all, most of the housing that will exist in the year 2025 has already been built.) These community centers, offering food, music, conviviality, and access to information in many forms, will draw upon the wisdom of elders, the energy and idealism of youth, and the intellectual and spiritual resources of all the residents in the area. Computer technology, instead of providing a television-like distraction and soporific, will provide a foundation and rich tool set for group-based



problem analysis, brainstorming, decision making, and communication with other networks in a way that will challenge the media monopolies, reinvigorate our democracy, and link us with citizen groups around the world.”

“THE YEARS JUST AHEAD WHICH our grandchildren will inhabit will certainly be a far different landscape than the one in which we grew up,” observes Albert Bates, director of the Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm. “Each day an additional 214,000 people parachute onto the planet somewhere. That’s ten cities the size of Socrates’ Athens. In 1998 we added enough new people to repopulate a country the size of Germany, or to build 10 new megacities in China. As they grow up these 80 million new people will add 80 million people’s worth of pollution and consume 80 million people’s supply of natural resources. Once you realize that there is no escaping, and that pretty darn soon we have to begin living like there *will* be a tomorrow (or there won’t), you start to seriously consider your personal lifestyle, and the patterns of living in your immediate community. Ecotopia starts at home.

“I expect there isn’t a whole lot I can do to prepare my grandchildren, other than hope they learn to be honest and compassionate with their fellow beings. It will take a whole lot of that honesty and compassion to get through what the next century promises to bring. The strongest thing experimental eco-community has going for it is not utopian architecture or formal structures of mem-

bership and contracts, but the invisible architecture of human kindness and willingness to go beyond the consciousness you arrived with. Community is about purposeful, personal co-evolution. And in that, there is a lot of hope.”

“THE KEY TO OUR SPECIES’ SURVIVAL is *cultural synergy*, a condition in which the values we pursue tend to benefit, rather than undermine, the value pursuits of others,” predicts Mike Cummings, community scholar and professor of political science at the University of Colorado at Denver. “Intentional communities can and will help us learn to synergize, rather than perish, in the 21st century. Synergistic communitarians will encourage people to pursue values—like humor, knowledge, craftsmanship, beauty, art, friendship, family, and simple daily pleasures—whose achievement by one person increases, rather than decreases, the likelihood of their achievement by others. Synergistic communitarians will look better and better to people disturbed by the pathologies of lifestyles that exploit the Earth while dividing society into a few winners and many losers.”

Some see community—and networks of communities—as ecological and economic models, as schools for living.

“IMAGINE AN INTERNATIONAL consortium of educational programs—a ‘communiversity’—that provides direct experiences with the concepts, skills, and tools of sustainable living,” suggests Daniel

Greenberg, an intentional community educator and member of Sirius community. “Instead of sitting in a classroom, students will help design and build ecological structures, learn effective methods of decision making and conflict resolution, and work to enhance the health of wider communities and ecosystems.

“Imagine a network of research, development, and demonstration sites within many different sustainable communities. Possible projects within this network might include developing indicators of sustainability such as the ‘ecological footprint’ or the Genuine Progress Indicator; researching physical technologies such as solar greenhouses, ecological waste water treatment, and solar hot water systems; or advancing our more ‘social technologies’ such as consensus and mediation. Such a network will allow us to build a database of ‘best practices’ and to share our wisdom with each other and the broader public.”

This vision is not fantasy, Dan reports, as many of these projects are already underway and thriving. “Through developing such educational programs and networks, I believe that communities in the next century will serve as microcosms and foundations from which we can learn about and help develop truly restorative and sustainable societies.”

Working models for sustainable living ...



PAT THERRIEN, WHO DEVELOPS and promotes small-scale recycling and environmental businesses for communities in the Southeast also envisions “a vast interconnected network of diverse communities becoming working models for sustainable living.”

“I see waste-water systems which provide fuel for lighting and heating, nutrients for indoor gardens, and clean water at the end. I see solar energy systems designed into the dwellings, producing power without polluting the planet, even when they are made. I see vehicles carrying people and materials from place to place without producing pollution—as they drive, when they are made, or when they are dismantled. I see communitarians joyfully moving towards their highest and best selves with the support and encouragement of those around them.”

“COMMUNITIES WILL PROVIDE THE experiential laboratories in which to develop urgently needed models for necessary, very basic changes in societal, educational, and possibly medical structures as we now know them,” declares Mildred Gordon, founder of Ganas Community and the Foundation for Feedback Learning. “Hopefully, the range of future community political designs will include direct participatory democracy, and everything else will be decided from there. In the future, the networking of existing communities that has already begun will be carried much further so that whatever is developed any place will be available every place. Practical matters such as purchasing, marketing, banking,

public relations, to name a few, will be dealt with cooperatively instead of individually within and between as many intentional communities as possible.”

“IN THE 21ST CENTURY, COMMUNITY living will become more the norm than the exception,” asserts Thomas H. Greco, Jr., community economist and author of *New Money for Healthy Communities*, “with urban and rural ecovillages, in which there is wide diversity, federated in powerful economic and political networks, regionally and nationally. Out of the lessons of communal experiments of the past, coupled with the intensifying stresses of the dominant paradigm, will come sustainable, cooperative lifestyles in which we’ll see a better balance between privacy and autonomy, on the one hand, and community involvement and cooperation, on the other. This will help people to transcend the alienation of the industrial culture and realize the power, joy, and abundance inherent in partnership.

“Internal village economies will be characterized by gift-giving, sharing, common ownership, and work-credit accounting, while exchanges between communities will be more formal and reciprocal. Community federations will work out more healthy patterns of production and distribution. They will establish mutual credit systems to balance trade between communities and to enable individuals who live in different communities to trade among themselves.

“In the wider society, as more people discover the advantages of mutual

Urban and rural ecovillages, federated in powerful economic and political networks ...

credit, they will establish their own community currencies and will no longer be in thrall to money and the banking ‘priesthood.’ The nature and role of money will be greatly changed. Savings and investment agreements will also change drastically, with the use of interest-bearing debt giving way to shared ownership (equity). As power is decentralized and widely shared, society will achieve greater levels of social justice and economic equity.”

Others believe that communities will primarily model social sustainability.

“CONTINUING RAPID CHANGES IN technology and environmental circumstances (population explosion, the Internet, biotechnology, and who knows what else) will make the world of 2050 as different from ours as ours is from the Middle Ages,” predicts Jeff Grossberg, longtime communitarian and nonprofit fundraiser. “In the midst of such societal overhaul, what will remain is the need for and the ability of human beings to share their thoughts and feelings and to find ways to cooperate in order to manifest their visions. Intentional communities will focus largely on the processes that groups



employ not just to reach agreement, but to draw the greatest wisdom and involvement from their members. That ability will allow intentional communities to thrive in an increasingly competitive world and to exist on the leading edge of the ever-present deepening of human experience in the midst of what will be bewildering social, political, and environmental change.”

“WHAT I’M MOST HEARTENED BY as I indulge my fantasies about the next millennium is not the particular forms community takes but the way people relate to one another in them and the group synergy that results,” notes Carolyn Shaffer, co-author of *Creating Community Anywhere* (Tarcher/Putnam, 1995).

“I like to think that the skills we struggle so much with today—collaborative communication, conflict work, and decision making—will

become second nature, like playing scales is to a professional pianist. No longer will we spend precious meeting time laboriously trying to reach consensus on such weighty procedural matters as whether to take a ten-minute break now or a 30-minute one later. As we relax into the safe container of healthy group process, we’ll get much more real with one another. If something bugs us that we figure is group business, we’ll bring it up right away before it has

COMMUNITIES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

by Tim Miller

THE 19TH CENTURY, SEEN BY MANY HISTORIANS AS THE HEYDAY of American communitarianism, saw the flourishing of both large individual communes and communal movements. In the 1850s, several thousand Shakers lived in nearly 20 villages, while hundreds of members lived in the Oneida Community near Oneida, New York, and the Amana Colonies in Iowa. Powerful charismatic community leaders held sway: for example, George Rapp of the Harmony Society, Frances Wright of Nashoba, and John Humphrey Noyes of Oneida. Community economies were often centralized, with just a few members controlling the purse strings. High commitment was typically expected of members, even if it was not always perfectly achieved.

But in the 20th century, communities have ranged from tiny to huge, with a much wider variety of lifestyle options, spiritual and ideological orientations, economic agreements, gender relations, even building styles. Here are some of the more important of the trends of communities in the 20th century.

Smaller size. Only rarely, as this century has worn on, have many hundreds of communitarians lived at one site, or have tight-knit networks of communities (after the fashion of the Shakers) flourished. Contemporary communi-

ties tend to have not more than a few dozen members, and most have been single-location enterprises.

New forms of government. As the 20th century progressed, governance by a single charismatic leader became the exception rather than the rule. Benevolent dictatorships have given way to democratic and bureaucratized structures, and the consensus process has provided a wholly new avenue for community decision making. Some communities have embraced anarchism as the central principle of non-government, and, improbably, some anarchist colonies endured and have made important contributions to the communal scene.

New economic arrangements. In the last century intentional communities typically had completely communal economies. One treasury received and disbursed all income; the group owned all assets; members didn’t control their own earnings or have private assets. In this century it has become common practice for community members to have private assets. Sharing no longer has to mean giving up everything.

New settlement patterns. The decentralization of the communal economy in the 20th century often extended to patterns of land ownership and housing. In many cases communities now rent or even deed land to families or individual community members. In contrast to the 1800s, many communitarians have their own homes and confine shared resources to community gardens and common spaces, community buildings, and communal tools.



time to fester. We'll actually enjoy drawing out the differences between ourselves and others, knowing that this will only deepen the wisdom within the group or community and help us collectively make and carry out better decisions in less time. Because our business gets done a lot faster, we'll have more time to play, dance, and make love and art.

"I love to imagine synergistic groups like this popping up in city offices, corporate conference rooms,

and in the halls of congress, as well as in neighborhood common spaces, church halls, and the living rooms of intentional communities. By the year 2050, this could be how most of our business gets taken care of. Think of all the time that leaves for writing poetry and hanging out together in cafes!"

Some see future community as embodying one's highest spiritual aspirations.

"I DREAM THAT MOST OF US become aware of and live in the larger community—the Oneness that is the wholeness within us," affirms Dorothy MacLean, cofounder of Findhorn community in Scotland. "When we reach that inner aspect of ourselves, we are part of every community that is, and we will be open to whatever happens to us and learn its lessons. We will love and serve that incredible exquisite wholeness that comprises us and every

Lowered commitment. Many 19th-century communities asked members for a commitment to lifetime membership. In the 20th century member turnover is viewed as a normal part of community life. Although highly stable communities, especially religious ones, have continued to exist, many more have seen residents come and go with considerable frequency. Mobility has risen in American life, and communities have felt it just as much as people in other living arrangements.

Lowered public profiles. Few communities in the 20th century have had the enormous visibility of the pristine Shaker villages or the idealistic Owenite communities. Our century's smaller communities with decentralized economies and land stewardship are inherently less visible than their prominent predecessors. Moreover, 20th-century communities have had a good reason not to try to attract attention: through many decades, notably the '30s, '40s and '50s, any collective undertaking was looked on by many as subversive. The American reaction to the Bolshevik victory in Russia chilled all kinds of cooperative efforts, and a series of demagogues, most famously Senator Joseph McCarthy, denounced as "un-American" any groups that supported the common good over private gain. More than a few 20th-century communities were directly shut down by the swirling social currents of the day.

Despite the agonies that the anti-communist crusade inflicted for several decades on cooperative ventures of all

sorts, intentional community had its greatest flowering ever in the last third of our century. A new generation of community-seekers, undeterred by Red-baiting or the American nuclear-family norm, caught the age-old vision of coming together for a more meaningful life. And again community took on new outward forms. Many post-1960 communes had open-door membership policies, flamboyant visual presence, and a penchant for unrestricted sexual encounters and mind-altering substances. Communal life changed in ways that would have shocked the communalists of a century earlier. But the communal style of the 1960s era has given way to yet newer models. As the century ends community is alive and well—and perhaps more diverse than ever: a mix of egalitarian communities, religious monasteries and ashrams, cohousing ventures, ecovillages, futurist dreamworks, centers for social activism, new age conference centers, therapeutic communities, and a few hardy survivors of the communal types of yore. The central vision—of people living in an enclave of cooperation rather than competition—remains unchanged. Ω

Tim Miller is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Kansas, and author of The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America (Syracuse University Press, 1998), and The 60s Communes (Syracuse University Press, 1999). (Reviewed on p. 68.)



community. As we dream and live in that beautiful truth, we will learn to trust what we are, what life is, and so change the world to what it truly is."

And some see this future as happening now.

"WE CAN DO IT, WE WILL DO IT, we *are* doing it!" So was the rallying cry of Margrit and Declan Kennedy of Lebensgarten ecovillage in Germany at Findhorn's 1995 "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities" conference. Hildur Jackson, cofounder of the Global Ecovillage Network, agrees.

"We are in the middle of a major cultural transformation, evidenced by 30-year old community experiments such as Auroville and Findhorn and the cohousing movement in Denmark, where I live, as well as the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka and the NAAM and Colufifa movements in Burkino Faso and Senegal respectively.

"In a recent competition by the Danish Association of EcoVillages, 53 organizations described their vision of a sustainable settlement for the 21st Century: leaving the old industrial, consumer-oriented, institutionalized culture behind for a culture that is more fun, loving, healthy, participatory, organic, creative—and modest. At the Global Ecovillage Network's international office we have daily records of new initiatives worldwide, all following this same general vision.

"The greatest limitations to this future are laws, regulations, and financial institutions, which must

"We can do it, we will do it, we are doing it!"

see the first successful 'mainstream' ecovillages before they will be persuaded that these are good investments. Fortunately the mainstream ecovillage is close to a reality in several places."

And ... it's all up to us.

"THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE WE'LL see in communities in the next century, mostly through efforts at documentation and education, is that ordinary people will begin to understand that folks living in intentional communities are not all that different from everyone else, that their values and concerns spring from the same social fabric," says Geoph Kozeny, community networker/activist and "Peripatetic Communitarian."

"People will see that community members, like their counterparts in the mainstream, are passionately concerned about such things as creating safe neighborhoods; raising healthy, intelligent kids; living ecologically; finding satisfying, meaningful work that contributes to the common good; leading healthy robust lives; and learning what kind of environments will nurture and inspire them in their elder years.

"It may take five years or a hundred for people to go from seeing intentional communities as weird and dangerous aberrations to seeing them as cultural laboratories work-

ing on important social issues and coming up with innovations that could and should be borrowed from. The more people get involved, the sooner it will happen. Help make it so!"

"I FEEL THAT OVER THE NEXT HUNDRED years we will live in community so intently that we can only liken it to the tribal life we had before cities," predicts physician, clown, and Geshundheit Institute founder Patch Adams. "I think we'll reach this by one of two routes. If we have great human and environmental disasters, we will grow communal afterward for survival and companionship. But I hope we reach it through intelligence, intention, and choice. My favorite daydreams are those of a future age of communal harmony, where our lust for money and power has been replaced by a lust for compassion and generosity. Anything is possible; it's all in our hands." Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.

Y2K & Change in the World

AS I WRITE THIS, SOME FOUR months from the millennium, some people are speculating that Y2K will show up as a middling bump in the road, and not as a disastrous disruption of life as we know it.

If so, that would come as a disappointment to a lot of folks. They had hoped that the computer glitch would do what the upheavals of the '60s and '70s had failed to do—take down the business and governmental structures that feel so oppressive to so many.

I don't think I share that view. Some of us seem ready for radical change, but I fear that most of the world is not—at least not yet. If all of our systems collapsed overnight, the same ugly value systems that pervaded the old world would likely prevail in the new.

Something like that has already taken place in the old Soviet Union. The disintegration of the old state socialism did not give birth to some enlightened and uplifted society, but to a horrifying takeover by the Russian Mafia and a particularly virulent strain of criminal capitalism. The lesson is that we should probably be careful about sinking the current ship before we know who will run its replacement.

But if cataclysm and revolution are out, what's in? How will the change we need come to pass?

Like all living things, we occasionally encounter forks in the evolutionary road—choices which determine whether we will adapt and go on, or stay stuck and die. One of those decision points now seems at hand. And if we are truly headed for a new consciousness, then the ideas, attitudes, and institutions that reflect the old consciousness must also either adapt or die.

Watching and waiting for that change can be painful and frustrating. From where we sit, the process seems interminably slow. That radical change must take place seems obvious and inevitable, and yet it's hard not to wonder when it ever will show up in the wider world.

And yet, from the perspective of that world, change is happening at a dizzying pace. Consider the Internet revolution, the global communications network which links all peoples, the impact of the feminine on the culture, the rise of non-governmental organizations as a kind of planetary government-in-waiting, the first evidence of the emergence of ecology as a basic business strategy. The signs of a shifted



Terry O'Keefe is a writer, and a member of the FIC Board. He also chairs the FIC-affiliated Community Business Development Group.

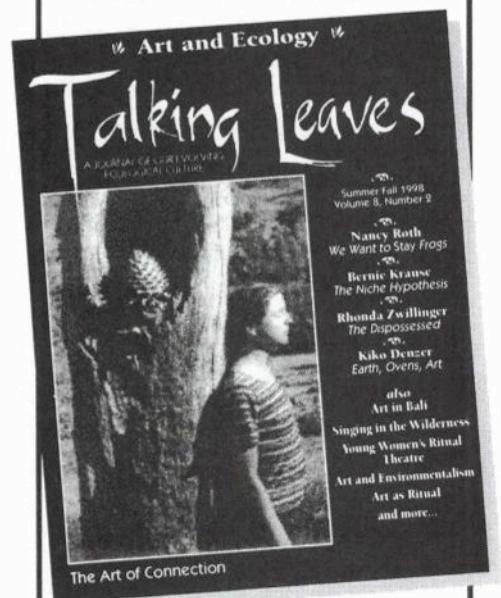
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consciousness are everywhere bleeding through the fabric of the old society.

Of course, there is always a lengthy time lag between the first faint hints of change and its adoption by the society-at-large. New movements are rarely visible on the radar screen of the wider culture. But when a movement finally swells to critical mass, it sweeps through the society like the ripples from a stone dropped into a pond.

Biologist Rupert Sheldrake offers an explanation for how this happens. He believes that every species carries with it a layer of shared consciousness, which he calls the "morphogenetic field." According to Sheldrake's theory, when a critical mass of individuals discover a new idea, this information gets transferred directly into the shared consciousness and therefore into the minds of every member of the group.

As in the legendary—some say apocryphal—tale of the "hundredth monkey," every individual is suddenly aware of the new information without ever having to "learn" it. Such a mechanism would explain the rapid rise of "beanie babies," the ubiquity of the latest teenage fashions, or our sudden collective addiction to SUVs.

And, on a somewhat higher level, the same mechanism would also account for

the shifts in the public consciousness around race and gender, the spread of democracy in the workplace, or the emergence of a whole new consciousness around economy, ecology, and social justice.

If Sheldrake is right, we may only be one person or a hundred people away from the critical mass that triggers mass change. Or we may in fact be already there.

So, perhaps the most important meaning of Y2K is not literal but metaphorical—that the old systems were not built to take us into the new century, and that the "machine" that worked so well in this millennium will run aground in the next. We can pay programmers to write new computer code, but only we can create new consciousness.

So how is all this connected to us as communitarians?

Well, most of the new consciousness that the world

needs is already alive and well in our communities—whether that is a deeper awareness and respect for the Earth, a desire to live more simply and justly, a commitment to honor diversity however it shows up in our lives, the search for peace and right relationship, or the knowing that all things are ultimately interdependent.

Y2K may stop the computers, but nothing in this world can stop that kind of consciousness. Ω

Perhaps the most important meaning of Y2K is not literal but metaphorical.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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3. Paid and/or requested circulation; paid or requested mail subscriptions	1800	1750
4. Total paid and/or requested circulation (2 + 3)	4775	4725
5. Total free distribution	0	0
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7. Copies not distributed; office use, leftovers, spoiled	85	228
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Martin S. Klaif, Business Manager 9-17-99

Community Meetings

Getting Off to a Good Start

HOW DO YOUR COMMUNITY meetings start? Do you hold hands, sing a song, or read a mission statement? These are some of the most time-honored ways to signal the beginning of an official gathering. While this type of opening ceremony is not strictly necessary, taking a few extra minutes to bring the group together offers a host of benefits, from bringing focus to the work ahead to getting to know each other better.

For some communitarians, the idea of reading a mission statement brings back unpleasant memories of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in school. Given that community living is considered an alternative lifestyle by many, it's not surprising that some who choose it may be suspicious of anything that seems mainstream. In addition, because communities are sometimes subject to the "cult" accusation, members may want to avoid activities that could look like "groupthink," however innocuous.

Yet communities also need unity. While taking steps to attain unity can take many different forms, communities need to be proactive in order to overcome the conditioning of an individualist culture.

This may be particularly true for groups who do not have a common spiritual path or clear goals to hold them together.

One approach to opening meetings that addresses both these needs is to consistently include an opening event, but let the form vary. The type of opening can be determined by the facilitator or the agenda planners, or the role of creating meeting openings

can be one that is rotated throughout the membership. The latter option may give those who don't normally volunteer to help run meetings a chance to shine and contribute in a new way. (If that role falls to you, and you plan to try out a new opening on the group, here's a tip. Think through each step of the opening and plan for efficient instructions to the group, and practice your delivery of the



Tree Bressen, consensus facilitator and teacher, lives at Du-má Community in Eugene, Oregon. Former outreach manager at Acorn Community (1994-99) and delegate to the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, she is currently a board member of the FIC. Questions or suggestions for the process column? Tree Bressen, 2244 Alder St., Eugene, OR 97405; 541-343-5023; tree@ic.org.

Mark your calendar now!



The Art of Community

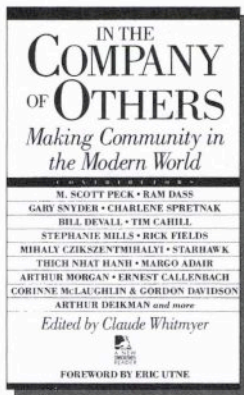
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instructions ahead of time with family or friends.)

One of the most common openings is the “check-in.” This gives everyone a few minutes to say how they’re doing, what’s been up lately, and any big issues that might get in the way of their focusing on the meeting agenda. Besides offering each person the attention of the group, check-ins also alert the other members if they need to be particularly sensitive to someone’s energy during the meeting because, say, she or he may have just received an upsetting phone call.

Here are a few more examples of a classic meeting go-round. (A “go-round” is where every person is invited to respond in turn. “Passing” on responding is also usually an option.) Some of these methods are appropriate for small groups or established communities (or those with frequent meetings), where everyone knows each other fairly well. Others are helpful for new groups, large groups, or established groups who meet infrequently.

• *News & Goods.* Each person says something new or good that happened since the last meeting.

• *Appreciations.* Each person says something they appreciate about someone else or the community.

• *Sharing Answers.* Questions could range from “What is your favorite food?” to “If I were queen of the community I would ...” to “As a child, what did you most dislike about your parents?” Pick something appropriate to the time limit and level of intimacy in your group.

• *Where Were You When?* Someone picks a date (e.g., January 5, 1978, or three months after one’s twelfth birthday) and everyone tells where they were and what they remember doing at that time.

If each person is going to share, providing clear guidance on how much time to speak helps keep things moving. Passing around a kitchen timer allows participants to self-regulate, neatly avoiding both the awkwardness of one person speaking longer than is appropriate and the awkwardness of having to tell someone else their time is up. If having each person address the whole group would take too long (e.g., if your meeting has 50

attendees), splitting into pairs or small groups is also an option.

Another fun way to find out a bit more about each other is a variation on the game Big Wind Blows. Someone calls out a survey question, such as “Who has sisters?” or “Who’s visited five or more intentional communities?” or “Who listens to music by Ani DiFranco?” Everyone who fits the description pops up out of his or her seat, then sits down again to hear the next question. The extra physical activity—and laughter—serves as a nice prelude to an hour or two of seated discussion.

Because meetings usually focus explicitly on verbal interaction, openings can be a great time to try something more creative. Has your group tried alternatives such as making music, drawing pictures, doing movement together, or sharing a ritual?

If you want to teach a song, choose one that’s short and simple. Having the words written out in large letters on poster paper displayed at the front of the room, or passing out song sheets, makes a song much easier to learn. You can also have each person sing her or his name to the group and have the group sing it back, sing wordless tones and harmonize with each other, or join in a reverberating “Om.” If you have a decent sense of rhythm, try starting a beat with everyone, then directing each individual in a form that meshes with the whole. Percussion in this setting, like voice, needs no special equipment—you can tap a table, the floor, or your body.

Doing visual art as an opening process can be individual (each person draws a picture) or communal (everyone contributes to a mural). Brightly colored markers, crayons or pastels are fun for all ages. An art project that involves paint or glue that needs time to dry, or a craft such as origami that requires a leader to teach steps, is probably too complicated. Invite members to draw their fantasy community house, their favorite tree, or the person sitting next to them.

Any activity that gets people up and moving is also good. Stand up and imagine you are all seaweed waving in the ocean, or herons flying overhead. Improve a human sculpture. Spin around in

**Consistently
include an
opening event,
but let the
form vary.**

circles. At one of my favorite community meetings we became a locomotive. Starting with a low "chug-chug," we made slow circles with our arms, then revving up our circles and our "chugs" faster and faster, we peaked with a piercing train-whistle "choooo choooo!" It was silly and fun, and it put us in a good mood for the rest of the meeting.

Less dramatic activities to bring folks together include short meditations or visualizations, or breathing and centering exercises. Getting people relaxed and in their bodies brings them into the present moment and helps them lay aside whatever unfinished business they left to come to the meeting. And of course, there is always a simple moment of silence, a technique that is timeless and priceless.

For some, calling for a moment of silence has spiritual overtones. Quakers, for whom silence is a foundation, officially refer to their business meetings as "Meeting for Worship for Business," explicitly acknowledging their spiritual basis. While many spiritual communities have rituals in place to gather the group, secular communities vary in their comfort level with such rituals. At meetings of the Fellowship for Intentional Community, we want to welcome both secular and spiritual communitarians, so we aim for rituals that are open to interpretation and don't require specialized knowledge.

A ritual element can bring up particularly strong feelings based on people's backgrounds, so as with any community activity, "Know thy group," and select accordingly. Just as some people prefer variety and others prefer routine, so it is with meeting openings. For groups that enjoy trying something different, it can be a great time to let creativity fly. My basic guideline for openings is: Keep it snappy and happy! Ω

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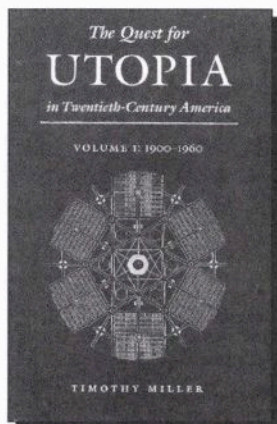


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REVIEWS



The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America, Vol I: 1900–1960

by Timothy Miller

Syracuse University Press (1998)
Hb., 254 pp. \$34.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafe Christian

IF YOU'RE HOOKED BY THE KALEIDOSCOPE of community living arrangements and love to sink curious roots into the rich humus in which our contemporary communities are planted, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America* should be just the ticket. Arranged in chronological order, with chapters grouped in two-decade increments and individual communities grouped in secular, religious, and other era-specific categories, the book offers a swift journey through America's 20th-century socio-political history, as seen through the lively lens of community.

An ardent student of what works and what doesn't work in communities, once I dipped into the introduction I could barely tear myself away. I mined, no, *consumed*, the stories of single-tax enclaves and "social gospel" communal experi-

ments; 1900s-era "new age" communities and 1910s-era back-to-the-land communes; art colonies; Pentecostal communes; Jewish farm communes; African-American liberation-movement communities; Black Jewish, Polygamous Mormon, and Hindu Vedantan communities; and anarchist and socialist communities—and that was only through 1920. I inhaled tales of alternative college and feminist communities; Catholic Worker houses; early land-trust experiments and New Deal back-to-the-land communities; WWII-pacifist communes and early affordable housing and student housing co-ops; Bruderhof colonies; Quaker and political activist communities; and yet another wave of "new age" communities, this time in the '40s. Hey folks, we're standing on the shoulders of giants!

Because the author Timothy Miller is a scholar—an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas—you can trust the information, painstakingly collected, thoroughly documented, and corroborated with materials such as members' journal entries and current newspaper accounts (as compared to merely quoting a founder's idealistic tracts). And because the author is not "just" a scholar—he's got hair halfway down his back and a twinkle in his eye—you'll *enjoy* the information. Never stuffy, never starchy, Miller describes communities with a fondness for the topic, and always with respect and compassion, no matter how egregious the founder or outlandish the scheme.

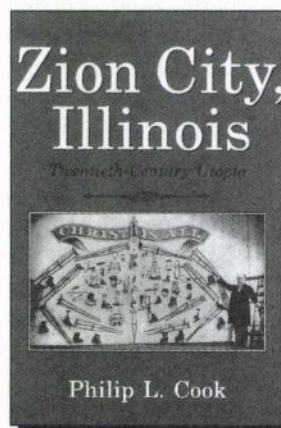
And outlandish some were. Such as Cyrus Teed, whose Koreshan Unity followers circa 1900 created a four-mile-long demonstration device to prove we're really living inside a hollow Earth. It doesn't take a rocket scientist ... but wait—in 1939 we find a real rocket scientist, Jack Parsons, cofounder of Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratories, leading a suburban community of Aleister Crowley followers, Thelemic Abbey, in Crowley's everyone-watches rituals of "sex magick."

Eccentricities (and great tales) notwithstanding, many communities you'll read about encourage and inspire. Arden (founded 1900), a single-tax enclave in Delaware, offering home and haven for early radicals such as Upton Sinclair, Scott Nearing, and many others. Gould Farm

(1913), near Great Barrington, Massachusetts, offering live-in care to indigent alcoholics, sex-offenders, long-term convalescents, and the mentally ill and physically handicapped. Arthur Morgan's Celo (1936), in the mountains of western North Carolina, the nation's oldest land trust community. Bryn Gweled (1940), near Philadelphia, offering racially integrated affordable housing in a cooperative setting. All, I'm happy to tell you, friends, are thriving to this day.

While I would have liked an alphabetical reference of communities and page numbers (i.e., "American Women's Republic, 1912–1920, Atascadero, California, women's suffrage movement"), this is still a must-have reference work—not to mention a good read—for anyone seriously gripped by the community bug.

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.



Zion City, Illinois: Twentieth Century Utopia

by Philip L. Cook

Syracuse University Press (1996)
Pb., 283 pp. \$14.95

Reviewed by Robert Rhodes

ANYONE WHO HAS LIVED IN COMMUNITY—be it spiritually based or centered in some common economic pursuit—knows that designs on utopia can be overly idealistic, to say the least. Experience tells us the perfect community milieu is difficult to achieve, and any gathering of even the most humble and earnest seekers could stumble if it starts on this path. Such was the case amid the

bright aspirations and determined zeal of Zion City, Illinois—a community founded in the nascent days of this century along the shores of Lake Michigan.

Headed by the charismatic faith healer John Alexander Dowie, whose ideals if not his methods were admirable enough, Zion City shone brilliantly for a season, but ultimately collapsed beneath the weight of its own largesse, and in the stuffy glare of Dowie's personal, rather self-serving glory. Cast against the gaudy purple chaos of late Victorian excess, Zion City attracted converts from around the world, due largely to Dowie's tireless proselytizing and economic inventiveness, as well as his ability to sell confidence in faith healing to a large audience of aspirants.

Starting with a storefront mission congregation in Chicago, Dowie's dreams of a Corn Belt utopia grew fast and prosperously, until a small city had sprung up around the community's many enterprises, including a well-endowed laceworks and several factories. Dowie saw poverty as an unnecessary cross to bear, and his community—not to mention his lifestyle—reflected this, with a growing aristocracy of church leaders and their minions treating themselves to lavish homes and lifestyles to match.

Dowie, meanwhile, eventually set himself up as a sort of Midwestern splinter pope—his flock started calling itself the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church—complete with frilly vestments and a mitre that more closely resembled a baker's hat. Also attached to Dowie's spiritual corona were the rather ominous and onerous titles of "first apostle" and "General Overseer."

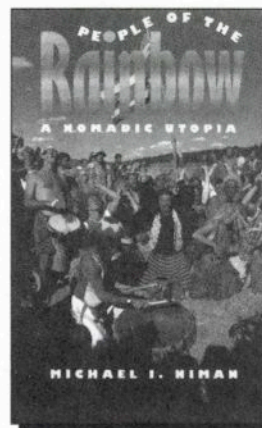
Dowie was no buffoon, however, and his theology of communal utopia, which also took a strong stand against racism, was serious. By 1905, Zion City had more than 6,000 residents. This was the community's zenith, however, and soon political infighting and a gamut of social struggles began to ravel at the fringes of Dowie's great plan. Receivership followed, until all that is left of Zion today is a town like so many others—a shadow of what once was, with an uncertain economic base. The church, and the communal earth-heaven dreamed of by its apostle, died with Dowie's successors.

Philip L. Cook, who grew up in Zion City and later became a professor of history and political science at Western New

Mexico University, presents a well-documented history of Dowie's dream, and explores not so much the leader's motivations but the appeal such a community had for those who joined it. A fine selection of photographs of Zion City in its various stages enhances Cook's presentation.

Of course, charismatic religious leaders, like snake-oil salesmen, have always been a dime a dozen, and the spiritual history of the United States is filled with scores of such shamans and charlatans. But Cook treats Dowie, with all his faults and heresies, with a respect and compassion usually not afforded such figures, and this makes Dowie's story readable and, best of all, conceivable.

Indeed, despite the likely corruptions of some of its leaders, Zion City was a genuine and deeply lived dream for some of its people, and an earnest if brief attempt to follow a life of Christian ideals. In a sometimes frightening world entering a new century—just as the Dowieites were doing, and as we are now—ideals were still something to live for, even if they were just a little unrealistic.



People of The Rainbow: A Nomadic Utopia

by Michael I. Niman

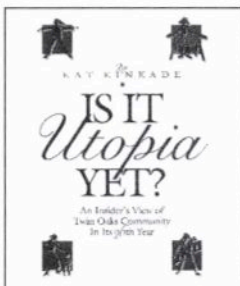
University of Tennessee Press (1997)
Pb., 274 pp. \$18.95

Reviewed by Rebecca Dawn Kaplan

I FOUND THIS ACCOUNT OF THE Rainbow Family inspiring and well-written. Niman combines semi-fictional

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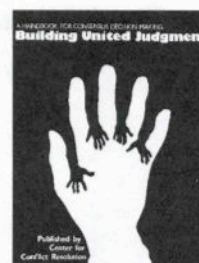


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storytelling and semi-anthropological analysis to characterize the Rainbow gatherings: large, rather anarchistic events in which up to 30,000 people gather in a different national forest each year during the first week of July.

People gather in these large annual non-residential communities, with no formal leadership and no formal financial interactions, to visit, share music, drum, dance, eat, and meditate. Rainbow gatherings include elements seen in Grateful Dead concerts, Burning Man events, the annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, rural intentional communities, and progressive social-change movements. Decisions are officially made by consensus at Council meetings, open to all. To the extent that there is any official statement of purpose, it is encapsulated in the invitation for the gatherings, which generally reads:

We, Sisters and Brothers, children of light, friends of Nature, united by our love for each other and our yearning for peace, do humbly invite Everyone everywhere to join us in expressing our sincere desire, thru prayer, for peace on earth and harmony among all.

The high point of Rainbow Gatherings is the prayer for peace on July 4th. In many ways, the Rainbow gatherings offer a short glimpse of the kind of peaceful, cooperative world that is the ideal of many communitarians: A society operated by consensus, with a high level of commitment to ecological sustainability on the land. A society where people treat each other with respect. A village that grows organically, and in which people spontaneously join together to do the work that needs to be done. (Niman details some wonderful stories in which even the task of re-digging "shitters" is done spontaneously, creatively, and well.)

Many lessons in the book could be valuable for communities, such as the discussion of the values and challenges of making decisions by consensus. For example, many Rainbow Family members were distressed by the tendency of "consensus by attrition," in which the discussion continued all night, allowing those with the most stamina to prevail. They therefore adopted a rule that no decisions could be consensed upon after sunset. When people complained that men dominated the discussion, some Rainbow groups decided

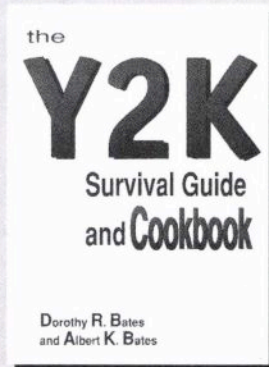
that speakers would alternate between men and women. For many participants, Rainbow gatherings represent the utopia that they wish everyone could have, year round.

And yet, the existence and sustenance of the Rainbow gatherings depends on "Babylon," as some Rainbow Family members call the wider society. The tools, the food, the money to buy basic supplies, all come from the outside, and generally depend on the income that Rainbow Family participants earn the rest of the year in fairly mainstream jobs.

The gatherings inspire many participants to seek out intentional communities, and intentional communities can learn from the gatherings, too. I believe intentional communities could gain valuable ideas from People of the Rainbow, on subjects ranging from setting up outdoor kitchens to managing large meetings of people with philosophical differences.

Rebecca Dawn Kaplan, cofounder of an urban cooperative in Oakland, California, works for Green-Party California State Assemblywoman Audie Bock. Email: rebeccak@igc.org. Ω

BRIEFLY NOTED:



The Y2K Survival Guide and Cookbook

by Dorothy R. Bates and Albert K. Bates

Ecovillage (1999)

Pb., 124 pp. \$12.95

Available from:

Global Village Institute

PO Box 90

Summertown, TN 38483

y2k@ecovillage.org

FOR THOSE WHO'D LIKE TO PREPARE WELL FOR ANY KIND OF EMERGENCY, whether from blizzard, ice storm, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, prolonged drought—or good old Y2K—this Farm community mother and son team offer an invaluable guide. At once a concise shopping list of recommended tools, medical supplies, emergency preparedness items, and storage food, the book also provides straightforward how-to advice. How to preserve and store water. How to dispose of human waste. How to generate and conserve heat and light. And not in the least—how to eat well while doing it. Dorothy Bates, author of such Farm cookbook classics as *The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook* and *The Tempeh Cookbook*, provides recipes from "Chick Pea Patties" to "Cajun Campfire Potatoes." Albert Bates, political activist, co-founder of Ecovillage Network of the Americas, and director of the Ecovillage Training Center among other roles, provides invaluable advice—freezing bulk grains and beans before storing them kills worm larvae; thorium wicks in kerosene lanterns give off radioactive soot—as well as simple drawings demonstrating devices from solar-moldering composting toilets to solar food dryers. "Those who prepare for the possibility of catastrophe will have a much easier time surviving it," he writes. This slender volume will help you do just that. —D.L.C.

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 SPRING 2000 ISSUE (OUT IN MARCH) IS JANUARY 10.

The Classified rate is \$.50 per word. We now have a discounted rate of \$.40/wd. for a four time insertion and if you are an FIC member, you may take off an additional five percent. We appreciate your payment on ordering. Make check or money order out to Communities and send it, your typed or clearly printed copy with 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.

An additional benefit of advertising in Communities classifieds is that you get a half price listing on our Marketplace Web page if you like. To place your Web ad: www.ic.org.

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 804-361-1262; heartwooddesign@mindspring.com.

CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

COMMUNITY DIALOGS across North America, sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), publisher of this magazine. What does "community" mean to you? What would help you create more community in your life? And how can the 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

SHELTER CREATIONS. Consulting assistance to forming communities in land search, zoning, and permitting issues. Also residential and solar electric design. 1-888-746-8899.

VASTU VEDIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION. Designing community buildings according to the sacred architectural traditions of India. 515-472-2157.

LAND FOR SALE

WILD, WONDERFUL, WEST VIRGINIA 860 wooded, rolling acres, secluded. No zoning. Perfect for community living. \$400/acre. 440-257-6157.

CENTRAL TEXAS. 80 beautiful country acres west of Austin. Oaks and other trees, southeast slope to seasonal creek; elevation 1,000 ft., two wells. 512-288-1287.

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.

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, Texas 79830; 915-837-3060.

ECOVILLAGE ENTHUSIAST, organic farmer with farm in New Hampshire, all around interesting fellow, 48, seeks woman partner, wife. Get the whole story at <http://homepage.fcnetworks.net/journey>.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

SIMPLE SHOEMAKING MANUAL (\$23.95 postpaid) and workshops offer patterns and instructions for making many styles of low-heeled, out-stitched, soft leather shoes. *Sharon Raymond*, 145 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-1748.

RECEIVE HEALING FROM wild crafted and organic Mountain spirit herbs. These adaptable native plants are hand harvested from the high altitudes of the southern Rocky Mountains by the Earth Family Farm. We appreciate your support for this community cottage industry. Phone orders: 719-746-2332; mail orders: *Earth Family Farm*, 93 County Rd. 550, Gardner, CO 81040; www.ruralwideweb.com.

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 SPRING 2000 ISSUE (OUT IN MARCH) IS JANUARY 10!

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. 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 Classified Dept. and are charged at a .50/wd. rate. Please see that column for instructions.



COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

ABUNDANT DAWN COMMUNITY, Floyd, Virginia. Creating a loving and sustainable culture. Our beautiful southern Appalachian land has building sites for four or five small sub-community clusters (pods). So far we have two pods: Tekiah (an income sharing group) and Dayspring Circle (an independent income group). We are committed to dealing openly with conflict, and to considering carefully the impacts of our actions on this land and on the planet. Business opportunities include organic gardening, portable sawmill operation, and hemp hammock business. We want to grow, both by taking on new members in existing pods, and by taking on new groups. We include diversity of spiritual and sexual orientations. We welcome families. POB 433, Valley Drive NW, Floyd, VA 24091; abundantdawn@ic.org; www.abundantdawn.org.

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. Global change work for Destiny Reservists in Divine 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. Global Change Music with Gabriel of Sedona and the Bright and Morning Star Band with the vocal CDs "Holy City" and "Cosmic Brides," and Future Studios with CosmoArt, CosmoTheater 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. Student commitment also available. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; aquarianconcepts@sedona.net; www.aquarianconcepts.com.

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.

COMMON PLACE LAND COOPERATIVE, INC., Truxton, New York. In scenic rural New York state, we have openings for new members. We have many undeveloped house sites available for lease from CPLC (one and one half acres each on 432 acre land trust). Transitional housing available in old farmhouse. (Also house for sale, see below.) Write or call for information: CPLC, 4211 Route 13, Truxton, NY 13158; 607-842-6799 or 607-842-6849.

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 strawbale and cob homes on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. Dancing Rabbit will be a large community with many different sub-communities that interact socially and economically. Our goal is to build a small town that is truly sustainable and socially responsible. 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 Web site 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.

FEMINIST EDUCATION CENTER, Athens, Ohio. 151 acres only 20 minutes from Ohio University, Hocking College and other intentional communities. SASE. Susan B. Anthony Women's Land Trust, POB 5853, Athens, OH 45701; ad965@seorf.ohiou.edu.

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. Every day half of us talk together about work, community, and personal issues. Our purpose is to learn to exchange truth with love, intelligence, and pleasure. 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-\$650 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, Parksville, 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., Parksville, NY 12768; 914-295-0655; or contact Ganas at 718-720-5378; fax 718-448-6842; ganas@well.com; www.ganas.org. (See full page ad, p. 1.)

L.A. ECO-VILLAGE, Los Angeles, California. In process, near downtown L.A.. We seek friendly, outgoing eco-co-op knowledgeable neighbors. Auto-less folks preferred who want to demonstrate and share low-consumption, high-quality living patterns in an interesting, multi-cultural, high-visibility community. Spanish helpful. Lots of potential for entrepreneurial right livelihood, but must be initially financially self-reliant. Possibility of group internships. Call or write:

Lois Arkin, 3551 White House Place, Los Angeles, CA 90004; 213-738-1254; CRSP@igc.org; www.ic.org/laev.

MULVEY CREEK LAND COOPERATIVE, Little Slokan 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 Slokan 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, Slokan, 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, coop-

eration, 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; terranovacommunity@juno.com.



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TWIN OAKS, Louisa, Virginia. Twin Oaks has been a model of sustainable community living for over 30 years. We are currently looking for new members, and would love to have you visit. We can offer you: a flexible work schedule in our community businesses, an abundance of homegrown organic food, a thriving social scene, and an established culture of nonviolence and egalitarianism. You can offer us: your talents and skills (or your unskilled enthusiasm) and your desire to live lightly on the land and share income. For information: *Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; twinoaks@ic.org; www.twinoaks.org.*

COMMUNITY HOUSES FOR SALE

COMMON PLACE LAND COOPERATIVE, Truxton, New York. Small rustic home for sale: outhouse, propane, running water, no electricity, wood heat, four wheel drive needed for winter vehicle access (snowmobile helpful). In cluster of four hilltop homes, swimming pond nearby. Rent during six-month membership process, purchase when member. \$7,000. *CPLC, 4211 Route 13, Truxton, NY 13158; 607-842-6799 or 607-842-6849.*

INTENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD, Eugene, Oregon. Home for sale. Be part of a dynamic and supportive living environment by purchasing this beautiful, finely crafted home with exquisite details and finishes. Highly energy efficient, it utilizes straw-bale construction with passive solar and radiant floor heating. Low toxic materials, hand troweled plaster and stucco. Three bedrooms, two baths, carport, atrium, balcony, plus detached studio. The neighborhood consists of 12 families in single-family dwellings. \$244,000. *985 Tiara, Eugene, OR 97405; 541-302-3397; jackandmae@earthlink.net.*

ROSEY BRANCH FARM INTENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD, Black Mountain, North Carolina. 2,250 sq. ft. home with wrap-around, southern

decking overlooking large stream and community trout pond, three quarter acres, one and one half stories, two to three bedrooms, two baths, open floor plan, cathedral ceiling, beautiful craftsmanship in wood and built-in cabinetry throughout, wood floors, natural cherry kitchen, solar hot water, greenhouse, detached 600-sq.-ft. shop building, partnership in 50 acre, seven family intentional neighborhood that has contiguous borders with Earthaven Ecovillage. \$199,000. *RBF House, 711 Stone Mountain Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-255-2607; 828-669-8964; carlosfunk@yahoo.com.*

WESTWOOD COHOUSING COMMUNITY, Asheville, North Carolina. 1,700 sq. ft. townhouse for sale. Built in 1998 on three levels with four bedrooms, three full baths, family room, front porch, deck, and patio. Woods in back. Also interest in common grounds and 3,500-sq.-ft. common house. Asking \$199,000. *828-252-4163.*

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. Hire cook and mower, perhaps, but share simple labors such as dishwashing and leaf raking. Total privacy within own condo, but good fellowship as well. **NEED EXPERTISE** from any similar group ANYWHERE. **IDEA SHARING** with people liking concept; and **POSSIBLE PARTICIPANTS** near Philadelphia area. *Sally Thompson, 48 Drummers Lane, Wayne, PA 19087-1511; idream@erols.com.*

ASH GROVE COMMUNITY FARM AND CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING, Corning, New York. Two or three people wanted to share a 20-acre organic farm with the intention of developing a not-for-profit educational center, horse rescue program, and larger intentional community. Investment welcome but not required, monthly rent as low as \$200 including

utilities. *Ash Grove Community Farm & Center For Sustainable Living, 1297 Martin Hill Road, Corning, NY 14830; 607-936-7092; www.agrove.com.*

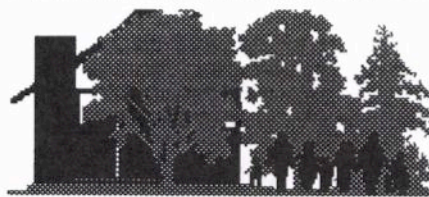
COHOUSING, Santa Cruz County, California. Two private studios available in large, wooded, cul-de-sac home. Prefer mature, single folks who value simplicity, integrity, health, thoughtfulness and an environmentally conscious lifestyle. Sharing some meals, gardening (organic) and maintenance is desirable. Employed or semi-employed, patient, communicative, light and wise hopefully! I am 54, a teacher, mediator, quiet, active, creative, gay. Rent reasonable (I am more concerned with your energy than your money.) Being auto-free is a big plus! I am willing to share my car. Please contact me. *Gary Harrold, 534 La Honda Drive, Aptos, CA 95403; 831-662-0102; gh@cwix.com.* Thanks.

COLUMBIA COHOUSING, Columbia, Missouri. We will cluster about 20 private homes around a common house to facilitate sharing and social interaction. In such a community, we feel more connected to other people and more committed to things beyond ourselves. We believe Columbia, a progressive university town, is an ideal location. We hope to build next summer. *5316 Godas Circle, Columbia, MO 65202; 573-814-3632; cohousing.missouri.org.*

ECOVILLAGE LA HERMITA, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Forming community seeks members desiring to share a rural environment. We are a permaculture and eco-technology village. We have 28 acres on the Laja River in the fertile canyon below the Allende dam. An acre of land ranges from \$10,000 to \$15,000. There is a good road, electricity and plenty of drinkable water from our own well. Space is limited to 28 units. Write: *Suzy, AP 555, San Miguel de Allende, GTO, 37700, Mexico; fax: 52-4-152-6061; www.infosma.com/lahermita.*

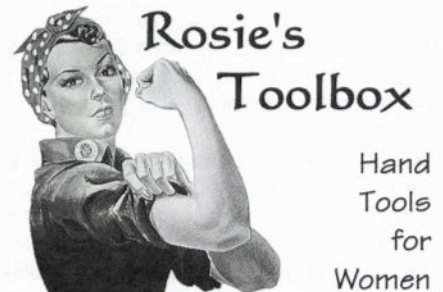
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EDEN RANCH, Paonia, Colorado. Seeking members desiring rural, spiritual environment. Sharing labor and resources on planned biodynamic, permaculture 65 acre farm. Ultimate self-sustainability is our goal. Western Colorado mesa, outstanding views and 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 571, Kenwood, CA 95452.*

GARDEN O' VEGAN, Big Island, Hawaii. We seek other clean-living vegans with whom to start an ecovillage on large acreage along the lush east coast. Sun, waterfalls, deep soil, ocean views and low population! Plans include individual and com-

mon living space, veganic gardens, good parenting, low-impact building and enjoying life. Although all necessary funds are available, we aim for shared ownership of the land. We can usually offer free accommodation to anyone who is interested, but would initially like everyone to be otherwise financially self-sufficient. *POB 1954, Hilo, HI 96721, USA; 808-933-1973; gardens@bigisland.net; www.angelfire.com/ht3/vegans.*

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.*

LIBERTY VILLAGE, Maryland. A hot meal cooked by someone else, impromptu parties, playmates for young and old, a helping hand. Having friends doesn't have to be a hassle. A modern-day village combines the best of community and privacy. Maryland's first cohousing development features 38 clustered houses with interesting common house designed by residents. Sixteen acres open space of meadows, woodlands, gardens and orchards. Footbridge to 105 acre community park featuring softball, soccer, tennis and basketball courts. Located eight miles east of Frederick, convenient to Washington D.C. or Baltimore in rolling country. House prices range from \$130,000 to \$220,000. Handicap sensitive units available. Construction is underway with first move-ins scheduled for spring 1999. Visit our Web site at www.LibertyVillage.com, or call 800-400-0621.

MANZANITA VILLAGE, Prescott, Arizona. Arizona's premier cohousing community is under construction with several home designs to choose from. Enjoy sunshine, clean mountain air and four seasons in a small town atmosphere. We are persons creating our own richly diverse community, balancing group harmony with individual growth and following the principles of ecological soundness, social awareness and economic viability. We seek to live in an environment which is mutually supportive, fosters neighborliness while allowing for privacy and encourages the interaction of people of all ages,

beliefs and backgrounds. For information: *Jeff Zucker at 1-800-555-3810 or visit our Web site at www.mwaz.com/cohousing.*

MEADOWDANCE, Plainfield, Vermont. We are a forming community and will move onto 165 acres of rolling meadows, hills and woods in April of 2000. 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 have started our first community business, a software testing company, and are in the midst of permitting, planning, and design in preparation for April. Persons of all ages, races, creeds, orientations welcome. Rural location, but not isolated. We are building a community where we can work and live together in a fulfilling and sane manner. Write, email, or call: *c/o Luc Reid, 100 Park Blvd. #72-D, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; 609-616-8340; info@meadowdance.org; www.meadowdance.org.*

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

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homeschool family with future hope of buying into homestead site. *Robie and Gil, 1901 Dutyville Rd., Garberville, CA 95542; 707-986-7787.*

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.*

PLEASANT HILL, California. Cohousing group seeks members. Our vision is to create and live in a diverse community which fosters harmony with each other, the larger community, and nature. We are planning to build 30-38 units on our 2.2-acre suburban site, adjacent to a walking/biking trail and an elementary school and park. We are working with The Cohousing Company and Wonderland Development. Families with small children are especially welcome. For more info, contact *Barbara at 925-256-1085; dancerBarb@aol.com; http://members.aol.com/danceBarb/.*

QUERENCIA NEW MEXICO, Silver City, NM. Join an intentional village that provides opportunity for individuals to deepen and enrich their spiritual lives by residing in community and supporting each other through the aging process. Just 14 miles from Silver City, our beautiful, off-grid, tranquil setting has soaring views and total privacy. Also in the vicinity are several Buddhist Centers and a Sufi Community. We invite 40 individuals to participate in the purchase of 200 undivided acres. \$13,500. *Phone and fax: 505-536-2879, e-mail: hardenbrook@gilanet.com; www.gilanet.com/querencia.*

SEEKING PARTNERS: a dozen adults committed that integrity is the source of workability in the matter, to forward the communal experiment "ethical science theatre." *Alexis, 631-736-3085.*

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.*

TURTLEDOVE POND COOP COMMUNITY, Jupiter, Florida. For spiritually sensitive, vegetarian healing artists, singers, dancers and musicians to work and play creatively, meditatively, harmoniously together on 2.5 sacred acres of blissfully serene and secluded tropical rainforest paradise and wildlife sanctuary. With one over-riding goal: to be in a state of Inner Peace always in the Here and Now. Share profits, responsibilities and fun, and the fruits of our loving labor with the world community through high-quality published books, audio and video tapes, concerts, workshops, and retreats. Especially welcome: high-spirited, conscious audio-video maestros, and positive people of all ages, to co-produce original, inspirational, inter-generational, interfaith, musicals together. No cigarettes, addicts, cults, or negatory scenarios please. Fax resume and brief statement of personal/artistic goals: *561-748-5624; turtle-dovepond@webtv.net.*

PEOPLE LOOKING

53 YEAR OLD SINGLE MOM and 15 year old daughter seek a supportive, creative, multicultural, nature spirituality community with land base. We like art and crafts, organic gardening, animal husbandry and ceremony and myth weaving for consciousness-raising. I am on a fixed income. Please reply: *Jamal Wren, 1665 Lucky Star Ct., McKinleyville, CA 95519.*

ADULT MALE, 59 YEARS OLD. While I'm disabled-Cerebral Palsy and use an attendant, I am mentally alert and very independent. I want to

live in a community. I have personal focuses of spirituality and growth. The gifts that I offer to others are healing, writing, sharing and listening. Other interests I have are reading, music, and continuing education. I'd be interested in hearing from you. *J. Carey, 1717 S. Douglas, Springfield, IL 62704; jbc1717@eosinc.com.*

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CAMPBILL SPECIAL SCHOOLS, Glenmore, Pennsylvania. The Beaver Run community and school for children with developmental disabilities seeks house parents and young people for childcare (who will receive Camphill Curative Education Seminar training). Ideal for young people seeking a different experience in a beautiful 77-acre woodland community with music, art, drama and festivals. *1784 Fairview Rd., Glenmore, PA 19343; 610-469-9236; BvrRn@aol.com.*

RESOURCES

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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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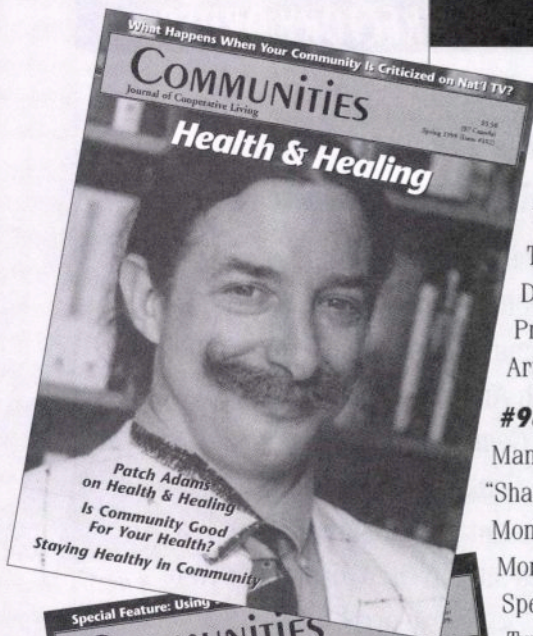
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Lessons from the Communes; "No Bad Vibes"; 25 Years of *Communities*; The "Shadow Side" of Community; Denial and the Demise of Kerista; What Price Community? UFA-Fabrik: Berlin's Arts & Activist Commune (Win '97)

#98 Values, Vision, and Money

Manifesting Our Dreams; Money as "Shadow" Issue at Findhorn; Mega-Bucks Money Pressures in Community; Identity & Money at Shenoa; How Much is Enough? Special Feature: Confronting the Petty Tyrant (Spr '98)

#99 Sustainable Communities

Living the Permaculture Dream; Building Design That Fosters Community; Building With Mud!; Salvaging Building Materials; Baubiologie; Special Feature: Using the Internet to Find Your Community (Sum '98)

#100 Political Activism in Community

Risking Jail, Creating Community; Health Care as Politics in Ecuador; Following the Lord ... Into Chicago Politics; Organic Growing, Activism, & the Good Life; "Meta-Politics" at Bright Morning Star (Fall '98)

#101 Communities, the Millennium, and Y2K

Patch Adams on the Movie "Patch Adams"; The Year 2000: Social Chaos or Social Transformation; Taking Y2K Seriously; Where Were You When the Grid Went Down?; Covenant for the New Millennium (Win '98)

#102 Health and Healing in Community

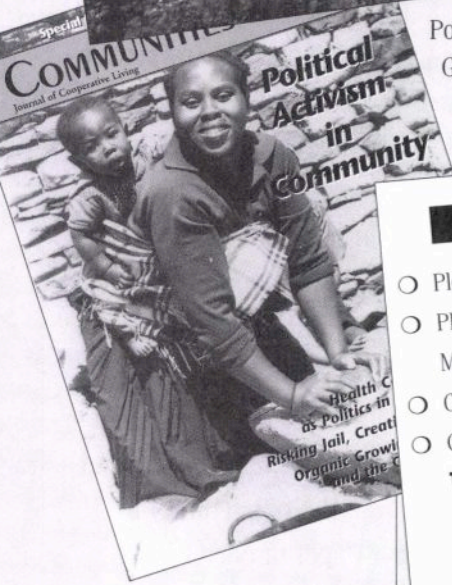
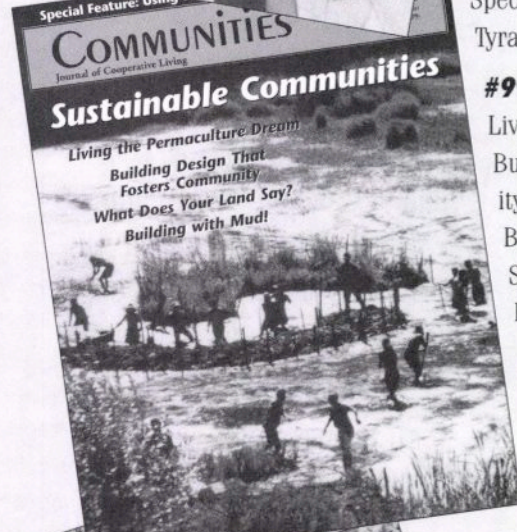
Community Is Healing; Patch Adams on Health and Healing; Loving to the End; The Hope Street Gang Forever; When Your Community Is Criticized on National TV (Spr '99)

#103 Walden Two Communities: Where Are They Now?

Science of Behavior, Sí!; Walden Two Communities: What Were They All About; "Who's the Meta Tonight?"; Growing Up at Los Horcones; Damanhur: A "Magical Mystery Tour"; Cultural Labs (Sum '99)

#104 Conflict and Connection

Living "Naka-Ima" at Lost Valley; Assessing Community Well-Being; A Healing Impulse; About Open-Hearted Listening; Working with Difficult Behaviors in Meetings; Nonviolent Communication: Transforming Conflict and Enhancing Connection (Fall '99)



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#105

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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:

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- hosts gatherings and events about community.
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Join the Fellowship team today!

PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

evolved into a tightly knit self-managed extended-family-style urban cooperative with members that share household expenses, chores, and evening meals.

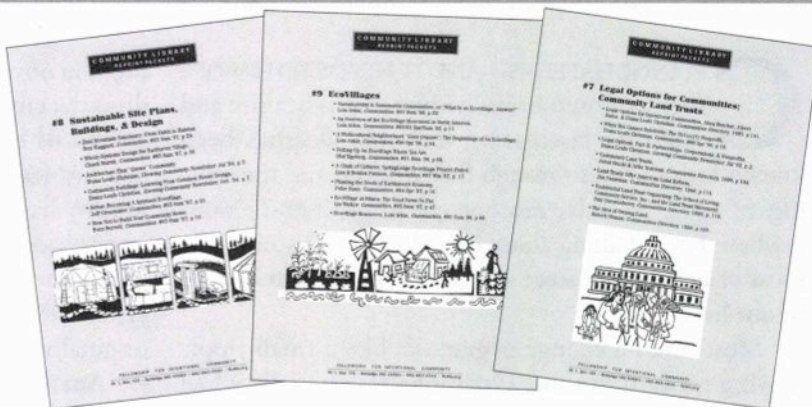
Examples such as these abound, and I have yet to find a community that's been around a while that hasn't undergone some sort of major refocusing or restructuring over the years. Ironically, although change is inevitable, people put an incredible amount of energy into resisting change—it's as though we fail to understand that we have bad habits to break and important lessons to learn. Fortunately, the universe conspires to bring those lessons to us over and over again until we finally understand and integrate the insight that we've been resisting.

Intentional communities are microcosms of the larger society. For any lesson that "they" need to learn in the mainstream, it's likely that someone in an intentional community somewhere has already been dealing with the issue. Mind you, the communitarians may not have come up with the ultimate solution, but they're often several steps ahead on the path and likely will have some valuable experience-based insights to share. If ordinary folks could be convinced to start thinking of intentional communities as R&D (research and development) centers for cultural innovation, we'd all be ahead of the game. The community folks would do a lot of the dirty work, but they'd be appreciated as pioneers (or guinea pigs) rather than feared as zealots or misfits.

If you actually start embracing change instead of resisting it, not only do you grow faster, but life starts to be more fun. Therefore: Communitarians, go forth and multiply the challenges in your life, for therein lies the key to everlasting growth and happiness. Ω

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 26 years, and has been on the road for 12 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 the featured communities have changed over the years.

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Embracing the Inevitable

CHANGE HAPPENS—AND IT NEEDS TO HAPPEN for any group or individual that is healthy and vital. It's fascinating that this idea has been known for centuries through folk wisdom and the writings of sages, yet today most people forget it or discount it when they're talking about communities. It seems that most of us make a career of resisting significant change in our lives.

Most often a change is gradual, like a small ripple moving forward in time. Occasionally, especially when deeply held convictions are involved, change is more like a tidal wave that comes in dramatic response to a crisis, a major restructuring initiative, or a simple realization that the current status quo is not achieving the desired results.

I've been giving slide shows about intentional communities for well over a decade, and I've learned to emphasize that the stories in my presentation are like snapshots frozen in time. No one community stays the same over time, and no two communities are identical—not even sister communities formed with identical charters. In most communities there are differences evident from one year to the next; however, for a few very stable, well-established groups, the big changes require decades to materialize. Here are a few examples of major changes experienced by intentional communities that have each been around for more than 20 years:

The Emissaries, who founded their first residential community in 1946, looked heavily to leaders Uranda and Lord Exeter for guidance. For many decades, the community was seen by many as having a patriarchal structure—although the leaders' vision emphasized the need to develop individual responsibility. The community's largest shift in that direction started shortly after Lord Exeter's death in 1988, and today most Emissary communities have adopted democratic structures that use a council form of governance based on the consensus process.

Twin Oaks was launched in 1967 inspired by the Behavioral Psychology model outlined in *Walden Two*, a

utopian novel by B.F. Skinner. It took only a few years to drop the emphasis on Behaviorism, and the community shifted its focus onto being an egalitarian community, another feature of Skinner's novel. Although the community has preserved several of Skinner's ideas, including an adaptation of his planner/manager system of governance and income sharing based on a labor credit system, the community is vastly different from what was originally envisioned.

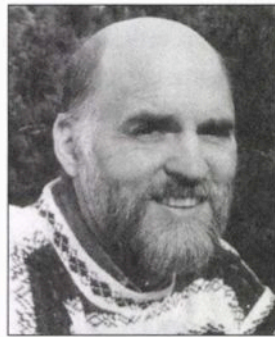
Ananda Village, established in 1969, originally emphasized a monastic lifestyle where, among other things, devotees wore Eastern-style garb and took on Sanskrit names. Within their first decade the founder, Kriyananda (Donald Walters), realized that the community's message could reach a much wider audience if they adopted a lifestyle more familiar (less alienating) to the American society at large. Today this spiritual community includes both singles and families, their dress and housing blend easily with the mainstream culture, and it is rare that a new member asks to be given a Sanskrit name.

The Farm, formed in 1970 after a caravan of brightly painted school buses circled the continent and landed in rural Tennessee, was originally a tie-dyed income-sharing spiritual community of hippies that eventually grew to include over 1,500 members. In the early '80s they went through a near-bankruptcy experience

that catalyzed a mass exodus and a major economic and organizational restructuring. Today they have an entrepreneurial family-based economy that looks and acts a lot like a land co-op.

The Purple Rose Collective, which got its start in 1978, was conceived as a collective household that would be owned by a communal core group of social-change activists who shared their income and raised their children together in a model urban ecology house. When that vision proved to be overly idealistic given the community members' anti-cooperative upbringing, the house

(continued on p. 79)



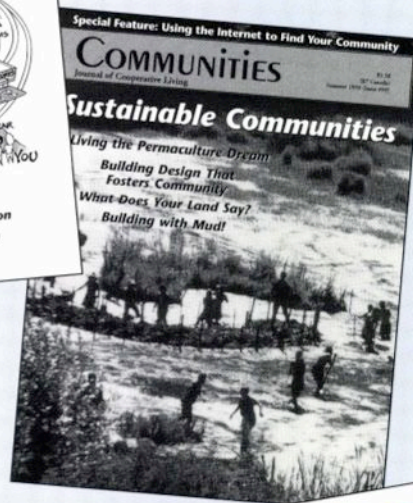
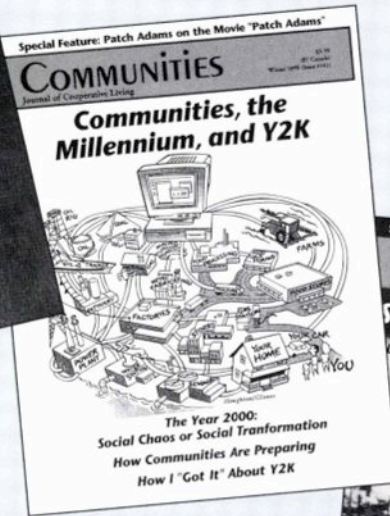
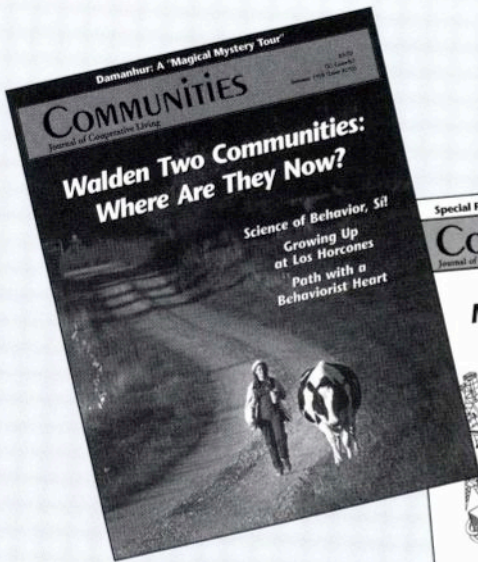
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#105

The strongest thing community has going for it is not utopian architecture or formal structures of membership, but the invisible architecture of human kindness. Community is about purposeful, personal co-evolution. And in that, there is a lot of hope.

—Albert K. Bates, The Farm



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