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COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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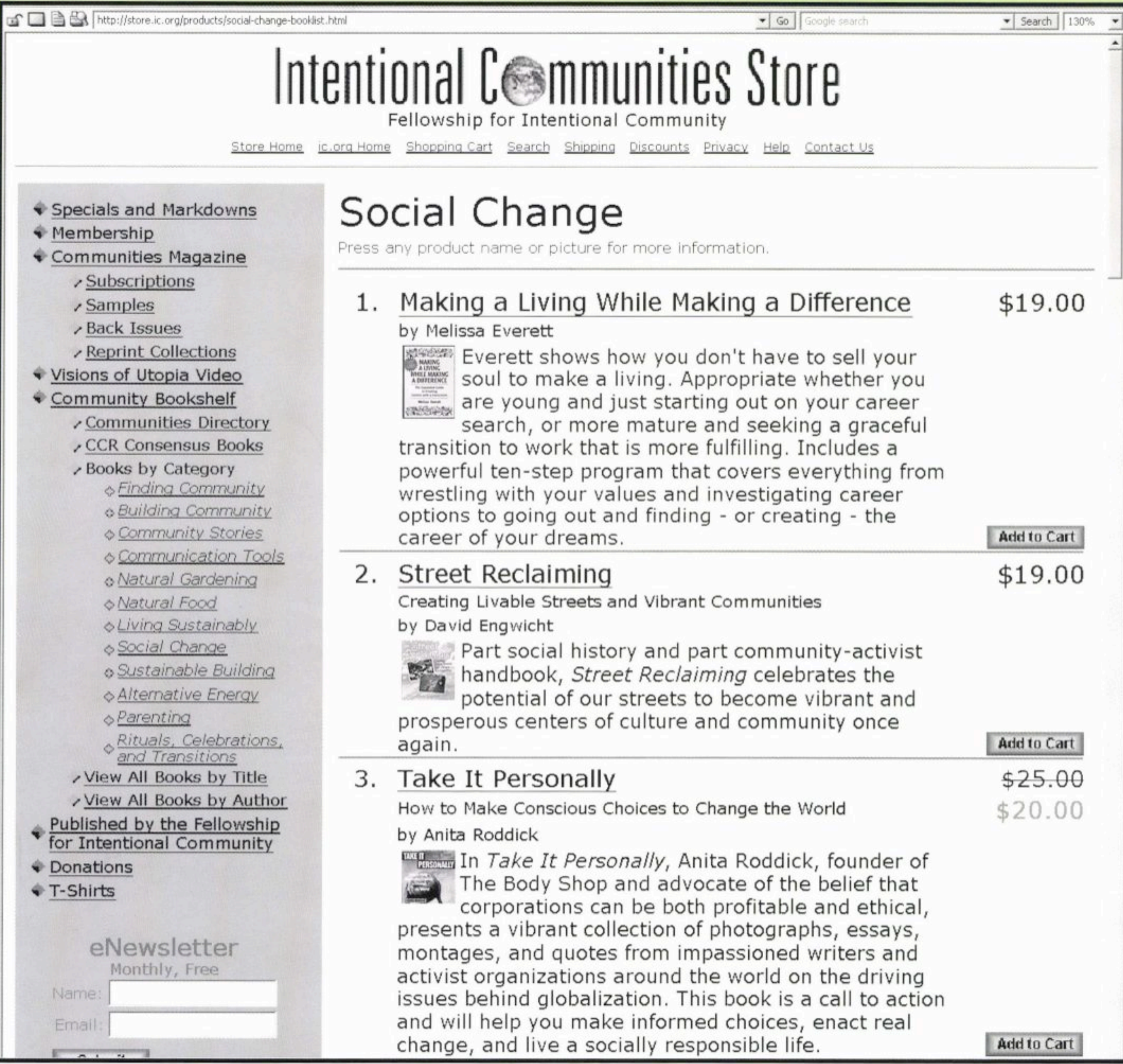

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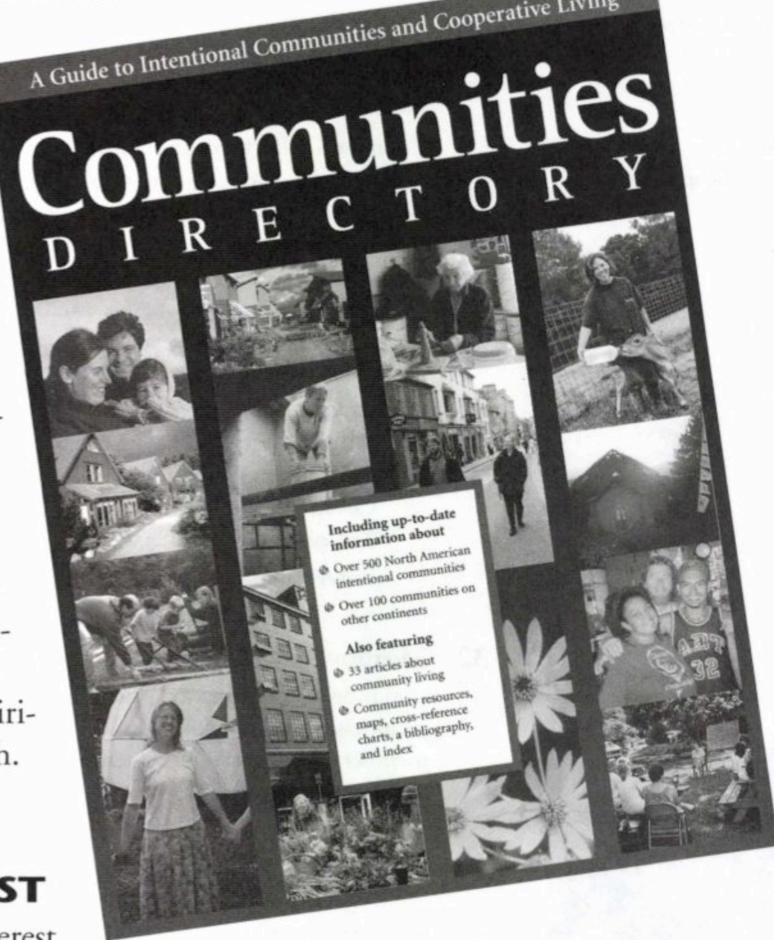

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Journal of Cooperative Living

Front Cover
A workshop at Goodenough Community in Washington State
Photo: Rebecca LiaBraaten

Back Cover
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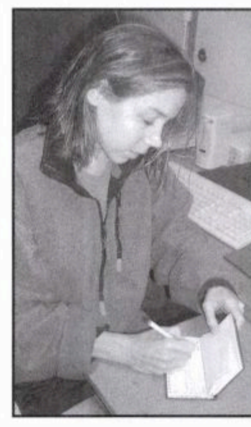

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Can We Afford to Live in Community?
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COMMUNITIES
Journal of Cooperative Living

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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!*

Dear *Communities*:

Luc Reid's letter commenting on my article, "Seriously Seeking Community, Part II" in the Fall '01 issue stated that land in Vermont can be had for under $100 an acre. Don't pack your bags yet folks! I talked to Luc and it turns out, unfortunately, that my assessment of real estate prices up there is closer than his. His community, Meadowdance, has bought a large piece of land in the North Country for $1,000 an acre, not $100!

We have kept up with land prices in Vermont and sneak a look at various pieces now and again—after all it is one of the most beauteous and politically correct places on Earth. The Green Mountain State has large parcels of land in remote places for $1,000/acre. But if you don't have the funds for 200 acres and you're talking 50 acres or less, then you're looking at closer to $2,000 or more. And they've just established strict state septic regulations, which can push the costs up considerably since much of the land in mountainous Vermont is clay and requires a mounded septic system. No outhouses allowed anymore—alas.

This brings up the larger issue I was attempting to deal with in my article of how forming communities can find land at a price that doesn't put them in deep debt and stifle simple living, or require a sugar daddy (mommy). My perception is that it's getting harder out there.

At the present time, John and I have found only one place in the Northeast where cheap living is really possible if you want to buy land and that's upstate New York. We recently made an exploratory foray out there to visit the Birdsfoot and Ness Communities near Canton, New York. Yes indeed, land out there is still $300-$400 an acre and no one will bother you if you have an outhouse. And there's a great connected community of simple livers. So it's the latest option on our possibility list.

I want to know and pass along information on this issue to others interested. If you live in or know of a place where under 100 acres of subdividable, non-swampy land on a road in a place without strict zoning or septic regulations can be had for under $500 an acre, please call me at 413-337-4037, or email me and give me details at patricia@ic.org. I will compile whatever info I receive and pass it along to whoever wants it. Many thanks and happy looking!

Patricia Greene
Heath, Massachusetts

While Communities *magazine intended Patricia's three-part series, "Seriously Seeking Community," to include a third article describing the process of joining a community, after visiting more communities, she and her partner John are again considered buying land and forming their own community.*
—Editor

Helpful in Defining Values

Dear *Communities*:

I have found your publication enormously informative and very helpful in my own search for community. I referred to it often as I was identifying and evaluating communities and defining my own values behind that search. So, thank you for providing a wonderful resource!

Joanne Capritti
EcoVillage of Loudoun County
Loudon County, Virginia

But What about Arthur Morgan School?

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your fine magazine. I thoroughly enjoyed the Spring '02 issue, "How Children Learn." I was sorry, though, that you failed to include an article about or even mention the Arthur Morgan School, a boarding school for grades 7-9 that functions as an intentional community within one of the oldest communities in the United States, Celo Community in Burnsville, North Carolina.

The emphasis of Arthur Morgan Scbool is academics, experiential education, and outdoor education, meaning their curriculum includes math and Integrated Studies (academic topics presented in a related way), hiking and nature activities, as well as cleaning and maintaining the property. The school is governed collectively by 13 staff members, who give great respect and consideration to the input of the 27 students. Arthur Morgan School is very relationally oriented, and personally I think teaching youth positive problem-solving and consensus process is more important than academics. This school does both.

My daughter, who grew up in two communities with very few children, was fortunate enough to attend this fine institution. Her attitude toward school has been transformed, and she's now well ahead of her grade level in both math and English.

Elke Lerman
dyeainu@yahoo.com

How Do We Reach Ithaca Health Fund?

Dear *Communities:*

Your article on the Ithaca Health Fund (Spring '02, #114) was very interesting, but do you have on email address where I can write for more about their organization?

Claudia Green

As noted in the article, you can learn more about the Ithaca Health Fund at www.IthacaHealth.org.

Email is paglo@pop.lightlink.com.

From the Cohousing-L List Serve . . .

I highly recommend *Communities* magazine, which I've been reading for a few years. I find that each and every issue has material which causes me to think more deeply on some issue. It's also a good resource, in practical terms, since it often discusses issues about conflict resolution, consensus, etc.—which are highly relevant to anyone living in community (or planning to live in one). Subscribing to the magazine will also support the great work done by FIC. (And no, I'm not working for them, I simply like the work they do.

Racheli Gai
Sonora Cohousing
Tucson, Arizona

Creating the Giant Wind Vortexes of "Ecovillage 2015"

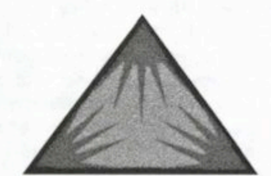
Dear *Communities*:

I'd like to know the dimensions of the giant "seashell" wind generator vortexes in the article "Ecovillage 2015" in the Summer '01 issue. I remember the vortexes were 40 feet tall, but don't remember the base diameter. I'd like to create one of those on a mini-scale, and instead of wasting lots of concrete trying to get the most efficient slope, I thought it would be easier to ask one of you for the dimensions.

Danny Wilson

Ooops, we apologize for not making it clear enough that Jeff Clearwater's "Ecovillage 2015" article was a science fiction story. The giant wind generator vortexes are a fictional guess at technology of the very near future, based on Jeff's plausible extrapolation of current technology. The base of each imagined vortex is about 22 feet in diameter, tapering up to about 3 feet at the top. Maybe, as many scientists have done since the days of Jules Verne, someone (perhaps yourself!) will physically develop a device that was first described in fiction.

—Editor



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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.***

Advertising Policy

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

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

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What is an "Intentional Community?"

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

Empowered by Editorial on Decision-Making

Dear *Communities*:

Your editorial, "Decision Making and Power," in the Decision Making in Community issue (Winter '00), really helped me get clear on issues of power in groups, and in our community specifically. We even held a fireside chat one evening to discuss the issues of power your editorial raised. It was especially significant for me because always I get much of my information intuitively—through "gut feelings—and before I'd always given over my power to those who had facts and logic. But in that discussion I felt empowered to speak from my intuition about the value of intution in the decision-making process, and now I do speak up in meetings when I feel that something isn't right, even if I don't have facts to back it up.

Thank you for including provocative, empowering articles like this in *Communities* magazine!

Fran Hart
Heartwood Cohousing
Bayfield, Colorado

Corrections

• On page 24 of our Summer '02 issue, "The Heart of Sustainability" (and in the cover photo of that issue), the natural builder we identify as Rob Bolman is in fact Mark Lamberth. Our apologies to Rob and Mark.

• **"More Sustainable Than Thou" Article—Our Mistake!**

We apologize to author Chris Roth and readers of his wonderful "More Sustainable Than Thou" article (Summer '02 issue, "The Heart of Sustainability), for the missing words at the bottom of each column on page 46. The bottom of the first column should read:

Our choices regarding food, shelter, transportation, energy use, and the other details of daily life become opportunities to express love and understanding, not to experience more fear, guilt, and blame.

The bottom of the second column and beginning of the third column should read:

Of course, even here, all of us still do have healing to do—and the occasional "sparring match" may still erupt between individuals—but in the supportive context of Maple Creek, wiser perspectives and help in re-establishing constructive communication usually seem close at hand, helping breaches to heal rapidly. I and others at Maple Creek seek to follow an approach to Earth-attuned living that is gentle, not severe; inviting, not intimidating; inclusive, not exclusive; "as sustainable as thou," not more so.

The bottom of the third column should read:

No food tastes better than what we harvest fresh from the garden—especially if we haven't ruined our ability to enjoy it by abusing our bodies through overwork.

—Editor

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Day the Electrons Died:

Reflections of a Laptop Dancer

Tucked up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, I was escaping the brutal Missouri heat last August for two days of Fellowship for Intentional Community meetings. While enjoying the cool envelope of a much-needed rainy day, I opened my laptop to start the second day only to discover that the screen was busted. It looked like someone had tried to close the lid on a marble—and pressed down instead of lifting up when they met resistance.

No one knew how it happened (it was fine when I put it to bed the night before), but the main mystery was how I was going to conduct my life as a 21st-century networker, sans computer. I was dead in the water. Oh, people would still talk to me. But I couldn't do anything.

I took it into a computer shop that day to see if I could find a suitable donor for a screen transplant. Tech support had it for 12 days, but couldn't locate a match. I returned home with a sick laptop in tow.

How did this happen? Not the accident, but my utter dependence on a laptop. Ten years ago, laptops were a novelty. Seven years ago I got a hand-me-down when a friend upgraded, and my life has never been the same. Today, if I let three days go by without checking email, I'm in trouble. If I let a week go by, the waves close over my head.

Still, a dozen days without a computer was great for my social life. Not being able to write reports, I didn't waste time regretting that I wasn't. I had dates with friends all over Virginia and Maryland, and the chance to reflect on how much of my life is spent cavorting with my laptop. While not exactly the Twelve Days of Christmas, it was an electron holiday, and a gift to get in so much visiting.

I had a terrific time at this year's edition of the Twin Oaks Communities

Coming in Future Issues

Ecovillages 2002, Spring '03. What are ecovillages, where are they located, and how are they faring, some 10 years after the concept was first introduced in Denmark? Do any true ecovillages exist at this point, or are they all "aspiring" ecovillages (and we'd need several generations of continuous existence to know for sure? What are the unique problems and trade-offs in trying to live up to the high sustainability ideals of the ecovillage concept? What can we learn from existing ecovillage models worldwide? Can we visit them and take home ideas for our own lives?

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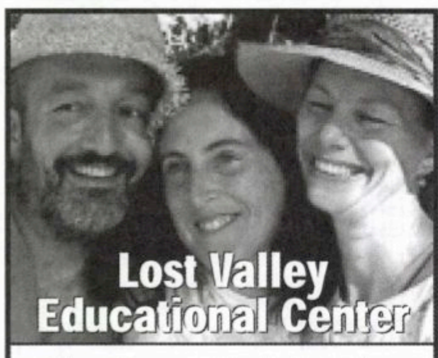

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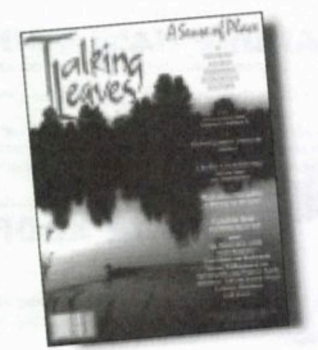

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Conference held over Labor Day Weekend (and right after my computer glitch). No small part of that was that I wasn't racing off to read email and compose reports. Instead, I hung around the conference site all day, gave a couple workshops, talked with friends and acquaintances, and schmoozed with people about community.

With a laugh, I realized that I had had a relaxing weekend. It wasn't that many years ago that I looked forward to community events as an adrenaline rush, to recharge my networking batteries. Now conferences represent a chance to kick back. Wow.

And I am reminded again that there is no substitute for face-to-face conversation. Much as we rely on computers to keep us in contact with people all around the country (and even the world), the FIC has discovered that people don't do well with assignments unless they have a buddy at home to share an interest in the work. Being able to see one another helps keep the momentum going.

It's also why FIC has twice yearly organizational meetings where the board and committee members can sit down together and reset their gyroscopes. The FIC uses electronic communication more than ever and there's no way we're going to put the electronic genie back in the bottle, yet we also know that community is best cultured when everyone is in the same room.

There is irony in writing this piece. Now home from my electron holiday, I've got my laptop networked with the office computers and I'm back in the swim, broken screen and all. Here I am at the keyboard pecking away after midnight, trying to dance the line between my dual identities as community member and community networker. My laptop helps me stay connected; my community helps me stay rooted. It's hard to imagine doing without either.

Laird Schaub

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2. Paid and/or Requested Circulation; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales (not mailed)	2711	2621
3. Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions	1550	1566
4. Total Paid or Requested Circulation (sum 2 + 3)	4261	4187
5. Total Free Distribution	0	0
6. Return from News Agents	0 (not applicable)	0 (not applicable)
7. Total Distribution (sum 4 + 5 + 6)	4261	4187
8. Copies Not Distributed	439	313
9. Total (Sum 7 + 8)	4700	4500
10. Percent Paid and/or Requested Çirculation (1 divided by 9 x 100)	100%	100%

COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE

In September, 2002, community activist *Eric Best* attended a conference at Ghost Ranch in northern New Mexico about the 30-year old, 200-member **Gaviotas** community in eastern Colombia, South America, with Gaviotas founder *Paolo Lugeri* as the presenter. "It was a fascinating experience with some very good suggestions as to what it takes to really create a very successful community," Eric reports. He notes that the Gaviotas community is financially independent, and (unlike many communities) its grown children tend to stay within the community. Gaviotas members, who farm organically and use wind and solar power, have planted millions of trees in a 360,00-acre area, thus regenerating an indigenous rainforest. The United Nations named Gaviotas as a model of sustainable development. To learn more about Eric's report on the conference: *www.MariposaGroup.org; select "more" on the opening page, then "What's New," then "Gaviotas."*

Members of **Prairie Sky Cohousing** in Calgary, Alberta report that their project is finally under construction. They expect to be finished by spring 2003. Prairie Sky, an 18-unit neighborhood with a mixture of townhouses and apartments in Calgary's inner city, is the first cohousing project in Alberta. It's also incorporated as a housing co-op (Prairie Sky Cohousing Cooperative Ltd.) as the first housing cooperative to be incorporated under Alberta's new Cooperatives Act. This legislation allows equity home ownership within the structure of a cooperative business. Prairie Sky Cooperative is also the first housing project in Alberta to partially finance itself by selling interest-bearing Mortgage Bonds to eligible investors. The rate of interest Prairie Sky will pay on these bonds is below that of a conventional mortgage, but high enough to offer an attractive rate for investors—which community members consider a win-win situation. A few units are still available. For more information: *www.prairiesky.ab.ca.*

Herrnhut: Australia's First Utopian Commune (Melbourne University Press, 2002) written by *Bill Metcalf*, *Communities* magazine's international correspondent, was runner-up for Australia's **National Community History**

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Members of We'Moon in southern Oregon.

Community Business Seeks Members/Workers

We'Moon Land, a small 52-acre lesbian community 35 miles southeast of Portland, Oregon, is seeking new members to work for their community cottage industry, **Mother Tongue Ink**, according to We'Moon founder *Musawa*. Mother Tongue Ink produces ***We'Moon: Gaia Rhythms for Womyn***, an annual lunar, astrological datebook featuring a collection of international womyn's art and writing, as well as color notecards and a wall calendar, and provides livelihood for most of the community's six to nine resident members. According to Musawa, the purpose of the business includes being "a sustainable cottage industry that empowers womyn living in community on the land to be self-supporting, and whose publications help empower ecofeminist culture, spirituality, and life."

Since a fire destroyed the community's main house and office space a year and a half ago, members are in the process of building a new community center and office space and creating **We'Mooniversity** and **We'Moon Land Trust** as tax-exempt nonprofits.

Currently two positions are open. The Business Manager, working 24-32 hours a week, is responsible for all aspects of creating, producing, promoting, and distributing the *We'Moon* datebook and other products. Requirements include experience and skill in running a business and "a commitment to womyn's community, Earth-based spirituality, the creative arts, and feminist publishing." Starting pay is $12-15/hour, with full benefits after three months.

The Office Manager/Administrative Assistant, working 16-32 hours a week depending on skills and seasonal shifts in work load, assists the Business Manager in administrative, organizational, and production work as needed, and is in charge of the day-to-day running of the office. Starting pay is $10-12/hour, with benefits after a year. Macintosh computer skills are required for both positions.

"We hope to hire womyn who are interested and committed to living in intentional womyn's community and who can handle somewhat rustic living conditions," says Musawa. "We use consensus as our decision-making process, and are committed to sharing responsibility and power in a healthy and sustainable way." Members work four days at week with Mother Tongue Ink and one "community day" of other community work projects.

For further information, call toll free *877-693-6666*, email *matrix@wemoon.ws*, or send cover letter and resume to *Mother Tongue Ink, PO Box 1395, Estacada, OR 97023.*

Award. "This history has all the elements for a fascinating film or mini-series," said judges for the prestigious Award, "as it's the story of curious charismatic individuals with magnetic power as religious leaders, but with an undercurrent of illicit behaviour."

The annual **Twin Oaks Communities Conference** was held in September over Labor Day weekend at **Twin Oaks Community** in Virginia. Two hundred participants attended, about half community seekers and half community members representing their home communities. The latter included **Great Oaks Cohousing** and **October Sky** in Michigan; **Camphill Community at Beaver Run** in Pennsylvania; **East Wind, Sandhill Farm** and **Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage** in Missouri; **The Farm** and **Dunmire Hollow** in Tennessee; **Abundant Dawn, Shannon Farm, Acorn,** and **Yogaville** in Virginia; **Wygelia** in Maryland; **Earthaven Ecovillage** and **Eno Commons Cohousing** in North Carolina; and **Miccosukee Land Co-op** in Florida, to name a few. The event was cosponsored by the **Federation of Egalitarian Communities** (FEC), with Twin Oaks conference organizers **Valerie Renwick Porter, Sky Blue,** and **Paxus Calta**, and the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). Current and former FIC board and staff members who attended included **Harvey Baker, Jillian Downey, Laird Schaub, Elph Morgan, Dan Questenberry, Jenny Upton, Velma Kahn, Diana Christian,** and Twin Oaker **McCune Porter.**

Alchemy Farm Cohousing in Hatchville, Massachusetts was formed with a strong interest in renewable energy and related environmental issues, says member *Karen Schwalbe.* "Since we are a lot-development model, individual owners have implemented their own ideas and interests differently on each home. Some members, for example, have passive solar design, super-insulation, green building materials and technologies, photovoltaic solar systems, solar hot water, composting toilets, and rainwater catchment. Alchemy Farm participated in a local **Green Buildings Open House** in October.

A group of families at **Heartwood Cohousing** in Bayfield, Colorado are creating the **Heartwood Homeschool Cooperative.** They're planning a Waldorf School-inspired curriculum according to member *Fran Hart,* with support from the parent outreach groups of the Waldorf Education Association of Southwest Colorado. Parents and non-parent community members, as well as interested people outside the community, will offer basic academic subjects, plus Spanish lessons, animal husbandry, organic gardening, theater, and more. "Many of us at Heartwood are passionate about our children's education," says Fran, "and we see our homeschool cooperative as a way to align the educational life of our children with our values." For more information: *hartmagic@frontier.net.*

Heard it through the grapevine ...

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

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Magic and Memes at Twin Oaks' Communities Conference

The Twin Oaks Communities Conference is an annual Labor Day weekend event co-sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) and the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC), and relying on the help and cooperation of the participants. For example, everyone is expected to bring a casserole dish for 10 to share and to do at least one two-hour work shift, and if they bring a child, to do a childcare shift as well.

But the 150 people who attended this year's conference offered more than just casseroles and work shifts. Over the weekend, participants offered on-the-fly workshops on topics as far-ranging as juggling, small steam-powered engines, and wheat-weaving. They led sweat lodges and morning stretches. They packed Twin Oaks' main dining room Saturday night to offer and bid on items for the FIC's benefit Auction and got up on stage for the talent ahow.

Each year at the "Meet the Communities" session of the conference, participants have the opportunity to share about their home communities. This year in the new "World Cafe" session they also promoted their favorite organizations and projects, which ranged from the Intentional Community Resource Center, to the Ithaca Health Plan, and Food Not Bombs. Sunday morning's Open Space sessions encouraged participants to collectively promote, design, and present impromptu gatherings on a wide range of topics they might be personally interested in, with offerings including Round Singing, Sacred Sexuality, Co-Empowerment, and many others.

Monday's program, "Utopian Architects," a group visioning, planning, and networking process, asked participants to envision a world in the year 2102, when the communities movement has been wildly successful. "What is your place in that vision?" participants were asked. "What are you passionate about that can help make that vision a reality?" We ended with small special-interest groups such as Inclusion/Diversity in Community, Sustainability, Leadership, and more.

Sky Blue has lived in Valley Oaks Village Cohousing in Chico, California, and the Cesar Chavez Co-op in Santa Cruz, California, and has been a member of the Board of Directors for Santa Cruz Student Housing Cooperatives. At Twin Oaks, where he's lived for three years, he co-manages the soy foods business, facilitates community process, organizes conferences and events, and leads both pagan and other rituals.

My work in crafting rituals (and conferences are a certain kind of ritual) has shown me that creating a balance between structure and flexibility in each ritual allows for spontaneous self-expression and group expression from the participants. The structure gives participants the context, the foundation, and then they build on it, and that often creates magic. At this year's conference, the participants once again contributed an amazing amount of faith and enthusiasm to the organizers' basic structure, as well as occasionally taking over the process to make it better. I found the result of this cooperative endeavor incredibly enriching and inspiring.

A quick poll at Saturday morning's opening circle found that about half of the participants were exploring the possibility of living in community while the other half currently live in community. So, for about half of the people this was a new experience. But many participants were experienced communitarians, people committed to (some would say fanatical about) creating community in the world. We knew we would have a bunch of them (many led the conference's scheduled workshops), so we started asking questions: "What makes and breaks a community?" "What does a successful communities movement look like?" "What is the essence of this amorphous concept we call community?"

Days after the conference I got a report from a participant who went out and started asking questions like these about community with people in her life, and initiating new projects. She has little or no community experience other than the conference, but was so inspired and satisfied by her experience that she's doing it anyway. Obviously "community" is something many people want. But what exactly is it?

Whatever it is, I believe it's contagious. Both of my parents lived at Twin Oaks in the past (in fact they met here) and now that I live here I find myself integrally involved with its outreach efforts, utterly committed, as stated in the community's Statement of Purpose, to "perpetuate and expand a society based on cooperation, sharing, and equality." It's as if community living were a "meme" (an idea that, like a virus or gene, is passed from person to person upon exposure or "infection"). My parents were infected by the community meme when they lived at Twin Oaks, and then passed it on to me.

Community living is not only a contagious, but widely diverse. The Communities Conference hosted representatives from every kind of intentional community—ecovillages, cohousing, housing co-ops, worker-owned co-ops, and nonprofit organizations.

In the last session of the Utopian Architects session I participated in the Inclusion/Diversity group. We talked about our blind spots, about the ways that we are intolerant without realizing it, and how communities can get set in their ways, often unwilling to truly question assumptions and practices. At the same time, we recognized that, in general, communities cannot realistically accommodate the diverse spectrum of human society or even the diverse spectrum of people actively seeking community. But if we really want to spread community, we have to start asking a more diverse range of people, "Are you interested?" And, "What would it take for you to be interested?"

The conference led me to ask,, "What is the essence of the concept 'community?'" "What is the best vehicle for delivering the community concept to others?" "After people have gotten the concept, how do we give them a tangible, visceral experience of it?" "How do we make resources and support available once they've got the community concept, and want more?"

I ask because I want to share my experience of community with the world; I want to insert the new and improved version of "communes" into mainstream consciousness. The Communities Conference was an amazing place to do this work and I am thankful and honored to have been a part of it. Ω

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On the Land at Last

After 30 Years, Goodenough Community Develops Sustainable City and Country Properties

BY KIRSTEN ROHDE

Drywall dust is everywhere, and the sounds of hammering, prying, and ripping fill the air. People look like ghosts, wearing face masks and covered in dust. A friend comes by to visit and hardly recognizes me. We're "deconstructing" a 20,000 sq. ft. former nursing home in north Seattle, soon to undergo a magical transformation and become Ravenna Commons, Goodenough Community's residence and community center—a place from which to more fully express our values and culture to others.

When finished, this community home will have 21 small residential units (350 to 800 sq. ft.) and will include a café, commercial kitchen, recreation rooms, banquet hall, and children's play areas, as well as our community offices. When complete, Ravenna Commons will be open to the public for workshops, seminars, catered events, and specialized classes.

We designed this community center and residence with an emphasis on environmental sustainability. First, we're renovating an existing structure instead of building from scratch, and we're building it according to standards set by LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a self-rating system created by the United States Green Building Council, which seeks to promote buildings that are "environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work." The city of Seattle awarded us a grant to pay for the work it takes to document this rating system. Some of the LEED criteria we're meeting are:

- Recycling as much material as possible both in the demolition and rebuilding.
- 30 percent improvements in building energy efficiency.
- Reducing single-car use through vehicle sharing and immediate access to excellent public transportation.
- Focusing foremost on indoor air quality, light, and overall livability.

REBECCA LIABRAATEN

Rebeccas Liebraaten and Cecelia Vega at Goodenough's Tahuya River Reatreat

We've attracted financial support from the City of Seattle and HUD (the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development) for our vision of a dense, multi-income, multi-generational living facility. Ravenna Commons represents an opportunity for each of the residents, regardless of income, to own a home in collaboration with others through the

legal structure of a housing co-op. Borrowing, lending, and creative financing, all within our membership, makes it possible for each of us to contribute to this endeavor.

As a nonresidential Seattle-based community of 32 members and more than 100 regular participants, we didn't start out with a quest for property. We came together as a group of friends with a common goal of sharing our lives in authentic relationships—being true to ourselves and to one another. We went through many of the struggles and challenges of founding a new community while living in separate family and shared living homes throughout the Seattle metropolitan area. Over the years we've worked through issues such as the desire for individual freedom vs. responsibility to a group, being open and transparent about our finances, deepening friendships and intimacy, creating our own form of governance, and learning to be responsible community members. We dragged endless piles of pillows and decorations to retreat centers around the Northwest to meet together, plan, process, and share, always dreaming of having our own place to celebrate our growing communitarian traditions.

Our concept of sustainability began by building a strong community that can endure life's hardships while celebrating the creativity and goodness of human life itself. Developing such a plan for the future has, in our case, taken decades to realize. Our community's culture involves developing ourselves first as individuals, learning the skills of mature behavior. Then we work on bringing our best selves to relationship with others, learning how to live up to the words of our covenant with each other, for example, "staying constant through conflict."

We've weathered some community storms together. We resolved the conflicts that arose when some people left in disagreement. Our first generation of children grew up with very independent notions about the community way of life. Their childhood and teen years occurred when our community was itself in the middle of a maturing process. So while they value much about our way of life, they give us feedback about some of the hard times they had to live through with us. Recently we have had to deal with the unexpected deaths of two beloved members. We also worked with "founder issues," learning to simultaneously honor John and Colette Hoff, our founders, and interact with them as fellow community members and as leaders, while developing leadership skills in ourselves, in finance, governance, cultural programs and events, property development, artistic expression, and so on. What we have learned from these experiences has strengthened our commitment of growing together, intentionally, as friends and neighbors, living in a way that supports one another in practical and authentic friendship.

REBECCA LIABRAATEN

Goodenough members such as Rosemary Buchmeier (pictured) enjoy apples from their property's 40-year old orchard.

Our members have jobs in government, health care, education, research, computer technology, counseling, as artists or musicians, and in many other vocations. Our financial strength comes from a willingness to be intimate about personal finances, which allows us to achieve a greater degree of participation in financial decision-making. For example, we have developed and shared budgets, learned about wise financial planning, and helped each other look at healthier ways to relate to money and intentional personal planning. We help each other with financial planning so that individuals and families can meet their obligations toward our shared community budget as well as meet their personal financial goals.

We raise money through annual donations and rent for services offered in our facilities, such as inter-faith spiritual practices, cultural events, celebrations, counseling, and workshops offered for members and the public. We rely in part on the support from our members and program participants.

But for the last 20 years, and for some of our members, the last 30 years,

we've still dreamed of also owning and living on land together. So when we were finally ready to do this, we bought two properties: the urban former nursing home that will become Ravenna Commons and our "country place"—Tahuya River Retreat.

In September, 2001, we found and purchased the latter, a 65-acre farm near the Hood Canal, less than two hours' drive from Seattle. The land encompasses forest, wetlands, meadows, orchards, a tree farm, and a majestic old cedar grove, and is home to bears, coyotes, beavers, mountain lions, and eagles. It's fed with spring water, and the Tahuya River that borders one side is a salmon restoration site. When we first saw this property we were so clear that it met our needs that we put money down on the spot. With some remodeling of the two houses and outbuildings, we can now house 30-40 people.

As a nonresidential community, we didn't start out with a quest for property.

We're committed to restoring this unique parcel of agricultural land and wilderness. For example, one of our members, an experienced biodynamic farmer, will rehabilitate the 40-year-old orchard of antique apple varieties. We've spent the first year observing the change of seasons and making daily discoveries about what grows and lives here while making as few changes as possible, and have already begun to hold workshops on land stewardship and permaculture design.

Our members collectively have abilities that we need to sustain our vision for these two properties: construction and remodeling, organic farming, how to drive a tractor, how to manage the accounting system, educational skills for trainings and classes, and so on. We are also dusting off labor and construction skills we forgot we had. Since September, 2001, we have put in approximately 15,000 hours of volunteer time at both properties.

We also realize the limit of our shared knowledge, and have engaged a development consultant, Mark Huppert of Catapult Community Developers, to work with us. Mark helped us create the funding for buying and developing these projects, educated us about real estate, business planning, and the process of development. Without this help we couldn't sustain our energy and creativity in designing and funding these properties.

We believe that living densely in town at Ravenna Commons, in smaller-than-normal living spaces and under one roof, is an environmentally sound urban strategy. Our Tahuya River retreat property allows us to share a "country home" without adding to the growing number of single-family vacation homes strewn across the natural landscape, and provides a place to educate our children and their children about the natural cycles of the Earth. Our new community homes are designed to invite others in to experience our community and to sustain our organization for future generations.

Transforming from a nonresidential to a land-based community is a work in progress. In many ways, we are just beginning the journey many other communities have been on for some time—developing ecologically sound living environments and technology. In other ways, we are feeling the strength and depth of our relationships and the general personal stamina and optimism developed over decades of joining in a common cause. Our 30 years of shared history gives us confidence that we will achieve our goals. Ω

Kirsten Rohde, a research nurse working in the field of geriatrics, has been a member of the Goodenough Community for 15 years, and will be a resident at Ravenna Commons.

Plans for Ravenna Commons can be viewed at Velocipede Architect's website: www.velocipede.net.

Goodenough members regularly participant in community sponsored workshops like this Human Relations Lab.

REBECCA LIABRAATEN

The Magic of Findhorn

(top) Inside nature sanctuary building at Findhorn, (center) Two of Findhorns founders, Dorothy Maclean & Eileen Caddy in 2002, (bottom) A May fair dance on the community village green.

By Karin Bogliolo

I was living in the sunny south of Spain when I first heard the name "Findhorn," That was in the summer of 1975, when I was pregnant with my second child. I decided to use my newly learned skill of meditation to ask my inner self where this child wished to be born, in Spain or in England. What I "heard" in my meditation was the word "*Findhorn.*" It took my partner and me another three months before we discovered that a place named Findhorn actually existed, and that it was a new age intentional community in the north of Scotland, and they grew enormous cabbages there.

Cabbage is not my favorite vegetable, so I would need to find a better reason for making my way up there for the birth of my baby. However, the pull to go to Findhorn was stronger than my aversion to cabbage, and so it was that we arrived there one dark, cold, and dreary December day in 1975.

What I found did not immediately reassure me. Where were the cute little houses I had imagined as part of this new age community? Where were the enormous vegetables and amazing flowers I had heard about? I found myself in an ugly trailer park with not a leaf or flower to be seen anywhere. This is where my baby wanted to be born?

Of course it did not take me long to discover that the magic of Findhorn at that time was not in its dilapidated old trailers or denuded winter gardens, but in 200 of the most amazing, loving, and inspiring people I could ever have imagined, each committed to making positive changes in themselves and the planet. People who loved each other, loved what they were doing, and even loved where they were, right there in the bleak edge of the North Sea. And while the cabbages were no longer as large as the ones I had heard about (lucky for me!), because the gardeners were still applying the principles Dorothy Maclean had learned in the very early days they were

still growing wonderful organic vegetables.

Findhorn did not begin as an intentional community. Community is what happened as people were drawn to the inner spiritual work and to the cooperation with the nature spirits in the gardens. When founders Peter and Eileen Caddy, with their three sons, first towed their green trailer to what was to become one of the most famous and successful communities in the world, it was because they had nowhere else to live, no job, and no money. That was in 1962, and for the next seven years the family lived in this tiny space. Soon their friend Dorothy Maclean joined them, and lived in a small wooden annex to the trailer.

With no job, and no income, Peter enthusiastically followed Eileen's inner guidance that they were to begin growing their own vegetables. Their trailer was parked next to a garbage dump on sandy soil, not the most propitious place to grow anything. Then the first magic began to happen. Dorothy began to get guidance from the nature spirits, or *devas* as she called them, on how to treat the soil and nourish the plants. At the same time, Eileen was receiving guidance from what she calls her "still small voice within," which she recognized as coming from God. Peter led the group in following both sets of instructions to the letter and the results were amazing. The gardens flourished, and it was not long before people began to visit to see for themselves how these wonderful vegetables could be grown on sandy soil on a wind-blown peninsula in often freezing temperatures. As the 40-pound cabbages appeared, so did people from around the world, particularly the young "flower children" from the United States who were looking for new and positive ways to live and change the world. Many of these people stayed, some for weeks, others for years. The community was underway.

By the time I arrived with my partner Tony, daughter Tamsin, aged 9, and six months pregnant with my son Michael, there were 200 members living in the 13-year-old community. Most of them lived in the trailer park near the small fishing village of Findhorn (now called The Park), and some in the large Cluny Hill hotel in the nearby town of Forres, which the group had just purchased. This was the same hotel where, many years earlier, Peter Caddy had been the manager.

I also found that bringing up a family in the community was the most supportive and easy way to be a parent.

For the next 23 years I lived and worked and brought up my family at Findhorn. I witnessed the community growing rapidly in those early years. The publication of *The Magic of Findhorn* in 1975 (now out of print) brought thousands of people seeking an alternative, more loving and sharing lifestyle. The community bought new properties and land to enable us to grow more of our own food. Most of our income came from the guests who arrived in the thousands wanting to spend a week or more to experience community living at Findhorn. These guests helped us in the gardens, in building the Universal Hall, in cooking our vegetarian meals, and participated in all aspects of community life. One of the most important parts of our lives together were the meditations that we shared in the various sanctuaries around the community. Findhorn has never had a guru, nor any particular creed or doctrine. All beliefs and religions were welcomed, and we believed that we could all live harmoniously and lovingly together.

I loved living in community. I worked in many different areas during my time there. My favorite place was always the kitchen; cooking meals for 200 people was a total joy for me. I also found that bringing up a family in the community was the most supportive and easy way to be a parent. Even when I became a single parent in the early '80s, I never felt I was doing it alone. I was living amongst so many friends that there was always someone to share my ups and downs with. And yes, there were downs as well as ups. Although our lives were very rich, we had very little money. Living in a small, damp, cold trailer in the middle of a Scottish winter also had its challenges!

In 1992 I married Thierry, a fellow community member. My daughter had left the community years before and was by that time married with children and living in the south of England. My son Michael was 16, and also nearly ready to leave home. In 1994 Thierry and I bought Findhorn Press, the publishing business of the com-

Cluny Hill College

munity, and in 1998 we took an enormous leap of faith and went to live in the United States for a few years. For the first time in 23 years I was no longer living as part of the Findhorn Community, although our office was still there and we continued to have strong connections. Last year we returned to Europe and now live in the south of France (Thierry is French) and run Findhorn Press from there, thanks to the miracle of the Internet.

The community dining room in the 1960s.

This year, 2002, Findhorn celebrates 40 years of community living. For the past 27 years it has been the focus of my life, even though I have not lived there for the past four. In January of this year I decided to return to Findhorn for a visit, once more in the depth of winter, to see if the magic I had first found 27 years ago was still there. I wanted to explore the changes, the growth, and the challenges. I wanted to know if the people were still as loving and caring, and whether the community was still relevant and important in the world of the 21st century.

What a very different arrival it was this time. Landing in the late afternoon at Inverness Airport, an old friend came to drive me to Findhorn. On arrival I was not shown to one of the old trailers, but to a Bed & Breakfast room in one of the new ecologically designed houses that had arisen on what we used to call the Field of Dreams. When I had last lived in Findhorn in 1998, this was still an empty field with just a dream of the houses that might be built there one day. Now I could count 11 houses, and was told there would soon be 44 new dwellings, all built with ecological design and sustainable materials. Another thing I noticed was that the Runway, the main road at The Park, was filled with cars. When I arrived here 27 years ago, I might have seen three or four vehicles. Progress of a sort I suppose. The Foundation (the administrative body of the community) has a small fleet of buses which commute between the various geographical locations of the community and take some of the children to the Steiner School, but it also looks like many people run their own cars these days.

It was immediately obvious to me how much the community had grown again. Until about ten years ago, the only organizational entity was the Findhorn Foundation, the educational and spiritual center of the community. Everyone who lived here was a full-time member of the Foundation and worked and lived within either The Park area or Cluny Hill in Forres. Everything was owned and run by the Findhorn Foundation. Ten years later the Foundation is just one organization in the constantly growing community, and there are numerous small businesses run by community members. The Findhorn Foundation has been extending itself too and is now even associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization and is represented at regular briefing sessions at UN Headquarters.

Among Findhorn's community businesses are the community store, The Phoenix, which sells organic food, crafts, and books, and Findhorn Flower Essences, which owner Marion Leigh runs from one of the community properties, Cullerne House. In the pottery studio Brian Nobbs and his friends produce beautiful pots, and in a nearby weaving studio people spin some of their own yarns and weave amazing "Sunrise panels." Richard Brockbank is an artist in wood; some years ago he created a most remarkable sideboard for my new home, and now he carves all the small boxes that hold the Findhorn Press Angel Cards. Every morning in the little bakery, Trevor Clarke and his crew bake fresh, organic, whole grain breads, which are appreciated not only by the community but by people who come to buy them from all around the area. A café serves delicious organic foods and the best cappuccino in the district. A number of small organic farming projects in the area have got together and created Earthshare CSA Farm, a farming cooperative to which community members may subscribe and receive a weekly box of locally grown organic fruits and vegetables. I still remember collecting my box of food on a Saturday morning, never knowing quite what delicious surprises were waiting for me, as one of the highlights of my week when I lived there.

Overlooking the Field of Dreams is a large wind generator called Moya (all our machines and buses have always had names, from the kitchen mixer to the buses and, of course, the windmill). Moya already produces 20 percent of the electricity for The Park area of the community, and there are plans for another, much larger generator to be built soon. There are hopes that within the next five years The Park will be producing all its electricity. At the further end of The Park is the Living Machine, a large building that looks like an enormous greenhouse. This an ecological sewage treatment system, and probably the most attractive sewage system you are ever likely to see! There is absolutely no smell, except an aroma from the pro-

fusion of plants and flowers that grow in the water tanks year round. At the end of the building the revitalized water, now crystal clear, falls from a small waterfall and splashes over some stones.

For the first few days of my visit there was much for me to explore and learn about again, and many old friends to reconnect with. I attended the internal conference of the Findhorn Foundation and learned about the community's very challenging financial problems, and the difficult decisions required in order to balance the budget. The post-September 11th world has greatly affected the number of guests visiting the community, particularly from the U.S. Most years the Foundation welcomes around 4,500 guests for its residential programs.

I made a particular point of talking to many of the guests who were participating in Experience Week, the introductory program required of all visitors wanting to spend time in the community. Here I found that, in spite of the challenges in the Foundation, everyone I met was still having the same wonderful and magical experiences as ever. And luckily, so was I!

There are now around 500 people living within the community, or living locally and connected in some way to the community. Even ten years ago there were still many challenges between the Findhorn Foundation and community members who just wanted to live around the community but not in it, but now I experienced a much more flexible and open welcome to people just wanting to connect with the community in whatever ways were right for them. I found that there are two Listener/Conveners (community representatives who serve as administrators) now in place to direct the New Findhorn Association, which has representatives from all areas of the community, not just the Findhorn Foundation itself. Then I discovered that there were now elections in some areas of the community, giving many people a chance to have a voice and choose the people they want to represent them. This was never the case when the Foundation ran the community. Then, in most cases, individuals would step forward to offer themselves for a post, the current leaders would meditate about it and make the decision, and that was it.

Around 500 people live within Findhorn, or live locally and are connected to it in some way.

The central spiritual practice of the whole community has always been meditation of many kinds. Of course many individuals and groups also use whatever spiritual practice they find appropriate for them, from Taize singing to Tai Chi, the Five Rhythms, Sacred Dance, and so on. I would say that virtually all community members, in one way or another, still listen to their inner "voice" or "guidance" in order to lead a spirit-filled life.

The nature connection is also still strong in many areas of the community, especially among those working in the gardens. I had a wonderful conversation with Brian Nobbs, who has been part of the community for around 30 years, and saw his drawings of the nature spirits he is in touch with.

One afternoon I was able to work in the community kitchens, helping to cook a delicious vegetarian meal for guests and community members. It was a delight to enjoy once more the welcome of the kitchen where I worked for so many years, and find as much joy and creativity there as ever. Different people work there now, the kitchen is bigger, the pots and pans and equipment shiny and new, but the spirit of service is still as strong as it ever was.

So did I find the magic of Findhorn again, in spite of the cold and wind and dark? Oh yes, I found it still, in every corner, in every building and in everyone I spoke to. It is a different community now, neither better nor worse. There are many challenges, not in the least financial ones, but I still found a community wanting to serve the planet, to make a positive difference, and to live lightly on our beloved Earth. Many of the faces are different, but just as filled with love and caring. Findhorn looks set to educate, transform, and inspire many more generations of seekers in the future.

When I eventually returned home to the warmer and sunnier climes of the south of France, I found many of the statements I had heard during my quest at Findhorn echoing through my mind.

"Findhorn is an incredible awakening to just how beautiful it is to exist, the intensity of wonder and discovery ..."

"Whatever the magic of Findhorn is, it is a process of continual effort, not just the day-to-day work but also of spiritual learning."

And finally the words from the delightful Julia Zalazar who runs the education department of the Foundation, "When things get tough I always need to remind myself that here I get to live in Paradise, with all the difficulties and challenges of Paradise, but nevertheless, Paradise." Ω

Karin Bogliolo was born in Germany, and also lived in Austria, England, and Spain. In 1975 she moved to Findhorn where she lived for 23 years. She now lives in the south of France with her husband Thierry, with whom she owns and runs Findhorn Press, the publishing business of the Findhorn Community. She is co-author with Carly Newfeld of In Search of the Magic of Findhorn, *published by Findhorn Press, 2002.800-758-3756; www.findhornpress.com; www.lantern-books.com.*

An Invitation to Visit Our Village Without Walls

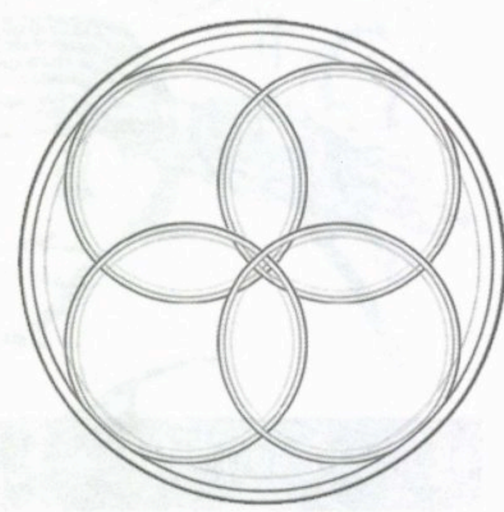
The Goodenough Community

Internship Program

Join us for an experience in a **village without walls**, where for 33 years a group of committed citizens has created a vibrant life of culture, caring, and a democracy at work in all the layers of life. Our "village" cares for the whole individual, couple, and family, and grows leaders who can change the world around them. A visit to us will introduce you to:

- Lively cultural programs that support people of all ages—couples, families, women and men.
- A "one-room schoolhouse" for human development with courses in self-mastery and citizenship.
- A rich inter-faith spirituality derived from sharing resources of the Perennial Wisdom.
- A sustainable way of life that helps us to live simply and carefully in our fragile environment.
- Practical friendship that gently cares for all the seasons and challenges of life.
- A system of governance that encourages conscious participation.
- Celebrations and rituals marking the passages of life.

A community shares wisdom from its storehouse of culture and experience.



Craft with us an internship (from three months to one year) that matches your needs – **training, healing, social experiences, leadership opportunities** – with our community's needs for your labor and specialized expertise. This year in our life will be a dynamic learning opportunity as we continue to develop two properties – one an urban cooperative and community center, and the other a a64-acre educational and environmental retreat center.

You will have an opportunity to learn from and work with teachers experienced in:

- personal development
- leadership
- group dynamics
- program planning
- whole-systems design
- organizational development
- permaculture

Community internships are available for the serious student of life in community.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

Check our web site for internship information.
www.aboutcommunity.org
Contact us for the 2002 - 2003 course catalog
goodenough@aboutcommunity.org
(206) 323-4653

Can We Afford to Live in Community?

FROM THE EDITOR DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

A couple I'll call Jack and Sally have just joined an intentional community I'll call "Oak Valley." It's the kind of community they always dreamed of: an idyllic setting of woods, meadows, and streams, with members living in small passive solar off-grid dwellings built of natural materials. Oak Valley members make decisions by consensus, practice good communication skills, and engage in environmental activism. So Jack and Sally pay the required joining fee. rent a small on-site trailer until they can build their own house, and start to look for work.

And then run into the dilemma of rural communities everywhere. They find there aren't enough available jobs for the local rural population, much less for newcomers like themselves. And the few jobs that occasionally open up are often minimum wage. Jack, a college professor eventually gets a job pumping gas. Sally, an engineer, finally finds part-time work cashiering at the local supermarket.

Like all intentional communities Oak Valley has yearly expenses: property taxes, liability insurance, and repair and maintenance expenses for its roads, buildings, and power and water systems, and since the property isn't paid for, quarterly mortgage payments. In years when there's enough money, the community also pays for capital improvements, such as adding more rental housing spaces for members, tapping a spring on the north ridge, and so on.

Oak Valley derives income from members' one-time joining fees, members' site lease fees, annual member assessments, and renting community-owned living spaces to members who haven't built their own homes yet. Jack and Sally and everyone else at Oak Valley are responsible for meeting the community's expenses through these payments to the community while they make a living off site and also do their share of required community labor hours. While Oak Valley is rich in beauty, fresh air, clean water, and companionship, and while it's paying its bills and making it financially, individual community members like Jack and Sally are … well, poor. Although the couple were formerly high-income professionals, by choosing Oak Valley they've become just one more pump jockey and check-out gal.

And there's not a lot they can do about it. Oak Valley

founders, like those of almost all rural intentional communities with visions of sustainability, ran into a Catch-22. Urban and rural areas with available jobs usually have stiff zoning regulations, building codes, and health regulations that don't allow what sustainable communities usually want—higher population density per acre and clustered housing, alternative natural construction, and composting toilets and constructed wetlands. And usually areas like these—urban settings and rural areas close enough to cities to have good jobs—are relatively expensive as well. But rural areas with low to no zoning, building codes, or health regulations, which often do have affordable property, usually have few if any available local jobs.

So Jack and Sally essentially had two choices for a sustainable rural community: (1) A new community like Oak Valley, which was so far out in the country that its lack of zoning and other regulations allowed a fairly sustainable lifestyle and which was within their financial means to join, but which had limited job opportunities. Or (2) an already-established community in a zoning-regulated county that had a special use permit or "grandfather clause" that allowed higher-than-normal population density because it was built before zoning regulations were adopted. (Sometimes communities in this situation, such as Sunrise Ranch in Colorado's Front Range, and Sowing Circle community in northern California, have permission for higher population density and are close enough to cities so members can get good jobs. Others, such as Ananda Village in northern California, and Lost Valley Educational Center in coastal Oregon, have the same special zoning permission, but still aren't near locally available jobs.)

Urban and Suburban Communities and Affordability

I believe location is everything in determining community affordability.

Urban and suburban communities usually cost more to join than comparable rural communities, because of the relatively higher land costs in these areas. Yet suburban and urban communities seem the most affordable in terms of daily living expenses, since members have greater access to jobs with decent salaries than they would if they lived in small towns or rural locations, while the typical community savings gained from sharing resources, buying in bulk and other economies of scale remain the same.

One of the fastest-growing and most popular forms of intentional community in North America is cohousing, and these communities are usually located in urban or suburban settings. Making a living is no problem since most cohousing residents continue working at the nearby the jobs they have. And cohousers, too, enjoy the savings of economies of scale and bulk buying. But cohousing communities are probably the most expensive of all intentional communities to join. Buy-in fees for studios to two-bedroom units and a share in the common infrastructure can range nowadays, depending on property values in the area, from the low $100,000s to the high $200,000s. Three- and four-bedroom units and detached homes with shared common infrastructure are often in the $300,000 and $400,000-plus range. And yet, while cohousing communities initially cost the most to join, since the housing units are individually owned, banks do give homeowners loans for them. So, paradoxically, buying in to a cohousing community can sometimes be comparable—in terms of initial cash outlay at least—to buying in to a rural non-cohousing community, if you consider the cost of joining fees, site-lease fees, and building your own small dwelling.

Cooperative households in small and medium-sized towns can often work well for both non-cohousing as well as cohousing communities, since land costs are usually less expensive than those in

Someone finally does the math and concludes that the business loses so much money everyone's actually working for $2.00 an hour.

cities, and members will still get the savings from economies of scale.. *(See "No Funds? How One Community Did It," pg. 44.)* But it's rural communities that have the most trouble financially.

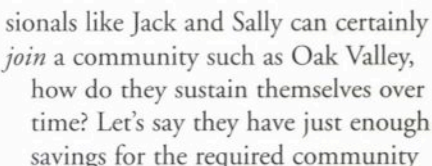
Hidden Poverty in Rural Communities?

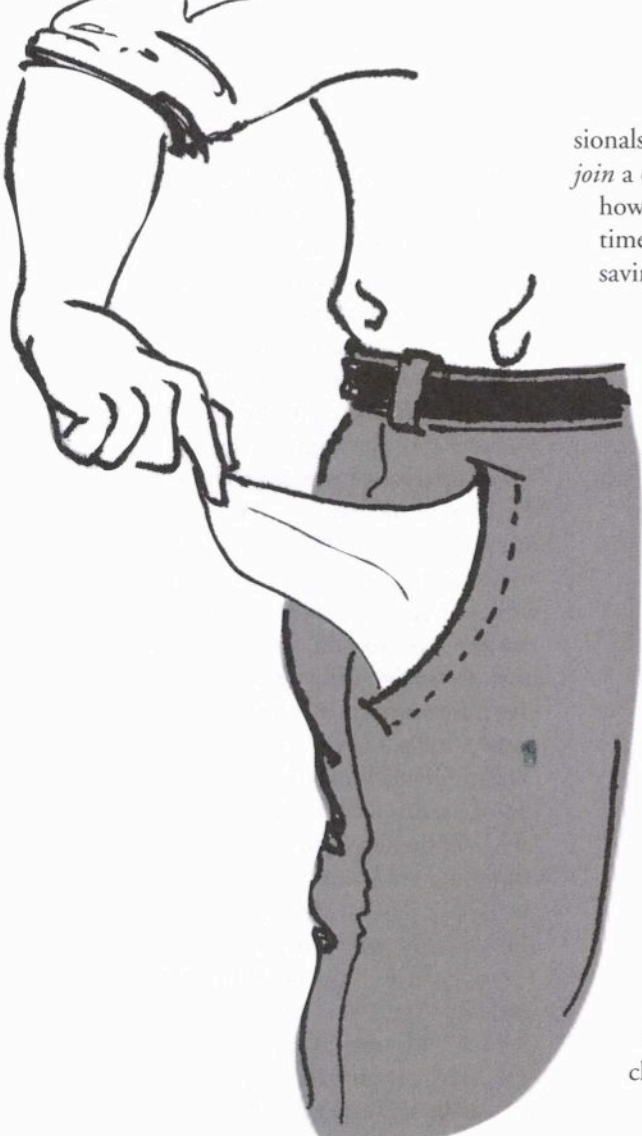
If we focus on newer rural sustainably oriented communities like Oak Valley, we might ask just how economically viable such communities can be.

Any new members who can afford joining fees, site lease fees, etc. and who can afford to build their own homes are probably highly paid profesionals, heirs with a trust fund, or two-income middle-aged or retired couples whose savings will cover these costs.

But how do young people fresh out of college join Oak Valley if they're not trust funders or telecommuting professionals? How do young couples or singles in their early 30s join, especially if they have small children? How do people in their late 30s with teenagers join?

And although middle-aged profes-





sionals like Jack and Sally can certainly *join* a community such as Oak Valley, how do they sustain themselves over time? Let's say they have just enough savings for the required community fees and to build their own home, and their minimum-wage jobs bring in enough to pay their monthly or annual community assessments. But can they ever take a vacation? What if their grown children suddenly need something—can they afford to help them? What if the deductible on their medical insurance doesn't cover expenses for a serious illness or accident? (Or, can they even still afford medical insurance?)

But what if Oak Valley operated one or more community businesses Jack and Sally could work for? This could solve the problem, yet community-owned businesses bring their own set of opportunities and challenges.

The Catch-22 of Community Businesses

Several rural community founders say it would have helped enormously if they'd had one or more viable community businesses to employ community members when they first started. There's plenty of precedent from income-sharing rural communities formed in the late '60s or early '70s. Twin Oaks in Virginia started its hammock business, and subsequently, a book-indexing service and tofu-making business—all continuing today. Sandhill Farm in Missouri started an organic foods business—growing and processing sorghum syrup, honey, tempeh, garlic puree, horseradish, and mustard.

However, creating a community-owned business (or a nonprofit educational center that pays wages to its employees) offers its own set of Catch-22s. Start-up businesses fail at the rate of at least 95 percent, usually because they're undercapitalized, or the founders didn't do adequate market research ahead of time. Start-up businesses require not only business experience and entrepreneurial skill to succeed, but often take 10- and 12-hour days for the first six months to a year or more. Even for a community of experienced, savvy entrepreneurs, where would they carve out the time and energy to set up a new community *and* a business, much less keep their relationships intact with their partners and children? (And it's much worse if they try to do all this on raw land they develop from scratch. New development either requires boatloads of money to hire professional crews, or long hard hours of sweat-equity labor, or both—usually over a period of several years. It's unlikely most community founders could pull this off *and* start a business.) Bottom line—if founders are planning a community-owned business, if at all possible, they should get it established and running well *before* moving to the land.

Community-owned businesses can operate like most businesses; that is, with member-employees receiving wages or salaries and then paying any neces-

sary community expenses from these earnings. Or such businesses can operate "communally" with income-sharing—in which profits from the business pay community expenses as well as basic necessities and cash stipends for each member-employee. *(See "Income-Sharing Economies," below.)*

But there are other ways to create on-site income for members besides the community becoming the employer itself. Several members can create a worker-owned co-op, for example, or provide the community with food, cooking, lumber, construction skill, laundry services, and so on for a fee. Or an individual or several members can start a business enterprise that employs some or all other community members.

But a community-owned or member-owned business that employs other community members has its own set of problems. On the one hand, community members will have on-site jobs, the entrepreneurs will have an ongoing source of close-at-hand workers, and since it has an income source the community will be more attractive to new members. On the other hand, just because some folks are fine fellow community members doesn't make them suited for a particular job role. What if the member is unsuited for the work, or makes costly mistakes, or doesn't show up for shifts, or arrives late and leaves early? What if the person is miserable, or even destructive, in the job? Imagine the amount of tension that can arise between that member and the business owners, whether the person is kept in the job (creating resentment in the owners and co-workers), or is let go (creating resentment in the person). Also, if some members own the business and others don't, a real or perceived power issue can arise between what can become the "owner class" and the "worker class." Or the needs of the business—driven by markets, cash flow, and other financial considerations—can slowly encroach on and even supplant the community's own visions and values for itself. Instead of being a servant to the community—providing income for members—the business can become its master. An antidote to this kind of "creeping takeover" can be to set up

Income-Sharing Economies

In a private or independent community economy, members earn money working at outside jobs or by owning their own businesses, and their earnings are individually retained. They pay agreed-upon joining fees, site lease fees, and/or other assessments to the community for all community expenses. Individual members decide how to spend or save their own individual incomes and assets. If the community uses some form of participatory democracy such as voting or consensus to make decisions, the whole group decides how to spend or save their community assets. "Oak Valley" and "Cottonwood Springs" *(see article)* have private economies.

In an income-sharing or "communal" economy, members work in one or more community businesses or work outside the community. They pool the profit from any community businesses and earnings from any outside jobs (and sometimes, pool their existing assets as well) in a common treasury. From this common treasury they pay their community's mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and other costs, and all members' basic needs for food, shelter, monthly stipends, and so on. All members decide how their common assets are spent. "Cranberry Valley" and "Potlatch Sound" *(see article)* have income-sharing economies.

Income-sharing communities manage their economies in a variety of ways. All or some members might contribute labor to community businesses and receive a stipend, or some might work for community businesses and others contribute earnings from outside jobs. Or the community can own no businesses and everyone contributes earnings from outside jobs. Some members can be income-sharing and others have independent incomes. In some communities, members can also work additional hours at community businesses or outside jobs for earnings they keep. Sometimes members contribute a non-recoverable joining fee. And sometimes, particularly in religious communities, members also donate any previous assets they owned before joining the community.

—D.L.C.

more than one member-owned business from the beginning, or a combination of community-owned, worker-owned, and individually or group-owned businesses, creating a more balanced "marketplace" of business activities and employment opportunities.

Are Community-Owned Businesses Financially Viable?

Another issue is whether or not a business is actually earning enough money for the community's real needs. A business might earn the community far less money per member than each person would make working outside, but as long as each member's expenses are low, their work hours reasonable, the work itself satisfying, and their lives in community fulfilled and balanced, they're probably living happier, healthier lives than their wealthier counterparts in the mainstream. Like the saying goes: "Living below your means is a cheap way to be rich."

On the other hand, a community business could pay its overhead, satisfy its customers, fund all necessary community expenses, and seem firmly in the black—but at the cost of community members working inordinately long hours to pull it off. If they intersperse gardening, maintenance, cooking, and other community tasks with hours at the community business, they might not really notice that they're working 60 or even 70 hours a week at the business and their free time has diminished to nothing. Entrepreneurs and business consultants identify this situation immediately for what it is—a failing business that's actually in the red—but many communities seem blind to it.

This happens regularly at a rural income-sharing community I'll call "Cranberry Valley." Its 20 members work at one or more community businesses—say, installing slate roofs, processing maple syrup for local stores, and operating a coffeehouse venue for local poets and musicians

How Country Communities Pay the Bills

While different communities slice their economic pies differently, in general they choose from among the same sources of income in order to reimburse the founders' land-purchase costs, and/or pay mortgages, taxes, insurance, maintenance, and for improvements to the property or other costs. These sources of income include members' one-time joining fees, site lease fees (one-time or ongoing), regularly scheduled member assessments or facilities fees, rental fees to members for living quarters, and/or required hours of community labor, which takes the place of financial contributions.

If the community is income-sharing, these fees are paid from the profits gained from members' labor in community businesses, and/or from earnings from on-site or outside jobs. Thus income-sharing members usually pay no joining fees, site lease fees, assessments, or rents, but rather, the community pays for their living expenses and gives them a stipend as well.

If the community has subdivided lots or acres for sale to members, or is a cohousing community, these fees are met by one-time purchase fees of these lots, acreage or (in cohousing) individual housing units, along with annual assessments for taxes, insurance, and maintenance, etc., for any commonly owned property.

Having or not having equity in the property or members' homes significantly affects the financial well-being of community members as well. *See "Nonprofit Land Ownership and Member Equity," pg. 41.*

Let's look at these income sources individually, and see what members of some real rural communities actually pay.

1. Joining Fees. Many communities have a one-time joining fee. The amount varies, depending on land values in the region and the original cost of the property, the amount of mortgage payments and other expenses, and the number of members who must split these costs. Joining fees can be recoverable or irrecoverable, mostly depending on whether (and how) members have equity in the property.

At one end of the spectrum is Sowing Circle community in Occidental, California (home of the nonprofit Occidental Arts and Ecology Center). With 10-11 members living on property now worth 1.5 million, joining fees of incoming members (who purchase the equity of outgoing members) are $20,000 (the amount each founding member originally contributed), along with the amount of any additional thousands of dollars of equity the departing member accrued over the years through the portion of his/her monthly assessments that went to mortgage payments and capital improvements.

At the other end of the spectrum, incoming members of Lost Valley Educational Center in Oregon, where equity in the property isn't possible as the land is owned by a nonprofit, pay a nonrefundable joining fee of $1,000. Most community joining fees fall within this range. Some communities, such as Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Missouri, have no joining fee.

2. Site-Lease Fees. Often communities designate specified areas as potential home sites, and lease those sites to members who will build their own homes. At Earthaven (besides the joining fee) members could lease a roughly quarter-acre site for a one-time site-lease fee of $17,000 in 2002. They have equity in the prop-

erty, in the sense that they can later sell their site lease to other members, along with any improvements such as utilities and buildings.

Dancing Rabbit members lease approximately 2,500 sq. ft. per person from the community at one cent per square foot a month, or $75 a quarter. They don't have equity in the site and cannot later sell their site leases to other members, but can sell their improvements.

Some communities have no site lease fees; members simply live in community housing or build on sites the community agrees on at no charge.

3. Member Assessments. These vary, depending on the amount of the community's expenses and how many members share in paying them.. Sowing Circle's 10 members pay approximately $815 a month for their 1/10th share of community expenses, and this includes meals and lodging. The member assessment at the following communities does not include meals and lodging: Dancing Rabbit, two percent of the members' annual income; Earthaven, $180 a year; Lost Valley, $250 a month; and Abundant Dawn, between $150 and $350 per month, depending on the circumstances of the member.

3. Rent. Some communities own some or all of their housing facilities and rent them to members separately from any community assessments. Some members might own their own housing (a house or cabin they've built on a leased site, a travel trailer or mobile home, a canvas yurt), and others rent from the community. Dancing Rabbit owns and rents out some of its cabins for $50-$150 a month, for example, as does Lost Valley ($75-$225 a month).

5. Labor Requirements. Most communities also require labor hours for needed community functions such as maintenance, repair, construction, cleaning, shopping, bookkeeping, committee work, and administrative tasks, and in some communities, cooking and/or childcare. Because it replaces money (the community doesn't have to pay outside laborers or professionals to do this work) labor hours are also an integral part of a community's economy. Dancing Rabbit's labor requirement ranges from 1.5 hours per week (or 75 hours yearly); Earthaven's, 1,500 within the first 10 years of membership (about 2 hours per week); Sowing Circle's, 7 hours per week; and Lost Valley's, 10 hours per week.

—D.L.C.

in town. But the hours are grueling and the community's newer members become exhausted and demoralized. (And in what I call "community macho" the long-time members remind them that it takes a lot of stamina to handle the intensity of community life.) But someone finally does the math and concludes that the coffeehouse loses so much money that everyone's actually working for $2.00 an hour, and their outrageously long hours are the result of trying to keep it afloat. Eventually the newer members propose that Cranberry Valley cut its loses and close the coffeehouse so everyone can live normal lives again. But the founders and old-timers don't agree, saying that having an artsy entertainment business was part of the community's vision from the beginning. Then there's a major exodus of members out the door. The scene repeats itself regularly with new groups of members several months or years later.

Hidden poverty also plays a role at an established income-sharing community I'll call "Potlatch Sound," whose community business is, say, making children's wooden play equipment. The community has been in business for 27 years, and is so large, well-known, and long-lived it's considered a premier example of a successful community. But is it really?

Some people work diligently on their work shifts, others come late and leave early, or do a poor job. The community member who manages the business has no recourse, nothing to induce those workers to keep better standards. She can neither encourage them with the future possibility of job advancement nor caution them with the future possibility of demotion or losing their jobs. Let's say a successful investment banker/business consultant offers Potlatch Sound free advice about improving the businesses' productivity and profitability. She analyzes the business at no charge, and recommends that they reduce inventory, get a new supplier for some of their materials, and change their distribution pattern. Her suggestions will cost the group time and energy to implement, and any

experienced businessperson would see immediately that they would make a positive difference. But the community ignores the recommendations and continues on as they were. Why? Because they don't *care.* Most of them aren't there to run a successful, profitable business, but to live in a groovy community that at least breaks even through its steady business income. "We've been here 27 years," says one of the founders, "and we're doing just fine."

And with 93 members the community is so large that members don't lack for on-site stimulation and entertainment. There's a sea kayaking club, a salmon-fishing club, a study group learning Japanese, not to mention used book-trading and used-CD trading clubs. They grow their own organic produce and raise chickens and dairy goats. The group has a fleet of community-owned cars, vans, and trucks. A maintenance crew keeps their roads, buildings, and utilities shipshape. An acupuncturist, two herbalists, and a chiropractor are community members; they take care of the group's health needs. The cozy living spaces, delicious meals, and small monthly stipend are quite enough for most needs—the Potlatchers are living large. Yet, when one member's grown daughter needs a drug treatment program to get off heroin, her mother, a 20-year Potlatch member, must stand by helplessly. Her $35 a month stipend doesn't help. When another member wants to get a health consultation from an alternative practitioner in another state, he cannot. His treatment of choice must be the health modalities at the community. And when parents want to get their child summer camp, braces, psychotherapy, or a college education, they cannot. They're lucky, in fact, that Potlatch Sound had enough child-raising money in the budget the year the couple wanted to conceive to allow the birth of another child at all.

But how do young people join if they're not trust funders or telecommuting professionals?

Is the Potlatch Sound community really all that successful? Yes, if you stay on the land and your needs and wants fit within what the community can offer. No, if it can't.

Then there's a community I'll call "Cottonwood Springs." Its middle-aged and retired members can afford the community's joining and site lease fees; its young single people and young families cannot. So the community allows young people to pay these fees over time. So far so good. But most of the middle-aged and older folks live off investment income, retirement income, or income from trust funds, and a few have telecommuting jobs from their rural location. The younger members form sole proprietorships, partnerships, or worker-owned co-ops as sustainable builders, car mechanics, organic gardeners, or dairy farmers. Although most come from middle-class professional families and they're all college educated, the young people now work blue-collar, low-wage jobs by choice in order to live out their sustainability values on-site. They have little money, work long hard hours, and eke out a subsistence existence for themselves and their families. The older members don't understand why the younger ones are so exhausted, and criticize them for dropping off committees and being absent at community business meetings. The younger ones resent the older ones, who, insulated by cushions of savings or an annuity, no need to work full time, and no experience of being "have nots," just don't get it.

While "Oak Valley" is a fictional example based on typical rural community scenarios, "Cranberry Cove," "Potlatch Sound," and "Cottonwood Springs" are real communities, and these are real stories conveyed by members and former members of each. I think hidden poverty in rural communities is a reality.

What Can We Do About It?

It's pretty obvious that increasing numbers of people want to live in communities—and often in rural, sustainable communities. What can we do about the economic trade-offs? How can we live in juicy, off-grid, natural-built country communities and still have decent-paying local jobs? How can we establish community businesses that are healthy and vital?

One way is to wait for culture and

Sample Income Sources in Rural Communities

Near a Good Job Market. Sowing Circle is in a rural-residential area surrounded by the cities and towns in Sonoma County, two minutes from the town of Occidental, 25 minutes from the city of Santa Rosa, and an hour and a half from San Francisco. It's relatively easy for its 10 members to bring in Bay Area-level salaries. Five are employed by the community's nonprofit conference business, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC), in multi-skilled roles that include administration, grant writing, gardening, maintenance and repair, and teaching workshops. OAEC staff members began working for $10 an hour, with annual seniority raises, and salaries now range, depending on their seniority, from 1,900 to $2,600 a month. This is a low wage by Bay Area standards, but fine relative to the community's values. Other members have jobs as a grade school teacher, college professor, environmental educator, and home-based mom/political organizer. Another member, the president of a nonprofit organization, works half-time at his home office and half-time commuting to Berkeley, an hour and a half away.

30 Minutes from a Low-Wage Job Market. Lost Valley is from five to 15 minutes from small towns and 30 minutes from the small city of Eugene, Oregon—all with relatively few jobs and low wages. Fifteen people, almost three-fourths of its members, work for the community's educational center business, either full time or part-time. Of the part-time employees, one also works as a massage therapist on site, and others work part-time in Eugene or the nearby towns. Members who don't work for the educational center have full-time or part-time jobs off site as well—grant writer and consultant, part-time librarian, part-time park ranger, sales rep for a food distributor. Another member flies to a different city each weekend to represent products at trade shows. Another drives 12 hours to the San Francisco Bay Area for week-long trips eight times a year to work as an accounting consultant for clients there, at Bay Area wages.

45-60+ Minutes From a Job Market. Dancing Rabbit members have an even greater challenge, since they live so much farther from a job market—45 minutes from a small town with (low-paying) jobs, and an hour and twenty minutes from the nearest city. Two members are self-employed in service businesses—a musician's booking agent and a freelance editor. Some have part-time or occasional work building homes for other members. Several have part-time jobs: working for the Fellowship for Intentional Community at nearby Sandhill Farm, or in Sandhill's tempeh-making business, or for the Missouri chapter of a national organic certifying agency. Some work off-site for several weeks or months—a personal assistant who helps people with disabilities, a traveling sales representative, and carpenters who work construction in other cities. Several work a few hours weekly for the community doing accounting, answering correspondence, managing their intern program, or fundraising for the community, and one works full time eight months a year growing the community's vegetables. Members of Skyhouse, the income-sharing sub-community, work a variety of telecommuting jobs, including computer programming, website design, and graphic arts.

In rural communities not near a thriving job market, most people make do with various odd jobs, part-time jobs, one-person businesses with an uncertain income, or they telecommute. Few actually have "a job."

While starting a new business at the same time as starting a community can be difficult to impossible, bringing a telecommuting job or an already-successful business to a rural community can work well. For example, the computer programmers at Abundant Dawn and Dancing Rabbit brought their professions with them and telecommute with their customers and employers. The income-sharing pod at Abundant Dawn was already making hammocks as subcontractors for Twin Oaks' hammock making business before they began Abundant Dawn (however they later launched their own independent hammock line).

—D.L.C.

laws to inevitably change. The more often local and state elected officials, planners, and zoning and building officials are exposed to successful, sustainable intentional communities, the sooner they'll realize such communities help them meet their own locally mandated environmental goals, and increasingly allow and, I believe, even advocate special use permits, zoning variances, and more liberal zoning laws and building codes. And in the meantime, we can take action.

Talk to people; educate them. We can meet with and get to know local bankers, mortgage brokers, elected officials, planners, building department and health officials. We can tell them what we know, show them studies, give them facts and anecdotes and information. We can solicit their advice, and make them partners in our visions for more cooperative sustainable places to live and work. Politicians call this "lobbying." Community activists call it "meeting folks and making friends."

Sociologist Paul Ray, who researched values in our population and co-authored the book *Cultural Creatives,* estimates that one-fourth of the US population, 50 million people, have alternative, sustainable values and support such practices. How many of these bankers, planners, and government officials might just be people like ourselves disguised in a suit? How many of them yearn to help create green, sustainable culture too, and simply need our citizen support to justify doing what they want to do anyway?

Stage Creative Protests. What public events can we stage that get media attention in positive, educating ways? A few years ago the town of Laramie, Wyoming voted to stop funding support for its community greenhouse program that served the town's elderly garden lovers. But they soon reversed their decision when 100 white-haired protesters dressed in green (accompanied by local newspaper photographers) filled the Council Chambers bearing signs, "Elders Need Gardening!"

The trade-off, of course, is that the community is far from most jobs.

Demonstrate Your Lifestyle, Vote with Your Dollars. Living in community, especially in those which model and demonstrate sustainable alternatives, *is* a political act. And whether you live in community or not, your lifestyle can demonstrate—to friends, family, and local officials—that you're choosing, say, public transportation and bicycles over exclusive car use; composting over trash in land fills; local organic produce over agribiz frankenfoods; a down-sized lifestyle over "affluenza"; and if possible, appropriate technology and off-grid power over power companies and petro-wars.

Save Money and Create Community Where You Are by Sharing Housing, Sharing Meals, Sharing Goods and Services. Create or join neighborhood dinner co-ops, babysitting and childcare co-ops, homeschooling co-ops. Support or create local currencies. Get to know your neighbors. Tear down fences and create community gardens, neighborhood composting centers, shared recycling centers. Neighbors have taken these steps in Cincinnati; Los Angeles; Takoma Park, Maryland; Portland, Oregon; and Davis, California, for example.

For encouragement, read *"No Funds? How One Community Did It?"(pg. 44); "Simple Gifts and Good Food at Songaia" (pg.50); "Ecovillages: Living with Fewer Trade-Offs" (pg. 52);* and *"Can We Afford* Not *To?"(pg.55).*

If You Live in Intentional Community, Create Viable Economic Systems. Visit communities; read about as many as you can; learn what works financially in successful communities and duplicate it.

For information about two kinds of income-sharing economies, see *"Meadowdance's Hybrid Economy" (pg 32)* and *"'Family Style' Income-Sharing" (pg. 39).*

If You Live in Rural Community, Create Strong, Healthy Community Businesses. If you're creating community businesses, learn sound business practices, create good accounting and cash flow systems, do market research. Learn what works and duplicate it.

For inspiration, take a look at *"Inventing a Rural Economy, Business by Business"(pg. 45).*

These articles show how real people are making it economically in communities. We hope you find their stories rich and fruitful! Ω

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities *magazine, and author of the forthcoming book,* Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community *(New Society Publishers, spring, 2003). The section on community-based businesses, and the sidebars "How Country Communities Pay the Bills" and "Sample Income Sources in Rural Communities," are excerpted with permission.*

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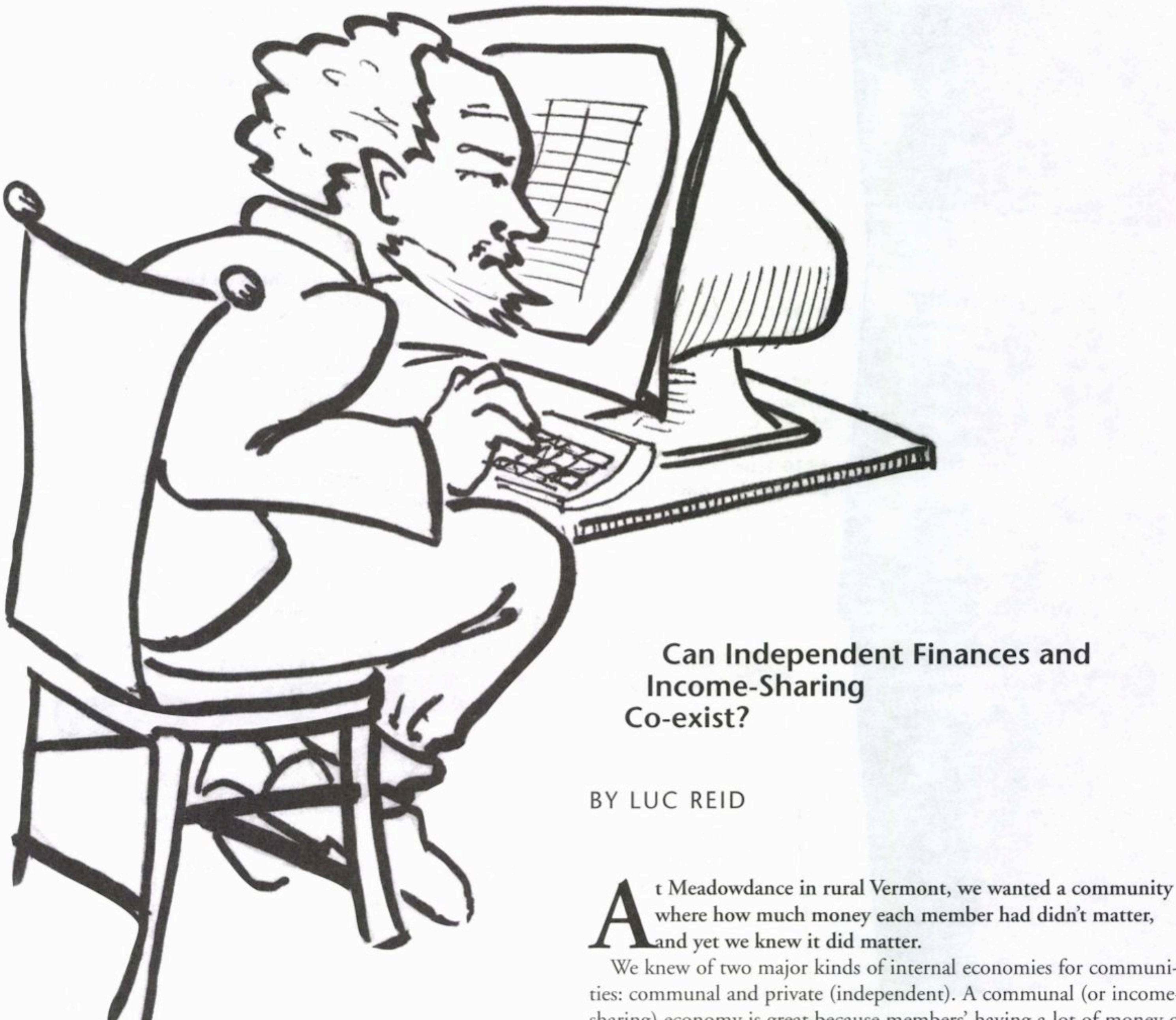
Meadowdance's Hybrid Economy



Can Independent Finances and Income-Sharing Co-exist?

BY LUC REID

At Meadowdance in rural Vermont, we wanted a community where how much money each member had didn't matter, and yet we knew it did matter.

We knew of two major kinds of internal economies for communities: communal and private (independent). A communal (or income-sharing) economy is great because members' having a lot of money or little money is no longer a source of division between people.

Everyone contributes what they have and gets what they need. On the other hand, a private economy is great because then you don't have to try to change people's attitudes about money and get them to share it or give up total control over it, and an incoming member with large assets or a high salary isn't haunted by terrible visions of what the whole group might decide to spend it on.

But it's difficult to attract people with substantial assets to a community with a communal economy, since they may feel that they'd be paying everyone else's way. And you can't attract people with little to no assets to a community with a private economy, because they probably can't afford the joining fee or ongoing assessments.

So at Meadowdance we created a hybrid of these systems: members with assets can keep them and/or loan some to the community and simultaneously protect their loan, and members with little to no assets can still afford to live there. After all, attracting living, breathing, cooperative, friendly, joyful new membesr is worth more than any amount of money.

We're not claiming to have necessarily invented this economic model, and we don't assume it's for everyone—both communal and private economies have worked splendidly for other groups in different circumstances. But for communities whose economic goals emphasize cooperation, a modest amount of individual financial freedom, and a means to include people of all economic situations, this hybrid model may be ideal.

Attracting living, breathing, cooperative, friendly, joyful new members is worth more than any amount of money.

Here's how it works. As in a classic communal economy, everyone works for one or more community businesses, the income from which pays all community expenses and most individual expenses—food, shelter, health care, etc. and a small stipend. People with no savings or assets can join the community and simply begin working. And people joining with assets can keep them, and/or make a loan to the community if they wish. Their loans don't earn a lot of interest, and it's at the community's discretion when to pay them back, but the loans are secured by anything the community owns, so that if the community were to fall apart the lender-members would get something back, at least.

And, after members have fulfilled their community labor requirements (for income-earning work as well as community chores), anyone is free to earn money for themselves at outside jobs or, within limits, by working additional hours at the community's own businesses. They can keep any outside income and can spend their money in any way that is consonant with community agreements.

What makes the hybrid economy work, of course, is that everyone owes a substantial amount of labor hours to the community every week. This means that the community needs to be earning money from some of that work. So, by working at community businesses, members earn enough income to pay for whole-community expenses as well as whatever's needed for the members to live a reasonable lifestyle. And no money needs to change hands within the community for this.

Another necessity to make this hybrid model possible is a willingness to accept and adapt to limitations as they arise. If you all want to live in your own houses but can't afford it, you buy one big house and live cooperatively until you can afford it. If wonderful people want to join the community but there's not enough money to provide them a place to live (or to feed them, or cover their health costs), then everyone has to wait until there is money—by which time the wonderful people may have moved on.

And even though the hybrid economy is organized so that investment in the community is a (partly) secured loan, anyone loaning the community money still has to have a great and abiding faith in its vision

and values, as well as in its members. What if the community doesn't work out for the members loaning money and they leave, yet the community also doesn't make enough money to pay them off for years? An incoming member who is intending to loan money to the community must therefore exercise a combination of faith (investing some), and prudence (holding enough back that if they don't get the rest right away, they're not out on the street). To help alleviate the problem of moving out and still having money invested in the community, the community generally pays back any non-members' loans before paying back loans from members.

Being able to earn your own outside income that the community has no claim to is also great—*if* you can earn that money. First you need to finish your weekly work requirement and have enough energy left over for other work—a particularly taxing proposition in a community's early years, when the work requirement might be high. And your community must also be in a location where there are available local jobs or some way to earn money—not necessarily a given in many rural communities.

Fortunately, if the community's businesses are vital enough, there's a way to alleviate this, too: Let people work more than their weekly work requirement for an hourly wage from the community.

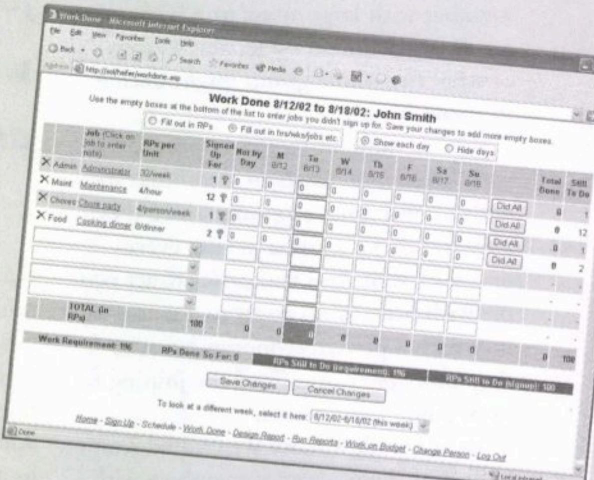
But that brings us to another vulnerability of the hybrid structure: If the community business(es) aren't bringing in enough money, they can't pay the rent, much less offer extra work-for-pay to members. And the community has to have a commitment to disband before they get so deeply in debt that there's nothing left to secure loans, because otherwise the loans become non-secured after all.

But they can get around this by founding the business before founding the community, or by starting up with some members having outside jobs (if the local job market allows) until the community businesses are successful enough that everyone can live from that income.

Ultimately, like any other community

Our Work-Requirements System

Meadowdance planned from the beginning to institute a work-requirements system that would equitably distribute work and enable members to work only for Meadowdance, receiving pretty much everything they needed to live comfortably in exchange, so as to remove the need to earn individual incomes. It took months of discussion and planning to hammer out the details of this system, and it was about 15 months after we moved in before it was really up and running, but now, having used it for more than a year, it's running smoothly.



Our key goals for the work-requirements system were:

- Helping ensure equitable distribution of work
- Making it possible for us to set work priorities as a group
- Having a record of what work was planned and done for a given time
- Having the flexibility to do different kinds of tasks
- Letting members choose their own work schedule
- Covering household work (cleaning, cooking, maintenance, etc.) as well as income-producing work
- Providing an adequate cash income (through income-producing work)
- Integrating work into daily life in a harmonious and meaningful way

To measure work credit, we invented a unit called the "responsibility point" or RP. The name reflects our intention to measure work in terms of "what gets taken care of" and not strictly in terms of how much time it takes to complete the job. Different jobs are measured differently. You might get so many RPs per hour, or so many per month, or so many per task completed, or so many per dinner cooked.

Full members have a full-time work requirement—currently 196 RPs, roughly equivalent to 49 hours a week—but this includes housecleaning, meal preparation, and so on. This is the highest requirement we have ever had, and we expect it to go down noticeably next quarter, as our membership grows. Guests who stay longer than a week have half a work requirement, and Seekers (people exploring membership) have a 75 percent work requirement. Parents with small children get a substantial abatement so that they can devote the necessary time and energy to parenting. Some older kids in the community voluntarily take on a small work requirement (20 RPs/week or more).

In this way people can have ongoing work that often doesn't require clock-punching. For instance, each of us gets four RPs per week for completing a housecleaning chore for the week, regardless of how long it takes to do a given chore. Since we rotate chores, it doesn't matter if mopping the floors takes 90 minutes and cleaning the second floor bathroom takes 40—it all works out pretty evenly in the end.

Another example is our Administrator job, which covers paying bills, community business correspondence, keeping files, and so forth. Although our Administrator's job may take a lot of time in one week and comparatively little in another week, that person gets a steady 32 RPs per week for doing the job: Hence no clock-

punching for doing that job, and the emphasis is on getting the work done and not on fulfilling time obligations.

Some jobs still require clock-punching, though. Both of our businesses provide services on an hourly basis, so when doing that billable work we record our exact time worked and take 4 RPs for each hour worked.

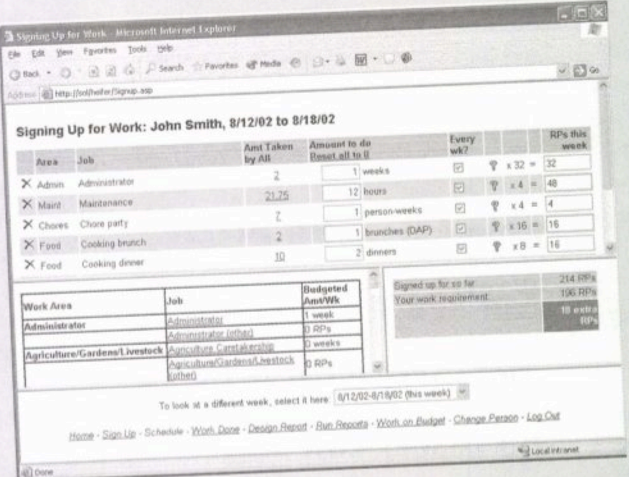
Before lunch on Monday of any given week, we all sign up for the amount of work we plan to do in the coming week: for instance, cooking three dinners, doing two lunch cleanups, a breakfast cleanup, 15 hours of business work, four-and-a-half hours of learning time with the kids, etc. Signing up for work is a loose but important agreement with the community that you'll get something done. For instance, the caretaker (work manager) for one of our businesses sometimes is dependent on people who sign up for a certain amount of work in that business so that certain jobs get done on time. If not all the work is covered, the caretaker is responsible for finding other people to sign up for more. However, we don't yet have a strong feedback system for situations where people might not complete the work they've signed up for. It has worked fairly well so far, despite that lack.

Some jobs, such as preparing meals and household chores, are also organized by the caretakers of those areas on a special schedule. For instance, we plan out in advance who will be cooking each meal to ensure that all slots are covered.

By the end of the week, each member logs how much of each job he or she has completed. Generally speaking, we each earn at least the minimum number of RPs required of us for that week. RPs can be saved up and used for more vacation time, to work less hours in a future week, (sometimes) to earn extra income, or donated to the community to allow it to do more of a particular kind of job or to reduce our work requirement, and so on.

There's also a budgeting process: Every quarter, all the caretakers make a list of the work they expect must be done over the coming three-month period. We add it all up to get the total number of RPs required from each adult for each week. We go over the budget job by job and sometimes cut back on planned work in order to reduce the weekly work requirement, especially if the total weekly workload per person is untenably high. We all come to consensus on the final labor budget, and that's what we use to plan work for the coming quarter.

There are a number of ways such a system could be administered, but in the end we agreed to use a computerized software program which we call HEIfER (Hellaciously Efficient Inventory for Entering RPs). Members get to it on their own computers or community computers through a web browser.



This software program tends to make our work system pretty computer-centric, which is fine for those of us who like computers. For people who don't, it's possible to sign up for and record work on paper; a Work Requirements Caretaker then enters that into HEIfER.

The problems we had getting the work-credit system and HEIfER off the ground mostly seemed to revolve around the idea of having to keep such close track of our work: Even though we don't always have to punch the clock, we still have to "keep score" and pass that information on. While this isn't entirely to our taste, so far it's the best system we can come up with in terms of being able to set priorities together (through the budget process), ensuring that needed work gets done, and providing an equitable way to work together.

Still, the idea of counting work has been a turn-off to some former members, and as a result we had a long and difficult time getting the system running smoothly, since not everyone would sign up and/or log their work. This left us with a partial record of how much work some people had done and no idea of how much work others were doing. The members who had the most problem with the system, though, did not get through the membership process and ended up leaving, mostly for unrelated reasons. This leaves us with a rough sense of agreement on how the process will work, and now new members must decide whether or not they can live with it before deciding whether to apply to join the community.

We credit each full member with a certain number of RPs each quarter toward vacation, which currently totals two weeks' vacation per year. In addition, members can earn extra RPs to extend their vacations if they wish. There's no set work schedule or vacation schedule. A member who is ill figures out how much work the illness has cost him or her and claims the appropriate number of "Get Well Pool" RPs. If anyone has any concerns about the claim of RPs, they can bring up their concerns privately to the member who made the claim, or in a group meeting, but no outside approval is needed to take the RPs in the first place. We have similar provisions for sabbaticals, family emergencies, jury duty, and the like.

Our HEIfER software makes it fairly easy for us to figure out how we're doing with our work. We can check to make sure we're caught up on our work requirements, find out how much vacation we have saved up, see how much work is planned for a given job in a given period, compare work planned to work done, compare work done to the work budget, and so on.

—L.R.

For more details about the work system, you can see the detailed agreements we've made about it on our web site on our Agreements page: www.meadowdance.org/agreements.

economy, the hybrid economy depends on the individual members and the success of the community. If the community members can't or won't do the work that needs to be done, or are more than willing to work but fail to grow a successful business, or mismanage their income, the economic structure itself isn't going to help. But if the community is strong and the members keep the faith, so to speak, there's very little you can't get around with a hybrid economy if you are willing to be flexible.

For example, if your community chooses the hybrid model, what if you can't afford the lifestyle you've planned? Live a cheaper one until you can. What if you don't have enough investment capital to buy community property? Live in a rental property until you've built up a stake. What if you're not managing money well? Hire a financial advisor! What if your community business fails, or you can't get it off the ground? Send members out to work local jobs. What if there are no local jobs? Move to another location! The latter is serious advice—since the only other option at this point may be breaking up the community and moving anyway.

And of course dealing with any of these limitations may well compromise the quality of life in the community, which may in turn erode the community spirit to the point where the group doesn't have the heart to continue. So it's important to know when to throw in the towel too—and maybe regroup in a few years, which will be a lot easier to do if you all leave because of "technical difficulties" (our cattle-raising business failed) rather than "personal difficulties" (when we ran out of money, we started fighting, and now we all hate each other).

Meadowdance is now a little over two years old. We put our basic hybrid economy model in place at the start, and attracted founding members with a range of financial situations. One family had virtually no savings and substantial debt, but a great income (which disappeared when the job was given up and the family moved into the community). Another family owned a modest house and had some other assets; they made these liquid in order to be able to make a very substantial investment in the community. Another family had a small amount of savings and a little debt. Several other people came in with significant debt and no assets.

Members with assets can keep them; members with little to no assets can still afford to live there.

Because we each relocated from various states to start Meadowdance in Vermont, few of us had anything like a reliable supplementary income from the start, whereas all of the members who had significant debt needed that kind of income. At various times, those members have been able to make money working long distance at their own professions, working locally, or working additionally within Meadowdance for private income, but again none of those has been consistent. The main limitation is time, especially since those people most in need of outside income are parents with younger children, and they have the least time to earn additional income.

Most of our initial investment came from one family. Without them we would either have had to wait longer and get more people before founding, or else start out renting a large house in a location with a decent job market. It seems to me also that this family has an unusual and brilliant commitment to cooperative living and cooperation in general, and I don't know if another family in the same position would have had enough faith to make the same investment.

We were attempting to buy our land and begin building our community from day one, but we failed to get the last permit we needed for the first piece of land we chose, and we decided that rather than fighting the town (not a good way to establish a new life) we'd go to our Plan B and live in a cooperative house in a different town first. While there's no way to tell for sure, that may have saved us: As one friend and community consultant pointed out, starting businesses at the same time you're trying to build buildings and found an intentional community is trying to do too much at once. Then again, we have a very resourceful group; we might have made it work.

About eight months before move-in we started a software testing business, and it has been earning money sporadically ever since (sometimes providing a good amount of income, sometimes none at all)—but we made very little progress with that business until some time after moving in.

So in late spring 2000—fairly close to our originally planned move-in date—we purchased a very large house in Springfield, Vermont for a good price and all moved there. After a few months at the house, we started a second business, a food-shopping and delivery service (which never got off the ground—it seems that it did not have a sufficient market), and a third, editing and proofreading business, which has regularly provided income ever since. In order to bring in needed extra cash, sometimes members have taken outside work instead of working at either of these businesses. This has generally not been as enjoyable for them compared to working at home in the community, and we stopped the outside work as soon as we were able. However, we have not yet had to all go out and get jobs, and at the moment it looks fairly likely that we never will have to (knock on wood).

Past debt has continued to plague those Meadowdancers who entered the community in debt, and yet on the whole even the person who left an enviably high paycheck behind seems to be happier living in the community than in his previous life. We've found that when community money is tight at least the worry is shared, and that when we have been running on an even keel (as we seem to have been doing for about the last 18 months), then none of us have to worry too much about getting the bills paid. Freedom from worrying about paying a myriad of bills is one of the blessings you get from either a communal or a hybrid economy. Excepting, once again, debt.

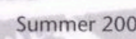
We racked up a fair amount of debt early on, when we did not have our work-requirements system in place yet *(see "Our Work-Requirement System"),* were not plugging away hard enough at the software testing business, and were sorting out the longterm members from the people who later moved on. If we had had our work-credit system in place from the beginning, we may well have had an easier time both with membership concerns (because the work-credit system very quickly turns up people who aren't able to get their work done), and with money (because it would have been obvious to us why we weren't getting in enough paying work). However, it's also probably true that part of the problem was just finding our feet.

Anyone is free to earn money at outside jobs or by working additional hours at community businesses.

We've managed our community's outside debt creatively and aggressively, relying on the good will of members with good credit ratings to secure us credit and paying off loans as energetically as possible. Relying on personal credit to help finance the community is not something I would necessarily suggest wholeheartedly, but for us it was the best compromise we could find. It has worked very well so far, both because of the specific members we have and because of the way the community has responsibly handled these obligations (thanks in large part to our Finance Committee).

In June, 2002, we closed on the purchase of a gorgeous piece of property with a near-ideal site for our community, so we now own our house in Springfield and that land, both with substantial mortgages. We're making arrangements to move out of this house and into our temporary housing near the land, where we expect to stay for a year or two (through the county permitting process and the first round of construction), and of course we'll sell the Springfield house. If we're lucky, that might give us enough of a stake to finance our initial building construction without additional outside funding. It also seems possible that now that we have land, new members with more money may show up and feel more confident about investing with us. If they don't, though, we'll eventually get the place built regardless.

Since we knew we would eventually be finding land and moving to a rural location, we based both our software testing and editing/proofreading businesses on supplying services to remote clients, and conduct them mostly over the phone and especially the Internet. We were fortunate to have access to high-speed Internet service in our cooperative house, which has



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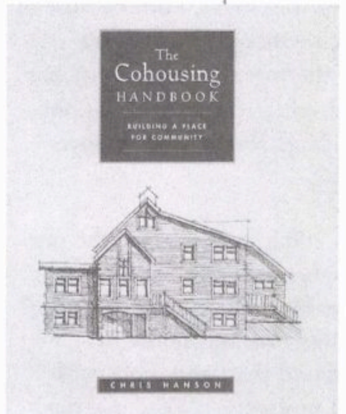

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been a marvelous boon to the businesses and a luxury that now feels like a necessity. We've had many other business ideas, and some of them (a retreat center, a private school) depend strongly on being settled in a particular area. Now that we're moving to the area where we intend to build our permanent infrastructure, we could begin those businesses if we felt ready. However, at our current size (just expanding to nine

If we had had our work-credit system in place from the beginning, we may well have had an easier time with membership concerns and with money.

adults and five children), two businesses are probably plenty. It will be a great pleasure to begin starting local businesses, however, as we can begin to offer services that help connect us with our neighbors and which involve less sedentary work. While both our current businesses are pleasant enough to work in, they also both center around sitting at a computer for long periods of time, and that's not our longterm vision for the lion's share of our work.

Our work-credit system has gone well. While one community member postulates a more ideal future situation in which each of us works for the community solely because of a sense of personal responsibility to and joy in the community (as compared to budgeting and quantifying time and tasks as we do now), whether this is realistic I don't know, although I'd like to see us try to

*(**Hybrid** continued on page 67...)*

BY KRISTEN GARDNER AND MICHAEL G. SMITH

ARYANA FARSAI

"Family Style" Income-Sharing

We began income-sharing three and a half years ago at Emerald Earth, a rural community in Northern California. At that time, three adults and one child moved onto the property, joining a single long term resident to begin reforming the community, which had been in an extended hiatus. Living expenses were low, and there were no mortgage payments since the land is fully paid for and owned by the nonprofit Emerald Earth Sanctuary. But with new people moving in there was an urgent need to build more housing and other infrastructure such as gardens, telephone, water, and power systems. The new group decided to pool their current income, labor, and skills in order to house and feed themselves more quickly and effectively. This allowed the most flexible allocation of everyone's time among many necessary tasks: construction, gardening, cooking, childcare, cleaning, maintenance, and working off-site for income.

Many people regard intentional communities as an antidote to the excesses and imbalances of industrial consumer culture. Community living encourages cooperation, sharing resources, and collective problem-solving—all underdeveloped in main stream society. Some communities take these values one step further by pooling their members' financial resources—a direct approach to equalizing wealth among members with different earning potentials. When income is shared, it becomes obvious that the only real wealth we have to share is our time and energy. Here's how we do income-sharing at Emerald Earth.

Currently we have eight adult members and two children. Six of the adults and both children are part of the income-sharing group; the two others contribute a fixed amount each month, based on an estimate of their share of food, phone bills, and other community expenses. Short-term residents and trial members don't participate in income-sharing.

Sharing incomes reflects the core of our community philosophy. We believe each person is best able to determine how much money and time he or she can contribute to the group and still balance personal and family needs. Unlike most intentional communities, we have no required number of hours that we must contribute to community projects, nor do we require members to spend a certain amount of their time earning income. We believe that sometimes the most valuable contribution someone can make to the health of the community may be reading to a child, meditating, getting a needed chiropractic adjustment, or taking a vacation.

Our ability to share money this informally is probably due to three circumstances. First, we're a small group and we're very compatible in values and needs. We trust each other's decisions about how we each allocate our time and money, so we don't have to work everything out in advance. Also, for the most part we are all physically able and enjoy contributing time and energy toward group needs, such as building, gardening, and earning outside income. And having no mortgage keeps our community expenses low. (However, our nonprofit land ownership structure brings its onset of financial benefits and challenges. See *"Nonprofit Land Ownership and Member Equity," pg.41.)*

At this point our income-sharing account covers food, rent, fuel, phone bills, automobile insurance, car repair and gas, entertainment, catastrophic health insurance, limited health care, and small personal items such as books and clothing. Overall, we are fairly successful at keeping our expenses low; our budget for eight people runs around $5,000 a month, roughly $625 per person. Certain choices based on our values, such as buying only organic food and running some of our vehicles on bio-diesel fuel, increase our expenses somewhat. Living in a remote rural setting also has its costs. For example, our only telephone option is an expensive cell phone, and using our long gravel road keeps car maintenance costs high. But mostly our lifestyle allows us to minimize costs by meeting our needs with our own labor and on-site resources. We grow much of our own produce and are continually expanding our gardens and orchards. Having an acupuncturist in the community, and until recently, a physician, has helped reduce medical expenses.

Trying to develop an economic system not based on pursuing personal wealth is challenging in a capitalist society.

Our income-sharing account does not cover the cost of travel, expensive personal items (e.g. cars), prior debt, or gifts for friends and family. Although some of us see this as a compromise to our economic ideals, we haven't come up with a practical way to reliably cover these expenses while allowing individuals the freedom to make personal choices. We're in similar circumstances to those of a family with limited resources: if unforeseen expenses arise, such as major medical expenses, we work together to figure out how to support the person in need. We are aware that we also have a wider community of friends and family who can and do help us during difficult times. The six income-sharing members contribute most, but not necessarily all, of their current income. They may retain a portion in order to build up some personal savings and to pay for items not covered by the income-sharing account. One family has no savings and needs to replace their car, for example, so they set aside part of their income each month. Another family already has adequate savings, so puts in 100 percent of their income.

Individual incomes also vary widely. At one end of the scale, our member who was a family doctor made $60per hour at the community health clinic. In

contrast, a member who cooks at the local health food store and another who teaches English as a Second Language at the adult school both make under $10 an hour. Income-sharing is one way of addressing this disparity, which we believe is based more on cultural prejudices and professional elitism than on the true value to society of different kinds of work.

Unlike many other income-sharing communities, we don't generate much of our income on-site. Most of our members have regular off-site jobs averaging two days a week. Others have a more sporadic income from teaching workshops, consulting, and book royalties. . We hold occasional workshops on natural building and permaculture, in which all community members participate as teachers, coordinators, or cooks, but these currently only bring in a fraction of our income. We plan to develop more cottage industries, but so far other kinds of development, such as building construction and permaculture projects, have taken priority for our time and resources.

Most members have regular off-site jobs averaging two days a week. Incomes vary widely—from $60 to $10 an hour.

Every six months we establish a budget and negotiate how much each person can contribute. If our projected income doesn't meet our projected expenses, we find ways to balance the budget, such as one or more members' increasing off-site work hours or everybody reducing unnecessary spending. Reducing spending is hard, since we already live very simply. But increasing our hours spent at paid jobs reduces the time we have for growing our food, building our houses, and building community. To an extent, the less we work off-site for money, the less money we need because we are able to meet more of our own needs. Leaving the community to work frequently involves buying gas for the car, eating out, and other incidental costs, while staying at home increases the amount of food we can grow and preserve.

Recently two of our highest off-site earners, one who works in construction and the other our doctor, revealed that they were both feeling dissatisfied with their work. Each wanted to reduce off-

Nonprofit Land Ownership and Member Equity

Our community land is owned by Emerald Earth Sanctuary, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. All community members make up the "land council," which uses consensus to make major decisions about the land and the community. Trial members take part in these discussions but with no decision-making ability.

The membership process takes at least a year, with three separate formal evaluations between the trial member and the community. At the end of that process, new members pay a one-time nonrefundable donation to the nonprofit as a membership or joining fee (currently $7,500, with a negotiable payment schedule). In addition, each member pays the nonprofit a relatively low monthly rent (currently $150 for full members). Membership fees and rent go into the nonprofit bank account to be spent on organizational costs and developing community infrastructure: buildings, water and electrical systems, fencing, orchards, tools and equipment, and so on. Since decisions about how these funds are spent are made by the same people who contributed the money in the first place, we experience a high degree of ownership, accountability, and transparency in our budgeting process.

Our membership fee and rent remain low not only because we have no mortgage or debt, but also because of our huge contributions of labor. Our four new residence cabins each cost between $2,000 and $4,000 ($7-10 per square foot) for example, because labor was provided by members and visitors and building materials were largely harvested on site. *(See "Many Hands Make Sustainability Work," in the Summer '02 issue.)*

However, because of our nonprofit ownership, we have no equity in the property (that is, we have no ownership rights), regardless of our contributions of cash or labor input. This is financially stabilizing for the community, because we will never need to empt your bank account or go into debt in order to reimburse the contributions of a departing member. But having no equity is a challenge for us as members. If we invest our time and money in the community and live here forever, we'll reap extensive benefits. But if any of us leave for any reason, we won't be given a check to take with us. For this reason we're considering ways to cushion departing members' re-entry into the "real world" economy.

—K.G. & M.G.S.

site work hours in order to spend more time at Emerald Earth. Some of us felt tense about the perceived conflict between individual and group needs. While we all believe that no one should have to work at jobs they dislike, and we wanted these members to feel fulfilled, we also wanted to know that we would still have enough income to cover our costs. At our budget meeting, we discussed various options for replacing the reduced incomes, and came up with several possibilities: to start adding the interest earned by members' personal savings accounts in the income-sharing account, for example, and doing more outreach to attract more participants to upcoming workshops. One member volunteered to take on more hours of off-site work, and we helped her brainstorm possible job ideas. By the end of that discussion it seemed probable that we'd be able to continue covering our expenses, so we gave both members the go-ahead to reduce their hours. There was a shared feeling of accomplishment—even elation—at having navigated some potentially stormy waters in a sensitive but realistic manner.

Of course, it isn't always smooth sailing. Since our income-sharing system has been developed over time byan evolving group, it is not completely consistent, either philosophically or practically, and this can be frustrating. We have chosen a more informal, "family style" of accounting rather than a strict accountability of every dollar spent. This requires a high level of trust. So far, we have never felt that anyone has taken advantage of the system by giving less than s/he could or taking more than s/he needed. On the contrary, the looseness of the system sometimes leads people to feel guilty that they aren't contributing "enough." Sometimes people spend personal money on items that should be covered by income-sharing, particularly if they worry that the expense might drain the account or that others might consider it a frivolous purchase. The net result is that individual savings tend to decline over time rather than building up. Sometimes we find "gray areas" where it isn't clear whether the item should be covered by income-sharing or not, and the infrequency of our budgeting meetings make these difficult to resolve. In general, most difficulties arise in perception and communication, rather than from a lack of resources. How people feel about income-sharing is essential to its success, so we try to address the feelings behind the concerns rather than develop amore bureaucratic system to give an illusion of safety and control.

"Sometimes we feel guilty that we aren't contributing enough."

On the other hand, the safety net provided by income-sharing has been real and tangible. Recently one member suffered a back injury and was not able to work off-site for several months. In other circumstances, his family might have been subject to severe financial stress and even forced to give up their housing. As it was, other community members were able to make up for his missing income fairly easily, and he was encouraged to take the time necessary to heal. Income-sharing also allows some of us to focus more of our time and energy on community development. Members with construction skills are encouraged to stay home when community building projects are underway, while others work more off-site if necessary to compensate.

Our safety net is about to face what will probably be its largest challenge to date. One family has just left the community, including the doctor who has had the highest earning potential in the income-sharing group. For the past three years, his off-site work has provided almost 40 percent of the group's income. Our current budget projections leave us cautiously optimistic about our survival as an income-sharing group. In the long term, it seems clear that devel-

oping more on-site income sources is the best way to sustain ourselves financially despite membership turnover. Trying to develop an economic system not based on the pursuit of personal wealth is challenging in a capitalist and individualist society. We have found that we each struggle sometimes to overcome our training and really embrace the idea that working for the good of the group is working for the good of the individual and vice-versa. So far, our approach of trusting each member to assess our

Unlike most intentional communities, we have no required number of labor hours.

own needs and ability to contribute time and money has worked well. At Emerald Earth we're proud to be a part of a larger movement of communities and individuals striving to develop a saner alternative to mainstream economics. Ω

With a background in nonprofit program development and administration, Kristen Gardner is currently completing her Masters degree in Organization Development, with a special interest in intentional communities and non-hierarchical social-change groups. Michael G. Smith teaches workshops on natural building and provides consultation to owner-builders. He is a co-author of The Hand-Sculpted House *and* The Art of Natural Building. *Both are members of Emerald Earth.lorax@ap.net.*

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No Funds? How One Community Did It

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

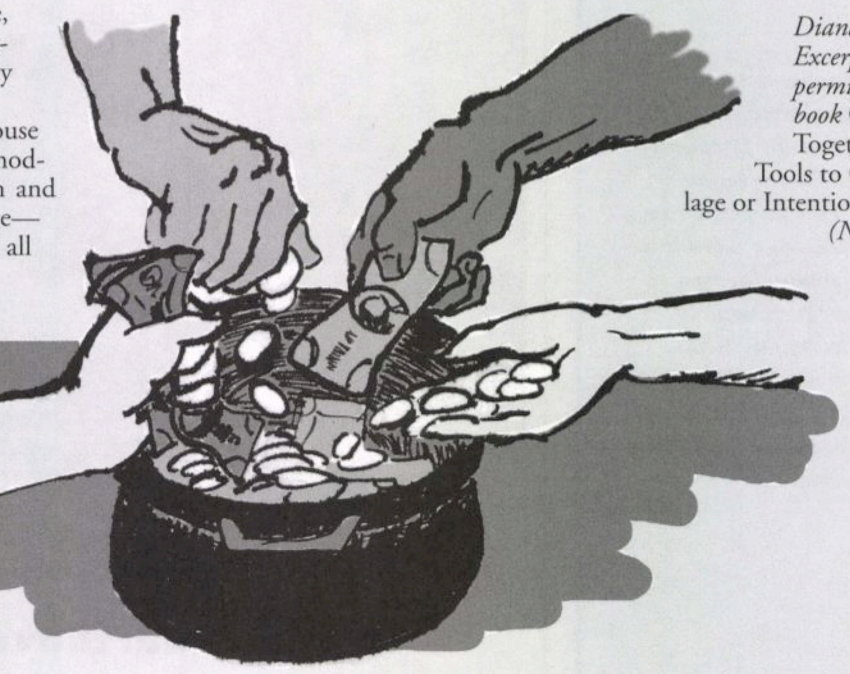
Let's say your founding community group has few assets and little or no borrowing power. Don't let that discourage you. Community activist Rob Sandelin heard the following story from a community member he met at a shared campsite.

In the early 1980s the camper and his friends dreamt of creating a community in rural Oregon, but none of them had any money. They all had jobs of one kind or another, but each household was only meeting its expenses and not saving anything, and they couldn't imagine coming up with enough money to buy land and start a community from scratch.

Then they got a simple idea: Why not all move in together and use the amount they'd save by sharing expenses as a starting stake? They drew a simple financial agreement saying they'd put the money they saved every month by sharing rent, food, utilities and other household expenses into a savings account. Although each household could withdraw their share of the money if they decided to leave, in time, their accumulated savings would be their stake to buy property in the country.

They found a large rental house in their small Oregon town, remodeled the garage as a kids' dorm and play area, and took the plunge—eight adults and four children all moved in together. They saved by buying food and household items in bulk, and by splitting rent and other living expenses. They quickly discovered that they really only needed three to four cars between them, so they sold their extra four cars and put that money into the account as well. While they learned many lessons about how to live together as a community, they managed to put away a little over $2,000 a month. To their surprise and delight, in two years' they had accumulated $50,000.

Why not all move in together and use the amount they'd save by sharing expenses as a starting stake?



However, by that time their vision had changed and they decided they liked living in their small town. So they formed a legal entity and bought a large home. They remodeled it to fit their needs and turned the yard into a large organic garden with chickens and a two milking goats.

The amount they owned on the house was low enough that after seven years they were able to pay off the mortgage. Their friends all thought they had a great thing going, so when one of the families moved out, two others bought in as new members. The community continued sharing resources and saving money and bought an RV and a boat, and even took vacations together.

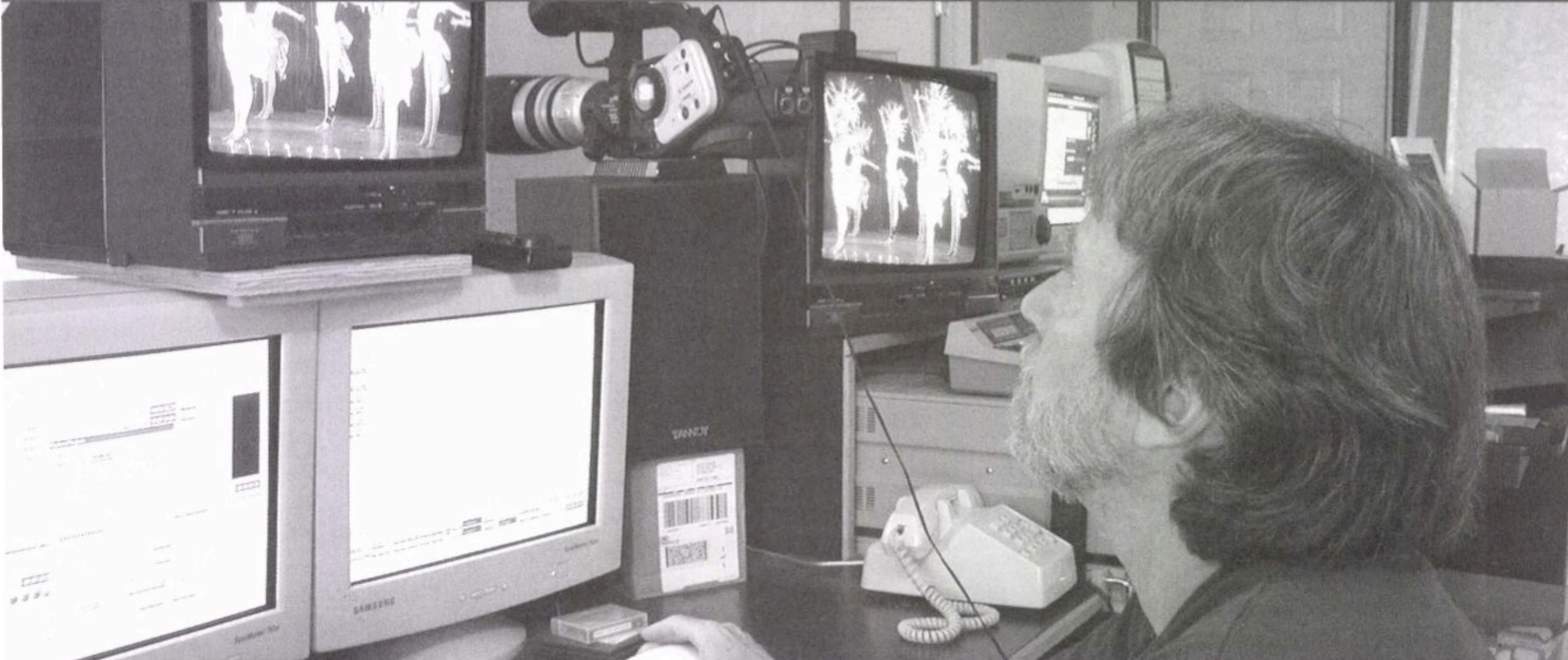
Not a bad life for folks who started off with nothing! Ω

Diana Leafe Christian. Excerpted with permission from her book Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community *(New Society Publishers, 2003).*

Inventing a Rural Economy, Business by Business

How The Farm Lost its Communal Subsidy and Formed a Stable Economy in Its Place

BY DOUGLAS STEVENSON



In 1983, when The Farm community in Tennessee changed form a communal economy to a private economy of independent incomes, we members suddenly needed to generate personal income to support ourselves. We were also expected to meet our obligation to contribute toward the maintenance and development expenses of a large community infrastructure. During this difficult transition we had many questions: Which services could the community afford now that it would have to pay people for their labor? How much was the community willing to subsidize the overhead of running those operations? Could people with valuable but highly specialized skills find employment within the community's few businesses or in the local area? How far would people be willing to drive in order to get jobs so they could still live in the community? What types of businesses and means of support could we develop from our rural location?

It can often take years to build a member-owned business so that it's truly profitable.

A Farm workshop held at a community yoga studio.

Although The Farm had undergone 10 years of pioneering development, in many ways "the Changeover" was like starting over again. The rules were different and it was time to take what we had learned and see how we could apply it to changing times. Many previously subsidized services fell by the wayside as people struggled to get on their feet. Hundreds of people left the community to seek jobs in cities around the country. After a few years our population, once 1200, stabilized at around 250. Those of us who remained had found a way to generate an income in rural, middle Tennessee, and we were committed to continued living in the community.

Located 70 miles from Nashville, few of our members have been willing to commute the hour and a half drive each way in order to take jobs there. Job opportunities in the small towns nearest The Farm have been limited as well. In the 20 years since our conversion to an individually based income, the sources for our economy have fallen into a few distinct categories: unskilled jobs, skilled jobs, and member-owned service-based, manufacturing, and mail-order businesses.

Getting Started

It can often take many years to build a member-owned business in community to the point that it is truly profitable or able to sustain a paid staff and several employees. Quite often community members must rely on outside jobs to guarantee themselves a steady income. However, by developing professional skills, individual community members can in many instances earn a better-than-average salary while avoiding the stress of starting a business. We have many members with medical degrees or professional licenses of some type, including quite a few registered nurses, a nurse practitioner, a physician's assistant, an emergency medical administrator, and a lactation consultant—services for which there is always a strong demand. Other types of outside jobs vary widely, from people who provide office and accounting services to massage therapy and legal services.

Fortunately telecommuting is now a reality. If community members can provide a service that can be delivered via the Internet or in some sort of digital form, their physical location can become irrelevant. Authors, editors, accountants, designers, and database managers can all make a living from a rural location. For over 15 years I have written articles for a magazine in California from my cabin in Tennessee. It has been nearly 10 years since my editor and I have seen each other face to face.

Quite naturally many community members rely on the building trades to earn a living. This is also one of the easiest businesses to start that can support more than one person. A van or truck, an assortment of power tools, and a few business cards can be all that's necessary to jump right into a fairly respectable income. Indeed some of our most successful community members at The Farm are people who developed their skills and reputation, and eventually became building contractors. These folks now provide work for several crews, usually managing several large building projects simultaneously. Their business has been one of our community's primary employers.

Many small business entrepreneurs will create companies that focus on a particular skill or service. From heating and cooling to computer repair, the skilled professional that can fix, install, or satisfy a need can develop a business serving the broader local community. These types of businesses usually start as sole proprietorships before expanding to need additional help and employees.

Start-Up Businesses

The costs and time it takes to build a business can vary greatly. Unless you have access to a substantial amount of money and venture capital, a community business must often begin as a "bootstrap"

operation investing a lot of sweat equity.

One good example is the business based on a craft product. Using inexpensive tools and raw materials, craft producers create their products at home, and then hit the road, displaying them at appropriate crafts fairs. Often the craftsperson spends the winter months in their shop and does most of the marketing during the warm weekends of summer. Those seeking a year-round market may move on to warmer states like Florida or the southwest during winter months. During the late 1980s The Farm's reputation was spread far and wide by a member who sold tie-dyed tee-shirts all over the South and Midwest while his family stayed at home and produced the shirts. Of course the disadvantage of the crafts business can be that this work takes the person away from home during the growing season and when the community is likely to have more of its own events and activities. The life on the road is not for everyone. Some communities, such as East Wind and Twin Oaks (so I understand), handle this by utilizing rotating crews that take turns on the road or displaying products at fairs.

While craftspeople produce products to sell, true manufacturing takes this method of generating income to a new level. The product is likely to be more complex to produce, with numerous steps or work stations, and specialized equipment may be required. Unless the company controls both production and retail sales, chances are the manufacturer will need to develop a customer base of stores that sell their product or utilize a distributor that sells a line of similar products to the appropriate retail outlets or directly to the end customers. If demand for the product is strong, the manufacturing business can rely on a few sales people that go outside the community to acquire contracts and distribution deals while most of the workers stay back at the homestead.

SE International is an electronics manufacturing firm owned by a Farm member that makes Geiger counters. The units were initially developed as part of the community's protest against nuclear power plants. Now some 20 years later, the Geiger counters are valuable tools utilized by hospitals, emergency rescue, "hazmat" (hazardous material emergency crews), and a variety of other industries. The company employs over 15 other community members in a wide range of skills, from office management and shipping to product assembly and calibration.

Mail-Order Businesses

It would seem that the mail order business is made to order for communities. Customers receive direct mail catalogs or visit a website, therefore the company's actual location isn't important. Community members working at a mail order business take phone orders or retrieve sales from "shopping carts" built into the company's website. UPS and Federal Express can deliver the company's products to the customer in a few days or even the next morning. All it takes is inventory, a healthy demand, and savvy marketing skills. However the mail-order business can take many years to develop as the company builds a reputation and a sufficient customer base. Of course there is always the risk of new and better-financed competition or that the line of products goes out of vogue. The better mail-order businesses develop loyal, repeat customers who come back to buy again and again.

The Mail Order Catalog at The Farm was started initially as a retail outlet for books produced by the community's publishing company as well as a few packaged food products. As a sideline the community members who owned and managed the company began purchasing the "seconds" of books from other publishers. Sales of these discounted books surpassed those of new, full-priced books. Later they added food products and these eventually took over as the primary revenue stream. Everyone eats but not everyone has time to go shopping or has access to specialized foods. Production, distribution, or direct sales of food and food products will always be valuable, and can be a substantial income source for a community business.

As appealing as the mail-order business might be, it is not without difficulties. Catalogs can be expensive to print. Mailing costs continue to rise. Increasingly greater amounts of catalogs must be sent out to produce a much smaller percentage of sales.

How far would people be willing to drive in order to get jobs so they could still live in the community?

Farm Midwives and Government Certification

In The Farm's early days midwifery was neither legal nor illegal. This ancient profession had all but disappeared in most of the country except for very rural areas, especially among Tennesse's small Amish community. This unrestrictive atmosphere allowed the Farm's midwives to develop their skills and reputation for 20 years. However, in the 1990s the medical establishment sought to take control of midwifery by permitting only Certified Nurse Midwives to practice. After many years of intensive lobbying by midwifery activists, in 1997 Tennessee passed a law recognizing "direct entry midwives," certified through a national program created by the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA). MANA's president for the last several years has been Farm member Ina May Gaskin.

—D.S.

Display or classified ads in specialized magazines, though expensive, may be necessary to reach a target market and let them know about the mail-order products and catalog. Initially the business owner might be required to purchase mailing lists in order to jump-start sales. Web-based catalogs have their own set of problems, primarily how to get noticed in an ever-widening sea of digital domains. Generally speaking, the print and print catalogs work best when used as two parts of a whole. The Farm's mailorder catalog company promotes their web site in their print catalog, and many people utilize their website as a convenient way to place their order.

Workshops and Education

Many communities rely on or plan to develop educational workshops and relaxing retreat facilities, thus bringing cash flow and customers directly to the community. However, it's important to match the people the community is trying to attract with the comfort level of its facilities. Is it providing individual rooms with all the amenities or will the participants be expected to camp or live in rustic conditions? There has to be a balance between the community's ability to deliver information or experiences demanded by the market, and the accommodations people are willing to accept. Generally speaking, the more rustic or dorm-like the community's accommodations, the less participants will be willing to pay. Careful planning is required to develop an operations budget and a marketing plan that brings in a sufficient number of properly targeted workshop participants.

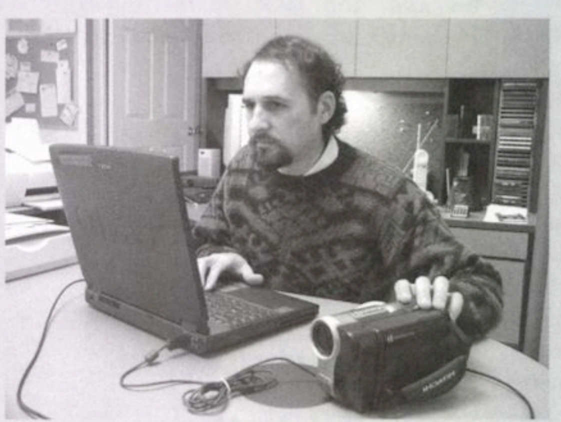
Again the marketing plan is usually based on direct mail and display advertising, catalogs, and brochures. These days, traditional forms of advertising are enhanced by the business's ability to direct interested parties to a website where they can get more information, register, and even pay by credit card.

Although we host a variety of workshops at The Farm, our midwifery assistant training programs have proven to be the most successful, probably because they are a kind of training that can be found

The Making of a Community Entrepreneur

When I came to The Farm as a youth of 19 with no real skills, I felt drawn to join the radio crew. The Farm used ham radio to communicate with its members on affiliated small farms all over the country and its relief volunteers around the world. As I studied for my ham radio license, I also learned electronics and electronics repair, and became the communications person in Guatemala for Plenty International, our community's relief and development organization.

When I returned to the States in 1980, The Farm was beginning to realize it needed to establish businesses that could really support us. Our ham radio/electronics crew designed and began producing our first Geiger counter, the "Nukebuster," confident that there would be a demand for this important safety product. I oversaw the assembly and quality control. But during that first year, although we were working really hard, we weren't generating much in the way of real dollars for the community. I grew frustrated.



The author at work at Village Media.

I wanted to change jobs, so I was assigned to work with a friend on the crew who was researching a book about a new kind of electronics hardware, the satellite dish. I recognized the potential of this new entertainment phenomenon to be developed into a business serving the local area. I loaded the dish and a home-made receiver on to a trailer and went off to the county fair in search of prospective buyers.

Two fairs later, I had sold a dish to a local radio station so they could receive news and sports from a satellite feed, a home system to a local businessman, and a four- receiver installation for our town's Holiday Inn. This was two years before our community's Changeover in 1983, when all Farm members would be required to earn their own income and support. Suddenly we (myself and my new business partner) had a real business, selling satellite systems right and left while providing training and employment for as many Farm members as possible.

At the time of the Changeover, because we'd started this community business we became its owners; we were two of the lucky members that had already figured out how to bring in an income. However, this was also a period of working 12 hour days, generally six days a week, and driving over 50,000 miles a year to sell and install our product. And although our company had over a half a million in cash flow and paid out $200,000 in salaries the second year after the Changeover, we had gotten ourselves over $50,000 in debt. We were paying off small bank loans and four vehicle notes, and driving our fleet of vehicles 200 miles a day when gas prices were going through the roof. Our whole operation started to crumble.

As the cable TV industry started scrambling their broadcast signals, sales of home satellite systems dropped significantly. My business partner left the community, and for the next several years I worked alone, providing service and maintenance for the systems that I had installed during our company's heyday. I had to consider my options. Most of my clients lived near Nashville, 70 miles away. Another satellite dealer in that location invited me to become his business partner, but it would mean moving.

nowhere else. The marketing efforts for these workshops benefit from Farm midwives having established a worldwide reputation. Attendees accept the simple accommodations without complaint and actually enjoy the bonding that takes place when sharing dormitory space. Promoted through a variety of display ads, the Farm midwives' week-long conferences are generally filled to capacity.

In our experience at The Farm, it has taken a variety of forms and approaches to create on-site member-owned businesses, both to suit the members involved and to create enough employment options for other members. This has also protected us as a community. Outside jobs come and go, and companies can rise and fall. People can get sick or experience trauma. But because our members' income sources are not based on only one type of service or product, our community economy is able to remain relatively secure and stable in spite of the roller coaster of our national economy. From the beginning, The Farm has called itself a school of change. The change from a communal economy to individual incomes has been its greatest challenge, one that continues to impact our growth and future development. Ω

Douglas Stevenson joined The Farm in 1973. He and his family spent two years in Guatemala in the late 1970s and recently worked six months in Belize volunteering with The Farm's organization Plenty International. He has served six years on The Farm's board of directors and four years as part of the membership committee. He is currently one of the community managers, organizing projects, community work-days, entertainment activities, and outreach. He owns Village Media,the company that assisted the FIC's Geoph Kozeny with his video documentary, Visions of Utopia"

Did I want leave The Farm and pursue this as a career, or continue the rural community lifestyle I loved?

About that time I ran into an old friend who had established a new career writing for some of the TV guide magazines that served the home satellite market. He introduced me to his editor at a trade show, and I agreed to write for the publishing company's trade journal for the home satellite dish industry. I wrote from my hands-on experience, providing how-to information on installing antenna towers and mini cable systems. Buoyed by this new form of supplemental income, I approached other trade magazines serving home satellite dish owners. I started spending less time on the road and more days at home, banging out words on one of the earliest home computers.

maybe I could make money with video

However these magazines were also feeling the downturn of the home satellite industry, and in an effort to follow the changing whims of the consumer marketplace, one publisher changed its focus to a new electronics device attracting a lot of attention, the video camcorder. "No problem," I said. "I can write about those." So I went out and purchased a camcorder and started writing about videoing my kids, videoing family vacations, how to edit home videos, and how people were using camcorders to make money.

I was intrigued. Maybe I could make money with video. I started reinvesting the profits from my satellite work into professional video equipment. I got lucky when I landed a job documenting a Farm member's reconstruction of a log cabin for the Army Corps of Engineers. His contract specified that the entire project had to be documented in video and with still pictures. I used the money I made from this job for my first video editing gear.

I got my biggest break when I became the advertising production company for the cable company serving three nearby towns. I started shooting and editing three to five commercials a week for local car dealers, furniture stores, and all kinds of local small businesses. I started to have enough work to take on a new business partner. In addition to commercials, he and I also produced industrial marketing and training videos, and other small projects. Things were going along well, when all of a sudden the cable service, which was owned by a corporation in another state, decided to do all of their video production in their own in-house facility. Overnight we lost $50,000 a year in business.

It was hard, but we survived. I was still writing three or more articles a month, so we had some steady money coming in. Then I discovered a new technology on the horizon, the Internet. I took on my first job designing a web page before I even had the software in hand to get it done. For the next several months I buried myself in graphics and electronic shopping carts, learning by creating my own online catalog and building websites for a few local businesses and Farm-based nonprofits.

It's now been nearly 20 years now since the Changeover. Being in business for myself has had its ups and downs, both in terms of stress and income. However, it has also given me the freedom to choose my own hours and take time off when I needed to—in short, to control my own destiny. I've been the dad who could go on the school trips. I took the family back to Guatemala. I didn't have to ask for days off during the holidays. I could become more involved in our community, serving on The Farm's board of directors and organizing several small festivals. I've never had to punch a clock or wear a tie.

These days I write magazine articles, create and maintain web sites, and work on multimedia and video projects that interest me. My pace is a lot slower. I hardly ever leave The Farm. Many people have chosen a profession and then let that work lead them through life. I got to choose the intentional community I wanted and discovered the work that allowed me to live here.

—D.S.

Simple Gifts and Good Food

How the Fabulous Food Folks Save Money at Songaia

BY NANCY LANPHEAR

It's six o'clock, and you can hear the beloved Quaker song rising from the Common House at Songaia Cohousing in Bothell, Washington before everyone sits down for the evening meal: "'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free. . . . ." It's been over a year since our food committee, the Fabulous Food Folks, was put in charge of the community food pantry and common meals, and we're proud of how much money we've saved members while providing delicious, nutritious food.

We serve five common meals a week, and stock our community pantry, from which our 37 members can take any food items they need for preparing meals at home, for $80 per month per adult member. (Yes, that's per month.) The fee for children is $5 per year of the child's age; for example, a three-year-old is $15. I believe it's possible for members to live well on our community-purchased food alone, without needing to purchase additional food, although of course they can and often do. Obviously it's a lot cheaper to live a community lifestyle when it has a well-organized food system like this.

Our emphasis is on good, nutritious, economical food—and organic wherever possible within our budget. Besides the food for community meals, we stock the community food pantry with many items we know our members might want to prepare breakfasts, lunches, and weekend dinners at home. Pantry items include naturally-nested eggs, cereals, fruit, vegetables, cheese, organic yogurt, milk, butter, margarine (and dairy alternatives), organic grains, pulses, and beans, pasta, noodles (wheat and non-wheat), spices, free-range ground turkey and occasionally chicken, tofu, tempeh, peanut butter, fruit juices, rice cakes, tuna fish, tomato sauces and pastes, crackers, pretzels, condiments, and more. We buy most of our bread from a day-old bakery. We buy organic whenever possible, and include our own homegrown organic veggies and fruits.

Only three committee members regularly purchase the food, in order to keep our knowledge up-to-date and our purchases consistent, and we buy from the four or five regular locations in our area that sell products in bulk and carry the best buys. Often we check out new locations for

specialty items and are on the lookout for new wholesale opportunities, especially when organic items are available at good prices. We clip coupons, study the newspapers, and call stores on the phone for the best bargains and to find the sale items of the week. Lettuce and broccoli are costly in February through March, for example, but each week one store uses lettuce or broccoli as their lead sales item. Buying in bulk and using leftovers for lunches at home or at work are two other keys to success. In fact, community members have reported that their coworkers are quite envious of the wonderful aromas emanating from the microwave when they reheat their Songaia leftovers.

People outside the community say we have an enviable, one-of–a-kind service.

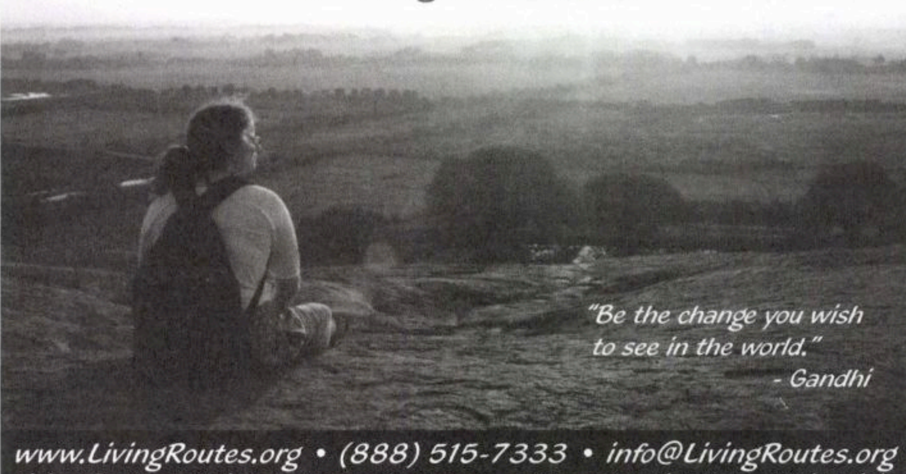
We always ask for community input on how we can improve the program and include more healthy meals, such as those with a lower fat content and less carbohydrates. We want to make sure that people feel they're getting their money's worth.

Of course issues and questions have arisen as we developed our food program. Since eating meals in the Common House or choosing foods from the community pantry isn't mandatory, does everyone need to participate in the tasks? For example, does each person need to cook? (Each Songaia member chooses to either cook or clean up after dinner once each week—and I'm happy to say that's working well.) Can members really have the food they need and want? (They seem to.) Will children get enough to eat from the common meals and the pantry? (So far, Yes.)

My passion at Songaia has been to enable this food service to work, and I and other food committee members have spent many hours planning, shopping, monitoring supplies, and cleaning freezers and refrigerators to support the process. Since the beginning of our food program we have heard from people outside the community that we have an enviable, one-of–a-kind service—meaning that our food system has become a demonstration model for others. This is wonderful, since one of my dreams is to find a way that neighborhood community centers might create similar programs for residents with low incomes—who often pay more for their food because of their difficult circumstances. Songaia's Fabulous Food Folks have created a model that makes sense. Our experiment of simplifying the planning, purchasing, storing, and cooking of food for many families by doing it cooperatively has worked, thanks to the energy, time, and intention of each and every community member. It truly is "a gift to be simple."

Nancy Lanphear is a founding member of Songaia Cohousing Community, where she and her husband Fred have lived for 13 years.

ecovillage education



Ecovillages: Living with Fewer Trade-offs

BY MANDA GILLESPIE

I grew up poor in America. As my family rose up the economic ladder we also moved across a geographic spectrum—from the city to the country and then to the suburbs. When living in the city, we were acutely aware of the economic trade-offs. My brothers and sisters and I fantasized what it would be like to have fields, barns, and large gardens to play in. As we picked up broken glass from around our struggling vegetables in the vacant lot next door, it was easy to see the problems living in the city.

Three years later, I bent over zucchinis the size of small dogs in our sprawling garden in the country and contemplated the problems of this life. The night before at the county fair someone had called me a "nigger lover" as I sat in a gondola holding hands with my biracial brother. The isolation, the intolerance of some country residents, and the long drives to the grocery store or school were the costs that went along with the affordable farmhouses, friendly neighbors, and gorgeous gardens of this land.

When my family moved to a sprawling suburb between the city and the country, I mostly found the worst of both worlds. We were even more isolated and more outside the social norm, we could neither ride our bikes to a corner store nor to the river to swim and play. There weren't any other mixed-race families to associate with or exciting cultural opportunities to escape to. From this vantage point both the city and the countryside became more attractive and the suburbs too costly.

There were other costs of these three locations—the money spent on buying and maintaining homes, the city taxes, the traffic, daycare, school taxes, and more. But, when I look back, it is the less tangible trade-offs that I remember most—time with or without our mother, friends made or lost, gardens tended or neglected. It is no wonder that in my adult life I have traveled the world looking at the ways people value their home locations, and asking: "What does it really cost us to live in the places we call home?"

We seldom ask this question, or at least we don't ask it completely. I believe at least three kinds of costs are associated with the place we live:

1. Our own household costs.
2. The public sector costs to sustain our community.
3. The less quantifiable social costs of our communities.

We often think about the first kind, our household costs. I consider the cost of buying and maintaining a home every time the roof leaks or my windows need repairing. Likewise, we might begin to think about public sector costs when a school levy raises our property taxes or a highway threatens our property values. But there are few tools

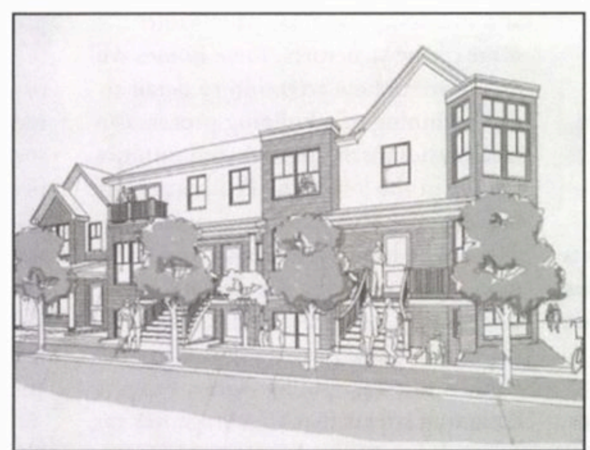
to help us understand the true public costs of building and maintaining the infrastructure of our communities and even fewer examine the related social costs.

Household costs are theoretically easiest to measure. Where you live affects your cost of housing, your job opportunities and income potential, and many other line items in your household budget. Though these costs can be fairly straightforward, most households still do not fully calculate the trade-offs. For example, you may choose to move from the urban core to the suburbs for lower housing prices, lower taxes, and lower car insurance costs. But you may end up with additional expenses for childcare, food, or recreation. And, most likely, in the suburbs you will end up with much higher transportation costs as you commute farther to work. According to a recent study, "Driven to Spend," by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, the average household spends 18 cents out of every dollar just getting around. Most American families spend more on driving than on health care, education, or food, and in some sprawling metro areas, more than on housing as well.

Where you live also affects the public costs to sustain your larger community. When moving to a new suburb, through taxes and home prices, the entire community pays to develop the new roads, build new schools, extend sewer, water and power lines, and duplicate services that already exist in other parts of the metropolitan area. In some cases a developer might pay to develop the road or the water and sewer in the new development, but most of the costs are paid for either directly or indirectly by the city, and therefore by the taxpayers. It is the city that pays for the interchange before the new developments spring up, the city that usually maintains the roads after they're built. The city is also responsible for building new schools when children move into the new homes, and it may even have to upgrade sewer treatment facilities because of the demands of many new households. These costs are often not considered when looking at the price of a housing development, and, as taxpayers, these costs are paid by all of us.

Even greater are the indirect community costs related to where you live. For instance, if you live in a community that makes it necessary for your household to have a car—or more likely, multiple cars—the taxes and other public costs for this extend far beyond the transportation costs that you'll notice in the size of your car payment.

What price tag do we put on our time?



If you take into account the pollution and waste associated with the production, use, and disposal of an automobile, as well as the complete costs of the oil it uses as fuel, the initial cost of a typical car would be close to $100,000 and a tank of gas would be $250, according to some estimates. If we are paying so much less at the car dealer and the pump now, who is making up the difference? We all are. We pay tax dollars to fund hazardous-waste clean-ups. We pay subsidies to the oil industry and taxes to the military to defend foreign oil fields. And after we've paid these hidden costs our children will continue to pay tomorrow in the form of lost environmental capital. Transportation is not the only example—we are also paying for loss of farmland and loss of water and air quality, and for our dependence on oil and coal for energy—all associated with where we choose to live.

The social costs associated with where we live are the most nebulous, but they are the most directly related to our well-being. If so many people flee the cities that they become disinvested shells, and sprawling suburbs become monotonous seas of congested traffic, who will pay the costs of social isolation and alienation, a degraded sense of safety, and disconnection from nature? What price tag do we put on our time—the increased hours spent commuting between work and home, juggling children's needs, and getting between restaurant, grocery store, school, and home? Just because we don't measure these costs in the Gross Domestic Product doesn't mean they aren't real. We're already paying the price. Our children will continue paying it.

Ideally, neighborhoods can be designed or retrofitted so they don't force us into these unfortunate trade-offs. But today many people feel forced to spend more money, use more resources, and waste more time in order to feel a greater sense of safety. Or they compromise access to nature in favor of shorter commutes and the opportunity to walk to the grocery store. Many of us are beginning to realize that these trade-offs are more than simply annoying, since they compromise our natural environment and erode the fabric of healthy family and social connections.

Is it possible to create places to live where the trade-offs are less drastic? I believe aspiring ecovillages are an answer. Ecovillages—intentional communities dedicated to creating and demonstrating ecological, social, economic, and spiritual sustainability—take many forms, from rural to urban, from small experiments to large districts in transition, and exist in many cultures and geopolitical climates. All have made a commitment to model community development while considering how present actions affect future generations.

Ecovillages in cities address the costs typically associated with urban living. The group that formed Los Angeles Eco-Village, for example, originally planned to move to a reclaimed urban greenspace, but ended up staying in an older, diverse neighborhood in central L.A. and working to show how the ecovillage concept can be applied to an already established neighborhood. LAEV residents promoting sustainability have begun to influence neighbors around them through activities ranging from shared meals and bicycle activism to creating neighborhood gardens and a housing co-op. Learning from this model, the Cleveland EcoVillage started in a similar kind of older, diverse neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio, and has engaged the wider community in planning for its own future, including building the city's first "green" multi-family dwelling. By using advanced framing techniques, reducing building waste, working with local suppliers, designing for extreme energy efficiency, and incorporating solar panels into some of the structures, these homes will demonstrate how attention to detail at the beginning of a building process can save both households and communities money in the long run. The homes will heat and cool for less than a dollar a day, saving homeowners and renters money and reducing the demand on community resources. Both of these urban ecovillage projects have also worked to create public spaces. From designing streets that encourage less car use and slower speeds to creating more green space, urban ecovillages often reduce the trade-offs usually associated with city living.

What does it really cost us to live in the places we call home?

A suburban ecovillage demonstrates that it's possible to reduce the cost of developing greenfield areas. At the 176-acre EcoVillage at Ithaca, one and a half miles from downtown Ithaca, New York, people live in the first of five planned adjacent cohousing neighborhoods, and the second neighborhood is under construction. As in other cohousing communities, residents at Ecovillage at Ithaca own their own smaller-sized individual housing units as well a large Common House and other common spaces for shared meals, meetings, laundry, gardening, and recreation. And Ecovillage at Ithaca residents are members of the CSA (community supported agriculture) farm on their land, and preserve 80 percent of their land as undeveloped greenspace. All these shared resources save residents both time and money.

Aspiring ecovillages exist in the countryside as well. At Dancing Rabbit in Missouri, Earthaven in North Carolina, and the Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm community in Tennessee, people are learning and demonstrating ways to live and work with fewer trade-offs as they create rural ecovillage models.

Ecovillage projects explore new ways of organizing community so as to reduce the costs to the individual, to society, and to the Earth. As more people begin to understand the costs associated with the places we call home, we can begin to redesign local and federal laws, rethink land-use decisions, and rebuild our economies in such a way as to make it easier and more affordable to live well. I hope that the result of all this work will be that I will be able to raise my children in communities where the economic trade-offs are less extreme. And as for my grandchildren, I want them to live in a world where all communities are ecovillages.

Manda Gillespie is Project Manager for EcoCity Cleveland in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, managing the organization's involvement with the Cleveland EcoVillage. She was recently appointed to the Council of ENA (Ecovillage Network of the Americas), as a representative of the East United States. 216-939-7998; manda@ecocitycleveland.org.

Magicians and guests interrupt lunch on the front porch for a group photo. HILARY HUG

Can We Afford Not To?

BY HILARY HUG AND ROBIN BAYER

Can we afford to live in community?

Can we afford not to? Can we afford to spend more money and work more hours than are required for simple material comfort? Can we afford to make unnecessary demands upon other people or on the rest of the environment? Or to forgo the insights and support of caring friends who know us as only those who live with us can?

At Magic, a residential service-learning community in Palo Alto, California, we live comfortably by North American standards, and luxuriously by global standards. We do this on less than half the average per capita income in our area, and with less than half the per capita pollution and resource depletion of an average US resident. We earn our livelihoods by studying and teaching how people can learn to apply ecological principles to further the common good, and enjoy round-the-clock access to each other's thoughtful counsel. We can afford all this by living in community.

"Homeless Population Hits All-time High." "Housing Shortage Worsens." "Home Ownership Beyond Reach." You've seen the headlines. As more and more people crowd onto the Earth, resources sufficient to house every individual or couple in a suburban home are simply unavailable. William Rees of the University of British Columbia estimates that we would require on the order of ten more Earths to support all six-plus billion of us in the current American lifestyle.

Sharing housing can help improve personal well-being, reduce social inequality, and protect environmental quality. Renting or purchasing a four-bedroom home or apartment is less than four times as expensive as renting or purchasing four comparable one-bedroom dwellings. Providing a kitchen and bathroom for every bedroom increases environmental impacts and labor burdens as well.

Consider, for example, effects of seven adult and two three year-old residents sharing one bathroom in our community, often with one or more overnight guests, and with as many as two dozen daytime visitors. Homebuilding costs in our locale are $250-300 per square foot. Even a modest bathroom can entail a $15,000-30,000 investment.

The average US household contains between two and three occupants, and between one and two bathrooms. Because at Magic we lay claim to fewer than "our share" of bathrooms—about one tenth of a bathroom per person instead of one half—we've avoided $100,000 of capital expenditures. With that amount we can generate an inflation-adjusted $4,000 of annual income without drawing down principal!

We also reap savings by cleaning one, rather than five bathrooms. Cleaning each of four bathrooms for one to two hours per week requires 200-400 hours per year. At current hourly wages in our area, that labor is worth at least another $4,000 annually.

With the global average wage less than a dollar an hour and the average work week more than fifty hours, the $8,000 per year reduction in capital and maintenance expenditures we achieve by sharing a bathroom is enough to support three people in full-time public service!

To make floor, walls, pipes, wires, mirror, tile, toilet, sink, and so on for a bath-

room, we cut trees, mine ore, pump oil, and more. We burden the environment with everything from greenhouse gases to toxic waste. To wrest the ton of materials in a small bathroom and its fixtures from the Earth, humans process ten or more tons of raw materials, most of which we turn to waste. By sharing a bathroom in our community we reduce our waste by forty tons!

HILARY HUG

Heather coaches Jen and Hil in dental hygiene.

We've applied "bathroom" savings towards purchasing our home, and we've loaned money and provided tenants below-market-rate lease-option agreements to assist others in purchasing theirs. We've supported ourselves and others in work aimed at furthering common good. And we've slept, danced, exercised, read, sung, and cared for children with life energy not spent in building and maintaining bathrooms or working to earn money to pay others to do these tasks..

What do we "give up" for these savings? Mostly privacy and convenience. To the extent that we're willing to see and be seen while bathing or using the toilet, we surrender only privacy, because we rarely want the toilet or shower at exactly the same time as someone else, and we can easily share the sink. In fact, the Magic shower and toilet are each in use less than two of every twenty-four hours.

Surprising as it may seem, we're coming to view loss of privacy as a benefit. As each of us endured or imposed the unnecessary inconvenience of waiting, we've had impetus to question why we extract and pay that price. Sitting on the toilet we've asked, "Why do I think of using the toilet as something to hide?" Standing in the shower we wonder, "Why do I conceal my naked self?"

Increasingly, we see desire for privacy as a cue that we're being dishonest—that we're laboring to maintain a distinction between the personae we present to others and the persons we are. We're learning to distinguish privacy, by which we seek to prevent others from knowing us, from solitude, by which we aim to know ourselves better, and to redirect energy and other resources we once wasted pursuing the former to ensure that all of us have adequate access to the latter.

Such shifts in consciousness and behavior, in which we move from lack of awareness, to insight, to transformative action, are a benefit of community living that most people see dimly, if at all, and that we at Magic ponder how to value accurately. What is it worth to be more relaxed, open, and honest? To be more effective and satisfied as parent, worker, or friend? To avoid illness and injury? To simply feel better?

A half dozen friends eat supper on Magic's front porch after practicing hatha yoga together in a nearby park. Persimmons are ripening near the porch, and ripe plums and apricots fall from other trees nearby. In the back yard another half dozen diners engage in lively conversation about habitat stewardship fieldwork they just completed. In the kitchen two latecomers serve themselves salad from a counter laden with fresh organic produce and breads from local bakeries while two others take up pasta, tomato sauce, and vegetables from pots steaming on the stove. Children roam from one group to the other, posing questions, climbing on laps, and sampling fare from those willing to share. It's dinnertime at Magic.

What do we "give up" for these savings? Mostly privacy and convenience.

Food service affords another excellent example of how community living can yield both lower costs and higher quality of life. We've only one stove and two refrigerators to purchase and clean. One person shops for all. Because we use relatively large volumes of food quickly, we can take fuller advantage of "specials" and consume marked-down bruised and damaged items before they spoil. We purchase beans, grain, and so on in bulk from a wholesaler who delivers them to our door. One or two community members, often aided by guests, cook and clean up each night. The rest enjoy a catered meal at home with friends. Drawing on our individual social circles we provide each other a rich diversity of visitors with whom we share ideas and feelings.

In a shared kitchen as in a shared bathroom, we find thorns as well as roses. Our cooks burn an entrée or serve dinner late. Someone breaks the stove by using too much force and too little thought, and all suffer.

As we experience these events together, we become partners in shouldering responsibility, refraining from blame, accepting self and others, and thinking prospectively about how we can live better and contribute to others' doing so. We become enriched.

In almost any aspect of life at Magic a keen observer can see additional benefits of community. Seven adults in the US each living alone, typically pay for seven phone lines. They either answer their phones, let a machine do it, or miss their calls. At Magic we share two lines. We take calls for each other, serving callers and called, and becoming better acquainted with each other's family and friends in the process. For being each other's personal assistants, each enjoys the services of several personal assistants.

A high-speed Internet connection costs less and is faster and more reliable than seven dial-ups. Our single utility bill is a fraction of what we would pay if each of us lived alone. We've one washer and one dryer to purchase and maintain. We clean and repair less than two thousand square feet of floor space, including workspace, and we service one, rather than two or five or seven, of everything from an ax to a zoom lens. Our pooled tools, books, vehicles, musical instruments, recreational equipment, etc. are so extensive that friends and neighbors regularly borrow from us. The list goes on and on.

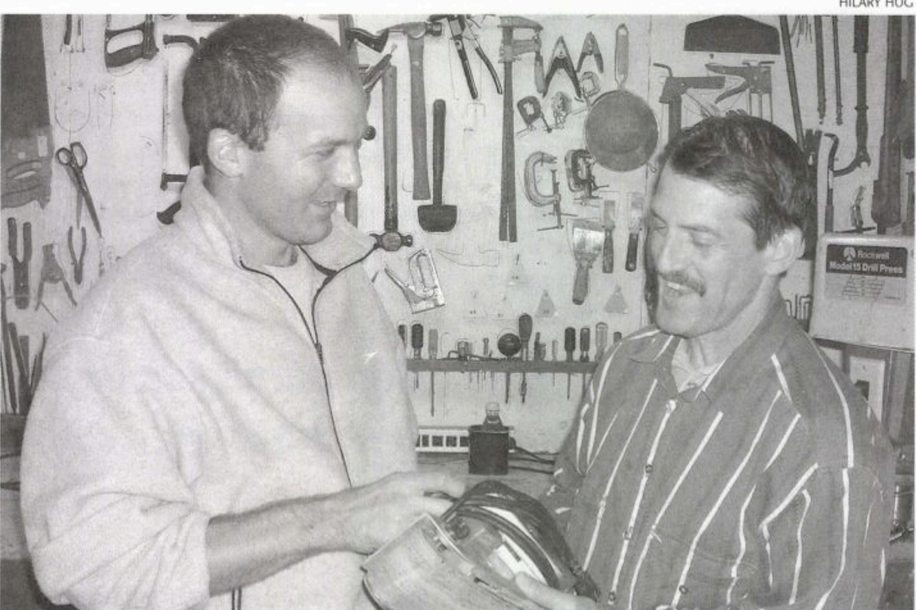
At Magic we consider the psychological benefits of community living to be even greater than the material benefits. Many people have difficulty understanding this, because they've only experienced relatively "unintentional" community.

Most of us grow up with parents and siblings acquired by chance. We live in dorms, barracks, fraternities, or sororities where we share only transient or shallow purpose with those around us. We form households of economic convenience by necessity, rather than by choice. We bring to all of the above settings much of the consciousness of "take as much as you can, and give only what you must" which is a guiding principle for participation in the commercial exchange economy in which we are increasingly immersed.

We're shaping a community in which each of us can give more, be freer in giving, and in an apparent paradox, get more out of life even while demanding less of each other and the world around us.

With single-parent and single-occupant households among the fastest growing census categories in the US. we are losing a critical context for knowing and being known. Who can be surprised that so many people feel lonely, disaffected, alienated, afraid, and overwhelmed? Who can doubt that community can play a role in both preventing and curing anomie?

HILARY HUG



Franklin, a neighbor, returns Magic belt sander to Chris.

By sharing tears and laughter, concerns and triumphs in our community, we appreciate self and others more fully and deeply. We discern more clearly how each of us feels and projects, and we learn to allay fear with love. We become more adept at giving and receiving love at home and in other settings.

Do we sometimes find this difficult? Of course. When David failed to secure the proper building permit, he wished more than once that it were his own little secret, rather than a "public" failure. Is that really what he wants? To carry the burden of pretending to be a person who's above making such errors? In the end he thought he gained more by coming clean.

What is it worth to be more relaxed, open, and honest?

Our living and dining rooms are dark, and we've moved our furniture onto the porch. Music fills the air with Paul Simon on the stereo, Jeffrey on keyboard, Kent on guitar, Liz and Martin on drums, and kids clacking and jingling assorted rhythm instruments. People dance alone, in pairs, and in groups. There's an easy flow to the scene.

Community living is cheap fun. A night in a club for seven adults is at least a hundred-dollar undertaking. It can entail travel, childcare, tickets, and the possibility that music, food, or other patrons may be little to our liking.

When we party at Magic, we're without any of these costs and concerns, and we easily include a dozen or so neighbors and friends in our fun. With a weekly dance party we save $5,000-10,000 a year, and give this much or more value to our guests.

Though our community members and many others are seeking to rehumanize commerce, the money economy remains a realm in which crying needs go unfulfilled and multitudes are disadvantaged. We perceive that by giving more freely to each other, we begin to remedy these ills.

Over the past several days, Dave fixed Hilary's bike, Hilary cared for Robin's daughters, Robin paid Daniel's bills and balanced his checkbook, and Daniel took phone messages for Dave. These

services are likely to be valued at quite different rates in the marketplace. People concerned with keeping track of such discrepancies devote an enormous amount of life energy to doing so—life energy unavailable to render other services.

Robert Axelrod, a biologist who has studied cooperation, has observed that humans and other animals are more likely to cooperate when we expect to interact in the future. By living together we ensure such future interaction. As we become more aware of our common humanity, we look for ways to give more, and take less, both within Magic and without. We live our days remembering that the less resources we channel into keeping track of who gets what, the more we have available to increase what everyone gets.

We think of money as "soft" guns, a way to command others in which underlying power relationships are made less visible. When we enlarge the money-free realm of our lives, we strip away camouflage. We see more accurately what we give and what we take, and from whom. We reduce our reliance upon those who ask that we compromise our commitment to common good, and upon people all over the world who compromise theirs to serve us because they fear the consequences of refusing to do so.

As we grow and diversify our community, we create additional opportunities for generating and receiving goods and services within it. We can shape interaction with each other and with people elsewhere to reflect the value we place upon consensuality and freedom. This restructuring of our social relationships is an essential element of what we consider our spiritual path.

Community living is cheap fun.

Although we've touched upon how we at Magic secure food, shelter, communication, recreation, and personal and spiritual fulfillment, we feel that we've only begun to describe the benefits we reap by living together. We find the experience of intentional community immensely enriching, even in its most difficult moments. As we look at current trends in population, resource use, environmental degradation, cultural evolution, and individual well-being, we see intentional community as a viable, perhaps necessary strategy to slow our collective impoverishment, and to maybe even someday realize age-old, near universal aspirations to prosperity and well-being for all. Ω

Hilary Hug and Robin Bayer, who hold degrees from Stanford in Human Biology and Civil Engineering respectively, have each lived at Magic for more than a decade, where they teach how people can apply ecology to become healther, more cooperative,and better stewards of the environment. They are co-mothering Robin's three-year-old twin girls.

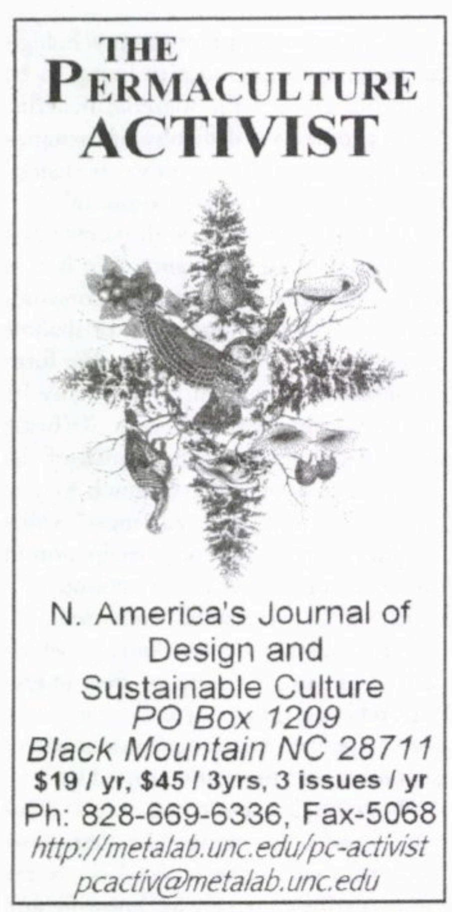
NEW COHOUSING IN MICHIGAN

For more information about Honey Creek or Great Oak, call Nick at 734-663-5516.
For information about Lansing, call 517-337-3116.

Michigan is now home to three new cohousing communities being developed in Ann Arbor and Lansing. Honey Creek and Great Oak are 36-unit developments on the west side of Ann Arbor, and Greater Lansing is a 36-unit project near East Lansing.

The Ann Arbor sites are minutes from downtown, with ponds, vistas and convenient highway access. The wooded Lansing site is close to the Michigan State campus, bus lines and many parks. Units are still available in all communities.

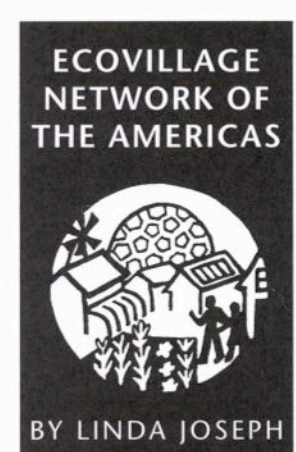
Lansing Cohousing



Growing Our Grassroots Network Sustainably

The Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) is a network of networks—people in South, Central, and North America acting locally, regionally. and globally to help create a truly sustainable world.

In the mid-1990s our organization was just a concept held by a handful of people throughout the Americas. We shared a common vision of connecting individuals, communities, and organizations to leave a healthy environmental, social, and spiritual legacy for future generations. In early encounters with one another, that concept was ignited to a spark by our shared ideals and activism.



By 1997, we had convened a Steering Committee, and over the next two years learned how to build the connections between grassroots folks interested in creating ecovillages, to aid their separate interests and for their mutual benefit. In 1999 we launched a healthy international network. Our ENA Council had participants from nine regions encompassing all of the Americas: Southern South America, Northern South America, Brazil, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, West United States, East United States, Canada, and a "mobile ecovillage" region—activists traveling in the Americas, sharing ecovillage principles and practices wherever they go.

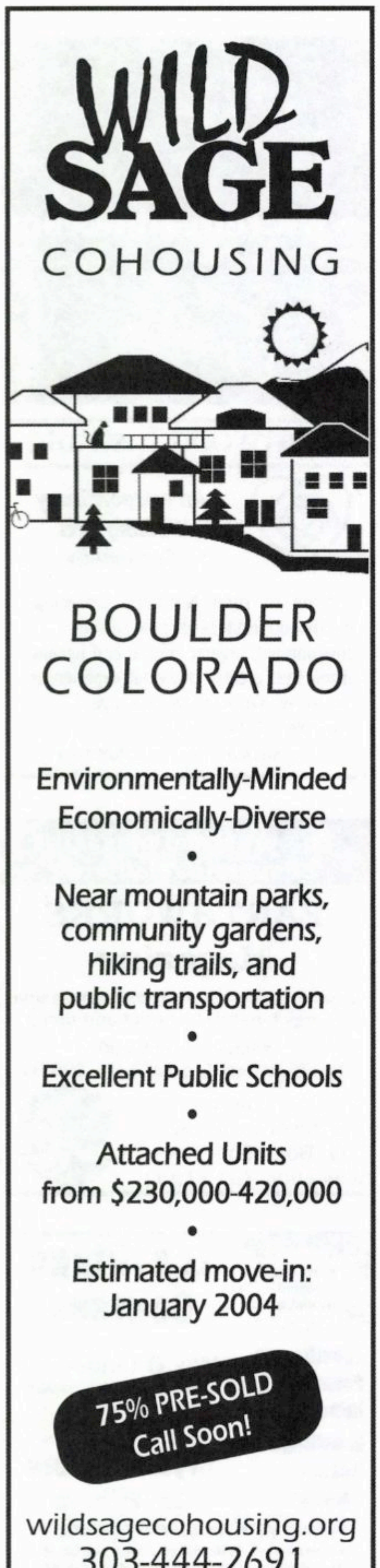
Meant to incorporate anyone with the ecovillage calling, and with ever-increasing participation from Canada to Argentina, our form and identity have emerged—today ENA is a thriving entity coming into its own.

We committed in our charter document to organizational and interpersonal innovations. Our Steering Committee seeded ENA's first Council with volunteers willing to serve as place-holding representatives of their regions until increasing numbers of participants in each chose their own Council representatives. Building a grassroots

Linda Joseph is Coordinator of ENA's central office and lives at EarthArt Village in Moffat, Colorado. ena@ecovillage.org; www.ecovillage.org.

Manda Gillespie: manda@ecocitycleveland.org; EcoCity Cleveland; www.ecocity-cleveland.org.

Daniel Greenberg: daniel@ic.org; Living Routes, www.LivingRoutes.org.



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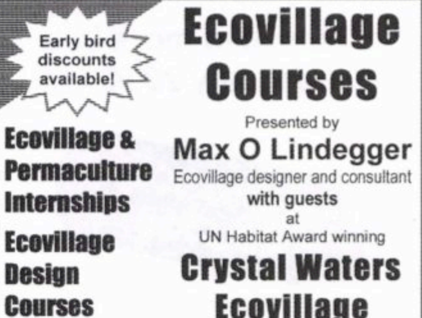

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foundation in the various regions is progressing, each at its own pace. This year the East US region became the first to conduct a region-wide effort to select two new representatives to the ENA Council . Since ENA's birth three years ago, Jeff Clearwater, formerly of Sirius Community in Massachusetts, and Corinna Bloom, who lives in Burlington, Vermont, have served us well as the place-holder representatives for the East US. Recently Jeff and Corinna stepped down, providing the opportunity for this region to select its new representatives. Although uncharted territory when we began, the process was inspiring, rewarding. and fun. With support from core ENA activists in both the West and East US, we conducted a Call for Candidates. Four excellent candidates came forward, and we are grateful for their enthusiasm and all the good work they are already doing to help create a sustainable world.

We shared a common vision to leave a healthy environmental, social, and spiritual legacy for future generations.

We are happy to announce the new ENA East US Council representatives chosen by ENA members in the region: Manda Gillespie and Daniel Greenberg.

Manda is Project Manager of EcoCity Cleveland in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, managing that organization's involvement with the Cleveland EcoVillage, an urban redevelopment project on Cleveland's west side. The project brings together principles of green building, transit-oriented development, and the best of the New Urbanism movement. Manda writes and assists in the production of the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* and educational resources, and manages development, membership, intern programs, and volunteers.

Daniel has studied and directed community-based educational programs for over 12 years. He wrote his doctoral thesis on "Education within Contemporary Intentional Communities," and has visited and corresponded with over 200 intentional communities in the United States. He is experienced in directing college-level semester programs, and has developed curricula on sustainable community development, deep ecology, ecological auditing, and systems thinking. Today he's executive director of Living Routes, an organization that creates college-level programs in ecovillages worldwide. Daniel is a member of Sirius Community in Massachusetts.

All of us at ENA congratulate Manda and Daniel. We are so pleased to have them, not only as the newest representatives on the ENA Council, but also as pioneers in our process of growing our grassroots organization sustainably, and helping strengthen the network of ecovillage activists in the Americas.

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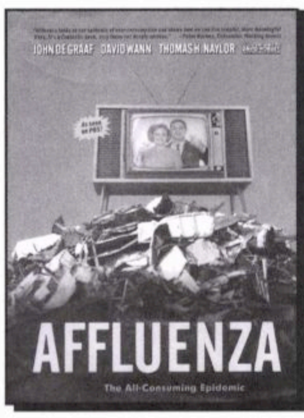

Affluenza The All-Consuming Epidemic

by John de Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 2001
Hb., 268 pp., $24.95

Reviewed by Doug Wingeier

Growing out of two recent PBS documentaries *(Affluenza* and *Escape from Affluenza*), this book uses the metaphor of a disease or addiction to tackle a serious subject: the damage done—to our health, families, communities, and environment—by the obsessive quest for material gain. The authors show that problems such as loneliness, rising debt and bankruptcies, longer working hours, environmental pollution, family conflict, and rampant commercialism, are actually symptoms of this disease.

The authors define Affluenza as "a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more." Their stated aim is "to encourage a national dialogue about the American consumer dream." They trace the root of the malady to "the obsessive quest for economic expansion that has become the core principle of 'the American dream.'"

They describe the situation this way: "We in the United States have the best gas prices, awful weather, continued economic growth, persistent poverty, consumer confidence, spiraling debt. All are connected. In each of the past four years, more Americans declared personal bankruptcy than graduated from college. Our annual production of solid waste would fill a convoy of garbage trucks stretching halfway to the moon. We have twice as many shopping centers as high schools. We work more hours each year than do the citizens of any other industrial country. Though we comprise only 4.7 percent of the Earth's people, we account for 25 percent of its global-warming greenhouse gas emissions; 95 percent of our workers say they wish they could spend more time with their families; 40 percent of our lakes and streams are too polluted for swimming or fishing. Our CEOs earn 400 times as much as average workers. Since 1950, we Americans have used up more resources than everyone who ever lived on Earth before then. We Americans are the world's most profligate consumers, but since the American lifestyle is the model for nearly all the rest of the world, we are all in this together."

The first of the book's three sections presents Affluenza's symptoms as medical metaphors—shopping fever, a rash of bankruptcies, swollen expectations, chronic traffic congestion, the stress of excess, family convulsions (conflict between family values and market values), dilated pupils (marketing to children and in schools), community chills, ache for meaning, and social scars.

The second section, "Causes of Affluenza," is more analytical, and identifies causes in five areas—spiritual (the idea of original sin, greed, desire, emptiness, hunger for meaning), emotional/psychological (insecurity, low self-esteem, aloneness, fear), cultural (conditioning through advertising, PR, and early primitive hoarding practices in hunter-gatherer societies), systemic (an economic system that depends on growth and expansion and demands domination and control), and political (choosing the accumulation of things over preserving leisure time, development over community, and resource exploitation to build highways, suburbs, and malls over conservation).

In the final section, "The Road to Recovery," the authors prescribe numerous practical treatment measures to bring about a cure. These include individual stock-taking; a nine-step frugality program; participation in voluntary simplicity study circles; experiencing nature; simple environmentally-friendly lifestyle changes such as carrying our own gro-

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Herrnhut
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST UTOPIAN COMMUNE
William J. Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf

This is the story of Australia's first utopian commune. Johann Friedrich Krumnow and his followers fled Germany to escape religious oppression and to seek a safe haven for their radical way of life. Herrnhut, the settlement they established in 1852, was based on a strange blend of Moravian Christianity, personal charisma, millenarianism, mysticism and communism. It was to last nearly forty years.

William Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf have uncovered the myths and the truths of Herrnhut. The picture they paint, is coloured with characters who display will-power, determination and compassion as well as a tendency to grumble. Their rediscovered history is indeed both rich and strange.

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cery bags; recycling, drying laundry on a clothesline; and using energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, and automobiles (for example, my wife Carol and I recently bought a Prius hybrid).

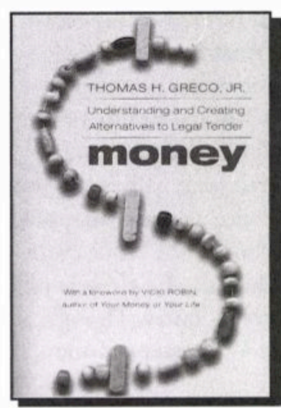
The authors also suggest community-wide efforts: living in cohousing neighborhoods, socially responsible investing, car-sharing cooperatives, the Consumer Credit Counseling Service, teaching money management and media analysis in schools, TV Turnoff Week and Buy Nothing Day (the day after Thanksgiving), and screening of "uncommercials" (e.g., one Marlboro Man saying to another, "I miss my lung, Bob.")

They also suggest legislation to address the epidemic: instituting a shorter work week (the Kellogg company had a 30-hour week in the 1930s and 40s); graduated retirement; a living wage; subsides of wind and solar power rather than fossil fuels; taxes on consumption, pollution, and depletion rather than on income; corporate responsibility to take back, disassemble, and recycle worn out products; and a ban on Affluenza ads, particularly those targeted at children. The use of the Genuine Progress Indicator (which measures our "ecological footprint") rather than the GDP would provide a more reliable assessment of the health of the economy.

The book closes with an encouraging message from Betsy Taylor, director of the Center for a New American Dream: "In 25 years we will have new government policies that provide incentives for us to use materials and energy differently. New policies for transportation, waste management, recycling and taxes will help individuals and institutions consume wisely. … Prices of goods will reflect the true environmental costs of natural resource use and waste. Government will use its purchasing power to create markets for environmentally friendly products. … Our sleepwalking culture is on the verge of waking up."

Although much of the information in this book is appalling and disturbing—and at a time when national and global trends seem to be moving in a disastrous direction—it also offers encouragement that efforts to adopt simplified lifestyles and press for sustainable economic and environmental policies will one day bear fruit.

Doug Wingeier, an Emeritus Professor of Practical Theology at Garret Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, is retired and lives in North Carolina.



Money Understanding and Creating Alternatives to Legal Tender

By Thomas H. Greco, Jr.

Chelsea Green Publishing, 2001
Pb., 295 pp. $19.95
Available from bookstores, Community Bookshelf (store.ic.org) or Chelsea Green Publishing Company
PO Box 428
Gates-Briggs Building #205
White River Junction, Vermont 05001

Reviewed by Gina Temple

What is money? Shrouded in secrecy, stress, satisfaction, or pride, it is a topic many of us stew over, whether we want to or not. Yet beyond the rudiments of cash and bank account balances, how many people truly understand this method of exchange? How do events in local communities, banks, and businesses affect the money and lifestyles available to the citizens of that community and the world? Are there alternatives to government-issued currency?

While personal finances remain delicate dinner conversation, the subject of public and community finance receives intense scrutiny. Understanding the origin of money and its current uses is important for anyone wishing to challenge our society's accepted financial practices. In *Money,* former business professor Thomas Greco outlines our public monetary history, demystifying such concepts as interest, inflation, and the creation of wealth.

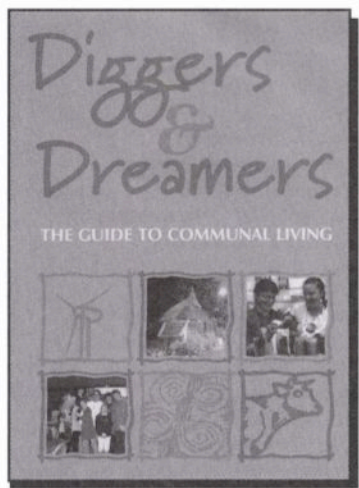
After a clear, impassioned introduction to the dangers of today's monetary system—for example, the destructive "debt imperative [that] creates a growth imperative that is forcing us to destroy the life-support systems of the planet"—Greco expertly examines alternative community-based currencies. These "equitable exchange mechanisms" such as local currencies and reciprocal trade systems have been explored in cities and regions worldwide in order to transfer local goods and services. When these systems work well and offer viable choices for citizens, Greco believes that they go a long way toward helping people create more harmonious and equitable lives. In rural communities, where resources and willing service providers are abundant but money is scarce, these alternative systems can spark a vibrant exchange that strengthens relationships and local culture.

Greco describes past and present programs, touching on successes and failures as far back as the Depression era. Current efforts such as Ithaca HOURS currency in Ithaca, New York, and various LETS (Local Exchange Trading System) programs are presented as models, with specific advice for improvements, where needed. More a careful textbook than a quick how-to manual, *Money* will appeal to readers who are interested in truly understanding the basis for currency and its circulation. Activists anxious to begin a new program immediately may not have the patience for such a dense volume, but Greco helpfully divides the book into

four clear sections, and refers frequently to related chapters to clarify essential points. His resource list is exhaustive, and includes local currency initiatives from around the world.

Understanding and creating financial systems can be a daunting task. Fortunately Thomas Greco's useful book helps demystify the process.

Gina Temple contemplates currencies and community in a converted one-room school near Galva, Kansas.



Diggers and Dreamers 2002/2003 The Guide to Communal Living

Edited by Sarah Bunker, Chris Coates, Andy Hill, David Hodgson, Jonathan How, and Christine Watson

Diggers and Dreamers Publications (2003)
Pb., 224 pp., $10.00
Available from Community Bookshelf (store.ic.org)

Reviewed by Alline Anderson

When the latest edition of *Diggers and Dreamers: The Guide to Communal Living* arrived at the Fellowship for Intentional Community office in Missouri, our first response was to shriek, "It shrunk!" Indeed, this biannual guide to intentional communities in England, Scotland and Wales is now a pocket-sized 4" x 5-1/2" (we all tried it), and thus extremely handy for sojourns to these countries.

While the book is small in size it remains rich in content, offering the following details about 84 intentional communities in the UK.

• Several paragraphs describing the community: its physical features (including buildings), attitudes and beliefs, daily activities, celebrations and rituals, shared and individual responsibilities, visiting opportunities and other pertinent information. Fun to read, these descriptions seem to truly reflect the personality of each community.

• Easy-to-use icons offering comparative information at a glance about money, energy use, transport, resources, land, food, smoking and access, which help readers find communities with values similar to their own.

• A comprehensive chart listing the location (rural or urban), number of adults and children, visiting details, spiritual focus (if any), and dietary regime of each community.

• The community's ideological focus (ecological, nonviolence, Christian, etc.)

• A map showing the location of each community.

• The year each community was formed.

Also included are several pages of "Frequently Asked Questions about Communal Living," details of 23 forming communities, and eight pages of networks, support organizations, and useful regional contacts.

Diggers and Dreamers continues to be well written and comprehensive. It's an excellent resource for those seeking to join, wanting to visit, or simply wanting to learn more about the wide variety of intentional communities in Great Britain.

Alline Anderson manages Community Bookshelf, the Fellowship for Intentional Community's mailorder book service: store.ic.org. She is a member of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Missouri.

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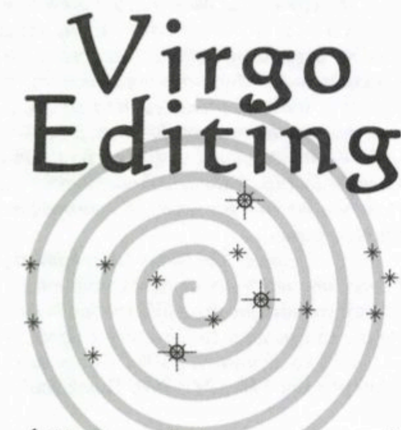

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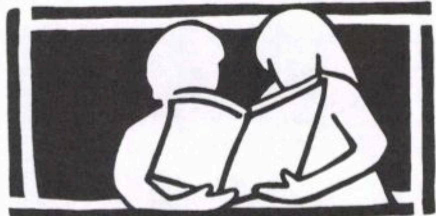

One of the Fellowship for Intentional Community's primary objectives is to provide the most up-to-date contact information for intentional communities that we can find, and our Communities Directory is the centerpiece of that work.

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!

New

Altair Cohousing
13 Morgan St
Phoenixville, PA 19460
610-917-3648
eggjoel@aol.com
http://www.cohousing.org/cmty/groups-us.html

We are a Cohousing Group in the land search stage (entering 4th year of affiliation). 9/2002

Amadea Cohousing
Attn: Delia Dudgeon, Secretary
30 The Front
Potten End, Berkhamsted
Herts HP4 2QR England
United Kingdom
01442 874187
01935 862756
deliadudge@supanet.com
http://web.ukonline.co.uk/bristol.goodwill/amadea/

We are a national network of individuals plus associated groups who meet locally to develop their own plans for community living. Our mission is to bring together people who have a spiritual outlook, seek to live in harmony with the natural environment, and who wish to live near others of like mind in a mutually supportive community. 9/2002

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DK-8530 Hjortshoj
Denmark
+45 86 22 21 24
Myattpeter@hotmail.com
http://www.andelssamfundet.dk,
http://www.ecovillage.dk

It has been twelve years since the original vision of a sustainable community came about. It has been eight since the cooperative community started its history as a community village of approximately 100 children and adults, who all had to learn how to function together with the tasks at hand.

Decorating the common-house, communal eating, playgrounds and growing vegetables, to name just a few.

We have succeeded in giving a practical bid in what we think is the right direction. In the light of the age we live in, this is something we can be proud of. And we are! Our houses and efforts are so far only a start, a step on the way to a more sustainable lifestyle.

The Co-operative Community is about 15 km northwest of Aarhus in the outskirts of Hjortshøj with detached houses and residential areas on one side and a view of Aarhus Bay on the other. 9/2002

Commonterra
Attn: Johnathan Fulford
127 Stovepipe Alley
Monroe, ME 04951
207-525-7740
invert@acadia.net

Commonterra (est. '77) is five households, total population 9 adults and 7 children, living on 150 acres held in common through a community land trust. Open to new members who must go through a one-year provisional process. Individual families own their own houses, and are responsible for their own finances and domestic arrangements; community decisions are by consensus. 9/2002

The Community Planet Foundation
Attn: Jack Reed
1611 Olive St
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-962-2038
jackreed@communityplanet.org

The mission of the community planet foundation is nothing less than transforming the planet. We are not an existing community, but we are working on creating a demonstration community on the level of 400 to 500 people that will redefine how we as people live together on the planet. We realize that the way we live together and relate together in community is the basic building block that is needed to change the world. The creation of a large-scale egalitarian, sustainable community that utilizes the latest technology will enable others to see how we can all cooperate and enjoy a happier and healthier standard of living. With media exposure, millions will be able to see and hear about a lifestyle that they too can enjoy. Given the current status of our planet, at this point in our history nothing less is called for and nothing less will work.

For a complete description of our project, you may purchase our book, the next evolution: a Blueprint For Transforming The Planet by Jack Reed. Please order by email. 9/2002

Delaware Street Commons
P.O. Box 1153
Lawrence, KS 66044
785-550-0163
info@delaware-street.com
http://www.delaware-street.com/

We are looking forward to beginning construction early in 2003. And yes, we ARE accepting new members! 9/2002

Earthen Spirituality Project
Attn: Loba & Jesse Wolf Hardin
PO Box 516
Reserve, NM 87830
earthway@concentric.net
http://www.concentric.net/~earthway

Founded in 1981, ESP is a small wilderness-based community located on the Sweet Medicine Wildlife Sanctuary, an isolated river canyon deep in the enchanted Gila bioregion. Nested seven shallow river crossings from the nearest road, the restored Sanctuary is home to towering pines and majestic cottonwoods, blossoming cactus and wild grape vines, elk and deer, lion and bear, ducks and herons, rare songbirds and bald eagles. Teachers, residents and seasonal interns dedicate themselves to 1) restoring and rewilding the lush canyon ecology; 2) resacramenting the ancient place of power and protecting its archaeological integrity; 3) disseminating the important Gaian insights the canyon provides through correspondence, publishing, and the hosting of students and seekers for Project programs; and 4) nurturing focused community, leading to a sustainable lineage of sacred caretakership.

Openings are available for 30-90 day internships, the more demanding apprenticeships, and potential lifetime residencies. All ages are considered, including young individuals and couples willing to devote themselves wholly to a wilderness paradise and its ministry of Earth and Spirit, presence and awareness, compassion and response-ability, promise and purpose. We feast on locally gathered wild foods and bulk organic grains, and eat a number of meals together each week. A portion of every day is given to being alone with land, taking intimate walks that deepen our connection and affirm our practice and work. There are a couple group

workshops each quarter, as well as the annual Wild Women's Gathering. Normal activities include tree planting, seed collecting, wood chopping, cooking for groups, website production, studying, transcribing talks, corresponding, submitting articles, assisting the many guests coming for inspiration and guidance? and actively celebrating life, tribe and place.

Those interested should check out the programs, Gaian teachings and photos of the land on our website. Materials, books and an introductory video tape are available on request. 7/2002

EarthLight Foundation
EarthLight Foundation
near Marshall, NC
elflink@earthlink.net
http://www.earthlightfoundation.com

We are a planned alternative type of community with common land and everyone owns their lot that they build their home on. There is a community garden space and orchard/vineyard. 9/2002

Eco-village (Forming Quebec)
Attn: Ulysse Voyer
St Hilarie, QC
Canada
ulysseom@rawfoods.com

An "ecovillage research group" publishing a magazine called AUBE with a new website soon www.eco-village.net 9/2002

Ecovillage Network UK
PO Box 1410
Bristol BS99 3JP, England
United Kingdom
+44 0117 373 0346
evnuk@gaia.org
http://www.gaia.org/uk
9/2002

Elim (Evangelische Leefgemmenschap Immanuël)
Berweg 7
3941 RA Doorn
Netherlands
31-0343-417064
info@elim.nl
http://www.elim.nl

The community Elim provides for their own livelihood through full-time and part-time jobs, and consists right now of five adults and five children. Most of the income comes from the running of a technical illustration and design bureau.

Community-members live with a common purse, from which all costs are paid: rent, cars, holidays, pocket money, etc. From the circle of friends of the community, the evangelical church Elim came into being in 1985. This church has three meetings each week. One tries, both in the community and in the church, to put into practice living with God in everyday life. In addition, there are ongoing contacts with Christians in Third World countries - mainly India - both with western missionaries, and with native believers.

More than ten years ago, Elim initiated a community-movement of at present 35 Dutch communities. There is a work-group, a magazine, a study course and an annual conference. With our life we hope people do discover that it is possible to live in peace and happiness through the life-giving and transforming power of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Come and visit us! 9/2002

Ella Jo Baker Intentional Cmty
Attn: Ajowa Ifateyo
1415 Tuckerman St NW Apt 306
Washington, DC 20011
a.ifateyo@verizon.net
9/2002

Enota Ecovillage
1000 Hwy 180
Hiawassee, GA 30546
"enota" <enota@enota.com>
http://www.kiz.com/enota/

We are focused on permaculture, sustainability, ecovillage projects, and spirituality. We need service volunteers here.

We offer room, board , and a stipend. We need help year around. 9/2002

Grishino Community
P.O. Soginitsy, Box 32
Podporozhskii rayon, 187743
Leningradskaya oblast'
Russia
(812) 115-04-13
vasudeva@mail.spb.org
http://www.grishino.ecology.net.ru

In the northwest of Russia, in the historical village of Grishino (300 km North East of St. Petersburg), at the confluence of two rivers for a number of years we have lived and built an ecological village and a center for spiritual and educational programs.

We are followers of different spiritual traditions united by the aspiration to live in harmony with Mother Nature and with each other. We believe that all inner paths lead to the One Source and that the divine light dwells in the heart of every being. We seek that light through prayers, meditations, chanting and dances, as well as in our daily work, creating a space of love for ourselves and our children.

Seven of us are living in Grishino all year round. We have two community houses in traditional Russian style, and some of us are building their own log houses. We have several vegetable gardens, and large wild flower field. Our ecovillage is surrounded by natural forests, where we gather lots of herbs, berries, and mushrooms. There live many kinds of wild birds and animals, like beavers, moose, bears, hares, foxes, wolves, wild cats, and many others. We are starting a project on ecological forest management.

We aim to continue the cultural traditions of our ancestors, restore the folk arts, their songs and dances, woodworking, ceramics, village architecture, and build a school of joy for our children. Each summer we hold seminars for adults and children where one can participate in the spiritual life and work of our community and to merge with the spirit of Russian nature.

Nearby there is a beautiful wooden church, built in 1696. 9/2002

Sunrise Credit Union

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scu@ic.org
www.sunrisecreditunion.org
888-871-3482 or 970-679-4311

Sunrise Credit Union

Holy Family Catholic Worker
Attn: Charles K. Wilber
1910 E Jefferson Blvd
South Bend, IN 46617
(574) 288-8451
wilber.1@nd.edu
http://www.nd.edu/~cwilber
9/2002

Homewood Cohousing
Attn: Fred H. Olson
1221 Russell Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55411
fholson@cohousing.org
http://freenet.msp.mn.us/~fholson/cohousing/homewood
9/2002

Hospital Comunitario Waldos
Attn: Lance Evans
Apartado 17-23-021
Sangolqui
Ecuador
5932-2-331966 (tel/fax)
"Lance (Evans) Grindle"
<lance@waldos.org.ec>
a cooperative group of Americans and Ecuadorian doctors serving the poor. 9/2002

Jamaica Plain Cohousing
263 Chestnut Avenue, Apt.1
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130-4436
617-524-6614
info@jpcohousing.org
http://www.jpcohousing.org/
9/2002

Jesuit Volunteer Corps (DC)
PO Box 3756
Washington, DC 20027
202-687-1132
jvi@jesuitvolunteers.org
http://www.JesuitVolunteers.org
Since 1956 more than 7,000 members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps have committed themselves to working with the poor. They have put off graduate school and turned down job offers in order to offer alternatives to people who have few options.

Hundreds of grassroots organizations across the country count on Jesuit Volunteers to provide essential services to low-income people and those who live on the margins of our society.

Jesuit Volunteers serve the homeless, the unemployed, refugees, people with AIDS, the elderly, street youth, abused women and children, the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. JVC has become the largest Catholic lay volunteer program in the country.

Some job placements require specific credentials or licenses, but most JVC jobs can be done by people who have a general educational background and a willingness to learn new skills.

JVC is more than just a job. Social justice, simple life-style, community and spirituality: these values provide the cornerstone for living out a commitment to faith and justice.

There are six regional centers

JVC: South
jvcsouth@jesuitvolunteers.org
(713) 223-5625

JVC: Northwest
jvcnw@jesuitvolunteers.org
(503) 335-8202

JVC: East
jvceast@jesuitvolunteers.org
(410) 214-1744

JVC: Midwest
jvcmw@jesuitvolunteers.org
(313) 345-3480

JVC: Southwest
jvcsw@jesuitvolunteers.org
(415) 522-1599

JVC: International
jvi@jesuitvolunteers.org
(202) 687-1132 9/2002

Jindibah
PO Box 264
Bangalow, NSW 2479
Australia
+612 6687 2244
chris@jindibah-community.org
http://www.jindibah-community.org
9/2002

Manitou Arbor Ecovillage
P.O. Box 113
Nazareth, MI 49074-0113
info@manitouarbor.org
http://www.manitouarbor.org
9/2002

Mickleton Emissary Community
Attn: Tessa Maskell
Mickleton House, Mickleton
Gloucestershire GL55 6RX, England
United Kingdom
01386-438251 office
01386-438308 Events Office
Mickleton@emissary.demon.co.uk
9/2002

Oak Creek Commons
1323 Stoney Creek Road
Paso Robles, CA 93446
800-489-8715
info@oakcreekcommons.org
http://www.oakcreekcommons.org/
9/2002

Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA)
Oberlin College Wilder Hall
135 West Lorain Street
Oberlin, OH 44074
A network of self-managed student co-op houses.

OSCA, est. 1950, is a unique co-op in that it houses and feeds 175 student owners and feeds an additional 455 student owners in dining facilities. Individual houses are self-managed, and decisions for the association are made democratically, with representation from all of the individual units. Some decisions are by simple majority; most are by consensus. OSCA buys food from local farms as much as possible; special provisions are made for members with vegetarian and kosher dietary preferences. The co-op owns some of its facilities, and leases most from the University. 9/2002

October Sky
Attn: Ma'ikwe Ludwig
5301 Updyke Rd
Grass Lake, MI 49240
517-522-4771
avatar@ic.org
9/2002

Olive Branch Community
Attn: Harold Moss
PO Box 73497
Washington, DC 20056-0009
202-682-9056
olivemoss@aol.com
http://www.olivebranchcommunity.org/
9/2002

Order of Saint Benedict
Collegeville, MN 56321-2015
roliver@csbsju.edu
http://www.osb.org/
9/2002

Santa Cruz Student Housing Cooperative
316 Main St
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
9/2002

Seven Points Crossing
Attn: Teresa Cochran
St. Louis, MO
314-621-6222, ext. 102
info@7pointscrossing.com
9/2002

Stone Curves: A CoHousing Neighborhood
Tucson, AZ
520 293 5290
info@StoneCurves.com
http://www.StoneCurves.com/
Stone Curves is an urban infill cohousing project. The City of Tucson has already earmarked funds and is working hand in hand with us to help make our greater neighborhood even more pedestrian-friendly.

We have integrated into our team the foremost permaculturist of our area. He will help us create one of the best native plant and water usage environments in Tucson. It is envisioned to be a demonstration model of what can be done and for our desert. 9/2002

Terra Firma Drummond Housing
170 Drummond St
Ottawa, ON
Canada
613-233-8438
steve@fick.ca
9/2002

(*Hybrid* *continued from page 38*)

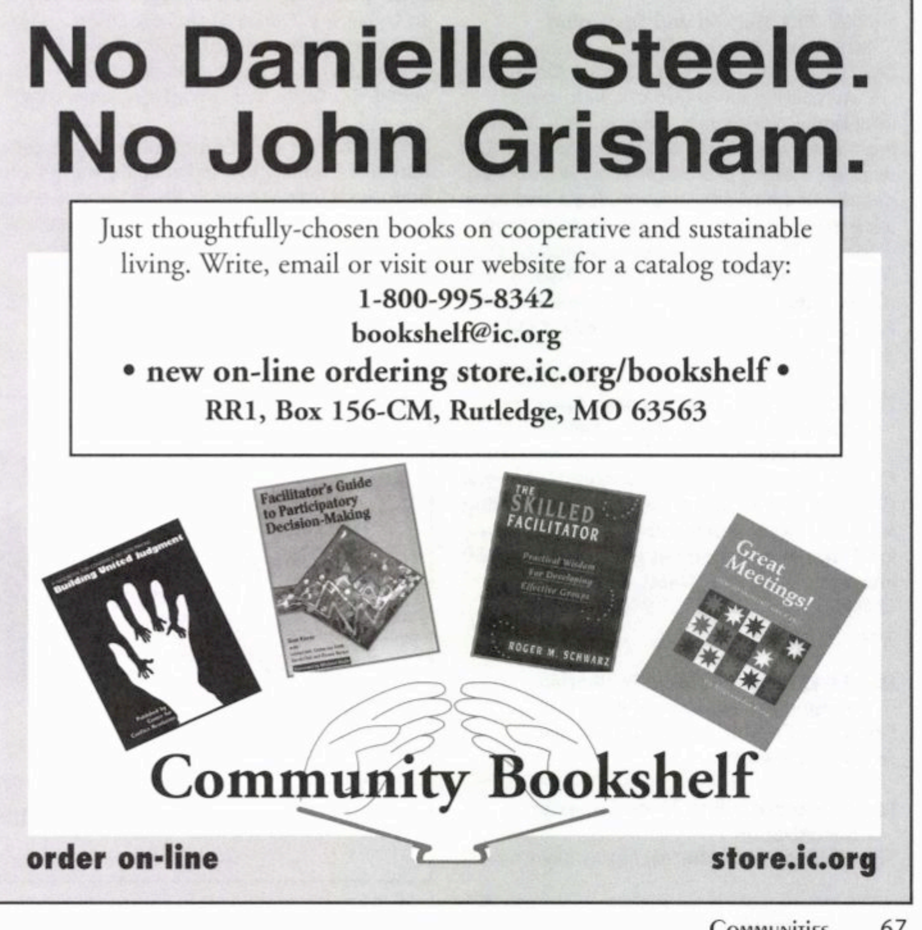
get there. In the meantime, having a quantified system has kept work more or less on an even keel even through vicissitudes (a fire, a smaller-than-planned community membership, uneven business performance, and so on).

And you really can live here with virtually no involvement with money, and certainly without outside income. Our monthly stipend, though small, will pay for modest clothing and entertainment. Food, lodging, transportation, a reasonable amount of long distance calling, postage, insurances, other health costs, and even some furnishings are all provided for by the community's business income. Eventually our weekly work requirement will reduce from its present level—which keeps us all busier than we'd like—to a more modest level that should allow a lot more free time, and people who are interested in living more modestly than the community norm should be able to reduce that even further. It should become easy, sooner or later, to do extra community work for extra money.

Certainly even in our cooperative house and now in temporary housing in Marshfield, life is much more comfortable and enjoyable than in the commuting/bill-paying world. I hardly dare think how pleasant it will be to live in our own houses in our own aspiring ecovillage on our own land, spending time with neighbors and children, enjoying the occasional inviting aroma of someone's freshly baked brownies.

All right, I *do* dare to think about it. After all, dreaming is what got us this far in the first place. Ω

Luc Reid lives at Meadowdance with his wife Jennifer and two children. He is a cofounder of Meadowdance, writer of fiction, sometime musician, and computer programmer/web developer: luc@meadowdance.org; www.meadowdance.org.



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.

Nov 22-24 • Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, Occidental, CA. Actualize your dream of a land-based intentional community: finding land, financing a purchase, legal entities available, group decision-making process, finding like-minded people, financial organization, legal and insurance issues, dealing with zoning, long-term planning. Extensive tours of community. *Dave Henson, Adam Wolpert.* Sl/Sc: $600-$525, incl. meals, lodging. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org.*

Dec 6-8 • From Global to Local: An Inspirational Weekend with Helena Norberg-Hodge
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, Occidental, CA. Slide and lecture presentations on ecological agriculture, indigenous knowledge, and local strategies to combat globalization. $350, incl. meals, lodging. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org.*

Dec 11-15 • Federation of Egalitarian Communities Fall Assembly
East Wind Community, Tecumseh, MI. *fec@ic.org; www.thefec.org.*

Jan '03 • EcoDwelling Three-Semester Concentration
New College of California, North Bay Campus, Santa Rosa, CA. Culture, Ecology and Sustainable Community program, spring semester. Design equitable, sustainable, universally affordable housing alternatives. Implement vision, theory, and design. *Steve Beck, Joseph F. Kennedy,* Coordinators. *New College of California, 99 6th St., Santa Rosa, CA 95401; 707-568-3093.*

Spring '03 Courses, Living Routes —Ecovillage Education Consortium

Jan 2-23 • Ecovillage Development in Senegal
Senegal, Africa. Eco Yoff Community. Three-week program in the theory and practice of sustainable development. College credit anticipated through UMass, Amherst. *Daniel Greenberg, Living Routes—Ecovillage Education, 85 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 888-515-7333; info@LivingRoutes.org; www.LivingRoutes.org.*

Jan 8-31 • Ecovillage Design and Sustainable Living Course
Crystal Waters Permaculture Village, Queensland, Australia. January-term permaculture certification course. College credit available through Pacific Lutheran University. *Daniel Greenberg, Living Routes—Ecovillage Education, 85 Baker Rd. Shutesbury, MA 01072; 888-515-7333; info@LivingRoutes.org; www.LivingRoutes.org.*

Jan 31-May 9 • Findhorn Community Semester
Findhorn Foundation, Scotland. Courses on permaculture, psychology, art, and creative writing. College credit through Pacific Lutheran University. *Daniel Greenberg, Living Routes—Ecovillage Education, 85 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 888-515-7333; info@LivingRoutes.org; www.LivingRoutes.org.*

Jan 19-May 3 • Geo Communities Semester
Auroville Community, India. Full semester program with travel through south India. College credit through University of New Hampshire. *Daniel Greenberg, Living Routes—Ecovillage Education, 85 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 888-515-7333; info@LivingRoutes.org; www.LivingRoutes.org.*

Jan 30-Feb 2 • Living in Actualization in an Interuniversal-Soul Cultural Community
Sedona, AZ. Aquarian Concepts. *See Nov 21-24.*

Feb 22-Mar 21 • Ecovillage 2003 Training
Findhorn Foundation, Forres, Scotland. Tools and technology for creating sustainable community in building green, sustainable economics, organic food production, group building, holistic health, global communication, fundraising, and ecological restoration, co-sponsored by Findhorn Foundation and Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) Europe. Eight modules can be taken separately or together: Ecovillages & the Emerging Paradigm (2/22-24); building Effective Groups: Democracy, Empowerment, and Creativity (2/25-27); Permaculture (3/1-3); Earthshare: Food, Farming, and Community (3/4-6); Building for the New Millennium (3/8-10); Right Livelihood: Towards a New Social Economy (3/11-13); The Healing Power of Community (3/15-16); Deep Ecology, Wilderness, & Ecological Restoration (3/17-19).

Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Findhorn, Forres, Scotland IV36 3TZ; +44-0-1309-691653; bookings@findhorn.org; www.findhorn.org/evt.

Mar 21-23 • Natural Building
The Farm, Summertown, TN. Basic techniques of strawbale, cob, earthbag, bamboo, rammed earth and sod construction, including stone walls, wattle and daub, siting, living roofs, solar heating, and earth plasters. *Katey Culver, Howard Switzer, Albert Bates.* $325 includes books, meals, lodging, $25 discount for early registration or multiple registrations. *www.thefarm.org/etc/natural_building.*

Mar 27-30 • Living in Actualization in an Interuniversal-Soul Cultural Community
Sedona, AZ. Aquarian Concepts. *See Nov 21-24.*

May 23- 26 • The Farm Communities Conference
The Farm, Summertown, TN. For information, *The Farm Welcome Center, 931-964-3574, or communitiesconference@thefarmcommunity.com.*

Northwest Intentional Communities Association

Communities networking
WA, OR, ID

Intentional Communities and Cohousing.

Newsletter and gatherings

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

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

Reach

REACH is our column for all your Classified needs. In addition to ads intended to help match people looking for communities with communities looking for people, Reach has ads for workshops, goods, services, books, products and personals of interest to people interested in Communities.

You may use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad. ***THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 2002 ISSUE (OUT IN JANUARY) IS NOVEMBER 10.***

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.)

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 pany and an organic vegetable farm and CSA. We meet twice monthly and use consensus decision making. There is transitional housing available and there are several small houses for sale, as well as many undeveloped residential leasehold sites. We host two annual festivals in the summer in late June and mid-August. For more information and to set up a visit, please write to *CPLC, 4211 Rte. 13, Truxton, NY 13158, or call Alison Frost 607-842-6799; frostym@swns.net*

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 sustainability 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@earthven.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*

ECOVILLAGE COHOUSING, Ithaca, New

• Permaculture-based • Off-grid • Ecospiritual

www.earthaven.org

• Near Asheville, North Carolina • 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711 • info@earthaven.org • 828-669-3937

CONSIDER BUILDING A HOME IN BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA'S COHOUSING NEIGHBORHOOD

Blacksburg is a university town located in the heart of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia

Features of the land include:
Adjacent to 169 acre town nature preserve
33 beautiful acres – half in mature forest
Convenient to town, VA Tech, & bike route

Features of the neighborhood will include:
Designed and managed by residents
Privately owned homes with yards
Pedestrian friendly with parking at the periphery
Large community building, gathering plaza
Nature trail through woods, community garden

Construction to begin in 2001

www.shadowlakevillage .org
(540)552-1425 nrvcoho@aol.com

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage

Come help us create a new way of life!

At Dancing Rabbit we're building a rural ecovillage, learning about sustainable living while we educate others. We're open to all kinds of individuals, families, and groups, who, like us, are committed to sustainability, consensus, feminism, and building for the future.

At **Dancing Rabbit** we:
Eat dinner together
Grow our own organic food
Use solar and wind power
Share a car co-op
Host internships and workshops
Run our vehicles on biodiesel
Barter goods and services
Have fun!

www.dancingrabbit.org
1 Dancing Rabbit Lane
Rutledge, MO 63563
dancingrabbit@ic.org

planet. We eat together regularly. We offer stability, experience (our "average" member has been here five years, and has lived in community 16 years), a river, pond, forests, pastures, gardens, basic infrastructure and limited housing. We seek builders, organic growers, musicians, business people, experienced communitarians, people who like to walk up and down hills and people who are fun to be around. We include a diversity of spiritual and sexual orientations. Families are welcome. *POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; abundantdawn@ic.org; www.abundantdawn.org*

ACORN, Mineral, Virginia. 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 tinnery 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/; http://www.globalchangemusic.org*

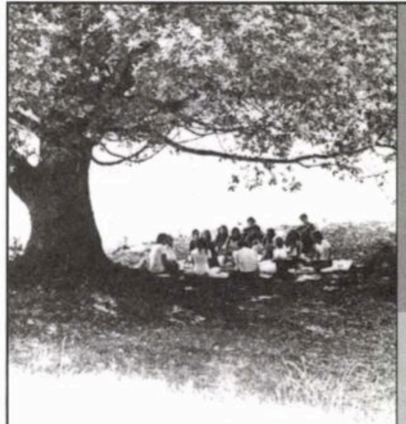
AQUARIUS COMMUNITY, Vail, Arizona. Picturesque mountain wilderness blessed with ideal weather. Hour commute to Tucson. Accepting solvent liberal people living the nirvana. Tell us why we would like you. *Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641-0069; jkubias@hotmail.com*

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.*

CAMPHILL 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 "coworkers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three weeks vacation and meet each person's needs as possible. For information: *15136 Celtic Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378; 320-732-6365; Fax: 320-732-3204; CVMN@rea-alp.com; www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org*

COMMON PLACE LAND COOPERATIVE, Truxton, New York. We are a 432-acre intentional community and land trust located in the hills of central New York State seeking new residential members. The land is mixed forest and fields on a south slope with ravine running down to a river and backed by a state forest. At present we are 14 adults and 12 children living on the land in energy efficient, owner-built homes, many using alternative power. Our children are both home-schooled and public schooled and have lots of room to play. There are several land-based member businesses, including several landscapers, a fencing com-



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Spiritual Ideals in Community Life

This program is especially designed for those who want to experience the practical aspects of spiritual life. The building blocks of our community are spiritual practice, service to the community and to our society, and a sense of shared responsibility for creating all the various aspects of community. Selfless service (Karma Yoga) is one of our main methods of self development.

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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.*

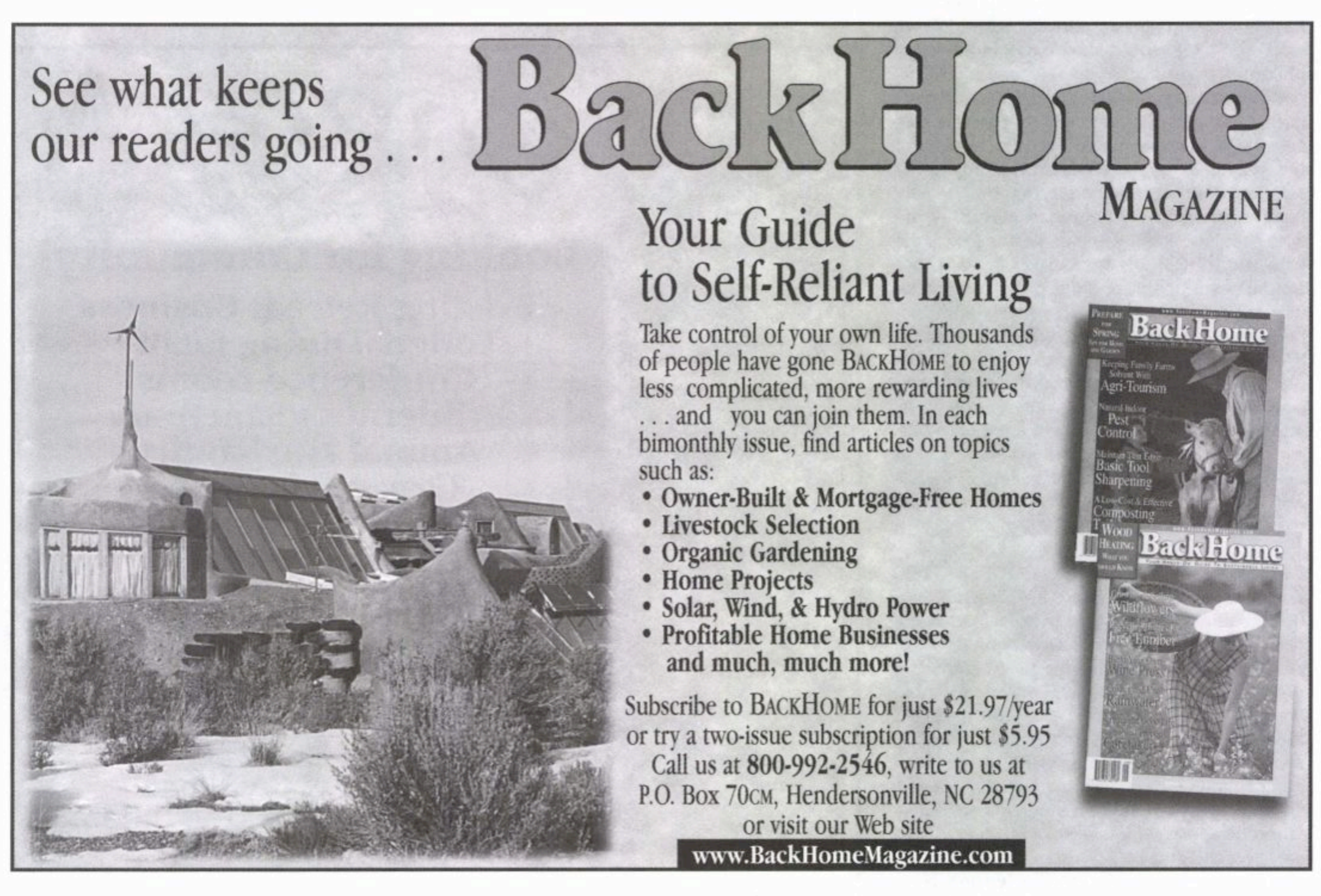
FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York. We seek co-workers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. 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; rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org*

MILAGRO, Tucson, Arizona. Using cohousing and ecological principles, the members of Milagro are committed to providing a people and earth-friendly neighborhood. Milagro is situated on 43 acres with 28 private, adobe homes clustered to preserve more of our natural desert site surrounded by dramatic views. Thermal mass home construction was chosen to maximize lasting value and minimize environmental impact. We have incorporated other environmental principles through-out the community: permaculture design, edible landscaping, organic garden and orchard, water harvesting, wetlands keeping black and gray water on the land. We are nearing completion of building with two homes available. Safety, community, belonging and fun! *520-622-6918; www.milagrocohousing.org; info@milagrocohousing.org*

PINON ECOVILLAGE, Santa Fe, New Mexico. A small community dedicated to environmental and social sustainability. We welcome diversity. Our 1.5 acre site 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 (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 3537, Santa Fe, NM 87501; 505-455-2595; www.pinon-ecovillage.org pinon@ic.org;*

THREE SPRINGS COMMUNITY, North Forks, California. Our 160 acres, including annual creek, pond, rolling hills and CSA organic garden, is held in a non-profit land trust. After six+ years, we have grown to eight adults and two children. We are now seeking new members who share our values of consensus decision-making, simple living and inter-personal 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 35 years. We are currently looking for new members, and would love to have you visit. Right now we would especially like more woman members. We can offer you: work in our community businesses, an abundance of homegrown organic food, a thriving social scene, and an established culture of non-violence, feminism and egalitarianism. You can offer us: your talents and skills (or your unskilled enthusiasm) and your desire to live an ecological and income- sharing lifestyle. 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; swas-app@earthlink.net;* www.unionacres.org; *http://www.unionacres.org*

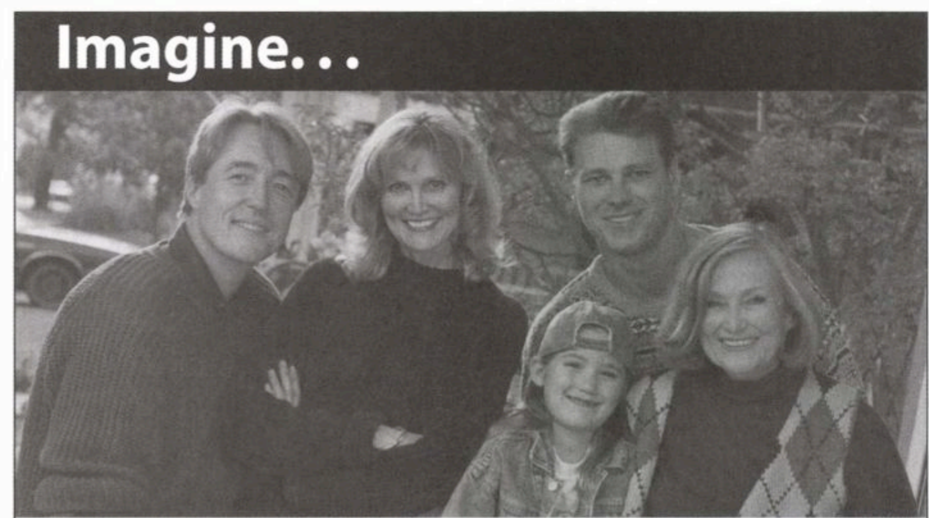
VILLAGE TERRACES, Black Mountain, North Carolina. We are a neighborhood pod at Earthaven Ecovillage, and currently seeking new members to join our extended family and help build our cohousing neighborhood. We are now in the process of building our first building (which will hold five to ten people), and we plan to grow to 30 adults, plus children. Our vision consists of raising children together, growing plants and animals for food, honoring our bodies and cultivating honest and responsible communication. We are looking for families, couples, singles and elders who can help us manifest our dreams. All members of Village Terraces must meet all requirements for Earthaven membership. To learn more, visit *www.eh.org, or contact us at vt@eh.org. Call us at 828-669-4328.*

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*

COMMUNITY HOUSES AND PROPERTY FOR SALE

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

Imagine...



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"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

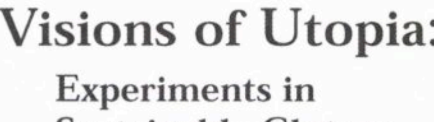
Visions of Utopia:

Experiments in Sustainable Cluture

Geoph Kozeny, a core staff member of the first two editions of the *Communities Directory*, has spent more than four years creating this documentary about intentional communities. Now you can actually see how some communities look "up close" while you listen to community members tell their stories in their own words.

- A brief history of 2500 years of shared living
- Insights about what works and what doesn't
- In-depth profiles of 7 diverse contemporary groups: Camphill Special School ('61), Twin Oaks ('67), Ananda Village ('69), Breitenbush Hot Springs ('77), Purple Rose Collective ('78), Earthaven Ecovillage ('92), Nyland Cohousing ('93)
- 1-1/2 hours of information & inspiration!

Intentional Communities: cooperative models for building a better world.



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GREENWOOD FOREST ASSOCIATION, Mountain View, Missouri. Beautiful Ozark property for sale in 1000-acre land cooperative with ecological covenants. Oak and hickory forest bordering Ozarks Scenic Riverways. Lots of dogwoods, redbuds, wildflowers, wildlife. Access by well-maintained dirt roads, electricity available. 10-acre parcels - $20,000. 417-932-5345; *t.lroehl@train.missouri.org*

MEADOWDANCE, Springfield, Vermont. Very large 1920's house on one-half acre. We've used it as our starter house for our community until we bought land and were ready to move. 13 bedrooms, four baths, not counting three-story stone carriage house. Wood floors, wooded area in back, five-minute walk to municipal forest or town center, porch, deck, fenced in front yard, balcony, across street from town common/playground. Wired for phone and high-speed Internet, cheap local Internet access available. Third story of carriage house can be set up for living or business space. Area has few jobs; best suited for group with own business(es), B&B, etc. Will be available Fall 2002 or Spring 2003; Please inquire. $210,000. Contact: *802-885-2980; suereel@meadowdance.org; www.meadowdance.org*

VASHON COHOUSING, VASHON ISLAND, WASHINGTON. Cottage for sale. Two bedrooms, 1.5 baths, oak floors, high ceilings, gas stoves, insulated attic, etc. Great for one or two persons. Asking $190's. Contact: *www.vashoncohousing.org; Rose: inou98070@yahoo.com or 206-463-1992.*

VILLAGE OF HARMONY, Central New Mexico. Eight-year-old community is expanding and has several old sites for sale. One has ten acres fenced with a small house already started and workshop with a carport, hot boxes, flowers, almond orchard, various trees and more. Asking $26,000 with large down payment and owner will carry balance at $200 per month with 0 percent interest. We also have three other fenced one acre lots with houses in different stages of completion. Prices $1,500 to $6,000 for those and terms are available. The last one acre lot is fenced with a well, house, pool, sunroom and large trees. Owner wants $20,000 with $5,000 down and $200 per month payments at eight percent interest. Call *Mike at 505-379-6208* for more info, or email us at *voh4love@yahoo.com.* Visit our community site on the web at *ic.org under Village of Harmony.* We are always accepting new members!

COMMUNITIES FORMING

CATSKILLS NEW YORK. Cohousing community forming. We are seeking people to help form a CSA, find land, build houses, make community. Inspired by Hundredfold Farms Cohousing. Email: *camrabe@yahoo.com*

EASTON MOUNTAIN RETREAT COMMUNITY, Greenwich, New York. Community forming at the Easton Mountain Retreat. Seeking

creative, psychologically mature individuals interested in deepening spiritual life, meditation, non-violence, social justice and celebration. Currently four gay men running a retreat and conference center on 175 acres in upstate NY. We are engaged in healing work, body work, acupuncture, holistic medicine, education and spiritual retreats. There are many opportunities for cottage industries on the property. Developing an ecovillage that will include couples, singles, a monastery and retirement community. Contact: *john@eastonmountainretreat.com; 518-692-8023; www.eastonmountainretreat.com*

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

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

FLORIDA, West Central. Looking for others wanting to form a sustainable farm-based intentional community on a tree and vegetable farm. *Jon and Deb Butts, 4321 Needle Palm Rd., Plant City, FL 33565; www.ecofarmfl.org*

JAMAICA PLAIN COHOUSING, Boston, Massachusetts. Our group owns a site within five minutes walk of a subway station and two parks. June 2004 is the target completion date of our environmentally friendly development of about 30 units. For more info call *617-524-6614, or visit our web site at www.jpcohousing.org*

LUNA HAVEN RANCH, Apalachicola, Florida. Ten acres, beautiful forest, grass marsh, navigable creek, fenced garden, large shed. Good fishing, sailing. Currently, there is a house, a cabin and sites for three more houses. Present residents: myself, 58, my octogenarian parents, four dogs. I hope to live out my days here in

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Oak Creek Commons is creating an environmentally friendly, 36-home cohousing community on 14-acres in Paso Robles, CA. A few homes are still available. Construction starts fall 2002.

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company with openhearted people who desire to live and work in harmony with each other and this lovely place. Like gardening and/or bookkeeping? You would be especially welcome! Help build this vision? And yes, Luna Moths live here. *Kristin Anderson, POB 386, Apalachicola, FL 32329; 850-653-2249; www.longdreamgallery.com; kwrks@gtcom.net*

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*

THE NEW JALAPENO, Pahoa, Hiwaii. An intentional community, liberal, easy work exchange on 18 acres in jungle five miles from a lava flow. On the big island of Hawaii, in the district of Puna (35 miles south of Hilo), ten miles west of Pahoa, one mile past the end of state highway 130. POB 1161, Pahoa, HI 96778; 866-260-4471; www.thenewjalapeno.tripod.com; thenewjalapeno@yahoo.com

NOAH'S ARK 2, Texas. East of Austin, northwest of Houston. Job sharing, progressive city-dwellers co-creating short-term rural weekender nature retreat and long-term earth-sheltered Liberal Survival Center since 1995. Part-time silence/solitude acceptable/recommended. Lovers welcome, not haters. Eight-page brochure $1. *4001 Oakridge, Houston, TX 77090-5230; 713-863-0433; sharingfutures@aol.com*

OAK CREEK COMMONS, Paso Robles, California. Creating an intergenerational, 36-household cohousing community on 14 wooded acres on the beautiful central coast of California. Our neighborhood includes environmentally designed private homes with over ten acres of wooded open space, a hiking trail, year-round flowing stream, beautiful views and a 4,000 square foot community-owned Common House. Construction will start in the fall of 2002. We hold orientations and site tours on weekends in Paso Robles, and free informational meetings every month in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. For more info call *800-489-8715, or visit our web site at www.OakCreekCommons.org*

ROCKY HILL COHOUSING, Northampton, Massachusetts. We're building a community of friends on 27 forested acres in Northampton (#1 U.S. Small Arts Town). 28 homes, mostly three and four bedrooms still available in this green community. We have a sledding hill! Call Sharon and Glenn at *413-584-9987; email: rockyhillcohousing@mail.com; www.rockyhillcohousing.org*

WILD ONION COHOUSING, Northwestern Vermont. A rural, village-based community forming in northwestern Vermont. We are a committed group of singles and couples of various ages, and families with children, working actively toward our dream of a close-knit village embedded in the countryside. We are planning for 25 moderately-priced homes in a community that respects the natural environment and the rural culture of this beautiful part of the world. Visit our web site *at www.wildonioncohousing.org; email us at info@howecohousing.org; or contact Michael/Essie at POB 216, Underhill Center, VT 05490; 802-899-3146.*

CONSULTANTS

CREATING OR EXPANDING COMMUNITY? Or are you in an existing community that is having communication challenges? Save frustration and effort while deepening your experience as a community. Or utilize a community coach to move your process of visioning, acquisition, and/or formation of community forward. Drawing from an eclectic background of coaching, Hakomi, mediation, law, real estate, and energy work, Creation in Motion offers a unique mixture of intellectual, emotional and spiritually-based consulting and coaching. See www.SpiritualCommunities.com or email *BonitaJoy@SpiritualCommunities.com or call 785-842-2268.*

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

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SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 15 to November 1, 2003. Gain experience in organic farming, construction, communication, and rural and community living. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Community and applying for an internship at HYPERLINK http://www.thefec.org/sandhill or by contacting us at *Sandhill Farm, RR1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5543;* sandhill@ic.org

SPRING FIRE, Glenmont, Ohio. Young community seeks interns who want to learn hands-on gardening, wild edibles, simple living, childcare, constructions and community living. We live in a beautiful Ohio Valley near Mohican State Forest, and would love to talk with you. Write or call for more info: *SpringFire, Attn.*

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Patricia Greene, 13 West Branch Rd., Heath, MA 01339; 413-337-4037; patricia@ic.org

Molly Ewing, 21935 Jericho Rd., Glenmont, OH 44628; 740-599-1574.

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

WHY PAY RENT OR MAKE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS, when you can live rent free? The Caretaker Gazette contains property caretaking/housesitting openings, advice and information for property caretakers, housesitters and landowners. Published since 1983. Subscribers receive 800+ property caretaking opportunities each year, worldwide. Some estate management positions start at $50,000/yr., plus benefits. Subscriptions: $29/yr. *The Caretaker Gazette, Box 540-I, River Falls, WI 54022; 715-426-5500; www.caretaker.org <http://www.caretaker.org>*

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

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

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AGENT, PUBLISHER AND/OR DISTRIBUTOR WANTED. Professional artists based in rural Ireland whose work is diverse and internationally recognized, including meditative and visionary images. Visit us at www.joopsmits.com and www.deborahhealy.com We welcome your inquiry at healysmits@hotmail.com or you can phone/fax us at *+353-0-6484528*

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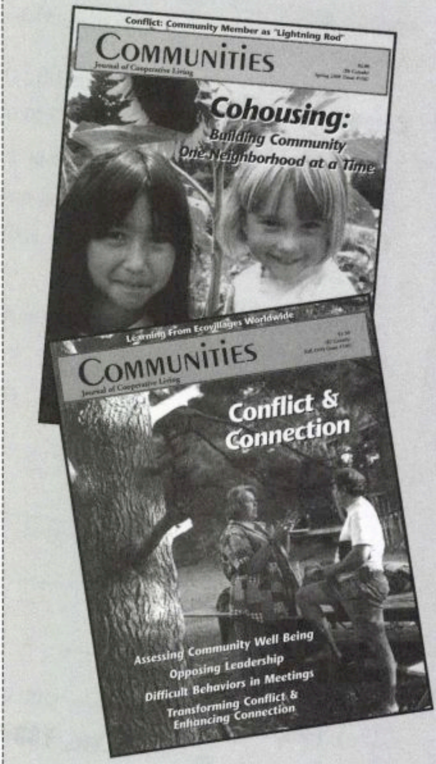

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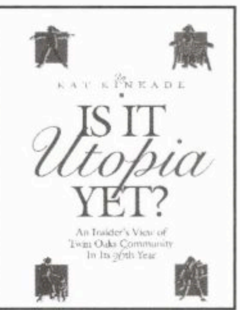
PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

heard and taken into account—the easier it is to generate positive movement.

Positive thinking doesn't guarantee easy success, however. Sometimes a group needs to explore dozens of options before it finds one that really resolves their problem. The big question is: Do they want to attempt resolution under a cloud of doubt, slogging through a mire of negativity, stress, and mistrust? Or do they want to approach their task with optimism, generating an esprit de corps that carries them through times of low energy and keeps them open to new possibilities? To me the answer is obvious. But then, "optimist" is my middle name!

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various communities for 30 years, and for the last 15 years has been on the road visiting communities. He recently released Visions of Utopia, his video documentary about intentional communities, and he's now on tour showing it nationwide. To invite him to bring his optimistic show to your town, contact him at geoph@ic.org.



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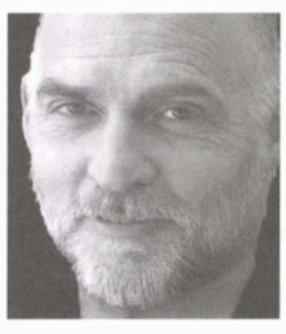
Pollyannas, Pessimists, and the Optimal Optimist

BY GEOPH KOZENY



If you tend to assume the worst, you'll likely encounter aggravation and disappointment in regular doses, probably more than your share. If you tend to assume the best, you'll not universally eliminate exasperation, but your overall life will likely be happier and more fulfilling than the pessimist's. That essential message—the centerpiece of Norman Vincent Peale's 1952 classic, The Power of Positive Thinking—is still a good piece of advice, and the regular practice of assuming the best in a community can greatly boost its likelihood of success, measured both in the group's longevity and the level of satisfaction of its members.

Although it's possible to be overly optimistic in the face of adversity (the Pollyanna personality routinely takes denial to its extreme), it's also true that many people become pessimistic and immobilized in the face of a large task that actually would be doable, or at least improvable, if people kept a positive attitude about it. Rather than sliding into overwhelm, they could take the more productive approach by dividing an intimidating task into a number of smaller tasks and tackling the more manageable bits one or two at a time. However, it's hard to stick with a daunting task long enough to identify its subcomponents, so it becomes critical to find a way to believe that through exerting a reasonable effort it would in fact be possible to achieve the goal.

Group synergy tends to run in spirals of positive or negative energy, so it's important to break a negative cycle.

One common pitfall at the negative end of the optimism/pessimism scale is the very human habit of making up stories that might explain someone else's behavior, then acting as if those stories are true. Much like the question as to whether the glass is half full or half empty, if there's an option to assume the best about someone, or to assume the worst, many people take the pessimistic road and go for the negative scenario. Usually they're wrong, or at best they're dealing with partial truths that skew their understanding and reduce the likelihood of a mutually agreeable solution. It's common for the person making the negative assumption to suffer from self-doubt and low self-esteem. Tools to help counteract these patterns include using "I" statements, acknowledging that one might be putting a negative spin on something that might be neutral or even positive, and looking for the "grain of truth" in the behaviors or words of the other person. It can also be extremely valuable if they are willing to try to imagine an alternate scenario that would explain the other person's actions in a positive light.

I've done a lot of facilitation for troubled groups that use a consensus process, and getting them to believe that a mutually agreeable solution is possible is one of the key steps in resolving their issues. It's amazing how much better people can listen to each other when they believe a positive outcome is possible. And the shift into a state of collective optimism seems to help prime the pump of creativity and cooperation. Conversely, carrying a cloud of pessimism results, most of the time, in a discouraging round of self-fulfilling prophecies. Either optimism or pessimism can be contagious, so it's the outlook of the strongest believer or the most charismatic speaker that usually carries the day—unless that believer has previously lost credibility by having a history of being overly optimistic or overly pessimistic about past projects.

Along that line, group synergy tends to run in spirals of positive or negative energy, so it's important to look for ways to break a negative cycle and shift the pattern into an optimistic and constructive direction. Sometimes all that's needed is to draw the person or group's attention to the pattern, or take a break and do a humorous and lively group exercise. Other times a private mediation with the polarized parties can help. And sometimes the best choice might be to adjourn the discussion and come back to the issues another time, after people have had a chance to sit with their perceptions and feelings and have gained clarity about the options they could live with. If the group's facilitator is good at identifying common ground as it emerges, and pointing out how the group is making progress on a sticky or complicated issue, often that helps a group find or maintain an optimistic outlook and helps keep their process moving forward. The better a group is at communicating—if everyone ends up feeling that their concerns are being

(continued on p. 79)

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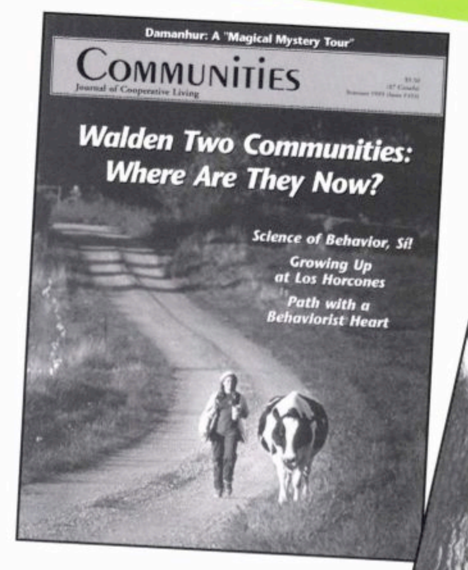

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