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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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Spring 2002 (Issue #114)

What Do Children Learn in Community?

***Community-Based Education:
Superior to Public Schools?***

A Place in the Tribe

***Self-Reliance, Self-Esteem,
& Social Confidence***





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by Fellowship for Intentional Community
Annual supplement to the *Communities Directory*, including existing communities that have decided in the last year to let us publish news of who they are and where they are; the latest word on groups now forming; changes in contact information for communities already listed; and information on communities that have disbanded or closed their doors.

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Whether you're planning a European vacation or looking for a new home in the Old Country, Eurotopia is the place to begin your search. It features excellent articles on communal living; a listing of a whopping 336 intentional communities (40 ecovillages) in 23 European countries, including detailed information and descriptions; descriptions of 24 networks, including address of their members; 17 maps; a chapter with useful addresses; a recommended reading list; and a detailed index.

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by David Janzen and others in Shalom Mission Communities



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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

FRONT COVER

At Bundagen Cooperative in New South Wales, Australia, author Jenny Ledger's son Chris, age seven, with baby wallaby.

BACK COVER

Children at The Free School, Albany, New York.

Photo: Connie Frisbee Houde.



FOCUS

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36 **The Play’s the Thing** Acting in home-grown theater helps New View Cohousing children improve self-esteem, self-expression, and social confidence, as well as make friends with community members of all ages. *Franny Osman*.

40 **“We Care About Each Other Fiercely”** With no desks, tests, or grades, children thrive in an atmosphere of self-directed learning and cooperative problem-solving at The Albany Free School, as well as in the intentional community of School families and friends living close by. *Chris Mercogliano*. • **Learning at Greenbriar**—*Jerry Mintz*

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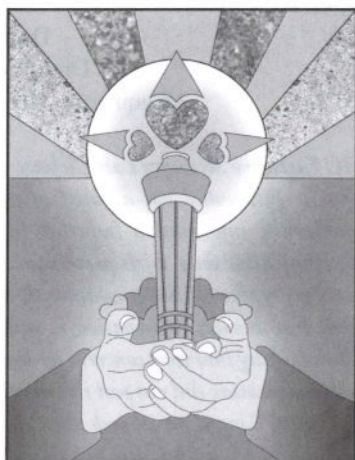
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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

EDITOR

Diana Leafe Christian (Earthaven)

GUEST EDITOR

Ron Miller (Ten Stones Community, Foundation for Educational Renewal)

LAYOUT

Tristan Masat

ILLUSTRATIONS

Darren T. McManus
Billie Miracle (*WomanShare*)
Jacob Stevens (*Dancing Rabbit*)

PHOTOS

Brenda Callan (Twin Oaks), Daniel Greenberg (Sirius), Connie Frisbee Houde, Jonathan Roth, Joshua Russert (Nature's Spirit).

COPY EDITING

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

PROOFREADING

Melissa Smith

DISPLAY ADS

Diana Leafe Christian (Earthaven)

REACH AND CLASSIFIED ADS

Patricia Greene

BUSINESS MANAGER

Marty Klaif (*Shannon Farm*)

OFFICE MANAGER

Jonah "Cecil" Scheib (*Dancing Rabbit*)

DATABASE MANAGER

Velma Kahn (*Abundant Dawn*)

CIRCULATION MANAGER

McCune Porter (*Twin Oaks*)

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

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

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LETTERS



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

Why Ninety Percent of Forming Communities Fail

Dear *Communities*:

I just read Patricia Greene's article in your Summer '01 issue, "Seriously Seeking Community," and can relate very deeply. I agree that approximately 90 percent of forming communities fail and I think I know why. Sustainable relationships are not very central to our culture. We are socialized to be self-centered and wary of intimacy—it's simply fear.

At Namaste Greenfire community we are trying to create an intimacy circle, involving multiple intimacy, poly loving relationships—the freedom to be responsibly loving without limits. This demands strong, secure individuals perfecting their abilities to be giving and liberated in that giving—rising above fear. Multiple intimacy is an *intentional* situation where everyone in a circle is focused and practicing intimacy in truth as deeply as possible with several others. In some cases sexuality may be a very real part of the shared closeness; in others, it is not. In all cases, being cooperative in the practice of integrity is a must! Without this underlying motive groups have a real tendency to disintegrate.

Bruce Shearer

Namaste Greenfire
Barnstead, New Hampshire
nhnamaste@yahoo.com

The Right of Communities to Privacy

Dear *Communities*:

We recently had a problem related to our listing in the new *Communities Directory*. After careful discussion, our community chose to include ourselves in the *Directory* listings.

We assumed our listing would be printed in the hard copy of the *Directory*, and it would be available to interested persons by mail-order, at the library, at communities conferences, and so on.

So we were surprised recently to learn that our community was listed on two different web sites. We contacted the creators of those web sites and asked to be deleted. Being listed on the Internet without our permission has raised a number of concerns for our community. I believe it is a serious breach of privacy to put a group's personal information on a web site without contacting them first. We feel that electronic information is a totally different medium than print, and we would assume that consent to one does not necessarily imply consent to the other. Did the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), publishers of this magazine and the *Directory*, give permission to post our listing electronically? How can we prevent this from happening again?

I believe it is a mistake to assume that all intentional communities have, or want, computer technology. Many of our community members have chosen not to own computers for the same reasons we don't own TVs or microwaves or power lawnmowers. Some of us have chosen not to even use or participate in computer culture. We value face-to-face communication here. We value hand-written, carefully thought out letters that cannot be sent at the click of a button. We are skeptical of high-tech solutions to low-tech problems. We have made a conscious decision to resist the techno-dominance of our lives.

We welcome dialogue on this issue. As one of our members often responds to people asking about email, "I have a phone you can call, an address you can write, and a door you can knock on."

Dusty Marie

Dreaming Lizard
Albuquerque, New Mexico

FIC Executive Secretary Laird Schaub responds:

The Fellowship has a policy of publishing community information (whether in print or electronically) only with permission, and we make every effort to honor community requests to limit how contact information is made public. Upon looking into your concern, we learned that our organization did not post information about Dreaming Lizard on its web site (www.ic.org) and that the two instances mentioned were the result of well-intentioned independent community networks who used Directory listings to

involve web browsers in their areas of interest.

While both community networks removed the *Dreaming Lizard* listing from their web sites, we are sympathetic to two of Dusty's points. First, the medium does affect the quality of the message (as Marshall McLuhan pointed out in the '60s). We agree that electronic communication is not the same as face-to-face dialog, and it can be awkward and misleading to assume that the former is an interchangeable substitute for the latter. It is partly in recognition of this dynamic that the Fellowship provides multiple entrees to information about community: print publications, conferences and events, and an active web site. We try to offer something for everyone.

Second, given that community living is based on the quality of connections among people, we agree with Dusty's view that posting information about a group implies that the group has been contacted first and agrees to the posting. While we're confident that no harm was meant, it appears that enthusiasm of these community networks ran somewhat ahead of prudence.

The Love Israel Family's "Divorce" (Winter '94 Issue)

Dear Communities:

I just read Serious Israel's account of the Love Israel Family's 1984 "divorce." ("Community as Crucible," Winter '94.) Many of us left due to very specific deceptions, abuses, and corruption. We considered ourselves the ones with the strength, maturity, foresight, and conviction to do the difficult and almost unthinkable—to stand up to Love Israel and ask him to adjust to the realities of living on this Earth as a culture/community.

The story is freely available from any of us who ultimately had to leave to retain our integrity. The Council, including the elders Integrity, Logic, Strength, Frankness, Innocence, Humility, Imagination, Understanding, Wisdom, Courage, Certain, Goodness, and more than 150 others also left—essentially the "bones" of the community.

And we have retained our community, representing over 80 percent of the membership of the original Love Israel Family. We do not all live under Love Israel's authority, and we do not all live together. But we are honest; we stay related; and we hold fast to our sense of community.

The scattering of our community was a painful process. But what happened did happen and would not be denied by an honest soul. I still love Love and Serious and the oth-

ers who stayed. But the truth sets us free, and it does not suffer from examination. Romanticizing it is a form of denial, and a subtle deception of itself. We are not silly people. We gave our lives in a spiritual marriage. The remaining community will have grown in awareness also over the past 15-20 years, and I wish them well.

Thomas Hiltner
(formerly Alertness Israel)

New Web Site for International Communes Desk

Dear Communities:

At long last the International Communes Desk (ICD) has set up a web site devoted to the various forms of communal living around the world. You can find us at www.communal.org.il. In both English and Hebrew, our web site is an up-to-date supplement to our biannual journal *CALL (Communes At Large Letter)*. As the contents of our web site and *CALL* indicate, the term "commune" in our name is for brevity, not exclusiveness. It really means all forms of community living.

The FIC is prominently featured on the site, and in our series of booklets written in Hebrew, "*Communal Living Around the World*." Your readers' communities may well appear in the first of these, which covers communities in the Americas.

The ICD is essentially a contact office between intentional communities of all kinds around the world, run mainly by kibbutz members on a voluntary basis. We would be very interested to hear about life in your own community, its ideology, aims, and problems. Through such mutual contact, we feel we can help one another by sharing our communal experiences. Any comments on our website or sent to *CALL* will be very welcome.

With best wishes for every success in your endeavours.

Sol Etzioni
Secretary,

International Communes Desk
Kibbutz Tzora, D.N. Shimshon,
Israel, 99803
solrene@tzora.co.il

CORRECTION:

In the article, "To the Ecovillage!" in the Fall '01 issue, we incorrectly identified a child in the photo (p. 27) as Aurora Hubiak. She is Emma Allen, six, formerly of Sandhill Farm community in Missouri and The Farm in Tennessee.



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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.*

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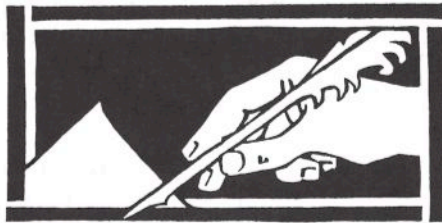
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What is an "Intentional Community"?

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

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



How can I keep from Singing?

Reflections on Cultural Imperialism and Who Can Own a Song

*Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing.
It sounds the echoes in my soul; how can I keep from singing?*

—Quaker hymn

Like a lot of us, when I was growing up I was taught to be self-conscious about singing and dancing. It was firmly reinforced in me that I could do neither, and it's taken me most of my adult life to unlearn that awful lesson.

Not that I have any particular facility at carrying a tune, mind you. (I change keys more often than a night watchman.) Rather, I believe that singing and dancing are human birthrights, and it isn't only about hitting the notes or imitating John Travolta. It's also about energy and expressing spirit. And *that*, as a community veteran, I know something about.

As a process consultant I'm frequently in front of groups that I've only just met, wrestling with issues of diversity and communication. I'm always attempting to work in a manner that builds energy, and singing has become a part of my palette. Last November I was working with a group forming community in the suburbs of Boston, and I chose song as a way to focus energy at the start of sessions. The first morning I taught a calypso tune called "We Come from the Mountain." I learned it during the first consulting job I ever had and it's become a favorite at my community. Though I didn't pick up on it right away, some were uneasy with a honkie offering up Caribbean music on the shores of Plymouth Bay.

Things got worse in the afternoon when I essayed to teach an African song with three-part harmony (interactive singing is such a good antidote to the post-lunch sleepies). I had learned the tune three years previously from a white woman with a lovely voice. She didn't know the song's origin or how the lyrics translated, and neither did I.

Five minutes into it someone objected to the group's singing a song that we didn't know the meaning of the lyrics to, on the grounds that it might be disrespectful to the culture from which it came. Now the fat was in the fire.

Someone suggested switching to "Dona Nobis Pacem," which translates from the Latin to "give us peace." While an inspiring pacifist tune for some, it was too associated with the Catholic Church for others, and thus gave us no peace in our quest for something acceptable. What was meant as a light, uplifting moment was getting quickly bogged down in the prickliness of screening songs for sniffs of oppression. We got through the moment OK, and even used the awkwardness as a learning opportunity for working through conflict. (In the process world everything is useful; either a thing goes

well and you get what you were looking for, or it doesn't go well and you get to talk about that.)

I was stunned though by how the attempt to bring the group together through song turned into an occasion for separation and caution. Pretty much the exact opposite of what I had in mind. That got me thinking about song and cultural oppression.

Is it only correct to sing songs that arise from one's own subculture? Who is qualified to give another permission to sing a song? Can you ever be certain that someone will not be offended by a song—even if you wrote the damn thing yourself? When I walked this all the way through it occurred to me that you can never be certain that someone will not be offended by *anything* you do. In the end, all you can do is intend not to offend, to attempt to sing with respect. How it is perceived is not in your control.

Upon reflection, I remembered Kirkpatrick Sale's opening keynote at the FIC's 1993 Celebration of Community, where he spoke about the ancient link between song and community. Kirk poignantly related how the Ladakh culture in northern India had a rich, centuries-old tradition of song among its people—until radio finally penetrated that remote, mountainous region and the locals learned to be ashamed of their voices, which were not as accomplished as those being broadcast from more "civilized" places. Within a generation, the Ladakhi sang noticeably less, and their culture—their sense of community—languished.

This was a story of cultural imperialism, a serious thing. And it provided me with an insight into how I could rise up and sing in front of others again. Activist and songwriter Pete Seeger wrote:

No word means the same thing to everybody. Nor does any word mean the same thing at different times. When eventually we have a world of peace and justice, the songs and those who sing them will be some of the millions of reasons why. Is such a world an impossibility? The alternative is no world at all.

I do not approach groups with the message that their members cannot sing or that their traditions are pitiable in comparison with robust songs from Africa or the Balkans. Rather I am leading from my joy. "Here's a song that has touched my heart. Let me share it with you." Either that makes all the difference or celebrating diversity is a myth. Is that proof against someone being offended? Not at all. But just as my audience is not obliged to like what I offer, neither am I obliged to feel guilty.

I only offer songs that have energetically enriched me, and I never mean disrespect. I am willing to take the chance that I will offend because I want to share the love that songs have inspired in me, no matter who wrote them. If it doesn't work, I will apologize and go on. But I will not stop singing, because I don't want a world where voices are afraid to harmonize.

Pete Seeger again:

Getting that world of peace and justice will involve millions of smiles as we recognize and treasure our diversity, our different paths, our different values. And when one person taps out a beat while another leads into the melody, or when three people discover a harmony they never knew existed, or a crowd joins in on a chorus as though to raise the ceiling a few feet higher, then they also know: there's hope for the world.

Pete Seeger's quotes excerpted with permission from Rise Up Singing, Peter Blood-Patterson, editor. Sing Out Corporation (1988). Available from Community Bookshelf: store.ic.org/bookshelf.

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"Sustainable Community." Summer '02. Natural, Earth-friendly construction, off-grid energy, and appropriate technology in communities.

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Who Says I Can't Participate?

Issues of Inclusion and Exclusion in Ecovillages

“**S**orry, this is a closed meeting of the Residents’ Council.” “As a visitor, you may observe our monthly business meeting, but you will not be allowed to speak.”

“Only full members have blocking privileges.”

“New residents must take a process training before participating in the meetings.”

As a professional facilitator, my job often involves explaining the “rules of engagement” at the beginning of a meeting, for example, identifying who can participate in the discussion and who can vote on or block a decision. While people generally appreciate having these process issues clearly defined, there is almost always an undercurrent of discomfort when some of

those present are excluded in some way. Those who belong to the “in” group tend to be a bit embarrassed at having their rank exposed for all to see, while those on the margin often suffer emotions ranging from mild envy to outrage.

Why are such limits so hard to articulate and even harder to accept? My experience

of community living (first in Wisconsin and now in Mexico) suggests that they touch the raw nerve of “rank” embedded in the more-or-less egalitarian structure of ecovillage life. One searches for a hierarchy-free paradise, only to discover that the privileges are not uniformly distributed. Those who have been in

the community longer, invested more money, speak the language, are privy to the gossip—to name but a few of the many possible variables—often have a competitive advantage when it comes to community decision making.

Even to use the word “competitive” in reference to ecovillage life provokes discomfort. After all, our vision is one of nonviolent cooperation, not the tooth-and-nail struggle for dominance

which characterizes the culture we are trying to leave behind, right? Yet a community’s resources, whether of time, land, money, energy, or good will, are always limited; conflicts over their use are inevitable; and some people will have more decision-making clout than others.

ECOVILLAGE NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS



BY BEATRICE BRIGGS

Beatrice Briggs lives in Ecovillage Huehucoyotl, near Tepoztlán, Mexico. She is the author of the manual Introduction to Consensus Process, and a founding member of the International Institute for Facilitation and Consensus. She may be reached at brigs-bea@aol.com.

So how can we encourage a participatory process which neither creates false expectations nor kills hope? First, be truthful. Recognize that rank and privilege exist. (For more on this topic, read Arnold Mindell's excellent books, *The Leader as Martial Artist* and *Sitting in the Fire*.) Study the characteristics and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in your community and in the culture at large. Review your group's policies around membership and meeting participation.

Yet some people will have more decision-making clout than others.

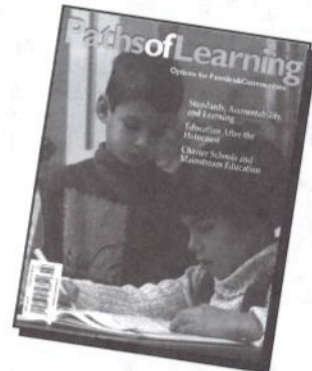
Are they clear? Rational? Does everyone understand and support them? Take meeting time to talk about each person's experiences of being new, feeling excluded, not understanding the rules, and so on. If you are one of the higher-ranking members, become an ally of those with fewer privileges. Beware of the impulse to dismiss their suggestions as "unrealistic" and their complaints as "exaggerated." Listen well and help them to be heard. In other words, use your rank, if you have any, as a tool to help others, rather than as a weapon to protect your status.

And if you are one of those being excluded from the community's process in some way, try to determine if the restrictions are permanent (that is, the rules will forever prevent you from full participation) or provisional (that is., they can change with time or circumstances). If they are permanent, you have two choices: start plotting the palace coup or simply move on. If they are temporary, try to accept them gracefully, as part of an initiation process. Then, once you are "in," remember what it was like to be on the margin and help the newcomers who come after you. Ω

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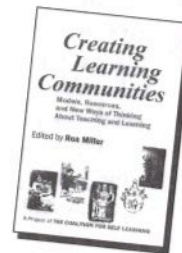
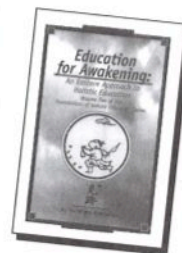
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Reflections on the Fellowship's Fall '01 Get-Together

More than a decade ago the FIC decided to rotate its semi-annual meetings from region to region—hosted, when possible, by a local community—so that we would regularly expose new people to our organization, as well as meet new communities on their home turf. That tradition has served us well, and our Fall '01 meeting hosted by Sonora Cohousing in Tucson, Arizona, was another great experience. To give you sense of what these meetings are like, we've compiled some reflections from a cross-section of participants.

about the challenges as well as the highlights of building their community. Plus the hot tub was an added bonus!

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



BY GEOPH KOZENY

John (a Tucson resident seeking community): This was my first opportunity to meet with community members from around the United States. I was drawn to the intelligence, experience, charm and warmth of many of the members, and their ability to conduct meetings and to arrive at consensus was remarkable. I came to understand that financial debt was an area of grave concern—a

difficult topic in any arena. Still, the mindset was positive and the method of exploration very sound. Ultimately I came away with a greater awareness of the demands of community living, and my spirits were buoyed by the simple graces of effective human living; basic principles of respect, caring, and deep affection for the community path.

Steve (a Tucson resident): I enjoyed the fellowship and reconnecting with FIC. The commitment and dedication of the FIC board members was inspiring. The Sonora Cohousing people were great hosts.

Tree (FIC Board member): Our Sonora Cohousing hosts were so generous in sharing their homes with us, and I really appreciated the opportunity to hear

Jillian (FIC Board member): I had some great conversations with some of the res-

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 slideshows about the diversity and vitality of the communities movement. Presently, he is producing a full-length video documentary on intentional communities.

idents of Sonora Cohousing, and loved swapping stories with them about our experiences in forming cohousing communities. I plan to keep in touch.

Lotus (communities networker): I enjoyed meeting some of the lively and friendly members of Sonora Cohousing, and especially appreciated the members of the hospitality team—Racheli, Scott, Ann, and Jim—who helped us settle into our quarters, cooked for us, and generally met our needs. I felt very welcomed and cared for by these warm folks, and the food was delicious and nutritious! I also appreciated the Sonora facilities—ample meeting space, pleasant and clean kitchen and dining area, hot tub, swimming pool, gym/weight room, and a beautiful green commons. While our FIC group had to struggle through some low energy around looking at our financial situation and working on next year's budget, I thought we rallied about midway through the meetings and ended up in an inspiring, visionary, and positive space with a nice feeling of unity and connection.

Sally (in search of a utopian community): I found a great group of people—and also some communities to consider. The people were from many different communities, and being exposed to life through their experiences was interesting, challenging, and food for thought. On our social evening, visitors from outside the area came to meet with FIC and ask questions about living in community. I found there are many who had lived successfully in community, then left for a time—for a variety of reasons—then went to another or back to the same community. We discussed the reasons why members chose and continue to live in their communities, or are called to create new ones. The participants worked very hard during the meetings, brainstorming many new ideas—seeing the process evolve was inspirational. When people were leaving, it was very emotional and easy to see most members had really bonded over the four days of the conference.

Jackie (FIC Development Assistant): The song “Learning to Fly” has been

fitting through my head since my visit to Tucson. Scott, one of our hosts at Sonora Cohousing, did an informal dance performance in his living room one evening after dinner. Now, it's not just any living room—this one has a trapeze secured to the roughly 20-foot ceiling, and has been left empty to allow swinging ... and flying. Have you ever seen something that transported you right out of yourself into a state of sheer joy? Scott didn't defy gravity; he teased it, played with it, made it into a helpmate. Since then, I've been dreaming of a space which would hold a trapeze....

Scott (our trapeze-dancing host): After several days of meetings it seems fitting that the closing would be another example of collaboration and teamwork. In a guided visioning exercise, each participant was invited to conjure a word that reflected something meaningful about their experience here. In six groups of four, we combined our words into sentences. The resulting six sentences offer a truly collective version of our shared experience:

- *There are opportunities in community for involvement and connections.*
- *Familiarity held cleansing acceptance.*
- *In the fiery and wild FIC crucible, we created an alliance of deep connection and warm nurturance.*
- *We care for our demons by bringing them into the sunmoonlight, promoting their growth and ours.*
- *The time spent together was re-energizing, awakening, and replete with carrots.*
- *Namaste, support centered on idealism. Ω*

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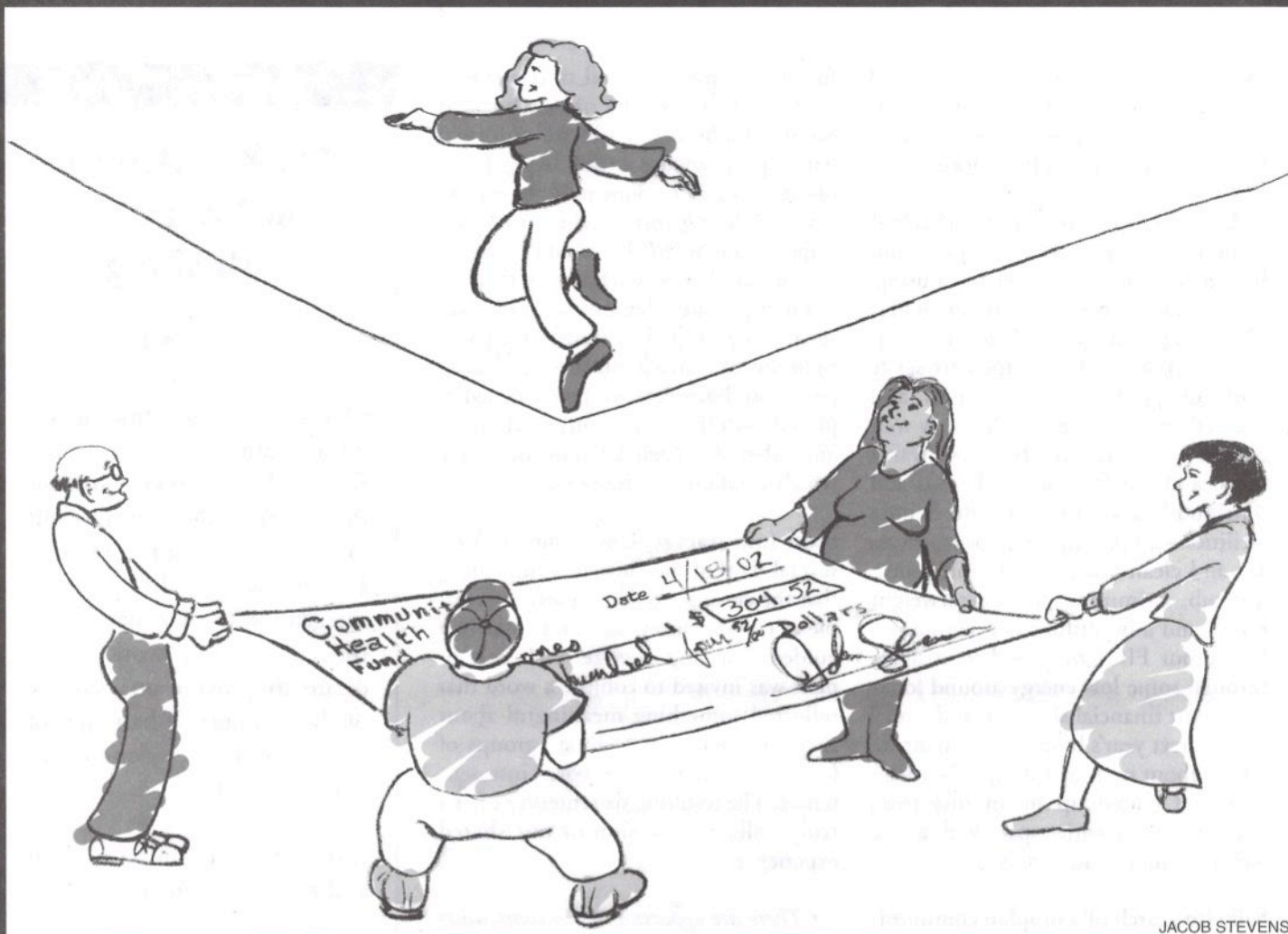
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Our Own Low-Cost Health Fund

*How Communitarians, or Anyone Else,
Can Benefit from this Grassroots "Insurance"*

BY PAUL GLOVER

One night Ruth L., who lives in Ithaca, New York, fell down her stairs and broke her wrist. "I spent the night with ice packs on my arm, weeping," she recalls. "I was in severe pain but wouldn't dare go to the hospital because I couldn't afford it. Then I remembered I had

joined the Ithaca Health Fund, and it covers broken bones. I was so happy. It really was one of the nicest things that's happened to me in a long time. I always liked the idea of a member-owned health care fund—but the reality of it—my reimbursement check for \$556.57—is even better."

Many of us in Ithaca, New York (pop. 30,000) regard our city as a real community in the traditional sense, rather than as a byproduct of capital investment. We have created scores of groups dedicated to promoting local currency, regional agriculture, fuel efficiencies and alternatives, co-op enterprise, architectural innovations, co-home ownership, alternative healing, bike lanes, mediation, and racial justice.

However, we're still primarily dependent on the prevailing systems: agribusiness, automobiles, fossil fuels, narrow building codes, absentee landlords, landfills, police, courts and jails, banks, hospitals, and outrageously costly medical insurance.

Therefore, since one third of us in Ithaca had no medical coverage, few had dental insurance, and many are disgusted with HMOs and frustrated by Medicaid, in 1997 we started our own member-owned, nonprofit health security system—the Ithaca Health Fund.

We invited people to pay \$100 each (\$175 per couple and \$50 per child per year) to become Fund members. At first the Fund provided nothing but discounts with over 100 Ithaca area health providers. Most pioneers joined

because they wanted to challenge the HMO monopoly, and to assert the need for single-payer health insurance. Some joined to reverse the loss of millions of insurance dollars from the local economy. Some joined to promote holistic healing. Some joined because they didn't trust their job's permanency, while others joined so they could leave their job to start an independent business. Some joined from personal desperation; others, to prepare a future for children and grandchildren.

As the Fund grew, we carefully expanded our modest menu of payments. For example, we soon offered to pay for broken bones, to a maximum of

five percent of the Fund's balance, and our first payment was for Ruth L.'s broken wrist.

Gradually the Fund added more categories of modest payment—for emergency stitches, burns, appendectomies, root canals, ambulance rides, and so on. When we reached \$60,000 in gross income (with the help of some small grants), more people began to join because the Fund had created a reasonable cushion for everyday health emergencies.

How could we do this? With no salaries for corporate execs, profits to stockholders, or expensive overhead for corporate offices and national advertising, we can afford to put most of the membership funds into reimbursement checks. We pay no salaries yet and spend only three percent on overhead. The rest goes to people's health care. By the way, even though our members benefit just as if they had medical insurance, we're an Amish-style fund, not an insurance company.

Today we can make payments up to \$3,000 for that same \$100 annual membership fee. And every few months our elected board of directors approves further expansion of health coverage, which members can ratify. Members' votes come in by mail, email, and ballot box.

But beyond making larger payments for more categories of need, we're intending to establish nonprofit health clinics in Ithaca, providing free or at-cost care to members. That's the real revolution. We are owners, not clients. Imagine if half the residents of any county paid just \$100 a year to a health fund.

How else is the Ithaca Health Fund different? *Anyone anywhere may join, and payments are made anywhere in the world, with any health provider.* While members in the Ithaca area have readier access to discounts with our participating local

health care providers and can attend monthly Fund meetings, members live all over North America and even abroad. Here are some other ways the Fund is unique.

Fast Payment. The Fund holds the world record for prompt payment—20 seconds and 40 seconds. Members approached the Fund's agent on the street with bills for services and were paid instantly. Otherwise, we usually pay overnight.

More for the Same Fee. The Fund has not raised its \$100 annual membership fee since its founding in 1997, while expanding its payment menu from two categories to 20, and expanding the maximum size of payments. Ithaca-area health providers still pay a sliding scale of \$30-\$100 year.

No Deductible. The Fund pays from ground zero—from first dollar. Many people with high-deductible medical insurance have joined the Fund also..

Community Rating. We're here to help each other rather than to exploit weaknesses for profit, so the membership fee is same for all.

Local Currency. Ithaca HOURS are welcome for 25 percent of the membership fee from general members, and for 100 percent from health providers. Any valid community currencies may be used for five percent of the fee.

Barter. The Fund keeps a database of skills members can barter for health services, if a health provider agrees to trade.

Discounts. Members get discounts, 10 percent or greater, with 115 Ithaca area health providers. The local Cayuga Medical Center offers a five percent discount. Checkups are rebated \$20 when any health provider discounts 10 percent to a member.

Invested in Members. All money paid by members is available to members. We're not feeding investors. Fund operation has cost about \$600 per year. Funds are kept at Alternatives Federal Credit Union, mainly in higher-yield accounts.

Free Love. The legal status of a couple's relationship is their business. Two people in love pay \$175 total per year.

Anyone anywhere may join, and payments are made anywhere in the world, with any health provider.

Thanks. The Fund has grown by foundation grants and personal donations, which are tax-deductible when made to the Southside Community Center, Inc.

Holistic. We support our members' preferences for healthier living, and gentler healing.

Environmental Health. Health damage from polluted soil, water, and air can be at least as bad as that from bad eating habits. The Fund has been willing to take public stands on such issues.

Going National. The Canadian and British single-payer national health plans began with examples set by local health funds like ours that raised public demand for universal coverage as a human right.

But Ithaca Health Fund members are after more than just helping people with medical and health care bills. We've got a far larger goal in mind: universal cov-



**We are owners,
not clients.**

erage which is owned directly by citizens, rather than by politicians. When government can give it to you (Great Society of the '60s), government can take it away (Reagan Revolution, to

date). As Ithaca's local health fund succeeds, our example will make it easier to start local health funds elsewhere. They will link with one another, change the nature of healing, and help create a world where everyone, everywhere, has cheap, fast, and humane health coverage. And anyone, anywhere, can join us.

For more information about the Fund: www.IthacaHealth.org. For more information about Ithaca HOURS: www.IthacaHours.com.

Paul Glover is founder of Ithaca HOURS, the Ithaca Health Fund, and Citizen Planners. He rides his bicycle everywhere and holds a degree in city management. Ω

WHAT THE FUND PAYS, AND HOW MUCH

The following figures represent the maximum for each category below. For example, the Fund reimburses the medical bill for broken bones, but only up to \$2,000.

Broken bones: \$2,000.

Emergency appendectomy: \$1,500.

Ambulance service: \$400.

Emergency stitches: \$800.

Second or third-degree burns: \$1,000.

Dental repair and extraction of a natural tooth, resulting from documented external trauma to jaw, within 60 days of injury: \$400.

Root canal (after six months' membership): \$200.

Rabies post-exposure inoculations: \$600.

Vasectomy or tubal ligation (after six months' membership): \$300.

Diagnostic exams: Dental, periodontal, eye, genito-urinary, hearing, and medical exam. When a health provider discounts their fee 10 percent or more for one of the above six categories of exam per member per year, the Fund will pay \$20 of the fee, for a member who has paid \$50 or more annual membership. Maximum of one of these exams per year.

Smoking-Quit Bonus. The Fund will pay \$50 to a member six months after completion of a tobacco cessation program, upon their affirmation they are still smoke-free.

Maximum total payments per member per year: \$2,500 first year; \$2,500 second year; \$2,750 third year; \$3,000 fourth and subsequent years.

—P.G.

Towards Clarity and Honesty

Part II

DARREN MCMANUS

What We Can Learn from a Nonresidential Therapeutic Community

BY JOHN SCHINNERER

"Do I have group support to do accountability work?" asks Bill at the community meeting. His question is greeted by a chorus of "I support you." Once Bill has group support, he continues.

"OK, Andy, will you listen?"

"Yes."

"Sally, will you?"

"No." ("No" is always an option; the process is always consensual.)

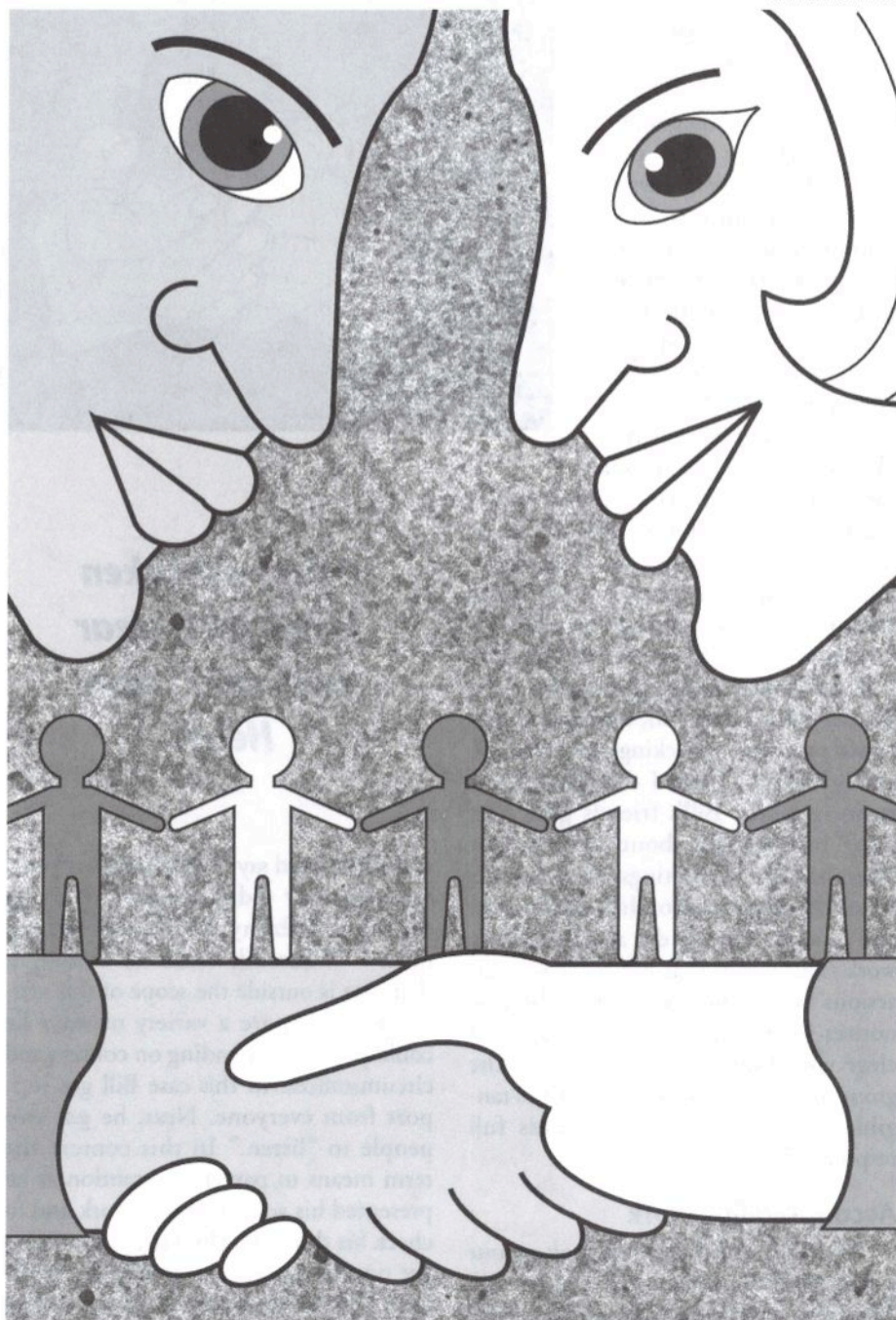
"OK, Helen, will you listen?"

"Yes."

"George, will you time me?"

"Yes."

"OK, here goes. The contract I broke is ... that I will be on time to our weekly meetings. How I broke it was by being late to meetings for the last two weeks. My mistaken belief is ... is that I am not, um, that no one will miss me if I'm not here. My responsibility work is that I will be at the meeting room ten minutes early



every week from now on. What I learned is that when I don't show up, I cheat myself ... and all of you ... by not giving, and receiving, all I am capable of. Am I clear?"

"Your mistaken belief isn't clear with me, Bill," says Helen.

"OK, Helen ... hmmm ... ah, yeah." Bill digs deeper. "My mistaken belief is ... that I ... that I'm not good enough."

"You're clear with me," says Helen.

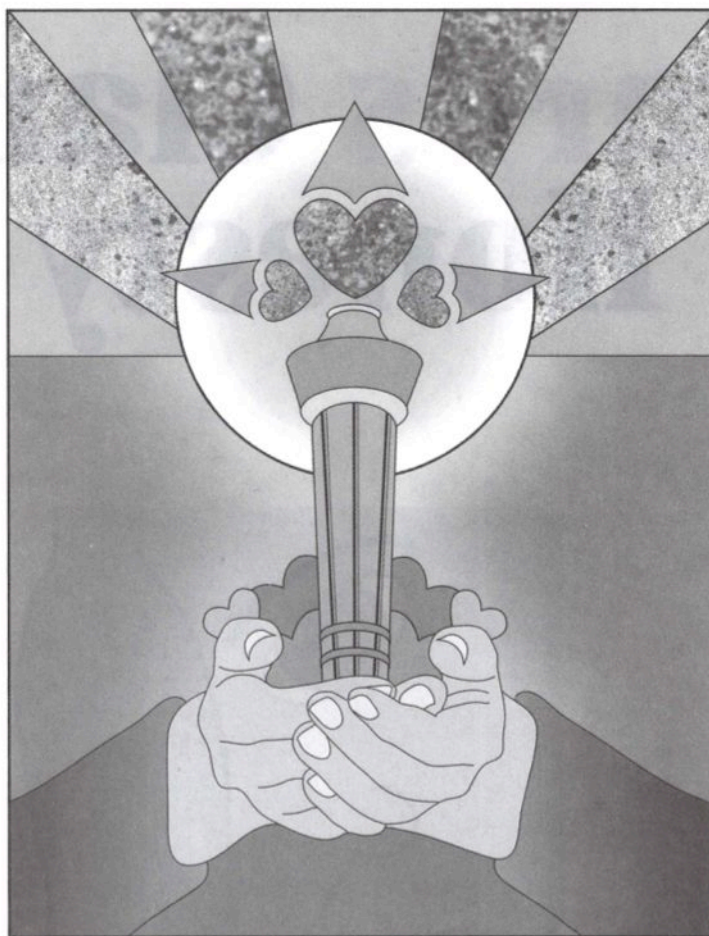
"Could you say again what you learned?" asks Andy.

"OK ... Ah, that when I think I'm not good enough, I cheat myself?" "You're clear with me," Andy says.

"Accountability work" is one of several processes we use in our experiential therapy group, a nonresidential community in Seattle I've been involved in for several years. For me, we're clearly an intentional community, because, like residential intentional communities, we have common intentions that we have formalized in a set of structures and processes we all agree to. Our intention is to support each other and the group in applying our processes for helping each other grow and heal. Part I of the article, which appeared in the Winter '01 issue (p. 38), introduced two of our processes, "checking out a fantasy" and "clearing." There I described a scenario in which Bill's friends gave him some information about his behavior when he's late to meetings. He acknowledged the correctness of that information and said he would do accountability work. This means that Bill reflects on his actions in relation to his responsibilities; notices where they don't match up; gets clear with himself and the rest of the group about the mismatch; and takes tangible, measurable action towards full responsibility.

Accountability Work

Here is a more detailed look at our accountability process. First, when Bill asked for group support, one or more



DARREN MCMANUS

"Your mistaken belief isn't clear with me," says Helen.

members could say "I don't support you," meaning they didn't support his doing the accountability work process right then. What Bill could have done in that case is outside the scope of this article, but there are a variety of ways he could proceed depending on context and circumstances. In this case Bill got support from everyone. Next, he got two people to "listen." In this context the term means to pay close attention as he presented his accountability work and to check his thinking. (In our group we also get one of our two co-therapists to listen.) The listeners' job is to see if they

agree that Bill is clear about what responsibilities he has not fulfilled, how he has not fulfilled them, what his underlying mistaken belief is, and how he will reclaim his responsibilities. Their job is not to "fix" his work or "correct" him, but only to say whether or not his thinking seems clear to them. If something is not clear to them, they say what it is and ask Bill for further clarification.

Bill may ask for more information and feedback from his listeners, but to get full benefit from his accountability work he needs to do his own thinking and make his own decisions. No one in the group should try to do it for him, and if they do, he or someone else should call them on it.

Accountability work, if properly prepared for and clearly presented, will not

take more than a few moments, and the amount of time allotted is known and agreed to by all involved. George's job as timer is simply to let Bill know when his time is up, if he hasn't already finished. If Bill wants more time, he can ask for group support to continue; for example, to get clarification from his listeners on why he's not clear with them. He will not get support for arguing with his listeners, stalling, or acting confused or defensive, which indicates that he is obviously not clear with either his listeners or himself.

Once people have agreed to be his listeners and his timer, Bill uses a simple and concise format to express his work. First he states what contract he has broken and how he has broken it. Next he identifies the mistaken belief he holds about himself that was at the root of his breach of contract, and then he states his plan for how he will keep the contract in the future. Finally, he tells what he has learned about himself through breaking the contract and doing his accountability work. In our therapy group's context, we have one more piece to this format: after

our plan for keeping the contract in the future in the larger world, we state what therapeutic work we plan to do in the group setting to address the mistaken belief that we have uncovered.

In our example, Bill first comes up with a mistaken belief that is about other people (“no one will miss me”) rather than about himself. Helen notices this and tells him he is not clear with her on that part of the process. Bill thinks again and quickly sees his actual mistaken belief about himself. Andy then asks him to repeat what he’s learned, and Bill does so, incorporating his more clearly identified mistaken belief in his phrasing the second time.

Had Bill needed to do significantly more reflection and re-thinking, he would have done so on his own time and the meeting would have proceeded to other items of business. When he felt ready, Bill would again ask for group support to do his accountability work.

After he is cleared, listeners may ask if Bill will hear a comment or suggestion from them. As you might expect by now, “Yes” or “No” is up to him. Additional feedback might include enhancements to his already cleared work, personal

insights, or a compliment on his clear thinking. Bill’s self-designed “responsibility work”—being ten minutes early to the meeting room from now on—may or may not work in practice; that’s up to Bill.

“Bill, this is the third meeting in a row you’ve arrived late.”

What listeners are looking for is clear thinking and practical, measurable outcomes with regards to the contract in question. If Bill had said nothing more concrete than “I promise I won’t do it again,” or “I’ll try harder to be on time from now on,” his listeners would not have cleared him.

If Bill’s thinking, including his practical work, is cleared by his listeners, but he turns up late (or only five minutes early) to the next meeting, it simply means that he has some more accountability work to

do. When he does it, the same plan (“be ten minutes early”) or a functionally identical one (“be fifteen minutes early”) will not get cleared. Bill will need to think of a more habit-busting way of getting to the meetings on time. For example, he will call another group member as he is leaving for the meeting and tell them he is on his way, on time. In a residential community he might choose to stop by another member’s house and say he’s on his way, on time, and/or ask that person to accompany him.

What Bill has implicitly done in his accountability work is make a simple contract. His contract is to be ten minutes early to every meeting from now on. He has made this contract with the support of the group, and the group will hold him accountable to this contract if he doesn’t do so himself. If Bill had gone another week without taking responsibility for breaking the group’s original be-on-time contract, someone would most likely have pointed it out to him: “Bill, this is the third meeting in a row you’ve arrived late. I’d like you to do accountability work around being on time to meetings.” Three times is not a magic number, either—someone might have done this the first time he was late, as well.

Making Contracts

Now let’s turn to Helen. Part I of this article described a scenario in which she told Sue that she was going to make a contract for herself about how she behaves around learning new things. Her contract isn’t part of any particular accountability work. It arises in recognizing the truth of Sue’s observation that Helen tends to question her own intelligence whenever she tries to learn something new, such as (described in the previous scenario) stacking wood. Helen sees how she often does think that she’s stupid when learning new things. She ponders how to approach changing this mistaken belief she holds about herself, and writes down a potential contract. During the next community meeting she speaks up.

“I’d like group support to negotiate a contract.” Everyone responds with an “I

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following processes have been created and refined through ongoing use in community. The accountability work process was originated by the Cathexis Institute and revised through use by the Corrective Parenting Institute; the clearing model was developed by and refined through use in the Corrective Parenting therapeutic community.

- *Growing Up Again*. Jean Illsley Clarke & Connie Dawson, Hazelden, 1998.
- Joan Casey, MSW. Holistic counselor/therapist. www.joancasey.com.
- Dave Knight, Counselor. Holistic counselor/therapist. 206-781-4949, greater Seattle area. (Joan and Dave are the co-therapists for the group I participate in.)
- The ReDo Theatre Company. Interactive theater workshops and performances supporting positive life changes. www.redotheatre.com.
- The Village Project. Teaching wise choices, understanding, and nonviolence to children, youth and adults. www.thevillageproject.org.
- *The Way of Council*. Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle, Bramble Books, 1996. Council processes, with a long and global history, support clarity and honesty in group understanding and decision making.
- *The Way of the Shaman*. Michael Harner, Harper & Row, 1990. Shamanic processes, also long a part of cultures worldwide, support personal and interpersonal insight, growth and empowerment.
- BrainGym/Educational Kinesiology. Linking specific physical activities to learning and wellness. www.braingym.org.

(continued on page 55) *Towards Clarity*

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.

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Children at The Free School, Albany, New York

CONNIE FRISBEE HOUDE

BY RON MILLER

People join intentional communities to find a climate of intimacy, trust and caring that is rarely available in the institutions or neighborhoods of contemporary society. For this same reason, during the past 35 years thousands of parents and educators have formed or joined alternative schools of many different varieties, or turned to the even more radical practice of "unschooling"—teaching their children at home and outside, in the real world. It is worthwhile to explore the par-

allels between intentional community living and intentional alternative learning environments.

The two movements have much to learn from each other, yet until now there has been remarkably little contact between them. For example, past issues of *Communities* (in 1973, 1978, 1984, 1990, and 1994) that focused on education or childrearing offered few significant references to writings or practices in progressive, alternative, and radical education (although the Fall, 2000 issue, "Let's Go! Learning Opportunities in

Community," took a step in this direction).

By nature, communities are educational settings, and the contributors to this issue provide compelling evidence that the quality of learning in a deliberate, active community is far superior to the learning acquired in many conventional schools. In "Educating Prem," Joshua Russert poignantly shows how Prem, a 12-year-old, accustomed to the intimacy and caring of the Auroville community in India, was instantly alienated and discouraged by the controlling and isolating



The Free School, Albany

CONNIE FRISBEE HOUDE

a sense of confidence and security. This is the sort of learning that progressive and radical educators from John Dewey to A.S. Neill have advocated for two centuries, but it is an educational climate rarely found in modern schools, with their emphasis on molding young people into socially conditioned roles.

Kristina Jansen reports that when she was enrolled in public school, she often failed to show up because the education provided there was not as relevant or real as the experiences offered at home in her community. Other students weren't involved in "real things" at school, but only in a fabricated world mediated by school procedures and routines. Critics such as Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, and John Taylor Gatto have been pointing out this glaring flaw in modern schooling over the past 40 years, yet except for a brief explosion of hundreds of "free schools" and even public alternative schools in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the educational system has continued to grow more rigid and regimented.

Some of our authors, such as Jenny Ledger in "Social Capital: The Fragile Inheritance of Community Children" and Emanuel Pariser in "A Steadiness Within," speak about the element of trust that pervades a true community. A group of people committed to common goals who are genuinely concerned about the others involved in their common pursuit are able to let each other thrive in their own distinct, personal ways. This is exactly what conventional schooling, as it has been organized, cannot do very well. Young people are not trusted to pursue their own interests and passions in learning. They are not trusted to regulate their own behavior for the sake of a more orderly and nurturing community life. They are

routines of a local public school after he moved to the United States. Refusing to subject himself to this harsh discipline, he found support among members of his new community, who responded to his interests with respect and caring even while preparing him to undergo the rigors of standardized tests. We find stories like this again and again in the alternative education literature, such as the moving account of an inner city free school in the classic *The Lives of Children* by George Dennison.

Similarly, we see in the articles by Kristina Jansen ("My Tribal Childhood"), Jonathan Betz-Zall ("It Takes a Village ..."), Daniel Greenberg ("A Place in the Tribe"), and Franny Osman ("The Play's the Thing ...") that in community life, young people learn through their rela-

tionships with a diverse group of concerned adults. Neither adult mentors nor young learners are plugged into fixed roles or subjected to arbitrary authority; instead, they are free to engage authentically with each other in rich and complex ways that reflect their wholeness as human beings. As Franny Osman says, "It is beneficial to challenge usual authority lines." Young people feel valued as real members of a purposeful community. They are actively involved in real-life issues and tasks, and gain

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not trusted to play a meaningful part in the decision-making processes that determine the quality of life within the organization. What we see repeatedly in the writings here is that community is more primary than schooling, and relationships are more

primary than academics. Intimacy, authenticity and trust grow in a place where relationships are honored, and they wither in a place where roles, rules, and standards force people into a deadening conformity.

Nevertheless, educational settings can be communities, as Emanuel Pariser's article about the Community School in Maine, Chris Mercogliano's "School as Community, Community as School," about the Albany Free School in New York, and Jerry Mintz's "Learning at Greenbriar" so convincingly illustrate. Emanuel Pariser emphasizes that "relational education," a human-scale education, leads to positive growth and transformational learning in young people. When individuals live within a caring community, when the authoritarian role of teacher is replaced by a mentoring, collaborative relationship, real education takes place. Chris Mercogliano, who is among the most rousing authors in the alternative school movement (his book about the Albany Free School, *Making It Up as We Go Along*, is a gem), powerfully captures the essence of learning rooted in community in his simple statement: "We care about each other fiercely." In a democratic school, everyone belongs, and everyone is invited to meet their needs and work out conflicts in respectful and honest engagement with others. The learning that results from this sort of experience is far more than merely academic—it's life-changing.

Prem's personalized education, as Joshua Russert describes it, embodies the essence of democratic and radical pedagogy. His learning is rooted in the lives and concerns of the significant people around him. They share their passions and expertise, even while evoking his own questions and wonderment. His studies are integrated around relevant inquiry, not divided into subjects or periods or curricula. People who live consciously in intentional communities seem to arrive at such methods of teaching quite naturally. Wouldn't they be inspired to know

When the authoritarian role of teacher is replaced by a mentoring, collaborative relationship, real education takes place.

that exciting educational thinkers, such as John Holt, Paulo Freire, and Deborah Meier, to name a few, have argued that learning should take place this way everywhere, all the time? Often, for various reasons, intentional communities do not provide formal education for their young people, and send them to nearby schools, sometimes public schools where the mis-

match with the community's values, even if not as painful as it was for Prem, is startling. I hope that the articles in this issue, along with our suggested resources, will encourage intentional communities to find closer links to alternative ways of teaching and learning. Ω

*Ron Miller, Ph.D., a historian and author on holistic education, has founded two journals, an alternative school, and the Foundation for Educational Renewal. He is the author or editor of seven books, including *Free Schools, Free People*. He lives at Ten Stones Community in Vermont.*

Twin Oaks Community, Virginia

JONATHAN ROTH



A Place in the A Place in the Tribe



DANIEL GREENBERG

The author's daughter Simone, 2, at home in her tribe.

BY DANIEL GREENBERG

We packed the camper van the night before so we could leave at sunrise. We were proud of all the cozy touches we had brought in—plants, spice racks, even an oriental rug. After all, this was going to be our home for the next nine months as we traveled to over two dozen intentional communities across North America. We were less comfortable with all the video equipment, and the trunk full of notepads, audiotapes, and questionnaires, but that too was to be part of our journey. I was researching children and education

in communities for my doctoral dissertation, and my partner, Monique, was producing a video about life in communities.

The following dawn our excitement became alarm as we discovered someone had broken into our van and stolen everything. We sat by a river and cried, wondering whether our adventure was to end before it even began. Fortunately, my mother's home-owner's insurance covered much of the equipment (but not my guitar or hundreds of music tapes). Even so, it took several weeks to regroup, both

physically and emotionally, and gather enough courage to carry on.

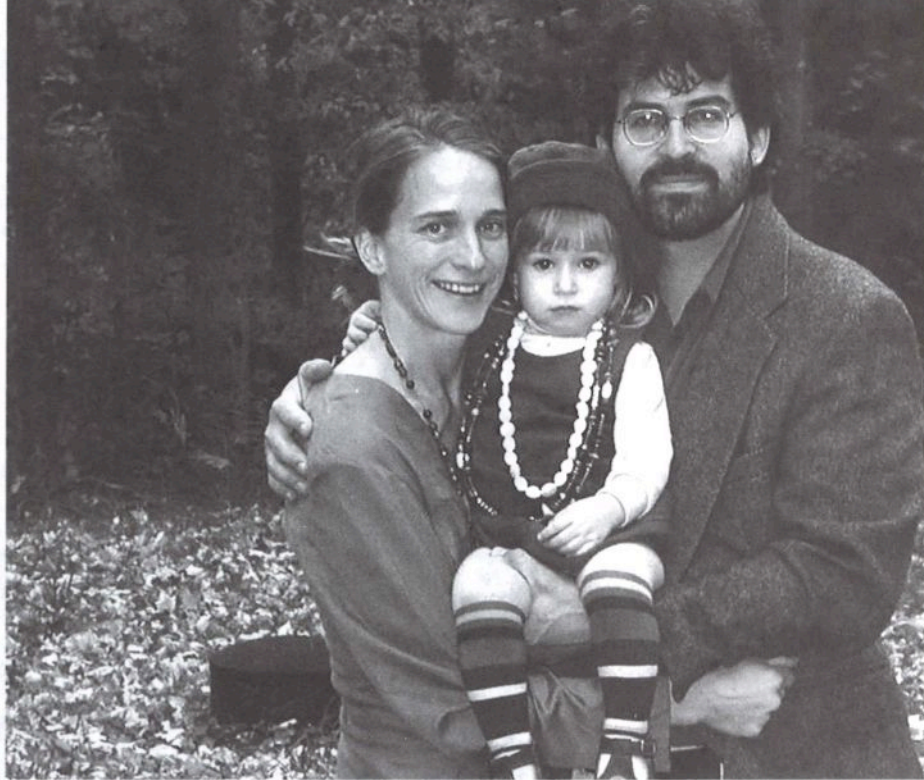
Now, over 10 years later, I can finally tell that story without wincing. I can also better appreciate how naïve we were—two twenty-somethings in love and in search of utopia—and thank our youthful selves for climbing back up on the horse and taking the journey that changed our lives so completely.

At that time, all Monique and I knew about intentional community was from reading stacks of books and the 191 questionnaires returned by kind communitarians nationwide. While that was a good start, I can honestly say now that I learned more about community the first day I set foot in one than in the three years I'd spent studying them.

I learned that each community is like a unique song, heard only by those immersed in it, living it. Communities are wholes, much greater than the sums of their parts. Before actually experiencing community, I was only studying the individual notes without appreciating the complex and beautiful (and occasionally discordant) melodies and harmonies that arise from their notes played together.

What startled me as we visited communities, was how this wholeness, and the joys and struggles of adult work and life, are not hidden from children. By contrast, I grew up in suburbia and always felt there was a veil between myself and the adult world. For example, my father is

Tribe



The author (right), and his family at Sirius.

a mechanical engineer, but until I was six or seven I thought he drove trains. I didn't know what my father did when he left the house, didn't know where supermarket food came from, didn't know where pee went when I flushed the toilet, and didn't know how adults worked, played, and loved together.

Community children, on the other hand, are exposed to and learn from many complex and subtle aspects of adult life that tend to remain "behind the scenes" for mainstream children. They see adults building houses, building relationships, building political structures (some last, some don't).

They witness arguments, tears, and the ups and downs of intimate relationships. One community parent put it well: "Kids on The Farm get to hear so many heavy life-and-death sort-outs between adults, so many real-life situations, that it makes them really good at understanding and dealing with human nature."

While such integration of children into community life seemed odd at first, I came to recognize it as more "normal" than any life I'd ever known. Margaret Mead once said that for 99 percent of our evolution as a species we lived in tribes, knowable communities in which we "belonged." "Only in times of war, or the psychological equivalent of war," she

wrote, "do we have the nuclear family, because of its mobility, which is good for survival."

So, community isn't *odd*; it's in our genes. It's our present-day absence of community that is abnormal—perhaps a sign of the stress of industrialization and the violence in our society. We are living in an age of amnesia, an age of forgetting what it is that makes us human.

Sadder still, our society has forgotten about community so completely that we generally don't even recognize it as a basic human need. This is why I think experiencing community is often an awakening for those brought up in mainstream culture.

And this is also why children raised in community are different in a way sometimes difficult to discern. Sure, they are typically socially and verbally precocious. As one researcher wrote: "commune children look like other children, except that their tongues are saltier and there are very few shy or withdrawn ones." This can also be seen in large families and is a logical consequence of living in such a social environment.

I'm talking about something subtler, yet perhaps more profound. Community children have a tribe. They're members of a group larger than their own family. Their innate need for community is fulfilled. This is often difficult to see as it's

not something most of us know to look for.

I'm not saying that community is necessary or sufficient for healthy development. Kids can grow up just fine outside of community and communities can be just as dysfunctional as any family. I am saying there is something special and significant about feeling one has a place in a tribe.

Monique and I now live at Sirius Community with our two-year-old daughter Simone. Recently at a restaurant in town we ran into a group of fellow Sirius members. When they saw us they immediately broke into a cheer of "Simone! Simone!" Of course, she was delighted to see her friends among the masses. But even more, I sensed that she was delighted to find "her" people in town. She belongs and she knows it. I can't imagine a greater foundation on which to grow into a responsible member of the Earth community. Ω

Daniel Greenberg visited and corresponded with over 200 US intentional communities for his Ph.D. dissertation on children and education in community. He is Executive Director of Living Routes—Ecovillage Education Consortium (www.livingroutes.org), which develops accredited ecovillage-based education programs. He and his family live at Sirius Community in Massachusetts.

Community isn't odd; it's in our genes.



Chris, age seven, with baby wallaby.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

the Fragile Inheritance of Community Children

BY JENNY LEDGAR

In the early '80s, before we had built our community house at Bundagen Co-operative in New South Wales, we sat in circles on the grass creating and recreating our decision-making process. Our babies and toddlers crawled among us, drawing in colouring books or eating organic bananas from our plantation. We lived in clearings in our 800 mostly forested acres, surrounded by half a mile of

ocean front on the east, and national park land and state forest everywhere else. Our guiding principles were social harmony, environmental responsibility, and economic independence.

The decision-making process that we argued over, amended, and finally agreed to in those early circles on the grass slipped painlessly into our children's cultural norms. I came to this realisation suddenly and unexpectedly one day in 1985, when my youngest son, Chris, was six years old.

We had organised a community school, which at the time served about 10 children, aged four through nine. We paid a teacher to come each morning, but afternoon sessions were taught by a different mother or father each day. The children left the school at noon and rode their bikes to the home of the parent of the day, who provided lunch and a crafts or sports activity until three o'clock. As the designated mother on this particular day, I had planned an afternoon of candle mak-

ing. At about 11:30 I realised that I didn't have enough bread for sandwiches, and so hurried to my car, parked five minutes away, to make the 15-minute drive down a dirt road to the nearest store. As I drove back into the community I saw the children racing along the road, their small bicycles flying over the speed bumps as dust flew up between the trees. I parked and walked for five minutes down to my building. The bicycles lay on the grass. The children were inside, sitting in a circle talking quietly. I began to make sandwiches and they soon drifted in. We ate lunch and made our candles. When they had left I asked Chris what they had been talking about earlier. He said they'd been having a meeting. I asked what it was about. He said the girls had complained because every day when they left the school and rode their bikes to someone's house all the boys raced to get there first. The girls got left behind and they said it wasn't fair. I asked Chris what they had decided.

"Well," he said, "first we had a circle and everyone got to say what they thought, but the boys still wanted to race each other."

"So how did that get sorted out?"

"We decided that every day one of the boys should stay back and ride more slowly with the girls. We're going to take turns."

I was astounded. This was not the sort of problem-solving process I had experienced with my older children and their peers; it was incredibly sophisticated and could only be seen as a reflection of meeting procedure in the greater community. I don't think the experience of these children can be extrapolated to represent other groups of children at other intentional communities, or even on Bundagen. I think that their particular experience came from being the young ones exposed to intense periods of frequent meetings during the formative



Bundagen members enjoy half a mile of Pacific ocean frontage on their property.

years of our particular community.

In those early days, when we weren't sitting in meetings on the grass we helped each other build houses, plant gardens, organise cafes and cabarets, care for our children, and celebrate every imaginable event from the full moon to accepting new members. Members have married each other on the beach. Babies have been born at home. We've recently begun to organise and conduct home funerals. Over time we've created rituals appropriate for each event and each individual. In the early days none of us spoke specifically of creating "social capital" in our community. Yet, in retrospect, our social capital may be the greatest legacy we have to hand on to our children.

Our decision-making process slipped painlessly into our children's cultural norms.

What Is "Social Capital"?

Eva Cox, an Australian academic and public intellectual, defines social capital as a marker of the bonds within a community (meaning "community" in the more general sense). In resilient and open communities, she notes, residents or members have a high level of trust in each other and in the group's chances of working through any problems. They have a kind of shared optimism in the processes they have set up to manage problems. In order to negotiate changes

peacefully a high level of trust must be maintained. As she sees it, high levels of social capital in a community are characterized by:

- Shared cultural understandings
- A power structure that allows for individuals to feel that they have a voice in decision making
- An understanding and acceptance of the group's decision-making and problem-solving processes
- A safe place for the individual to speak out, raise problems, and seek change
- A level of interpersonal connection which can bridge differences
- Resilience of the group to cope with stress
- The capacity to work together towards a common good
- The ability to recognise communalities and share values across differences
- The capability to resolve conflicts that arise between individual or specific interest groups
- The ability to allocate resources civilly

After I heard Eva Cox speak about social capital I began to look for specific examples of practices or behaviour that exemplified social capital in our community. I found it most often in our decision-making process, as it tests our capacity for trust and for dealing with the challenges of difference and confrontation.

I want to share something of that process—how developing it has contributed to social capital in Bundagen,



The author (center) with older son Matt and friend outside her unlockable shade-cloth kitchen, 1994.

how diminishing social capital is reflected in challenges to the decision-making process, and how second-generation members of the community have internalised aspects of the process and applied it to their personal lives.

Decision Making at Bundagen

From our earliest days we have yearned for consensus, and for years we've labored over the process. We began with high ideals. We would have no rules or laws or all-powerful leaders; we would operate by consensus; we would reach no agreement until we were all happy. We agreed to no cats, dogs, or firearms. We agreed that no one should build a permanent dwelling until we had reached consensus on the boundaries of our sanctuary areas.

However, these issues were controversial enough that we created a modi-

fied form of consensus. We hear all concerns and whenever possible amend the original proposal to meet those concerns before making a decision, but pass proposals with two-thirds (not all) of our members' support. If some of us object strenuously, we defer making a decision for a few weeks or months unless 10 percent of our group considers it too urgent to delay. When the group's direction is not clear we might ask each person to speak for a few minutes without interruption about their feelings, concerns, and hopes for the issue. When we finally reach agreement we feel great relief and some pride.

I came to see that, in terms of social capital, our community had accrued and demonstrated a number of the defining concepts noted by Eva Cox—in a safe environment we had worked through a process that we all under-

stood and accepted and had come to agreement. With so much community time devoted to this process in our formative years, it's no wonder that our toddlers picked this up as a natural way to behave.

Here's another example. In the late '80s the little boys at Bundagen all played with Lego pieces. They made space ships and tiny pieces of military equipment, such as mini tanks with guns. None of the parents were well off and the kids treasured whatever Lego pieces they had. One day Chris and three of his friends played inside our old school bus. As the three small boys came down the bus steps and onto the grass, Chris directed them to empty their pockets—checking for any of his Lego pieces. I immediately confronted him and delivered a lecture about trust. But the other boys assured me that it was OK; they all did this as they left each other's homes. They all understood how much they wanted to take the best bits home, so they had agreed to go through this process after playing together.

Chris later told me that it was none of my business and that I didn't understand. What I did realise was that the children had taken the community decision-making process a step further than we had; they had normalised and factored in temptation and dishonesty. I wasn't sure whether to be proud of them or not.

The Waxing and Waning of Social Capital

Eva Cox states that when social capital is losing ground, fear of the outsider becomes more widespread. When social capital is threatened, fear of the "other," whether an unknown intruder, or a subgroup of the community itself, is common.

At Bundagen we like to believe that we can live without locking up. Indeed most of our homes cannot be closed and locked like houses elsewhere. My kitchen walls are still shade cloth; my tool shed has no door. When something goes missing we look for an outsider to blame, such as mysterious campers who set up a tent and were gone the next

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day. When security is seriously breached, such as happens every few years (when, for instance, the solar panels are stolen from everyone living near the public carpark, or all the surfboards and wetsuits are taken from their hiding places in the dunes) we shut the gate. A shut gate signifies vulnerability and mistrust. The visitors who might otherwise have been welcomed are confronted and asked their business. Meetings are tense as accusations fly around; moderates argue with reactionaries about the viability of keeping the gate shut, of introducing elaborate alarm systems. But we live with a public beach as one boundary and unfenced national park and state forest as the other boundaries. The gate provides only token security. Unlike our children, we have not managed to factor in dishonesty. Our response is just about always to exclude anyone suspicious. Our common good—our social capital—relies on maintaining a high level of trust and optimism in our own processes. It's a juggling act and our accumulated capital is fragile in the face of dishonesty.

So how does a spate of dishonesty and a fear of "other" impact our decision-making process? Sometimes the others we fear or wish to have power over are not mysterious visitors but per-

ceived power groups operating within meetings. One group of residents recently said they felt disempowered by our decision-making process, and proposed that we make decisions by referenda instead. Rather than discuss and refine the proposal to meet various concerns, they wanted a simple Yes or No

"We decided that one of the boys should stay back and ride more slowly with the girls. We're going to take turns."

response to proposals. Moreover, they wanted members to check various boxes on a circulated petition and avoid community meetings altogether. Their rationale was that we are not all suited to the dynamics that take place in our meetings; for them meetings are a negative experience and not the best way for their voices to be heard. This group has proposed referenda several times before, and each time it has failed. Each time it

generates debate and lobbying throughout the community, but the dissenters never quite get the two-thirds support they'd need to pass it. The "us" and "them" divide is here manifest within the community. While one group sees our modified consensus process as offering equality of opportunity and participatory democracy, others identify a power clique and express vulnerability to social pressures.

Our Young People and Social Capital

Our adolescents also present as a threat to some Bundagen members. Before they are officially accepted as legal shareholders of the land, our young people have a right to speak at meetings. But if we resort to the dreaded majority-rule vote, they are excluded. Thus their social rights are constantly up for negotiation and they must abide by agreements in which they have limited decision-making power. Social control over our teenagers' activities goes beyond their nuclear family and includes community-wide agreements.

In writing about the young citizen, sociologist Nikolas Rose suggests that youthful behaviour can come to symbolise a range of social anxieties that are seen as threats to a group's established order and traditional values. Some of our members, particularly non-parents, can interpret the manifestation of youth culture in our community as a threat. The same children who once raised dust racing bicycles now drive cars. When our teenagers want to use the community house for a party some adults become afraid. What if teenagers from the "outside" attend? Will there be loud music late at night and a mess in the morning? People mutter about alcohol and marijuana and try to lock their unlockable doors.

Another example of community-wide panic occurred when a group of teenagers attended a community meeting to request funds to build a skateboard ramp. Although eventually the ramp was built, it was only after much debate over several months about public

(continued on p. 52) Social Capital



Creating community at Bundagen has involved celebrating "every imaginable kind of event."



My Tribal Childhood

**School? I
learned More
Staying Home...**

BY KRISTINA JANSEN

I was six in 1976 when my parents decided to sell their house in suburbia and join 80 friends and colleagues in buying, renovating and moving into a 16-unit apartment complex in Southern California. I was the oldest of the ten children whose parents made this leap. Since then, thirty-one kids have been born into this community (which I will call “the Orinda Co-op” in this article), and it is still thriving after 25 years. We have moved a few times and now live in a more rural area near the coast, some people have left, some have joined, but a substantial core of the original members are still here after all these years. Today approximately 100 friends still share their lives at Orinda. I left for college when I was 20, and lived apart from everyone for eight years before returning to stay. Of those original ten kids, four of us are still around.

Orinda is not organized around religious or spiritual beliefs. It does have a certain humanistic guiding philosophy, but the glue that holds us together is a love of sailing and traveling—seeing new places and visiting long familiar ones. The friends and colleagues who created Orinda did not actually set out to create anything. Rather, it evolved organically out of the simple fact that it was more convenient and economical to live together. It was also more fun. And as a group of people they shared values that diverged from mainstream USA: they were interested in pushing their individual boundaries, in personal growth, in living lives based on feeling and

honesty. They were already spending much of their free time together on various shared projects, most significantly the purchase and overhaul of a large wooden sailboat. As they prepared to embark on a sailing voyage to circumnavigate the globe it seemed silly for everyone to be spread around the city. Plus, parking had become an issue in the suburban neighborhoods where the friends would get together for dinners and talking. So, going along with the free-thinking spirit of the early '70s, a number of the friends sold their individual homes and created Orinda.

Despite its spontaneous origins, however, we work now to maintain the community we have created. Much of our energy nowadays is focused on planning, financing or implementing the next trip, and also on making home seem more like life on the boat.

When my collective "family" first moved in together, everyone was experimental—interested in living more authentic lives full of adventure and friendship and honesty. My parents shared that goal for themselves, but also they were interested in making the best lives they knew how for us kids. Sometimes that meant stepping back and letting other people, more talented at childrearing, take over. My own parents, for example, had little ability in this area, and my sister and I were effectively raised by other members of the community. We each had "practical parents" who were in charge of our everyday well being, and we were also integrated into the "kids program"—which started out as an after-school arrangement, but eventually expanded into every aspect of our lives. Despite the special arrangements that were made for us, we kids were also fully inte-

grated into the adults' lives. Taking care of the kids has always been a central focus of Orindians; it's taken for granted as a fun and rewarding part of life.

We kids were lucky to have been thrown into a community of concerned adults that extended far beyond our immediate families. Community parents were lucky to have had the support—practical and emotional—of close friends in raising their children, which ameliorated any incompetent, abusive, or otherwise destructive parenting. Now, after 25 years of experience—and lots of trial and error—we have come a long way, and have learned a lot about raising kids to be happy and productive individuals. As an adult, a big part of my decision to return "home" was based on my desire to offer my own future children the same rich opportunities that growing up in community

offered me. I also missed helping care for the kids who are growing up there now.

Of course there were many stumbles, and sometimes experiments went awry. The year that Amy and Jessica, both 10 years old, worked after school with Pam, a woman challenged by arthritis and crippled by bitterness, was pretty much a disaster. They helped Pam make dessert for dinner each night, but Amy and Jess did not get much out of this exchange besides a healthy dislike of

everything sweet. My sister Laura also proved a problem. She would often throw fits and had a perverse love of provoking other kids and adults into punishing her. This made her hard to manage, and the young couple who had taken her on eventually had to ask for serious help from the community. Partly because of her behavioral problems, my father and Laura moved out when she was a young teenager, and went on to live a more conventional life with my father's new wife. But the children

proved resilient enough, and I doubt any conventional family gets through raising a kid without at least a few major hiccups. Laura now has a daughter of her own and is working as a doctor's assistant in Los Angeles.

One drawback of raising kids communally is the potential for a child to get "lost in the crowd." Neglectful parents are neglectful parents whether in a nuclear household or a communal one. For Laura, and a few others, this did happen—they were left to the kids program too much, with not enough love and attention

I was used to being treated like a person, and I didn't feel comfortable being a "kid" at school.



Orinda kids learned more at home than at school, 1978. Author (middle, far left).

from a special person or two. Once people in my community realized this was a danger, as in Laura's case, they worked hard to change the way things worked so that this did not happen in the future. In my case, I lucked into a strong relationship with a couple other than my natural parents who took me on as their own, and throughout my childhood acted as my "practical parents" —my advocates, advisors, and role models.

My parents' choice to join the Orinda Co-op changed my educational path as well, but I don't think I suffered for it. I went to public school until I was fourteen and graduated from junior high. I was a good student, naturally interested in learning and eager to please, so my teachers always liked me. The

worst they did was to criticize my atrocious attendance record. Since my family didn't care much about whether or not I went to school, I'd often miss school in order to travel, to hang out at home, or even just because I didn't feel like going. (I still hate routines, and thrill at the chance to "play hooky.")

I was friendly with the other students, but I couldn't completely relate to them, and my closest friends were at home—both children and adults. I was used to being treated like a person, and I didn't feel comfortable being a "kid among kids" at school. I liked games and toys as much as the next child, but I was also interested in talking about personal reactions to this or that, about things I had seen while traveling, about what the stars looked like when you were in the middle of the ocean or the desert and there were no city lights around, or about how it made you feel bad when I'd just said something ugly. "I'm sorry," I would have said, and given you a hug. Needless to say, the other kids couldn't relate to me either. It was not until I went away to college and I was forced by circumstance to live only with other students my own age that I got comfortable with my age

peers. But by then my peers were finally getting interested in what I considered "real things."

By the time I was 14 my family was beginning to sail and travel even more than usual, and three of my friends (John, 13; Danny, 13; and Erica, 14) and I dropped out of public school to be available for the trips. We signed up for correspondence courses, and had



Author Kirsten Jansen today.

plans to whip through the high school curriculum and be done with it before we were even old enough to take the equivalency test. Despite our scholastic intentions, other things proved far more interesting, and none of the adults really cared whether or not we finished high school. It took me, the most studious of the bunch, 18 months to finish one semester of four

courses—including Driver's Ed. Instead of working on school courses, I spent my time taking care of the younger children; cooking dinners and lunches; shopping for provisions; taking on cleaning projects, building projects, and other work projects; and just sharing life with friends and family. I also read a lot. When I turned 16 I took the GED, and passed, as did the others. When I turned 18, I felt, and my older friends encouraged me in this, that it was time to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. I started working in an office and going to school at the local community college.

In my second college semester I read about Pygmies who lived in the rain forests of what was then the Congo, and my life suddenly made sense to me—I had grown up in a tribe! No wonder I could never relate to the conventions of American family life, to the pain and

embarrassment supposedly involved in watching one's parents break up, to the need for one's own space and lots of privacy, to the desire many of my classmates voiced to spend lots of time alone. I became fascinated by the commonalities between groups of people who seem very different from each other, such as my Orinda family and the BaMbuti Pygmies—and by the dissimilarities between groups of people who superficially seem much the same, such as my community and mainstream America, and so I majored in Anthropology. I now have a Master's degree, and I'm at work on a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of California, San Diego, but my fascination with the oddities of human groups has not yet been exhausted. I doubt it ever will be.

Being raised in a community of concerned adults, teens, and children gave me the security of having many people to turn to for affection, help, support, and succor. It gave me companionship and allowed me to form deep friendships with people of all ages. I also had access to the skills and talents of a diverse collection of adults in the community—all willing and able to teach me what they could about anything that interested me. I learned from Robyn, the head cook of our evening meal in

the mid eighties, how to cook delicious meals—for huge crowds—without breaking a sweat. She also taught me to appreciate subtlety in flavor and the importance of presenting food attractively. My friend Gretchen, a high-school Eng-

lish teacher, taught me to love Shakespeare and the craft of writing. She guided my reading and read everything I wrote during the years I took off from school. I learned celestial navigation and how to drive from Max, who loved the

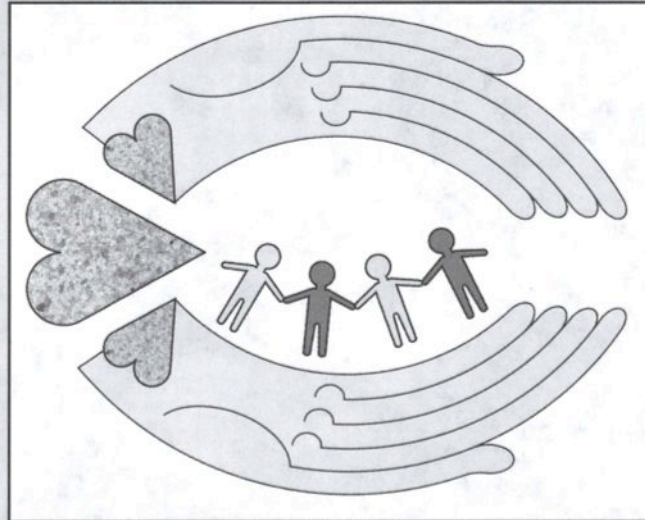
**Our community has
learned a lot about
raising happy,
productive individuals.**

(continued on page 54) Tribal

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE..."

BY JONATHAN BETZ-ZALL

In 1980 my wife Rosy and I and other like-minded folks founded Bright Morning Star, an urban community in Philadelphia affiliated with the Life Center Association, a training ground for nonviolent social-change activists. We intended to nurture our children and support ourselves and our friends in a strongly egalitarian, peaceful way. Twenty-two years later we're still carrying out that mission, though we've moved to Seattle, our children are grown, and many residents have passed through the



community. I've often boasted that growing our children in community made them richer, stronger, more balanced human beings than they would have been in even a well-connected nuclear family. The key ideas that made this work: diversity, egalitarianism, and mutual support.

Like many others of our generation, we had analyzed our parents' successes and mistakes and thought we could do a better job of child raising. Early on we agreed to read about, absorb, and use the most egalitarian ideas and practices that humanistic psychology had to offer. We also agreed that every adult member of the household would share in childcare, and that we would ask members of the other houses in the Life Center Association to share in childcare as well.

Fortunately for us, the Life Center included many people who were willing to share in the work of child raising without taking on the overwhelming joys and risks of biological parenthood. Several who were not our housemates routinely watched our children during house meeting time, so all of us could participate undistracted. Our housemates, as they moved in, agreed to carry out two two-hour shifts of childcare per week. These shifts usually covered the afternoons and evenings, which gave them experience with diapering, bathing, and feeding our children, as well as playing and conversing with them. They then had plenty of time for their other activities. Ken, one of our cofounders, was so taken with our positive attitude toward including gays and lesbians in our children's lives that he promised to stick with us until our unborn child graduated from high school—a 19-year commitment that he fulfilled! Thus while I worked full time and Rosy obtained a graduate degree, at least 20 other Bright Morning Star members not connected to us by blood or marriage shared time with our kids during their critical preschool years. By the time we moved to

Seattle six years later, everyone agreed that this had been a very positive experience.

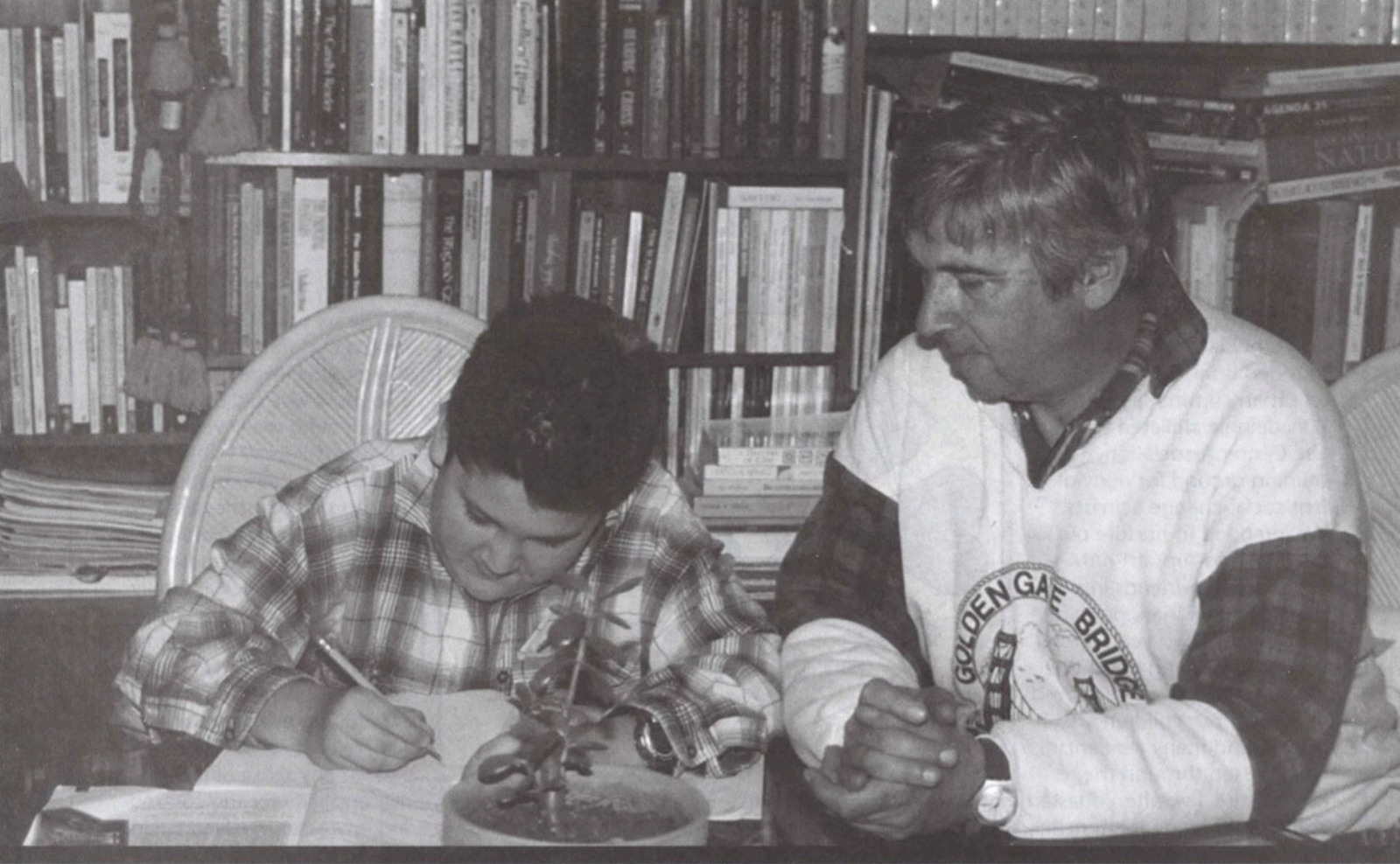
So, how well did this all this co-parenting really work for our two children? When I interviewed them as adults, they agreed that they learned skills and developed attitudes that would have been harder to acquire in a nuclear family situation. They liked being treated as full members of the household at an earlier age than their peers. Our practice of requiring everyone to participate in chore rotations suppressed any sense of favoritism

and developed their sense of responsibility for the community. Our formal problem-solving processes involved talking things through rather than resorting to blows, and confronting disagreements directly rather than repressing conflict. The presence of many caring adults provided multiple, complex relationships, and thus more opportunities for conflict in which to learn and practice problem-solving skills. The adults modeled a variety of attitudes toward life, and demonstrated how groups could effectively use consensus and other decision-making techniques. They also modeled effective political and social activism. Our son David mentioned that we seemed to frown on assertiveness; perhaps we placed too high a value on "getting along."

As a result of all this effort, our grown children do appear to be better equipped than most to deal with a variety of social and cultural situations. In India Marissa fit right in with her host families. In Japan, her landlady noted she was the only resident who did her chores without being nagged. Meanwhile David's teachers noticed his obvious conflict-resolution skills in his first few weeks of high school, where most of the other students had known each other since kindergarten. They chose him to become a peer mediator, which was quite a high honor in that situation.

Looking back, I think our effort to use "a village" as one of our parenting resources for the most part worked very well.

Jonathan Betz-Zall, who has lived in community almost all of his adult life, has served on the board of the Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA) since 1993. He is completing a Master's degree in Environment and Community at Antioch University Seattle.



JOSHUA RUSSERT

Educating Prem

BY JOSHUA RUSSERT

“How was school?” Dara asked his son Prem, 12, as he picked him up from his first day of sixth grade in the United States.

“OK,” Prem said, looking away.

Dara and Prem had moved that summer to Nature’s Spirit community in upstate South Carolina from Auroville, a well-known intentional community in southern India. Born in Auroville, Prem had been educated there in community-based schools since he was a little over a year old.

After dinner in the community house, as father and son took the short

walk through the woods to their log home, Dara asked again.

Through tears Prem said he would never go back to that school. That he’d rather go back to India, alone.

“No one talked to me all day,” he said. “And the teacher said we could only go to the bathroom three times during the nine weeks. And there was a rule for this and a rule for that!”

Even after Dara visited the school’s principal and returned with assurances that the faculty would help Prem adjust to his new environment, Prem stood by his decision not to return.

While Dara wanted to impress upon his son the importance of not quitting too soon, he came to understand that

this wasn’t a case of Prem simply feeling anxious. When he transitioned between two community-based schools in Auroville, Prem felt that, even though he was apprehensive about going to the new school, it was essentially a good place. “This is different,” he said. “This school is not right for me.”

So, with the school year already begun, Dara, Prem and the rest of Nature’s Spirit community decided that the answer was homeschooling.

South Carolina offers three options for homeschoolers. The first involves working at home with the basic curriculum of the state’s primary public education, with a yearly test to assess

proficiency. The second is running a completely independent program, with no exams. The third is to work with a third-party private educational institution for materials and structure.

Dara chose the first. "By testing with the state regularly," he said, "Prem will have the option of entering the public educational system any time in the future."

Insuring that Prem is prepared for state tests means that certain core subjects must be covered, and Dara already

particular learning style. Teacher and student co-create the learning process.

A schedule sheet located near the kitchen shows Prem's weekly lessons. Every day he has mathematics with his father, language arts with Jan, social studies with Don, and science with Charlie.

Dara and Prem work on math early in the morning, reviewing material from the textbook as the mandarin pink light creeps into the office window. Dara has had to brush up, but says it

the Enlightenment, so I was a little confused when I arrived and I saw Prem looking up into his eyebrows and concentrating. Finally he told Don that scientists think human life began on Earth two or three million years ago. I had walked into a running timeline exercise.

"And what's the key word in there, Prem?" asked Don, giving me a wink.

"Scientists think that human life—" Prem answered.

"That's right, they 'think,' rather than 'know,'" Don responded. Then the

(Facing Page) Prem and his father Dara work on math. (Left) Three people in field watching rocket go off. Charlie's science class includes the fun of setting off model rockets. The entire community supports Prem's at-home education.



had a busy schedule. But community members rallied around the challenge.

Spreading the disciplines amongst a diverse group of people with their individual talents and strengths is almost like giving Prem a college-level education. Every day he has the ear of his own private professor for one or two hours on each subject.

It also means that one or two people aren't required to be masters of half a dozen subjects. Since the teachers each have a specialization, they are free to spend their energies finding creative ways to meet the needs of the state tests while engaging Prem's

has reinvigorated his own love of learning.

I decided that it would be nice to sit in on some of Prem's classes, and saw first-hand how such personalized lessons can work together to create a deep learning experience.

Ultimately, we're all being taught how to work together, learn, teach, and appreciate our work.

I found Don and Prem sitting side by side in the community meditation space as they read through a social studies textbook. The subject that day was

two went through a chronological retelling of the saga of Western culture, with Prem giving brief details about the shift from hunter-gatherers to agrarian city building; the birth of Democracy in Greece; and the subsequent cultural shift away from those ideals towards

centralized, absolute truths and monarchies. This eventually lead the conversation to the Enlightenment, and the rebirth of

reason in the West.

Don had begun what he called the "Story of the Universe" exercise after consulting with Jan about her language

arts lessons. Jan had begun by asking Prem what he wanted from the class. He said he knew that he had many stories to tell, but wanted to learn how to tell them better. With that in mind, Jan began focusing on assignments and exercises that build storytelling skills.

“The advantage of living in community with the student is that I am intimate with his life, and can tie his homework to it,” says Jan. “And then the homework is not something imposed on him, but something that fulfills his aspirations.”

Don took a cue from this and began the Story of the Universe, a continuing narrative that he and Prem retell to each other, adding to it as they reach the various epochs being covered in the course book. Don says that in addition, he stresses the viewpoints that create a story, which directly related to the topic on the day I visited. Since they were covering the Enlightenment and the rise of scientific thought in the West, Don was making sure that their universe narrative contained the key themes about science: the discernment between working hypotheses and presumed certainty.

Science class with Charlie has meant studying the natural world and asking Prem to come up with practical applications. By Charlie and Prem walking the property and interacting with the environment, Charlie has begun integrating the “hard” aspects of science with our stewardship ideals at Nature’s Spirit. Some of the outcomes are very practical. We’re all eager to hear Prem’s report on how to deal with the local bears, since they are the culprits behind the recent raid on our beehives.

Prem’s early Christmas present from Charlie, a working vintage microscope, gave a hint of science work to come. Prem spent hours adjusting the focus and asking how one would go about creating specimen slides.

Prem had experienced a true moment of integrated education.

These standard courses may be the framework of what many would consider a traditional education, but the rest of Prem’s lessons, the electives, are the magical glue that reveals a holistic education taking place.

Kalyani teaches Prem art one day a week, and his careful drawings and studies in perspective grace the community bulletin board. During their study of the use of perspective in art, Prem told her he had just learned about perspective while studying the Renaissance with Don in social studies.

Coincidentally, Don discovered that during the same week that in language arts classes Jan had been asking Prem to consider the different points of view of characters in a story—basically another way of seeing “perspective.”

“So I decided,” Don said, “to link this with Prem’s study of history by considering historical events from different points of view.”

On Tuesdays Prem has crafts lessons with Jodi, who organizes one of the community’s craft sale items, handmade felt. In his latest crafts class, Prem made an enormous felt stocking for Christmas with neatly cut letters applied to the front reading, “Fill Me.”

Thursdays Prem learns home arts with Kathy. Together they clean and stock cabinets with food from the co-op, make inventory lists, and spend time going over the budget and other accounting tasks. Kathy says that she has seen marked improvement in Prem’s ability to focus during lessons, and was

impressed with his careful arithmetic during a session about balancing check-books.

Once a week Prem meets with his father to study Spanish, after which he has an hour of physical education with Mark, one of our interns. One week they might paddle a canoe across the lake, the next week run laps through the forest, or do football reflex exercises on the tennis court. To me it looks like the PE class is just a time for them to goof off, but Jodi tells me that Mark takes it seriously. “He doesn’t let Prem slide.”

One day as Jan was describing the interweaving elements of a story in the language arts class, Prem, who’d taken his first wool felting class that week, had a sudden insight.

“The elements of a story are like felting,” he said, “where all the layers of fiber come together to make a solid piece of felt.”

When Jan relayed this story during a faculty meeting everyone was silent. Then smiles spread across our faces as we realized that Prem had experienced a true moment of integrated education.

Ultimately, we all are being taught how to work together, learn, teach, and

appreciate our work. Prem just happens to be the youngest member of a whole community whose purpose is to learn many things on many levels. By participating in education as a community, we get daily reminders of our role as students in the larger world. Ω



Author Joshua Russert.

Joshua Russert, who recently received a B.A. in Journalism, lives and works at Nature’s Spirit, a spiritual community in upstate South Carolina.

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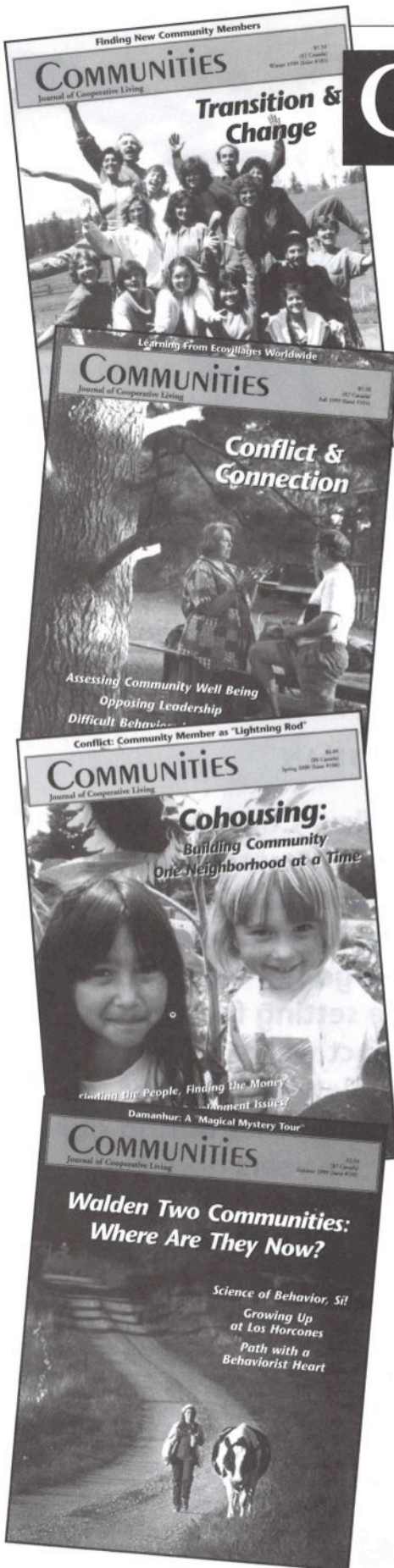
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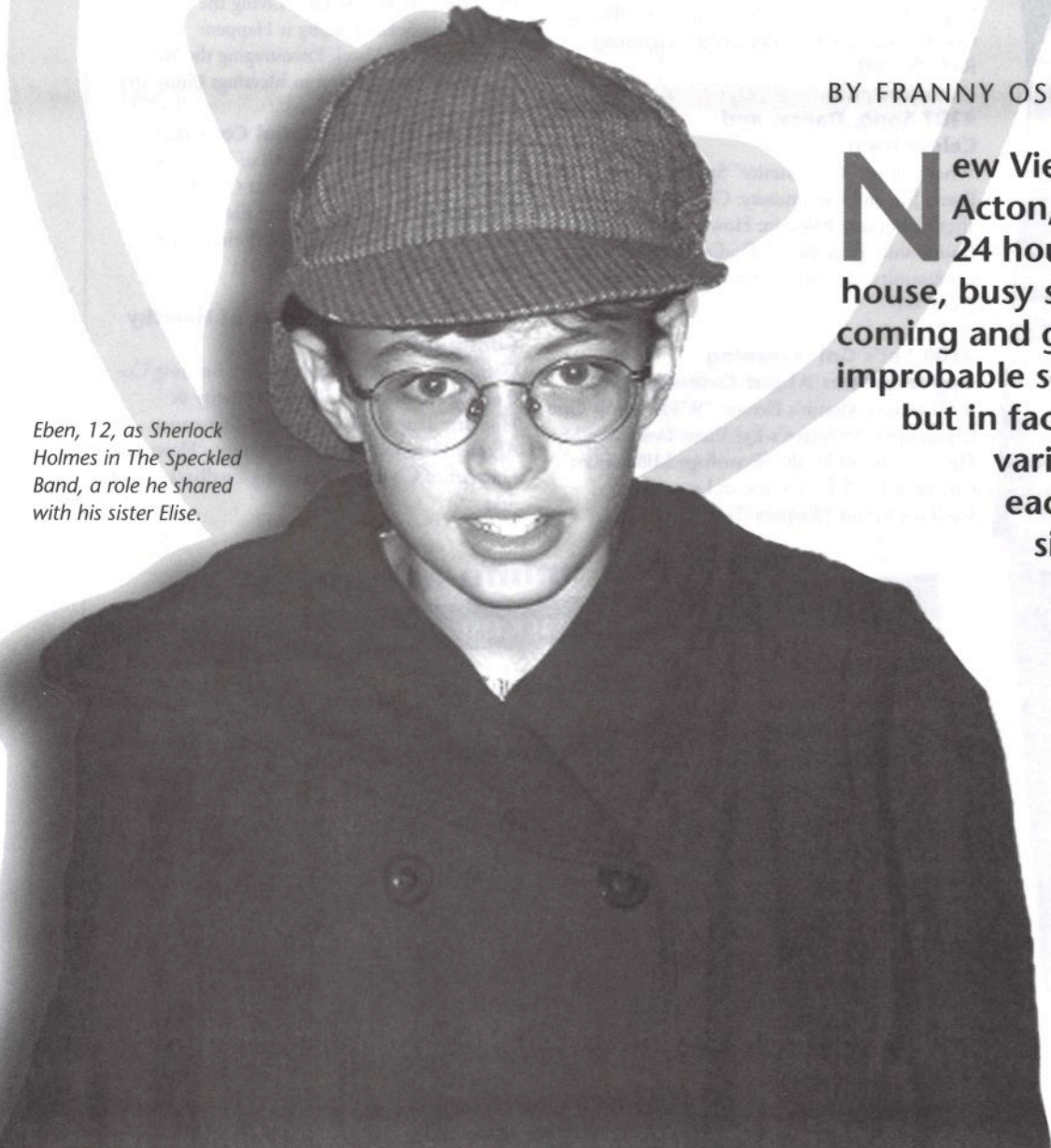
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The Play is the Thing...

BY FRANNY OSMAN

New View Cohousing in Acton, Massachusetts—24 houses and a common house, busy suburban residents coming and going—seems an improbable setting for theater, but in fact we've put on a variety of plays for each other during our six years here and have had a great time doing it.



*Eben, 12, as Sherlock Holmes in *The Speckled Band*, a role he shared with his sister Elise.*

some city neighborhoods or in certain families, what's unusual at New View is that children from 10 to 15 different families get together. It's true. I can send out an email or make calls announcing a rehearsal schedule and a dozen people show up.



The shortest time it has taken us to prepare for a play was four hours. This was *Ugh!*, a quirky Cinderella story set in prehistoric times, which a dozen or so New View residents, mostly children, performed for a neighbor's 50th birthday party last summer. At four o'clock, I wrote the script, based on a children's book I found in the common house.

At five, our mostly-child cast read through the script at the picnic table; at six, the cast dispersed to find costumes; and at seven, distracted, we ate the birthday dinner. At eight, we jumped into production on the front steps of the common house before dozens of guests.

Brianna, eight, who only participates if she can be an animal, played a dinosaur. "It was really funny," she reports. "I got to eat breadsticks." Elise, 11, was in her

prime as the hero; she doused her own hair and other kids' with egg whites to create crazy spiked prehistoric hairdos.

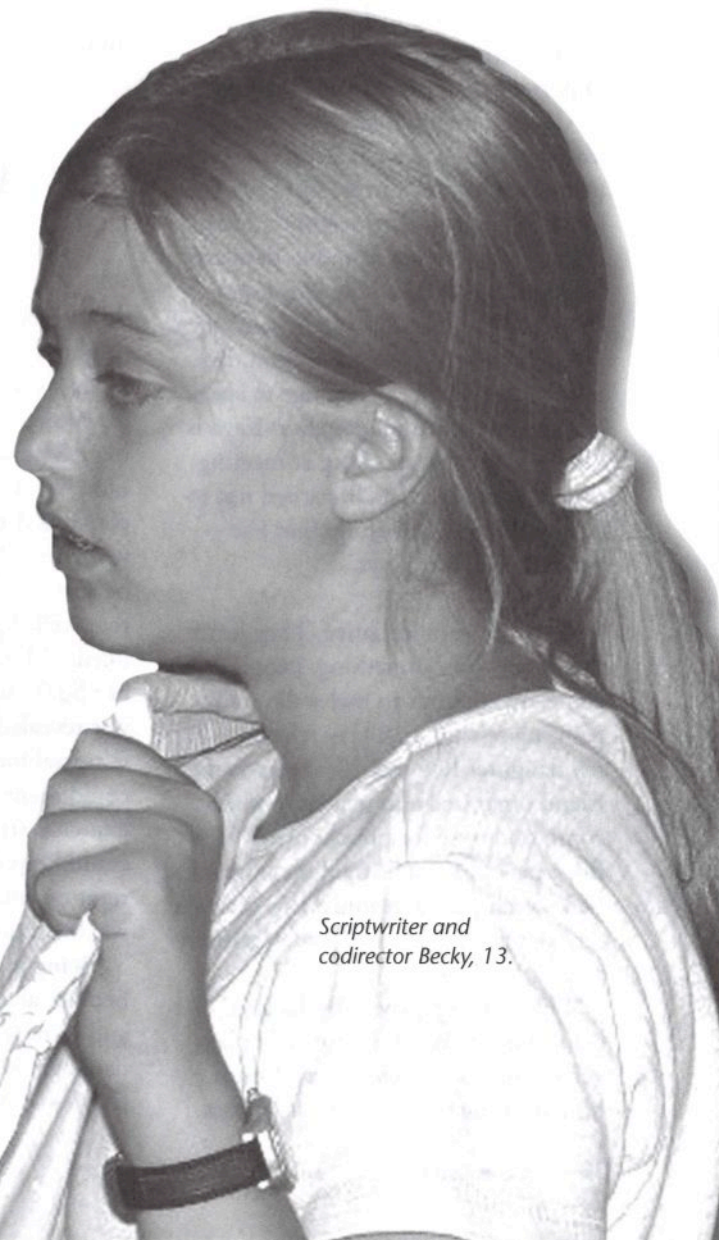
The best death in one of our plays so far was performed by Ann, 70, in the Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Speckled Band*. "She did a death scene that you'd see on Broadway, for God's sake," remembers Martha. "Pale face, eyeballs rolled back; it was the most terrifying thing I've ever seen." Thirteen-year-old Becky wrote the script for *The Speckled Band*. We produced it complete with spooky music, candles, and, of course, Ann's famous death scene.

In *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, one memorable musical interlude was carried by two four-year-olds. "These little kids were on stage

I usually direct the plays. I don't claim to train community kids in the-

ater. However, joining our troupe for a play is much easier than auditioning for a town or school production, and kids and parents report that the kids have learned "daring" and "boldness" by acting in our plays. All one has to do is be willing.

The plays are important to us. "People talk about the plays and rehearsals at meals," says my neighbor Martha. She notes that while this type of informal community theater might happen in



Scriptwriter and codirector Becky, 13.

by themselves, holding the scene,” Timmy’s mother recalls. The tots danced around the stage waving white scarves to the music of the Warsaw Concerto.



The process of putting on plays is definitely more important than the product, and consequently the plays are a pleasure for the audience because the actors are so happy and comfortable. “It’s just plain fun,” reports Elise. “I loved being Sherlock Holmes because I had a British accent and I made people happy.” One member, Dana, whose husband sometimes acts with us, appreciates that as director I give the actors room to grow and make mistakes. “They learn that connection is more important than perfection,” she says.

Co-director and playwright Becky leads our actors in a character development exercise she learned from her junior high play. One neighbor, Jude, taught us warm-ups from her days as a movement therapist. The kids learn about bowing, about stage left and stage right, and about voice projection. But mostly, they learn the courage to speak out. Sue says that her daughter Kaya is now comfortable speaking at meeting time in kindergarten. “I learned not to be afraid to do something that I’ve never done,” Kaya says.

Kids also learn initiative. They learn that if you plan something, people will come, whether it’s an owl walk, a silk-painting session, or a play rehearsal. My my daughter Roz was 10, she and a friend organized a drama class in the common house for preschoolers. When five-year-old Kaya learned there was no Halloween parade planned this year, she sent out an email herself and organized one.

“I like writing plays,” Becky says. “I get so into it. When I wrote our play version of *A Christmas Carol*, I must have read the book five times.” Most

recently, Becky has written a play based on Greek myths. And she asked to help direct our upcoming kid’s version of Julius Caesar, which 11-year-old David found in a book of Shakespeare plays for elementary-age actors..

David played Maisy the cow, a lion, and the lead dog, in *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. “In school, we’re writing a play now,” he says. “If I hadn’t done plays at New View, I wouldn’t be so enthusiastic about them at school.”

My son Joseph and his friend Alex, both five, reflect on their roles as dogs in *Sylvester*. “I think I was a little funny,” says Joseph. “I was a little funny too,” says Alex.



Working together on plays brings neighbors together that wouldn’t normally spend time together. If it weren’t for theater, I wouldn’t have the mentoring relationship I have with Becky. Eleven-year-old Ben’s first New View play was *A Christmas Carol*. “I learned what the other kids’ personalities were,” he says. “Some of them I didn’t know all that well. I got to know what they liked.” Martha remembers how neighbor Sue’s talent for sound production was revealed magically during the dress rehearsal for *A Christmas Carol*. Sue could identify the right gong or wooden clip-clop sticks for each scene, and could keep the sounds organized and right on time. What a gift to an overwhelmed director!

“Being in a community is really fun because all of my friends live really close and I know all the people,” observes my daughter Maddie, nine. “The plays are really fun. My favorite was *A Christmas*

Carol, where I played Sara, and a dancer. I love living in community!” “The play that sticks out in my mind is *In the Court of Queen Arithmetic* because everybody was in it and it was

really fun,” recalls my older daughter, Roz, now 11. “The social stuff, that’s what I learn most in the community, and I love that.” We put on *Queen Arithmetic* in Ann’s basement before the common house was built. Kids painted the mural for the sets on the side-

walk. We fashioned curtains from sheets. As always, we ate cookies and juice afterward.

Another benefit is that people of all ages work together. “The mix of ages teaches a lot,” Sue says. Claire, 13, was in a play when she was nine. “I got to know everybody in the community better,” she says, adding that in school plays everyone’s the same age, but at New View she learned from older people and acted as a role model for younger kids. “Here you’re not locked into your specific age group.”



I admit that directing all-adult actors would be a lot easier. The challenge of containing high-energy children, some of whom can’t read yet, and emerging with a cohesive drama, is overwhelming. Some parents have asked how I manage the chaotic scene at rehearsals. I put myself in a Zen-like mode of chaos-acceptance and unfluffability. I let the leaders emerge from within the ranks and carry the day. If some kids get too bossy, I step in and put structure on our discussions. At the performance, I step back. The kids know exactly what to do, when, and who’s coming on next.

Becky comments that she has learned a lot about directing younger

Parents say the kids learn “daring” and “boldness” acting in our plays.

kids. "It's great having all ages, it adds to it, but you have to be sensitive to it." And about directing adults, she says, "Sometimes I felt uncomfortable telling them what to do." Becky and I both vividly recall a Speckled Band rehearsal where we let each actor, in turn, deliver suggestions for improvements to the scene. Some opinions came gently, others came with great enthusiasm or even bossiness. I felt frustrated by the slow process. "I remember thinking, 'For the next scene I'm gonna figure this out at home'," Becky says. "But I also found out that your own way is not always the right way."

"What's interesting about drama here," Martha remarks, "is that it's a microcosm of what we see in the neighborhood. When

Timmy was four he got help from grownups *and* from peers. It's helpful for kids to see their peers being very competent or funny." "What I noticed," says neighbor Jim, "was how older kids like Becky and Eben learned how to get the cooperation of the younger kids. It's different than playing with other kids; they always "play" together. This was different. They had to get the cooperation in a different way, have authority."



It is difficult to assign roles fairly when different kids step forward each time, when one kid will only participate if she's a princess, when another refuses to play the other gender, and when another leaves in tears when she doesn't get the main role. I try to share the

wealth of having a main role, and it's a personal challenge to let go of talent and stick only to fairness when determining roles. I remind myself that the goal is the process, not a perfect performance with shining stars.

Lily, 14, played a lead role in *The Children's Hour* this year at high school. "New View plays helped me to work better with other actors," she said. Her father, David, notes that the plays also help kids get to know each other. Now, at her new high school, being in plays helps her integrate into that community. Neighbor Sue agrees. "I can't think of a better way to build community than expressing yourself creatively in community."

They also learn that connection is more important than perfection.

Another benefit of doing plays together is that kids learn about history and literature by doing plays. How could any child help but pick up knowledge with plays ranging from *Elizabeth Blackwell, First Woman Doctor* to *Aesop, Man of Fables*; *Julius Caesar*; and *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*?



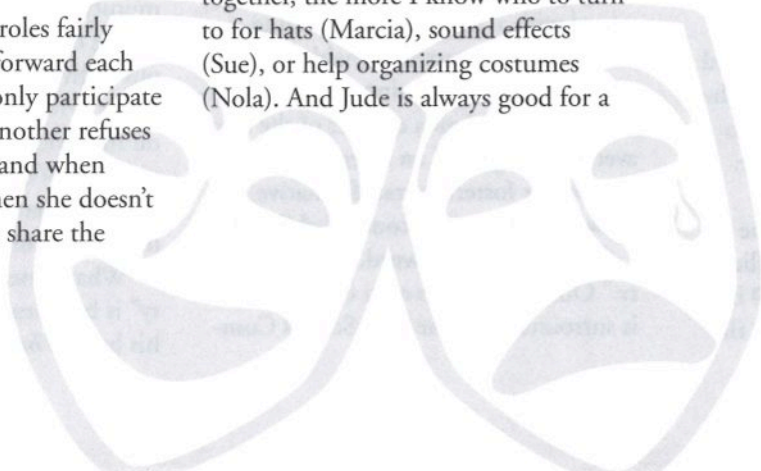
Because we all know each other so well, children and adults feel more comfortable acting together. It's fun to see usually-sedate adults and shy children ham it up. And the more we work together, the more I know who to turn to for hats (Marcia), sound effects (Sue), or help organizing costumes (Nola). And Jude is always good for a

loud, funny character. "If you asked me to help with a big play you're putting on in April I won't want to commit," she says, "But when you say, 'Tomorrow we need Greek costumes, and can you play the apple-seller?' I'm there." Ω

Franny Osman, an at-home mother at New View Cohousing Neighborhood in Acton, Massachusetts, is taking time off from her statistics career. She writes, and is the editor of Women Outdoors Magazine.



Author and director Franny Osman.



We Care About Each Other

BY CHRIS MERCOGLIANO

PHOTOS CONNIE FRISBEE HOUDE

“Council meeting!” shouted out seven-year-old Kavon as he moved deliberately through the building, calling students and teachers together to help him settle an ongoing dispute he was having with Garrett.

As soon as all were assembled in a large oval on the carpet, three nominations were taken and a chairperson elected. This time it was Michelle, an eighth grader frequently chosen to lead the meetings.

“Who called this council meeting?” she asked.

“I did,” answered Kavon, his eyes flaring with anger. “Garrett’s being a big bully. Yesterday at lunch he took my chair away from me, and this morning he was calling me names and then he pushed me down when I told him ‘stop.’”

All eyes turned toward Garrett, who is three years older and a head taller than Kavon. Violations of the “Stop” Rule—if someone is bothering you all you have to do is say “Stop!” and then he or she must comply—are taken very seriously. So is bullying.

Garrett lowered his head and stared silently into his lap. Any hopes that he would raise his hand and respond to Kavon’s accusations appeared futile.

And so began an example of the Albany Free School’s unique conflict resolution process. Founded in 1969 by Mary Leue, the school is arguably the

world’s oldest inner-city free school. Because it operates according to a sliding scale tuition that begins at \$70 per month and approaches education in a radically different fashion, the school is racially and socioeconomically diverse. About a third of the students come from downtown neighborhoods, a third from uptown, and a third from suburban and rural areas. Half of the kids attend the school because they and their parents favor its freedom-based philosophy, the other half because they have been unable or unwilling to make it in a conventional education setting.

How is it that a school with a 130-year-old building even kind observers find shabby, no support staff or fancy equipment, and a per-pupil cost less than a quarter of the state average, has gained an international reputation for fostering transformative growth in even very troubled children?

The answer, in a word, is “community.” Our school is its own community. It is surrounded by the Free School Com-

munity, an intentional community consisting of a dozen or so families and various individuals, most of whom live in either privately or school-owned homes on the block, which in turn is an integral part of a diverse inner-city neighborhood that possesses many of the ingredients of community.

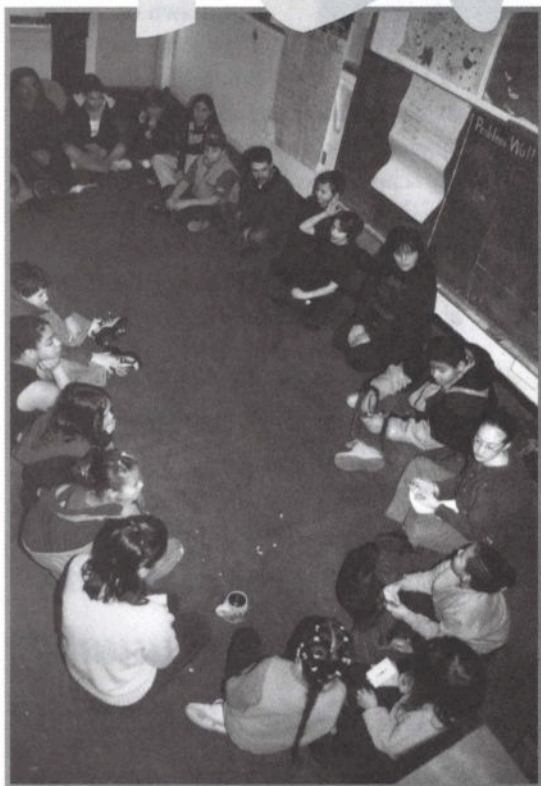
What I mean by the term “community” is best described by M. Scott Peck in his book *The Different Drum*:



Teacher Jeff Marden comforts a friend.

Fiercely

Fiercely



Any child or teacher can call a council meeting.

get along with others, how to love and be loved, and how to be an active, responsible citizen are valued at least, if not more, than learning to read, write and figure. Besides, happy, healthy, bonded children usually acquire their basic skills without a great deal of time and effort, especially when they are learning for their own satisfaction and not for external rewards.

In order to foster a deep sense of community, everyone cooks, eats, works, plays, travels, prays, celebrates holidays, and solves problems together. Students are intimately involved in the governing of the school. People care about each other fiercely. As a result, first-time visitors to the school are immediately struck by how

un-school-like the place is. "Where are the desks?" some wonder aloud, others only to themselves. "When do the classes

and 10 or so adults all heading seemingly in different directions at the same time appear as nothing less than pure chaos.

But hopefully the visitors will stick around until something goes wrong. It often doesn't take long, because conflict is inevitable in a community of very different individuals who share closely in one another's lives. Here, when someone has a serious problem one usually does as Kavon did and calls a council meeting. Council meetings are our conflict resolution and democratic decision-making system all in one. They are the glue that holds the school community together, by providing a forum in which people can work out their differences creatively and nonviolently. They also empower students to take ownership of the school by giving them a voice in the school's daily affairs.

Anyone can call a council meeting at any time. Everyone drops whatever they are doing and come to the biggest room on the first floor of the building. Three nominations are taken and a chairperson

is elected (usually a student, sometimes as young as six). It is the chairperson's responsibility to recognize speakers, keep the discussion on track, and maintain order. Interestingly, while the atmosphere of the school is characteristically

freewheeling, strict decorum is required in council meetings at all times—which is seldom a problem because everyone takes them very seri-

... a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, making the other's condition our own.

At the Albany Free School teachers, students, and parents practice community first, school second. Learning how to

"Teachers, students, and parents practice community first, school second."

meet?" "Is it always this noisy?" If their preconceived notions of school have been too thoroughly violated, then the sight and sound of 50 kids, ages 2 to 14,

ously. Meetings, which are run by Roberts' Rules of Order, begin with the person who convened the meeting stating his or her concern. Policies and rules can be made and changed, and consequences for unacceptable behavior meted out by majority rule, with students and teachers each having an equal vote.

Council meetings tend to take on a therapeutic rather than a governmental tone when the focus is an interpersonal rift. With the need for personal privacy and confidentiality respected at all times, the meetings become a safe, empathetic space where emotions can flow freely and the thread of the problem can be followed back to its source. Maybe it all started with something that happened a day or two before at school, or with some kind of trouble at home (an abusive older sibling, parents fighting, etc.). Tears are not infrequent.

Kavon's meeting continued with Kavon telling Garrett directly how sick and tired he was of being picked on by him. Then Nancy, one of the school's co-directors, wondered aloud if anyone else had been having a problem with Garrett. Several younger students timidly raised their hands. When asked why they hadn't called a council meeting, one boy reported that Garrett had threatened to hurt him if he did. This revelation brought a flurry of outrage raining down on Garrett, who sat still as ice, his anti-social behavior fully exposed at last.

Garrett has only been in the school three months, having spent several unhappy years in a public school where he was frequently the target of bullying. That school's solution was to dismiss Garrett ten minutes early at the end of the day so that he would have a head start in getting away from his tormentors.

Finally Jeff, one of the four teachers



in the group, asked Garrett if he had anything to say. Garrett answered that some of the older kids present teased him sometimes and made him feel like they didn't want him in the school. Jeff inquired if this was true and the hands of two 8th-grade boys, Julio and Jamar went up. Both admitted that they had put Garrett down on more than one occasion, prompting a general discussion of how meanness rolls downhill. The two boys promised Garrett they wouldn't do it anymore.

Garrett, thawing a little, raised his hand again and looked across the oval at Kavon. Garrett said he was sorry and pledged to stop harassing Kavon, who considered the apology sufficiently heartfelt to accept. Someone asked Kavon if his problem was solved. When he nodded his head affirmatively, a motion was made to adjourn.

It is through the council meeting system that the school meets Peck's test of "making the other's condition our own." The daily practice of supporting each other through their difficult moments teaches that we all face the same struggles, regardless of age, race, or gender, and that together we can solve problems that appear overwhelming when faced alone. This is the lesson and the power of community.

Awhile back a reporter from a local newspaper spent a day at the school so that he could write a feature-length profile. During a wrap-up chat in the afternoon, he shared an astute observation. He began by noting how in most classrooms in most schools, there are always at least a couple of kids who are loners, who seem withdrawn or "out of it" in some way. The thoughtful journalist

then went on to say that he was quite taken by not having seen a single child in the school who fit this pattern, for which he admitted he had been watching carefully. All of the children, he noted, appeared to be "in the flow." Everyone always seemed to be actively engaged in something, whether alone, in pairs or in groups of various sizes. Finally, he asked why this was so. The response, again in a word: community.

"Happy, healthy, bonded children usually acquire their basic skills without a great deal of time and effort."

Including students in the running of the school, not ranking one above another, and allowing them to express their own genius in their own way fosters a deep sense of acceptance and belonging in a nurturing community of equals.

This is the reason why the school has had such success in turning around kids who come, after years of failure in conventional school settings, with a negative attitude toward learning and a badly

damaged sense of self. Although he never seemed fully convinced that children could learn all that they should be learning in an environment in which there are no set curricula, no compulsory classes, and no grades or standardized tests, he appeared to accept the statement that countless graduates have returned to report having left the school fully equipped to lead happy, successful, empowered adult lives.

The reporter left profoundly moved.

Just as the Albany Free School is a community, the surrounding layers of community are very much a school. Students do some of their most important learning during the school day beyond the school's four walls. Sixth, seventh and eighth graders have the opportunity to apprentice themselves to professionals in the Albany Free School Community. Angela learned fine wood-working at the wooden boat works started by two community members and located next door in a school-owned building. She later went on to start her own successful wood refinishing business. Elisha learned all about natural childbirth from a doula in the community. Joey learned about the law from a husband and wife attorney team in the community, and discovered this was not the career for him. Jeremy learned how to fly an airplane from a retired Air Force pilot who joined the community after he left the military. Lily apprenticed to a French chef in the community, which led to future work with a local caterer.

Or if a student wants to learn a subject, perhaps a foreign language, or dressmaking, or a higher level of science or mathematics that no teacher in school is able to teach, very often there is an adult in the Albany Free School Community who can and is willing to work with that student. Thus the community greatly extends the school's reach.

Students also venture farther out into the city at large to work with professionals of all kinds. There is no shortage of grownups willing to give their time to interested young people. And here lies a

LEARNING AT GREENBRIAR

BY JERRY MINTZ

One afternoon as I was hanging out in Maria's crowded kitchen at Greenbriar community in Texas, one boy excitedly told other children and adults about a book he'd just read, while another group of kids gathered around a neighbor describing the Cuban boatlift. On the far side of the kitchen a former Franciscan monk helped another boy with his driver's education textbook. And just outside a small girl sought out and collected eggs from the community's free-range chickens. It was one of the healthiest learning situations I've seen.

I'm the Director of AERO, the Alternative Education Resource Organization, a hub of communication for educational alternatives worldwide, which means I visit many alternative educational settings. And while I've always been interested in intentional communities, I hadn't yet found a place like Greenbriar which was both a school as well as a long-lived intentional community. In this group of 50 to 60, with about half children, every adult is a resource for the students, who can make arrangements to learn from any of them. For example, they can learn various arts and crafts from on-site residential craftspeople. The students have access to the Internet and to the community's video library. They can swim in the community's swimming pool.

Greenbriar was founded in 1969 when eight young people bought 77 acres outside of their university town. Inspired by the book *Summerhill* and by the alternative education movement, they wanted to start a school based on the "free school" concept, in which students choose the subjects that interest them and all decisions are made by students and teachers in a democratic process.

The first year the founders built a road, secured power and water, built small cabins, planted gardens, and moved in. To provide a teaching space they built the "Main," a large oval structure of polyurethane foam over a steel frame, later adding a tin roof. With the founders as teachers, a sliding scale and scholarships, and bussing in 50 students from town, Greenbriar School was born.

Because they wanted the children to learn crafts and other skills, they invited a number of artisans and craftspeople to move to the land and teach. Selling crafts at local fairs has been one way the school funds itself, along with grant money. As time went on more and more people moved to the land and built homes. In 1975 an alternative education association accredited Greenbriar School.

This form of schooling continued until 1978 when Greenbriar's schoolbus broke down for good and the group decided the school would continue as a residential facility in an intentional community setting, as it has remained to this day.

Now, nearly 33 years later, the land is dotted with cabins, nice homes, alternative structures such as domes, and a renovated schoolhouse-shop building which they're using a central meeting hall (the "Main" burned down recently). The community now has second-generation members, grown children who've returned to raise their own children in the learning community of Greenbriar.

Jerry Mintz is the Director of the Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO). He has edited two directories of alternative schools, including The Almanac of Education Choices, as well as AERO's magazine, The Education Revolution. For more information: www.educationrevolution.org; jerryaero@aol.com; 800 769-4171.

Because Greenbriar School doesn't seek inquiries at this time, at their request have haven't noted their location.

**Everyone cooks,
eats, works, plays,
travels, prays,
celebrates holidays,
and solves problems
together.**

benefit beyond the obvious one: Moving education out into the world helps reestablish some of the web of interconnectedness that is fast disappearing from our urban centers.

The school makes liberal use of the neighborhood and beyond as an educational resource. Museums, art galleries, theaters, concert halls, court rooms, legislative chambers, newspaper offices and factories, to name just a few, all frequently serve as adjunct classrooms.

One of the greatest sins of modern education is the isolation it engenders by warehousing children away from the real action, which only teaches them passivity and disempowerment. Albany Free School kids, on the other hand, have actively involved themselves in the political process numerous times in order to fight for issues of deep concern to them. Once they lobbied the state legislature to restore funding to the New York State Children's Theater. Another

time they joined in on a series of rallies to shut down an inner-city garbage incinerator that was poisoning downtown areas and was a glaring example of environmental racism. Yet another time they fought to save the historic outdoor public swimming pool located on the edge of the neighborhood. The contribution of the students was no small part of each victory.

For 33 years the Albany Free School, the Albany Free School Community, and supportive professionals and business people throughout the Capital District have demonstrated the natural fit and the immense value of forging a connection between education and community.

Schools acting alone can't possibly do the job of preparing children to live in a confusing and complex world that changes seemingly at the speed of light. More than ever kids need to be in contact with real people and the real world. Textbooks and the Internet are fine as sources of information, but that is all they are. They will never provide the grounding, the inspiration and the guidance so essential to the educational process. Only adult role models and mentors can do that—but not when the



Author Chris Mercogliano offers encouragement.

typical teacher/student ratio is one to twenty-five or one to thirty. And not when the teacher is forced into the role of pressure-driven, teach-to-the-test taskmaster.

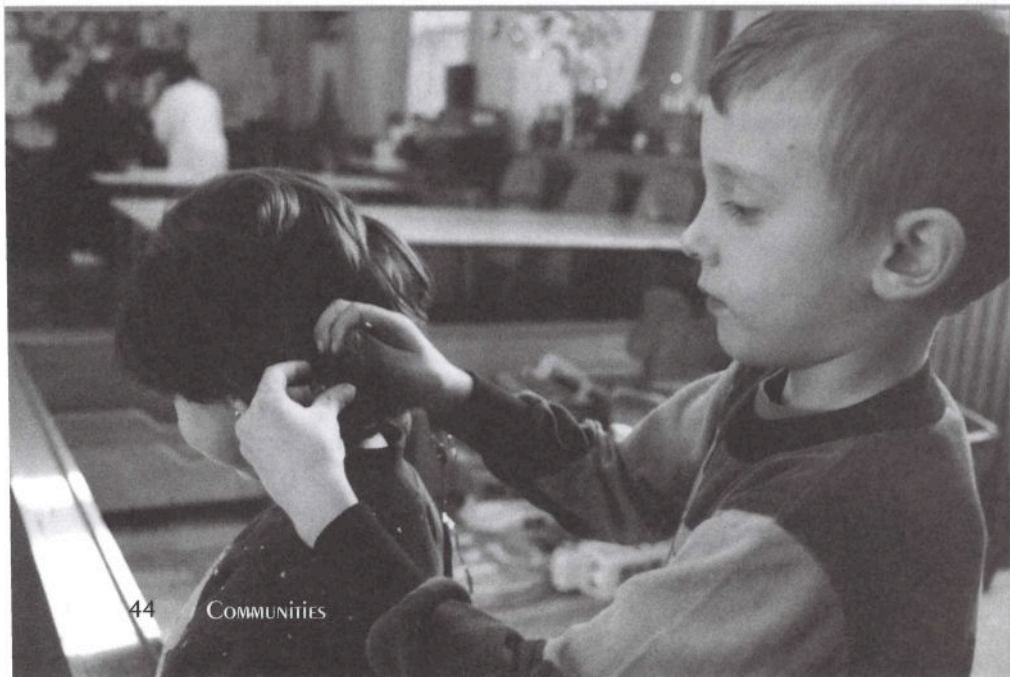
But such is increasingly the fate of the modern-day teacher. The current obsession with standards and high-stakes testing—soon to be a national regime—is hemming teachers into pre-packaged curricula that allow for little or no improvisation. Education is evolving into a mechanical process stripped of its humanity.

How do we reverse this inward spiral before it is too late—for certainly the recent epidemic of school shootings are a canary-in-the-cage-like symptom of how rigid and impersonal American schools have become?

In a word? Community. Ω

Chris Mercogliano has been a teacher at the Albany Free School since 1973, and Codirector since 1985. The author of Making It Up As We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School (Heinemann 1998), his essays, commentaries and reviews have appeared in many newspapers and magazines, as well as in two anthologies, Deschooling Our Lives and Creating Learning Communities. Chris also serves on the advisory board of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools and is a deacon in the Presbyterian Church.

Students frequently help each other.





"A Steadiness Within"

The Community School in Maine

BY EMANUEL PARISER

Graduate Kerrie Highouse returns for 25th anniversary reunion.

The white three-story New England-style house perched at the top of Washington Street in picturesque Camden, Maine is home to the Community School, an integral part of this small, coastal town. Renowned for its beauty and prosperity, Camden may not appear to be the most likely home for Maine's oldest alternative school. Yet since 1973 the Community School has been helping high-risk teenagers restore their confidence and complete their high school education, gaining support yearly from the area's residents, businesses, and organizations.

If you climbed the hill to visit our School you might find one of the co-directors talking by phone to a graduate now in his third year of college in Hawaii, working on a pre-law degree and doing well. The last time this student was in a public high school he

upended his principal's desk on him in a rage over being suspended. Like others, this young man had to work hard (it took him 14 months) on the application challenges we gave him before he could become a student here.

At the dining room table you might meet a 33-year-old former student who dropped out of the School in 1985. He has returned to take classes and complete what he started more than a decade and a half ago.

In the living room you might see a group of young women enrolled in *Passages*, our home-based program for teen parents, taking a workshop on first aid.

What we call "Relational Education"—relationships and a sense of community—forms the context for learning at the Community School. And it works. For students who have attended the School for two months or more, 80

percent have gotten their diplomas and 40 percent have gone on to college. Sixty percent remain in touch.

Currently we run three programs that serve 60 students a year. Our *Residential Program* enrolls eight different students each winter and summer term. Mostly from Maine, these students and six teacher/counselors live at the School (the staff stays overnight in shifts) and study together for six months. The curriculum includes life skills, work skills, and academics, as the students work at jobs in Camden or nearby towns. They perform cooking, cleaning, and other tasks for their shared household, and take classes and study in the evenings. Over 330 students have graduated from the Residential Program since its inception.

Our *Passages Program* currently enrolls 24 teen parents, usually young moms, who are tutored in their homes by our teacher/counselors. To finish high

school and get their diplomas, each student completes core skills in 23 areas with her one-to-one teacher, and then creates a “Walkabout,” a final independent project with the assistance of a team they assemble of friends, family members, peers, and people from the wider community.

Our Outreach Program further serves students and families who have participated in or graduated from the School. Through this program over 150 students a year complete their studies and graduate (many are former Residential Program students with uncompleted course work), or use it for ongoing support, counseling, and to get help with job references and transcripts. Outreach also runs the intern program for prospective new teachers and counselors.

Relational Education is powerful. At the graduation of the summer-term students last September, we shared excerpts from a letter that graduate Ben McLaughlin had written to the graduating class:

“Attending and completing the semester at the Community School was one of the most positively influential experiences of my life,” he wrote. “The semester was by no means easy, but it was also never boring! I lived with seven other radical personalities that were not about to submit to any mold. We fought each other but we learned as well. Every one of us had something to offer the others but we were damned if they would get it for free. . . . I want to thank all of you for the effort this endeavor has required. You are not quitters, you are not failures, you are a graduate of a true school of life.”

Several key values of Relational Education expressed in Ben’s letter—*intimacy, connection, a sense of belonging, taking responsibility and respectful attention and trust*—make Relational Education work.

Several years ago I walked into a room where a new student, Eric, was taking a diagnostic test in English literature. He seemed agitated. Both feet were tapping nervously and he was sweating. Since he was an articulate young man I was surprised to find him so anxious, and asked him what was going on.

He asked me why I was asking, and I explained what I was seeing. He admitted he was very nervous, and he had never passed a test in his life, so he was sure he would flunk this one. We talked at length, and I made sure that he knew his feelings were completely normal—



Residential students prepare their own meals.

why should he feel any other way? He let me know that the previous year he had been tested as having a third-grade reading level—but tested under the same circumstances of anxiety and paranoia. Over the next few days we all put a premium on helping Eric get calm by teaching him some relaxation methods, and assuring him that he would succeed. And he did. His reading went up seven grade levels in three weeks. To begin this learning experience how-

ever, Eric had to trust me—to open up, to explain to me what was going on with him—so that we could work together on a solution. The relationships with others that developed over his term helped to restore his confidence as a learner and as a competent human being. How readily can any of us assimilate information from someone we do not trust? How easy is it for any of us to learn in an environment we perceive as hostile, or inattentive?

Relational Education proposes a shift in the role of teacher from conventional dispenser of knowledge to a *listener, co-creator of knowledge, and facilitator*. All Community School teachers work with “one to one’s”—specific students whom they advise throughout their stay at the School. We spend hours in meetings reflecting on and problem-solving individual situations as they arise with our students. We also regularly attend to our own interpersonal dynamics.

When we started the School in 1973, our teaching was based on a simple premise, which I wrote about in *Changing Lives: Voices from a School that Works* (University Press of America, 1994). “We wanted our students to enjoy life the way we did, and hoped that by using ourselves as models they would see the joy and value in the things we found important such as gardening, playing music, and discussing ideas, feelings, politics, philosophy, and psychology. *We loved living and working with our students.*”

We also hoped to create an environment that was human scale—where interactions would not be driven primarily by individual roles as teacher and student, but by the essential qualities that make us human beings—our capacities to feel, to think, to imagine, and to empathize. We wanted other teachers to join our community with the same commitment to these values. We hoped that our students would use their graduation as a rite of passage into the adult world

and become joyful, productive, creative adults.

We soon began to experience the gap between our expectations and reality. Many students didn't seem to want a voice in running the community. They ran afoul of alcohol and difficult relationships, had difficulties breaking away from old friends who influenced them negatively, and were often angry and depressed. When we finally had the money to hire more staff, they generally didn't seem to stay more than two years. We were stumped. What was wrong with 80-hour weeks at sub-dishwasher's pay? Didn't the rewards of community and teaching far outweigh the practical realities?

Despite these initial disappointments we persevered and learned what worked. The School now has a successful track record and deep roots in the community and the state. Over 370 students have graduated. Of our 14 current staff members, three have worked with us for seven years and more, and one is entering his 21st year.

At Community School we believe teachers want to be treated and act like whole humans. They want to become part of a web of relationships that are ongoing and productive; they want to be supported and challenged as people.

"When I first came to the Community School as an applicant for a teacher/counselor position I was imme-



Residential students enjoy a winter camping trip.

diately struck by the congeniality of the group. They seemed so 'real,'" writes Eva O'Reilly. "The feeling of respect and genuine kindness was palpable. After working here for a year I still feel that. There is a focus on what is important in life: honesty, responsibility, respect, and a love for learning. The School allows me to teach in an authentic way, to begin to develop into the teacher I always wanted to be."

Students must be treated as whole humans as well.

"I arrived at the Community School in 1991 with a diminished trust in my peers, and virtually none in adults," notes college junior Emma Hall. "After years as an A student in public school I began to experiment with drugs and lost interest in school fast. What was the most disturbing to me was that teachers and administrators seemed not to notice my drastic downfall, nor did they try to find out what was going on with me outside of school. Eventually they stopped asking for my homework or expecting anything

from me at all. Some of them even stopped looking at me."

"I was 16 years old, and I wasn't fitting into anything," recalls Ed Foster, a 1980 graduate. "The School gave me a chance to fit in, a chance to succeed at something, a chance to be part of a community. At that age I needed a steady community, that sense of belonging—a steadiness within."

The sense of community contributes to the learning here. This involves choice, trust, a sense of belonging, and taking responsibility.

First of all, both students and teachers must *choose* to be here, which develops a culture based on trust, openness, and belonging. Learning and teaching are difficult if not impossible when these qualities are absent. The reasons students choose the School range from wanting to finish high school and graduate to less obvious reasons such as getting out of an oppressive school, overcoming issues of mental health or substance abuse, or proving themselves to their families.

Our teacher/counselors choose to work here despite low pay, long hours, and emotionally taxing experiences.

"I can say what I think," notes Passages director Lynne Witham. "I can be a real person with other students and



Walkabout committee meeting for a Passages student.



The School's first male Passages graduate and his daughter.

staff. I get to work with people who really care about others.”

“Here I have found that choice in what I teach and choice in what students learn can make all the difference in a lesson,” observes Ann La Bonte. “I have had the most memorable teaching moments at times that I didn’t even realize I was teaching: walks with students, discussions or just listening. It’s not about standing up and preaching what I know, but being an open shelf students can take from or put something on.”

Trust establishes the relationships that ultimately form the foundation of a sense of community. Residential students have a 24-hour community to immerse themselves in, with opportunities to develop trusting relationships with any of the eight adults who are regularly in their lives. But Passages students often live in isolated, temporary living situations. More than 60 percent have been abused as children or in their relationships, and trusting other people again is challenging. Our teachers come to their homes, work with them on core skills relevant to their lives, and spend a lot of time simply listening to their day-to-day issues. Trusting relationships

develop over time, and again, form the context for learning.

When students develop a sense of belonging within the School it bolsters the desire to achieve their goal of finishing high school. Although there are no grades for students in any of the programs, residential students are well aware of who completed which requirements, and they often use that knowledge to push themselves harder.

Passages students, whose *sense of belonging* is fostered by one-to-one relationships with their teachers, have a chance to participate in monthly group workshops and connect with other students. Each Passage student’s Walkabout project involves assembling a committee made up of people important in their lives, such as friends, relatives, peers, and an “expert” in the area of their Passage. The chosen project must be of singular importance to the student, and involve some personal risk. One student who was afraid of driving chose learning to drive as her Passage project. She dealt with her anxiety and passed her learner’s exam. Another contacted a brother she had never met who had been adopted out of her family. These efforts become possible through a community of support for the students and in turn help strengthen the natural community students are a part of.

Students learn to *take responsibility* for themselves and care for others by being part of a community.

“I had much more freedom at the Community School than I did at home,” notes Patty, a 1976 graduate. “But with freedom comes a certain responsibility—what you do not only affects yourself, but other people. How is what I do going to affect others?”

Adolescents at the Community School have responsibilities that link them to other members of the community. Passages students must raise their children and manage a household; residential students must pay room and board, cook

meals, and keep the house clean. The sense of interconnectedness these commitments foster can lead to a greater openness, respect, and understanding of others.

“I was working with the elderly people up at the Camden Health Care Center, and that made me feel good—doing something for somebody else,” recalls Debbie, a 1990 student. “The School taught me responsibilities—work, keep up with chores, learn to budget your money.”

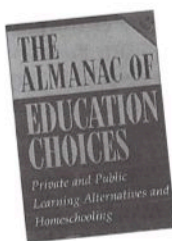
Relational Education also has its downside. Students and staff can find it hard to fit in. On average 20 percent of our residential students as well as Passages students leave without completing the term, or completing their passage. Most teacher/counselors stay only about three years. Dealing with personalities, conflicts, and power struggles demands emotional and intellectual stamina. As a staff we find it difficult to engage issues that seem to threaten our cohesiveness, knowing at the same time, that *not* dealing with them also imperils our cohesiveness. As long as the School maintains a primary value on community and the relational, we will be troubleshooting these kinds of issues, person by person, and conflict by conflict. It’s not easy, but, 28 years and 370 graduates later, we believe it’s well worth it.

Emanuel Pariser, who developed the theory of Relational Education, cofounded and co-directs the Community School, and co-authored the book Changing Lives: Voices from a School that Works. He has served for many years on state-level task forces and commissions and is on the steering committee of Maine’s Alternative Education Association. For more information: www.thecommunityschool.org; emanuel@cschool.acadia.net.

Where to Learn More ...

BY RON MILLER

Since the 1960s, numerous good books have been written on progressive and alternative educational approaches. Some, like A.S. Neill's *Summerhill*, have become classics, while others remain largely unknown, despite providing thoughtful, stimulating perspectives on teaching and learning. I have selected the following titles as being representative of this fascinating literature. They comprise a solid introductory reading list for anyone wanting to explore the possibilities of democratic, community-based education. But this list by no means exhausts the field, and I encourage interested readers to continue exploring this topic beyond these few titles. A good place to start is the Paths of Learning free online database (www.PathsOfLearning.net) which contains reviews of over 500 books and articles in this field.



The Almanac of Education Choices, Jerry Mintz, Sidney Solomon, and Raymond Solomon, editors. Macmillan, 1995. The first truly comprehensive directory of independent and public alternative schools across the United States, including Montessori, Waldorf,

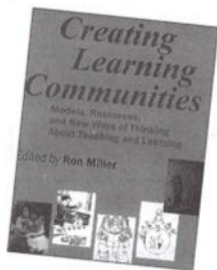
Quaker, progressive and many other types of schools, as well as homeschooling resource centers, alternative education organizations, and alternative education publishers.

Challenging the Giant: The Best of SKOLE, Mary Leue, editor. (4 vols.) Down to Earth Books, 1990s. Mary Leue, founder of the Albany Free School, published SKOLE: *The Journal of Alternative Education* in the 1980s, and compiled its most provocative articles into this series of books. An intriguing mix of personal essays, descriptions of schools, historical studies, and social and political critique, these books show what the alternative education movement is all about.

Changing Lives: Voices from a School that Works, Day, Jane. University Press of America, 1994. The Community School in Camden, Maine, truly is a place that changes lives, and in some cases literally saves them. No reader can encounter these young people's stories without wondering why all schools aren't set up to care for students in this way. This book provides a moving, intimate account of alternative education at its very best.

Compulsory Mis-education, Paul Goodman. Vintage Books, 1964. A colorful social critic of the mid-twentieth century, Goodman addressed the absurdities of modern schooling with sharp prose and an even sharper moral sense. He was an anarchist as well as a humanistic psychologist, so his view of education,

beautifully articulated in this book, is especially penetrating.



Creating Learning Communities: Models, Resources, and New Ways of Thinking About Teaching and Learning, Ron Miller, editor. Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000. Over 30 activists in homeschooling, alternative schools, and sustainable community development explain

why learning best takes place in a genuine community context rather than in the over-managed institution of schooling. Offers many stories about community-based lifelong learning centers internationally.



Deschooling Our Lives, Matt Hearn, editor. New Society Publishers, 1996. This brash collection of radical perspectives on the nature of contemporary learning begins from Ivan Illich's startling proposal that, as currently organized, schools should be abol-

ished altogether, and shows what forms of community-based learning are possible.



Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling, John Taylor Gatto. New Society Publishers, 1992. Five powerful essays by the 1991 New York State Teacher of the Year. Includes his acceptance address to the New York state legislature upon

receiving that award, in which he exposed the elitist agenda underlying modern education. Gatto is today's most vocal and visible critic of public schooling, and this fiery book set the tone for his crusade.

Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense, David Guterson. Harcourt Brace, 1992. A novelist and English teacher, Guterson writes gracefully while reflecting on the meaning of education, childhood, and life. Unlike some of the popular books on homeschooling, this one doesn't imply that Harvard-bound prodigies are the natural outcome of home-based learning but simply asks us to think more deeply about what kind of world we want to provide our young people.

Free at Last: The Sudbury Valley School, Daniel Greenberg. Sudbury Valley School Press, 1995. SVS is perhaps the most influential alternative school in the United States, in part through the stream of books Dan Greenberg and his colleagues have published. This one tells how young people grow and learn in the school's fully democratic environment. Freed from compulsory courses, curricula, or grades, students find their own passions and their deepest, truest selves. The SVS model has inspired the founding of other democratic schools around the United States in recent years.

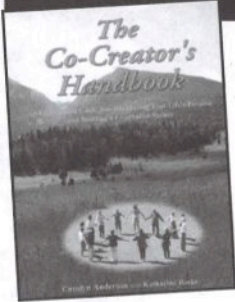
A Free Range Childhood: Self-Regulation at Summerhill School, Matthew Appleton. Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2001. A holistic therapist who worked for several years at the world's most famous alternative school, Appleton reflects in this lively book on the qualities of community life that give rise to growth, healing, and learning. He stresses the importance of freedom, self-determination, and self-regulation, explaining these principles even more fully than school founder A.S. Neill did in his popular writings.



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Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy After the 1960s, Ron Miller. State University of New York Press, 2002. This is a serious (but readable, I hope) study of the intellectual and cultural roots of alternative education. It looks at the educational ideas of John Holt, Paul Goodman, A.S. Neill and their contemporaries, and explains their popularity in terms of the civil rights movement and campus unrest of the 1960s. It compares free school ideology with the progressive democratic ideas of John Dewey and his followers.

Instead of Education: Ways to Help People Do Things Better, John Holt. Dutton/Dell, 1976. While all of Holt's books are interesting, this one gives the most practical advice about starting community-based learning centers. Having given up on school reform by the early 1970s, Holt surveyed the radical learning experiments he found around the United States and drew on his many experiences to compile this volume.

The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School, George Dennison. Random House, 1976. (Reissued by Boynton/Cook/Heinemann, 1999.) Dennison, a fiction writer and psychotherapist, and his wife Mabel opened a school in New York City in 1964. This moving work tells the struggles of the African-American and Puerto Rican students to overcome the many obstacles to their success. Dennison's musings on the meaning of education and the root problems of modern life are absolutely brilliant. This was John Holt's favorite book on education, and mine as well.



Making It Up as We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School, Chris Mercogliano. Heinemann, 1998. The George Dennison of our generation, Mercogliano tells the stories of the children in his inner city school (The Free School in Albany, New York) with

compelling empathy and appropriate moral outrage. He shows us how conventional practices stifle young people's organic development, and how a caring community can free them from the prejudices and barriers that crush their spirits.

The Parents' Guide to Alternatives in Education, Ronald E. Koetzsch. Shambhala, 1997. In this ambitious effort to provide an overview of virtually all forms of alternative education available today, Koetzsch gives a few details about different philosophies and then illustrates them in practice. He visited many, many schools to find out just what goes on, and reports his observations succinctly.

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Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing, A.S. Neill. Hart Publishing Co., 1960. (Recently reissued.) This was the "bible" of the free school movement in the 1960s, with its insistence that children are basically good and therefore must be given complete freedom to develop in their own way. Neill blasted modern society for suffocating human happiness with guilt and "duty," and argued that if allowed to interact and learn freely, young people would someday create a happier society.

Teach Your Own: A Hopeful Path for Education, John Holt. Dell, 1981. This is Holt's manifesto for homeschooling. He explains why school reform doesn't work, and encourages parents to make the leap from institutional learning to organic learning at home and in the community, with stories about some pioneer efforts in home learning and lots of practical advice.

What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture, Ron Miller. Holistic Education Press, 1997 (distributed by Foundation for Educational Renewal). This history of ideas in radical education explains exactly why diverse educators have criticized conventional schooling and sought alternative approaches. It begins with a concise historical account of American education, showing how it is rooted in the core themes of the dominant culture, followed by a "holistic" philosophy that gives rise to radical (countercultural) understandings of education.

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Social Capital (continued from p. 27)

liability insurance, noise, and truancy. The teenagers were tolerant during the wait, having factored in the community's apparent need to thrash out every nuance of the proposal before allocating funds.

It's worth noting that in an intentional community like ours, the teens' proposed "public" project was actually a community/extended family matter. Nikolas Rose highlights the dichotomy between public and private spheres when he discusses the problems youth have when they live away from home and control over their lives is managed by the public sector. In contrast, children who have grown up on an intentional community have a concept of home that expands beyond the family house and garden. At Bundagen, meetings that generate decisions that have power over various aspects of their lives are in-house, domestic, extended-family meetings. The key players in these political battles are often their mothers and fathers or the parents of their friends.

A community's second generation relates to any meeting equipped with all the skills common to their own community culture. This might serve them well within their own community, but often can leave them surprised and disillusioned when they stand before a representative of the mainstream power hierarchy, such as a landlord or police officer.

Chris is 23 now. He recently spent two years living away from the community, working as a chef at Byron Bay, a popular tourist destination. During that period he lived in a shared household with a changing population of other Bundagen youth. At one stage there were only two of them living in the house and they were struggling to pay the high rent. I suggested they seek another tenant from Byron Bay. Chris and the other Bundagen boy looked shocked. No, they told me; they'd rather cover the rest of the rent themselves until someone from the community came up, someone they knew. I was surprised because they had been away from Bundagen for months and had new friends who visited the



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house. I asked why they wouldn't let one of their new friends move in, or someone seeking lodging in the area. They both said that they trusted each other; that they liked to leave money lying around or share a car; that they would lend each other money or buy the food or pay the rent if the other didn't get much pay one week. They didn't expect that anyone but one of their Bundagen friends would be able to move into such a situation easily. They would wait for someone to come from home. Anyone from Bundagen, boy or girl, within that 15-to-30 age group, would be welcome.

When it comes to social capital I think Chris and his peer group are rich. But it is an inherited wealth and of greatest value within the specific community culture where they absorbed it.

Within Bundagen, social capital, that glue created by the founders and taken up by the next generation, is a fragile concoction and often appears to be held in dynamic tension by internal issues. I believe community decision making provides an abundant opportunity to study the concept of social capital. The proposing, listening, speaking, negotiating, and acceptance of proposals helps develop social capital among the active members of the group. Beyond this, groups in the intense early stages of development, especially when their children take part in the process, however passively, can create a kind of inherited asset. How this next generation makes use of their legacy is a continuing and unfolding story. Ω

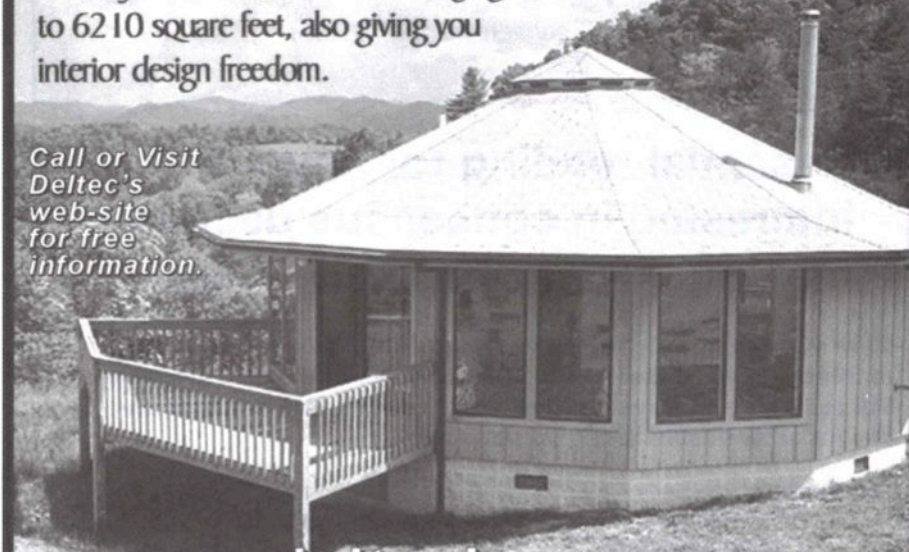
Jenny Ledger, a doctoral candidate in the writing program at Southern Cross University in northern New South Wales, is interested in history, cultural studies, and feminism. She has lived at Bundagen Co-op since 1984, where she raised two sons and a daughter. Portions of this article originally appeared as a paper presented at the 2001 annual conference of the Communal Studies Association.

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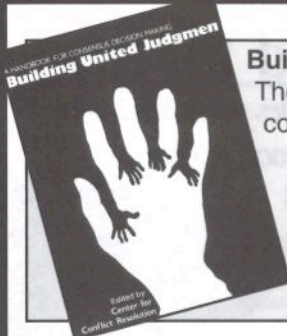
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Tribal (continued from page 30)

sea and served as navigator aboard the boat. I learned the value of hard work from Bill, who was always ready to get in and get the job done no matter how late it meant we were out there shoveling the dirt pile; he still inspires everyone to put their all into everything. I also learned this from Sonya, who used to head up work projects for us kids to participate in after school. I learned how to take care of children from Lisa, Tam, Jo, and Bill. Lisa took care of us after school while she was in college. Tam took care of me much of the rest of the time. When Tam had her first daughter, I was there, and I have helped her care for all the kids that followed. Jo was in her twenties when she took over the babies program; I was a young teenager, and helped her watch them. I learned how to work as part of a team. I learned the joy of hosting and making things nice for other people. I learned how to talk to people of all ages about anything. I learned how to listen to people. I learned how to read people. I learned how to care. I learned that no matter what age, each person is valuable and can teach me something. I am still learning and I hope that will never stop.


In all, I treasure my experience having been raised as a child of Orinda. The human richness of communal life appeals to my nature still, and I've returned here because I missed having people around whom I loved, and being around people who love me back. Growing up in the setting and in the way I did taught me to value my relationships with other people above everything. I believe this to be real wisdom, and it gives meaning to my life. Ω

Kristina Jansen works for her community as of the key coordinators and logistics personnel, and also helps takes care of children. She is working to complete her dissertation in Anthropology.



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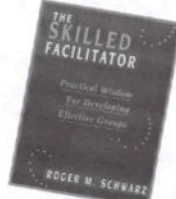


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Towards Clarity (continued from page 17)

support you" in this particular case. (And "No" is an option here as well.)

"I have a new contract around my mistaken belief that I'm stupid about trying to learn something new," Helen says. "What I'd like to do is learn one new thing each month, for the next six months, and when I start learning each thing I will write in a

She ponders how to change the mistaken belief she holds about herself.

journal my feelings and experiences that come up as I'm learning. I think that by doing it repeatedly, on purpose, I'll get over my fear of it, and the journaling will help me understand how it triggers my mistaken belief and give me ideas on how to change my belief. After four—no, three months I'll see how the contract is working for me and report to the group on it. Do I have group support for this contract?"

"I have a question," says George.

"Go ahead."

"Do you think it would help you to be more specific about what kinds of things you're going to learn?"

"Aha! Thank you, George. Yes, it would! I notice that it's physical skills that I give myself the hardest time with. I'll change the contract to be to learn a new physical skill each month. I'll make a list of a bunch to choose from, starting with stacking wood! Do I have group support?"

"I support you," comes the chorus, and Helen has got herself a new contract, enhanced by presenting it to the group. George's question helped her add useful specificity to her contract, and there might have been other questions. There might also have been non-support with feedback, as with all these processes. And of course the group can now help her be accountable to her contract!

Good contracts, as with good accountability work, are as clear and specific as possible. Spelling out details clearly makes them easier to perform, and harder to wriggle out of, let slide, or sabotage. Tangible and/or measurable outcomes make

them more likely to effect desired changes. Contracts may have a fixed duration, often with assessment and renewal options, as Helen's does, or they may be one-time activities. They may also be ongoing, effectively "ending" when the desired change no longer requires conscious effort.

When someone breaks one of their contracts, the accountability work process is ready and waiting for them to use in taking responsibility. As we've seen here, accountability work typically involves an implicit contract in its resolution. Our experiential therapy group has a set of basic contracts that we must agree to be accountable to in order to join and participate in the group. They apply equally to all of us, and we all support each other in honoring them (and doing accountability work when we don't). In addition, we each negotiate personal contracts proactively to support our growth as we learn about ourselves in the group and elsewhere.

Beyond these basic formats and processes are a great variety of additional and interrelated methods, tools, and techniques that we all can use to support our personal and interpersonal growth. In a sense I've only scratched the surface here. I invite you and your community to try some of these basic processes. You will quite likely find that they support going deep and coming up relieved, refreshed, and revitalized!

John Schinnerer has an M.A. in Whole Systems Design, and practices cultural and ecological designing, including teaching processes such as these to interested groups and organizations. john@eco-living.net; www.eco-living.net; 3822 24th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98108; 206-725-3571.

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Charisma and Controversy: The Story of Herrnhut

My car slows down on the busy highway between Adelaide and Melbourne. As I turn into a dirt road I step back 140 years. I'm at the ruins of Herrnhut, Australia's first commune.

Herrnhut was established in 1853 by Johann Krumnow, a Moravian Christian communist from Prussia. He believed that only through living communally could people achieve a moral and sustainable life. Charismatic, fiercely religious, and dogmatic about communism, Krumnow had been considered subversive and at one time was imprisoned for his teachings. He and his devoted followers left Prussia to escape religious persecution and realise their communal dreams. While many Moravians emigrated to America, establishing Bethlehem commune in Pennsylvania and Wachovia in North Carolina, Krumnow's group set their sights on Australia.

Here at Herrnhut, I slowly walk though the remains of Krumnow's house.

I imagine him sitting at the window where I now sit, admiring the view of Mount Rouse and planning the complex farming and social system on which so many people depended. I imagine his delight when, at long last, his dreams of a socialist commune were realised—and his despair as Herrnhut slowly unraveled.

The walls of his house, like those of all Herrnhut buildings, are two-foot thick basaltic bluestone, built to stand against the rigours of climate and vandalism. Fireplaces, doors, and windows are topped by superbly crafted stone lintels. All openings are placed to catch the sun and avoid cold winter winds. These massive buildings—this commune—was clearly built to last.

At its peak in the 1860s, Herrnhut's 60 members raised sheep, chickens, horses, and cows. They grew most of their own food, and sold surplus to nearby townfolk and local gold miners.

With stone quarried from their own



Dr. Bill Metcalf, of Griffith University, Australia, has since the early 1970s has studied both contemporary and historic communal groups around the world. He is President of the International Communal Studies Association, a Fellow of the Findhorn Foundation, and author of From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality (University of New South Wales, 1993).

His latest book, Herrnhut: Australia's First Utopian Commune (Melbourne University Press, 2002), is available in North America from Independent Publishers Group, 814 North Franklin St., Chicago, IL 60610; 312-337-0747; frontdesk@ipgbook.com; www.ipgbook.com, or directly from the publisher at www.mup.com.au.

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land, they built a magnificent church 60 feet by 27 feet, with a 40-foot ceiling and a raised stone altar and pulpit. They built a stone school, a bakery, a kitchen and dining room, three buildings with several large shared living rooms, and a dozen one-room houses.

To create more arable land and more water for their crops and cattle, they methodically drained wetlands by a series of hand-dug ditches, built two large dams, and dug four stone-lined wells, all still clearly visible. They were prosperous and, in the early years at least, respected by their neighbours.

Was any of this true, or simply a case of 19th-century "cult"-bashing?

Because of their commitment to pacifism and "good works" Herrnhut became a haven of peace and security within what was often a violent Australian countryside. Over 300 Aborigines, as well as swagmen (homeless travelers), sought protection at Herrnhut. Up to 30 swagmen are said to have been there at one time, staying in the community's Travellers' Hut. Bibles were provided in many languages, including Welsh and Chinese. A small religious work, *The Heart of Man*, illustrated with woodcuts, was printed and given to visitors.

Herrnhut's organisation was similar to that of Moravian communes in the United States, with little separation between church and politics. Everyone worked together, but all decisions were made by Krumnow. There was no private ownership—everything belonged to the commune. In return for labour, members received a home, food, and clothing, but no wages. Whether they benefited from Krumnow's leadership or were exploited by him is a matter of dispute.

As I survey the ruins of this once prosperous commune, I open some of their personal letters, gleaned from my archival research—this commune is the subject of my next book. I walk through the kitchen and school as I read about a Herrnhut girl's daily life in the 1860s:

"We were very happy in those days—no pain or trouble seemed to bother us, plenty of everything, a good warm bed to sleep in. In the ploughing time we used to get up early to get the cows and bring father the horses. Then we would feed the cows. Then the men fed the horses. Then we would have breakfast, then prayers and then to work. Sunday we had always to ourselves. There was ... no milking or cooking on Sunday except potatoes. ... There would be nothing to do on Sunday after coming from Church, just run the hot water ... on the potatoes and that was all the cooking that had to be done. The meat would be cooked on Saturday. We used to have beetroot pickles with this cold meat. ... I have thought many a time since of those peaceful Sundays."

But communal life was not always to be so sweet and cosy. As the communards aged and the second generation matured, people began demanding their own private property. The land was registered in Krumnow's name, which had been fine as long as they were a unified group, but increasing dissension led to a loss of community spirit and commitment.

Herrnhut also received bad press. One account described "a queer community ... [where] 'complex marriages' were allowed as in ... Oneida. Women and young girls toiled in the fields early and late, some clothed only with an old sack. ... Body and soul they were under the control of Krumnow." Another said: "At times he used to chain up the women ... when they had done wrong." And another: "Krumnow did not dwell all the time on a spiritual plane, but also had strong fleshly appetites. As head of the colony, he demanded that any of the women, including the wives of other members, should be honoured to share his bed, and ... many of the Herrnhut children bore a marked physical resemblance to him."

Was any of this true, or simply a case of 19th-century "cult"-bashing? Rumours of Krumnow's sexual proclivities plagued Herrnhut, ranging from pedophilia to demanding sexual access to all women, but no conclusive evidence exists about Herrnhut's sexual practices. Very little remains of Krumnow's own writings, so I am forced to rely too heavily on the writings of his critics and sensationalist journalists. As a historical researcher, this troubles me.

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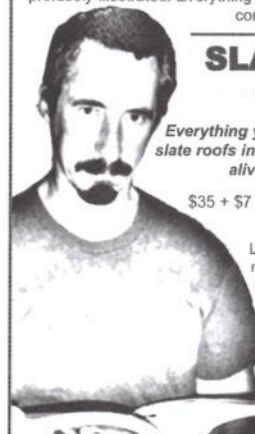
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By the mid-1870s, the aging membership was declining, with too few younger members to maintain the farming operation. Dissension increased, but Krumnow repulsed demands for change, not budging from the ideals the group had agreed to a quarter century earlier.

In 1875 Krumnow learned of a commune recently established by a German mystic, Maria Heller, about 300 miles away. She believed God had told her that the world was about to end, and she would become the mother of the new Christ. Unfortunately, she and her 50 followers were unable to grow enough food, and half a dozen had died of scurvy and malnutrition.

Krumnow believed an infusion of new blood would revitalise his community. Without consulting Herrnhut members, Krumnow invited Maria Heller and her followers to join them. He despatched horses and wagons to save the group, and personally led their trek to Herrnhut.

But farm productivity was declining, and this unilateral action of Krumnow's jeopardised the already spartan living conditions at the community. Providing food for these new arrivals placed impossible demands on Herrnhut's resources. Although Heller's followers were more artistically inclined than Krumnow's and brought music and cultural life to Herrnhut, they weren't good farmers. Matters came to a head when Heller's followers spent five days celebrating her birthday instead of bringing in the crops.

Charismatic leaders, particularly those claiming direct communication with God, rarely tolerate challenges to their authority. Two such charismatics in one commune can be incendiary! Both Krumnow and Heller saw themselves as divinely inspired so, not surprisingly, once they lived in the same commune their strong personalities clashed.

One Krumnow follower characterized Maria Heller as "a dangerous lunatic," her men "lazy," and her women "whores." Another claimed, "although Maria Heller's behaviour was erratic and highly emotional, she was not so much insane as religiously possessed and possibly even epileptic, and under the influence of her

'mystic' fits, she could become quite irrational."

In response, one of Heller's followers alleged Krumnow was a despot, "whose cunning and audacity has already ensnared many simple people."

There may well have been truth in both claims. Heller had been characterized in Germany as "completely stupid, almost an idiot," while Krumnow, on advice from God, believed he could fly, "making wings and climbing a tall gum tree from which he launched himself ... breaking his leg."

Charismatic leaders rarely tolerate challenges to their authority.

Because of feuds between these charismatic leaders, and Herrnhut's relative poverty in the 1870s, Heller and many of her followers left in late 1876.

The community's end was approaching. As their elderly leader grew steadily

more ill from progressive paralysis, members either left the commune or bickered over how to manage the land. Debts mounted, their economy suffered, and farm work was ignored.

Johann Krumnow died in 1880, and was buried next to the stone church. One descendant claimed there was such antipathy from his former followers that they buried him "face downwards" so that if he attempted to rise from his grave "he would go the opposite way, to the place many of his Lutheran neighbours believed he truly belonged."

A local man who had done business with Krumnow said, "A religious fanatic he was, erratic ideas he had, but in other respects he was a kind-hearted and honest man."

Newspapers had a field day. "Misshapen, fanatic, and, in his later years, drunken, Krumnow remained for 28 years the chief of ... Herrnhut. He ruled the community by fear and not by love, although he exercised the rights of free love. He was a dissipated Brigham Young or John Humphrey Noyes."

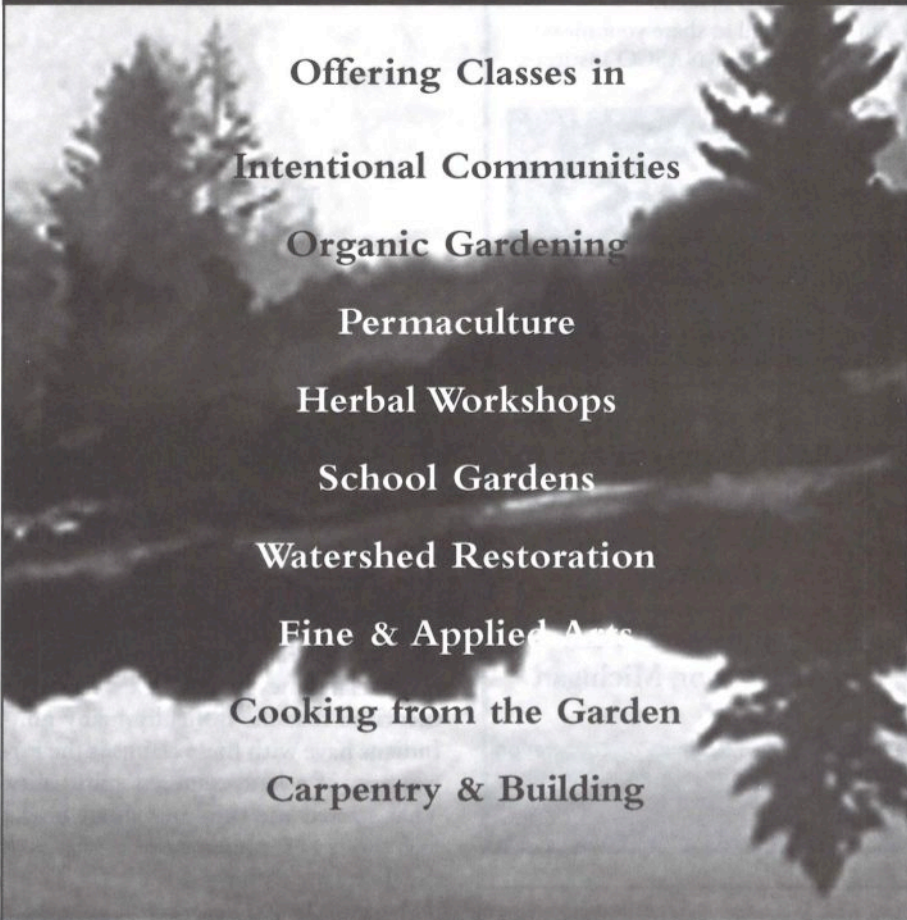
The community's leadership was taken over by Herrnhut member Louisa Elmore, 29. During the years it took to sort out their legal status and sell the property, the farm produced so poorly that she and the remaining members nearly starved.

The remaining members could no longer maintain the physical infrastructure of Herrnhut and their church, previously the focus of communal life, was "now quite neglected." Between 1885 and 1889 they arranged the sale of the property to a local lawyer, who subdivided the land in 1897.

A neighbouring farmer wrote that the new owners strongly disapproved of communes. Their first act was "to pull down the church, and let their stock trample the graves of the dead. ... I remember these graves being well cared for, with name plates and inscriptions decipherable. When I last saw them, these same graves were windswept and trampled with nothing to tell who they were, what they had been, nor whence they came."

Today, only one small grave marker remains. As I walk away from the blue-stone walls, all that remains of Herrnhut, a cold rain begins to fall. My face is wet, but is it the rain? I wonder how to do justice to writing about Herrnhut. As I drive away, I feel a weight upon my heart, perhaps the sorrows and dashed hopes of these earnest long-dead 19th-century communards. Ω

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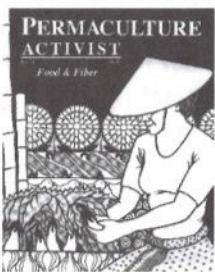
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Living in Community with the Land

Recently, I read an article about the increase in the number of lawsuits Native Americans are filing to reclaim land they hold sacred. The article theorized that the difficulty many non-Indians have with these claims is the foreignness of a land-centered spirituality. That started me thinking about how I feel about nature and how it relates to my desire for community.

I have always yearned for community. The deepest part of that yearning is the desire to discover: what exactly is community? What exactly is my place in the greater whole?

In college I studied political philosophy, social theory, and finally religion. I moved from dorms to group houses, looking for the connections that would be part of the answer. I later joined some of my friends at Twin Oaks, an income-sharing community. I married and fathered a child. Still, I wonder the why and how of what I am doing. The closer I live with others, the more I sense there is something deeper to community than just living with people.

I was a pagan before I knew there was a word for it. I have always been more

comfortable in the woods than on asphalt. I have always enjoyed watching rabbits frolic in the field more than watching television. For me, the wind blowing through the trees is the sirens' call. The dark rolling clouds that bring thunder and lightning also bring companionship. Fruit that I've planted and harvested myself tastes sweeter than any

chocolate milkshake. There is a reason I like to roll in the dirt, dance naked in the rain, and make love under the moon. There is a reason I collect feathers, rocks, turtle shells. Writing this, I recognize a strength of belief in my actions. Still, I could not reconcile any of it with the yearning for community.

Several months ago, Twin Oaks hosted a class on the fundamentals of ritual, based on Starhawk's

"reclaiming community" work. Fifteen Twin Oakers met for ten classes spread over several months, learning how to use ritual to create sacred space. The class placed strong emphasis on the natural world and making our connection to nature as strong and vital as our connection to each other. We ended with a ritu-

**FEDERATION
 UPDATE**



BY TOM FREEMAN
 TUPELO

Tom Freeman Tupelo has lived at Twin Oaks for six years and is the proud father of Jonah Raspberry Tupelo.

al consecrating Twin Oaks as a sanctuary for magic and healing.

I learned from this class to invite nature into my community, to open myself up to all those things I can only experience with my heart and soul. I learned to cast a sacred circle, a metaphor of the oneness—the sum total of all things. I learned I was part of that circle. I learned there was more to that circle

I sense there is something deeper to community than just living with people.

than people. I learned enough to be open for the next teaching that came my way.

Weeks after the class ended a Lakota Sun Dance Chief came to Twin Oaks and built a traditional sweat lodge. For four days he held morning and evening sweats, both consecrating the lodge and teaching the ritual of its use to us. He brought his sons with him, teenage boys preparing for their vision quests. The lodge and traditions the Sun Dance Chief shared with us were not only gifts for Twin Oaks but also tools for passing on Lakota ways to his sons.

I sat in one of the last sweats and compared this man and the history of his people with my own roots. Fifteen hundred years ago my Northern European ancestors built enormous stone circles, charted the course of the stars and moon to mark the passage of the seasons, and made offerings to the fields and the woods to ensure good harvests and community wellbeing. They lived on what they could grow from the soil or hunt in the woods. They had a partnership with the land, an interdependence necessary for survival.

All of that changed. My ancestors lost their tie with the land. Over time they sold their birthright for new ideals of rationalism, industrialism, and the supremacy of humankind. They traded communities of interdependence and sharing for urban centers of alienation and isolation.

There was a time when people had a

deeper relation with the land where they lived. They recognized that the land is vibrant circle of life and that we are part of the great circle. There was a time when people were in community not just with their family, or clan, or village, but with the land itself. With the animals they hunted or raised. With the crops they grew or gathered. The old-growth oak was the model, with roots deep in the Earth and branches than fan out against the sky, outstretched hands reaching to hold the hands of its neighboring oak.

This is what I have been hoping to find.

I now understand why I came to Twin Oaks. I live and work in the same place, eat food raised in our gardens, drink milk from cows pastured on this land, heat my home with wood sustainably harvested from the forests of this land. I am in community with it all.

We are one big medicine circle. We are tied to the land. The land is the mother of our community. For me, this is what is meant by living a sacred life on the land. Ω



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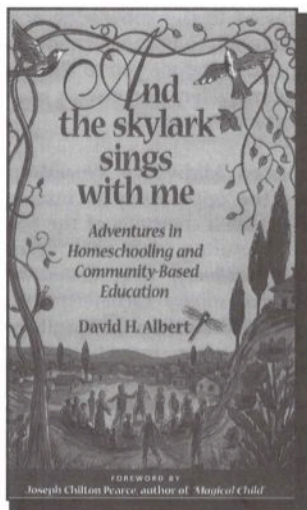
***For more information contact:
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www.MidwiferyWorkshops.org***

REVIEWS



And the Skylark Sings with Me: Adventures in Homeschooling and Community-Based Education

by David H. Albert

New Society Publishers, 1999
Pb., 221 pp. \$16.95

Reviewed by Diane Leafe Christian

I liked this account of homeschooling so much I couldn't put it down—even though I'm not a parent and not likely to homeschool anyone. Author David Albert describes how he and his wife Ellen helped their two daughters take charge of their own at-home learning process, and how the family drew on resources for learning in the community around them, from the local astronomy club to the regional wolf education program. He firmly believes that no single teacher or parent can meet all of a child's learning needs at any particular time. "It takes a community," the

author declares, "with or without a school, to educate a child."

When able to pilot their own course, he argues, and not exposed to force-fed education from the outside, children usually stop being depressed or numbed-out about "education" and regain their capacity for learning with energy and joy. That's what gripped me about the book—it reminded me that that's what I sought as a child, and gave me hope that parents and community members can offer these kinds of experiences to their children.

There's no such thing as a typical child, he continues, and basing the educational process on this premise is one of the greatest causes of damage to children attending public schools. Each child is unique. He believes that each child innately understands, and when encouraged, can articulate the information and experiences he or she needs at any particular point within that child's own unique development. The primary job of a teacher—parents or otherwise—is not to "teach," he states, but to provide opportunities in which the child can meet these needs. Doing otherwise, he warns, leads to children becoming frustrated, often expressed in aggressiveness, noncooperation, or passivity.

The Alberts' older daughter is non-competitive, unathletic, has fine motor skills, and loves an intellectual challenge. Her parents paid careful attention to her interests and helped her explore them. So at an early age she decided to learn violin—an instrument that requires fine motor skills and offers the mental challenge of choosing between different fingering possibilities for each note. Over the next several years she explored choral singing, opera, musical composition, Shakespeare's plays, English and American literature, raising and breeding corn snakes, wolf biology, genetics, astronomy, and, with help, building her own telescope.

Their younger daughter is athletic, keenly competitive, has an excellent musical ear, loves energetic physical expression, and is impatient with intellectual challenges or delayed gratification (such as learning the violin). Because the whole family gets involved in both girls' projects, she's learned much about the musical, literature, and science topics of her older sister, but her own tastes lead her to jazz and

classical piano (she taught herself Gershwin tunes by ear), gymnastics, dancing, and baseball.

And the Skylark Sing with Me offers encouragement and support for homeschooling parents, especially in encouraging a child's interests, and locating and using potential learning experiences from local organizations and businesses, which is what "community-based education" means. The Alberts used products on the shelves of a local supermarket, for example, to teach basic math as well as lessons on volume, fractions, and cost-to-value ratios. Their older daughter joined a local chorale society (and learned about madrigals and oratorios); their younger daughter joined a local children's gymnastics team (and learned coordination and balance); and the whole family volunteers as ushers in local theater productions (and learns about plays and theater). Almost every article in this issue underscores this point: children thrive on learning ideas and skills from a wide variety of adults.

At least one educator I know criticizes this book for implying, because of the precocious achievements of the older daughter, that such are the natural result of this kind of education, and if your kids aren't doing the same you've failed as a homeschooling parent. While such criticism may be warranted, I think the book also sends the powerful message that a community-based homeschool education is doable, desirable, and can become an engaging and rewarding journey of discovery for everyone involved.

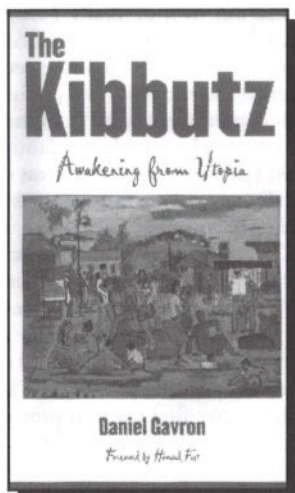
Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine.

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The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia

by Daniel Gavron

Rowman & Littlefield, 2000
Pb., 293 pp. \$24.95

Reviewed by Bill Metcalf

The Kibbutz is a well-written, fascinating look at the story of the best known communal movement in the world, as told through the words of many participants. Daniel Gavron, an ex-kibbutznik, asks why the kibbutz is changing so rapidly, wonders just how much it can change and still be communal, and offers lessons for other intentional communities around the globe. In my opinion, anyone interested in any aspect of intentional communities ought to be interested in the Israeli kibbutzim, and thus will enjoy and learn from this book.

The kibbutz is the only commune in history to have played a central role in a nation's life," Gavron writes. "Whereas other communes rejected society and retreated from it, the kibbutz embraced society and sought to lead it. It was instrumental in establishing the state of Israel, defending its borders, creating its agriculture and industry, and setting its social norms."

In the early days, the nuclear family was reviled as "bourgeois," and attempts were made to weaken its importance. For example, in most kibbutzim during the

early years, it was considered bad taste for husbands and wives to sit together in the communal dining hall. Kibbutzim, notes Gavron, "aimed to liberate women from what they called her 'biological tragedy,' the obligation of the woman to bear and raise the children."

The guiding principle of these early kibbutzim: "to each according to his/her need; from each according to his/her ability," and their concern with total equality has been impressive, although Gavron points out that most kibbutz "only tended to pay lip service to sexual equality."

Kibbutzim, however, like all communal groups, change over time, almost always becoming less communal and more like their surrounding societies. While kibbutzim members formerly had almost no private property, ate all meals together, had their children reared by the group, and made consensus decisions on almost all aspects of a member's life, in recent years this has changed dramatically.

Even today, however, the less than three percent of Israelis who live communally produce 40 percent of the country's agricultural produce, 10 percent of its industrial output and seven percent of its exports, and are over-represented as leaders in business, government, and the military.

Some kibbutzim now pay their members different wages for different work, children stay at home with their mothers, and people even cook and eat at home. Some kibbutzim have become capitalist enterprises, with all assets being vested in a corporation, the shares of which are distributed to members. Indeed, Gavron points out that while the kibbutz "started out as a revolutionary society aiming to

create new human relationships, the kibbutz became in the 90 years of its existence an extremely conservative society." He quotes one cynical kibbutznik: "The kibbutz is perfect for old people. It's also great for children. In between it's awful."

Today kibbutzim can be urban communes such as Tamuz; religious communes such as Ein Tzurim; capitalist enterprises such as Kfar Ruppin or even semi-anarchistic, open-purse, almost new-age communes such as Samar.

The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia is a superb exploration of this topic, offering hope to those who believe that intentional community can be a healthy, viable lifestyle while also warning of its many potential problems. Gavron's excellent writing makes it an enjoyable as well as informative read.

Bill Metcalf, communal scholar and president of the International Communal Studies Association, is author of many books on community, including Shared Visions, Shared Lives (Findhorn Press). He lives in Brisbane, Australia.



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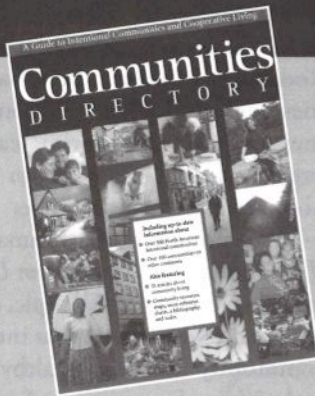
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Directories Updates



Communities Directory Spring '02 Update

One of the Fellowship for Intentional Community's primary objectives is to provide the most up-to-date contact information for intentional communities that we can find, and our Communities Directory is the centerpiece of that work.

While we do all we can to make the Directory as current and comprehensive as possible, it takes us more than two years to complete and every week we receive new leads for communities, plus numerous address and phone changes. Rather than trying to create an updated directory every few months, we regularly publish the late-breaking information here in Communities magazine. All of the information contained in this update was received after the 1995 Directory was released.

The information here is condensed and abbreviated, and will be more thoroughly presented in future Directories. For example, the book format includes a cross-reference chart of many features including population statistics, number of acres, leadership and decision-making structures, diet, schooling, spiritual practices, and so on, plus maps showing approximate location. If you would like to examine a copy of the current edition, please contact us at the telephone number listed below and we can direct you to nearby libraries that have copies.

You can help us, too! Please let us know if you discover any leads about new communities, or find that we have incorrect information in current listings. Please send to Directory Update, 138 Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa VA 23093. Or contact dir-updates@ic.org 540-894-5798. Thank you!

Aliantha
Vienna VA
703-242-6072 ext 7
info@aliantha.org

Aliantha is a warm and loving community in Northern Virginia dedicated to personal growth, healthy relationships, and supportive community. We are non-residential - we live separately in the DC metropolitan area, and meet frequently in each other's homes. We started in November 1999 under the name of CuddleBuddies, where our emphasis was on creating an environment conducive to safe touch.

Today, our vision has expanded to emphasize emotional intimacy in our relationships as our primary concern. We emphasize personal responsibility for our own feelings, honest communication, gentle resolution of conflicts, and clear expectations in relationships.

We have several activities each month, ranging from casual get-togethers and potlucks to classes and experiential workshops. Our membership is currently at 40. We welcome visitors to come to our public events. 11/2001

Anahata Community Village

Attn: Ayrán
PO Box 258
Albany Village
Auckland 10 Aoteraoa
New Zealand
+64 9 415 9468
anahata@i4free.co.nz
3/2000

Beacon Hill Friends House

Attn: Matthew Martin
6 Chestnut St
Boston, MA 02108-3624
617-227-9118
directors@bhfh.org
www.bhfh.org
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Collective A Go-Go

Elizabeth Tub
266 Olean St.
Worcester, MA
01602
508-752-1952
elizacorps@yahoo.com
7/2001

Dundee Hill Commons

Attn: Dan Harbin
1510 Hastings Ave.
Port Townsend WA 98368
360-379-5120
5/2001

The Eden Project

PO Box 571
Kenwood CA 95452

The Eden Project is a 2,240 acre planned EcoVillage Community in Northern California, to be able to grow all the food we would ever

need, and to build our own naturally passive solar homes in a circle all around the rim of Eden Valley in Mendocino County. To maximize peoples direct connection to the land, and to link that up with their commitment to this community, each of those people, couples or family groups who live in Eden will each have access to 5 acres of Eden to live on and use in a sustainable way. 3 acres of that will be for you to build a naturally passive solar home on within a one acre Living Circle. There you may do some gardening, plant some fruit and nut trees, keep some animals, build a workshop or a greenhouse or you may even run a small cottage industry out of it. The other 2 acres of the Homestead are to be left as wild and free as we find them to protect the natural integrity of the land in between and around the Homesites. The Farmsites are yet another 2 acres each, and one goes along with each Homestead. There you may be able to do some serious small farming either to produce a series of market crops or just to practice the natural art of Permaculture and to grow your own food and fibers on which may be used just for yourselves or for sale and trade within the community and beyond. For more information 4 issues of the Eden Journal is still available for only \$7.00 payable to: T McClure PO Box 571 Kenwood CA 95452 12/2001

Forming Community (Australia)

Attn: Rowan Eisner
Highgate Hill
Brisbane
Australia
WICCH@hotmail.com
7/2000

The Gathering

Attn: Isis Ringrose
PO Box 179
Schuyler, VA
22969-0179
804-831-2354
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Intentional Community Houston

PO Box 231821
Houston, TX 77223
713-767-2735
rodnejohnson2000@hotmail.com
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Rocky Hill Cohousing

Sharon & Glenn Koshar
Northampton MA
413-584-9987
www.dreamwater.org/rockyhill

Rocky Hill Cohousing in Northampton, Massachusetts is seeking members. We are 8 households with roughly 20 more households needed. We begin building our homes and futures in 2002 on 27 wooded acres five minutes from town.

Our mission is to create a neighborhood that recaptures the essence of community:

1. To foster a human environment that encourages interconnectedness, safety, growth, fun, and meaningful lives;
2. To create a physical setting that serves the needs and well-being of individuals and the community; and,
3. To live in a harmonious relationship with the Earth.

Our community will be a nurturing place for everyone, especially our children. We uphold the values of kindness, compassion and respect; and use these values to help us experience the sacredness in each other and everyday life. We resolve conflicts through honest, direct and respectful communication. We share fully in community activities, balance personal needs with group needs, and use a consensus decision-making process to reach decisions.

We welcome households of every shape and size, and encourage diversity of interests, lifestyles, race, ethnicity, spirituality, ages, and backgrounds.

We want to hold down costs, while designing beautiful buildings in harmony with nature. We wish to design a community that balances public and private spaces, that provides handicapped accessible public areas, with an option for handicapped accessible homes. Our buildings will be as healthy as possible, minimizing use of toxic materials.

We want to learn about and honor our biosphere, to build and live with low impact on the environment, and to maximize energy efficiency.

Our neighborhood will be part of the greater Northampton area, a community known for its enlightened ideas, lively arts, and freedom of expression. 11/2001

Stewardship Incorporated

PO Box 1159

Mountain View HI 96771

(808) 965-8821

(808) 938-4844 cell

mail@stewardshipincorporated.org

Stewardship Incorporated is a nonprofit community initiative dedicated to implementing sustainable systems on private and public lands. Our current focus is a cooperative effort between the Puna Community and The University of Hawaii. We are working to transform an unutilized agricultural experiment farm into a research & demonstration center for enlightened living practices. Malama Ki Experiment Farm is located on 189 acres in the Malama Ki Rainforest Reserve on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Stewardship Inc. is a very young effort. We are currently recruiting a permanent board of directors who will also be the resident, working staff. These positions will require people of extraordinary integrity, initiative, courage, and freedom from other obligations (minimum 1-year commitment). Anyone joining us, at this stage, is committing to intense personal involvement with a small core group of initiators. This intensity of involvement is necessary because the success or failure of this project is 100% dependent on the quality of relationship in this core group.

Functional stewardship is neither concept nor

lifestyle. Effective stewardship is conscious awareness of present, physical reality and is manifest through intelligent, strenuous physical labor. Most of the people who come to us are so caught up in idealistic, intellectual concepts, spiritual quests and utopian fantasies that they are unable to function effectively in any context, let alone the highly challenging circumstances of this project. Be aware: rainforest living is dirty, wet and isolated. This is an invitation to a rare opportunity to wake up to our natural relationship with each other and Planet Earth. Be prepared to face many challenges that might not support your current perception of reality. Aloha. 1/2002

Waiua Ashram Kauai

Attn: Sri Mario`ja

PO Box 1892

Kapaa, HI 96746

mario_ja@hotmail.com

An established monastic, devotional sanctuary located on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. 8/2001

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Earthaven Ecovillage

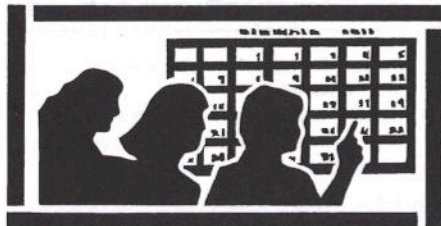


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www.earthaven.org

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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. 78.

2002 Ecovillage Apprenticeships

Ecovillage Training Center, The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. Ten-week Apprenticeship Program in organic food production, natural building, wastewater, ecological design. \$2500 incl. board, lodging, course participation, training. www.thefarm.org/etc/courses. ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4474; ETC, PO Box 90 Summertown, TN 38483-0090.

Mar-Oct • Organic Gardening, Permaculture, and Community—An Experience in Sustainable Living

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, Oregon. One-time \$100 registration fee plus \$400/month incl. program participation, organic vegetarian meals, lodging (Mar-May, Oct) or campsite (Jun-Sep). Three-month minimum suggested but not required. Limited spaces: qualified applicants accepted on first-come, first-served basis. 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; garden@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

May 3-5 • Introduction to Natural Building: Materials, Methods, Systems

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Explore cob, strawbale, slip-straw, earthen plasters, and timber-framing, and their use in Earthaven's innovative natural buildings. Paul Caron, Mollie Currie, Chuck Marsh. \$195. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

May 4-11 & May 12-18 • Homeschooler's Camp

Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, Virginia. Non-profit, secular camp. Workshops, recreational activities for homeschooled children 8-12. Attend one or both weeks. Each week children will explore two of the following morning classes (selected by pre-attendance participants' survey): woodworking, theater/acting, outdoor recreation skills, wild animals of Virginia, crafts, painting/drawing, photography, creative writing, Spanish, model building/painting, soccer. Plus afternoon games, sports, music, crafts, and evening campfire sing-alongs, games, night hikes, dances. Children may attend alone or with one parent who assists at camp. Max. 15 children per week. Opportunity to experience rural living skills (milking, gardening, cooking, soybean/dairy products production). If enough interest, parents' workshops on homeschooling, parenting. Cost incl. camping, meals: \$120, one week; \$200, two weeks. Child & parent who assists, one week, \$95; two weeks, \$140. brenda@twin Oaks.org; 540-894-5117; *Homeschooler's Camp, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093.*

May 9-12 • Fellowship for Intentional Community, Spring Meeting

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

May 15-19 • Sustainable Village Design

Ecovillage Training Center, The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. Ecovillage site selection, master planning and pattern design, consensus, conflict resolution, financial aspects, work issues, best practices. Live and work in an ecovillage for a week. Greg Ramsey, Albert Bates, and guest instructors. \$600 incl. meals, lodging. www.thefarm.org/etc/courses. ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4474; PO Box 90 Summertown, TN 38483-0090.

May 16-19 • Federation of Egalitarian Communities Spring Assembly

Acorn Community, Mineral, Virginia. *Tree Bressen*, tree@ic.org; 541-484-1156.

May 17-20 • Coming to Consensus

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Learn to communicate and make decisions in ways that empower everyone as equal participants in meetings. Consensus is a cutting-edge decision-making process for businesses, civic groups, service organizations, activist groups, and other project or task teams. Patricia Allison, Arjuna DaSilva. \$175. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

May 17-20 • Naka-Ima

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, Oregon. (See Apr 12-15.)

May 19-25 • Midwifery Assistant Workshop, Level I

The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. (See Apr 1-7.)

May 23-26 • Living In Actualization: Ascension Science and Planetary Divine Administration

Aquarian Concepts Community Sedona, Arizona. Speakers include community founders Gabriel of Sedona and Niánn Emerson Chase, and others. \$700 (\$500, pre-registration.) P.O. Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; www.aquarianconcepts.org.

May 24-Jun 1 • Permaculture Fundamentals

First half of complete design certification course. Learn low-impact methodologies that are creating a holistic movement. Albert Bates, Patricia Allison, Sizwe Herring. \$600 incl. materials, food & lodging. (Second half of course to be offered later in the year.) www.thefarm.org/etc/courses. ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4474; PO Box 90 Summertown, TN 38483-0090.

May 25 • The Magnification of Abundance—Plant Propagation Made Easier

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Plants just wanna grow! Save money and learn successful ways to encourage plants to multiply. Keith Johnson. \$60. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

May 26-Jun 9 • Permaculture Design Certification Course

Hummingbird Ranch, northern New Mexico. Organic gardening, alternative building, village design, community economics, watershed restoration. Scott Pittman, instructor. www.cocre-ativeculture.com/pc.htm. 800-336-3943.

Jun 9-16 • Fourth Annual "Build Here Now" Natural Building and Permaculture Convergence

Lama Foundation, Taos County, New Mexico. *The Last Straw Journal*, the Lama Foundation, and the Permaculture Institute, co-sponsors. Workshops in natural building, permaculture, appropriate technology, community building. Field trips to Taos Pueblo and local natural

building sites. Slide presentations, Dances of Universal Peace, music. Lodging at Lama (bring bedding or sleeping bag); RV and tent sites; hotels in Taos and Questa. Limited to 100 participants. Cost, incl. meals & on-site lodging: \$575 (\$475 before May 1). Per-day cost, \$100. 505-586-1269; *Build Here Now, Lama Foundation, P.O. Box 240, San Cristobal, NM 87564*; www.lamafoundation.org; www.strawhomes.com/build/here/now.

Jun 14-17 • Naka-Ima

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, Oregon. (See Apr 12-15.)

Jun 16-22 • Midwifery Assistant Workshop, Level II

The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. (See Apr 21-27.)

Jun 21-23 • Feng Shui: A Permaculture Journey

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. An informative, practical experience in creating, sacred, healthy, inspiring living spaces utilizing the combined values of Feng Shui, *bau-biologie*, sacred geometry, geomancy, and permaculture. Panther Wilde. \$225. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jun 21-23 • Lost Valley Summer Solstice Celebration

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, Oregon. Weekend of celebration, ritual, art, play, and gardening in the rich context of intentional community. \$90-\$60 s/s, incl. food, camping (indoor lodging, additional \$10/night). Register in advance. 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431; 541-937-3351; abigail@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Jul 3-Aug 17 • Community-Building Residency and Permaculture Design

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Trainings and skill development in every aspect of ecovillage design including organic gardening, site design, natural building, consensus process, and more. Including Permaculture Fundamentals and Design Practicum. Earthaven's Permaculture Instructors Team. \$2000. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jul 5-13 • Permaculture Fundamentals Course

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Permaculture is about designing and living in a regenerative human culture. Practice, principles, strategies, and techniques for reinhabiting your world. Patricia Allison, Andrew Goodheart, Peter Bane. \$600. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jul 15-21 • Natural Buildings Immersion

Ecovillage Training Center, The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. Mud and stone, turf and timber. Build with straw, cob, wood, and other natural materials. Earth plasters, passive solar, founda-

tions, roofing. Architect and builders Howard Switzer, Katey Culver, Albert Bates. \$800.

www.thefarm.org/etc/courses. ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4474; PO Box 90 Summertown, TN 38483-0090.

Jul 19-Aug 4 • ZEGG Summer Camp

ZEGG Community (Center for Experimental Culture Design), Belzig, Germany. Political-spiritual summer camp. Networking, think-tanks, workshops: community as an expression of peace, the politics of sexuality, the future of children, ecology, the magic of the sacred, humane economy, creative political action. Tent lodging. Children's camp, program for young people, choir, forum. Participation on weekly basis.

www.zegg.de; empfang@zegg.de; +49 -(0)33841-595 10; (fax) +49 -(0)33841-595 12; ZEGG, Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 89, D-14806 Belzig, Germany.

Jul 19-24 • Building with Cob: An Introduction

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Learn the art of constructing buildings with sand, clay, and straw. Course includes class discussion, lots of hands-on experience, tour of natural buildings at Earthaven, and more. Mollie Curry. \$350. 838-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jul 19-Aug 8 • Permaculture Design Certificate Course

Sirius Community and Living Routes, Shutesbury, Massachusetts. Through experiential and academic learning participants will explore inter-relationships between personal, social, and ecological sustainability. Three college credits through UMass, Amherst. John Gerber, Dawn Shiner, & Sirius faculty, instructors.

www.siriuscommunity.org; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; 413-259-1251; Sirius Community, 72 Baker Road Shutesbury, MA 01072.

Jul 25-28 • Living In Actualization: Ascension Science and Planetary Divine Administration

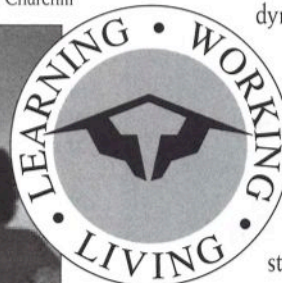
Aquarian Concepts Community Sedona, Arizona. (See May 23-26.)

Jul 26-28 • Farm Experience Weekend

The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. (See April 12-14)

"We make a living by what we get,
we make a life by what we give."

Winston Churchill



Camphill Soltane is a lively Anthroposophically-based community for and with young adults with developmental disabilities. Through a dynamic combination of community life, education and training, work with the arts and on the land, a job placement program, and active strategic alliances with organizations in the surrounding area, Camphill Soltane accompanies these young adults through their age-appropriate quest for meaning and purpose in their lives.

Camphill Soltane offers numerous benefits to coworkers, including AmeriCorps education awards! We are interested in talking with families and individuals (including college interns) over the age of 19 about opportunities for becoming involved with us.

For more information or to arrange a personal visit:

Camphill Soltane

224 Nantmeal Road, Glenmoore, PA 19343

610.469.0933 • Fax: 610.469.1054

Email: info@camphillsoltane.org

www.camphillsoltane.org



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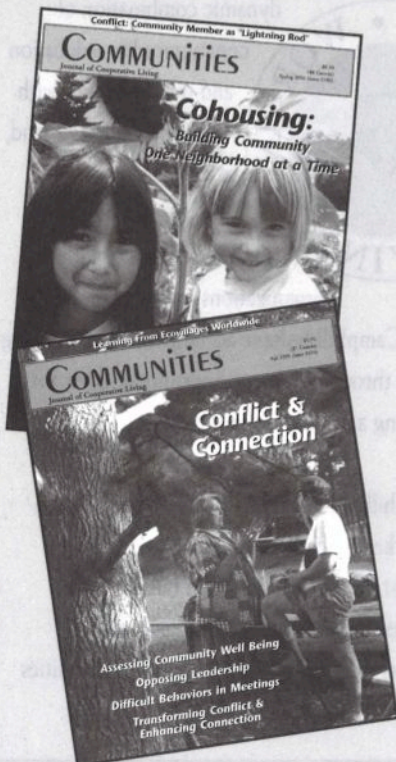
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Please return to:

Communities, 138 Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa, VA 23093

or email:
order@ic.org

Please include your 5-digit customer number from the mailing label. (The 5 numbers to the left of the letters "ADB" on the second line of your label.)



Reach



REACH HAS CHANGED WITH THIS ISSUE! We have combined our regular Classified column to create one column for all your Classified needs. In addition to ads intended to help match people looking for communities with communities looking for people, Reach now has ads for workshops, goods, services, books, products and personals of interest to people interested in Communities. All ads will run at the discounted Reach rate.

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

Note: **THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER 2002 ISSUE (OUT IN JULY) IS APRIL 20.**

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., Charlemont, 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.

Communities listed in our Directory are entitled to one free update to their listing. Updates submitted for that purpose will appear in the Directory Updates section of Communities magazine, not in Reach. New, forming or existing communities not listed in our Directory may also receive a one-time free listing in the Directory Updates section. We suggest advertising in Reach as well to increase and extend publicity for your group. Contact: dir-updates@ic.org or 540-894-5798 for more information on these free listings.

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 communarians, 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. Acorn is 72 acres of beautiful country located in the heart of Central Virginia. We are a young community that uses consensus and income sharing to create an egalitarian culture which values hard work as well as an easy-going atmosphere. Skills that can be learned at Acorn include hammock making, organic gardening and tinner where we create beautiful and functional artwork out of recycled tin. A main source of income is our exciting new business, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, which offers many varieties of herb, flower, vegetable and grain seeds. Recently certified organic, we specialize in open pollinated varieties, traditional favorites and heirlooms. The new business is taking off at lightening speed and Acorn members are finding much delight and fulfillment in its success. Acorn, 1259-CM12 Indian Creek Rd., Mineral, VA 23117; 540-894-0595; acorn@ic.org

AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona. Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 100 adults and children full-time. International members. 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. Organic gardens. Starseed Schools of Melchizedek. Global Change Music with Gabriel of Sedona and The Bright and Morning Star Band with the vocal CDs Wake Up America and CosmoPop 2000. Future Studios with CosmoArt, CosmoTheater and audio and video productions. Planetary Family Services, light construction, stone masonry, landscaping, cleaning and maintenance,

teepees and yurts, computer services, elder home care. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; <http://www.aquarianconcepts.org/>; www.globalchangemusic.org; <http://www.globalchangemusic.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

Culture's Edge Courses in Sustainable Living

Mar 23-24	Pruning and Grafting
Apr 27-28	Qi Gong
Apr 28	Medicinal Plants
May 3-5	Natural Building
May 17-20	Consensus Process
May 25	Plant Propagation
Jun 21-23	Feng Shui
Jul 3-Aug 17	Permaculture Internship
Jul 5-13	Permaculture Fundamentals
Jul 19-25	Cob Building
Aug 9-17	Permaculture Design
Aug 29-Sep 2	Permaculture for Women
Sep 20 -22	Natural Building
Sep 28-29	Earth Plasters
Oct 20-25	Permaculture Teachers Training
Oct 26-27	How to Start an Ecovillage
Nov 2-3	Mushroom Propagation

Earthaven Ecovillage

1025 Camp Elliott Road
Black Mountain NC 28711

(828) 669-3937

culturesedge@earthaven.org

www.earthaven.org

meet each person's needs as possible. For information: 15136 Celtic Drive, 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; C4TF@cs.com; www.childrenforthefuture.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-CM Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

EARTHAVEN ECOVILLAGE. Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina.

Developing permaculture-based, off-grid community on 325 forested acres 45 minutes from culture-rich Asheville. Streams, ponds, and gardens. Consensus decisions. Self-financed. Microhydro and solar power, composting toilets, constructed wetlands. Beautiful passive solar natural buildings—Council Hall, kitchen/dining room, trading post, cabins, multi-family dwellings, homes under construction. 40+ on-site members include permaculture professionals, artists, woodworkers, sustainable loggers, builders,

farmers, parents, engineers, and entrepreneurs in Forestry Co-op, Red Moon Herbs, Imani Farm, Permaculture Activist magazine, business consulting, Culture's Edge permaculture workshops. Multigenerational, children welcome. www.earthaven.org. Send for Information Pack (incl. video): info@earthaven.org; 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 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*

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ECOVILLAGE COHOUSING, Ithaca, New York. A great place to live! We are creating an environmental village that will be composed of several cohousing communities integrated with a working farm and education center. As an experiment in sustainable living, we already inspire visitors from around the world. EVI actively seeks new members for its expanding community. 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. Stop by the construction site of our second neighborhood group (SoNG). 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.*

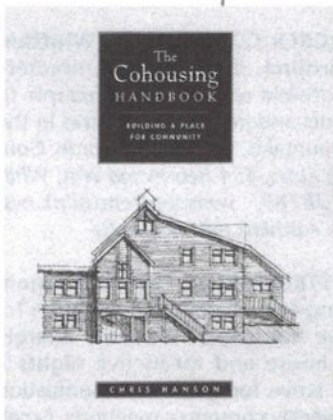
FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York. We seek co-workers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. Check out our web site at www.Fellowship-Community.org If you are interested in co-working or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: *Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; fellowship@attglobal.net*

MULVEY CREEK LAND COOP, Slocan, British Columbia. Small community with eight resident members on 230 acre wilderness property is open to new members. Self-sufficient, ecological focus. Members can purchase a four-acre site for \$30,000 Canadian. Also sites available with cabins and rentals. *POB 286, Slocan, B.C., VOG 2CO, Canada; 250-226-7850; sandy@netidea.com*

PINON ECOVILLAGE, Santa Fe, New Mexico. A small community (15-25 people) dedicated to environmental and social sustainability, that welcomes diversity. Our land is in a fertile mountain valley 20 minutes north of town with mature fruit trees and majestic cottonwoods. We grow some of our own food in organic gardens, and are renovating our adobe houses using green building methods. Pinon Ecovillage offers four membership options: Aspenwood

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Cohousing
Neighborhood



(shared labor, income and housing); Ponderosa (rent individual houses); Intern (work exchange for room, board and learning); and Juniper (non-resident supporter). We welcome visitors! POB 911, Santa Fe, NM 87504; 505-690-4828; pinon@ic.org; www.swicc.org/pinon/home.html

THREE SPRINGS COMMUNITY, North Fork, California. Our 160 acres, including annual creek, pond, rolling hills and CSA garden, is held in 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 consensus 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. 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/~lachristie

WALNUT STREET COOP, Eugene, Oregon. Seeking 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; walnut@ic.org

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HEARTWOOD COHOUSING, Durango, Colorado. For sale two passive solar straw bale town homes, 1,600 sf on two floors, open layout, three bedrooms, natural clay plasters. \$248,000, which includes lot, common house, 250 acres with 70 acres of irrigated pasture, workshop, greenhouse and more. Werner Heiber, 970-884-9045, whsb@frontier.net

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NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire. Intentional Cohousing Community, nature sanctuary, permaculture, activism. Loving more relationships. Real investments. NGC, POB 31, Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; nhnamaste@yahoo.com

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SEVEN GENERATIONS LAND COOPERATIVE, Minnesota/Western Wisconsin. Core group evolving into dual focus cooperative program. We want BOTH an urban center (well-located house) for classes, retail and living quarters, AND a rural center (western Wisconsin?) for CSA (Community Sponsored Agriculture) project, goats and chickens, and our ecovillage. Our business plan calls for these two centers to work together synergistically to enhance the financial, emotional and spiritual well-being of the whole community. We welcome a diversity of ages, ethnicities, gender orientations, spiritual paths and species. Full and associate memberships available. For more information contact: Trisha McKenney 952-443-3340; ancienteyes@att.net

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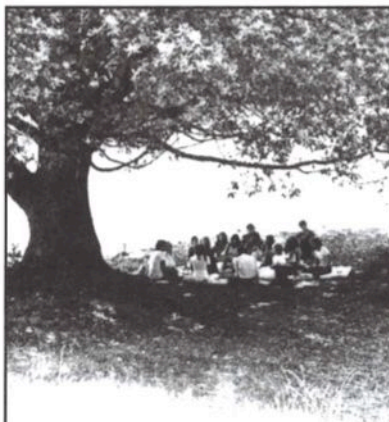
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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

of performance for same-age counterparts in modern society. ... The essence of [their approach is] such basic principles as emphasizing positive rewards, listening, soliciting opinions and suggestions, conferring important responsibilities, and respecting decisions of young people when conscientiously made in the performance of their duties.

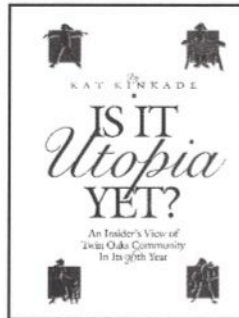
—Gary Shepherd and
Lawrence Lilliston

The adults in this community interact with the older children as full peers, and thus, with rare exceptions, do not override their decisions about how to manage the various task areas. It is also common for adults and teens to engage in candid discussions on topics related to individuality, socialization, and cooperation. Being both involved and respected, the youth feel empowered to manage their own lives, and apparently feel little need for the traditional teenage rebellion against adult authority, nor the need to leave home in order to experience the world. Although the community does occasionally lose members to dissatisfaction or the call of new frontiers, their overall retention rate has been remarkable.

I'm confident that a similar approach would work equally well in any community environment, regardless of the group's primary focus. However, if we're serious about leaving something substantial for the "Seventh Generation," then now is the time to get the second and third generations involved in the work of visioning, developing, and sustaining the culture.

Excerpted from Sex, Slander, and Salvation: Investigating The Family/Children of God, James R. Lewis & J. Gordon Melton, editors. (Stanford Center for Academic Publication, 1994.)

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 talks about the diversity and vitality of the communities movement. Presently, he is producing Visions of Utopia, a full-length video documentary on intentional communities.



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

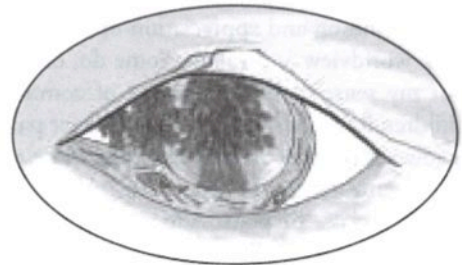
Is it Utopia Yet? is a lively, first-hand account of the unique struggles and triumphs of the first 25 years of Twin Oaks Community, one of America's most prominent and successful communes. This thoughtful and entertaining 320 page book, from the author of *A Walden Two Experiment*, is illustrated with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

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Beyond Book Learning

The core ideals of most intentional communities emphasize that children need a safe and sane environment to grow in, and that a good education is essential for raising an effective, caring, cooperative future citizen. Unfortunately, the reality often falls short of the dream: many well-intentioned parents and communities focus too much on the “future citizen” aspect while neglecting important opportunities to mentor their kids in everyday life. Fortunately it’s benign neglect—most community children end up with good social skills, reading-‘riting-‘rithmetic savvy, and the security of knowing they’re loved by the adults that brought them up. Often the adults get caught up in the fervor of their social or political ideals, and overlook openings to interact with and integrate the upcoming generation. In the bigger picture of planetary cultural evolution, essential skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, and community organizing are not getting enough attention.

I’ve met very few community-raised kids who’ve opted to live their adult lives in an intentional community, or who have a deep understanding and appreciation of their parents’ worldview and values. Some do, of course, but my sense of the percentage of community children living a lifestyle similar to their parents’ is lower than that of kids raised in more mainstream lifestyles—be they rich, middle class, working class, or poor. Allowing that the parents’ inspiration to live intentionally in community comes from a sincere desire to make the world a better place, then passing the mantle to the next generation becomes critically important. Yet that’s not happening to any notable degree.

Why not? Beyond the fact that we adults are not being effective in reaching out to our children, probably the biggest reason is the pervasive cultural programming that engulfs our lives. The lure of pursuing “success” is hard to resist, and mass media has a large role in normalizing that attitude. TV, movie, and magazine features glamorize only a very narrow spectrum of lifestyle choices, and the heroes for today’s youth are primarily celebrities from sports, music, or the movies—every one of them on the road to fame, fortune, and extravagant consumerism. Very few of these youthful icons have much to say about cooperative economics, sim-

ple living, or volunteering one’s time for social or political activism. As a result, I’ve seen scores of kids from social activist homes aspiring to land jobs on Wall Street or settle into some other lucrative mainstream career, focusing only on their own interests and needs, with very little awareness of the plight of the oppressed, nor a commitment to work for change on the global level.

This phenomenon is a trend—but not a lost cause—and I suggest two steps that parents and communities might take to inspire a brood of more effective, involved citizens.

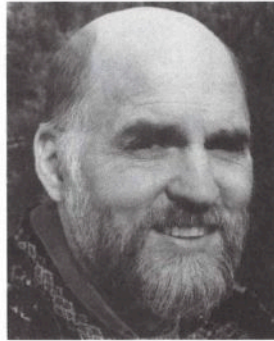
First, learn to talk candidly with your children about such topics as gender issues, love and romance, communication and problem-solving skills, the joys and the burdens of responsibility, the insidious reality of advertising and glamour, the problems with big arrogant egos and small fragile egos ... the array of critically important topics probably no adult discussed with you when you were growing up.

Second, go out of your way to get the children involved in every level of daily life, giving them both responsibility and authority. I recently read an account of the network of communities called The Family (formerly the Children of God), which describes how that controversial group, with 6,000-7,000 children and 3,000-4,000 adults, has applied those two steps with amazing results. The community has been tremendously successful in integrating their children, giving them full responsibility for organizing and managing most of the support roles necessary in the running of the homes, including maintenance and repairs, house cleaning, run-

ning the kitchen, soliciting donations of food and clothing, overseeing preschool and elementary education, managing the finances, and even organizing and leading the devotionals.

One is immediately struck by the degree of disciplined responsibility assumed by teens of all ages within Family homes. The general impression conveyed is not that of fearful subservience, but rather of genuine acceptance (and usually enthusiasm) while carrying out a variety of tasks that tend to be outside the realm

(continued on p. 79)



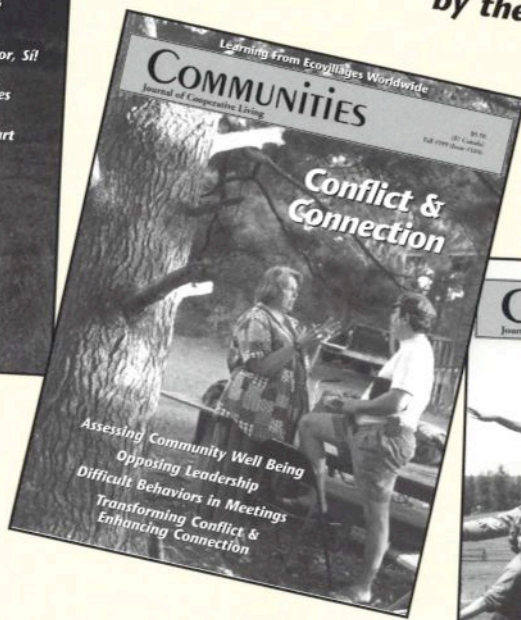
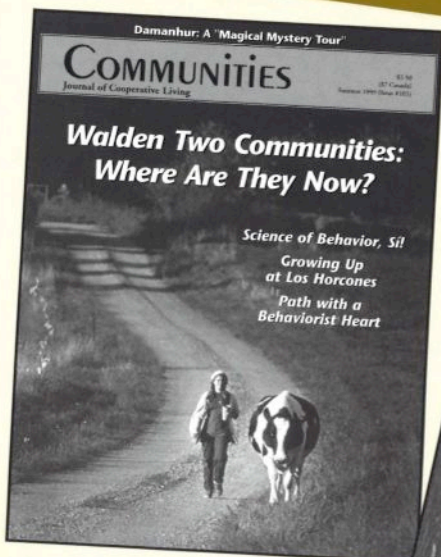
BY GEOPH KOZENY

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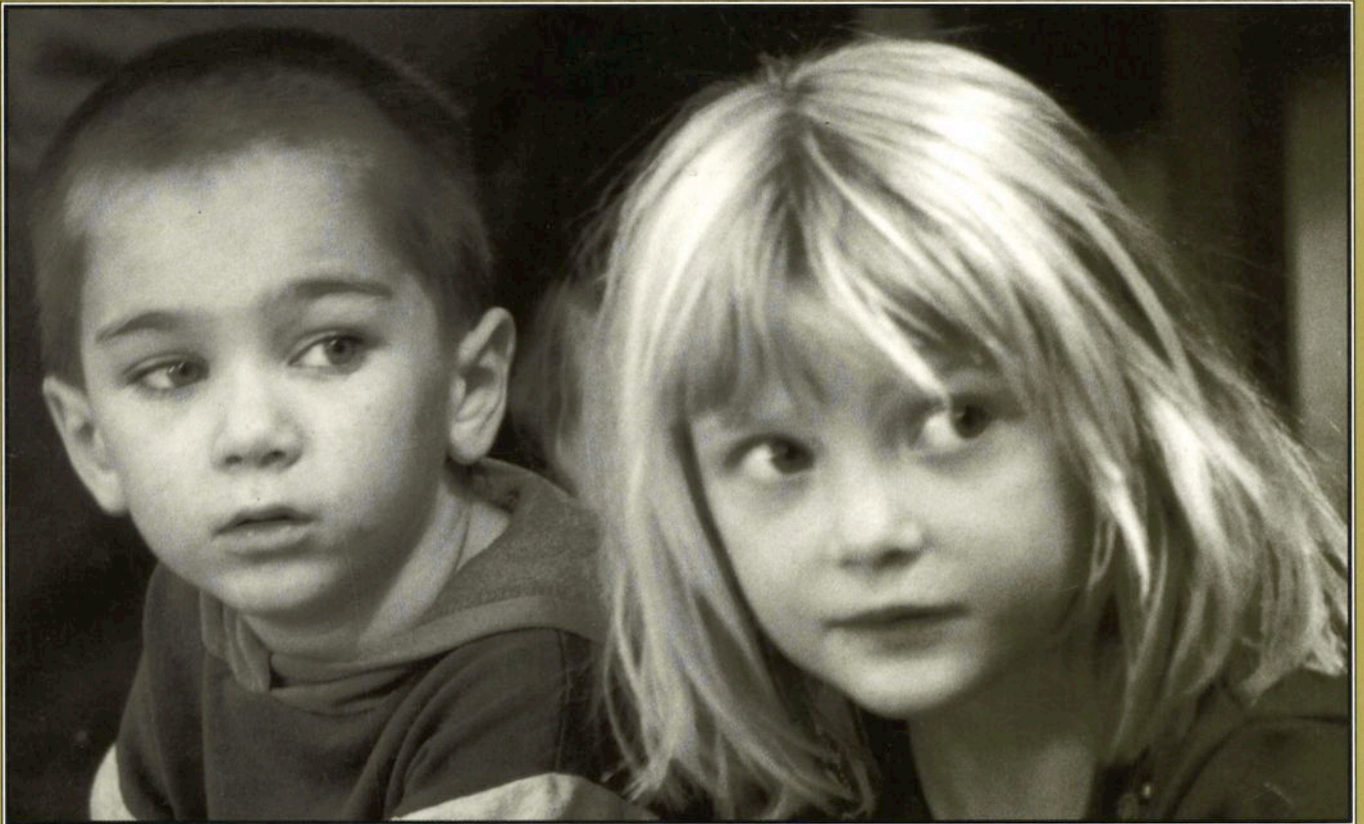
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