

Seriously Seeking Community: "But Can We Afford to Join?"

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

\$6.00

(\$8 Canada)

Fall 2001 (Issue #112)

Multigenerational Community

***To the Ecovillage!
Three Generations Move to Community***

What Can You Expect of Me as an Elder?

Resources: Communities Seeking Elders



THE COMPLETELY UPDATED, ALL NEW COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

Over 600 North American and 100 international communities describe themselves—their structure, beliefs, mission, and visions of the future, and provide contact information.

33 NEW ARTICLES

Topics include: how to visit communities; why live in community and what it means to do so; financing and setting up the legal structures of communities; opportunities for older people in community; communities and the “cult” issue; consensus process; raising children in community; dealing with conflict; an overview of Christian community; and more.

MAPS

Complete maps of North American communities. See at a glance what’s happening in your area.

CHARTS

These charts allow you to quickly scan for the communities that fulfill your criteria. The charts will show you in a flash which communities match your needs and desires.

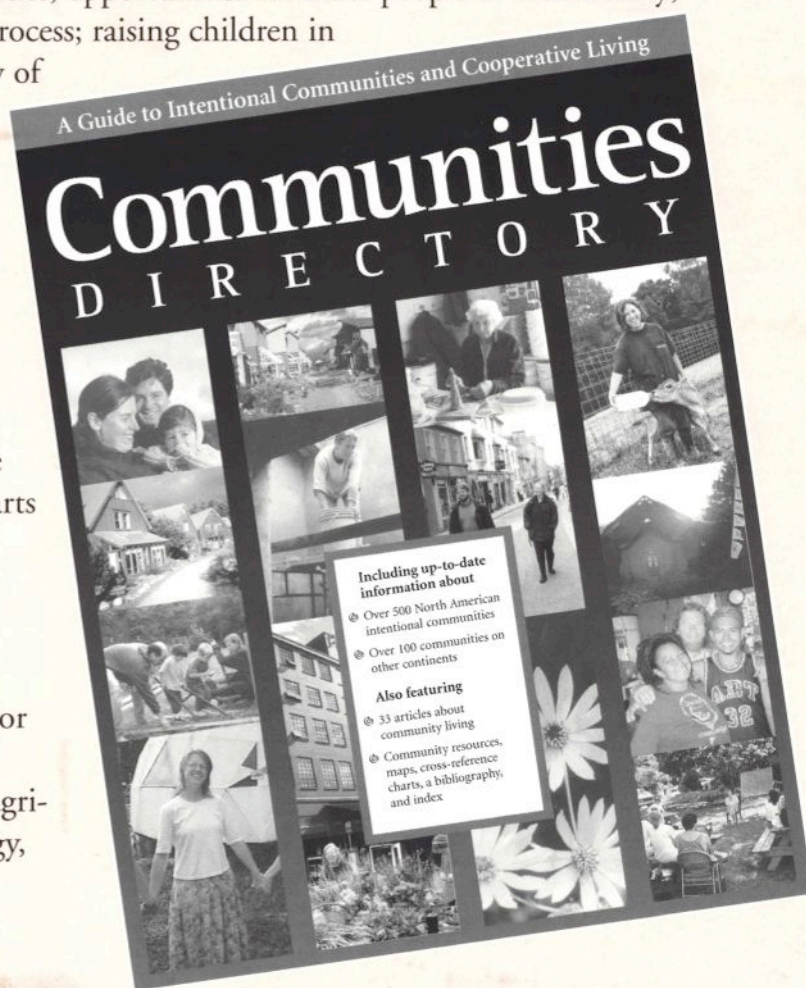
RESOURCES

Descriptions and contact information for major organizations within specific interest areas. Categories include: community networking, agriculture, ecology, energy, economics, technology, spirituality, education, sexuality, and personal growth.

NEW SECTION—

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

An annotated collection of over 300 texts of interest to community-minded people.



SEE ORDER FORM ON PAGE 70.

COMMUNITIES

RECENT BACK ISSUES

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#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, Sif: 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)

#105 Transition and Change

Death and Rebirth at Skywoods: Emissaries of Divine Light: Communities in the 21st Century: Finding New Community Members: Leadership Dynamics in Community (Win '99)

#106 Cohousing: Building Community One Neighborhood at a Time

Finding the People, Finding the Money: Community "Process" Issues vs. Development Issues?: Building Green Community on a Budget: Conflict: Community Member as "Lightning Rod" (Spr '00)

#107 Song, Dance, and Celebration

What Creates "Community" Spirit?: Dancing for Peace, Joy, and Community: Community Spirit after Cohousing Move-in: How Rumors Can Ruin Community Friendships: Finding New Community Members: Your Publicity Toolbox (Sum '00)

#108 Let's Go! Learning Opportunities About Community

A Midwinter Month's Dream: "Wilderness Is Our Classroom": An Intern's-Eye View: Designing My Own Education for the "Ecovillage Millennium": Communities Where You Can Learn: The Rainbow Family Diaspora (Fall '00)

#109 Decision Making in Community

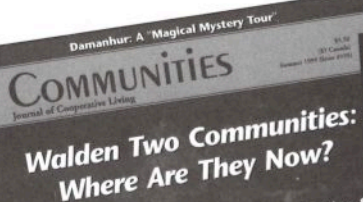
20 Things You Can Do to Improve Meetings: Multi-Winner Voting: Sociocracy at Ecovillage of Loudon County: When People Miss Meetings: Using Dynamic Consensus to Empower Ourselves: 12 Myths of Consensus (Win '00)

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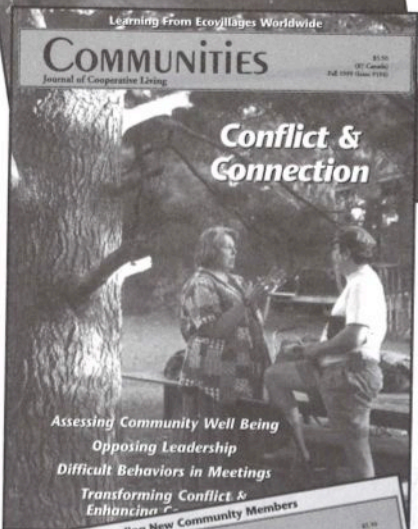
I was a Teenage Homeowner: It's a magical Life: High Rent and No Voice? No Thanks!: Who Says We Have to move Out? (Spr '01)

#111 Creating "Magical Culture": Appropriate Technology & Intentional Community

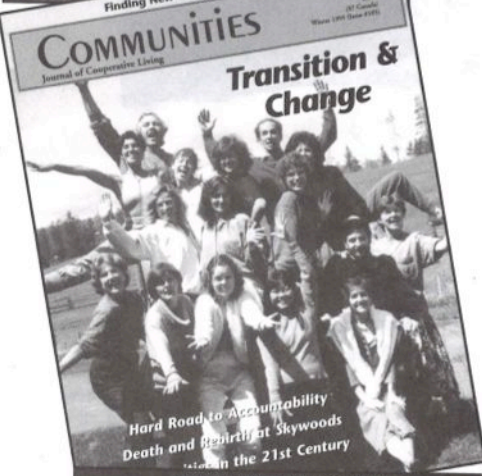
In a Hawaiian Rainforest... Living the Good Life: Going Solar? making it Happen: Moderating the Vocal, Encouraging the Shy. Equalizing Participation in Meetings (Sum '01)



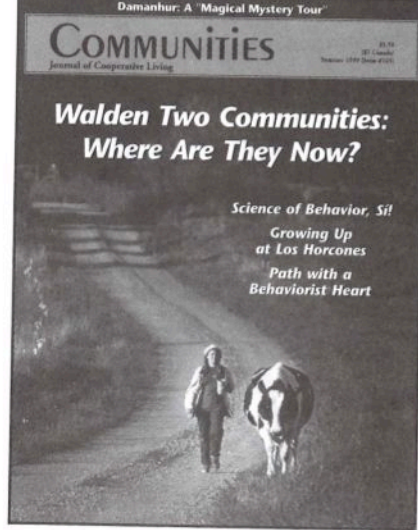
Science of Behavior, Sif
Growing Up at Los Horcones
Path with a Behaviorist Heart



Assessing Community Well Being
Opposing Leadership
Difficult Behaviors in Meetings
Transforming Conflict & Enhancing Connection
Finding New Community Members



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



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Growing Up at Los Horcones
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Journal of Cooperative Living

FRONT COVER

Fran Allison, 84, and Kayla Bartelos, 8, at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina.
Photo, Susan Patrice.

BACK COVER

Lotte Meyerson, 78, and Jodi Kann, 2, at Westwood Cohousing, Asheville, North Carolina.
Photo, Susan Patrice.

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Multigenerational Community

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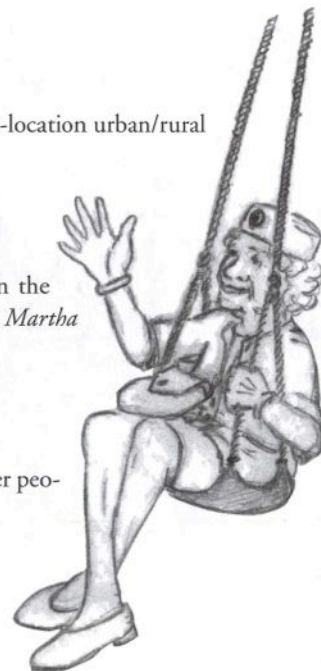
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Journal of Cooperative Living

EDITOR

Diana Leafe Christian

DESIGN DIRECTOR

Paul DeLapa

LAYOUT

Tristan Masat

ILLUSTRATIONS

Billie Miracle (*WomanShare*)
Jacob Stevens (*Dancing Rabbit*)

PHOTOS

Susan Patrice (*Blue House*)
Douglas Stevenson (*The Farm*)

COPY EDITING

Tree Ivy Beth Bressen
Marcy Michaud (*Teal Co-op*)

PROOFREADING

Melissa Smith

DISPLAY ADS

Susan Patrice (*Blue House*)

REACH AND CLASSIFIED ADS

Patricia Greene

BUSINESS MANAGER

Marty Klaiß (*Shannon Farm*)

OFFICE MANAGER

Jonah "Cecil" Scheib (*Dancing Rabbit*)

DATABASE MANAGER

Velma Kahn (*Abundant Dawn*)

CIRCULATION MANAGER

McCune Porter (*Twin Oaks*)

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Laird Schaub (*Sandhill Farm*)
Tony Sima (*Dancing Rabbit*)

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LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities* magazine, 52 Willow St., Marion, NC 28752; communities@ic.org. Your letter may be edited or shortened. Thank you!

Kudos for Sci Fi in Summer '01 Issue

Dear *Communities*:

Did I enjoy my visit to an ecovillage of the future in Jeff Clearwater's "Ecovillage 2015"? Absolutely! In fact, my mouth fell open. My family was enroute to my wife's parents, about three hours away, and I started reading the story out loud when I got to the dish-cleaning method in the Community Center. Here I thought Stelle was fairly up on technology ... but we stand in line to do dishes the old-fashioned way. Now I know what we can shoot for, thanks to Jeff's imagination. The effect on me of this science fiction piece was more than words can convey. This article should be in every community center, under the caption "Visualize this!"

Mark Wilkerson
Stelle Community
Stelle, Illinois

Researching Zoning Laws for Buying Community Land

Hi folks:

I subscribe to *Communities* magazine and think it's great. I've been going through the *Communities Directory* that you folks publish and I've not seen something that would be very helpful. Several of us want to establish an intentional community in Sonoma, Mendocino, or Humboldt counties in Northern California. Unfortunately, the zoning laws in that area are very strict and unfriendly towards residential intentional communities. Do you have a list of coun-

ties across the US that have no zoning regulations, or friendly zoning regulations? If so, could you send it to us, so we could redirect our search?

Charles Wood
PO Box 2877
Sausalito, California 94966
ccwood@ix.netcom.com

We don't know of a county-by-county assessment of progressive, community-friendly zoning regulations across North America. One way to get this information might be to first request contact information for all the county governments in each state your group may be interested in (probably available from the office that coordinates county governments in those states). Then ask specific questions about each county's zoning regulations—probably an arduous task of emails and phone calls.

Many county officials might simply want to send you a copy of their regulations, but it would be far easier and faster for you to just call the zoning board of each county and ask about clustered development, how many residences are allowed per five acres or 35 acres or whatever. While you're at it you might want to look into county building codes (do they allow strawbale, cob?) and health department regulations (do they allow composting toilets, constructed wetlands?).

In researching a book on forming intentional communities in today's financial and zoning climate, I've found that the more "community-desirable" the county, because of proximity to a city with jobs and a university with progressive people, arts, and culture, the more likely that county will be strictly zoned. And the more rural and economically undeveloped a county may be—and hence having few to no zoning regulations—the less likely it will be anywhere near decent-paying jobs or a good bookstore or coffeehouse.

In heavily regulated states like California, Oregon, Washington, and Massachusetts, it seems that only those community founders financially able to subdivide land and get a zoning variance for clustered development (such as cohousers) or to purchase and donate land into a community land trust, can form new communities. (Occidental Arts and Ecology Center offers courses in founding new communities, and they tell how they did it—in Sonoma County, California. oaec@oaec.org.) Many counties in Nevada,

Missouri, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, are not heavily regulated, have no to low zoning requirements (and building codes) and don't require as much money to get started. Good luck!

—Editor

Seeking Help for Research Project on Communal Sustainability

Dear *Communities*:

I'm a community member and architect in Germany who would like to hear from *Communities* readers who know of any related projects or similar collections of data to the two-year research project I'm conducting on the economic and ecological relevance of communal living. I'm also interested in connecting with resource people in this field.

I will be conducting the study in cooperation with the Center for Environmental Systems Research at Kassel University here in Germany, funded by our country's Ministry of Education and Research.

The project will primarily create an ecological balance sheet for Kommune Niederkaufungen, the 15-year-old, 75-person commune near Kassel where I live, covering nutrition, transportation, and housing. The project will also study two other intentional communities, Okodorf Sieben Linden and Lebensgut Pommritz, and two ecologically managed family households. The results will be compared with numbers derived from the general public, as well as current criteria for sustainability. The project will also take a look at which structures, as well as which patterns of consumption and behavior, are particularly meaningful to a sustainable lifestyle. In addition to the flow of materials and energy, it will also focus on social sustainability and the regional social structures which are either supported by or have been initiated by these communities.

As a result of this research, I will work out a set of recommendations for how these communities can improve their ecological balance, improve acceptance of their ecological projects by others, and make the achievements of the communal lifestyle more accessible to the wider public. In the end, I would like to demonstrate how

much more sustainable communal lifestyles are to mainstream lifestyles without any loss to quality of life, and possibly even enhancing quality of life.

I would be grateful for any suggested resource people or information about similar data or studies. Thank you.

Peter Dangelmeyer
Kommune Niederkaufungen
Kirchweg 1
D-34 260 Kaufungen, Germany
kommune@t-online.de

Is Community Turnover Too High?

Dear *Communities*,

Here's an idea for the FIC's next *Communities Directory*. Offer communities the option of listing their percentage of long-time members in the chart section—their retention rate or turnover rate, in other words.. No community should be required to disclose this information, but if a community chose to omit those rates it would send up a red flag. Readers could guess that probably that community has high turnover. And those who do disclose the rate, obviously deserve some recognition for being a place where members stay, and should be allowed to brag. This would be very valuable info to help us seekers make a decision about which communities to pursue.

I know of one community which at first glance looks like a together place. I've been there twice, and call it my favorite so far. But a little exploration brought an alarming fact to light—over its 30-year history its population has averaged 15-20 people, yet it has only five permanent members. What does that mean? It means hundreds of people have left on their own or been asked to leave. Damn! Two are the founders; two more are a couple (one of which the community went to great lengths to help with college tuition); and the fifth long-time member has been there about 20 years. Though this community does all right financially, and it's not infested with cockroaches and mouse turds like another well-known community I've visited, I consider the high turnover a glaring flaw. And it makes me wonder about going back. I even think I've detected an attitude

there of "We are cool, we have enough people, we don't go out of our way to get new members." After all, the 10-15 provisional and short-term members have livened up the place all these years and provided lots of labor. Publish retention rates. Yes!

Logan Harris
Louisville, Kentucky

What Works in Community Governance?

Dear *Communities*:

I'm seeking information from your readers about workable systems of governance and management in communities. I am a 40-year-old small-business owner with a wife and two children in Belgrade, in the former Yugoslavia. As globalization takes place here many of us are thinking of withdrawing from towns. As you know, from a wish to a realization of the wish can be a long journey. It is very difficult to break all the bonds with mainstream living, especially when the alternative is not so established yet. When talking about the idea of intentional community, most of us here envision something more like a junky commune than a (good!) republic. I have been obsessed for years with the concepts of an ideal society and social justice, but have found no practical solutions that would put us closer to a good community. Mainstream social models are an experiment themselves, and the reason for their apparent failure seems to be in the people, not in the models. But I still think that the models themselves are too poor and could be improved.

I would like to correspond with any *Communities* readers' via email about their practical experiences in community around this topic, and especially any recommended models of management and governance.

Drasko Cvijovic
Belgrade
cvijovic@yahoo.com

We've sent Drasko a complimentary copy of our Winter '01 issue, "Decision Making in Community," and invite interested readers to correspond with him.

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: Communities, 52 Willow St., Marion NC, 28752, 828-652-8517; communities@ic.org.*

Advertising Policy

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

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

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What is an "Intentional Community"?

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

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Winners & Whiners:

Giving Change a Hand

Last spring I was at a conference in Wisconsin for progressive change activists. During the opening plenary the moderator asked how many in the room regularly voted. Most raised their hand. Next question: how many have ever voted for a winner? A lot of folks pulled their hand back down. Welcome to the world of progressive politics. For many of us in the building-a-better-world business, our electoral excitement tends toward the edge of the menu, where selections are not common.

The panel of speakers was passionate and articulate. They'd done their homework and were comfortable working the crowd. Short speeches were followed by extensive Q&A with the audience, and it was a lively evening. However, with my community orientation, I got increasingly uncomfortable with the lack of movement in the dialog. No one was shifting positions in the course of the conversation; speakers were simply using air time to say the same thing another way. They wanted to win and, apparently, that didn't leave room for curiosity about different perspectives.

The moderator actually led us in a call-and-response cheer to build energy for the panel: Do you want to win? If you do, put your hand in the air and shout yes! (repeat until deaf) For that one I kept my hand down and my mouth shut—but I was still interested in the better world part.

For a group of dedicated progressive activists, I found the panelists' style depressingly retro. When one woman from the audience expressed her (and my) discomfort at the rhetoric of winners and losers, she was shouted down by a speaker who declared he'd be happy to talk about extending grace to the people in power ... after he'd won and had a turn at the top.

After more than 25 years of building community, I don't believe world peace is attainable through the politics of opposition. If you depend on an enemy to raise energy, in the end, you will simply become the thing you are fighting against. Even if you get elected, your reality will be corrupted by the mindset that you have created a power base that has defeated someone else's.

More recently I was at a community conference where the conversation was focused on bioregional politics. One woman from Arizona expressed her frustrations in trying to get local politicians interested in using bioregional criteria in redistricting (instead of the traditional political approach of gerrymandering boundaries to create safe seats for incumbent Republicans and Democrats). It reminded me of my experience in Wisconsin, and it occurred

to me that those of us who get it about community as an essential aspect of a better world, have a responsibility to lead the way out of the stalemate that arises from insisting that respect for your position is a pre-condition of negotiation. (You can see the trap here, if everyone waits to be heard first.)

So I put my hand in the air and suggested that she get interested in understanding why the local politicians wanted to do things the usual way, to see how she could honor their concerns and perhaps re-frame her bioregional inspiration in a way that would make more sense from their framework.

In creating community, I've found it essential to be able to understand the other person's position from their perspective. To grok why their position makes sense to them. Sometimes that's easy and sometimes it requires a lot of effort, yet it isn't possible to be effective allies until that understanding is achieved.

If this makes sense put your hand in the air.

What if others don't extend this kind of effort to understand you in return? My advice is to do it anyway! First, it is always a good thing to understand different viewpoints thoroughly. It will improve your thinking and the quality of your positions (whether others are smart enough to figure this out or not).

And there is a subtle secondary effect. You will appear to be smarter because you do such a good job of listening. Others will be more open to what you have to say because they'll come to trust your ability to hear. This will reduce the tendency toward posturing and enhance the quality of the conversation. You will become oil on troubled waters. You may become valued as someone who can translate one person's statement into something another can hear. Which is the heart and soul of effective communication. Which is the bread and butter of community. Which is the backbone of world peace. (Not to mention the mother of all mixed metaphors.)

Now who wants to build a world with no winners and no whiners?

Who's got their hand in the air?

David Schaus



Art of Community Audiotapes

**Multigenerational Living in
Communities:
Meeting Everyone's Needs**
Caroline Estes

**Finding Your Community:
An Art or a Science?**
Geoph Kozeny

**Manifesting Our Dreams:
Visioning, Strategic Planning,
& Fundraising**
Jeff Grossberg

**Raising & Educating Children
in Community**
*Diana Christian, Elke Lerman,
Martin Klair, Judy Morris*

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

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

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

**Building a Business While
Building Community**
*Carol Carlson, Lois Arkin, Harvey
Baker, Bill Becker, Judy Morris, Ira
Wallace*

Legal Options for Communities
*Allen Butcher, Aiy'm Fellman,
Stephen Johnson, Tony Sirna*

**We Tried Consensus and Got
Stuck. Now What?**
Caroline Estes & Laird Sandhill

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Coming in Future Issues

"Process in Community." Winter '01. How do we bond and connect as a group, resolve conflicts, and make decisions gracefully? How do we grow ourselves emotionally and spiritually among the "living mirrors" of fellow community members? .

Communities Magazine, 52 Willow St., Marion NC, 28752, 828-652-8517; communities@ic.org.

"Educating Children in Community." Spring '02. Are intentional communities holistic "schools of life" for community children? Does growing up in community make for richer, stronger, more balanced human beings? What about community schools organized by parents? What unique opportunities does community living offer children for learning social, practical, and intellectual skills?.

Communities Magazine, 52 Willow St., Marion NC, 28752, 828-652-8517; communities@ic.org.

COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



The biannual conference of the **International Communal Studies Association** held at ZEGG Community in Germany in June was “the opportunity of a lifetime” for community enthusiasts, according to ICSA President and conference convener *Bill Metcalf*. Participants included 170 delegates from many countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Israel, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Most were academic researchers studying various aspects of intentional communities but others were from the major international communal groups, such as world such as **Hutterian Brethren** from the U.S. and Canada, Israeli Kibbutzim, and **The Family** (formerly Children of God), in the US. About 30 volunteer workers and 70 ZEGG members completed the group.

Plenary sessions explored communal living in Germany in the past, present and future; the ZEGG commune, conference

host; the future of communal studies and how scholars and communitarians can work together for mutual benefit; an International Communities Fair featuring 34 communities from five continents; and the possible future of community living, including cohousing, ecovillages, and virtual communities.

The 70 presentations included topics ranging from communal economics to reincarnation of communards, and from free-love in theory and practice to historical accounts of hitherto unknown 19th-century communes.

For Bill (also *Communities* magazine’s international correspondent), some of the ICSA conference highlights included:

“ZEGG members singing early kibbutz songs in Hebrew to Kibbutzniks old enough to be their grandfathers,

“An elderly Israeli woman teaching young people from all over the world how to dance as they did in her kibbutz in her youth,

“A wonderful formal dinner hosted by ZEGG members dressed in black and white, and served outside on a balmy summer evening, followed by a fire ritual,” and,

“The incredible cooperation and breaking down of barriers between passionate, committed people from all over the world sharing only a passion for intentional community.”

By the end of the conference Bill was exhausted, but also exhilarated because the feedback about the conference was so positive. He notes that many new networking connections were established at the confer-

ence, for example, between the publishers of the *Eurotopia* (Europe) and *Diggers and Dreamers* (Great Britain) communities directories, the **Fellowship for Intentional Community** and *Communities* magazine, the Israel-based *Communes At Large Letter* (C.A.L.L.) and **Global Ecovillage Network** (GEN) networkers.

The conference was followed by a three-day bus tour of well-known German communities: **UFA-Fabrik**, in Berlin, **Kommune Niederkaufungen**, near Kassel, and **Oekodorf Sieben Linden**, in Poppau. “The double-decker busload of touring participants became an ongoing seminar about intentional community living, as well as a very fun time,” says Bill.



Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA), an organization that serves communitarians and people interested in community in Washington and Oregon, has created an email list specifically dedicated to regional community topics. If you have an email account and live in the area you can subscribe to the list. Any messages sent to the list will automatically be sent to all other subscribers for a broad, ongoing discussion of all participants. To subscribe, send a message to nwcommunities-subscribe@egroups.com.

NICA is also creating a regional community businesses directory specifically to help communities’ businesses advertise their goods and services to other interested communitarians. For more information contact NICA at nica@ic.org.

THANK YOU, ERNEST MORGAN

Last October, lifelong community activist, educator, author, and storyteller Ernest Morgan died at the age of 95. Until his last months this very senior community elder was still Corresponding Secretary for **Celo Community** in Burnsville, North Carolina. In his nineties he still contributed articles to *Communities* magazine about his many experiences of community and cooperation throughout his life, in his town, in the workplace, and in cultures internationally. Son of the legendary communitarian and social activist Arthur Morgan, over his long life Ernest Morgan published the weekly *Yellow Springs News* in Yellow Springs, Ohio; was UN administrator for Arab relief in the Gaza Strip of Palestine; and with his late wife Elizabeth Morey Morgan cofounded **Camp Celo** and the **Arthur Morgan School**. He was an active advisor to the **Community Services, Inc.** organization of Yellow Springs, Ohio, and Chairman of the Board Emeritus of The Antioch Company. He was author of *Dealing Creatively with Death*, a manual of simple burial, and *Dealing Creatively with Life*, an autobiography. *Communities* magazine honors his many contributions to cooperation and community spirit during his life, contributions which will live on after his passing. Thank you, Ernest.



Still Water Sabbatical community in western Montana is disbanding, and their 40-acre property five miles from _____ is available to a suitable successor community at a bargain price. While the property and improvements are worth at least \$150,000, they'll sell substantially below market value to an appropriate nonprofit organization. Improvements include four mobile homes with power and water, a reasonably well equipped shop, and an extensive library. The property is in a fairly secluded area off a county road, yet two hours from major shopping areas. For further information, contact *Victoria Adams* at pln5576@blackfoot.net.

GardenSpirit near Asheville, North Carolina has also disbanded, and its 11-acre solar homestead is available. Suitable for a small sustainable community, the property includes meadow and woods, two houses (kitchens, large living rooms, dining room, six bedrooms, two offices, three bathrooms, big decks, basement, laundry area), two storage buildings, 4,000 sq. ft. organic garden (expandable into three-acre meadow), two wells, and solar system powering 80 percent of electrical load (grid backup) and DC well pump. Contact *Amina Spengler*: amina@teleplex.net, or 828-863-2558.

While **Gaian Contemplative Community** is still going strong, they're selling 40 acres 29 miles northwest of Spokane, Washington, a property they believe is ideal for a start-up community. Improvements include two homes, a rustic two-story cabin, and a full-basement foundation for a future dwelling. The property has a year-round spring, irrigated gardens, meadows, woods, and beautiful views. For more information contact *Margaret Rhode* at 509-258-9443, or MargaretRhode@aol.com.



The 12 core-group members of **Jamaica Plain Cohousing** recently formed a partnership with Watermark Development Inc., to build a 30-unit cohousing community in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. The core group has hired two experienced cohousing professionals. *Chris Scott-Hanson*, cofounder of **Winslow Cohousing** in

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Bainbridge Island, Washington, developer or project manager for several cohousing communities in the Pacific Northwest, and author of *The Cohousing Handbook*, will be Project Manager. *Mary Kraus*, architect and cofounder of **Pioneer Valley Cohousing** in Amherst, Massachusetts, will be the architect, along with her firm *Kraus/Fitch Architects, Inc.*, which also designed Pioneer Valley Cohousing and the second cohousing neighborhood of **Ecovillage at Ithaca** in Ithaca, New York.

The group is actively seeking new members to complete their community: families with young children, singles, couples and seniors. For information see www.jpcohousing.org or contact them at 617-522-2209 or coho@world.std.com.



The Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), a mutual support network for communities valuing income sharing, nonviolence, participatory decision making, and ecological practices is 25 years

old this year. FEC member communities and associated "Communities In Dialogue" include **Acorn** (VA), **Beacon Hill House** (WA), **Blackberry** (CA), **Dandelion** (Ontario, Canada), **East Wind** (MO), **Ganas** (NY), **Jolly Ranchers** (WA), **Krut-sio** (Baja California, Mexico), **Piñon Ecovillage** (NM), **Sandhill Farm** (Missouri), **Skyhouse** (Missouri), **Terra Nova** (MO), and **Twin Oaks** (VA).

Partly inspired by **Kibbutz Ha'Artzi** and other Israeli community networks, the FEC first gathered in 1976 at East Wind. Other founding communities were **Aloe**, **Dandelion**, **North Mountain**, and **Twin Oaks**. Two founding delegates, *Piper Martin* and *Ira Wallace* still live at Twin Oaks now, as did *Kat Kinkade* until recently. Shared member outreach efforts are the core of the FEC's work—anyone who inquires about any FEC community receives information about all of them. The FEC also has a strong labor exchange program among member communities, and the P.E.A.C.H. insurance fund for catastrophic health care coverage.

Their **25th Anniversary Visioning Day**

is scheduled for December 8th at Twin Oaks. Former FEC delegates are especially invited. For more information contact *Sheldon* at bbhouse@yahoo.com or call 206-324-6822.

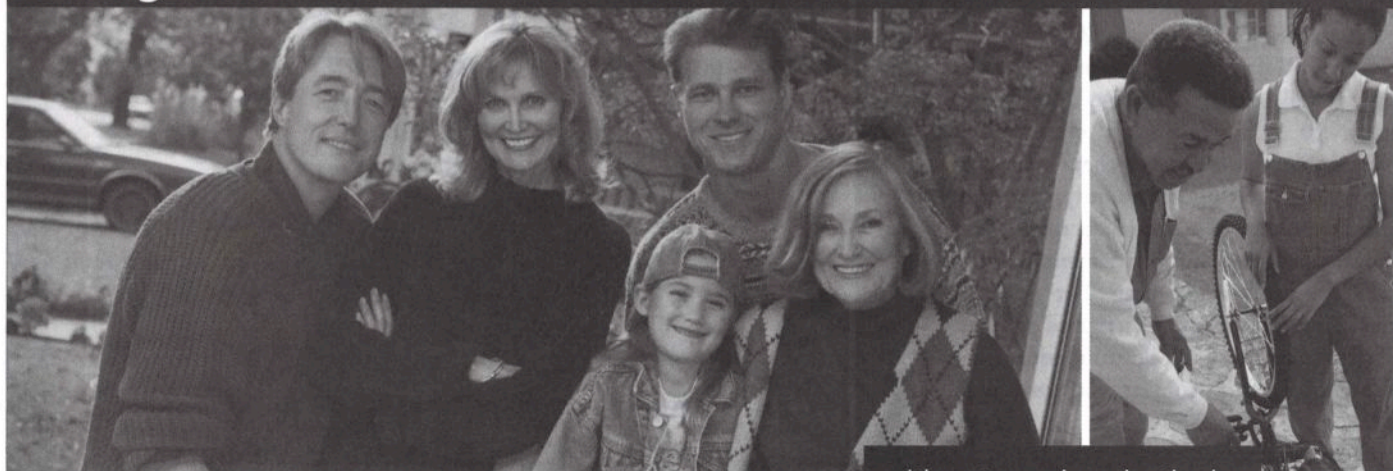


Individual communities (non-FEC affiliated) celebrating anniversaries this year include **Collegiate Living Organization** (FL), celebrating 70 years; **Abbey of the Genesee** (NY), 50 years; and **Camphill Village U.S.A.** (NY), 40 years.

Communities celebrating 30-year anniversaries include **Chester Creek House** (MN), **Cooper Street Homestead/Triangle F Ranch** (AZ), **Headlands** (Ontario), **Innisfree Village** (VA), **Moonshadow** (TN), **Mount Madonna Center** (CA), **New Jerusalem Community** (OH), **Plow Creek Fellowship** (IL), **Rapha Community** (NY), and **Springtree Community** (VA).

Communities 20 years old this year include **Aquarius Nature Retreat** (AZ),

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Community of Hospitality (GA), Dorothy Day Catholic Worker (DC), Sparrowhawk Village (OK), Susan B. Anthony Women's Land Trust (OH), Sweetwater Community Land Trust (OH), and Walnut House Cooperative (CA).

"New" 10-year old communities include Alchemy Farm Cohousing (MA) Bethlehem Peace Farm Catholic Worker (WA), Dreamtime Village (WI), Highline Crossing Cohousing (CO), L.I.F.E. (VA), Lichen Co-op (OR), The Land Stewardship Center (MI), Monterey Cohousing (MN), Mulvey Creek Land Co-op (BC), Ness (NY), Oakland Elizabeth House (CA), Pangaia (HI), Qumbya Cooperative (IL), Shepherd's Gate (CO), Tekiah (VA), Twelve Tribes Community in Hyannis (MA), Yesss Community (CA), and Zephyr (VA).



Whether in a 70-year or 10-year community, or no community at all, you're invited to the Fellowship for Intentional Community's fall organizational meeting, to be held October 26-29 at Sonora Cohousing in Tucson, Arizona. For more information, contact Jenny Upton, jenny@ic.org.

Heard it through the grapevine ...

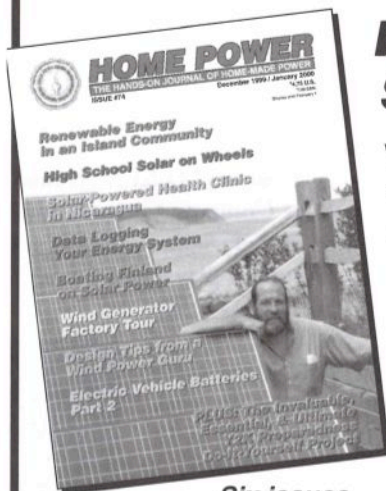
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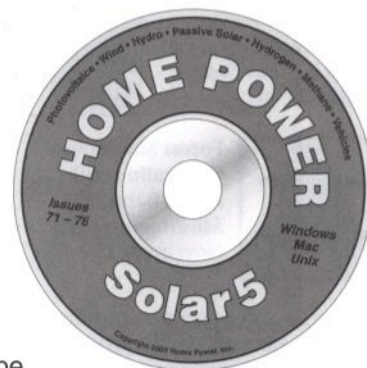
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Stress can be defined as either prevention of natural function or its forced functioning.

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Stress can be seen in the number of air conditioners in California without the power to run them; in the price of gasoline at the local filling station; in overpopulation, declining fresh water supplies, and global climate change.

Harmony can be found in:



Permaculture Design with Morag Gamble and Evan Raymond of *Sustainable Futures*, Australia, July 8-22.

Ecovillage Design with architect and master planner Greg Ramsey of *Village Habitat Design*, October 17-21.



Forest Mushroom Cultivation with Albert Bates of *Mushroompeople*, November 10.

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A Playground for “La Comarca”

This autumn (Spring 2001 in the Northern Hemisphere), Diego Méndez and I received an invitation for our initiative, “Taller Marindia,” to travel to La Comarca, an intentional community in El Sauce, Canelones, Uruguay, to build a play space for community children. We arrived on the weekend with our tools, planning to stay long enough to work with this community of 17 adults and six children.

On the first day we cleaned up the area selected for our project and erected the main poles of a play structure that would look like a sailing ship. All tasks were spontaneously shared with community members and ourselves: peeling the poles, digging holes, hammering, making a sail. By sunset we had the frame for the ship finished. We built a platform for the deck; a net for kids to climb on; a slide; ladders; and a place for a watchtower, hammocks, and other playful equipment, all set up within the vessel’s structure. We were all happy about what we had accomplished as we shared a wonderful dinner of veggies from La Comarca’s organic garden. We renewed our energy together and gathered for sharing about the group’s experiences as a com-

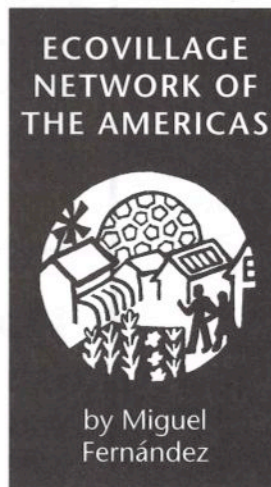
munity.

The next morning we had the feeling of being a grand work team, as each of us focused on some particular part of the ship while having an understanding of the structure as a whole. We could feel a deep connection with each other, and different

ideas and solutions came easily. We built everything with the materials available in the community, except for some paint and nails that we brought. When we stopped to reflect and talk about each step of the work, the children were already playing on the almost-finished equipment. It was good to see them play, and we shared with La Comarca members what we have learned about what a great benefit playing can be for physical exercise, stimulation, relax-

ation, creativity, and happiness.

The sun was still up, and we were ready for the final touch: painting. We chose our colors from the flowers, the fruit, the sky, the animals. With several brushes we painted with the colors of America, colors of the old traditions that vibrate throughout this land with a high and strong energy. The Taller Marindia project seeks to feature colors in simple drawings that connect us to our folk art,



Miguel Fernández is an artist in Uruguay who deeply believes that the future depends on children’s education. Through their project “Taller Marindia” Miguel and his associate Diego Méndez build special playgrounds in many school and community play areas. They believe that children can connect with nature and learn about their unique cultural traditions through art and play.

bringing dynamic colors into everyday life.

At dusk on this second day, as the sun was setting like a fire in the sky, our work was done. We had accomplished what we had intended, and saluted the sunset. We built a fire and formed a circle around it. Everyone had a chance to express themselves as we passed the talking stick, one of the poles prepared for the ship's sails. We shared our good wishes for one another, for our children, and for the whole family of life. At the end of this warm ceremony, we hugged, and Diego and I set off for home. We left behind an artful sailing ship for the children of La Comarca and other visiting children to navigate.

Taller Marindia is now creating a wonderful holistic playground in Marindia, Canelones, Uruguay, for children from many different area schools, and for workshops in art, music, permaculture, and more. The project is currently under construction, though in need of additional support in order to be finished. We have already built much play equipment, a large space for classes and workshops, and a small maintenance shop. Some ecological systems still need to be completed: composting toilets, a graywater treatment system, and appropriate technologies to generate off-grid electricity. When finished, this play site will accommodate visits of large groups of children for play and learning. Ω

Taller Marindia is a project of 7 Generations, a nonprofit organization which serves as a contact office for the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) in Southern South America. See photos of Taller Marindia's enchanting creations for children at:

<http://www.7generaciones.org/marindia>

ENA contacts: Lucia Battagazzore, ENA Council Representative for Southern South America: 7generaciones@jacaranda.org.

Linda Joseph, ENA Central Office: ena@ecovillage.org.

ENA Home Page: ena.ecovillage.org.

ENA Regions: ena.ecovillage.org/Region.

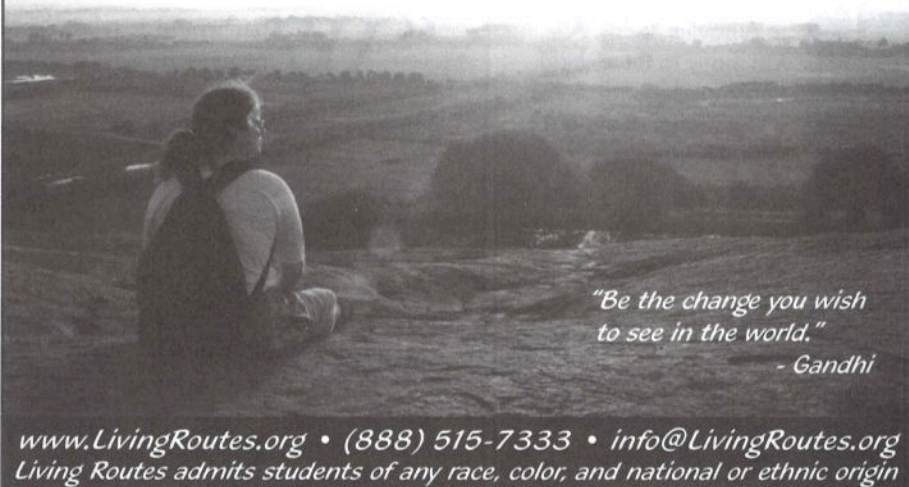
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Cohousing's 2020 Vision:

Warm and a Bit Fuzzy

“What would it take for 10 percent of new housing starts to come from cohousing developments by the year 2020?” asked keynote speaker Eric Utne at The Cohousing Network’s (TCN) biennial conference (held July 20-22 on the Berkeley campus of the University of California). At the present rate, that would represent 150,000 houses, noted the *Utne Reader* founder—roughly 100 times the total number of cohousing units built in the last decade. Nobody can accuse this group of thinking small!

This summer’s conference marked the tenth anniversary of the first cohousing units completed in North America, in Davis, California. Today there are 55 finished cohousing projects and three times that number in various stages of planning and construction. It was a good opportunity to look at the amazing amount of ground covered since 1991, and what lay ahead. Nearly 300 folks came from all over the continent to celebrate, see friends, and talk shop.

Taking a crack at Utne’s challenge during the final plenary session, Chris Scott Hanson (professional cohousing developer/consultant, Cohousing Resources, and author of *The Cohousing Handbook*) noted that to do this a lot more units would need to be built for renters, and cohous-

ing would need to participate in much larger developments, perhaps even retrofitting former military facilities.

Stella Tarnay (Editor of *Cohousing Journal*) addressed the overwhelmingly white, middle class audience about the challenge of incorporating a more diverse population in cohousing. Will future cohousing communities provide homes for more people of color, people with more colorful personalities (or, for that matter, for people who don’t use colored cards in meetings?) Will there be a welcome mat for those who prefer to harvest a substantial portion of their protein on the hoof? How about Republicans?

Ruminating on the kind of people needed to make cohousing work in

his plenary address, Jim Leach (professional cohousing developer/consultant, Wonderland Hill Development Company) offered the insight that it required folks who combined both the vision of a more connected life with the stubbornness to survive the gauntlet of meetings necessary to get there. Upon reflection, he decided that if you pooled together all these “enlightened dysfunctionals” there just might be enough market share to get the job done.

TCN President Ann Zabaldo felt cohousing was especially well placed to



Laird Schaub is Executive Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community, publishers of this magazine and the Communities Directory.

offer significant solutions to tough societal issues about child-rearing, environmental degradation, and care of the elderly. She also waxed eloquently about the power of consensus as a tool for social change work, claiming “you cannot use consensus legitimately without being changed in the world.”

Chuck Durrett (cohousing architect, The Cohousing Company, and co-author of *Cohousing*) emphasized the potential of beauty in cohousing communities to inspire. He noted that a quantum leap in cohousing starts would require a prior leap in public awareness, which in turn would probably be based on the discovery that the cohousing movement creates beautiful places to live. Though financing was part of the logjam stifling early cohousing development, that’s no longer the key log; today it’s suitable sites and suitable groups. Durrett wondered if the cohousing movement could spawn a cadre of skilled cohousers willing to travel from site to site, passing on their wisdom and inspiration personally, as union organizers did in the ’20s and ’30s.

Zev Paiss, The Cohousing Network’s Executive Director, offered a vision of being able to walk across the country, hosted each night in a different cohousing community from Maine to California, just as Catholic priests in Old California built their 21 missions a day’s walk apart. He also challenged the audience to think about the potential of communities such as cohousing to spread the culture of engagement and neighborliness beyond property lines to embrace (infect?) adjacent populations.

The conference did not lack for strong visions and inspirational words. While the high attendance strained the facilities (people outnumbered chairs at every workshop I attended) and the venues were scattered all over town, these were relatively minor inconveniences—conference energy was clearly up-tempo and constructive.

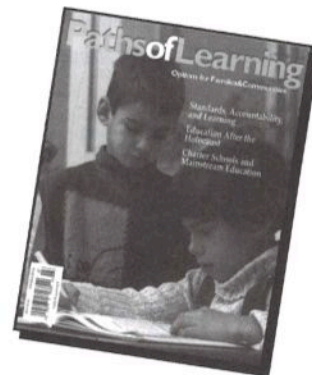
While I’m all for strong visions, it is also worthwhile to contemplate the obstacles that must be addressed to get there. I felt the conference soft-pedaled several serious questions that the grand vision begs. Here are three that I gleaned from the weekend:

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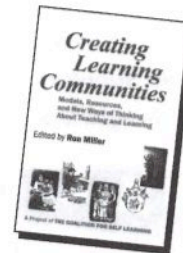
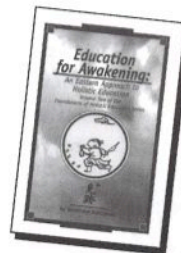
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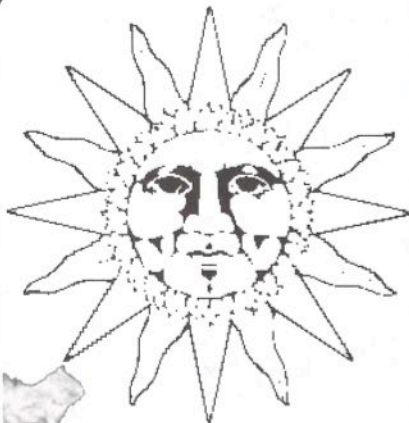
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lated on how to shorten the time from a starting group's first couple of moving speeches, to the time when the first couple moves into a finished home. While experiments are now underway with the "streamlined" and "developer driven" models, there's a growing appreciation that creating quality community takes time and cannot be rushed or pre-packaged. (When Utne mused about the possibility of creating community "boot camps" where future residents could get a crash course in community living, I was heartened to see this idea substantially rejected by the audience, who saw it as naive). It seems that today's cohousers get it that community is not something that can be done to you or for you, but an experience each group must create for itself. The challenge will be growing a solid sense of community at the same time that the group is designing, financing, and marketing. That's a process that can only be done so fast.

The coming power struggle with renters. If cohousing is going to make a serious pass at affordable housing it will have to offer a lot more rental units. (Market rates price most Americans out of cohousing, no matter what economies of scale are achieved by having everyone buy the same style kitchen cabinets.) And that means wrestling with the power gap between community owners and renters. A good deal of bonding and community culture comes out of the design and construction phase—all of which is the exclusive domain of owners. Renters enter the picture later, buying in (so to speak) to a substantially done deal. In addition, renters may be disenfranchised from certain long-term community decisions. The dynamics of renters as potential second-class citizens in a community is a boogiemon on the horizon and will require careful work to exorcise.

"Inventing Community." While I'm reasonably sure that no one in the audience thought Ann Zabaldo was serious

when she introduced Chuck Durrett as "the inventor of the Internet," I had an uneasy feeling all weekend that most cohousers feel they've invented community, rather than discovered it. The relationship of cohousing to other forms of intentional community was rarely mentioned, and I had the distinct impression that people were often using the term "cohousing" where "intentional communities" would have been a fuller statement. For a group bent on seriously tackling societal challenges, I longed for more awareness of and bridging to cohousing's

Cohousers have a growing appreciation that creating quality community takes time and cannot be rushed or pre-packaged.

closest allies—other forms of intentional community. The toughest moment came Friday morning when a panel of cohousers appeared on KQED, the local NPR affiliate, with a chance to plug the conference. When callers asked about other forms of community and their relationship to cohousing (such as co-op houses, ashrams, and rural communes), Zev Paiss replied that "cohousing has spawned many forms of community." As if cohousing were the fountainhead from which all other forms have sprung. Ouch!

Zev's a friend and former FIC board member, so I'm confident he understands that cohousing is the new kid on the block and that all the other major forms of community existed well before cohousing appeared on the scene. We'll get to a good place on this, yet it points out a tender area where more bridge work is needed within the communities movement as a whole.

The next TCN conference will be held in Colorado in 2003, and no doubt there will again be lots to celebrate and connect with, even if it may be BYOB—bring your own bridge. Ω

Setting the Record Straight:

13 myths about intentional community

One of the tasks of the Fellowship for Intentional Community is helping the public understand that the communities movement exists, is growing, and is a good thing. That often requires debunking common myths and misconceptions. Here's a list that the FIC hands out to journalists—to set the record straight.

Myth: There are no intentional communities anymore; they died out in the '60s & '70s.

Fact: Not so. Many of those communities survived and thrived, and many new ones have formed since. A significant surge of new interest in intentional communities began in the '90s. The FIC has about 3,000 North American communities in its database, and estimates that there are thousands more.

Myth: Intentional communities are all alike.

Fact: There is enormous diversity among intentional communities. While most communities share land or housing, and members share a common vision and work actively to carry out their common purpose, the vision can vary widely from community to community. Some communities have been formed to share resources, create great family neighborhoods, or live ecologically sustainable lifestyles. Some are wholly secular, others are committed to a common spiritual practice; many are

spiritually eclectic. Some help war refugees, the urban homeless, or developmentally disabled children. Some operate rural conference and retreat centers, health and healing centers, or sustainable-living education centers.

Myth: Intentional communities are all "communes."

Fact: Many people use these terms interchangeably. It is probably more useful to use the term "commune" as an economic term, for communities operating with a common treasury and sharing ownership of their property. Few intentional communities are actual communes.

Myth: Most community members are young—in their twenties.

Fact: Most communities are multi-generational.

Myth: Most communitarians are hippies.

Fact: Few communities today identify with the hippie stereotype, and many are cohousers, who essentially live a middle-class, though more cooperative, lifestyle. Most communitarians tend to be politically left of center, hard-working, peace-loving, health-conscious, environmentally-concerned, and family-oriented.

Myth: All intentional communities are out in the boondocks.

Fact: About half of the communities listed in the 2000 Communities Directory

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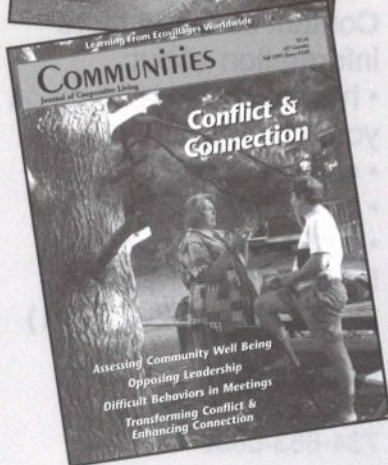
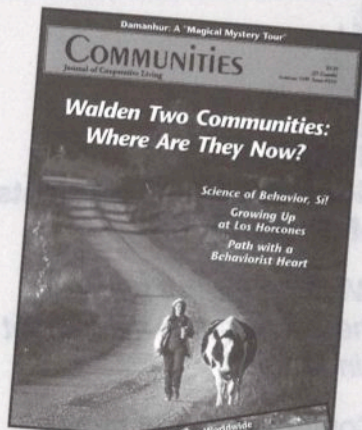
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are rural, about a fourth are urban, some have both rural and urban sites, and some don't specify.

Myth: Most intentional communities are organized around a particular religion or common spiritual practice.

Fact: While it's true that many groups have a spiritual focus—statistics from the 2000 Communities Directory show that half are secular, 10 percent don't specify, and 40 percent have a spiritual focus. Of these, some are religious, some have a common spiritual practice, and some are spiritually eclectic.

Myth: Most intentional communities have an authoritarian form of governance; they follow a charismatic leader.

Fact: The reverse is true; the most common form of governance is democratic, with decisions made by some form of consensus or voting. Of the hundreds of communities listed in the 1995 Directory, for example, 64 percent were democratic, nine percent had a hierarchical or authoritarian structure, 11 percent were a combination of democratic and hierarchical. Many communities which formerly followed one leader or a small group of leaders have changed in recent years to a more democratic form of governance.

Myth: Community members all think alike.

Fact: Because communities are, by definition, organized around a common vision or purpose, their members tend to hold a lot of values and beliefs in common—many more than are shared among a typical group of neighbors. Still, disagreements are a common occurrence in most communities, just as in the wider society.

Myth: Most communities are "cults."

Fact: Both the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion have done research that refutes the idea that religious or other groups are systematically brainwashing their members or interfering with their ability to think critically.

Although the term "cult" is usually intended to identify a group in which abuse occurs, it would generally be a more accurate description if the observ-

er defined a cult as "a group with values and customs different from mine; a group that makes me feel uncomfortable or afraid."

Most communities are not abusive toward members. The ones that are, especially those prone to violence, can attract media attention which falsely implies that intentional communities are abusive in general. It's our experience that the overwhelming majority of communities are considered good places to live by their members—and good neighbors by people who live around them.

Myth: Community members have little privacy or autonomy.

Fact: The degree of privacy and autonomy in communities varies as widely as the kinds of communities themselves. In some communities individual households own their own land and house, and have their own independent economy (perhaps with shared facilities); their degree of privacy and autonomy is nearly identical to that of mainstream society. In most cohousing communities, for example, residents enjoy autonomy similar to that of any planned housing development. However, in communities with specific religious or spiritual lifestyles (such as monasteries or some meditation retreats), privacy and autonomy are typically more limited, as part of the purpose for which the community was organized. Most communities fall between these two points on the privacy/held-in-common spectrum. Many older communities have become more privatized and less communal over the years.

Myth: Most members of intentional communities live impoverished lifestyles with limited resources.

Fact: Communities make a wide variety of choices regarding standard of living—some embrace voluntary simplicity, while others emphasize full access to the products and services of today's society. Nearly all communities take advantage of sharing and the opportunities of common ownership to allow individuals access to facilities and equipment they don't need to own privately (for example, power tools, washing machines, pickup trucks, and, in some cases, even

swimming pools).


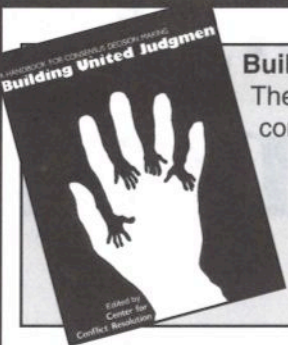
Members of new communities that start off with limited resources tend to live simply. As they mature, they tend to create a stable economic base and enjoy a more comfortable life—according to their own standards. Many established communities have built impressive facilities, financed by successful community businesses, such as light manufacturing, food products, computer services, and conference centers.

Myth: Most people who live in communities are running away from responsibilities.

Fact: Many people choose to live in community because it offers an alternative way of life from that of the wider society, yet most community members still raise families, maintain and repair their land and buildings, work for a living, pay taxes, etc.

At the same time, communitarians usually perceive their lifestyle as more caring and satisfying than that of mainstream culture, and because of this—and the increased free time which results from pooling resources and specialized skills—many community members feel they can engage more effectively with the wider society. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine. Laird Schaub is the Executive Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community. Geoph Kozeny, the magazine's "Peripatetic Communitarian" columnist, is producer/editor of a three-hour video documentary about communities.



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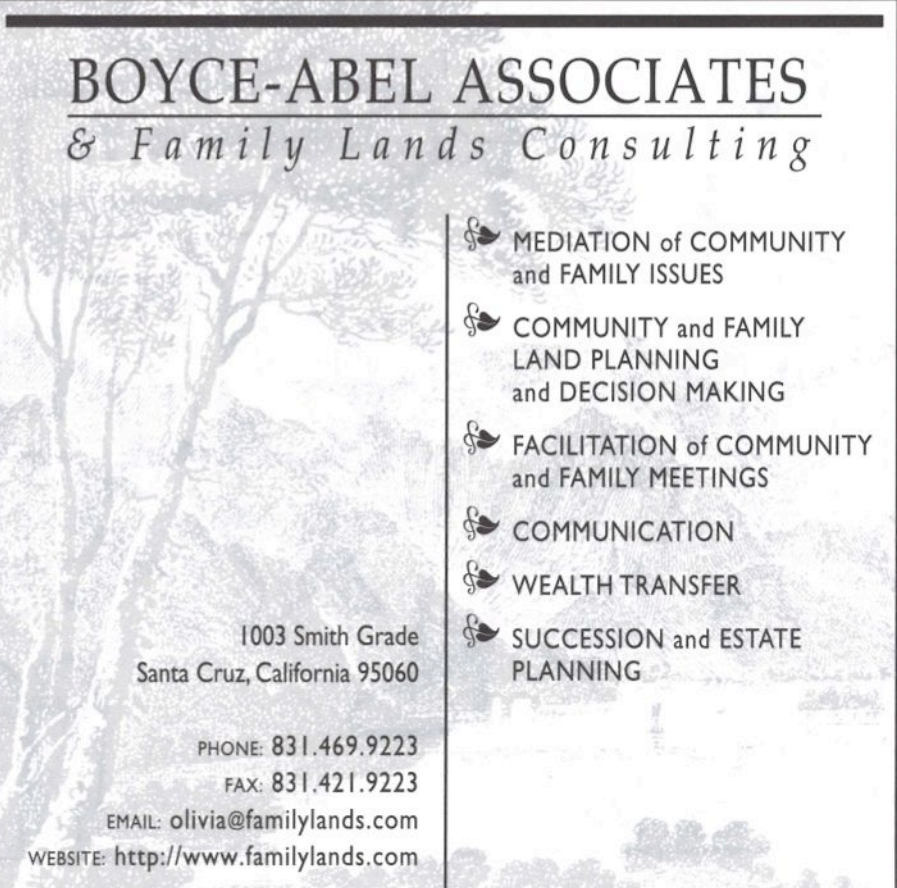
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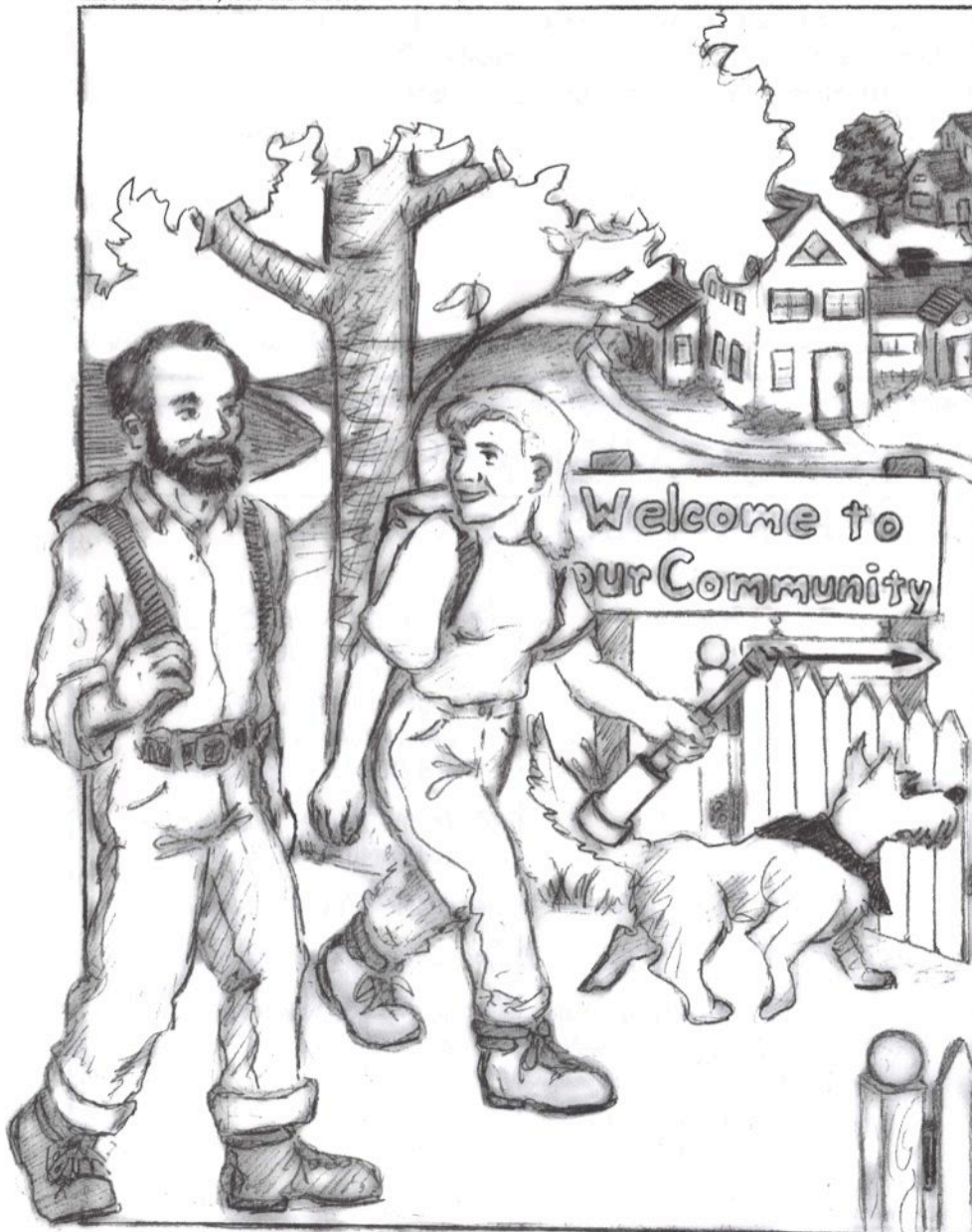
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Seriously Seeking Community

BY PATRICIA GREENE

Second in a three-part series

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JACOB STEVENSON



My partner John and I sat at the kitchen table of our New England farmhouse ready to dig into listing our priorities for the community we hoped to find and join. At first it seemed easy to cart out a long list of community buzzwords: *ecovillage, consensus decision making, educational outreach, sustainability, earth friendly, natural building, off-grid, nonviolence, permaculture, organic gardening, land trust, cottage industry*, and of course, *cooperation*. These words have always created bright pictures in our minds; shorthand for visualizing the aspects and attitudes of this new way of living we're eager to be part of. But while they are important, the popular buzzwords began to seem sort of generic as we listed them off.

I put my pen down. Fresh out of not finding the right community—again—we were beginning to wonder if we were being too picky or too cautious, or maybe there was something we were missing here.

So we pushed aside the new *Communities Directory* with all the listing pages we had carefully tabbed, and took a deep breath. Decided to let go of the flashy, fun part of our search—planning to visit communities, creating the perfect ad for *Communities Magazine*, scanning the new listings on the FIC web site, or running out to traipse about various properties for sale and dreaming of where to put the community center. Of course we thought our goals were defined while we were running around (we wanna live in community where we can be more sustainable and spiritual and help create a new way of life, don't we?). Might have been better if this time of reflection had arrived earlier, but hey, community searches, like life, are not always neatly ordered. For us it took a dose of mucking around in it, and as we did, our ideas changed and grew.

The time had arrived to go inside and start delving into what our ideal lifestyle would look like now, and then how we could, in a very practical way, put that in the context of living in community.

What Do We Really Want?

In the beginning of this search, community was our creative expression. We were zealots, giving our whole lives to the community we were co-founding, all working (read “slaving”—literally round the clock) together in the cooperative community business, all living together under the same roof and intending to share most expenses—at least until we could build our own shelters, which would have been years. It was too intense and stressful. We ended up being workaholics who couldn't stand each other.

We healed from the failure of that vision, got a little older and thought, “good idea to start enjoying life now, not later.” So John and I have grown into our own individual, creative expressions that didn't have much to do with community—making rustic furniture, writing novels, meditating, and sailing.

Balance has become important when we think of life in community. “I think the ideal is to work four hours a day at community labor and have four hours to spend on your own personal stuff. For me it's spiritual development,” said a man working alongside me in the garden at one community we visited. But when we revisited a year and a half later, he was regularly making a silent retreat two days a week and we almost didn't get to talk to him. He had found personal balance and the community realized how important individual free time can be to the good of the whole.

So to be balanced living in community, we've realized we need more space for ourselves, both psychologically and physically. We'll probably want our own house with a place to write, workshop space, and time to pursue creative and spiritual interests and have fun.

We're no fools. We know that being part of a community takes much more time than living a more mainstream life. Between meetings, processing, having more conscious interactions, community work, and the rigors of sustainable living, being an engaged community member is like having a part-time job. And we're looking for a community with what we call “glue,” or a sense of purpose that involves more than creating a beautiful place to live with like-minded neighbors.

First, we're looking for an internally bonded community that eats together, meets regularly for both business and emotional sharing, and coordinates group work projects. Group meditation, ritual, celebration, and resource sharing are also important, as is some possibility of income on the land (or at least intent to develop this).

The second part of glue for us is having a common dream that extends beyond the community. It might be outreach through education or retreats, wanting to create and share a model for a new way of living or service in the local community.

Whatever it is, it means that a community has a sense of connection to the bigger picture.

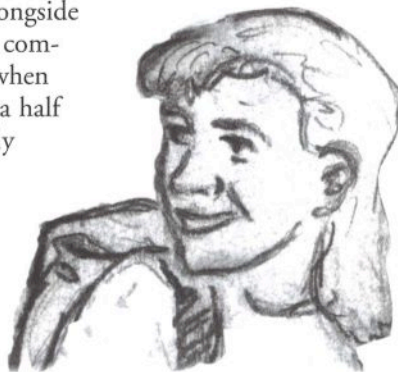
And the gluiers are, the more time it takes.

So if our ideal life is in a gluey community, we'll have to figure out where those hours we want for ourselves will come from. Most likely they will have to be subtracted from our strictly income-producing labor. That fact alone has several implications.

Out of the Mainstream

Our ideal life has gotten farther and farther from the mainstream, as in our real lives we've gone from very frustrated to terminally dissatisfied with hard work at jobs that don't thrill us, costly mortgages, the pressure to consume, and the complication, busyness, and isolation imposed by our lifestyle—which is actually fairly simple. We figured out a while ago that when we really get down to it, the only way out of this endless cycle is out—a radical lifestyle change. Living in a common-land, eco-spiritual community has always seemed the most decisive and sane step away from the mainstream we can take.

What we really want is to be able to do what we love—whether it's making furniture or serving on a community membership committee. If we can keep expenditures low, we can be free to spend less of our time earning money



**We are the people
communities are
looking for
financially
because we can
afford to join
them
—or can we?**

which will allow us freedom to be ourselves and to be cultural evolutionaries.

However, as we've looked around at a variety of communities, we've begun to understand that living in community won't magically insulate us from mainstream attitudes or the expensiveness of society.

Once we spent a few days at a wonderful community that was establishing a retreat center with cabins, one of which we stayed in while we joined in community activities, including labor. When it came time to say good-bye and pay up, we found they were charging us \$100 a night for

meals and lodging. I gently said that it seemed like a lot for community visitors to pay. Their reply: "Well, you could never get three meals and a motel room for that." We wrote out our check, glad that it was at least going to a good cause, but were left with a feeling of frustration—not so much because of the money, but because of the attitude. We've realized that if we have to pay too much to join and live in a particular community, either through land fees, monthly dues, or the cost of building, then we will be right back where we are now—floating in the insanity of the mainstream with steady jobs and loans to pay off.

A few communities we've visited, usually the older ones where land and buildings are paid for, held a refreshingly radical and cooperative attitude as the norm. (Income-sharing communities fall into this category, but because they require a common purse, shared housing, and 30-40 hours a week of income-producing and community-maintenance labor, we would not be able to have the

life we want at such a community.)

One long-established community simply charged members a nominal monthly fee for room and board.

Everyone lived in small, rustic cabins without water or electricity, and shared common meals at a central cooking/eating/bathing facility. Since they had few members they were realistic about the community work requirement of about

18 hours a week, and included tasks like cooking and attending meetings. They clearly stated that they wanted to make it possible for members to live on the land without having substantial outside jobs.

When we asked about their new-member policy

regarding joining fees, they said at first there weren't any joining fees. "Nothing?" we asked incredulously. Then one member said, "Oh, well people have been telling us we should have a joining fee, so we've been talking about charging \$10,000 and then giving that back to the member when it comes time for them to build their house." Turned out none of the small houses built there so far had even cost \$10,000. Now there's a radical and workable idea, we thought. Only possible if the land is paid for or bought cheaply, of course. If you leave this community, the house remains, but this is also radical in its supposition that one makes a commitment and stays, and if not—well, you haven't spent too much and so you pass on a legacy to the future.

Less Money, More Freedom

Visiting the community with no joining fee brought us to an important realization about money, freedom, and community.

From what we've seen, John and I are

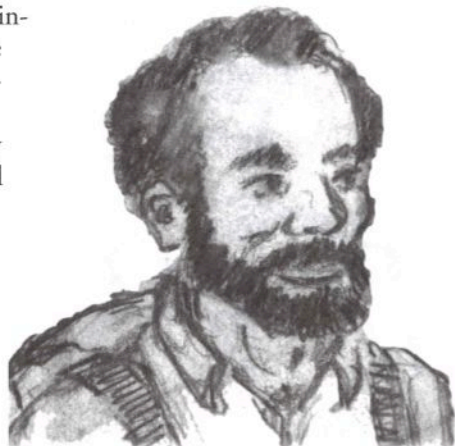
financially fairly unusual among those seriously seeking community, many of whom are good people who've been pursuing better things than money and therefore haven't accumulated a lot of savings. While we're not wealthy or trust funders, we've worked at saving up a substantial chunk of money and have equity in our house. Debt-free, we can carry our old jobs with us if we want. We are the people communities are looking for financially because we can afford to join them—or can we?

What we've been dreaming about is financial sustainability. So we asked ourselves what our formula would be for financial sustainability in community.

We'd start by being able to live on less than half of what we live on now. We'd be bank-free and interest-free—building a very simple house we could build and pay for without a mortgage or loans. We'd have extra money to invest (could be revolving loans to other community members), to provide some of our monthly income and relieve financial pressures, thus allowing us to transition into earning what we need from things we love doing without leaving the land. Another essential: we'd have extra money set aside for the first year to take care of temporary shelter and getting established (since most communities require six months to a year of prospective membership on or near the land before one can become a full member). Throw in the ability to freely barter, thus not having to use money as the means of exchange at all.

We like this picture! The key to making it a reality is finding an affordable community in a low- or no-zoning area (which means we can build more cheaply), within our targeted geographical region (at this point the rural East Coast from Georgia to Maine), that is currently accepting members and that we feel is a match for us. Sometimes, I must confess, we think it's a tall order.

How do we define affordable? Of course the formula is different for everyone, but for us to realize financial sustainability, we can afford to pay \$10-15,000 to join and have the right to lease a piece of land. Take \$40,000 or so to put into a house, which we expect to build mostly ourselves, including the substantial costs of a solar system, roads,



We were beginning to wonder if we were being too picky or too cautious.

water, septic and other necessary improvements. Or better yet, take the kitchen and bathroom out of our house and put it in a common building. We'd still have some to invest and get over the hump of the first year.

Community Affordability: Elusive and Necessary

We know it's much harder to start a community today than when John joined a commune in 1969. With the escalating cost of real estate, the newly formed communities we've visited have had to pass the high cost of land along to members. These members are caught needing a large chunk of money up front, because they can't get a mortgage from a bank unless they actually own (and are not leasing) the land under their house.

Some communities help out by offering a little sweat equity, a little paying over time, and sharing of house sites with others to defray costs. But if a community depends on land fees to survive (and diversity in the financial portfolio is definitely an asset!), this generosity can strain its finances and force it to put off needed improvements—improvements which, paradoxically, would make the community comfortable enough to attract the new members with money to invest that it so desperately needs. And we've seen members of new communities who can't afford to build their house tire of living in mildewed canvas yurts after a few hard winters and leave.

Joining fees in the communities we've been interested in have varied from nothing at all to \$80,000. One well-thought-out community we liked had a \$4,000 joining fee per person, a site lease fee of \$16,000 for a lot, and a land improvement fee (to pay for roads and water) of about \$10,000. This would bring our cost, before we got to building our house, to \$30,000. Add on the cost of the house and you've got about \$70,000. Still pretty cheap, and we acknowledge that this would include an interest in the community center and access to the whole large parcel of land, but it would squeeze us so much financially that we'd have to get jobs in town—which was too far away.

Another community we considered had a very reasonable joining fee of about \$5,000. The original founding couple was

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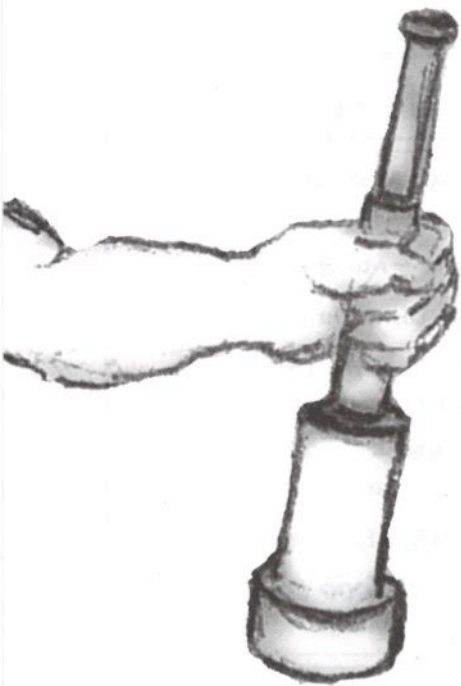


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We've seen members of new communities tire of living in mildewed canvas yurts after a few hard winters and leave.

holding the mortgage and everyone was paying into it at \$250 a month. If we joined, John and I would be paying \$500 per month to live there, which added up to \$60,000 over ten years. Plus, of course, the cost of building our house, which would have been somewhat less in this community as the plan was to have common kitchen/bath/laundry facilities. Over time it would have cost us about \$85,000, although initially only about \$30,000.

Another important factor that plays into the how-cheaply-can-we-build equation is local zoning regulations and building codes. We have become much more conscious of asking about these. One community that had built a dozen or so tiny, inexpensive houses with no plumbing and a central bath and kitchen facility had slipped under the permitting process when the sympathetic building inspector agreed to call the houses "storage sheds." Up here in Massachusetts you could never live in a house without plumbing or smaller than 1,000 sq. ft.; you'd have to have 200 feet of frontage per house on a town-accepted road, and any road you built into your community would have to be 30 feet wide and paved.

Community Accessibility

So how can communities be made more accessible and affordable? We're always on the lookout for the elusive

answer because it seems affordability is the key that will allow us to live our ideal, unpressured, balanced life—and we've come to think this should be an inalienable right.

Perhaps a community bank that

would make its main business giving low-interest loans to pioneering people joining common land communities. Or a foundation that would give communities grants and loans for land and improvements or for starting cooperative businesses.* We started a business at our community to support members, but we didn't do enough research, none of us liked the type of work (making rope!) and for various reasons the business failed. But the idea was still a good one and could be folded in at the beginning as a natural part of the community-forming process.

What about wealthy people helping out directly? We visited a community where one of the founders, a former corporate executive, raised the money to buy the land and then devoted himself to helping build the community. My sister is joining a women's community where the founders had enough cash to buy land in a cheap, no-zoning rural area. They sold new members lots at a reasonable rate with down payments of only \$5,000 and owner-financed the rest, thus making it easy for new people to buy in while simultaneously giving themselves an income and enough time to develop the community. Not surprisingly this community has already sold most of their 42 home sites. In another community, members and close friends raised more than \$200,000 to pay off the land owner, and now all the other community members are paying these members back rather than paying a bank or outside mortgage holder.

One last thing. Community founders could let go the idea of being in locations

with mild winters near a major cultural center, where property tends to be more expensive. We've found beautiful places in the Adirondacks, for instance, where land still sells for \$400 an acre and there's little zoning. Yet across the border in Vermont, where so many people think they would like to start communities (including us at first), land prices are three and four times that and the zoning super strict.

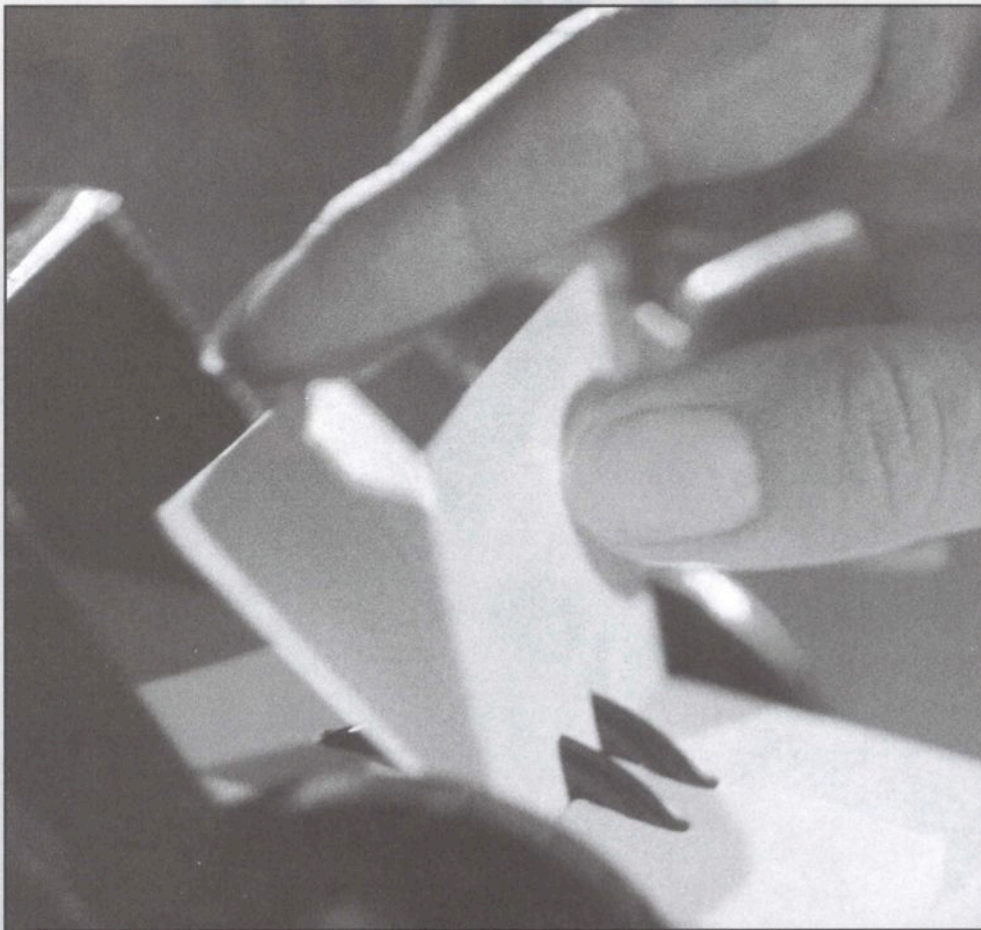
Sometimes when I start feeling a little gloomy over taking so long to think through this process, I realize how un-fun it would be to settle too quickly into a place that wouldn't fit us a few years down the line. We want this to be a life decision, not an just an experiment. Not rushing our search has allowed us the time to become clearer about our life directions and priorities and that will affect our choice.

So we're still dreaming about that little, mortgage-free, off-grid eco-house we'll build ourselves, about that tribe of good-hearted people, about those common meals out of the community garden, about the bartering of labor and expertise, and the sharing of cars, band saws, and bathrooms. Will we make it a reality? Seems like seeking community is a calling and, as the nuns told me years ago, there's no denying a calling. We have decided to go on trying. Ω

The first article in this series, in the Summer '01 issue, described Patricia and John's early search for community and their attempts to start their own. Part Three, in the Winter '01 issue, will recount their experiences visiting a community they are interested in for an extended stay.

Patricia Greene has edited the Reach and Classified sections of Communities magazine since 1994. She is, among other things, a writer with one novel published and another on the way

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To the ecovillage

SUSAN PATRICE

by Diana Leafe Christian

Do Family Dynamics Change When Three Generations Move to the Same Community?

“And here’s the constructed wetlands,” says Patricia Allison of a series of ponds on the slope outside the community kitchen. “The graywater flows through these reed beds and these water hyacinths and ends up in a pond clean enough for frogs and salamanders to live in.” This is where you’ll find Patricia on many Saturday mornings, giving the weekly two-hour visitors’ tour of Earthaven in western North Carolina.

Earthaven is an aspiring ecovillage on 325 forested acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville. With about 50 members (mostly in their twenties and fifties) and approximately 40 people living on the land in various Earth-friendly huts and canvas yurts, their goal is to become a sustainable multigenerational village of about 150.

Patricia teaches permaculture as well as consensus facilitation at Earthaven and at other centers around the country, including her native Texas. She's walked her talk as an ecovillage pioneer, living in a yurt with a wood stove (so far with no running water or electricity) since 1996. Now the community has a kitchen and dining room, showers, a large Council Hall for meetings, electricity and running water in the common areas, and even a sauna and a general store. But Patricia has lived on this site of converging stream valleys since the early days when "community living" meant, essentially, camping out.

And so it was something of a stunner for this long-time ecological activist when her sister Mary, a former top US Tupperware manager; her brother-in-law Lynn, a retired mechanical engineer and hydrologist; and her 84-year-old mother, Fran, all decided to pull up stakes in Texas and join her at Earthaven.

Since Patricia's 21-year-old son Robin also lives at Earthaven and works in the community's Forestry Co-op, this makes three generations of the Allison-Armstrong family to choose the ecovillage life. And because Robin's own toddler Gailen has visited often, that's potentially four generations walking the shady paths

and narrow wooden bridges of this rural permaculture community.

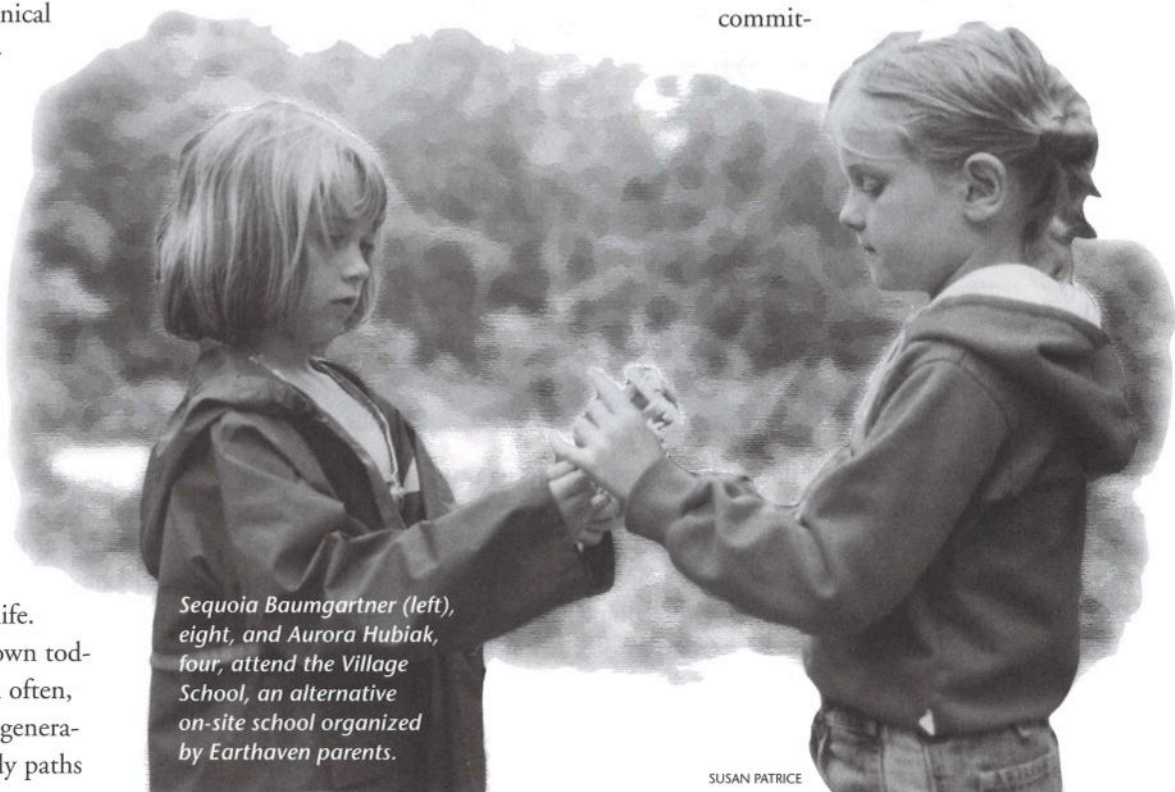
In April of '99 Mary began a four-week permaculture certification course with Patricia in Houston. "And it absolutely changed her life, turned her around," says Patricia, "because she got it. She got the wholeness of what I've been talking about all these years. Mary said, 'As long as I was ignorant I could continue the way I was living. But I'm not ignorant anymore and I simply can't. I've got to change my whole lifestyle.' Looking over her options, Mary decided to do what I was doing, saying, 'I want to go live this way.' Of course, I didn't believe her." In August of 2000 Mary traveled to Earthaven to take the second part of the permaculture course. That's when she and Lynn made the final decision to move to Earthaven.

When Mary quit the Tupperware business in March she had been the top sales manager in her region, and number 72 out of 10,000 Tupperware sales managers nationwide. She and Lynn had run two other business. She knew management, and how to make an enterprise successful.

Lynn had worked as a mechanical engineer for several decades, besides co-managing the businesses, and had supervised the construction of several of their homes and their warehouse/office building. He was tired of the daily rat race in Houston and relished the challenge of helping a group of visionaries with his practical skills.

Patricia and Mary's mom Fran had been a medical technologist, as well as a lifelong artist, writer, and craftsperson who taught needle crafts. Widowed young, she raised four children almost singlehandedly. "When my mother heard that Lynn and Mary were moving here," Patricia says, "her reaction was, 'Well, if both of my daughters are going to live at Earthaven, I'm going to live there too.' She had also taken the first part of the permaculture course, which is basic theory. And, like Mary, she got it."

In February 2001, Fran, Lynn, and Mary left Houston and moved into a rental home a few miles from Earthaven. They became Provisional Members of the community, got involved in various commit-



Sequoia Baumgartner (left), eight, and Aurora Hubiak, four, attend the Village School, an alternative on-site school organized by Earthaven parents.

SUSAN PATRICE

tees, and began planning the two-story home that they and Patricia would share on community land. In June, the family put up a canvas yome (yurt-dome) on their building site, so that Fran, Mary, and Lynn could be more available for beginning construction.

Communities Magazine: *How do you feel about the rest of your closest family moving to Earthaven?*

Patricia Allison: It's incredibly rewarding, and difficult. I'll occasionally just get this wave of euphoria and gratitude.

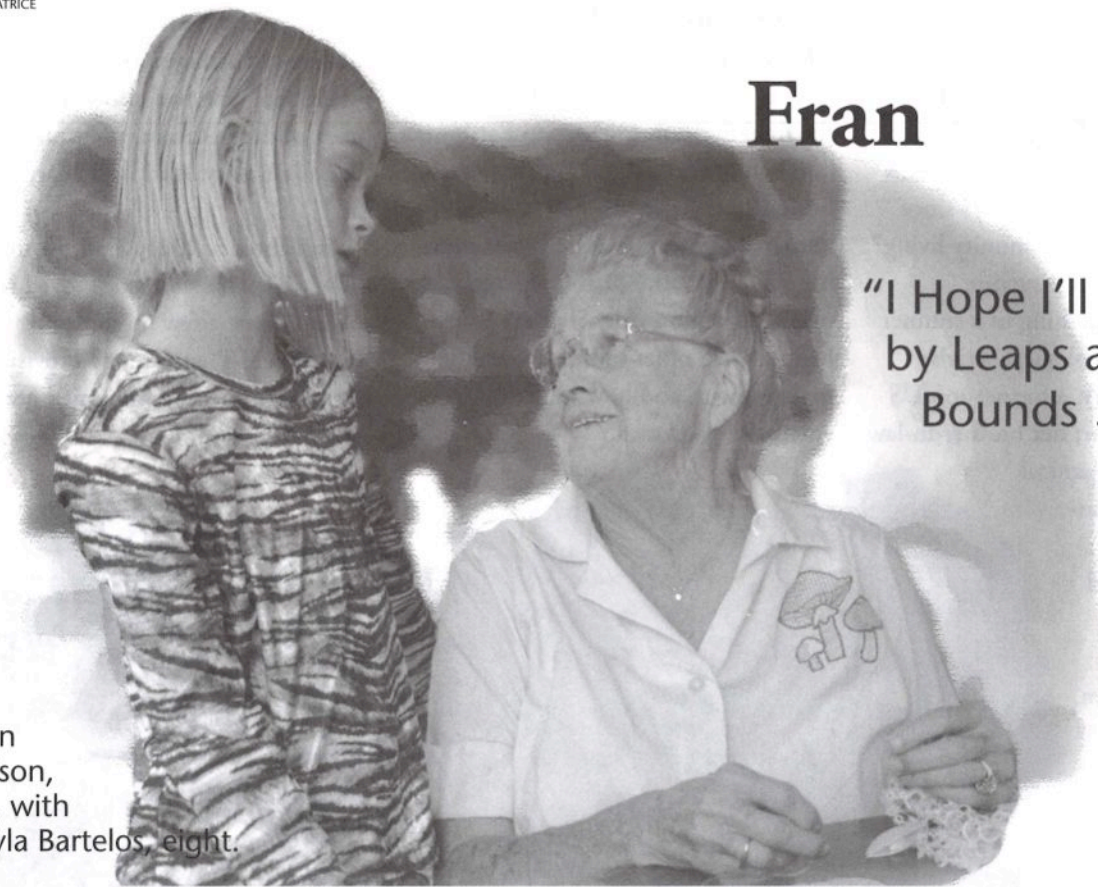
I'll remember I prayed for this. I asked for this. I got what I asked for. I said, "We need Mary's energy here. We need Lynn's expertise here. We need elders." And yet, I never believed they would come here. I never had a *clue* they would. Because, compared to me anyway, they were very mainstream people. And so I never expected it.

The most magnificent part of their coming here is that if my family can see the vision here at Earthaven, and see its value, mainstream America can be reached. That's the incredible power

here. If we can turn around the Tupperware lady, we can turn around anybody. (Now, it's got to be a Tupperware lady with a great big heart, who's open to loving unconditionally, any entity that comes her way, like Mary.)

And it *is* difficult. They're my family. Other community members will see them through the filter of me, and me through the filter of them. We have—my mother, my sister, and I—a family pattern of defensiveness and easily hurt feelings. We act it out with each other, and with other people. I have gotten to

SUSAN PATRICE



Fran

"I Hope I'll Grow
by Leaps and
Bounds ... "

Fran
Allison,
84, with
Kayla Bartelos, eight.

For many years my daughter Patricia has been trying to pour some knowledge into my head about sustainability and ecological concerns. But I refused to accept, until about two years ago when I took the permaculture course. And it finally dawned on me. I'm just a slow learner, you know? Then Mary and Lynn decided this was for them, and were planning moving up here.

You know, I'm not a spring chicken anymore: my need for a little help along the way increases with each year. And it seemed to me that the place for a woman in her 80s was near her daughters. So if both of my daughters were going to be up here, they weren't about to get by with leaving me back in

Texas! (laughs)

Had I been awakened to this knowledge at the age of 60, that would have been a different story. I think I would have moved here on my own. But at this age, unless my daughters were here, I think I probably wouldn't have.

I don't think living here will pre-

see our pattern against the backdrop of Earthaven, and it's like, "Whoa, we have got it big time!" I mean, I knew we had this pattern, but, bring it into a community situation, and it's extremely evident.

CM: *Do you recommend ecovillage living for revealing, making explicit, and 'exorcising' family patterns?*

Patricia: Well, people are certainly going to be in your face. You'll have other people calling you on your stuff besides your family. I think that's very

beneficial. I've been called on my stuff here, stuff I never knew existed. And yes, I'm still defensive. I still tend to take things personally that perhaps weren't meant that way. But *exponentially* less than when I first arrived here. And so my heart kind of breaks sometimes, because I know both Fran and Mary are going to get slapped around a bit. It's not going to be easy.

So far they haven't been called on things very much. But as people get more friendly and more intimate here they will be. And the challenge for me is not to feel *responsible* for them. Or

embarrassed. Or to think, "Oh my gosh, how can I fix this? How can I protect Mary from being hurt? If somebody calls her on her stuff, it's going to hurt her so badly." And "Oh, I hope they're nice to Mother, even though, you know, we all have our stuff." That's the scary part.

The other part of it also, is that they were, to some degree, painted with the same brush as people want to paint me.

CM: *Meaning?*

Patricia: Meaning, I believe that people

sent any physical challenges that will be detrimental. I think only good will come of it. I have led a fairly sedentary life, and it's better late than never, beginning to get some mountain legs under me. (laughs)

I hope to increase gradually the amount of walking I do. And I'm certainly able to walk a heck of a lot more now. When I first came here I used a big walking stick. Well, I don't have to do that anymore. Might have to hang onto a post or two, but I manage to get up and down the paths.

If the community is going to invite elders, they'll need to make some of the access a little easier, like putting steps in; like putting handholds where are aren't any now. Even if it was nothing but a rope with knots stretched across an area, it would help. One of the young men was watching me the other day. He said, "Hey, you know, we're going to have to start thinking about getting older, 'cause although you've already reached eldership, we're not getting any younger." (laughs) I thought that was very observant of him, to think that what would help me now will help him later.

My energy and abilities declining over time doesn't concern me, because I still have my mental capacity. I still can use a computer, I

still can go to meetings, I can work in committees. I'm working with two right now: Membership and CurrentSee. (Earthaven's labor/credit system) And I'm trying to learn Excel so that I can enter more data for the CurrentSee committee, because they're so far behind. The only thing I can't contribute is manual labor. And not only that, there is a lot of talk about making a labor requirement exemption available for elders—but only if we want it. We elders don't want to be forced into old age, you know.

So I can still work for the good of the community. A number of women have expressed desires to learn to knit and crochet and use my knitting machines. I would like to start a cottage industry with the knitting machines. I'm a darned good cook, and I have a lot of know-how in that department. I've lived a long time, and I may have collected a few little items of wisdom along the way (though I can't really think of any of them right this moment). (laughs)

I don't look too far in the future. The first most satisfying thing about being here will be seeing our home for all four of us erected and finished, and seeing an organic garden develop on our site.

In terms of community life, I'm

going to enjoy all of it. Being around young people makes me feel younger. Seeing what these young men and women are accomplishing is just mind-boggling, really. The idea that they haven't been here but six years, and they've done all this; it blows my mind.

After we get settled in our home, I want to take the full permaculture course. I've always had to know about things. It was most amazing to me when I took just a little introductory course. I really want to know and understand more about that.

I'm really interested in learning more about the processes they use here: consensus, mediation, learning to find ways for people who are in complete opposition to come together to agree on things. I just think that it's fascinating.

I communicate fairly well myself, but I sometimes carry my feelings on my shoulder for somebody to knock off, you know? (laughs) I'm hoping I can learn more about curbing that. Just living in a community of three with Mary and Lynn is already teaching me some. But I've still got a long way to go. You know I don't think you ever get too old to grow. I hope I will grow by leaps and bounds while I'm here.



Mary
Armstrong
at the family build-
ing site.

SUSAN PATRICE

Mary

"I Couldn't Keep My Head in the Sand"

I couldn't keep my head in the sand anymore. You hear about the destruction of our water, our air, our oceans. And it's about "they." But in the permaculture course I became aware that this means "us"—there is no "they"—and it'll take one person at a time to make the difference. It just filled my soul when I took that course. I knew that I had to get out here.

The one thing that made me successful in Tupperware are my people skills, such as the ability to listen to other people, to hear both sides. And being able to take a project and run with it. I believe that being able to communicate and motivate makes me a good leader. But there's so much I have to learn here before I take on too much. Because I've really switched lifestyles.

I've taken classes in consensus, and I need more study, more practice. I want to learn more about cooking great vegetarian meals. I also want to learn different types of natural building and off-grid energy methods. It's going to be a major learning curve building our new home.

One of my greatest desires is to go back to the practice of daily prayer, which Patricia and I have shared in the past. Both of us seem to need the other to keep it going, and we really hope others will join us, to make it even stronger.

Our family has always been close. I feel so fortunate that I'll have this time with my mother. However our grown children do not think this is a good idea. They are not happy about their momma leaving at all. Lynn and I have been married 28 years and have seven children between us, and 13 grandchildren. We left them all right there in Houston.

When it came down to it, it was a very hard thing to drive away. But I have not regretted it. I had more desire to be me. And I could only be me by breaking away from where I was and stepping into a new place.

who aren't all that fond of me, and have difficulty with the way I am, were initially not very receptive to my family. I don't think it was necessarily conscious; it was definitely subtle. But I believe I saw some resistance. And, I have a strong personality. Some people see me as "taking over." I don't know if I do or not. But, having a strong personality, being willing to be present and on the front lines all the time, can be perceived that way. And then when you bring in a Leo version of that—Mary's got five planets in Leo and the rest in Scorpio—it's like, "Is this going to become Allison-haven? Is this family going to take over? Cause look at the two of them!" And Mother ain't no wimp either! *(laughs)*

CM: How do you think your son is doing now that not only his mom, but also his aunt and uncle and grandmother are all here?

Patricia: Robin has surprised me. I saw his maturity. It seems that he's just moved up another click in his willingness to be present, to be available for them, to go over to their house and help them. I guess I was still thinking he was 16 years old. He's shown himself to be a very responsible, caring, and compassionate young man, in helping them get themselves settled. So that's been lovely.

Robin declared his independence at age 16. He said to me, "You've been the best mother and teacher a person could have, and now it's time for me to go out into the world and learn by making mistakes." So when I came here he didn't come with me. He visited me and stayed here off and on, and by the time he was 19 he had made his own decision. So he joined independently of me.

I think independence is particularly important to home-schooled children of single parents. I've played a *big* role in his life, more than most mothers, and I think it's really important for him to

distinguish himself as an individual.

CM: *This is a big place. Do you see each other very much?*

Patricia: We don't. We see each other at meals, and I'll go up and give him a hug, and every once in awhile he'll come and give *me* a hug (*laughs*). So it's sort of a "Hey, Robin, how ya doin'?" And then every once in awhile we make it a point to get together. He'll come up to my yurt and hang out and have some tea and sit for a few hours and kind of

catch up. I think we've done quite well. I feel good about the mutual respect that has continued between us.

CM: *Does he play a role with you as younger person seeking the wisdom of an older person, or a fellow adult, or both?*

Patricia: More fellow adult. Very occasionally—but beautiful, rich occasions—he actually will come to me with a problem. I don't know if he's ever asked for what he'd call "advice," but he's made himself open to hearing, and has appre-

ciated whatever guidance he got from me.

I believe that in a really mature ecovillage or mature tribe, where a child had many adult friends, and where a single parent and child hadn't had the isolation that Robin and I had, due to the constraints of our culture, he wouldn't be going through the need for as much distancing as we've had to go through. It's been, frankly, painful.

I foresee that when Robin's in his 30s or so it will be a time of us genuinely being equal adults, and, probably rarely,

Lynn

As an engineer and as an individual, my "thing," you might say, is to assemble a bunch of pieces that aren't necessarily connected in any particular manner, and put them together in order to create something. I like the challenge of putting together all these different parts to create something physical; something that you can see. In back of the kitchen at Earthaven is that little porch, for example. Robin and I built it out of all these curved and warped oak boards they were going to throw away because they couldn't be used for anything else.

I think Earthaven needs somebody like me, somebody who knows how to do most of the things that they're learning. There's enough people and energy here to create anything that you wanted to create. I like to see this kind of energy and I like to teach people how to use it. Let's be productive with it.

Sometimes there's an easier, more economical, more ecological way to do things that they haven't thought of here. Take local building codes and the group's land-use guidelines. I'd like to help them find balance between these. Because I've been on both sides of the fence; I can understand both sides. And hopefully, I can get my PE (professional engineer's) license accepted here in North Carolina. I can stamp their building plans and walk them right on through.

Some things are challenges here. For example, they don't know how much total water they've got. If you can bypass 20-30 percent of their stream water through a turbine, how much have you got? Nobody knows.

In terms of living with family, I'm very fortunate. I have some very good in-laws; they're congenial and easy to get along with. Easier to get along with than I am. And I'm the only Libra in the group! (*laughs*)

"I Like to See This Kind of Energy"



SUSAN PATRICE

Lynn Armstrong at the site.



Many young parents at Earthaven work at the community and stay near their children. Mihaly Bartalos (left), father of three, works in the Forestry Co-op. Corrina Wood, mother of an infant, co-owns Red Moon Herbs.

having a need or desire to accentuate our biological connection. That, yes, there's that specialness, but it becomes less and less special as the new adult integrates into the world of the adults of the tribe. That's how I see the ideal integration.

CM: What do you think it will be like living together with your mom and sister and brother-in-law again after all these years?

Patricia: I have a lot of joy, a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of euphoria. Sometimes I can't believe this is happening. I also have a strong, pragmatic gratitude that Fran's paying for the house. I haven't had a clue how I would have

Robyn

"I Need More Space!"

SUSAN PATRICE

On the one hand, it was a lot easier to move here because my mom lived here. At the same time, that causes me a lot of heartache. I often feel as if I didn't come here of my own volition. I still feel that I have a lot more world experience and learning to do.

On some level, living here is really incredible. I have a lot of interest and excitement and awe about the possibilities of creating a sustainable village. It's awesome that my mother and my aunt and uncle and my grandmother are here now. And at the same time, I have a lot of feelings like, "God, I'm living with my folks, you know?" Which feels really weird to me. It feels like, "Jeez, couldn't I have done better for myself? Or created other avenues for myself?" I'm not going to say this is clear thinking. But I definitely feel this way subconsciously.

Most of these feelings are about being here at Earthaven, which is not really working out that well for me right now. First, there's the total lack of social life for people my own age, 21. My peers aren't here at all. There's only two people here near my age range; the nearest others are 26 and 28 or 11 and 14.

Second, I really need a lot more space, physically and psychically, for thinking and feeling about who I am and what I need to be doing with myself right now. I feel like I need a lot more space than I can have here, with the level of work required. Everyone is pushing like hell all of the time to get all of these things done. And if I'm not necessarily doing something productive, but just spending time with myself to think, or rest, or be, I feel guilty. Just being here requires a very high level of interaction—with meetings, with other people, with all the responsibilities of being on a committee and working the required hours per quarter. And I just can't be doing that right now. I want to be somewhere else, in my own dominion.

I feel pretty clear that this is what I want to be doing ultimately, and I don't want to lose touch with what's going on here. And I want to still work with the Forestry Co-op, no matter what. Basically the experience I'm getting with our business—I appreciate it a whole lot. It's definitely what brings my life fulfillment.

paid for a home. I just kept trusting that when Spirit wanted me to build a home, some money would come my way. Well, it did, in the form of my mother. So, I'm mighty grateful to be getting a home that I don't have to go out scrounging up dollars for.

At the same time, I am one of the most low-tech people here. For 20, 25 years I've lived mostly outdoors and without electricity. I don't want to live in a "house." I'm pretty damned rigid and judgmental about high-tech consumerism and "my comfort at any cost." And I see that as lovely as they are, my family brings that with them to some degree. But, Goddess bless them, they are willing, they are so willing! It's just mind-boggling. If I ask that we talk about some construction material, Styrofoam insulation, for example, and weigh the economic and ecological costs, they listen to me. Sometimes it's incredibly humbling, because they respect my knowledge and my opinion. It's kept me straight though, trying to stay in my integrity and not force my opinions on them. So I'm concerned about my own physical and psychic comfort living in a great big house. I'm afraid that I won't be outside as much as I really need to be.

My concerns are not too deep though; I can always build myself a mud hut to live in if I need it. I think the main thing is not how I'm feeling about this, but what these new people can do for Earthaven, and thus for humanity. I know that they have a lot to give, and are willing to give it, and I would welcome them no matter who they were related to. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine. She and her mother Rosetta Neff, 85, are on the membership track for Earthaven Ecovillage.

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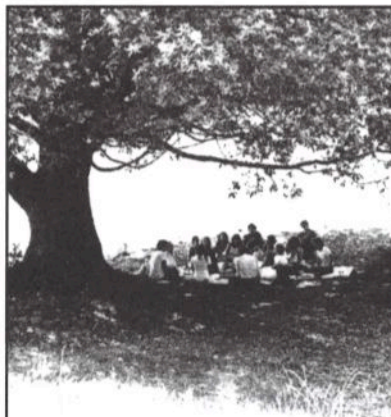
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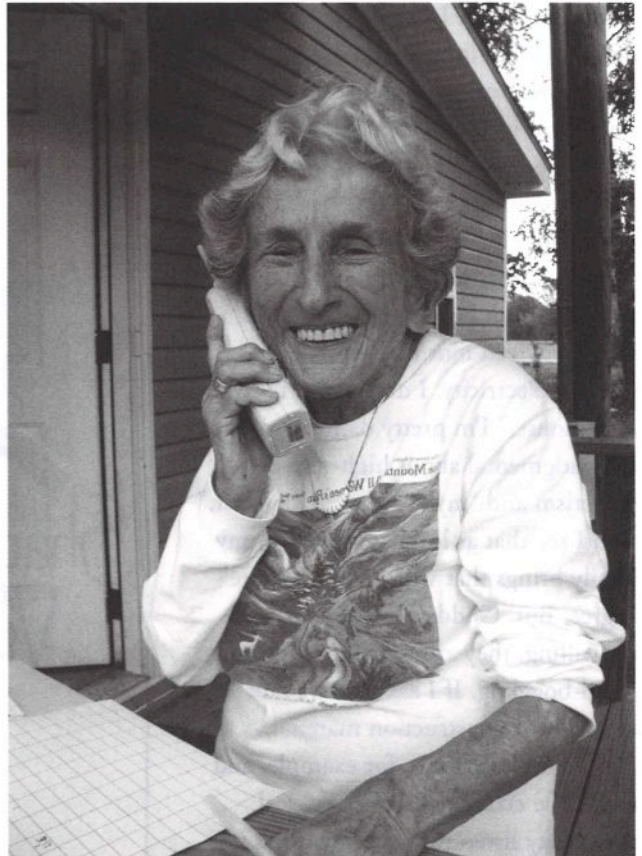
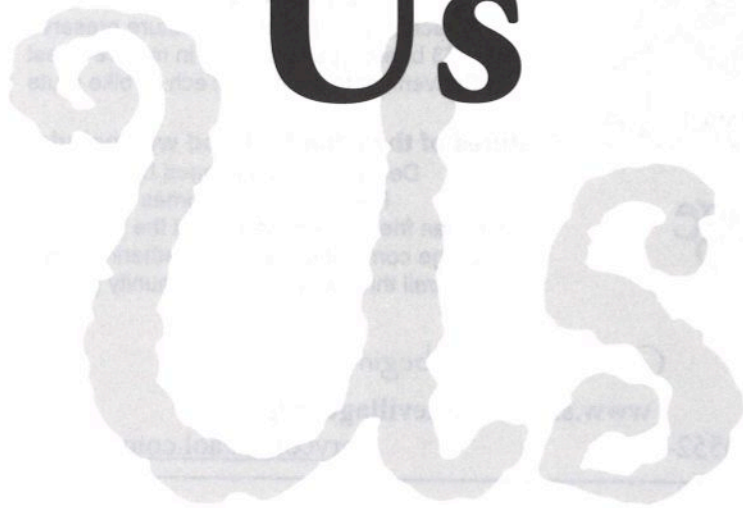
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It Takes All of Us



"What, only a loaf of bread?" Formerly shy Claire Marx, 84, is an integral part of one of The Farm's food businesses, remembering everyone's favorite foods as she takes orders by phone.

BY DOUGLAS STEVENSON

When we founded The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee in 1971, most members were in their twenties and starting families. Now some 30 years later, we're experiencing a graying of community, as our core members reach their fifties, with most of the second generation, the children of founding members, leaving the community to seek a life of their own in the greater world.

So now it's time to take stock. What is the ideal composition in people and generations that will insure a community's continuity and keep it healthy and strong? And what part do elders play in a community dominated by a younger generation?

Throughout our history we have been fortunate to have a population that encompassed the entire range of ages, from a continuous stream of newborns to those in their elder years. Although always outnumbered by our population of boomers and young children, people born before World War II have always played a vital and important role at The Farm.

During our early days in Tennessee, for example, Uncle Bill was one of our first residents over 70. He was rescued from a nursing home by one of our members, his niece, and came to live in one of our large multi-family communal houses. His situation illustrated how our society devalues its senior citizens, sending them to wither and die out of sight and away from their loved ones. On the Farm, Uncle Bill came back to life. Once the owner of a New York delicatessen, he was soon sharing old recipes and inventing new ones, once turning an abundant eggplant harvest into a vegan substitute for pickled lox, a dish that has become a Farm tradition.

In early 1980 Joe and Helen Silvers lived a quiet retired life in the Chicago suburbs. One day Joe happened to see a few members of the Farm on the Phil Donahue Show. Acting without hesitation on some unknown impulse, Joe and Helen packed up everything they owned and moved to Tennessee, where they lived with us for the rest of their lives.

Although that was during a time when Farm members pooled their incomes into a communal economy, it was decided that Joe and Helen should keep their Social Security incomes to provide for their own needs. Nevertheless Joe gifted the Farm with swing sets for our many children. He bought a riding lawn mower, and gave himself the job of keeping the community's many roadsides trimmed in an effort to bring beauty to his newly adopted home. Joe also poured his heart and soul into caring for the Farm's cemetery, and in so doing, helped teach us the importance of honoring and remembering the spirits of those who have left this world.

The road to the cemetery is called Silvers Lane in his honor, and a painting of him and a plaque commemorating his time on the Farm grace the walls of our community center. Joe showed us the importance of recognizing and following your dreams—and that you're never too old to seek adventure.

In the early '80s The Farm faced a financial crisis, prompting a radical change in its structure and organization, which left many people disillusioned. As we struggled to get back on our feet, one of our community-

owned businesses, The Book Publishing Company, was broke and in debt. While it had published many best-selling titles, including *Spiritual Midwifery* and *The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*, the company had little or no stock and no money to republish.

Dorothy Bates, a Farm senior, offered vision and financial support, and rescued the business. Still community-owned, today it employs over a dozen Farm residents, and is one of the largest publishers in the United States of vegetarian and Native American titles.

Dorothy came to Summertown in the late '70s to retire near her grown son and grandchildren, purchasing 50 acres of land just outside the Farm's main gate and hiring Farm

building crews to build her a model solar house.

Although her property is separate from The Farm proper, there is no question that she has been and continues to be an invaluable member and mentor. In addition to authoring many cookbooks herself, she has stood

by The Farm in times of trouble and stress as a voice of wisdom that is respected by everyone.

It was Dorothy who first counseled our community on retirement planning. She started an investment club, teaching a crowd that had purposely avoided an understanding of the stock

**We're
experiencing a
graying of
community, as
our core
members reach
their fifties.**

market the value of saving for the future, both through her own independent example as well as her instruction on how to establish IRAs and college funds.

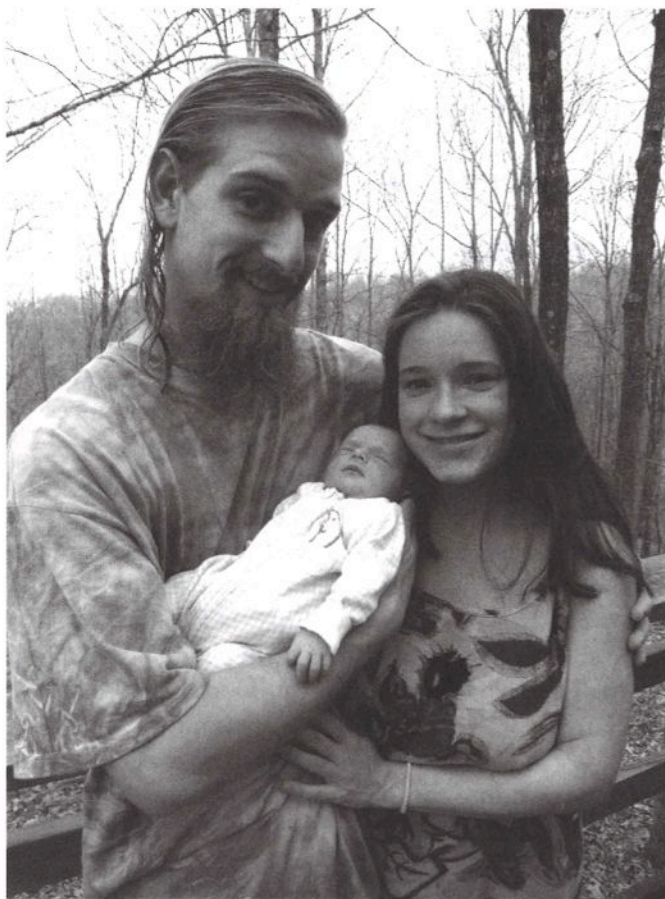
Although recently a fall fractured her hip in three places, three days later Dorothy was up with a walker, once again demonstrating that you can't keep a determined spirit down.

At 84, Claire Marx is the community's oldest resident. She is the mother of Roberta Kachinsky, one of The Farm's main chefs and managers for a variety of food operations, from deli dishes to community dinners and banquets. Claire is always at the heart of these activities, working side by side with the rest of the crew in

Businesswoman Dorothy Bates has helped the community's publishing business and written many of its cookbooks.

**The next influx of
new people may
not be a return of
our children, but
of our parents.**





New residents Jason Deptula and Alayne Chauncey came to The Farm to have a baby and stayed to become members.

food preparation. Each week she makes calls to all the households and businesses, taking orders for Roberta's bakery.

"What? Only a loaf of bread?" "No tempeh this week?" "How about some bean salad?" She is ever the saleswoman and remembers each person's favorite foods. You'll usually find her working the serving window as the money collector. Sharp as a tack, Claire doesn't miss anything. The blessing of her presence on The Farm cannot be measured.

Claire moved to The Farm a little over five years ago, when caring for her ailing husband Stanley became too much for her. Roberta and her husband Joel converted their living room into a bedroom and Stanley was made as comfortable as possible for his remaining years. After Stanley's passing Claire moved out to a nearby cabin built by Joel and

Roberta's son Louie, who'd gone off in college. A ramp was added for easy access, along with a small kitchen, bath, and everything necessary to make the cabin a home.

Claire teaches us through example that we should always be open to trying new things, pushing the boundaries of our self-perception. This formerly shy woman, by now barely over four feet tall, has become a shining star at The

Farm's many musical events, performing tunes from the '30s and '40s before an adoring crowd. At The Farm's 30th Anniversary Reunion party, which included hundreds of former residents coming in from all across the country and around the world, Claire surprised us all by riding to the stage on the back of a Harley. It brought down the house to say the least!

The real question for The Farm today is how will we adapt over the next 20 to 30 years as the majority of our members enter their sixties, seventies, and eighties? Can we produce

incomes that will sustain and support our infrastructure, pay our property taxes, and cover our own medical needs? More importantly, is it possible to shift the wage-earning balance by increasing our number of younger members?

This indeed may be happening as a third generation of Farm residents is beginning to make its presence known. One by one, a fresh crop of new babies are turning The Farm's second generation into parents themselves. A few of our grown children and their babies already live within the community, and others talk of returning to raise their families here in the years ahead. There is also a small but growing influx of new families with children making their way to The Farm.

Most of the original members of The Farm recognize the need for a healthy population of children to sustain community institutions like the Farm's school. However a shortage of available housing and good-paying jobs, both at the community and in the nearby area, make it difficult to attract people in their twenties and thirties in any large

numbers. In general we've found that a slow organic growth is the best way to acquire permanent members.

Over the years our population of children has been like a wave continually washing out to the rest of the world, as kids become teenagers and then young adults who leave home to establish independent

lives of their own. Now after many years' absence, our elementary school has started up again to serve a new batch of youngsters. Communi-

What is the ideal composition in people and generations that will keep a community healthy and strong?

ty dinners include the energy of children running around in joyous play. We hope that these little sources of light will serve as a magnet to attract other young families, extended brothers and sisters born of a new generation of Farm parents.

One of the ways this could happen is through The Farm's internationally known midwifery program. Jason Deptula and Alayne Chauncey arrived at The Farm for this program as so many before them have come, in a Volkswagen van, several months into a pregnancy. They were able to rent a small house and get established. Now the proud parents of a baby girl, Jason works at The Mail Order Catalog, a business here at the community, and teaches auto mechanics at our high school. Alayne is a full-time mom, and their daughter has been "adopted" by dozens of surrogate grandparents.

In spite of the community's desire to attract young people, we have recently had to recognize that the next influx of new people may not be a return of our children, but of our parents. As The Farm's original members enter their fifties and sixties, their mothers and fathers are now entering a period where they often need greater care. The community's unwritten philosophy has always been to avoid nursing homes and for the family to provide care, bringing aging parents into our homes. What for years has been a sprinkle of elder "spice" in our lives may over the next 10 or so years turn into a significant flavor here—as more of our elders seek a compassionate transition through their final stage of life.

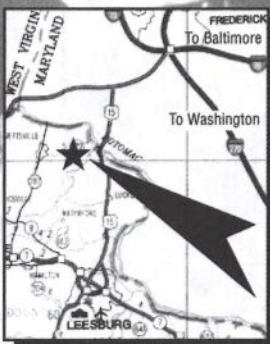
Ultimately it is about balance. We need all of us, newborns to seasoned elders, to make it feel right, the spirit and energy of youth tempered by the

wisdom and experience of age. Life in community gives us that chance, the opportunity to create new extended families, tribal connections that will carry us through all our seasons. Ω

Douglas Stevenson has been a member of The Farm for 27 years. He was on the community's board of directors for six years and is now on The Farm's membership committee. If you are interested in becoming a resident at The Farm please visit www.thefarmcommunity.com/resident.ht.

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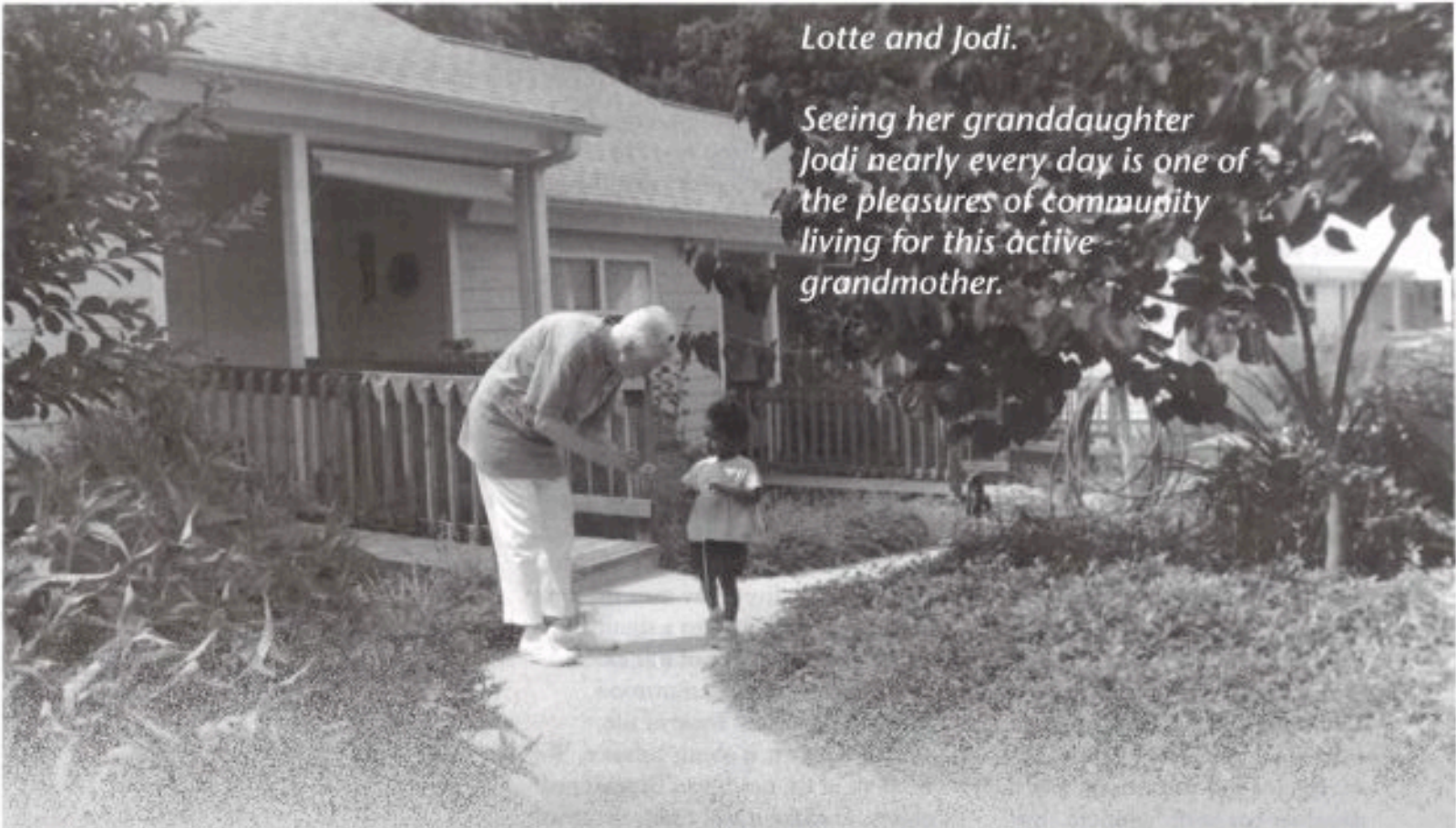
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Lotte and Jodi.

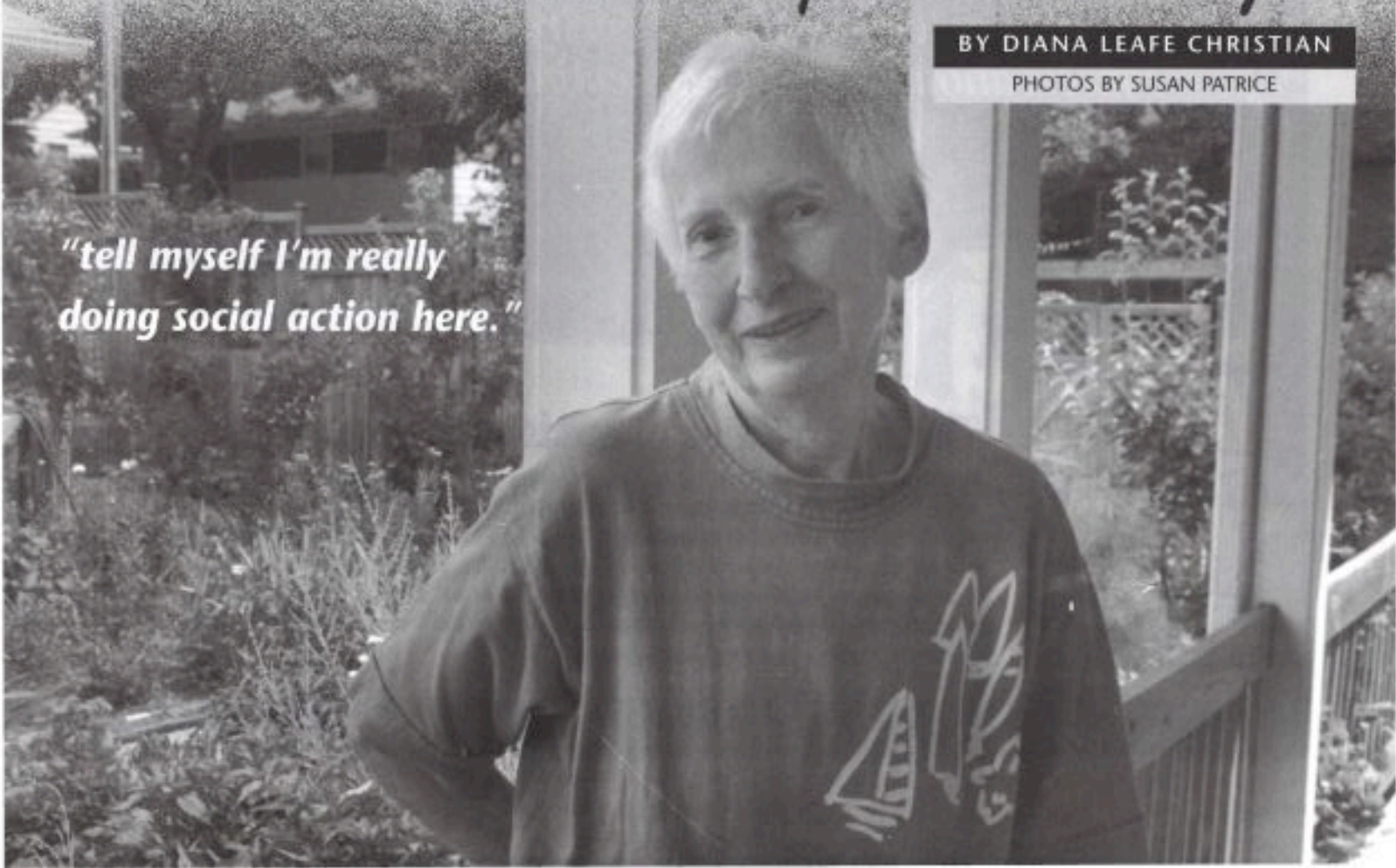
Seeing her granddaughter Jodi nearly every day is one of the pleasures of community living for this active grandmother.

An Eternal Optimist

Elder Leadership in Cohousing

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

PHOTOS BY SUSAN PATRICE



"tell myself I'm really doing social action here."

It's four o'clock in the afternoon and there's a light knock at Lotte and Seymour Meyerson's door. Two-year old Jodi Kann flies into the room and leaps into grandpa's arms. She turns around and excitedly shows grandma the artwork she made at the daycare center that morning. Lotte, 78, and Seymour, 84, members of Westwood Cohousing in Asheville, North Carolina, get to see Jodi nearly every day, as Jodi lives with her mom, their daughter Elana, down the path and across the footbridge at Westwood. Lotte and Seymour cherish the relatively close proximity of their and Elana's homes, so they can share in the joy of caring for Jodi and watching her grow up.

At 4:30 Lotte is upstairs in the Common House, about to begin a meeting. As president of Westwood Cohousing's current board of directors, and an active member of several of the committees from the beginning, she participates in many collaborative decisions and problem-solves with other community members, a task that gives her great satisfaction.

"I enjoy the process of working with other people," she says, "learning their ideas and other ways of doing things.



SUSAN PATRICE

Lotte has served on committees since the community began, and and now, as board president.

We have a lot of give and take, both on our board and in our community. I think our group process is very good. People who come to meetings with one set of ideas often leave with a different set of ideas because they've heard each other."

Before living at Westwood, Lotte and Seymour had lived in Gary, Indiana, for 45 years, where he was a research chemist for Amoco, and she was a community organizer for social change, serving as president or chair of committees, boards, and organizing coalitions. In the early '90s they bought 2.5 acres adjacent to their daughter's two acres in Asheville as the site of their future retirement home, so they'd be closer to family and potential help if they needed it.

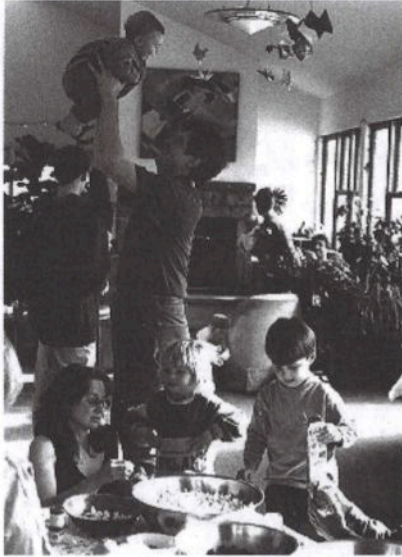
But Lotte happened to pick up a copy of McCamant and Durrett's book *Cohousing* and got hooked. "Let's build a cohousing community on those 4.5

acres," she said. And that's just what they did. After they and other interested people founded a cohousing group, Lotte, Seymour, and Elana formed a development company for the project (because they couldn't find anyone else to do it), and moved into Westwood Cohousing in 1997-1998.

The Meyersons were not new to community living, as they'd been active for about 15 years in a cooperative summer camp near Kalamazoo, Michigan. And even earlier, after Seymour was discharged from the service following World War II, they helped develop plans for a cooperative housing community for 300 families on land outside Chicago. "It didn't work out," Lotte says. "The FHA (Federal Housing Authority) turned down our loan application because we were an interracial group." We already had 25 families, and everyone was so desperate for housing

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that we didn't fight it, but went our separate ways. The next year, 1949, the FHA changed its policy.

So almost 50 years later they helped organize a cohousing community instead. It was an arduous task. "During some of the difficult times—and this was at least once a month—we asked ourselves why we hadn't just moved to a retirement community, where everything's already finished and we could just relax," she recalls, laughing. "But we were committed to this land and to Elana, who lived here already. We were not 'shopping for a cohousing community'; we were going to create one. We were committed and we were just going to make it work."

"Our group made it very clear that we wanted to be a multigenerational community. We decided that after we'd sold 18 of our planned 24 homes we would sell the rest of our units only to people with children. And we've

achieved that. We have eight children here now, and one of our members will soon have another."

"I would not have the energy to do that again," Lotte says. "But I do have the energy, now that we're living here, to work on completing the project and our organizational procedures, as well as the day-to-day management tasks. People comment on it, you know, that, especially at my age, I seem to have more energy than they do."

The ongoing tasks of board and committee work take up all the time Lotte would otherwise still spend as a social-change activist. "I tell myself I'm really doing social action here," she says. "It's so important. I think this kind of community is a model, for housing ourselves, and for how people can live together cooperatively. First of all, it's a model for a more intelligent housing development, so we're not spreading out in 'sprawl,' and also for combating the

It's Comforting to Live in a Setting Like This ...

"A couple of weeks ago I had a very rapid heartbeat while helping make dinner in the Common House. After this had been going on for a couple of hours, Sarah, one of our neighbors who's a physician's assistant, got her stethoscope and took my pulse. She determined that I needed to get this checked out in the hospital. Another neighbor volunteered to drive me, and two other people jumped in to take our place on clean-up in the Common House. So the neighbor who drove, Seymour, and Sarah and her nine-year-old daughter came along. Four people took me to the hospital emergency room, and they all stayed there with me for a couple of hours.

"The hospital staff never could measure anything—the rapid heartbeat episode had passed—and I'm taking other tests to check it out. But that was an example of the sense of security you can feel here. Living somewhere else you might have very good friends, but if they're a few blocks away or across town, they can't help you as quickly as neighbors in community. So in terms of getting older, it's comforting to be in a setting like this."

— Lotte Meyerson



SUSAN PATRICE

Three generations in cohousing: Lotte, granddaughter Jodi, and daughter Elana Kann.

social isolation of families and individuals. I think cohousing is an important social development in this country, and I have been wanting to do all I can to make Westwood a model for others. We're certainly not the only one, but I mean to be part of this movement of developing successful communities."

When asked if other Westwood residents seem to value her for her years of wisdom, she replies with a laugh, "Well, no one here says, 'You've been around a long time; what would *you* do?' But because I do have this experience, I'm able to apply it. I think that's what counts. I don't think old folks ought to be respected because they have gray hair. I think it's what we do, what we have done with our lives, and what we continue to do, unless we're not able to. But I do feel I have a broader perspective than that of many other people here because of my experience."

"I'm also the eternal optimist, which doesn't have anything to do with age, but as a matter of fact, my optimism hasn't waned with age either. Some people are surprised about that, since many people get more pessimistic as they get older. People here seem to appreciate the fact that I'm an eternal optimist and I expect everything to work out well in the end."

Meanwhile, Lotte intends to continue enjoying this multigenerational community she helped birth, and delights in having her daughter and granddaughter so close by. Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.

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I Don't Feel Any Particular Age

My Last 26 Years in Community

BY JAN BULMAN

Senior, retired, elder, pensioner, grandmother, old lady, charter member—you name it. All true, but they don't define how I feel. Sometimes I feel like I'm 29, or 42, or 50, or 71. I am 71, but mostly I don't feel like any particular age, but a healthy, energetic, outgoing Jan.

Like many my age I haven't been damaged by immediate dangers: war, torture, earthquakes, famine, floods, tornadoes. So I chose *community* for adventure. I also wanted to help the world be a better place than the city suburbs where my mate Tom and I were living in 1975.

We became early founders of Community Alternatives that year, a two-location urban and rural community of about 50 that would be intergenerational, nonsexist, "live more lightly on the land," and be a caring place that would make decisions by consensus. In four years we had bought a small farm an hour up the valley from Vancouver, BC, and in the city had built a hundred-room co-op-style apartment building with nine shared-living units we called pods. Tom and I and our 11-year-old son moved into an eight-bedroom pod with other members. Our three daughters were already off on their own.



Jan and Tom Bulman have lived in two multi-generational communities: Community Alternatives and Windsong Cohousing, both in British Columbia.

We lived in the community 22 years, until four years ago, when Tom wanted a bit more privacy, so we moved to Windsong, a 34-unit cohousing community in Langley, BC.

In both communities I've always been one of the oldest members. Communities seem to attract people in their twenties and thirties. I was 45 in 1975 when we started Community Alternatives. By that time, in "mature middle age," I had already learned a few things that made community living attractive.

What did I already know about community living? Years before I had come home to my mate and four children and announced I was going off to a workshop on cooperative communication skills. They looked so surprised I whooped with laughter. It seems they believed I really needed to learn this!

Another time, at a "Group Development Lab," I found I was making judgments about everyone around the table. "Why doesn't she just speak up; I never know what she's thinking." "Why does he argue with every other strong male around the table?" It was quite exhausting. I went down to the beach and had a nap, only to wake myself up in gales of laughter.

I had dreamt I was lying with my head on the belly of God, and God said to me, "If they do all that changing for you how will you know them in heaven?" It was a very liberating

Now that I'm retired, I can be one of the storytellers.

moment! I went back into the fray much more respectful of other people's styles, although still ready to give feedback if asked.

And one time I had been in a group that was trying to design an event, and had tenaciously hung on to one of my initiatives, only to have it rejected by the others. Later I offered another idea, and decided this time to let go of it and see what would happen. Some time later the group adopted that idea, but by that time many people had added to and revised it to be much better. I learned to gift ideas, not to hug them to my bosom.

So I had learned a few things about interpersonal dynamics already, that served me well when we founded Community Alternatives. Don't be entirely unilateral, consult. Take people as you find them. Trust initiating and offering ideas to the group.

With this kind of positive, eager entry into community life, I guess it's no accident that my memories of those years are so full of friendships, celebrations, and accomplishments. I've had a ball. I



Dinnertime at Windsong Cohousing, in Langley, BC.

love people who choose community.

We've made some fascinating mistakes though. I once read a phrase in *Atlantic Monthly*: "A thing worth doing is worth doing badly." I found that a liberating concept, and it helped me contribute to some pretty crazy projects, such as build-

ing 44 solar panels for our roof (in Canada's rainy West Coast), and choosing to build a 3400-square-foot farmhouse on our farm (both of which worked out pretty well in the end, actually). Community offers a marvelous power base for launching things. Community Alter-

What Can You Expect of Me as a Community Elder?

Expect me to enjoy you and enjoy your kids, if you have any. I love getting invited to parties and community occasions. Expect me to sit on one or two committees, and to help out on work parties as I'm able. Feel free to ask me if people can meet at my place for discussion times. I'll help organize potlucks and coffee clatches, because making one batch of things rather than the whole shebang is a breeze. Expect me to try hard to get everyone's opinions on important issues and to work towards consensus. I know from experience that unless everyone is happy with the decision, it won't get implemented effectively.

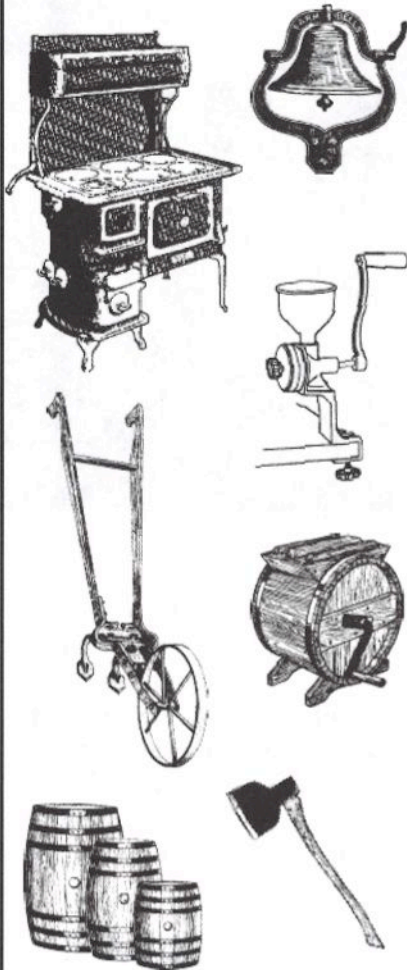
Don't expect me to do gardening and landscaping. It's not my thing. Tell me about your setbacks and failures, if you want to. Dear God knows I've had my own. Don't assume I want peace and quiet. As Andrew Marvell said, "The grave's a fine and private place, but none, I think, do there embrace."

— J.B.

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natives started businesses and contributed to various collectives. We've offered affordable housing to musicians and artists and community development workers. The farm has had a salad business that has employed three or four members permanently and other members seasonally.

Now that I'm retired, I can be one of the storytellers. I can savor the

I chose community for adventure.

memory of all the children who have come along, even been born among us. When I take a youngster out for a stroll, or enjoy his or her birthday party, I feel sorry for the nearby seniors' gated community where residents have to give notice if a grandchild is going to visit!

It's normal to worry about being aged and sick. At Community Alternatives we've only gone through two serious illnesses. One woman chose to move back to relatives when she learned she was terminally ill. However, one chap, Ewan, who lived in our pod, fought prostate cancer for a couple of years, but fell one night, paralyzed, and was found to have a huge tumor behind his spine. After the operation to remove it, he hated hospital and asked to come home. We said we'd give it a try, and over the next six weeks 35 of us, including a few of his family, gave him 24-hour-care. We had a daily chart and people signed up for as many hours as they could. During the night shift the caregiver stayed the night. It was an amazing experience for us all. Kids came and visited and read to him, people made him special food and watched videos with him. It was a privilege, and he died peacefully and cared for. I would be ready to do that again now for someone else,

and maybe even be like Ewan and be able to ask for it for myself!

I don't want to make it all sound like utopia. At Community Alternatives we've also been through the worst: an adult who molested one of our eight-year-old children, and went to prison. You learn a lot about each other in such times. Reactions varied from wanting him dead, to wanting to hang in with him so he wouldn't go off into anonymity. In community you do the best you can.

I want to say something about community and meetings. I think I've been to about 3,216 meetings since 1975, give or take a few. There are people like me who are always ready to go to a meeting. There are those who think it is higher ground to never go; just trust the group. And there are those various Myers-Briggs types who can't stand the meeting styles of other Myers-Briggs types. It's my opinion, though, that we can't have a good life together if we don't pay attention to good meeting habits and processes. Decision making is too important to do badly, although since it's worth doing, you sometimes have to start out that way! My "wise elder" advice? Be ready to evaluate, evaluate, evaluate.

It's potluck time tonight, rather than our usual team-cooked meal. Tom has been the cook, so off we go to socialize, talk, and listen. Life is never boring. Ω

Jan Bulman, retired from a long career in social work and involvement with social justice and environmental issues, is a founding member of Community Alternatives Society, an urban/rural community in Vancouver, BC. She and her husband Tom now live at Windsong Cohousing in Langley, BC.

Fran *in* Wonderland



BY MARTHA MCCUNE

When Fran came to Skywoods community in 1977, we thought it was just for a visit. We were an income-sharing commune, eight of us ranging in age from 18 to mid-forties, living on a 63-foot wooden boat in White Lake, near Lake Michigan. Phil was our college professor founder, and Fran was his mother.

Her husband had died about a year earlier and she had been struggling alone at home. Her problems had become overwhelming. Her dog decided that a good place to do his business was under the piano. She couldn't decide when to eat so she didn't eat at all and lost a lot of weight. She couldn't decide what to wear, so she wore her bathrobe most of the time. While the Meals-on-Wheels and other organizations helped her at home, she was visibly declining and apparently losing touch with reality. She really didn't want to go to a nursing home, so she came for a visit.

On our small boat we ate together, slept together eight-in-a-bed, worked together, played together, and vacationed together. Personal space was limited! As we realized that Fran couldn't get by on her own, even with daily help, she became part of our lives. We fixed up

Quite a crowd gathered to see the giggling white-haired lady on the ground.

the little triangle room in the bow of the boat for her. The only working toilet was in that room, so we all got to be quite cozy and uninhibited. We had to find a way to help Fran and still live our lives too.

As a nurse, I took charge of her physical care, however our real challenge was meeting

her emotional and psychological needs. Because she had had emotional problems she was taking large prescribed doses of tranquilizers. Although we found her a local doctor who reduced her dosage, she often just sat and stared, partly due to the medications, partly due to depression, and perhaps partly due to her underlying problems. What could we do?

We had a five-gallon bucket of assorted screws that we'd bought at a close-out sale. Any time we found Fran staring off into space, we asked her to sort screws. A retired school teacher, she was not used to manual labor and the screws were dirty. She would grumble and complain as she sorted, but we reminded her each time that as long as she was doing something she didn't have to sort

***We brought to Fran's
life security and
strong backs, lively
conversation, and an
opportunity to travel.***

screws. Over the following months, she found that writing letters, journaling, washing the dishes, or reading the newspaper were all more fun than sorting screws. She gradually began to come out of her shell.

Food was also an important motivator for

Fran. When I'd come home from work and ask her how her day went, she would tell me what she'd had for breakfast, lunch, and snacks. At the end of her first year with us, Fran had gained over 40 pounds and it had become more difficult for her to walk, so she agreed to an exercise program. She could walk on the deck safely by holding onto the rail, so 10 laps around the boat earned her dessert for lunch, and 20 laps earned dessert for dinner too. But

we never had the heart to actually deprive her of dessert.

Two of our members, Step and Bert, were young men in their twenties when Fran joined us. Also known as the Slugger Brothers, they often played practical jokes on Fran. They would ask Fran if she was a "lert" and she would reply, "I am not a-lert!" The Slugger Brothers would laugh hysterically and Fran would grumble, vowing to get even. I got her a large empty syringe which she filled with water and hid in her apron pocket, ready anytime to sneak up on the Slugger Brothers and douse them. Once, the Slugger Brothers asked Fran if she would like some pie. When she of course answered "Yes," they told her to close her eyes and put her hands on the arms of the chair, which she did. The Sluggers quickly taped her arms to the chair arms with a roll of masking tape, then placed the pie on a plate on her knees, and told her to open her eyes. She hollered and swore and the Sluggers laughed gleefully. Then they released her arms so she could eat her pie. But she got even. For example, she would smile charmingly at one of the Slugger Brothers and say, "I have a secret. Bend down here." When Step or Bert got in range, she would grab a large handful of beard and give a firm yank. The Slugger would howl and Fran would cackle gleefully.

A wonderful part of living on a boat is the travel. One summer, we took an extended vacation to the north edge of Lake Huron. On our way home, we docked at Mackinaw Island, on the coal dock for the ferry service. The dock was closed at night but if we hung onto the fence we could sidle out to the end of the rock wall and around the end of the fence and back to land. We were going out to eat and of course Fran didn't want to stay home. She couldn't sidle along the fence, so we laid her down on a tarp on the ground and pulled



The Skywoods crew and Fran in the '70s.

her under the fence. We all had a great meal, complete with wine and dessert. When it was time to go home the Slugger Brothers found that she'd eaten too much to easily fit under the fence. We all helped hold down her stomach, laughing and cheering, as the Slugger Brothers pulled her under. Quite a crowd gathered to see the giggling white-haired lady on the ground, and we did successfully get her back on board.

Another summer evening when we were anchored out in Lake Charlevoix, the hurdles of going to dinner were more complicated. We weren't at a dock this time so we had to canoe in to shore. Fran was will-

The Slugger Brothers would laugh hysterically and Fran would grumble, vowing to get even.

ing to do anything for a great meal out, so she sat in the canvas bosun's chair on the side deck while we attached it by a rope to a rooftop davit 20 feet above the water, which

we normally used to lower the life boat. We swung Fran in her chair out over the lake while the Slugger Brothers paddled a canoe into position beneath her, and we all lowered her on the rope the last few feet into the canoe. Returning to the boat after a wonderful meal, we found that so much fog had rolled in that we couldn't see it. Fortunately, our dog was on board, and when we called to her she began howling, giving us a bearing by sound. Our first crew paddled out to where we thought the boat was, and once on board, turned on the deck lights so the rest of us could find it. Unfortunately, raising Fran from the canoe was not as easy as lowering her, but

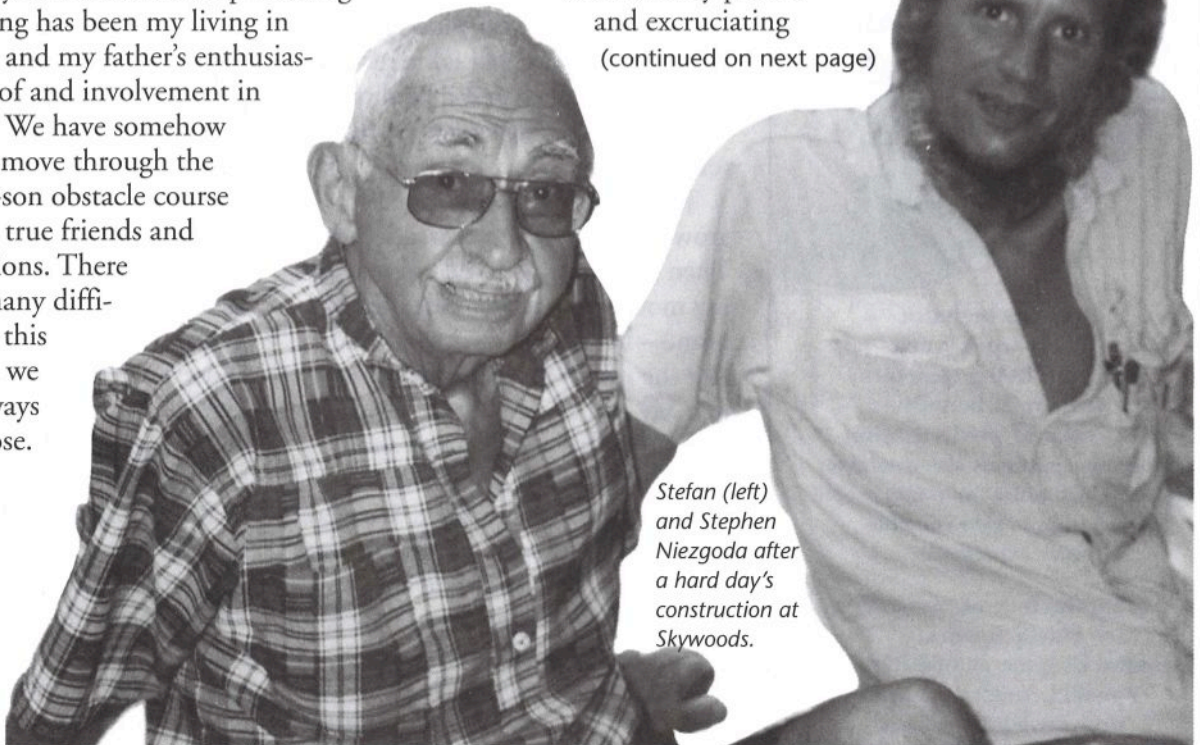
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Down the Road with Dad

BY STEPHEN NIEZGODA

My father and I have an unusual relationship—we're best buddies. I believe the key to our relationship evolving and deepening has been my living in community, and my father's enthusiastic embrace of and involvement in community. We have somehow managed to move through the usual father-son obstacle course and become true friends and life companions. There have been many difficult steps to this process, and we have not always been this close.

We have been fortunate to share many joyful and exciting experiences, as well as many painful and excruciating
(continued on next page)



Stefan (left) and Stephen Niezgoda after a hard day's construction at Skywoods.

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(continued from Down the Road with Dad)

ones.

When I graduated from college I was torn between taking a graduate assistantship or joining Skywoods Cosynegal, a commune on a little wooden boat. When I asked my dad for advice, which I had never done before, he said, "It's your life and your decision. If I tell you what I think, you'll either do it, and resent me—or not do it, and resent me." I was never so angry with him in my life! I had stuck my neck out to ask his advice, and he declined to give any. Years later I realized this was the best possible advice he could have given—for me, for him, and for our relationship.

So I became one of the "boatpeople." When I came aboard, the boat was mostly a floating construction site with a roof and half a dozen people living aboard, but little else. No heat, no water in winter, no shower, no beds. My folks, bless their devoted souls, visited regularly. While my mother was barely able to mask her concern and discomfort, my father was enamored with the vision, dedication, adventure, and excitement. He could feel it in his blood and in his heart. He was glad I'd taken the road less travelled, and in reality, that has made all the difference in his life too.

This connection continued to grow and deepen for over a decade. Then life threw us a real curve when my mother got cancer. She died at home—in hospice—with my dad and the rest of the family caring for her. My dad and I were alone together, holding her hands when she gasped her last breath. It was a moment we'll never forget. We were there for her, for the family, and for each other. We had shared something very special, and we knew it. It was a road we knew we had to go down. It was an extremely dark, difficult time, but, as life in community

has taught me, you can get through hard times together, and you don't have to do it alone.

About two years after my mother died my father began having serious problems. He was terribly depressed. After having a heart attack in a doctor's office he was told he needed triple by-pass surgery (his second) or he wouldn't live. With mom gone, he wasn't at all convinced that he wanted to live. To the consternation of some friends and family, I told him that I would support whatever decision he made—to live or to die. He knew I had an opinion, and he knew that I would be at his side come what may. I had learned from his willingness to let me decide my life course, and was now able to return the favor.

My father's decision to have the heart surgery was only the first step in our evolving relationship. The second step, and this seemed huge to me, was for this hippie son to take a month's leave-of-absence from the community to care for him at home while he recuperated. I know, and dad knows, that it was my community life that allowed me, and prepared me, to be able to do this. Because of the physical delicacy and fragility of post-heart-surgery recuperation, my new role required me to be nurse, mother, maid, and drill sergeant—all at once. To be better able to provide round-the-clock-care, I began sleeping in the same bed as my father—a pattern which brought us much closer, and a pattern which frequently continues on our travels and visits. I'm very happy to report that he didn't die, we didn't kill each other, and our relationship made another quantum leap forward.

Remarkably, my dad grabbed onto life and living as never before. He came to stay with us at Skywoods for long visits of one to two months, three or four times a year. He worked with us, celebrated with us, shared with us, and adventured with

us. Our little community became his second home, and he became our official community dad. He began to spend more and more time visiting us and working on our construction projects. We also began to take more trips together as a community. One spring a few years ago we stopped to visit our good friends at Earthaven Ecovillage in Black Mountain, North Carolina. They put us up in a small cabin with a sleeping loft. We all climbed into bed together, and had my dad sleep in the middle, fearing he might get up in the middle of the night and stumble or fall. As we settled in, dad began giggling like a child, saying, "This reminds me of when I was little. We only had one bed for the three boys, and since I was the baby, I had to sleep in the middle." What a wonderful way to fall asleep. The next day, after our tour, my dad was amazed and inspired by Earthaven's vision and work. He continues to ask frequently about the friends he met there.

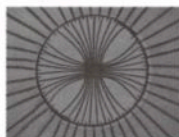
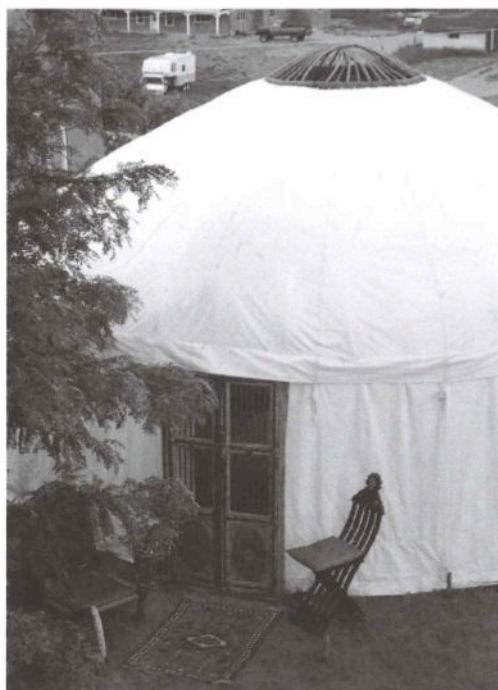
The latest of our community adventures occurred just this spring when the two of us decided to visit Italy for a month. We spent our first

week at Torii Superiore, an ecovillage in the mountains near the sea west of Genoa. Since my dad is 80, and the community is a beautiful 800-year-old village community members are restoring, some were concerned about the amount of walking and the number of stairs he'd need to negotiate to get around. Little did they know that my father doesn't just watch when he travels, but really works, having built with Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua, the South Pacific, New Zealand, Nepal, and Brazil. During our stay at Torii Superiore we pruned olive orchards, hauled and burned brush, and generally became one with the community work life.

My dad and I love people, love good work, and find one of the best ways to get to know people is to share their workday with them. I am glad that my father taught me this value—of the social connection and creativity of common work—the community of people sharing their lives and livelihood. I also believe that this social and physical connection is what keeps my dad young—that is why he so understands and

values community. For him community is about hope, joy, fulfillment, diversity, positive vision, and action for the present and future. Dad feels privileged to experience the adventure and awareness of intimately sharing in our community lifestyle. For me it is a privilege to be a buddy-guide-son with him, sharing in such an incredibly grounded lightness of being. Ω

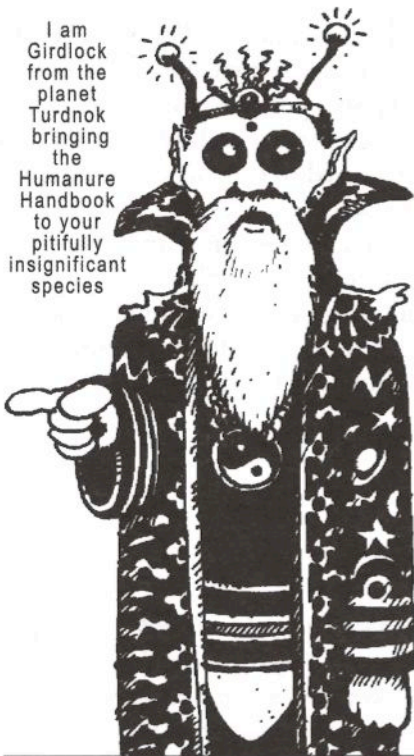
Stephen Niezgoda, a founding member of Skywoods Cosynegal, is a designer, woodworker, gardener, and permaculture teacher. His dad, Stefan Niezgoda, is a frequent long-term visitor to the community.



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Award winning author Joseph Jenkins' new book, **Balance Point - Searching for a Spiritual Missing Link** has been described as:

"Perhaps the best environmental book I have ever read," by the Arkansas Environmental Education Newsletter; an "amazing and powerful adventure" by the Compendium Newsletter; "An engaging and enlightening book, as well as a disturbing warning to us all," by Today's Librarian; "A delightful new slant on our environmental mess in a wonderful tale told with passion, wit and insight," by BookReader. This timely book is a must-read for those who care for our planet!

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it was certainly just as exciting!

Before she came to live with us, Fran had battled depression and feelings of hopelessness, trying to motivate herself to get up in the morning to days of arthritis pain, limited mobility, and loneliness. Moving in with a group of young people was certainly a lifestyle earthquake for her. And for our communal family of young people in the 1970s, the responsibility of caring for an infirm person who couldn't be left alone for more than a few hours was a real lifestyle challenge as well. And a blessing. She had a great sense of humor, and was able to contribute her small income to help us find a piece of property where we'd build our home. She was always ready to share a hug, and she greeted me each day with a smile and open arms. She loved to sing and knew a little harmony, so we sang many old hymns and ballads from her youth as well as protest songs from the '60s, labor songs from the Wobblies, and old Woody Guthrie tunes. We brought to Fran's life security and strong backs, lively conversation, and an opportunity to travel. We learned together about how to blend lives that were very different, with many life lessons for all of us.

Much of what I learned from Fran greatly enriched my nursing practice, including life lessons, not just about health care. For example, when Fran was incontinent, if no one was available to help her she would just go to bed. I would get extremely angry at what I saw as her lack of consideration, since I then had to then clean up her, her clothes, and all the bedding. We had some yelling matches where I tried to make her see how much better it would be if she would clean up as much as she could after being incontinent, rather than just getting into a clean bed. With the help of the counselor Fran was seeing, I was

able to understand that Fran was doing the best that she could, and was literally going to bed and covering up her head in the face of a situation that was disgusting and overwhelming for her. With the help of her counselor, we began as a family to celebrate significant life events for Fran, such as her wedding anniversary and her husband's birthday. We enjoyed the celebration and it helped all of us to honor and respect Fran's life. She in turn helped us to celebrate our own family holidays, such as the day we purchased our property, and the day we moved the boat to its own harbor.

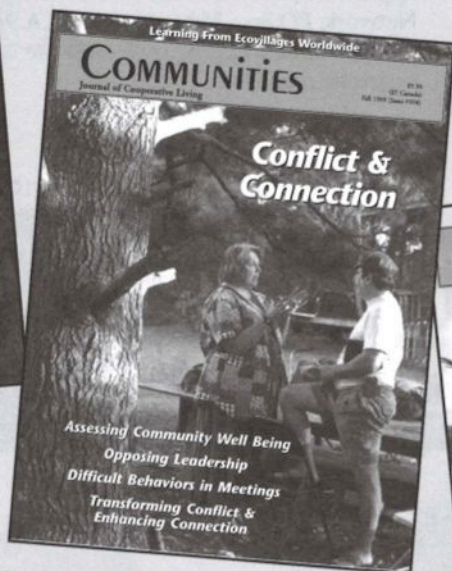
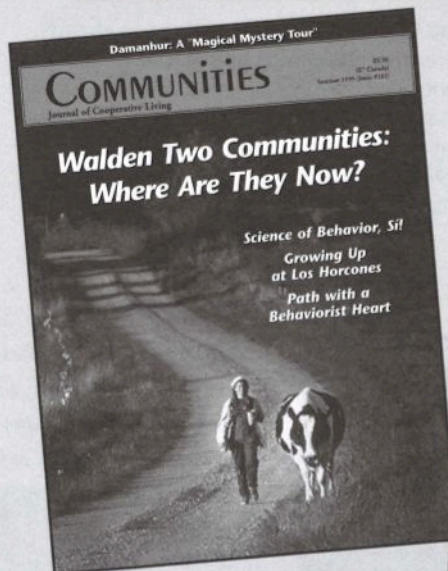
Over the decade she was with us I watched Fran become increasingly stronger and mentally clearer. I saw the joy and responsibility she brought to our lives and the richness and flexibility we brought to hers. She was a special gift to us. On March 5, 1988, Fran had a massive stroke and lived only a few hours on life support. We gathered at her bedside as a family and she died at sunset the following day. She lives on in our stories and songs. Ω

Martha McCune, a founding member, has lived at Skywoods since 1976. She is a Registered Nurse certified in auricular acupuncture and is in process of becoming certified in Healing Touch.

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This is the beginning of a resource list of communities which actively welcome older folks into their membership. Some of these communities are inter-generational; others are specifically for older folks. Some are newly forming; others have been around for years. We encourage you to communicate with any that interest you to find out more detailed information, and begin to determine if one of them might be the right community for you.

If your community welcomes elders and is not included here, please let us know and we'll add it to our list. Contact me at valerie@ic.org or 540-894-5126.

150+ Cohousing Communities

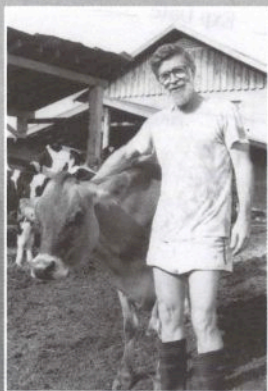
Cohousing is an attractive urban or suburban intergenerational community living option for many older people, in which members own and manage their own small neighborhoods while living in individual housing units. Optional community dinners are usually available two to four nights a week in the community's shared Common House.

Cohousing communities, both those currently forming and those already existing, often benefit greatly from older members with enough available time, energy, and experience to help in various community projects. For a list of the more than 50 existing cohousing communities in North America, or the approximately 150 in the now-forming stages, please contact The Cohousing Network, PO Box 2584, Berkeley, CA 94702; 510-486-2656; 303-413-9227; office@cohousing.org. Their web site is www.cohousing.org. They publish the quarterly magazine, *Cohousing*.

BY VALERIE RENWICK-PORTER

Valerie Renwick-Porter has lived at Twin Oaks for nine years. She is active in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities and coordinator of the Twin Oaks Communities Conference.

Communities Seeking Elders



Earthaven

PO Box 1107
Black Mountain, NC
28711
828-669-3937
info@earthaven.org
www.earthaven.org

We are an aspiring ecovillage on 325 forested acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, NC. Our vision is to develop sustainable, regenerative culture and extended functional family in a small-scale village setting, while remembering and celebrating the primacy of our inner/spiritual being and the power of love, life, and laughter. We practice consensus governance, group-process work, permaculture, natural building, appropriate technology, and more.

Edges (aka Athens Land Co-op)

10770 Hooper Ridge Rd.
Glouster, OH 45732
740-448-2403, 740-448-3006
juem@frognet.net

Seeking responsible, positive people dedicated to community living in rural land trust in Appalachian foothills. Eight adults, five children live in various dwellings and share community building on 94 acres of wooded hills near progressive town of Athens, Ohio. Activities include organic growing, land restoration, implementing our permaculture plan, beginning community businesses. We use consensus decision making and value good group process and conflict resolution.



Sue Stone and Geoff Stone at Earthaven.

SUSAN PATRICE

Becoming One Big "We"

"When we moved to the land and began eating in the community dining room," says Sue Stone of Earthaven Ecovillage, "we looked around and saw all these young people with long hair. 'My God,' I said, 'We've ended up living with our kids.' But as we kept doing work projects with them over the weeks and months, it stopped feeling like we were a mix of older people and younger people, but just one big 'We.' One night they invited us to go with them to hear the reggae group 'Be Here Now' in Asheville. We went, and had a fabulous time."

— D.L.C.

ElderSpirit Community

PO Box 665,
Abingdon, VA 24210
540-628-8908
espirit@preferred.com

We are in the process of developing a cohousing community for seniors in Abingdon, Virginia. ElderSpirit should be ready for occupancy in late Fall 2002.

The Fellowship Community

Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle
241 Hungry Hollow Road
Spring Valley, NY 10977
845-356-8494
fellowship@attglobal.net
www.Fellowshipcommunity.org

The Fellowship Community is a work-based, inter-generational, nondenominational community centered around the long-term care of the elderly, based on the spiritual science (Anthroposophy)

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of Rudolf Steiner. Our 110 acres include meadows, woodlands, and a farm and apple orchard. Caregivers, their children, and our elder members (as they have the interest and ability) participate in daily housekeeping and other work activities, and make practical handmade gift items as part of our income base.

Ganas Community

135 Corson Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-720-5378
ganas@well.com

We are a 21-year-old New York City intergenerational intentional community of about 90+ people. Our intention is to care about each other, about people in general, and about the environment. Many of us meet every morning at breakfast to discuss problems and make decisions as well as to plan for the day and for our lives together. We welcome seniors, but are unable to make any special arrangements for them. For example, most of our residences require walking some stairs. Everyone is expected either to work with us or to pay their expenses. We have found working with seniors both enjoyable and valuable and have several working residents in their 60s and 70s.

Heathcote Community

21300 Heathcote Rd.
Freeland, MD 21053
410-343-DIRT
Heathcote@s-o-l.org
www.Heathcote.org

Heathcote is an intentional community nestled in a narrow wooded stream valley on a 112-acre community land trust. We are a community of friends and family who choose to live cooperatively and consciously create a better way of life. We strive to care for one another and for the natural systems that nurture us. We are committed to creating a permaculture demonstration site at Heathcote where we can live sustainably in balance with the Earth and guide others on this path. We

strive to foster gender balance and a diversity of culture, spirituality, and thought.

The Okanagan Fellowship Community

Dean Goddard
Summerland, BC, Canada
250-494-0298

ecozone@pacificcoast.net

We are forming an intergenerational work-based community. While we emphasize caring for the elderly, all ages will benefit from such a diverse community. We plan farming and workshops to bring in about 30% of our anticipated income, another 30% from donations and gifts (as we are a nonprofit), and the remainder from paying members (seniors). Our costs will be about half that of a typical senior-care center.

Rocinante

41 The Farm
Summertown, TN 38483
www.thefarm.org/charities/roc.html

Located on 100 acres adjacent to The Farm community in central Tennessee, Rocinante plans to build low-cost, energy-efficient housing for seniors. Right now we have a small crew of settlers who are either already living on the land or building facilities to move into. Some of our first residents will be elderly people who are able to settle into small cabins designed for assisted living. We are not primarily providing housing, but rather a whole frame of reference, including access to care, friends, and a peer group; access to a cabinetry shop and gardens; and all of the healthful aspects of community living.

Sacred Mountain Ranch

PO Box 90763
White Mountain Lake, AZ 85912
520-587-3887
djl@starband.net

We are forming a spiritual community of people who are off the grid, with the aim of being off the

medical system as well. We eat healthily and have holistic medical resources, including a library on self-healing methods. We pride ourselves on minimal group expenses and financial independence for members. We value emotional "transparency" and practice communicating compassionately.

Sparrow Hawk Village

12 Summit Ridge Dr.
Tahlequah, OK 74464
918-456-3421

www.sanctasophia.org

Our spiritually based community, established in 1981, is located on 440 acres with over a mile of river frontage. Residents own their own homes or rent and choose their level of commitment to ongoing projects. Village life is enriched by a constant stream of international guests and students who participate in classes and workshops offered by accredited programs of Sancta Sophia Seminary. The campus includes a beautiful church, esoteric library, bookstore, gift shop, and wellness center.

SunToads Community

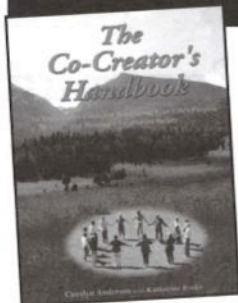
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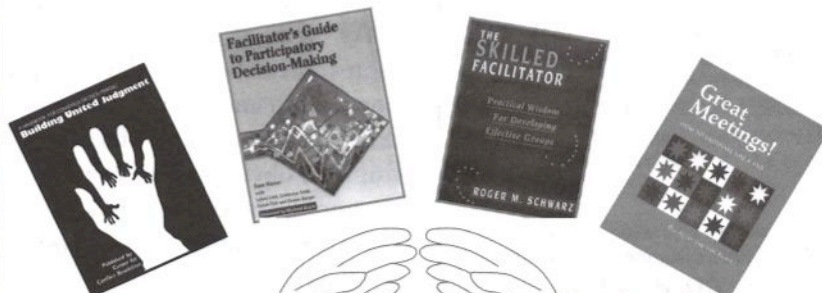
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*email: midwifews@bellsouth.net
www.MidwiferyWorkshops.org*

What Communitarians Taught Me About Growing Older...

When I think about the future, I get scared. Computer-programmed relatives, Monsanto-pets—just thinking about the future makes me a little queasy. What I fear most, though, is something harder to name. It is the fear of myself: and who I will become two decades from now that truly scares me.

I am 20 years old. Born and raised in a town where all roads converge at the shopping mall, I have somehow begun to see getting older as a trip into the America I've spent my teenage life rejecting.

This past winter break, instead of returning from college to my home in Columbia, Maryland, I visited Twin Oaks. With the exception of a common appreciation for playgrounds, my home town and Twin Oaks breed very different lifestyles. Differences range from the obvious, such as group housing and the lack of a rush hour at Twin Oaks, to the subtle, such as community members dining with different people each day. The differences that

struck me the deepest were the simple details. People of all ages working together. Women over 40 still having long hair.

My favorite evening there was Wednesday: Anarchist Pizza night. In that crowded, basil-smelling dining room the person spouting Emma Goldman was as likely to be 22 as 72. At this community, aging just didn't seem the same process as the life-cycle I'd seen dominating Columbia, Maryland.

Halfway through my stint at Twin Oaks my parents came to visit. The trip was my idea. I wanted them to see this place as an alternative to their nine-to-five lives. A while back I had asked my dad about aging. Why does it seem like everyone does it the same way? And where does everyone's vision of changing the world go after that big four-oh birthday bash? My dad responded swiftly, launching into the "neuro-biological reasons for youth rebellion." He defended the ubiquitous presence of a watered-down sort of



BY ARIELLA COHEN

Currently Ariella Cohen studies politics, as well as a bit of liberal yuppiehood at Oberlin College in Ohio.

middle-age with the cause and effect of science. It boils down to this: the changing brain chemistry of youth breeds instability; rebellion is something you literally grow out of. Essentially, exchanging vigorous, visionary youth for a steady paycheck and a house in the suburbs is biological.

One night during their visit my parents and I walked into the kitchen. U2 was blasting and the dishwashers, two men and a woman, were bopping and gyrating and singing as they worked. They had thrown their tee shirts to the floor. I turned down the volume and introduced my parents. They looked at my new friends suspiciously. These were my managers at the hammock shop? My dad, observing the dishwashers' flat stomachs, long hair, and abundant laughter, asked their ages. Turns out they were exactly the same age he was.

The surprise on my dad's face, the surprise I myself felt when we realized that these excited, dancing people were his biological peers, showed me how deeply nature has been cut away from our understanding of the aging process. It's easy to associate aging with the pattern we see most often: the model that sells us overpriced diapers and diet soda. But the truth is that the reality of growing older in our culture has very little to do with most of our conceptions of it.

We're fed a steady diet of prime-time television and Sunny D billboards, and it appears that aging follows a well-trodden path. Youth translates one way: rock music and liberal politics. Gradually the young molt their blue jeans. They metamorphose into button-downed creatures of habit. From my suburban perch, getting older appears to be a steady climb up a narrow ladder. Endless rungs of cubicle offices and oversized grocery stores

stretch towards the ultimate goal—a gold watch and reservations for an Early Bird Special in Miami Beach.

In that flash encounter between my parents and the Twin Oaks' dishwashers, I saw the hole in this theory.

A few days before I left Twin Oaks, the January snow began to melt. I was weaving hammocks when one of my coworkers whipped out a digital camera. She asked if I would take some pictures of her and the other Twin Oaks women in front of the ice sculpture goddess

they'd carved out of frozen lake chunks. The goddess was melting and they wanted a picture before her belly and perfect round breasts were gone.

A line of women streamed out of the hammock shop, giggling like it was prom night and I was the mom hired to photograph the dresses. At this prom, though, most of the women were in their thirties and forties, and naked. I had never seen such a pageant. The women linked arms in front of the sculpture and smiled wide.

That picture of naked bodies in the snow—pale, tan, saggy, firm, stretch-marked, and pregnant—is how I like to remember Twin Oaks. A break from work with no one discussing Slim Fast diets or aerobics classes. A few babies slung on hips, and well, naked and smiling outdoors in January. If this is another way of growing older, I told myself, then maybe there's hope for me. Ω

U2 was blasting and the dishwashers were bopping and gyrating and singing as they worked.

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Finding a Community to Grow Old In

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

My mother died a lonely and isolated woman at the relatively young age of 60. Not for me, I declared, and in my early forties set out to find an alternative to ending up like Mom. This search led to my finding options I was never before aware of, including all kinds of intentional communities from cohousing to land trusts and everything in between. I set a goal to live in an intentional community by my early fifties.

There were no intentional communities in my area of Minnesota except for a cooperative house created by a group of people who came together 25 years ago for weekly potluck dinners. Collectively they bought an old nursing home and renovated it into individual living quarters with common areas. It's a beautiful place, and everyone loves it so much that they never move, hence there were no openings!

So I decided to start an intentional community interest group, and signed up for a display booth at the May Day celebration in a local park. I made a lovely display, laid out my Communities maga-

zines and the Communities Directory, and signed up over 200 people for our new organization, the "Intentional Community Development Forum." It was originally formed as a place where people could gather and perhaps link up with like-minded people they might want to

consider forming a community with. The common thread for everyone was that they didn't want to end up in their elder years lonely and isolated. Most people in this group were middle aged, or approaching middle age, and asking "What's next for me? And how do I want to live out the rest of my life? How can I have a sense of belonging and feel useful?"

As a result of that beginning, by the time I was in my early fifties, I met my goal and found my community. Now 52, I'm a relatively new resident of East Wind Community in Missouri.

The people in our group in Minnesota would have loved to sit down with the many members of East Wind and ask them questions about their lives in community and their future. I have had the pleasure of interviewing many people here about aging in community. I spoke with people who have lived as long as 18-25 years at East Wind and plan on being buried in the community cemetery alongside their friends and family of choice. They don't consider leaving East Wind

FEDERATION UPDATE



BY CAROL
CRAWFORD

Carol Crawford lives at East Wind Community in Missouri.

even an option. Generally, I found that most people don't want to become a burden to the community as they grow older, but realize that aging is inevitable. Some even stated emphatically that when they become incapable of functioning or no longer feel useful in the community, they would like the choice to "not be resuscitated," a polite way of saying "just let me go." Long-term community members are concerned about the fact that East Wind doesn't pay into Social Security and therefore has no official retirement plan, nor does it have a financial safety net to cover potential difficulties such as diminishing and failing abilities. People here are generally secure, however, in the fact that, for full community members, most major medical expenses are covered. Many members trust that "of course" the community will be able to handle almost anything that comes up. Currently, the community is arranging for handicapped accessibility for a member who uses a wheelchair.

East Wind is now 27 years old and currently has just under 50 members. We would love to see the membership increase, which would make the workload easier for everyone, and give us more people to share our lifestyle with. Many members have reminded me to say that an egalitarian community like East Wind is not a place to retire, but a place to come and be useful. There is no age limit on new members joining East Wind, but at least one Federation community, Twin Oaks in Virginia, limits its new members to those 54 and under.

I find life pretty good here. I don't worry about paying rent or utilities, going hungry, or having enough of anything I need. We always have a full kitchen and raise most of our food organically. Our labor policy allows each member over 49 to work one less hour than the norm for the community (currently 40 hours a week) for every year of age over 49. So I work at least 37 hours a week, with a combination of jobs that serve the community infrastructure or keep the businesses going. I'm not isolated unless I want to be, and I feel appreciated and useful. I get to use almost all my talents. Community life works for me. So, thanks, Mom, for the motivation to go out and find an alternative lifestyle. ♪



10-acre site just outside Asheville, NC. Will have two neighborhood clusters and one large shared Community Building.

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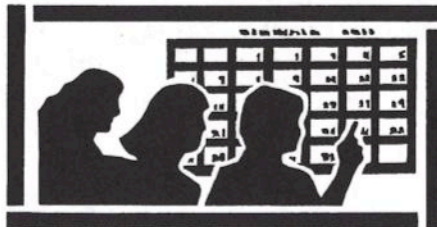
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community calendar



This is a calendar of:

- 1) events organized or hosted by intentional communities;
- 2) events specifically focusing on community living;
- 3) major events with significant participation by members of the communities "movement."

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

Please send us suggestions about what we might include in future calendars. Also note that the Fellowship publishes a quarterly newsletter (free to FIC members) that includes announcements of and reports about similar events. Information about joining the FIC can be found on p. 70.

Summer/Fall 2001 • Organic Gardening in Community Apprenticeship

Dexter, OR. Lost Valley Educational Center. Seasonal activities may include sheet mulching, soil prep., sowing /saving seed, composting, plant propagation, food preservation, medicinal mushrooms, herbal medicines, greenhouse management, more. Books, class time, field trips. March-October with 3-month minimum commitment. Starts 1st of each month. \$450-\$350 s/s per month incl. food, lodging/camping. Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; info@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Fall 2001 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships

Summertown, TN. The Farm community. Ecovillage Training Center. Apprenticeship program in organic food production, natural building, wastewater, ecological design. Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; 931-964-4475; ecovillage@the-farm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/.

Fall 2001 • Living Routes-Ecovillage Education Scotland. Findhorn Foundation. Findhorn Com-

munity Semester. France, Plum Village. India, Auroville. USA, Sirius. Geo Communities Semester. Daniel Greenberg, Ph.D., Living Routes-Ecovillage Education Consortium, 85 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413-259-0025; info@LivingRoutes.org; www.LivingRoutes.org.

Sep 27-29 • 28th Annual Communal Studies Association (CSA) Conference

New Harmony, Indiana. Sessions and individual presentations on all aspects of communal studies. Special plenary session, "Communities, Public Perception, and the Media," with Jon Trott and Lyda Jackson of Jesus People USA (JPUSA) and Krishna Priya of Kashi Ashram. Gina Walker, gwalker@usi.edu; 812-4641896; 8600 University Blvd., Evansville, IN 47712; http://fic.ic.org/csa/.

Sep 27-30 • Living in Actualization in an Interuniversal-Soul Cultural Community

Sedona, AZ. Aquarian Concepts. Ascension Science and Planetary Divine Administration Four-Day Seminar. With Gabriel of Sedona, Niann Emerson Chase. \$400 pre-reg; otherwise \$500. Aquarian Concepts, PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 520-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; www.aquarianconcepts.com.

Sep 28-30 • Texas Renewable Energy Roundup

Fredericksburg, TX. Green Living & Sustainability Fair. www.renewableenergyroundup.com.

Sep 28-30 • Fall Harvest Celebration

Dexter, OR. Lost Valley Educational Center. Ritual, creating shrines and altars, play, working directly with the land and plants by harvesting, preserving and preparing food, making and enjoying meals together, singing and dancing, theater games, and exercises to bring us into deeper intimacy with one another and the Earth. \$90-\$150 s/s, incl. food, camping. Advance registration required. Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; info@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Sep 29-30 • Nonviolent Communication

Black Mountain, NC. Earhaven Village. Ways to stay centered even during normally "difficult" conversations, by disarming conflict and inviting cooperation. With Diana Christian. \$125. Culture's Edge, 1025 Camp Elliot Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culture'sedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Oct 5-7 • Cooking from the Garden

Occidental, CA. Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. Harvest organic vegetables, edible flowers, culinary herbs, fruit and transform into meal class shares. Focus on salads, savory dishes and seasonal fruit desserts. With Doug

- Gosling. \$100. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.
- Oct 12-15 • Naka-Ima**
Dexter, OR. Lost Valley Educational Center. Through the practice of honesty and learning to recognize and let go of attachments, rediscover the depths of the essential self, moving towards greater intimacy, connection, enjoyment and community. \$300-\$500 s/s, incl. food, lodging. Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; info@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.
- Oct 14 • The Ecovillage Alternative**
Black Mountain, NC. Earthaven Village. Spend an afternoon learning about the global ecovillage movement. Shortcuts to starting your own. Discussion, slides, video. \$15. Culture's Edge, 1025 Camp Elliot Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; http://earthaven.org.
- Oct 17-21 • Ecovillage Design**
Summertown, TN. The Farm community. Ecovillage Training Center. Site selection, design for Ecovillages, consensus and conflict resolution, financial aspects, work issues, best practices. Live and work in an ecovillage for a week and get a sense of the issues. With Greg Ramsey, Albert Bates and guests. \$500 incl. food, lodging. Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; 931-964-4475; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/, www.thefarm.org/permaculture/.
- Oct 19-21 • Co-Opportunities Northwest: A Sustainable Communities Conference**
Seattle, WA. NICA (Northwest Intentional Communities Association). Community conference of diverse people to identify and advance trends in developing and maintaining more sustainable communities. Ben Kaufman, 206-297-2656; benjzk@hotmail.com; www.coop-nw.org.
- Oct 19-21 • Bioneers: Revolution From The Heart Of Nature**
San Raphael, CA. Visionary and Practical Solutions for Restoring the Earth. Presenters include Frances Moore Lappe, Susun Weed, Julia Butterfly Hill, Hunter Lovins and more. Toll free 877-BIONEER; info@bioneers.org; www.bioneers.org.
- Oct 20-Nov 3 • Permaculture Design Certificate Courses**
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters Eco-Village. Develop a practical, theoretical and philosophical understanding of permaculture through the exploration of topics such as sustainable local food production, building healthy soil, sustainable shelter and human settlement design and more. With Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond and Max Lindegger. Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond, Lot 50 Crystal Waters MS16 Maleny, Queensland 4552, Australia; +61-0-754-944-833; courses@permaculture.au.com; www.permaculture.au.com.
- Oct 26-29 • Fellowship for Intentional Community's Fall Organizational Meeting**
Sonora Cohousing, Tucson, Arizona. Public welcome. 660-883-5545, or contact Jenny Upton, jenny@ic.org.
- Oct 27 • Mushroom Propagation for Food and Medicine**
Black Mountain, NC. Earthaven Village. Focus on the home propagation of several varieties, shiitake, oyster, more. Participants will take an inoculated log or bag of medium to grow at home. Keith Johnson. \$75. Culture's Edge, 1025 Camp Elliot Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; http://earthaven.org.
- Nov 2-7 • International Conference on Altered States of Consciousness**
Albuquerque, NM. An exploration of Enlightenment, Entheogens, Shamanism and Peak Experiences. Awakening Awareness through Sacred Technologies. Huston Smith, Stanley Krippner, Brooke Medicine Eagle, Bruce Eisner, others. \$745. The Message Company, 4 Camino Azul, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 505-474-0998; message@bizspirit.com; www.bizspirit.com.
- Nov 9-12 • Naka-Ima**
Dexter, OR. See Oct 12-15.
- Nov 11-16 • Ecovillage Design Course**
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters Eco-Village. Part 1 of the Ecovillage Design Course. Incl. eco-design principles, in-depth tours of Crystal Waters, international case studies, community building, project management, more. Max Lindegger, Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond, Lloyd Williams, others. Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond, Lot 50 Crystal Waters MS16 Maleny, Queensland 4552, Australia; +61-0-754-944-833; info@permaculture.au.com; www.crystalwaterscollege.org.au.
- Nov 16-20 • The Practice**
Dexter, OR. Lost Valley Educational Center. A Course in Creating Intimacy and Community Through the Practice of Honesty. The Practice is a companion course to Naka-Ima, intended to give a deeper experience and understanding of the tools and concepts so they are more integrated and readily accessible in your life. \$450-\$700 s/s, incl. food, lodging. Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; info@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.
- Nov 18-22 • Ecovillage Design Practicum**
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters Eco-Village. Part 2 of the Ecovillage Design Course. An opportunity to be involved in a practical ecovillage design project. Join with international designers from the Global Ecovillage Network in Oceania and Asia, Europe and the Americas. Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond, Lot 50 Crystal Waters MS16 Maleny, Queensland 4552, Australia; +61-0-754-944-833; info@permaculture.au.com; www.crystalwaterscollege.org.au.
- Nov 22-25 • Living in Actualization in an Interuniversal-Soul Cultural Community**
Sedona, AZ. See Sep 27-30.
- Nov 24 • Mushroom-growing Basics**
Summertown, TN. The Farm community. How to grow shiitake mushrooms and make money doing it. Half-day course 11 am to 3 pm. Albert Bates, Frank Michael. \$50. Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; 931-964-4475; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/.
- Dec 1-2 • Hands-On Permaculture Workshop**
Queensland, Australia. Crystal Waters Eco-Village. Workshop for those who wish to get their hands in the earth and learn about permaculture by doing it. This course is one of the best ways to experience Crystal Waters for the first time. Morag Gamble, Evan Raymond, Lot 50 Crystal Waters MS16 Maleny, Queensland 4552, Australia; +61-0-754-944-833; info@permaculture.au.com; www.permaculture.au.com.
- Dec 8 • Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) 25th Anniversary Visioning Day**
Twin Oaks, Virginia. Former FEC delegates especially welcome. Sheldon, bhhouse@yahoo.com; 206-324-6822.
- Dec 10-14 • Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) Fall Assembly**
Twin Oaks, Virginia. Valerie, valerie@twinoakds.org; 540-894-5126.

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classifieds



Communities classified ads reach 5,000 people 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 or expanding communities
- personal ads.

Please note that the CLASSIFIED DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 2001 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCTOBER 20TH.

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, 13 West Branch Rd., Heath, MA 01339. Phone or fax: 413-337-4037; email: peagreen@javanet.com If you are emailing me an ad, please be sure to send your mailing address, phone and put the check in the 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.

NOTE: new picture listings with Land and Homes For Sale ads. See section for details. All other listings can be found in the Reach and Calendar columns.

BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS, WEB SITES

PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS. Clarify your life at www.HolisticHarmony.com Emotional Harmony, Health, Confidence, Self Acceptance, Self Knowledge, Decision Making, Overcome Fears.

INTRODUCTION TO CONSENSUS. Useful information about participatory group process and sustainable decision-making. Includes 28-page Guide For Facilitators. Also available in Spanish. \$15 check or money order to Beatrice Briggs, POB 25, Black Earth, WI 53515. Briggsbea@aol.com

CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

TOOLS FOR INTENTIONAL LIVING on your own and in Community. In the Avatar Course you learn how to get out of your own way, dream-and achieve-bigger, connect more easily, resolve conflicts quickly, and enjoy the process a whole bunch more. We have found these tools to be remarkably effective in our own Community, and we create a strong Community feel during our course. Avatar is the "how-to" course for deliberate living. Group discounts. Contact Ma'ikwe at 417-935-2984; avatar@ic.org

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VASTU VEDIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION. Ancient Indian architectural traditions hold that a building is a living organism and can be designed in harmonic resonance with the underlying energy structure of the universe. Such a building becomes a generator of coherence, attuning the occupants to the universal laws and increasing health, wealth and spiritual well-being. Design services/consultation. Vastuved@yahoo.com

FACILITATION AND WORKSHOPS on consensus and other decision-making tools. Learn skills to make your meetings upbeat and productive from planning agendas to dealing with "difficult" people. Save hours of time and frustration and deepen your sense of community. Contact: Tree Bressen, 541-484-1156; tree@ic.org

LAND AND HOUSES FOR SALE

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SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO. Ideal retreat center/spiritual community land. 200 acres in riparian zone with year-round creek. Adjacent to Gila National Forest. Secluded yet accessible. Neighbors to Sufi Community. Contact *Rashad* at POB 373, Silver City, NM 88062; 505-538-0201; rashad@gilanet.com

IDEAL COMMUNITY PROPERTY. 11 acre semi-rural, partially solar-powered homestead, an hour from Asheville, NC. Two houses (three bedroom/two bath, office, and three bedroom, one bath, office); 4,000 sq. ft. fenced organic garden; three acre pasture; 2,800 watt-hours/mo. solar system, AC & DC (grid backup) and two wells (one with DC pump); three outbuildings, 4-5 acres woods. 828-863-2802; diana@ic.org

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; \$29/yr. *The Caretaker Gazette*, Box 540-1, River Falls, WI 54022; 715 426-5500; www.angelfire.com/wa/caretaker.

PERSONALS

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, Lennoxdale, MA 01242; 413-445-6309; www.concernedsingles.com

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.

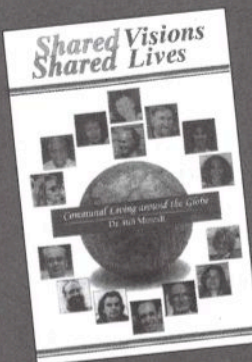
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Available from US sources for \$14 postpaid. Available fr. Australia f/ roughly equivalent price). Contact Bill Metcalf, w.metcalf@mailbox.gu.edu.au.

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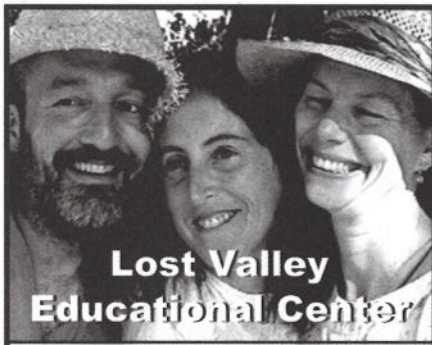
Contact us to find out about how you can live more sustainably. We're building a rural ecovillage with room for individuals, families, and other communities, where we strive to learn and educate about sustainable living. In this early pioneering stage, we're committed to consensus, feminism and building for the future. Come help us create a new way of life!



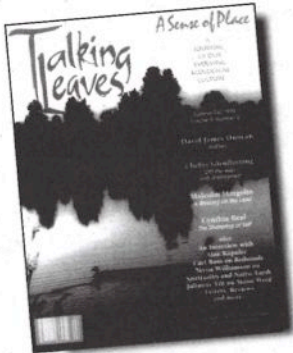
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Reach



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, it reaches those who are seriously interested in community.

You may use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad.

Note: THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 2001 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCTOBER 20TH!

The special Reach rate is only \$.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$.50 per word thereafter for all ads) 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, 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, 13 West Branch Rd., Heath, MA 01339; phone and fax, 413-337-4037, email: patricia@ic.org (If you email an ad, please include your mailing address, phone number and be sure to send off the check at the same time.)

Suggestion: get a larger response by not excluding anyone. Include not just email, but address and phone. Caveat to readers: never, but never, drop in on any community unannounced!

NOTE: new picture listings with Community House For Sale ads. See section for details.

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. Our 90 acres of beautiful mountain land is home to two small sub-communities: Tekiah (an income sharing group) and Dayspring Circle (an independent income group). We want to grow, both by taking on new members in existing pods and by taking on new groups. We are committed to dealing thoughtfully with conflict and to considering carefully the impacts of our actions on the planet. We eat together regularly. We offer stability, experience (our "average" member has been here five years, and has lived in community 16

years), a river, pond, forests, pastures, gardens, basic infrastructure and limited housing. We seek builders, organic growers, musicians, business people, experienced communitarians, people who like to walk up and down hills and people who are fun to be around. We include a diversity of spiritual and sexual orientations. Families are welcome. POB 433, 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-CM12 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 1989. 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 Bright Music with Gabriel of Sedona and the Bright and Morning Star Band with the vocal CDs "Holy City" and "CosmoPop 2000," 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; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; http://www.aquarianconcepts.org; www.glob-alchangemusic.org

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

potent environment for social and personal growth. *Breitenbush Hot Springs, Personnel, POB 578, Detroit, OR 97342; 503-854-3320.*

CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres-woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), dollmaking shop, food processing kitchen and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a non-denominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories, plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us-families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "co-workers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three weeks vacation and meet each person's needs as possible. *For information: Rt. 3, Box 249, Sauk Centre, MN 56378; 320-732-6365; Fax: 320-732-3204; CVMN@rea-alp.com; www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org*

CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE, Champaign, Illinois. Join our child-friendly, peace-oriented, income-sharing community of students and grads. We are currently five adult non-smokers and three children. Our houses are just two blocks from the University of Illinois. We are academically oriented, non-sectarian and home school. Student members are subsidized and pay just \$110/mo room/board. Members get back 25% of earning for personal expenses. Student loans and moving expenses are paid by the community. We hope to have and raise many intelligent and well-rounded children who will contribute positively to society. *800-498-7781; CATF@cs.com; www.childrenforthefuture.org*

COOP HOUSE, Eugene, Oregon. Seeking a few more long-term, committed members for cooperative household. We share a large, rambling house and meals five nights a week. We strive for good communication and hold weekly consensus meetings. Excellent location near university, river, parks, in the thriving alternative culture of Eugene. Our efforts toward urban sustainability include things like eating mostly organic food, growing vegetables in our front yard, and commuting by bicycle. Nine-bedroom house with plenty of common space. *1680 Walnut St., Eugene OR 97403; 541-484-1156; angelina@ic.org*

DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. We are actively seeking new members to join us in creating our vibrant home and sustainability demonstration project. We are building our homes with earth-friendly materials on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. We live, work and play together; with cooperation and feminism as basic principles. We grow much of our food and share delicious organic meals together every day. We make our decisions by consensus. If you're looking for a nurturing home where you can live more sustainably and make a difference in the world, come visit us. Help make our ecovillage grow! *One Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

EARTHAVEN, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Community in the Blue Ridge invites motivated cultural evolutionaries to live in dynamic harmony with nature (and each other) on 325 acres. Three streams, permaculture land plan (70+ house sites in 11 neighborhoods, 25 leases sold), natural building methods, simple off-grid living. Hydro-powered village center with strawbale community hall and kitchen, store and café. Gardens, lumber mill, building coop, workshops and trainings. Growing every day! Accessible to Asheville. Membership and visiting information: *info@earthaven.org; "Infopak" and four newsletters available for \$15 from Earthaven Association, 1025 Camp Elliott Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711. Visit our website at www.earthaven.org or leave phone number at 828-669-3937.*

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 and please contact us before visiting. *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 environ-

mental 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. EVI actively seeks a diverse membership, including ethnic, economic, physical ability, sexual orientation, age and spiritual. We are also seeking new members to join our diverse second neighborhood group (SoNG), which plans to begin building this summer. 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 and visit our 9.5 acre organic farm. EcoVillage welcomes you! Check out our web site at: *www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us* and contact: *Liz Walker, 607-255-8276; ecovillage@cornell.edu; EcoVillage, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell Univ, Ithaca, NY 14853.*

FLOWERING DESERT PERMACULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTER, Tucson, Arizona. With two residents, we seek one compatible family unit or single person to buy into and become partners on our 2.27 acre permaculture site. Zoning allows another house plus guest house. Property is owned by one of the residents, and we would put ownership in a legal context that works for all partners. Non-violent communications, social transformation and land restoration are priorities. We welcome inquiries from people with financial resources and sincere interest. We are hosting an open house during the FIC Board event October 26-29. *520 578-9557; info@floweringdesert.com; www.floweringdesert.com*

GANAS, Staten Island, New York. We are an intentional community in NYC with about 90 adults of many ages, ethnicities and life views. We are looking for people with managerial skills to work in our residences or retail businesses. We could also use people who can do auto repair or grounds maintenance. We live in ten 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 full-time receive expenses, plus up to \$300 a month and a share of our profits. Others pay expenses with \$500-650 per month. Every day about half of us talk together about work, community and personal issues.

Northwest Intentional Communities Association



Communities networking
WA, OR, ID

Intentional Communities
and Cohousing.

Newsletter and gatherings

Huge web resource library at
<http://www.ic.org/nica>

For sample newsletter send \$1 or SASE to: NICA 22110 East Lost Lake Rd.
Snohomish, WA 98296 Email floriferous@msn.com

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. *Ganas*, 135 Corson Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301-2933; 718 720-5378; fac 718 448-842; ganas@well.com; www.ganas.org

SALT CREEK INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY, Port Angeles, Washington. We are four non-sectarian, middle-aged, mostly traditional adults seeking members who share our vision of community which is: six to eight "families" who take responsibility to learn, communicate honestly, adapt and cooperate to create balanced, peaceful lives while restoring and sustaining our natural environment on 55 acres of forest, creek and farmland. We are not income sharing. We have a permit for a seven-lot cluster development, and are developing an organic market garden. Our dream is to build a common house and six individually owned small houses. We are still researching our legal structure but are leaning toward a homeowner association with common ownership of the common areas and open space. We are located 13 miles west of Port Angeles, a town of 20,000 near the Olympic National Park. SASE to *Salt Creek Intentional Community*, 585 Wasankari Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98363; janevavan1@aol.com

SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Family-style, income-sharing, egalitarian community looking for new members to help build a caring, sustainable lifestyle, respectful of the earth and each other. We support ourselves growing and selling organic food (sorghum, honey, mustard, tempeh, garlic, horseradish), helping build the communities movement (we do administrative work for FIC), and by having fun! We grow most of our own food and value the energy put into that process. We operate by consensus and hold group meetings twice weekly. We are looking for people who value simple living, are self-motivated, conscientious, and willing to follow through with conflict resolution. We have experience homeschooling. Single parents or families with a child of four to ten years old are particularly encouraged to visit. We are looking to expand our membership from the current five adults and one child. Having a sense of humor and a joy for living are big pluses. We have recently joined energies with Dancing Rabbit (a community two miles away aiming to build a sustainable ecovillage.) Interns welcome April-November (see ad below). *Sandhill Farm, Rt. 1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5543; sandhill@ic.org*

THREE SPRINGS, North Fork, California. Our 160 acres, including annual creek, pond, rolling hills and CSA-organic garden, is held in a non-profit land trust. After 5+ years, we have grown to seven adults and two children. We are now seeking new members who share our values of con-

sensus decision making, simple living, and interpersonal growth. Send letter of intent. 59820 *Italian Bar Rd., North Fork, CA 93643; farm@sierratel.com*

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 non-violence 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. Twin Oaks offers a number of internships, including conference organizing, sustainability, web site applications, bikes, among others. For information: *Twin Oaks, 138-R Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; twinoaks@ic.org; www.twinoaks.org*

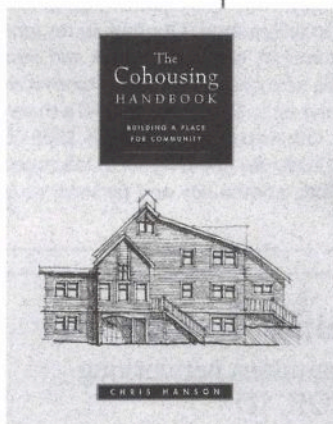
UNAHWI RIDGE, Western North Carolina. Our community offers home sites, amenities, gardens and miles of trails on 600 acre eco-development in North Carolina mountains. Prices from \$38,000, with owner financing. www.unahwiridge.com

UNION ACRES COMMUNITY, Whittier, North Carolina. Established community seeks responsible and fun-loving people to purchase lots and join us on 80 acres in the Smokey Mountains. Children welcome. Contact: *Union Acres, 654 Heartwood Way, Whittier, NC 28789; swasapp@earthlink.net; www.home.earthlink.net/~lchristie*

WINDTREE RANCH, Douglas, Arizona. Remote foothills, eco-sustainable, poly, Pagan, naturist, vegan, toxin-free, non-profit. RR2, Box 1, Douglas, AZ 85607-9802; 520-364-4611; windtreeranch@theriver.com; www.windtreeranch.org

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COMMUNITY HOUSES FOR SALE

Run a one inch high picture of your home for sale with your copy for only \$20 more! Photo must be high contrast and horizontal and must arrive by the stated deadline.

HEARTWOOD COHOUSING, Durango, Colorado. Two highly efficient, passive solar straw bale townhouses for sale; completed winter '01. Each is 1600 sq. ft. with unique, open floor plan, three bedrooms. Prices will range from \$220,000 to \$240,000 (including \$72,000 cost of lot). Heartwood's 350 acres include some irrigated pasture and many other amenities. *Werner Heiber 970-884-9045; whab@frontier.net*

HIGHER GROUND, Bend, Oregon. Newer intentional community with forty separately owned homesites. Common house for some shared meals, meetings, retreats, overflow. Spa, sauna, pond and waterfall, garden. One delight-

ful home for sale with 1938 sq. ft., four bedrooms and open floor plan. Post and beam, stucco and straw bale construction with radiant floor heat. Very artistically and innovatively designed and decorated. Mike Dillard at the Professional Realty Group for more information. 300 SE Reed Market Rd., Bend, OR 97702; 1-800-700-5657; info@4uisell.com

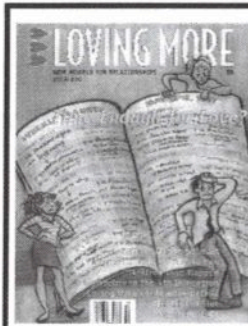
COMMUNITIES FORMING

AGATE ACRES, Central Point, Oregon. Seeking friendly homesteader community types. Alternative-minded single males or females ages 25-70's with strong desire to live as large family, cooperative, self-sufficient tribes on our 30 acre organic farm - all paid for. We're seeking volunteer partners to aid in development of new building and remodeling of existing ones. You should be creative, trustworthy, resourceful and responsible for self. Prefer one or two computer literates to help re-run this ad on internet and live on land or nearby. Full 360 degree views of Rogue Valley and Cascade Ranges, with I-5 only five minutes away. Have a passion for fun, celebration and fellowship, enjoy family environment. No flakes. Write for short questionnaire and complete details. SASE to: *Gorddie Rancho, Judy L., Marilyn W., Agate Acres/Re-Village, POB 3308, Central Point, OR 97502.*

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, White Mountains of Arizona. Starting Biblical-based community Acts 2:42-47. 43 acres. Northeast Arizona. Must be able and willing to live and work together in primitive area. Provide own housing, transportation and income. Members serving one another. 1 Cor.12 No kings, one is our king. No lords, there is one lord and savior of us all, Yashua! Contact: *Dames and Knights of the Lord's Table, POB 1078, Snowflake, AZ 85937.*

CALIFORNIA. Energetic, committed group buying rural California property to preserve three-quarters and construct communal kitchen, organic garden, tree houses, hobbit holes and more on the rest. Let's have fun! Expenses, property, and decision-making power shared equally. Sober or serious eco-minded anarchists, artists and animal lovers welcome to check us out. Call or write. You know you want to! **5324 Manila Ave., #2, Oakland, CA 94618; 510 658-2574.**

COOPERATIVE ECOVILLAGE, Minnesota Area. Core group forming in Minneapolis/St. Paul area to purchase rural acreage together, either within 90-mile radius or out-of-state (or both). Goal to create independent income cooperative ecovillage(s) with extensive wilderness reserve. Several income-generating projects are being researched, including an artists' retreat/workshop/cooperative, wellness center, CSA, and Abundant Living community outreach project. Group meets monthly. Call or email *Trisha McKenney for more information: 952-443-3340; ancienteyes@att.net*



Loving More[®] is the only magazine on polyamory—open couples, triads & moresomes, sharing a lover, expanded family, sexual healing, jealousy, sacred sex, co-parenting, community, and other topics of interest to those who are open to more than one love. Plus regional groups, events, and personal contacts.

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Loving More, Box 4358C, Boulder, CO 80306
LMM@lovemore.com / www.lovemore.com / 1-800-424-9561

ECOZONE, Clear Lake, California. Two and a half acres, secluded, quiet. Four bedroom, two bath house, more bedrooms in barn. Exploring technology (solar, wind), ecology (permaculture, cob), creative arts, spirituality, economics (workshops, retreats, short-term rentals). Four members; looking for five more. Rent start at \$300, plus shared utilities. Work possibilities. Near Harbin Hot Springs. *Oakland Hanover Ecovillage connection. 9168 Diamond Dust Trail, Kelfyville, CA 95451; 707-279-0895.*

EDEN RANCH, Paonia, Colorado. Seeking members desiring rural, organic living environment. Share labor, community meals, and an undivided share of 65 acres. Future crops and community businesses planned. Outstanding views and clean air on a Western Colorado mesa. Build your own environmentally responsible home; ultimate self-sustainability is our goal. Ocal alternative school. Diversity in thought and age; mutual respect and trust creates consensus decisions. Approximately \$15,000 landshare (flexible terms), plus membership fee. Other residential categories available. Visits, tours, camping and guest accommodations by reservation. Visit our web site at *www.eden-ranch.com Eden Ranch Community, POB 520, Paonia, CO 81428; 970-835-8905; woodwetz@aol.com*

EDEN ECOVILLAGE, Northern California. 1,600 acres, 70 five-acre passive solar home sites, enough to reach that critical mass making self-sustainability really possible. Sunshine, clean fresh air, pure water, natural healing environment, springs, creeks, trees, farmland, lakes, four seasons, egalitarianism, freedom, consensus, democracy. Open Lodge meetings on last Saturday of every odd numbered month. One hour north of Golden Gate Bridge, Jack London Lodge, Glen Ellen, 11AM outside Bistro. *Eden Journal, 20 pages, four issues \$7-20 sliding scale Payable: T. McClure, POB 571, Kenwood, CA 9545; Join our e-group: edenprojectsubscribe@egroups.com; www.edenproject.hometstead.com*

HOMESCHOOLING COMMUNITY, Garberville, California. Community forming. Homeschooling families. Homestead, organic orchards, alternative energy. Land and stream restoration. Our vision is to share country living here on the farm with homeschooling families, having fun work-

ing together, growing gardens, enjoying nature. We are non-religious. *Gil and Robie, 1901 Dutyville Rd., Garberville, CA 95542; 707-986-7787.*

MID-COAST MAINE, Belfast, Maine. We have bought 55 acres and a round stone house near Belfast, a coastal town. Looking for others who share our desire to enhance our spiritual paths as a diverse group of people living in community to nurture ourselves, our land, our neighborhood and our world. We are two middle-aged women looking for women, men and children of all ages who are committed to organic gardening, shared meals, varied ecological housing, honoring each person's uniqueness. Let's talk. *Nan Stone, POB 1060, Belfast, ME 04915; 207-338-5559; nan-stone@mint.net*

MODEL INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY, Maine (tentatively). Emphasizing actualization of potentials of enhanced powers of functioning, and optimal interpersonal relationship, and its exponential power to produce beneficial transformational changes in the individual and society. We are highly selective, seeking communicative, constructive, sincere, caring, growth-oriented members. Individuals who are compulsively conflictual, narcissistic, selfish, exploitative, manipulative, controlling or into narcotics, addictions or artificial "highs", of any kind, need not apply. We seek members who can risk for individual and relational growth, rather than being overly protective of positive self-concepts, and not into psychological gamesmanship. We have developed a process of optimal deep, open and honest, interpersonal communication, leading to optimally fulfilling interpersonal relationship, as a synergistic relational "we", ie., a true sense of relational community, empathic connection, closeness bonding, and belonging, which then beneficially contributes to the empowerment and transformation of the individual and the whole society through a process of vibratory sympathetic resonance. We are demonstrating the transformational and blessing power of relational connection to produce optimal healing and developmental growth effects, at every level of one's being, as well as producing creative understanding, inspiration and expression. Members must be able to provide their own source of income. If interested, email: *MHBJ@Maine.edu*, and tell us what skills and interests you could bring to this community.

NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire. Active ecology (permaculture), nature sanctuary on 49 diverse, secluded acres, seek investor co-participant cohousing residents. *NGC, POB 31, Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; nhnamaste@yahoo.com*

NOAH'S ARK 2, Texas. Eleven rural acres one hour east of Austin, two hours northwest of Houston. Open-hearted, job-sharing, progressive sufi/yoga/unitarian folks co-creating short-term weekender nature retreat community and long-term, earth-sheltered, "Liberal" survival center since 1995. Part-time silence/solitude acceptable. \$1 brochure. *4001 Oakridge, Houston, TX 77090-5230; 713-863-0433; sharingfutures@aol.com*

OAKLAND HANOVER ECOVILLAGE, Oakland, California. Three year+ neighborhood-as-community. Monthly calendar of free daily events: garden projects, art/music, video discussions, potlucks. Meeting places: member houses, local restaurants. Drop in for events. *Stephen Kelly, 468A Hanover Ave., Oakland, CA 94606; 510-663-2594; www.javamentor.com/eco*

SEEKING PARTNERS: about 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.*

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY, Northern California. Starting gender balanced coopertave household working toward visionary ecovillage community. Mostly artists, musicians, unencumbered singles 25-35. \$300/month plus utilities. *www.SustainableCommunity.homestead.com; Temeluch@yahoo.com*

PEOPLE LOOKING

THERAPEUTIC BODYWORKER SEEKS COMMUNITY. Skills in Massage, Z.B. Trager, Reflexology, Cranio Sacral, Holistic Health Educator and more. Additional skills in remodeling and property management. *Ischweit@yourinter.net*

INTERNS AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS, Sedona, Arizona. LEAD GUITARIST, KEYBOARDIST, LEAD VIOLINIST, LEAD CELLIST, BASS PLAYER wanted for Gabriel of Sedona's Bright and Morning Star Band. Male or Female. Send demo. **SOUND ENGINEER** also wanted for Band and live performance hall with Soundcraft 8000, 40-channel board and Solid State Logic 4040G, 32-channel board. **CHOIR DIRECTOR** wanted for Gabriel of Sedona's Bright and Morning Star Choir. Young, vivacious female for 40 voice choir and eight piece orchestra. All original CosmoWorship compositions. Spiritual commitment necessary. Must be willing to become a committed community member. Send picture and resume. See our community listing under "Communities With Openings" above.

OJAI FOUNDATION, Ojai, California. Residential Work Retreat and Internship opportunities for those who are interested in exploring the relationship between mindful work, spiritual practice, community experience, and personal retreat time. The foundation provides a learning community; a rites of passage center; a place for retreat, reflection, and healing; opportunities to participate in the creation of a caring, mindful culture; and a training center for bringing the Way of Council to the educational, business and therapeutic communities. *805-646-8343; Fax: 805-646-2456; ojaifdn@jetlink.net; www.ojaifoundation.org*

SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Internships In Sustainable Living. February to November. Gain experience in organic farming, construction, communication, rural and community living. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. See community description under "Communities With Openings" above. *Sandhill Farm, RR1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5543; sandhill@ic.org; see our link at www.thefec.org*

RESOURCES

ALTERNATIVE EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES. NO MONEY DOWN! We invite you to join our existing businesses and housing-all we ask for is a cooperative attitude and willingness to work hard. Live with others who value equality, ecology and pacifism. For our booklet, send \$3 to: *Federation of Egalitarian Communities, HC-3, Box 3370-CM98, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; fec@ic.org*

COMMUNITY JOURNAL. A magazine devoted to the life and experience of living in community as told through words and pictures. Published quarterly by Community Service, supporting and fostering healthy small, local and intentional communities for 60 years. Write for a complementary copy. Yearly subscription is \$25. *POB 243, Yellow Springs, OH 45387; info@community-service.net*

INTERESTED IN JOINING A BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY? We'll put you in touch with former members of the Hutterian Brethren/Bruderhof. *Peregrine Foundation, PO Box 460141, San Francisco, CA 94146; 415-821-2090.*

COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE REACH ADVERTISING ORDER FORM

Please specify which section you wish you ad to appear under:

- Communities with Openings
 Communities Forming People Looking
 Internships Resources

Cost: 25¢/wd. to 100 words, 50¢/wd. thereafter.
 23¢/wd. - 2 inserts, 20¢/wd. - 4 inserts. FIC members get 5% discount. Please include payment with submission.
 Abbrev. & phone # = 1 wd., PO Box = 2 wd.

____ Word Count at 25¢/word = \$ _____

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*Please type or print text of ad on separate sheet of paper.
 Make check out to Communities magazine.*

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ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Mail this form with payment (by July 20 for Fall issue) to:
Patricia Greene, 13 West Branch Rd., Heath, MA 01339;
413-337-4037; pegreen@javanet.com

THE COMPLETELY UPDATED, ALL NEW COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

Over 600 North American and 100 international communities describe themselves—their structure, beliefs, mission, and visions of the future, and provide contact information.

33 NEW ARTICLES

Topics include: how to visit communities; why live in community and what it means to do so; financing and setting up the legal structures of communities; opportunities for older people in community; communities and the “cult” issue; consensus process; raising children in community; dealing with conflict; an overview of Christian community; and more.

MAPS

Complete maps of North American communities. See at a glance what’s happening in your area.

CHARTS

These charts allow you to quickly scan for the communities that fulfill your criteria. The charts will show you in a flash which communities match your needs and desires.

RESOURCES

Descriptions and contact information for major organizations within specific interest areas. Categories include: community networking, agriculture, ecology, energy, economics, technology, spirituality, education, sexuality, and personal growth.

NEW SECTION— RECOMMENDED READING LIST

An annotated collection of over 300 texts of interest to community-minded people.



SEE ORDER FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE.

FIC MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITIES MAGAZINE, & DIRECTORY ORDER

Communities Magazine— Subscribe Today!

Your source for the latest information, issues, and ideas about intentional communities and cooperative living!

Supplements the *Communities Directory* (see *Directory* ad on inside front cover) with update listings about communities in North America—including those now forming.

Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Memberships!

The FIC is a network of communitarians promoting communication and understanding about and among intentional communities across North America. The Fellowship:

- publishes *Communities* magazine and the best-selling *Communities Directory*.
- built and maintains the Intentional Communities site on the World Wide Web

<www.ic.org>

- hosts gatherings and events about community.
- builds bridges between communities and the wider culture.
- serves as an information clearinghouse for all aspects of community—for individuals, groups, and the media.

FIC membership supports these efforts and offers the following benefits:

- our quarterly newsletter
- discounts on selected products and services.
- advertising discounts in our publications.
- invitations to board meetings and other activities.
- first notice on whatever we're doing, and the opportunity to get in early!

Fellowship for Intentional Community Membership

Yes, I'll join the Fellowship for Intentional Community! (Check appropriate membership category)

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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 72)

vidualistic and competitive ways of the mainstream, and the same social ills we were trying to escape we inevitably brought with us into our idealistic new lifestyles. I also realized that unlearning the old ways and creating a new culture was going to be a lifelong endeavor. I began taking on the role of networker, organizing for cooperative community causes.

An accident of fate launched me onto the road 14 years ago. I felt stuck in a leadership role in a community I had co-founded 10 years prior, and I wanted to break that pattern. Somehow that major life shift has evolved into a full-time career as a community networking volunteer—documenting community visions and everyday realities, leading workshops about various skills needed to build and maintain community, doing lots of communal matchmaking and resource referrals, and promoting the idea of community to any audience that has been willing to listen.

I get a lot of satisfaction and inspiration from pursuing this mission, and it has also provided me with a never-ending supply of material for my own inner work. I'm confident that, as I ease into my elder years, promoting community will remain one of my ongoing roles. As I grow older I imagine I'll still be telling people, as I do now: "Living in community, though mostly productive and joyous, is incredibly hard work. It will bring up all of your personal issues and prompt growth in areas you never dreamed you had. And it's absolutely worth it!" Ω

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 28 years, and has been on the road for 14 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 three-hour video documentary on intentional communities.



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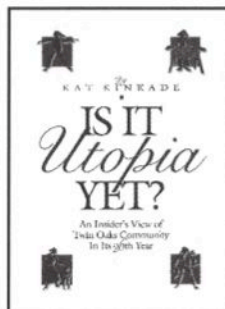


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An Insider's View of Twin Oaks Community In Its 26th Year by Kat Kinkade



Is it Utopia Yet? is a lively, first-hand account of the unique struggles and triumphs of the first 25 years of Twin Oaks Community, one of America's most prominent and successful communes. This thoughtful and entertaining 320 page book, from the author of *A Walden Two Experiment*, is illustrated with 16 photographs and 60 cartoons.

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Community & Me

One evening at FIC's spring '01 organizational meeting, everyone in the circle shared their story of what got them involved in community. The accounts were universally inspiring, and prompted the idea of asking folks who live in community to write their own stories and submit them for possible publication in this magazine. We expect such a series of mini-biographies will show that the intentional communities movement is made up of ordinary people with extraordinary vision and commitment. (If you'd like to contribute an article, send for Writers Guidelines. Contact communities@ic.org; 828-652-8517; or write Communities magazine, 52 Willow St., Marion, NC 28752.)

So here's my own story. I was raised in a small town in Kansas, the heartland of conservatism, and absorbed much of that culture. Throughout my youth I was an overachiever who appeared destined for success in the expected, media-promoted role of upward mobility. But a few years into college I experienced a growing angst as I realized that most of the movers and shakers in the business, political, and religious worlds weren't playing by the rules I had been taught in home, school, church, and the Boy Scouts: honesty, kindness, consideration, contributing to the common good, and living according to the Golden Rule.

As I look back, several disillusionments stand out. I had already witnessed a few respected hometown preachers being transferred to distant parishes as a result of infidelity scandals, and I was troubled deeply by the oppressive (rather than liberating) role of the US in the Vietnam War. Big business was gaining a reputation of valuing profits over people and the environment, and the Nixon/Watergate scandal merely deepened my cynicism about corruption in high places (a loss of faith not yet restored by any subsequent US president).

As I moved into my budding career in architecture and construction management, I became further disillusioned by the greed, corruption, and incompetence I discovered at

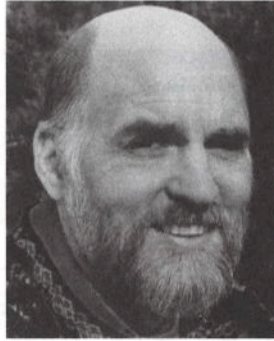
many levels of that field, from top executives to on-site laborers. I decided to drop out of the mainstream and set up my own home repairs business in which I could be my own boss, oversee the quality of the materials and workmanship and develop a trusted, valued, and friendly relationship with my customers. Within a few months my business was booming. Obviously, even my mainstream customers noticed and appreciated honest, friendly, quality craftsmanship.

About this time a friend from grade school saw a magazine article about a "middle class commune" in Boston—really a cooperative household—where a handful of recent college graduates lived together in a large and luxurious home that none of them individually could have afforded. They shared rent, living expenses, chores, and evening meals, and got the added bonus of a built-in social scene. Inspired by this example, my friend and I put out the word to about a half dozen other friends and quickly coalesced a group that worked remarkably well. Within weeks we rented a house together. I've never looked back, and those housemates remain good friends to this very day.

Learning of my new avant-garde lifestyle, friends started loaning me books such as Kat Kinkade's *A Walden Two Experiment*, which chronicles the early years at Twin Oaks community, and Richard Fairfield's *Communes U.S.A.*, which describes his visits to many of the countercultural communities of the '60s and early '70s. What a breath of fresh air! I discovered that not only were hundreds of idealistic groups trying to live a life based on visions of a better world (including those values I had learned growing up!), but also glimpsed the inspiring legacy of alternative community cultures in the West that have existed since before the time of Christ.

Of course, I was young and idealistic (read "naive") about how straightforward and simple it would be to live up to such ideals. It didn't take long to learn that most of my fellow dropouts and I were firmly indoctrinated in the indi-

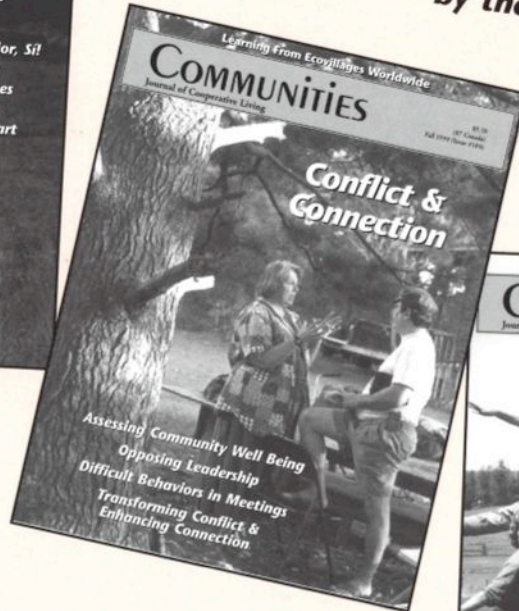
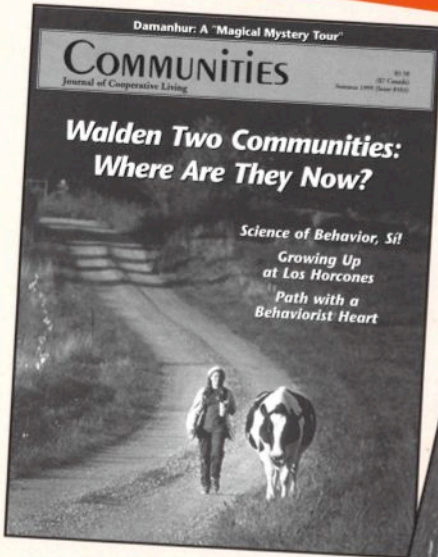
(continued on p. 71)



BY GEOPH KOZENY

Unlearning the old ways and creating a new culture was going to be a lifelong endeavor.

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