

Accountability and Consequences in Community

COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE Living

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Spring 2003 (Issue #117)

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Since 1972, the primary resource for information, issues, and ideas about intentional communities in North America - from urban co-ops to cohousing groups to ecovillages to rural communes. The 80-page quarterly is focusing increasingly on cohousing communities and aspiring ecovillages, as those are two of the fastest-growing kinds of communities in North America today.

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tools and resources

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

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

33 NEW ARTICLES

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

MAPS

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

CHARTS

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

RESOURCES

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

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Journal of Cooperative Living

FOCUS

Ecovillages: What Have We Learned?

FRONT COVER

Rachael Katz in the prairie grass at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, Missouri.

Photo, Tony Sirna.

BACK COVER

Preparing meals for Cattail Co-op, Dancing Rabbit.

Photo, Tony Sirna.

22 What is an "Ecovillage"?

Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) uses a broad, liberal interpretation of "ecovillage." Here's why. *Linda Joseph* and *Albert Bates*.

25 Ecovillage Roots (and Branches)

When, where, and how we re-invented this ancient village concept. *Albert Bates*.

- Where They Are—*Diana Leafe Christian*
- An Ecovillage Education—*Albert Bates*
- Living and Learning Centers—*Philip Snyder*

30 Spirit and Earth at Manitou Arbor

What happens when a group of Earth-honoring Catholic nuns decide to found an inter-faith ecovillage? *Ma'ikwe Ludwig*.

34 Creating "Ecovillage Zoning" With Local Officials

A group of plucky Canadians convinced local officials to write new zoning laws especially for ecovillages. *Melanie Mitchell, Lokesh Green, Elizabeth Gorla, and Brandy MacPherson*.

37 Why Urban Ecovillages Are Crucial

Cities need ecovillages, and ecovillages need cities, asserts community founder *Jacob Stevens Cordivae*.

39 Cabins, Computers, and Construction Dust

Living out sustainable values "on the ground" at Dancing Rabbit. *Stephanie Noll*.

43 Not Just Eco-Technology

Danish ecovillagers train themselves to change energy consumption at Munksoegaard, an award-winning project near Copenhagen. *Lone Samuelsson*.

- Ten Years of the Danish Ecovillage Network—*Hildur Jackson*

46 A 73-Year-Old Ecovillage in the Land of Ice and Fire

In 1930 a farsighted Anthroposophist scandalized her Icelandic neighbors by founding what may be the world's first modern-day ecovillage. *Albert Bates*.

- Why Camphill Communities Are Ecovillages—*Jan Martin Bang*

52 Ecovillages—Cherry Blossom-Style

Can a top-down, developer-driven ecovillage thrive in the Land of the Rising Sun? Will the Japanese once again show us how to do it better, faster, and more effectively? *Hildur Jackson*.

- The Japanese Quest for Sustainable Alternatives



FEATURES



16 Accountability and Consequences

How can we help each other stay accountable to the group? What are our options if someone repeatedly breaks community agreements?

Diana Leafé Christian.

20 Should We Lock Our Community Buildings?

How a California cohousing community solves this dilemma. *Patty Mara Gourley.*

COLUMNS

12 COMMUNITY LIVING WORLD WIDE
• *Bill Metcalf*
The Wolery, Australia

80 PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN •
Geoph Kozeny
Striving for Sustainability



DEPARTMENTS

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 LETTERS
- 7 PUBLISHER'S NOTE
- 9 COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE
- 60 REVIEWS
- 63 CALENDAR
- 66 DIRECTORY UPDATES
- 68 REACH

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Journal of Cooperative Living

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COMMUNITIES (ISSN 0199-9346) is published five times a year; March, June, September and two times in December, by the Fellowship for Intentional Community at Route 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563. Periodicals postage paid at Rutledge, MO, and at additional mailing offices: Louisa, VA 23093 and Lawrence, KS 66044. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Communities*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; indexed in the *Alternative Press Index*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$20 U.S., \$24 Canada, \$26 outside U.S./Canada for four issues via periodical/surface mail. Single copies are \$6 U.S., \$7 Canada, \$8 outside U.S./Canada. All payments in US dollars. Available from *Communities*, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; order@ic.org, or order online at store.ic.org.

BACK ISSUES: Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342.

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

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FELLOWSHIP FOR INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY: Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5545.

REPRINT PERMISSION: Community groups may reprint with permission. Please contact *Communities*, 52 Willow St., Marion NC, 28752, 828-652-8517; communities@ic.org.

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

WEB SITE: www.ic.org.

This magazine printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, at Allen Press in Lawrence, Kansas, USA.

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!



“Can We Afford to Live in Community?”

Dear *Communities*:

I really enjoyed your editorial, “Can We Afford to Live in Community?” (*Fall/Winter '02 issue #116*.) It just blew me away. I could hear you putting words to my feelings and community experience on every line. Oh! that we communitarians could be good at practicing what we preach!

Lois Arkin

Los Angeles Eco-Village
Los Angeles, California

Dear *Communities*:

I wanted to tell you how impressive I found your article, “Can We Afford to Live in Community?” on the finances of typical rural want-to-be-self-sustaining communities. Very well organized, well written, clear and effective communication. I appreciated your direct approach, no warm-and-fuzzy excuses for communities whose

members end up receiving a monthly stipend that's just a pittance, working too hard, and suffering significant financial hardship for having been naive and idealistic.

Muriel Kranowski

Shadowlake Village Cohousing
Blacksburg, Virginia

Dear Editor:

I just wanted to you to know that we thought your editorial “Can We Afford to Live in Community?” was fabulous! We have run into those very challenges in our community. So what's the solution?

Swan Freed

Enota

Hiawassee, Georgia

As noted in the editorial, it seems that rural communities not close enough to decent-paying local jobs must have viable on-site businesses, either owned by the community or by one or more members. Such businesses can offer members a source of income to meet community fees and other expenses, or, if the community is income-sharing, so it can earn enough profit to meet its expenses.

And that community businesses must be healthy and successful if community members are to do better than work long hard hours to eke out a subsistence existence (and call it “normal” community living).

And that income-sharing communities would benefit from finding ways to attract members with assets and high skills like Meadowdance has done. (See “Meadowdance's Hybrid Economy,” p. 32 of that issue.)

And lastly, we need to educate and persuade city and county zoning, building code, and health department officials to allow higher population density per acre on sites with clustered housing, dedicated open space, and shared and/or off-grid utilities, constructed wetlands, and other sustainable systems and shared resources. If they allowed higher population densities per acre, for example, rural communities could divide land and development costs among more member households, and then regular folks and young people with few assets, not just affluent people, could afford to live there.

— Ed.

Do Reversed Photos Lower Our Credibility?

Dear *Communities*:

Hello from Canada. Love the magazine. I find it very inspiring and it helps me remember that other people are successful in living a different lifestyle than the mainstream model.

Just wanted to drop a quick note about photo layout. The Summer 2002 issue (#115) shows a picture of four people involved in a work party on page 34. On the back cover is the same photo but a mirror image. While I understand some of the dynamics involved in photo layout (e.g. following eye direction to lead you across a page), this simple liberty of representing the same image two different ways undermines its credibility and by extension that of the entire publication. On a subconscious level, I noticed the photos' differences and wondered what other liberties had been taken with the images. I do not oppose Photoshop techniques or other editorial "improvements," but when it is that obvious it makes the reader wonder about the rest of the images and stories. Just thought I would pass on some constructive criticism.

Thank you for the wonderful magazine.

Jason Steeghs
Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada

We appreciate your constructive criticism. We crop photos to select which images will appear in the magazine image, and sometimes reverse them for visual effect or use Photoshop software to darken distracting backgrounds so the foreground can be seen more easily.

I'm aware that several years ago a major newsmagazine altered O.J. Simpson's cover photo to make him look more menacing to their average (white) reader, and I found that visual chicanery appalling.

*But *Communities* magazine has neither the inclination nor the budget to make community people look essentially any different than they are. We do these desktop publishing tricks to make the snapshots and hastily shot digital photos borrowed from volunteer authors look decent enough to illustrate their articles. With no photography budget and no staff photographers (our staff is several part-time low-wage communitarians), we're lucky to get photos at all. And, lucky to have a few methods to help make these borrowed images, which often have little composition and less contrast, worthy of our readers' expectations that they are getting, in fact, a real magazine.*

Yet, if you wondered about our credibility, maybe others do too. Maybe we should do this less often. (Maybe we should get more, and better, photos!) Thanks for taking the time to let us know how the reversed image affected you.

—Ed.

Enjoyed Articles on Feedback, Gifting Circle, "More Sustainable Than Thou"



Dear *Communities*:

Your last several issues have been great. I really enjoyed the article on giving and receiving feedback in the Winter '01 "Communication and Process" issue. (#113). The Gifting Circle process reminded me of the Begin Anew ceremony that Thich Nhat Hahn teaches. This ceremony is conducted twice-monthly at his Plum Village community in France, and like the Gifting Circle, provides an opportunity to express feelings in a safe way, without trying to figure out who or what is "right."

I also got a real kick out of the illustration that accompanied the "More Sustain-

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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.



able Than Thou" article in the Heart of Sustainability issue. (Summer '02, #115.) I'm laughing now, thinking about the frayed twig and recycled tire sandals. Great stuff.

Mark Bucciarelli
Sirius Community
Shutesbury,
Massachusetts

Single Parents in Community

Dear *Communities*,

A posting on the Cohousing-L list requested the benefits of living in community for single parents. Here is my response, as a mom of a nine-year-old and a two-year-old.

1. Adults to talk to! As a single parent, it's very easy to become isolated in your own home with just the kids.
2. Someone to take turns pushing the kids on the swings.
3. Someone to get parenting advice from.

4. People to eat dinner with who stay at the table longer than five minutes.
5. Someone to pick up your kids when you get caught in traffic.
6. A baby-sitting coop so that everyone gets a little downtime now and then.
7. Other adults who think your kids are almost as bright, charming, and adorable as you do.
8. A neighbor to pick up milk at the store when you don't want to drag everyone out.
9. Someone to roll your eyes at and sigh to when your kids are being exasperating.
10. Someone to take them to the park just for fun.

Terri Hupfer
Pleasant Hill Cohousing
Pleasant Hill, California

You can browse the Cohousing-L Listserv by going to their Cohousing-L Info Page at www.cohousing.org/Cohousing-L.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



AAA for the Heart: *Sometimes You Need a Map to Navigate Emotional Territory*

Back in August I was doing a public talk about the power of community and the value of responding in moments of distress differently than with some combination of fear, defensiveness, or judgment. I concluded with a story about me and my father that taught me to use emotions as an opportunity for self-examination and curiosity. I've told this story many times and usually it invites a tenderness in the audience and is a great place to end. This time, however, theory collapsed into reality in one terrifying moment.

The point I tried to make at the conclusion of my story was that we have options in how we respond to distress, and one of the most potent of these—though seldom used—is to examine the roots of our upset and decide whether our response serves us. If not, we can change how we feel. One guy in the audience got highly agitated when I said this. Jumping out of his seat he complained in rising tones that that was not simple. I agreed that it wasn't, yet insisted that it was possible. Wanting none of that, he proceeded to show me and the rest of the audience just how hard it could be. Striding over to the woman who had organized the evening—someone he had never met before that night—he proceeded to chew her out in no uncertain terms about her abusive and violating behavior, using language that might wilt a sailor.

Everyone was stunned. What was going on? What could the woman have possibly done that unleashed this torrent of abuse? Some in the room (I found out later) were trying to figure out why I had shown such poor taste in arranging for a demonstration of wild dynamics to end the talk. The woman's husband, treating the verbal attack at face value, was debating whether to jump the guy. Two or three others attempted to shout him into his sensibilities and were promptly hosed down by a stream of invective in turn. It was getting ugly fast and I had no clue why this was happening. But happening it was, and on my watch.

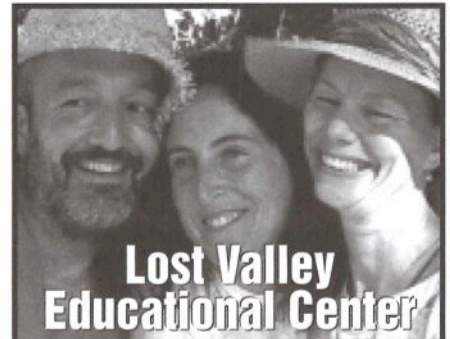
Taking a deep breath, I stepped up to the guy and tried to make contact, to draw his attention to me and away from the woman. Looking him in the eye and elevating my voice to enter his decibel range, I tried to acknowledge his anger, and get him talking

Coming in Future Issues

Love Relationships and Family in Community, Summer' 03.

Does it take a village to raise a child or nurture a love relationship? Do the pleasures of community living enhance partnerships and families? Do the pressures drive couples apart or make them stronger? What happens when one partner seeks the community life and the other doesn't? How do children fare when they have many adult friends, when there are many other children, when turnover is high, or when there are no age-peers? Is community life more difficult for young families with little savings or equity? What happens to founding members when all the children grow up and move away?

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about what had set him off. Fortunately, it worked. Being met (instead of condemned), he quit shouting and related that he felt violated by how the organizer had tapped him on the upper arm at the beginning of the evening (to ask him to sign a clipboard collecting contact information).

I asked him why being touched on the arm felt violating, and he admitted he'd been abused as a kid and was hypersensitive to touch without permission. OK, that gave me something to work with. While 99 out of 100 people would not feel violated if their upper arm were tapped by a stranger, he was the one who did. The woman had made an assumption about what was acceptable behavior and was wrong in this case. Both could accept this explanation. I asked the guy if he felt she intended to violate him. Now much calmer, he admitted she probably didn't. Following up this opening I pointed out that he used some highly abusive language in complaining that the woman had abused him. I asked him to apologize, and he did. I checked in with the woman to see if she needed anything else. She was shaky, but OK. We were lucky.

Finally, everyone exhaled and we left for the post-talk reception, thankful that the punch we wound up with at the end was the kind you drink.

Fortunately, moments that wild are rare. It is not rare, however, for people to get upset, and it is not rare for groups to struggle with how to handle those moments well.

Ten years ago my community's frustration with handling distress reached a peak, and we took a deep look at the question of upset, resulting in an explicit commitment that members were expected to be there for each other in hard times. Unfortunately, it didn't occur to us to ask each other what we wanted in hard times. Last summer, a decade after the commitment, we finally got around to asking that question and the results were startling.

We asked, "When you are in distress, how do you wish the group to respond to you? What does support look like?"

One member reported it was crucial that people respond calmly, with modulated tones, because if others are excited there's a greater chance that things will spiral out of control. That person said they were more likely to come back to center if everyone else was already there.

Another said they couldn't stand it when people are calm in the face of their distress. It felt like they were being coddled, or condescended to. They didn't trust that others actually understood their feelings unless heart rates were rising to meet theirs. People didn't actually need to scream, but they needed some passion in the response.

A third member asked for an island of silence around their statements of distress, allowing the moment to sink in. If people jumped right in they would suspect others were unwilling to sit with the discomfort and were trying to shunt their feelings aside.

In direct contrast to this request we heard a fourth member confess that it absolutely drives them bonkers when people delayed responding—they needed to know right away what others were doing with the information. They were on pins and needles until they knew how their distress landed.

You could almost see the 100-watt bulbs light up around the room as people suddenly made sense of confusing incidents over the years, where one well-meant response after another was so ill received. A major factor contributing to our mixed results in working with distress was that people were regularly packaging offerings of support in wrapping that *they* preferred, not bothering to wonder if the intended recipient liked the same colors.

All that variety in a group of just 10. *Ai-yi-yi*. Think of the range you'd see in a group of 40! Thinking back to the guy who went ape at my public talk, I realized I was luckier than I knew.

Jared Schaus

COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



Judy Meeker, member of **The Farm** in Tennessee, was one of five peace activists acknowledged in *Time* magazine's December 10th issue for her founding role in PeaceRoots Alliance, an organization of current and former Farm members nationwide. Distressed by anti-Arab sentiments expressed by her elementary school art students, Judy helped launch "More Than Warmth," a project in which over 1,000 children across the country created quilts that illustrate a non-political/non-religious message of peace. Completed quilts have been sent to orphanages, schools, and other children's organizations in Afghanistan, Jerusalem, and Africa. In another PeaceRoots project, the message "Peace Is Patriotic" has appeared on billboards in the San Francisco Bay Area, Denver, Tucson, Reno, Cleveland, Atlanta, and Los Angeles, with other cities targeted in the coming months. www.peaceroots.org.



On December 23rd the television program **News Hour with Jim Lehrer** featured a 12-minute segment on cohousing, with interviews with architects *Charles Durrett* and *Kathryn McCamant*, CoHousing Company principals and authors of the book *Cohousing*, and San Francisco Bay Area cohousing residents *Sandra* and *Michael Coleman* and *Joani Blank* at **Swan's Market**, as well as members of **Doyle St. Cohousing** and **Pleasant Hill Cohousing**.



Manzanita Village Cohousing in Tucson was recently filmed for a PBS television program, "Right on the Money," that will air sometime this spring, according to Manzanita member *Joan Burrell*.



The January/February 2003 issue of *Canadian Geographic* magazine features "Going Green in the 'Burbs," an article on ecovillages and cohousing communities in Canada, profiling **Windsong Cohousing** in British Columbia and **Ecovillage Network of Canada**. A map notes the locations of communities all across Canada, including **Talking Cedars**, **O.U.R. Ecovillage**, **Cardiff Place Cohousing**, **Southeast False Creek Cohousing**, and **Glen Valley Organic Farm** in British Columbia; **Borealis** and **EcoVillage 1** in Alberta; **Northern Sun Farm Coop** in Manitoba; **Common Ground**, **Whole Village**, **Sustainable Ecological Alternatives for Living**, and **Carp Ridge Eco-Wellness Centre** in Ontario; **Terra Flora** in Quebec; and **Hawthorn Hill** and **EarthSea** in Nova Scotia. To order: 800-267-0824.



Just off the press is *Communities* magazine editor *Diana Leafe Christian's* *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community*, released by New Society Publishers. Based on the experiences of successful North American ecovillages and communities founded in the '90s, the book focuses on how to form and sustain communities and ecovillages in today's rigorous financial and zoning climate. With real community stories and cautionary tales, topics include why 10 percent succeed and 90 percent fail; characteristics of community founders; getting off to a good start; community vision documents; power, decision-making, and governance; agreements and policies; legal entities; finding and financing land; dealing with zoning; internal community economies; sustainable design; communication, process, and conflict; and selecting new members. Examples of these community-forming processes are drawn primarily from eight communities founded in the 1990s: **Sowing Circle/Occidental Arts and Ecology Center** (California), **Lost Valley Educational Center** (Oregon), **Abundant Dawn** (Virginia), **Earthaven** (North Carolina), **Dancing Rabbit** (Missouri), **Mariposa Grove** (Oakland, California), and **Meadowdance** (Vermont).



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An Australian film commission may produce a television documentary of community scholar Bill Metcalf's latest book, *Herrnhut: Australia's First Utopian Commune*, published last March by the University of Melbourne Press. (See "Charisma and Controversy" in *Communities* #114, Spring '02 issue.) An Australian movie producer is also considered doing a film of the book, possibly with German filmmakers, since the 1850s community was founded by German immigrants. The book was also first runner-up for the 2002 National Community History Award in that country. Recent president of the International Communal Studies Association, a Findhorn Fellow, and *Communities* magazine's "Community Living Worldwide" and "Historic Communities" columnist, Bill is also author of *Shared Visions, Shared Lives; From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*; and several scholarly works on Australian communes.

David Wann, Harmony Village Cohousing resident and co-author of *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic* (reviewed in *Communities* #116, Fall/Winter '02), is seeking article and photo contributions to the anthology he's editing about community life in cohousing. With the working title *A Different Kind of Neighborhood: Stories From Cohousing*, it will be published by Fulcrum Books in late '03 or early '04. David is seeking articles that reveal "experiments and innovations; successes and failures; and new ways of creating neighborhood support and social capital, bringing renewal energy online, and sharing tools and cars instead of duplicating everything—a full range of what's being learned and unlearned in cohousing." While these topics are certainly also being learned in almost every other kind of intentional community as well, David's book will no doubt expose more people to the idea that intentional community—in this par-



Honoring Philip Berrigan, Robert Swan

Renowned peace activist and communitarian Philip Berrigan died December 6, 2002 at Jonah House, in Baltimore, Maryland, an intentional community he cofounded in 1973. He died surrounded by family and friends, two months after being diagnosed with liver and kidney cancer, and one month after deciding to discontinue chemotherapy. Approximately 30 close friends and fellow peace activists gathered a week earlier to celebrate his life and honor him.

During his nearly 40 years of resistance to war and violence, Phil Berrigan focused on living and working in community as a way to model the nonviolent, sustainable world he was working to create. At Jonah House members live simply, pray together, share duties, and attempt to expose the violence of militarism and consumerism. The community was born out of resistance to the Vietnam War, including high-profile draft card burning actions. Later the focus became ongoing resistance to United States' nuclear policy. Because of these efforts Phil Berrigan spent about 11 years in prison for nonviolent protect actions. He wrote, lectured, and taught extensively, publishing six books, including an autobiography, *Fighting the Lamb's War*.

Phil Berrigan wrote a final statement in the days before his death, which included this passage: "I die with the conviction, held since 1968 and Catonsville, that nuclear weapons are the scourge of the Earth; to mine for them, manufacture them, deploy them, use them, is a curse against God, the human family, and the Earth itself."



Robert Swann, lifelong peace and social justice activist, champion of community economics, founder of the E.F. Schumacher Society in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and father of the Community Land Trust movement died peacefully on January 13 in his home in South Egremont, Massachusetts, from lung cancer. He was 84.

A conscientious objector and seminal figure in the decentralist and community economic movements in the US, Bob Swann dedicated more than a half century of his life to non-violence, desegregation, appropriate technology, affordable housing, land trusts, community credit, worker cooperatives and local currency.

ticular case cohousing community—is a desirable, valuable, and do-able alternative to an unsustainable mainstream lifestyle. If you have possible article or photo contributions: WannDaveJr.@cs.com.



And *Liz Walker*, director and cofounder of **EcoVillage at Ithaca**, is writing a book about her experiences of co-creating and living in one of the first ecovillages in the Americas. Tentatively titled “Creating a Culture of Sustainability: The EcoVillage at Ithaca Experience,” Liz is exploring topics such as birth and death, invented celebrations, organic farming, green building, conflict resolution and personal transformation. “People are hungry for a sense of connection and meaning in their lives,” she says. “By describing our experience at EcoVillage at Ithaca, my hope is that many readers will be motivated to make positive ecological and social changes in their own lives.”



“Help, we need a meeting facilitator.” “Please, we need help resolving conflicts!” Inquiries like these often come to our publisher, the nonprofit **Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC)**. To help these communities, the Fellowship is creating an online **Process Consultant Clearinghouse**, where anyone seeking such support will find experienced communitarians offering process, facilitation, and conflict resolution services listed all in one place on the FIC’s website: www.ic.org. Five percent of the consultants’ fees will be donated to the FIC in exchange for the referral. “Everyone wins,” says Clearinghouse organizer *Tree Bressen*, FIC board member and member of **Walnut Street Co-op**. “Communities get help, consultants get linked up with communities who need them, and FIC gets a small donation.”



Tree Bressen, a facilitator herself, has also created her own new process and facilitation website—www.treegroup.info—offering over two dozen web pages on consensus, facilitation, conflict resolution, and how to have better meetings, for commu-

nity groups and others. All the articles, tips, and resources are available for free download and use. “The site is an example of how we can take the wisdom earned in community and make it widely available,” she says.



If you’ve wondered how you could help give financial support to intentional communities by buying their products, look no further. Long-time **Fellowship for Intentional Community** staff member *Velma Kahn* of **Abundant Dawn (Dayspring Circle)** is also offering a new web-based service—an online store featuring mail-order products made in North American intentional communities. The new site—**communitymade.com**—offers, among other products, candleholders and planters made of recycled tin (**Acorn Community**, Virginia); herbal products from Red Moon Herbs (**Earthaven Ecovillage**, North Carolina); hemp and recycled polyester hammocks (**Tekiah Community**, also part of **Abundant Dawn**, Virginia); quilted wall hangings and pot holders (**Twin Oaks Community**, Virginia); and women’s calendars and greeting cards (**We’Moon Land**, Oregon). Velma, who is database manager for *Communities* magazine and creator and designer/manager of the FIC’s own online store, store.ic.org, hopes to carry products from 30 to 40 communities eventually. Ω

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The Wolery, Australia

Great Southern Ocean waves, pushed by icy, Antarctic winds, crash over Elephant Rock and Green's Pool, the optimistically-entitled “swimming” beach near The Wolery. Although this is a lovely October spring day, in the far south of Western Australia the biting wind makes me glad to return to my hosts' house, facing north and sheltered by trees, for coffee and home-made cake.

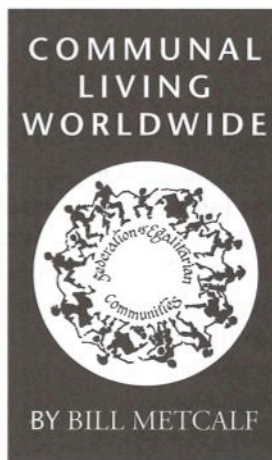
The Wolery was formed in 1977 by middle-class and middle-aged people who had been living in an urban commune in Perth. Several of them had a history of political and environmental activism, and membership in the Communist Party and Humanist Society. They named their community after Wol's house in Winnie the Pooh. Wol, you might remember, was the owl who could not spell. Enid and Ian Conochie, founding community members, tell me “it is perhaps a little twee, but it slips off the tongue, and like Wol, we felt that we were part wise and part foolish.”

Buying a 64 hectare (160 acre) derelict farm, and incorporating themselves as a Non-Profit Association (like a club), they have erected thirteen separate family houses and two special “retirement units,” mostly clustered as a village around their Community Centre. Their scenic land is gently rolling, with rich soil, several dams and a creek, and is

mostly covered with trees through which you can glimpse the ocean. Several well-fed cows and horses amble about, and kangaroos abound in their lush paddocks, thereby completing this Arcadian scene.

Some houses have views over the Great Southern Ocean although most shelter behind eucalyptus trees and native shrubs to avoid the biting cold winter winds. Most houses are built of mud brick or local timber, and reflect a great deal of architectural creativity and cultural and environmental sophistication. Their houses are seldom locked, with community children running in and out. Members share responsibility for each other's personal property and welfare, enjoying semi-independent lives while interacting frequently and deeply as an intentional community.

Consensus decision-making was their early ideal and, for some years, they worked at achieving this. However, as my hosts wittily tell me, “We couldn't get consensus on making consensus mandatory for decision making!” Instead, the Wols (as members call themselves) strive for and generally get consensus, with a 75 percent majority voting fallback for all decisions other than altering their constitution and admitting new members. For these two matters, three dissenting votes will stop action. In reality, they have not had to vote for many



You can read more about The Wolery and other Australian intentional communities in the author's book, From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, Australia, 1995.

years. It seems to me that their ability to almost always achieve consensus probably results from their frequent and amicable personal interactions, their maturity and sophistication, and the high degree of mutual respect and affection which is so obvious within the community.

At their Annual General Meeting they select people for the usual positions of Community Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as the humorously entitled Minister for Cattle, Minister for Tractor (they've only got one!), Minister for Water, etc. and the more prosaic Workshop Manager. They have always tried to involve every member in their community's governance, and to avoid any member being seen as dominant or isolated.

They hold at least one formal decision-making meeting each month, as well as a philosophy meeting where concepts and issues are discussed but decisions not made. They also have many social events, many with a humorous theme. For example, soon after Atlanta hosted the 1996 International Olympics, The Wolery hosted the International Wollympics—a time for silly games with even sillier prizes, all poking fun at media hype and crass commercialism. Since then, they have held regular Wollympics featuring sports such as three-legged races and apple-eating. Their collective sense of humour helped me to enjoy my time as their guest.

The Wolery's large, purpose-built, rammed-earth Community Centre houses meeting and massage rooms, a large kitchen for their frequent community meals, a bulk food store operating on an honour system, Video and TV room and a children's play area. Outside is a sporting field, tennis court and playground.

It is in this Community Centre where The Wols assemble one evening to hear me talk about communal history, including Western Australia's early com-

munes. In my travels, I have often observed that most contemporary intentional communities, including those as well-informed and sophisticated as The Wolery, lack historical perspective. This can lead to repeating old errors by not seeing themselves as part of a long, communal living tradition. While this observation frustrates me, in The Wolery it is greatly tempered by my appreciation of the depth and sophistication of their questions and comments—including those from young people who obviously experience community living very differently from their parents. The evening concludes with their usual coffee and homemade deserts (it is a miracle the Wols are not obese!), and much talk about everything from the state of the weather (very dry) to Australia entering the impending war with Iraq (opposed).

Because of local government regulations, no new houses can be built at The Wolery, so their membership is fairly stable with about 40 adults and young people. Like most intentional communities around the globe, The Wols are aging, although several younger couples have recently replaced older people, so the sounds of children again ring through the community—and disrupt talks being given by crusty, visiting scholars such as myself!

The Wolery's membership is fairly homogenous because, like most successful groups, they tend to select people who share similar views, while not enforcing any religious or political line. Enid, my pragmatic and lovely 77-year-old host tells me, "As it has turned out, most members are ex-Christians, but some believe in astrology, ghosts and divining, which I regard with scepticism, and call for verifiable evidence before accepting supernatural claims. I often think wryly that, in many cases, old religions have been discarded only for new beliefs, requiring similar leaps of faith, to be taken on unquestioningly. As I highly value peaceful relationships with com-

They almost always achieve consensus, probably resulting from their mutual respect and affection.



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munity members, I restrain myself with some frustration from counter-evangelizing the evangelism I meet.”

Once accepted, new members must contribute a non-refundable \$10,000 to be able to take over one of the existing houses. As well, they would need to compensate the departing member(s) for the cost of the building. Each household must then pay an annual fee of \$400 to the community, as well as the usual Local Government rates. All land belongs to the collective.

Each member is responsible for her/his own income. While several are on retirement pensions, others work in local businesses or in professions such as architecture and information technology. Members appear to be reasonably prosperous, well-educated, and living comfortable, environmentally-sensitive lives. Rather than dropping out of society, they play vital roles in local and regional affairs and, as one of Australia's best known intentional communities, serve as a model for many other would-be communards.

Over coffee, Enid rhetorically asks

herself, “Do the gripes loom large enough to blight my life, sour my community experience, or make me feel I'd like to leave and live on a separate block, in a retirement village or in another community? In the heat and stress of occa-

As with many communities, few of their children, when grown, have remained in the community.

sional moments, the answer would be yes. Always after a deep breath— or three—the answer is a definite NO—I'm here for good! The Wolery, made up of real-life people, has not fulfilled all my dreams, but it does yield much satisfac-

tion and many delights. So it's here at The Wolery I want to live, and sometime later on, to die. And it's here I'll leave the most abiding memories.”

As with most intentional communities around the world, few of their children, when grown, have remained in the community. When The Wolery recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary, one of the Wol children, now a young woman working in Europe, wrote home about how she feels so proud to be even such a small part of such a place. I think when I was younger I took the safety, happiness and freedom for granted—as I knew nothing else—now, being away in other countries far across the sea I feel I can fully appreciate how lucky I was to have the pleasure of such a carefree childhood.”

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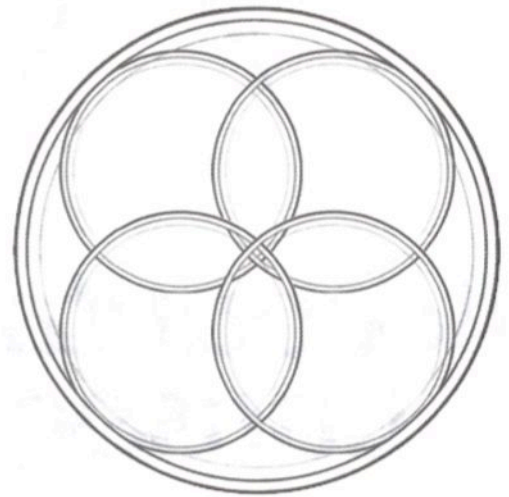
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Accountability and Consequences

How can we help each other stay accountable to the group? What are our options if someone repeatedly breaks community agreements?

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

One of the most common sources of conflict in community occurs when people don't do what they say they'll do. As in business, this often causes repercussions "downstream," since some people count on others to finish certain preliminary steps before they can take the next steps. But by putting a few simple processes in place, community members can help each other stay accountable to one another in relatively painless, guilt-free ways.

One is to make agreements about tasks in meetings, and keep track of these tasks from meeting to meeting. This involves assigning tasks to specific people and defining what they're being asked to accomplish and by what time. It also involves having



a task review at the beginning of every meeting—the people or committees who agreed to take on these tasks report whether they have been done, and if not, when they will be.

It also helps to create a wall chart of assigned tasks with expected completion dates and the person or committee responsible for each. Assign someone the task of keeping the chart current and taping it on the wall at meetings.

Community activist Geoph Kozeny suggests creating a buddy system, where everyone is assigned another group member to call and courteously inquire, “Did you call the county yet?” or “Have you found out about the health permit?”

***It's not about
guilt-tripping; it's
about helpful
inquiry and
mutual
encouragement.***

This is not about guilt-tripping; it's about helpful inquiry and mutual encouragement. These methods rely on the principle that it's more difficult to forget or ignore responsibilities if they're publicly visible. Social pressure can often accomplish what good intentions cannot.

If not completing tasks becomes an ongoing problem with one or more people in the group, you can add additional processes. For example, when anyone accomplishes a task, thank and acknowledge the person at the next meeting. When someone doesn't accomplish a task, the group as a whole asks the person to try again. After

awhile, the simple desire not to let others down usually becomes an internalized motivator for more responsible behavior.

Why is not completing tasks such a common source of community conflict? I think it's about developing the habit early in life of procrastinating or agreeing to take on more than is possible, and not having enough motivation to change. When we live alone or live with our families, it's relatively easy to change our minds about whether or not, or when, we'll do something we said we'd do, or just plain let it go. But in a community this can have widespread negative impacts on other people, and we'll certainly hear about it. It can take time, energy, and commitment to shift from "live-alone" or "single-family" mode to consistently considering how our actions will affect others.

When people repeatedly don't do what they promise and others continue to hold them accountable, it usually results in the person either changing their habits or eventually leaving the group.

If someone still frequently fails to do what they say they'll do (and you really don't want them to leave the group) you can use a graduated series of consequences

A Graduated Series of Consequences

While not following through on tasks is difficult for a group, it's even more painful when someone consistently violates agreements or behavioral norms, or refuses to make changes repeatedly requested by other community members regarding behavior or communication style. One remedy is to agree on and implement negative consequences for such offenses. In order to protect a community, it's possible to design a graduated series of fair, compassionate consequences, from mild to increasingly serious, that treat people with respect while inducing them to make necessary changes.

Many communities have no consequences for such breaches, partly because

most of us feel uncomfortable considering such matters, and partly because having negative consequences seems no different than the fines and jail sentences of mainstream society. It's difficult for com-



It can take time, energy, and commitment to consistently consider how our actions will affect others.

munity members to propose or implement coercive methods of governance when what they really want is a finer, kinder, more conscious society than the one they grew up with. For the same reasons, the communities that do have consequences are often reluctant to enforce them.

Still other communities have consequences, but the consequences are too severe for the offense, so people are loathe to employ them. For example, one large income-sharing community has just one consequence for members who fail to do their share of labor, or who borrow too much against future stipends—eviction from the community. But this requires polling the members for 100 percent agreement to take this action. While many people in this community have failed to do the required labor or have borrowed more than they've earned

over the years, this consequence is rarely proposed. And when it is, usually enough friends of the member in question vote against it so he or she doesn't have to leave. Everyone loses here. The community continues to financially carry members who contribute less and take more, and the offending member continues to get away with irresponsible behavior and has little motivation to change.

Occasionally, community members need a series of consequences to finally understand that they must make changes. When all else fails, coercion can give a person a needed kick in the pants.

Community Alternatives Society in Vancouver had no real "rules" until they were forced to create agreements about behavior, and more importantly, institute a graduated series of consequences if anyone breached them. This community's series of consequences treat members with respect, yet have "teeth." Here's what they do if someone seriously violates behavioral norms or repeatedly breaks community agreements:

(1) One person talks with the member in question about the problem and asks him or her to make changes.

(2) If this doesn't work, four people meet about the problem—the first two and a trusted friend of each, again, requesting that the person make changes.

(3) If this doesn't solve it, the person meets with the Accountability Committee to resolve the problem.

(4) If this still doesn't solve it, the Accountability Committee creates a five-month contract with the member that outlines how he or she will make the necessary changes, and meets with the member monthly for updates. The purpose of the contract and meetings is *not* to punish or humiliate the member, but to encourage and support their making the changes.

(5) If even this doesn't work, the whole community meets specifically to decide what action to take, which may include asking the person to live somewhere else for awhile, and possibly also revoking his or her membership. The member can participate in this meeting, but has no blocking power.

(6) If most members want to take this action but one or more people block it,

the committee meets with the member in question and the those blocking the proposal to seek resolution together.

The number of consequences a group has, and how far it goes (a whole-group meeting? expulsion?) will depend on the size of the group and how deeply connected people feel—often a function of how long they've been together.

Isn't it drastic to put a member back on provisional membership status, or ask them to live elsewhere for awhile, or worse, to permanently leave the community once you're all living on the land? Yes, it is drastic. And sometimes, when the violation is severe enough or the conflict too wrenching, it's the only way to protect your community from breaking up altogether.

After they took the first Naka-Ima workshop to improve their process and communication skills, Lost Valley members noticed two divergent trends developing in their community. Most mem-

Social pressure can often accomplish what good intentions cannot.

bers wanted to move in the direction of more cooperative and shared resources, but felt frustrated because other members wanted more independent lives. At that time, as a relatively small consensus-based group of 10 members, it seemed that without something changing

nobody would be able to get what they really wanted—especially since using consensus requires a common purpose.

"To those of us who held the cooperative vision," Larry Kaplowitz recalls, "it seemed necessary to break with precedent and ask the others to leave, freeing the energy to move forward. We didn't feel we had enough of a foundation to tolerate that kind of diversity. This was the first in a series of courageous and risky choices that we believed we must take to restore our integrity as a community."

The people did leave, and Larry reports that the community became more harmonious because of it. Ω

Excerpted with permission from the author's book, Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community (New Society Publishers, 2003). Diana Christian is editor of Communities magazine.

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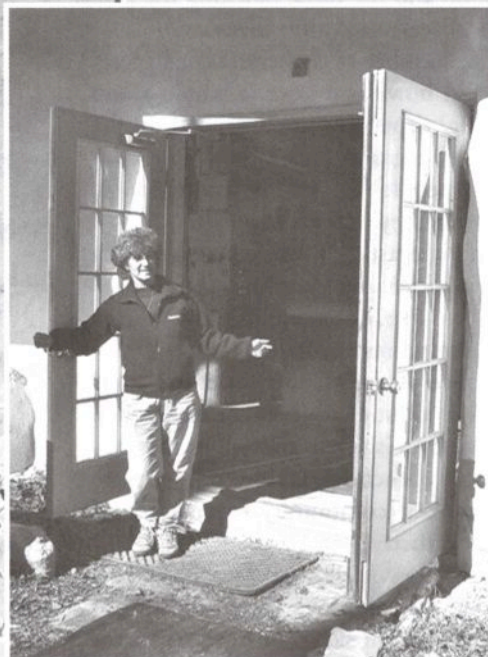
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Should We Lock Our Community Buildings?

Should We Lock Our Community Buildings?

BY PATTY MARA GORLEY

This begins the first in a series of articles about how various communities solve common community problems.

At Tierra Nueva Cohousing on the central coast of California, we never lock the common house. We are in a somewhat rural/suburban area, with farmlands on our border, as well as housing developments. We are fortunate to have a retired senior with eagle eyes living in one of the houses next to the common house. She sees all and knows all who enter. When "strangers" are seen she intervenes appropriately. Most of the time it is a befuddled pizza delivery person. Once though,

we heard of a member finding a naked person in the office. The story has grown into a rural/suburban myth.

Supervision of children under six is encouraged, and most parents follow through. Some don't. We have 13 kids over six who use the game room (ping pong and pool), the media room and the library. Sometimes the results of fort building and pillow fights remain after they leave, and we usually can find the perps and make them clean up. Most of the time the use is respectful.

We've also had our brushes with mild delinquency. Friends of one of our teens were caught playing darts in the game room, but not using the target. Rather, they darted the artwork and most of the walls. The response was an interesting commentary on our community life. One of my husband Bruce's photographs was darted. When Bruce was notified about the damage he talked with another artist in the community who encouraged him to set a fair value to the work. Bruce then spoke with the member teen about compensation. All the friends, and their parents were included in the agreement, and payment was made over the course of several months by the all boys. They also did the work of spackling

and repainting the walls. Bruce's relationship with the member teen, which was minimal before the incident, was enhanced by the interaction (and the compensation). The parents of the guest boys were given a gentle education about our community and how we talk to one another and take responsibility for our actions.

In my mind, it serves us to encourage using the common house by all ages (with appropriate supervision). I am delighted to see our teens hanging out doing homework (yes, to very loud music) in the dining room or library. Also tickled by the gangs of roving kids playing in the green, decked out in bizarre combinations of clothing/accessories from the costume trunk in the common house playroom.

Excerpted with permission from the Cohousing-L Listserv, which readers can access by going to their Cohousing-L Info Page at www.cohousing.org/Cohousing-L.

Patty Mara Gorley lives at Tierra Nueva Cohousing in Oceano, California. She frequently writes about cohousing life for Cohousing Journal and Communities magazine.



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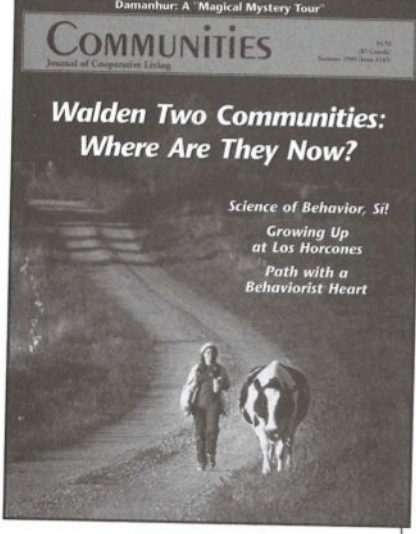
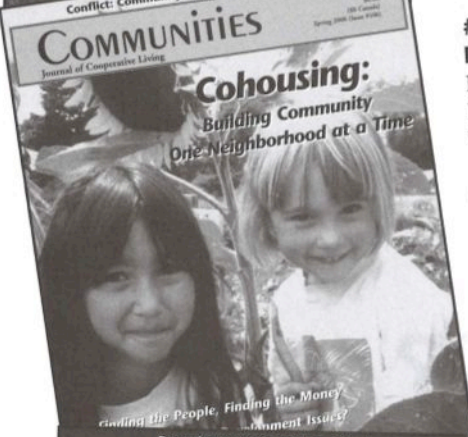
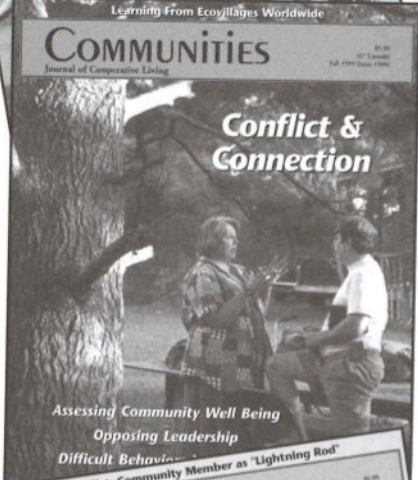
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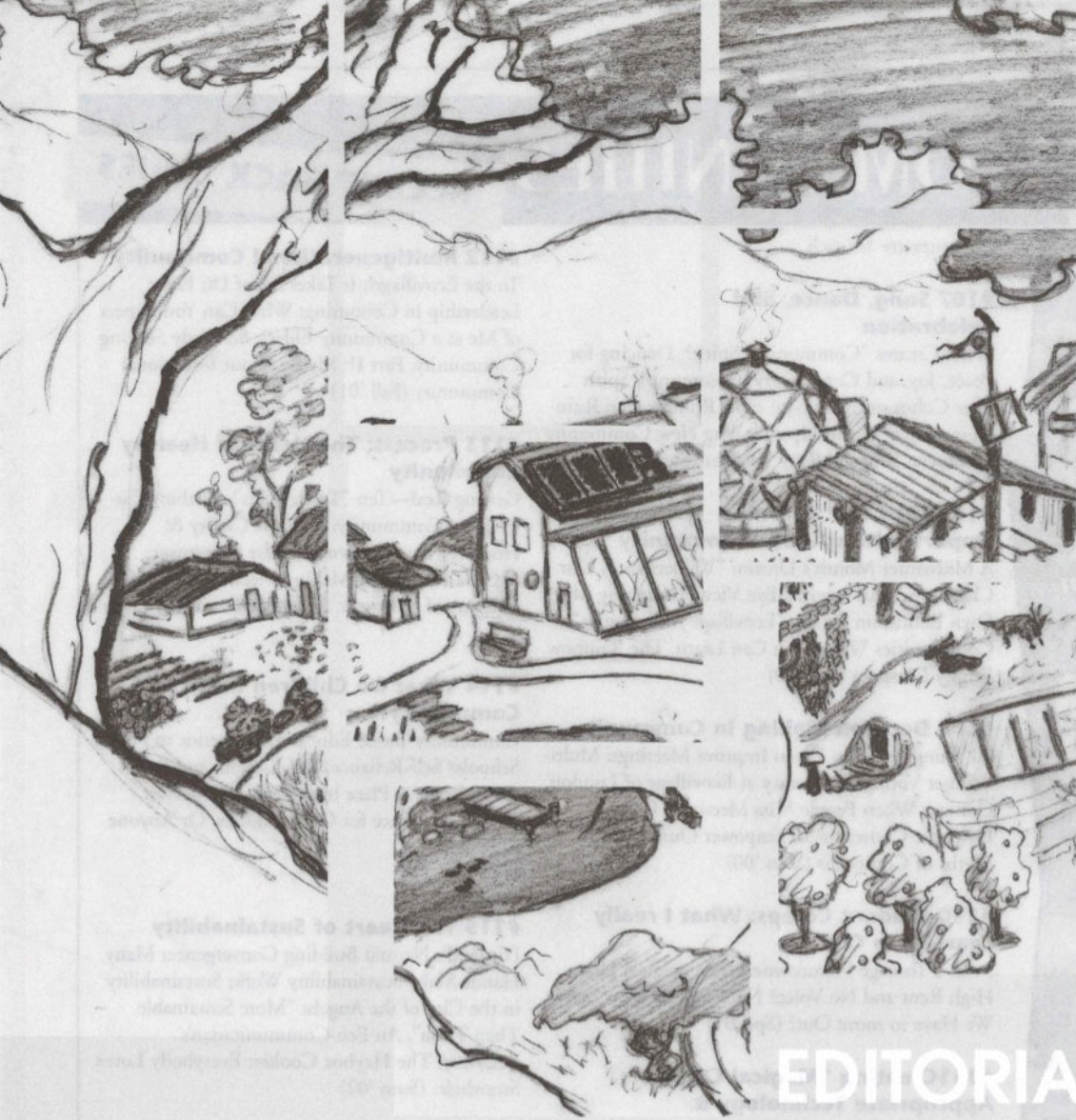
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EDITORIAL

What Is an “Ecovillage”?

LINDA JOSEPH AND ALBERT BATES

Among the most frequently asked questions of the offices of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) are: “What is an ecovillage?” “How do I create an ecovillage?” Or, “What does my community need to do to qualify as an ecovillage?” Sometimes we get questions about whether a particular commu-

nity can or should be entitled to call itself an ecovillage at all.

In helping develop the number and networking connections of ecovillages, and the ecovillage movement as a whole, the Ecovillage Network of the Americas and the two other Global Ecovillage Network divisions (GEN Europe/Africa, and GEN Oceania/Asia) have attempted to define and evolve the definition of ecovillage, since the term first came into use. Robert and Diane Gilman, in *Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities* (1991), offered the following definition, which we use as a starting point: “A human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy

human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future.”

Ecovillages typically build on various combinations of three dimensions: social, ecological, and spiritual. These dimensions also describe the reasons why people most often are attracted to ecovillage living, although one of these dimensions may predominate more than others in some ecovillage projects and be completely absent in others. The Community Sustainability Assessment Tool is a self-administered survey created by the Global Ecovillage Network to show the many approaches—including those in the social, ecological, and spiritual dimensions—that can be taken to make a community more sustainable. (See “*Ecovillage Resources*,” p. 56.)

From the early stages of our networking activities, we and other ecovillage activists considered whether it would be useful and appropriate to specify criteria and establish a minimum threshold of achievement for a community to identify itself as an ecovillage. We decided that we’re not about sitting in judgment and monitoring; rather, we’re encouraging everyone to do what they can in order to live sustainably. The CSA became an auditing tool communities could use to find direction and identify steps they could take. It is a measuring rod, allowing comparison to other communities. Perhaps more importantly, it allows an ecovillage to track its own progress against a somewhat more objective standard.

In 1998, at a sustainability and education conference held in conjunction with a GEN board meeting in Denmark, attendees affirmed that a community is an ecovillage if it specifies an ecovillage mission, such as in its organizational documents, community agreements, or membership guidelines, and makes progress in that direction. No “ecovillage police” enforce these standards. Rather, the Ecovillage Network of the Americas and the other GEN divisions offer connection with other aspiring

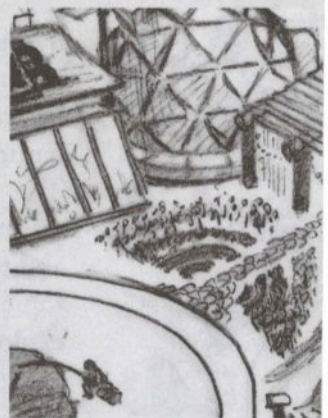
An ecovillage movement is too wide-reaching and experimental to fit some tidy model with enforceable standards.

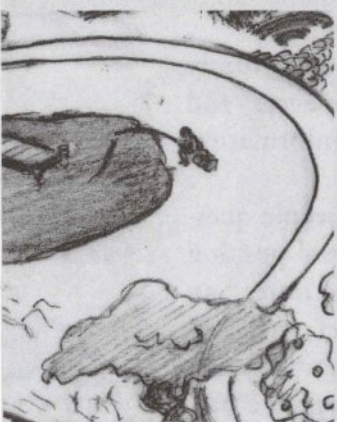
“A human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future.”

ecovillages, and an opportunity to exchange experiences and methodologies, information and fellowship.

Sometimes people question our rather liberal position about what constitutes an ecovillage. We’ll get mail asking whether a community can really be an ecovillage if a particular aspect of sustainable living isn’t in place. Sometimes

we’re asked if our choice to be more inclusive doesn’t detrimentally impact the ecovillage movement as a whole.





We respond that the ecovillage movement is too wide-reaching and experimental to fit some tidy model with enforceable standards. We stand at the junction between two millennia. The past one was about building societies that ran on fossil sunlight and militarism. The next one, still a mystery, must be more conscientious and humane or we won't survive.

There may be, among more than 15,000 identified sustainable community experiments, no single example of an "ecovillage" in the sense of a full-featured human community untainted

by earlier technologies, or polluting material flows, or which hasn't engaged in theft of our future natural heritage to some extent. The discrepancy between the dream and the reality of sustainability is an important ongoing topic for all ecovillage activists to explore.

The challenge of transforming urban environs is especially difficult. The alternatives, displacing topsoil and other biota for new expanses of steel and concrete, or suffering drastic human population cuts, are both unthinkably cruel and unsustainable. So it has to happen. There have to be vertically oriented ecovillages. Ecocity Cleveland is inspired by the example of Los Angeles Eco-Village. That neither are as far along as, say, a rainforest eco-settlement in

rural Columbia or a permaculture village in suburban Australia is more a measure of the greater distance city reformers have to travel than any lack of resolve.

Our ecovillage movement is blessed with diversity. From rural to urban, neighborhood experiments to large districts in transition, in many cultures and geopolitical climates, people are reading the handwriting on the wall and getting on with the work that must be done. They are not waiting for government or foundation grants. They are picking up shovels and hoes and building the future, often without a blueprint or even the ability to read and write. It is on the shoulders of these pioneers that the dreams we

all have now rest—for peace, security, prosperity, family, and happiness into the coming generations of our children—whether they, or we, recognize it yet.

Be they traditional, tribal settlements or urban retrofits, young and forming or seasoned and well-rounded, for the ecovillage network, there are still many possible answers to the question "What is an ecovillage?" We like them all. Ω

In many cultures and geopolitical climates, people are reading the handwriting on the wall and getting on with the work that must be done.

Linda Joseph, president of Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA), lives at EarthArt Village in Moffat,

Colorado, linda@ecovillage.org. Albert Bates, ENA International Secretary, and director of Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee, ecovillage@thefarm.org. Context Institute and In Context Journal: [/www.context.org](http://www.context.org).

For further perspectives, click on "What is an ecovillage?" at the GEN website, gen.ecovillage.org, or that of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas website, ena.ecovillage.org, to access additional and different perspectives.



BY ALBERT BATES

Ecovillages came into being through apparently simultaneous ideas arising in different locations at about the same time.

In 1975 the magazine *Mother Earth News* began constructing experimental energy systems, novel buildings, and organic gardens near its business office in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and in 1979, began calling this educational center an “eco-village.”

GEN founding members at 1995 Findhorn conference. Albert Bates, front row, 2nd from right.

Ecovillage Roots (and Branches)

When, where, and how
we re-invented this
ancient village concept.



Throughout the 1980s and early 1990, on Bainbridge Island near Seattle, Robert and Diane Gilman used their journal, *In Context*, to publish stories and interviews describing ecovillages as a strategy for creating a more sustainable culture. When Hildur Jackson, a Danish attorney and social activist, discovered *In Context*, the ecovillage movement suddenly got traction.

Ross Jackson, Hildur's husband, was a Canadian computer whiz who had been working in the financial market, writing programs to predict shifts in international currencies. When he took his algorithms public as Gaia Corporation, his models made a fortune for his investors, but Ross, being a deeply spiritual man, wanted little of it for himself. Searching for the best way to use their prosperity, Ross and Hildur contacted the Gilmans and organized some gatherings of visionaries at Fjordvang, the Jackson's retreat in rural Denmark, to mull over the needs of the world.

Three strategies with potential leverage emerged from those meetings. The first was inspired by Swedish physician Karl Henrik Robert's "green cell" model, from which came the Natural Step program for reforming industrial goals. The second was reform of the standard Western educational model, the pedagogy which prepares children for specialized, compartmentalized lives and deaths in large produce-and-consume machine-like economies. The educational reform called for new and alternative courses, curricula, and learning centers. The third strategy, inspired in part by young Russians whose country was experiencing rapid transformation from a planned economy to a free market, was to assist estranged youth to build

At about the same time in Germany, during the political resistance against disposal of nuclear waste in the town of Gorleben, anti-nuclear activists attempted to build a small, ecologically based village at the site, which they called an *ökodorf* (literally ecovillage). In the largest police action seen in Germany since the Second World War, their camp was ultimately removed, but the concept lived on, and small *ökodorf* experiments continued in both eastern and western Germany. The magazine *Ökodorf Informationen* began publishing in 1985 and later evolved into *Eurotopia*. After reunification of Germany, the movement coalesced and became part of the international ecovillage movement.

About the same time in Denmark, a number of intentional communities began looking beyond the social benefits of cohousing and other cooperative forms of housing towards the ecological potentials of a more thorough redesign of human habitats. In 1993 a small group of communities inaugurated the Danish ecovillage network, *Landsforeningen for Økosamfund*, the first network of its kind and a model for the larger ecovillage movement that was to follow.

For the past half century environmental scientists have been warning of the consequences of unchecked industrial development, exploding human population, and proliferating weapons technology, but few proposed any comprehensive solu-

tions. Thus we drift, as Einstein observed, towards unparalleled catastrophes: global warming, famines, accelerating extinctions, and weapons of mass destruction—bio, robo, nano, info, and nuclear—in the hands of small terrorist cells with opaque ideologies, or worse (as

Small ökodorf experiments continued in both eastern and western Germany.

in the case of Colombia), no ideologies at all. Ecovillages, on the other hand, pose a universal solution: voluntary, culturally sensitive, democratic, spiritually attuned, pacifist, in harmony with the natural world. Ecovillages work from the bottom up, making individual lifestyle change the cornerstone of global transformation—a sustainable balance of human and ecological needs.



alternative models for how humans might *actually live* sustainably; that is: ecovillages.

Ross Jackson was also interested in utilizing the new information technology that was just then emerging: email and electronic file exchanges between universities and

research centers (although it would still be a few years before the appearance of shareware browsers and the open-to-all World Wide Web).

Ross and Hildur Jackson created a

Ecovillages today are typically small communities with a tightly-knit social structure united by common ecological, social, or spiritual views.

charitable foundation, the Gaia Trust, and endowed it with 90 percent of their share of company profits. In 1990, Gaia Trust asked *In Context* to produce a report, *Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities*, in order to catalog the various efforts at sustainable community living underway around the world, and to describe the emerging philosophy and principles in greater detail. The report was released in 1991 as a spiral bound book (now out of print).

In September 1991, Gaia Trust convened a meeting in Fjordvang to bring together people from eco-communities to discuss strategies for further developing the ecovillage concept. This led to a series of additional meetings to form national and international networks of ecovillages, and a decision, in 1994, to formalize networking and project development under the auspices of a new organization, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN).

By 1994 the Internet had reached the point where access was becoming available outside the realm of university and government agencies and contractors. Mosaic was the universal browser of the day, and the first Internet cafés had begun to appear in major cities. Ross Jackson brought in a young Swedish

Where They Are?

Here's a sample of some of the more well-known ecovillage projects to date. Some of them were formed as spiritual, social, or service-oriented intentional communities in the '60s, '70s, or '80s, and began calling themselves ecovillages later, as they become more aware of and committed to ecological, social, and/or spiritual sustainability in the 1990s.

Europe:

Solheimer, Iceland, 1930.
Camphill Communities, 1930s–Present
Findhorn Foundation, Scotland, 1962.
Damanhur, Italy, 1977.
Svanholm, Denmark, 1978.
Lebensgarten, Germany, 1985.
Torii Superiori, Italy, 1989.
Munkesoegaard, Denmark, 1995.
Oködorf Sieben Linden, Germany, 2000.

Middle East and Africa:

Yoff, Senegal, 1400s.
Thlolego, South Africa, 1990.
Green Kibbutz Group, Israel, 1996

Asia, Pacific, and Australia:

Tanamalwila, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka, 1970s.
Crystal Waters, Queensland, 1988.
Jarlanbah, Australia, 1990s.

South America:

Reserva Integral Sasardi, Colombia, 1985.
Institute for Permaculture and Ecovillages in the Cerrado, Brazil, 1990s.
Marquina Ecovillage, Boliva, 1998.
Centro Venezolano de Ecoaldeas y Permacultura, Venezuela, 1990s.
Ecoaldea Fronteriza El Pauji, Venezuela, 1990s.

North America:

Camphill Communities, 1930s–Present
The Farm, Tennessee, 1970.
Huehucoyotl, Tepoztlan, Mexico, 1973.
Sirius, Massachusetts, 1978.
Earthaven, North Carolina, 1990.
Ecovillage at Ithaca, New York, 1992.
Dancing Rabbit, Missouri, 1993.
Los Angeles Ecovillage, California, 1993.
O.U.R. Ecovillage, British Columbia, 1990-99.

—Diana Leafé Christian

Scale 1:100,000,000 (approximate)

One inch to 1600 miles

0 500 1000 1500 Miles

0 500 1000 1500 Kilometers

web technician, Stephan Wik, who'd had a computer services business at Findhorn, and the Ecovillage Information Service was launched from Fjordvang at www.gaia.org. With Stephan and his co-workers gathering both the latest in hardware advances and outstanding ecovillage content from around the world, gaia.org began a steady growth of "hits," increasing 5 to 15 percent per month, that would go on for the next several years, making the GEN database a major portal for sustainability studies.

In October 1995, Gaia Trust and the Findhorn Foundation co-sponsored the first international conference "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities—Models for the 21st Century," held at Findhorn in Scotland. After the conference, GEN held a formative meeting and organized three worldwide administrative regions: Europe and Africa; Asia and Oceania; and the Americas. Each region was to be overseen

by a secretariat office responsible for organizing local ecovillage networks and developing outreach programs to encourage growth of the movement. A fourth secretariat was established in Copenhagen to coordinate all the offices, seek additional funding, and oversee the website. The first regional secretaries, chosen at the Findhorn meeting, were Declan Kennedy, Max Lindegger, and myself. Hamish Stewart was the first international secretary.

With generous funding from Gaia Trust for this new model, the ecovillage movement experienced rapid

growth. Kibbutzim that re-vegetated the deserts of Palestine in the 20th century developed a new outlook with the forma-

An Ecovillage Education

Many communities offer workshops and courses as part of their central mission or as a side-business, but few of these programs are specifically targeted at creating ecovillages or educating people specifically to become ecovillagers.

In April 1994, the Ecovillage Training Center was inaugurated at The Farm community in Summertown, Tennessee. In October of that year, the Center hosted a gathering of environmental educators to address the idea of using ecovillages as models for advanced instruction.

The planning meetings brought together ecovillagers from North and South America, Europe, Russia, and Africa, career educators, permaculturists, media professionals, and others. Over a period of a few weeks, they brainstormed about what a curriculum for ecovillagers might include. From this some standard workshop themes emerged: organic gardening; natural buildings; village design; conflict transformation; consensus; health and natural healing. The common thread seemed to be the conscious design of lifestyles that are elegantly frugal, holistically balanced, and responsible for the many generations still to come. Similar meetings within the ecovillage movement have continued to explore the potentials of this new, immersion form of learning ever since, most recently at Damanhur in Italy in 2002.

The Center itself also became a laboratory for experimentation in sustainable technologies, methodologies, and culture.

In December of 1994, the Ecovillage Training Center put out the first issue of *ENNA*, a newsletter of the "Ecovillage Network of North America," which, in 1998, became *Ecovillages*, official newsletter of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas. This newsletter is published today in Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French. The Center also launched a website in 1994, which eventually became www.ecovillage.org.

Today the training center at The Farm is one of many such projects around the United States and Canada, and in the rest of the world, serving as model living spaces, within the larger framework of aspiring eco-community. These centers offer instruction from their own experience, and an opportunity to try on the lifestyle for a little while, to see if it suits you.

—A.B.

tion of the Green Kibbutz Network. The Russian Ecovillage Network was inaugurated. Permaculture-based communities in Australia such as Crystal Waters and Jarlanbah pioneered easy paths to more environmentally sensitive lifestyles for the mainstream middle class. GEN-Europe hosted conferences attended by ecovillagers from dozens of countries, and national networks sprang up in many of them. In South and North America, nine representatives were designated to organize ecovillage regions by geography and language. By the turn of

the 21st century GEN had catalogued thousands of ecovillages, built "living and learning centers" in several of them, launched ecovillage experiments in universities, and sponsored university-based travel semesters to ecovillages on six continents.

GEN also made the ecovillage concept heard in the corridors of government. By 2001 it had obtained consultative status at the United Nations

(Continued on page 58)



Living and Learning Centers

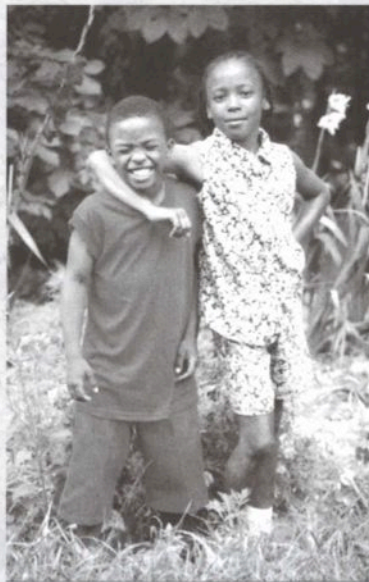
BY PHILIP SNYDER

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) works cooperatively with Living and Learning Centers in Sri Lanka, Brazil, and Senegal to provide hands-on training in green technologies and regenerative systems. As part of the international ecovillage movement, these Living and Learning Centers are evolving a collaborative system of experience, education, and research for their countries.

Based upon a partnership education model in which instructors and students mutually learn from each other, the comprehensive educational programs at these centers integrate the traditional wisdom, knowledge and skills of each society with permaculture design and related appropriate technologies for organic food production, waste recycling, ecological restoration, and renewable energy.

Tanamalwila Living and Learning Center, Sri Lanka. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, begun more than 40 years ago, is the largest people's self-help organization in the country. With over 13,000 member villages, a strong organizational structure, and extensive outreach, Sarvodaya takes an integrated, holistic approach to development, peace, and spiritual awakening that reaches all areas and ethnic groups of the island. Its guiding vision is of a society with no poverty and no affluence, based on principles of truth, non-violence, and self-sacrifice, and governed by ideals of participatory democracy and human rights. Sarvodaya's Tanamalwila Living and Learning Center marries this vision with ecology on a diverse 350-acre site. The center is currently running training programs for Sri Lankan villagers in permaculture, ecovillage design, and enhancing biodiversity, to name a few, while hosting international programs from Japan, Australia, Europe, and the United States. www.sarvodaya.org.

Institute for Permaculture and Ecovillages in the Cerrado (IPEC), Brazil. Collaborating closely with its partner PAL (Permacultura Latina America), IPEC develops sustainable systems to address Brazil's social and ecological problems. IPEC runs an *ecoversidade* (ecoversity)—the Mollison Center for Sustainable Studies, named after Bill Mollison, co-founder of permaculture. The Center's purpose is to demonstrate permaculture solutions to rural living and to train people to

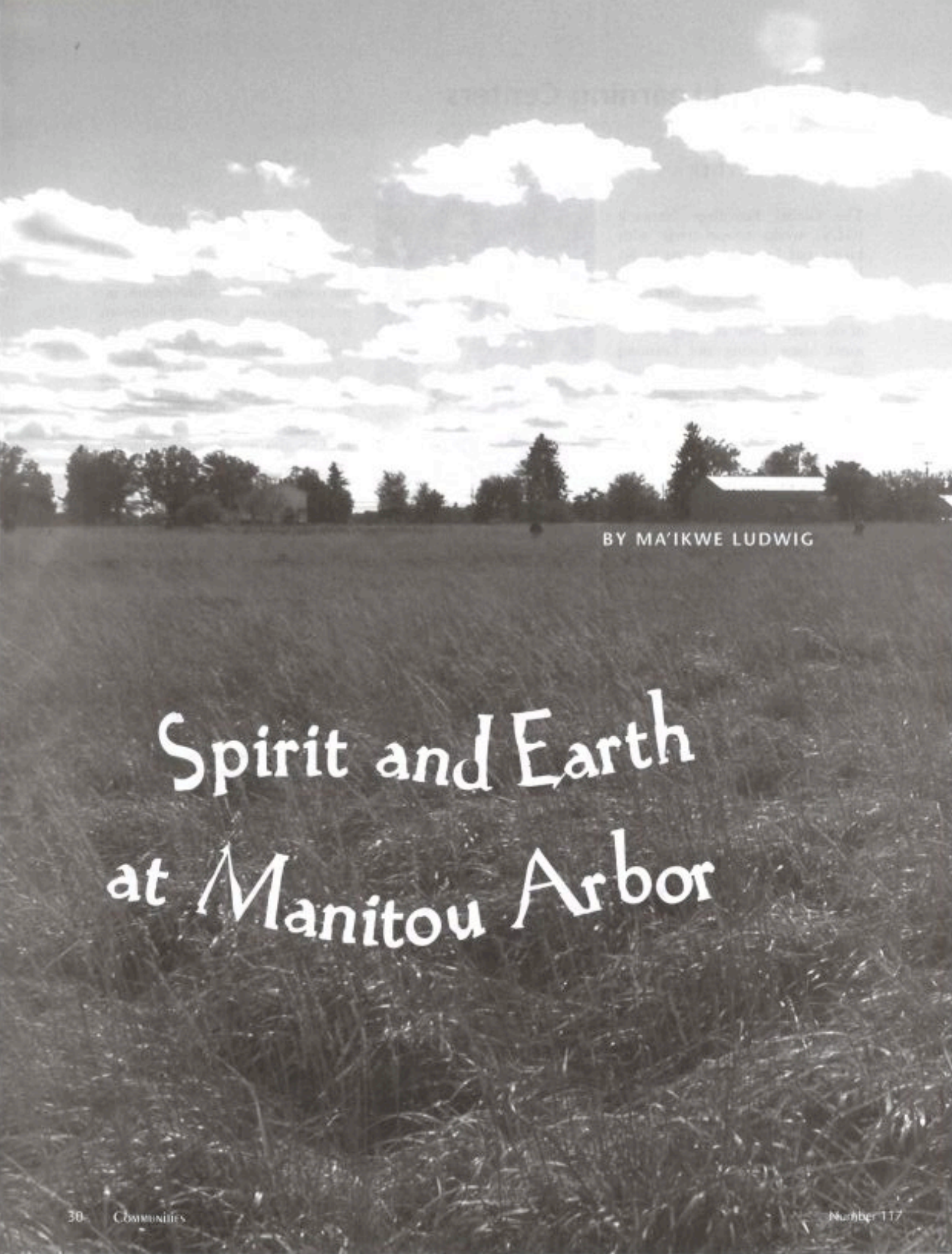


implement them throughout Brazil. This center works closely with four other permaculture centers, each based in one of the other major ecoregions of the country. The first nine-month, in-residence training, currently underway, is a comprehensive program of study, practical application, and outreach in all aspects of sustainable communities: design, ecosystem cultivation, natural building, water, renewable energy, waste recycling, holistic health, etc. IPEC is also the central hub for the rapidly developing national permaculture network, and publishes the magazine *Permacultura Brasil*. www.permacultura.org.br/ipec.

EcoYoff, Senegal. Coordinated by the non-governmental organization CRESP-Senegal, EcoYoff is a sustainable community development program based in the ancient fishing community of Yoff, now a small city incorporated into the capital city of Dakar. In addition to sponsoring local education and research programs dedicated to community development, health, and nutrition, EcoYoff offers a variety of urban permaculture projects, including the construction of the Yoff Habitat Ecovillage as a living demonstration of sustainable systems for urban Africa. Accredited programs in cooperation with North American universities include a month-long course in sustainable development, offering a full immersion into the traditional life of this African community. EcoYoff functions as the hub and catalyst for the new Senegalese Ecovillage Network, which recently received a United Nations Development Program grant for improving the economic and ecological sustainability of its 12 member villages. EcoYoff also manages a major Internet education and information program serving Senegal and West Africa. www.cresp.sn.

Each center operates amid great demands and limited resources. Already rich with positive, inspiring examples and programs, these Living and Learning Centers are, in E.F. Schumacher's words, "making a viable future visible in the present."

Philip Snyder is an organizational development consultant and former director of the international office of the Global Ecovillage Network based in Denmark.



BY MA'IKWE LUDWIG

*Spirit and Earth
at Manitou Arbor*

These are no ordinary Catholics. Father Mike leads sweat lodges; Sister Ginny leads the Council of All Beings.

What happens when a group of Earth-honoring Catholic nuns offer their land to form an inter-faith ecovillage?

“We had land and 110 combined years of community living experience; we felt we had something to share.” So says Sister Ginny Jones, in a typical understatement. At least I think that’s what she said—it’s a little hard to hear over the fierce Michigan winds and the 30 feet of space between us.

We are standing on retreat land of the Sisters of St. Joseph—an incredible 270 acres of mixed forest, lake front, and open space east of Kalamazoo—future home of Manitou Arbor Ecovillage. Sister Ginny and I are part of a widening circle of people placed in various locations on an open field by architect and Manitou member Christina Snyder. After numerous conversations about the ecovillage site plan, Christina has decided that standing on the land and feeling



Standing in the fields and “feeling into” the best locations for homes at Manitou Arbor.

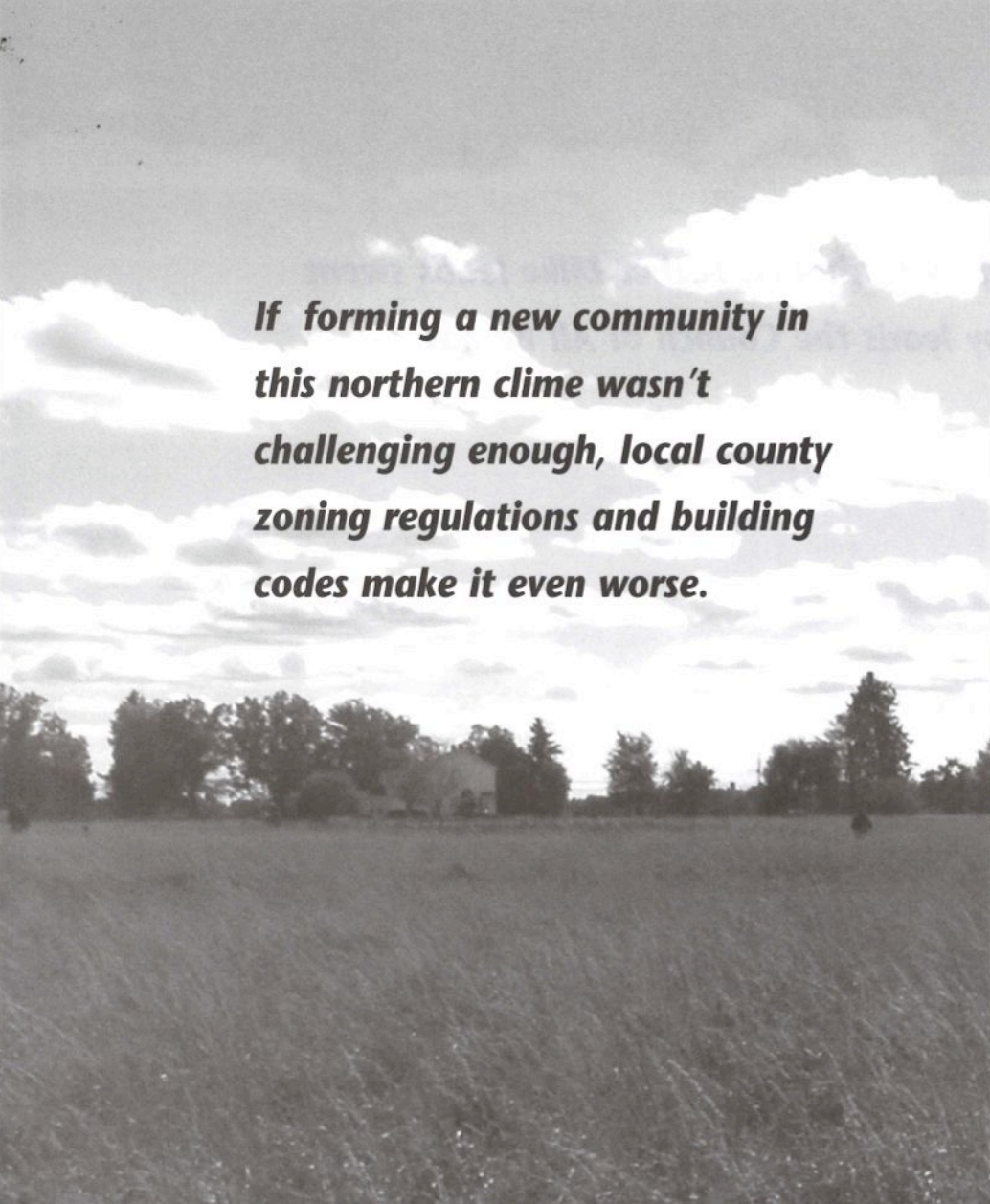
into it is the best way to communicate what little squares on paper cannot—asking how it feels to have your house that close, or that far away, from someone else’s? And so we are outside on a chilly November day, using our bodies to communicate what paper has so far failed to do.

Ginny’s commitment is what has brought all these people together, at least initially. I asked three original members for some of the three-year history of the project, and one of them responded simply: “Ginny is the history.” Her commitment and her ability to inspire others has pulled together a group of eclectic, mature people, including my friends

Christina Snyder and her husband, Chris Coon.

I met Chris a dozen years ago, drawn together by mutual ecospiritual friends. Named “Mr. Eco-How-To,” by a mutual friend, even then Chris had a reputation for alternative technology knowledge. For nearly 20 years he had met with groups of people, and learned the skills and technical information needed to start a community.

At the same time the Sisters of St. Joseph were working on their long-range land management plans, and eventually concluded that turning their property into an ecovillage might be the best stewardship possible.



If forming a new community in this northern clime wasn't challenging enough, local county zoning regulations and building codes make it even worse.

When I heard that Chris was involved with a community connected to the Catholic Church I was surprised. But these are no ordinary Catholics. Community member Father Mike Holloway leads sweat lodges; Sister Ginny leads the Council of All Beings process; the Sisters of St. Joseph run an Office of Earth Spirituality. Interacting with the nuns and priests in this project has showed me that being Catholic can mean being profoundly humanistic, action-oriented advocates for seeing what connects us to each other as people, and indeed, to the Earth itself.

Ginny's Earth Ministry is subsidized by the Sisters, and this allows her to teach environmental studies at two universities, coordinate the Earth Spirituality office, and work on building

the ecovillage. When the congregation approved work on the ecovillage project, it was specifically to be in collaboration with others in the community.

Manitou Arbor's mission statement reads: "We are called to be prophetic, listening in faith to the signs of the times ... we collaborate with others in identifying and responding to the needs of the global community ... (and) promote global consciousness that reverences the sacredness and interconnectedness of the universe." It seems that the Sisters have indeed paid attention to the signs and are responding as many others have done, turning to the ecovillage model as a next natural step.

Hearing the language of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and seeing their members in action, I can indeed see how Chris could

align his energy with theirs.

Yet Manitou Arbor is a profoundly interfaith project, not in spite of but because of its connections with the Sisters of St. Joseph, who seem to recognize that we live in a fundamentally interfaith world. And they have practical reasons as well. Like most groups of nuns the Sisters of St. Joseph are aging, and few young women are stepping up to take their place. If the land is to be stewarded into the future, opening the project up to a wide range of people makes more sense than keeping it in their hands alone.

Group members also believe the interfaith bent of the project is important. "Trying to create this ecospiritual community with members of only one faith would be like trying to regenerate an ecosystem by planting a monoculture," says Christina. Like other group members, she believes the model of sustainability is multi-level—not just about how we do our physical interactions, but our spiritual and heart interactions as well.

It seems to me that spiritually oriented ecovillages have the potential to be a real home for those who don't hold to any one faith or personal growth practice, but rather embody the spiritual diversity of our times. Manitou Arbor is a comfortable fit for a number of very different individuals, including Mike Swords, who describes himself as a "far-left radical Catholic who believes in the spiritual everywhere in existence."

Sister Ginny sees ecospirituality as a function not just of individuals finding satisfying fits for themselves, but of the success of community in general. "When we relate on the deeper level," says Ginny, "we cross any barriers of religious tradition and belief and come to a deeper relationship with each individual. Hence, real community is potentially more possible."

Like many aspiring ecovillages, including Dancing Rabbit in Missouri and Earthaven in North Carolina, Manitou intends to be an educational model and demonstration project for the general public. They're considering passive solar buildings, off-grid power from sun and wind, constructed wetlands, living machines, and strawbale, Earthship, and earth-bermed or even underground

construction.

Yet Manitou faces some tough issues because of its location. If the physical aspects of creating a new community in this northern clime wasn't challenging enough (heating homes, generating power, and growing organic food in a winter-gray landscape with a short summer), local county zoning regulations and building codes make it even worse.

While precedents exist in similar climates for each alternative building style and sustainable technology that the Manitou group plans, and precedents exist for smaller projects getting building approval in Michigan, pulling it all together in this project is likely to take a mammoth effort. Also Michigan has recently acknowledged its serious water issues. The water table has dropped in the Kalamazoo area in recent years, and nitrogen contamination is an issue as well; the old wells on the Sisters' property are not likely to be usable. As the county's answer appears to be to extend sewer and city water service out in their direction, the Manitou group is facing one of the classic ecovillage choices—do they go the conventional route, which certainly requires less thought and planning (valuable resources them-

selves for any forming community), or hold fast to more ecologically sustainable systems and use creative energy that might be used for other aspects of community development to get these passed through local government bureaucracy? And how does either affect the financial accessibility of the project? Creating a project of this scale and getting approval from regulatory authorities could, as they say, try the patience of a saint.

Manitou members are looking toward possible grant support for some of the more radical—and expensive—ecological projects (such as living machine sewage processing). One local foundation has taken an interest in eco-technol-

ogy and ecovillages in particular and, like Manitou Arbor, likes the idea of demonstration projects. Foundation support might be key to projects like the \$40,000+ wind generator system the group is researching, and being able to access abundant clean water sustainably, instead of simply taking the county's easy fix.

Still, Manitou has only just begun the process of sorting through choices about money, time, and idealism. It's now experiencing the natural push-pull of



Future ecovillage residents and visitors at a day of land planning.

every young project in which people are anxious to get it done right now instead of waiting for the group to make important decisions or wait for building permits and legal documents. The social stability provided by the Sisters of St. Joseph is likely to prove invaluable.

The group uses consensus decision-making, has a strong committee system, and regularly takes time to connect spiritually, all of which can save immense time and frustration in the long run, but require a good deal of effort up front. The members are committed to group process but not very experienced in it yet. As beneficial as it is that the Sisters are holding space for this project, I won-

der what will happen, financially and socially, when their land is finally turned over to the ecovillage as a distinct legal entity, and how indeed the group will decide to accomplish this transition.

I am encouraged by the members' willingness to learn from other communities. They're benefiting from the Sisters' combined community living experience, visiting other communities, bringing in permaculture trainers from Earhaven, and drawing on Christina's background designing cohousing and energy-efficient homes—they're *not* reinventing the wheel. They are also looking at sustainability as a multifaceted process—not simply physical but social, spiritual, and cultural as well. This holistic approach, in my opinion, is the glue that holds this group together and offers real hope for its success.

Meanwhile, Manitou Arbor members are meeting regularly, doing preliminary design work, test-driving their basic agreements, and celebrating the sacred together. They have a well-thought-out commitment, a "can do" attitude, and a rich sense of humor. This is a mature group, well into forging the bonds that get a forming community through the pioneer phase and into an established life together. I look forward to seeing them do it. Ω

Ma'ikwe Ludwig lives in Michigan, where she offers eco-education for children as the Outreach and Education Coordinator for Recycling Jackson. She has lived in a previous community for six years, and is creating a resource center for intentional communities and people interested in them. She can be reached at avatar@ic.org.

Creating “Ecovillage Zoning” With Local Officials



BY MELANIE MITCHELL,
LOKESH GREEN,
ELIZABETH GORLA, AND
BRANDY MACPHERSON

One of the more difficult challenges for ecovillages is getting the necessary zoning permission to create sustainable physical infrastructure on the land. Visions and dreams are one thing; getting permission from the appropriate authorities is quite another!

Last year One United Resource Ecovillage (O.U.R. Ecovillage) in Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia, successfully completed the rezoning process and created a brand new zoning designation that allows our ecovillage plans. We have broken new ground, making it far easier for other groups in British Columbia (and perhaps beyond) to create similar ecovillage developments.

O.U.R. Ecovillage is situated on 25 acres within an hour's drive of Victoria, the provincial capital of British Columbia. We envision a multi-functional small rural village and educational demonstration site of about 20 to 30 residents—with natural building, alternative energy, organic agriculture and animal husbandry, interpersonal growth, and community governance in an integrated whole. In addition to our handful of on-site residents, many expanding circles of people are involved with the development process. On an average day you might find residents and volunteers working with the animals, designing and maintaining the gardens, or constructing natural building projects such as a children's cob playhouse, an outdoor oven, and a sauna.

In the late 1990s our group came together to share a vision of creating a rural ecovillage. We approached representatives of the Cowichan Regional District (similar to a county in the United States), to sound out the potential for this project in the region. After receiving support from them in principle, we set about finding appropriate property in the Cowichan Valley. In 1999 we found a beautiful parcel that had been a working farm, with woodlands, pastures, a lake and pond, and an existing home with all utilities. It was zoned "Secondary Agriculture." This meant that while it must remain agricultural it could be subdivided into five-acre parcels with a maximum of one primary residence and a small guest cottage per parcel, but required building a highway-style road on the property, at considerable expense. We wanted something quite different—clustered housing, open space, and environmentally protected areas. However, because we felt encouraged by the District's generally positive

We wanted something quite different—clustered housing, open space, and environmentally protected areas.



stance, we were willing to take a chance on getting a zoning amendment. In March 1999 we acquired the property with the help of one of our members, who bought the property on behalf of the group.

Our next step was for a few members to live on the property (the rest of us live in Victoria and nearby towns and rural areas), while we got to know the land over its seasons. Using permaculture design principles, we surveyed and mapped the site, and held a number of visioning workshops involving planners, agrologists, permaculture designers, educators, a lawyer, and health professionals. We were fortunate to get the help of sustainable development consultant Jack Anderson from Anderson GreenPlan,

Ltd. With these advisors, along with local and provincial representatives from the Cowichan Valley Regional District, and the British Columbia Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Highways, we proposed an entirely new zoning designation: the "Comprehensive Development" zone. The entire property would become an environmental "classroom," with four sectors. The Woodlands/Wetlands Conservation sector would include sensitive ecosystems, woodlot management areas, and nature trails. The Agricultural sector would include organic agriculture and animal husbandry. The Ecological Education and Infrastructure sector would provide a central gathering area for community educational activities. The Residential sector would provide clustered housing which will also demonstrate different kinds of natural building techniques.

We didn't request any additional density for the property than would have been allowed if it were subdivided. Rather, we asked the District to accept the same number of houses in a cluster format and an averaging of bedrooms with no house to exceed 235 sq. meters.

We had created a nonprofit society several years before to offer the educational programs which we were hosting both on and off-site. The nonprofit also supported much of the educational process in design work, through income from workshops in permaculture design, and by providing information on appropriate ecological land use design and sustainable land management work to other individuals and organizations.

In the fall of 2001 we were ready; we officially applied for a zoning amendment for "Comprehensive Development" to the Cowichan Regional District. We first met with our local Advisory Planning Commission, then presented our proposal at a public hearing so officials could gauge the response of neighbors and other local citizens. Through the hearing, and through a series of on-site open houses, we described our planned homesteading and educational activities, addressed people's concerns about possible traffic and noise impacts, and built support for our plan. Lastly we met with the Regional Board and received their approval to proceed. Because we had the support of local elected officials and the planning department, we were able to help write the new District bylaws about this proposed zoning designation and develop bylaw amendments for the Local Community Plan, integrating our vision with neighbors' input and specifically how this new designation might apply to other properties in the region. Once the

new bylaws were drafted, the District held another public hearing—and the proposal received overwhelming support. The final proposal then went to the Regional Directors, where it received unanimous final approval in October, 2002. With the help of the local

The District held another public hearing—and received overwhelming support.

Cowichan Community Land Trust we're working to establish permanent ecological covenants on O.U.R. Ecovillage land (similar to a conservation easement in the US) to protect our land management plan in perpetuity.

Now, four years after the property purchase, we're looking at ways to complete the design and implement our plan. We are also working on a research project to request copies of the ownership model, legal ownership documents, governance documents, and so on from other communities and aspiring ecovillages. This research project will explore a myriad of options and hopefully will help us develop a hybrid model of ownership and governance. (If you'd like to contribute copies of your community's documents, please email us at our@pacificcoast.net.) We're considering a co-op ownership model, for example, with various types of membership which will allow each resident to have contributed equally. At the same time, we want to make membership affordable, and are exploring ways to finance buying in over

time, as well as helping finance the costs of developing homesites and building homes here.

This summer heralds a new phase of education work at O.U.R. Ecovillage. We have partnered with Cobworks Consulting in developing a Natural Builders School for 2003. The program will operate over four months in the summer and facilitate a "start to finish" natural building process using a wide variety of techniques and materials. Builders and facilitators are coming in from various locations in Canada and the US to help promote what we call the "building of community through the natural building process."

The task of rezoning our property was lengthy and labor intensive. It's been a lot of work—years of lobbying and political education, and we've received tremendous support throughout. In particular the Regional District has been very progressive and forward thinking in their decision-making. Hats off to them for having the vision to see our vision! Ω

Melanie Mitchell, a board member of O.U.R. Community Association, has a background in social work and a strong affinity for community development. Lokesh Green, a resident of O.U.R. Ecovillage, has lived in three rural and three urban Canadian intentional communities over the last 30 years. Elizabeth Gorla, currently living in England, will most likely work with O.U.R. Ecovillage's development team. Brandy MacPherson, who was born and raised in Canadian intentional communities and is a founding member of O.U.R. Ecovillage, works as an educator, community development consultant, and creative visionary.

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WHY URBAN ECOVILLAGES ARE CRUCIAL

BY JACOB STEVENS
CORDIVAE

Most ecovillages in North America are rural, or suburban. Only four urban ecovillages are underway right now, and only one has been around for more than a few years: L.A. EcoVillage, founded in 1992. You might expect the others to be in San Francisco or Portland. Instead, they're in the Rustbelt: Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Detroit.

What's going on here?

Environmentalists have long recognized the need for green development in

cities. Urban density helps preserve farmland and wilderness from human development. It also lends itself to large-scale cooperative ventures, such as public transportation, pedestrian communities, and energy conservation: e.g., heating apartments or whole apartment buildings instead of single-family homes.

So cities are important to environmentalists. But environmentalists are also important to cities. Many of our cities suffer from sprawl, pollution, concentrated poverty, and other fallout from





post-industrial development. I think that this is why the urban ecovillage movement is beginning to take off — and why it's emerging in these unexpected places.

L.A. EcoVillage was born from the '92 riots. The other three are rising out of the devastation wreaked by the collapsing industrial model. It takes ashes to give birth to a phoenix. Abandoned property, unused open space, and a population looking for hope are com-

mon in America's Rustbelt cities. Economic hardship makes property inexpensive, cooperative ventures appealing (and sometimes necessary), and new ideas desperately sought and welcomed. In Detroit, for example, the outdated methods of the industrial model have failed, so people must look for something new. This is fertile ground for urban ecovillages.

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in rural Missouri has been my training ground for the past six years, both while living there and as a board member. Now I'm in the process of founding an ecovillage in Detroit. I've spent a lot of time thinking about how to further the entire movement. To model sustainable living for others, outreach and education are essential. In cities, any local news cover-

age will reach hundreds of thousands instead of just hundreds or thousands. This is one significant reason urban ecovillages are important to the movement. But it's just the beginning. Urban ecovillages present a whole new set of opportunities and challenges.

For one, the boundaries of an urban ecovillage are bound to be less

defined, geographically and socially. Unlike in rural ecovillages, non-community members are more likely to be in closer contact with the ecovillage and even traveling through the place, and members are less likely to be so inwardly focused, interacting much more often with the mainstream culture around them. This has the advantage of allowing the ecovillage work to reach a wider and more diverse set of people. As a result, urban ecovillages must deal with issues of race in a way that is simply irrelevant to many rural ecovillages. Environmental justice must also play a central role. The disadvantage of these looser boundaries is that they leave an urban ecovillage project more open to the demands of popular culture and expectations. The relative isolation of rural ecovillages may allow more room to fully create a new culture—a powerful tool for environmental change.

These looser boundaries are both social and geographic, and define some of the likely reality of urban ecovillage development. As a result, I suspect urban ecovillages will have to develop new models for both creating boundaries and crossing over them. Living in an already developed area also makes a big difference for urban

ecovillages. Re-use—retrofitting and rehabilitating existing buildings and using salvaged and found materials—is likely to be more important than natural building methods, due to the resources available in cities and their more conservative zoning regulations. The limit on natural building methods could discourage some urban ecovillage activists, but for the wealth of supplies available for re-use. Urban settings provide a seemingly endless wonderland of inexpensive and free materials.

For people sensitive to the wonders of nature and the damage humans have done to it, urban living can be discouraging. When farming urban lots, soil and air pollution stop being abstractions and become scary realities. Wildlife populations are already so depleted that our furry and feathered allies aren't as available for inspiration. Willful ignorance about the universal relevance of ecological issues is evident everywhere you turn. The loneliness and alienation possible in a city of thousands can be devastating, as witnessed by much of literature in the last century.

We need ecovillages, specifically the village part, in cities. Community building is essential for urban environmental and environmental justice work. The challenges require us to create strong social communities to support us through the process of making a positive difference. Those same challenges also provide us with clear goals and inspiration.

Our cities must change. Rural and suburban ecovillages are plowing ahead with their part of the work. Now us city-folk must carry the work into the next phase. Ω

Jacob Stevens Cordivae lives in Detroit, where he's cofounding an ecovillage in conjunction with the Adamah project, and working to found an urban ecovillage network as part of Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA). jacob@ic.org; www.adamah.org.

In cities, any local news coverage will reach hundreds of thousands instead of just hundreds or thousands.



Dancing Rabbit's "town center" from the air.

Cabins, Computers, & Construction Dust

Pioneering ecovillagers discover the challenges of living out sustainable values "on the ground."

BY STEPHANIE NOLL

We're sitting in a circle of straw-bales at Skyhouse, one of Dancing Rabbit's nine natural-built residences. In the center are lit candles, clay and prairie grass, and animal bones found on the land.. It's the eve of our annual Land Day—celebrating the time five years ago when the founders purchased 280 acres of prairie in rural northeastern Missouri.

We're telling stories about how we originally came here. I describe my first visit in early 1998, when I was part of a student group from an environmental issues course at a university 40 miles away. The other students and I knew next to nothing about Dancing Rabbit, and most had never heard the term "ecovillage." After a delicious vegan

lunch and a talk about Dancing Rabbit's vision and land covenants, we began the tour. At that time the "tour" was high on vision and low on physical infrastructure. Enthusiastic community members talked about sustainability, living simply, education and outreach, commitment to feminism, valuing all labor equally, using

food, and watch a real ecovillage develop. However, although I'm thoroughly impressed by the ideals and realities of life at Dancing Rabbit, the community has not been without its challenges. Building an ecovillage from scratch is not an easy task, neither in creating the necessary physical infrastructure nor in fos-

ment we celebrate. However, everyone still comes to the trailer every day to meet many of their basic needs, especially in the winter, since the trailer offers the only indoor kitchen and dining room, the only indoor hot shower, and the only indoor common space. All of this could change in the next year or two as plans are in the works for a common house, so maybe it's not such a big deal that DR members are still using the trailer. But many Rabbits feel frustrated or even embarrassed that what often seems to be the physical heart of Dancing Rabbit culture still isn't even on Dancing Rabbit land. However, for everyone who visits the community, the falling-apart trailer is where the tour starts.

A week after last year's Land Day celebration I was giving a community tour to a young couple from a nearby college town. I pointed out our organic gardens, where we grow most of our produce year-round; our solar panels and wind generator which generate all our power; and our strawbale cabins and recycled-lumber timber-framed cabins. Using our vehicle co-op, I said, reduced our car use to less than 10 percent of the national average, and we run our cars on biodiesel fuel made from recycled vegetable oil. I noted that we compost our human waste and are restoring portions of our land to native prairie grasses and trees. At one point we took shelter from the wind and rain in the first floor of a grain-bin-turned-duplex apartment. As I rambled on about the strawbale insulation and earth plasters, the couple said they had been following DR's progress on our website for years. Although they admired and aspired to the simple sustainable life we live, they'd never considered moving here because they couldn't imagine giving up their computers. At that point I burst out with, "But this place was *founded* by a bunch of computer geeks!"

And although they're generally not part of the Dancing Rabbit tour, right now 11 computers are in active use here—a ratio of less than two members per computer. Once I moved back to Dancing Rabbit as a resident living in my small backpacking tent, I bought a laptop to use for my newly acquired



Members grow much of their own food in several community gardens.

consensus, and building community. As I remember, the tangible part of the tour centered largely around a super-efficient refrigerator run off of a couple of solar panels and a small wind generator. We learned that Dancing Rabbit's land, which they held in a land trust, was actually across the road from the mobile home where we'd had lunch. We crossed the gravel road and walked to the "town center," where we stood in an open field as a DR member described a vibrant ecovillage of 500 to 1,000 people living sustainably together on the land. I honestly don't remember what he said as I gazed on the gently rolling hills of depleted, empty farmland, but I found myself returning to Dancing Rabbit repeatedly. And with every visit the community had grown in new and exciting ways.

It's been exciting to return and help construct new buildings, grow organic

tering a culture that truly nurtures its members.

In the earliest days, the deteriorating mobile home they rented across the road was invaluable in providing members a place to sleep, bathe, cook, and stay

"But this place was founded by a bunch of computer geeks!"

warm while they figured out how to meet these needs sustainably and according to their ecological covenants. Now, five years later, for the first time there's enough housing on the land that no one is sleeping in the trailer—an accomplish-

musician-booking job. Most days I'd do hours of construction work, then enter the trailer, straw in my hair and pants covered with mud, to fire up my computer and earn more money. Like me, many other folks here use computers and telecommute for income.

One of Dancing Rabbit's challenges is to prove its economic sustainability over time. Despite the relatively low cost of living here, with only 20 members, most members cannot earn sufficient income in the internal Dancing Rabbit economy, except for those who are willing or able to do construction and gardening for the community. Most members must have some other source of income and must work outside the community at a variety of jobs. Dancing Rabbit has yet to develop any thriving cottage industries that folks interested in ecovillage life can just plug into. This lack has made it difficult, or even impossible, for many interested people to move here. Members have many ideas for small businesses, and I think some of them will need to come to fruition in the next few years for Dancing Rabbit to become an economically sustainable village. Although it is likely that some folks will always find reasons to work outside the community, many others have the desire to support themselves purely from activities on the land. In the meantime, anyone walking into DR common space may find as many as three or four people clicking away on their laptops as they telecommute, in addition to whoever may be working in the office next door.

However, the hundreds of visitors, students, and neighbors who tour our aspiring ecovillage every year don't come to see economic sustainability, but how we're working toward ecological sustainability. And although members are anxious in many ways for Dancing Rabbit to attract new people

I'd do hours of construction work, then enter the trailer, straw in my hair and pants covered with mud, to fire up my computer and earn more money.

and grow, the constant state of growth and transition and DR's outreach program seems to create stress and tension. While people here are helping build a radical environmentally sustainable demonstration project, they're also just trying to live their lives. And sometimes even in 280 acres of open prairie, it can feel like there's nowhere to get away from the construction, the planning, and especially, the tours. Folks often talk about "living in a fishbowl." One member says when she's in the nearby small town shopping or attending the local quilting circle, local people will recognize her and say, "Oh, I've been in your home." When they don't add what they thought was interesting or valuable about it, she immediately imagines them critically eyeing her dirty laundry, her unfinished strawbale walls, and construction dust everywhere. Likewise tension sometimes arises between members over the constant state of living in a construction zone. Stacks of what to some Rabbits are valuable reclaimed building materials, to others are just horrendous piles of junk.

Also like all intentional communities, Dancing Rabbit has its share of interpersonal conflict. The community's rural setting in some ways geographically isolates its members from other people, and that makes for an exceptionally close and in-grown experience. The Rabbits depend on each other as coworkers, friends, potential lovers, neighbors, support givers, and allies—all

at the same time. In such a close, multi-relationship setting, disagreements and personal differences can sometimes become intense. And despite its commitment to feminism, DR has frequently struggled with attracting enough women. Creating a community that feels supportive to women and families is an ongoing concern of many Rabbits. Also, because Dancing Rabbit is constantly growing and changing, it frequently feels like it's having growing pains. How does DR make the transition from small community to village? What do we do when the consensus process that worked great for eight people feels unwieldy for twenty? How can we diversify and continue to ensure that folks still have the advantages of a close-knit community? Members need to con-



Community members Thomas and Kristen mix earth for one of the cabins.



Members of the community's Cattail Co-op share lunches and dinners daily.

stantly maintain an open mind while the Dancing Rabbit they love strives to get closer to its vision and continues its constant evolution into something new.

Often Rabbits approach this evolution by attempting to create systems, norms, and social structures that will serve its members and its ideals into the future. Planning for the unknown is a difficult task and members often clash about what level of organizational structure they should create. When I returned to Dancing Rabbit as a resident last fall I found quite a controversy around creating policies about kids, and tensions ran high. It all seemed so strange to me because no kids actually lived here. It had been years since Dancing Rabbit had had any members with children. Now the community had opened itself to the possibility of families joining again. When some families did express interest in joining fairly soon, some members were alarmed, saying the community wasn't ready. Other members were excited about having children again, and believed any challenges could be worked out as they arose. Others felt

that DR should first have some policies in place that assured that families felt supported and included in community affairs, while non-parents also had their needs met in the limited common space. The question of how to create policies that leave enough room for growth, diversity, and creative freedom but that are still clear and structured enough for other people's comfort levels is still a common debate here.

Another community goal is to become more village-like in its social structures. But even though it's a goal, it's not necessarily easy for members to let go of the small-scale, inclusive ways they've interacted during their pioneering years. For example, a current big issue is the

Even in 280 acres of open prairie, it can feel like there's nowhere to get away from the construction, the planning, and especially, the tours.

new dining co-op, the second in the community. Throughout DR's short history, most members have been members of Cattail co-op, sharing lunches and din-

ners every day. But sometimes in the summer the number of visitors and interns eating with Cattail has totalled more than 30 folks—an overwhelming size for some Rabbits, and now they're ready for a change. Others talk about creating dining co-ops oriented towards different types of diets, or coops in which members are more directly involved in growing their own food. When most members talk about the future of Dancing Rabbit, they talk about people having different dining options and don't imagine the whole village eating together every night. However, some Rabbits are still sad to see the exodus from Cattail. Cooking for each other and eating together has been a large part of community life at DR. Creating a second dining co-op has demonstrated how challenging it can be to offer more options and shift from the small community model to become more village-like.

In spite of the struggles and growing pains, it's been a joy to watch Dancing Rabbit grow from a few members in an ancient trailer with a grand vision to the dynamic community and model demonstration site it is today. Although I'm sure the road ahead includes many more trials, I'll be excited to watch Dancing Rabbit make the transition from a dynamic community into a thriving village of several hundred. Rituals like our circle tonight on the night before Land Day remind me that the community has the vision, it has the energy, and it has made a powerful beginning. Now it just needs time and more folks who want to come share in the joys and challenges of building an ecovillage. Ω

Stephanie Noll is currently a resident at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, where she especially enjoys building, biking, and merry-making with fellow Rabbits.

For more information: www.dancingrabbit.org.



Not Just Eco-Technology

Danish ecovillagers train themselves to change energy consumption at an award-winning project near Copenhagen.

BY LONE SAMUELSSON

The physical layout of our two-year-old cohousing-style ecovillage Munksoegaard (pronounced roughly “Monks-SO-eh-guard”), consists of 100 housing units: five two-story cohousing clusters of 20 residential units, each with a common house, on 25 hectares of former farmland. Here 250 people (150 adults and 100 children) live together in a project based on environmental sustainability and the spirit of community. In 2000, when Munksoegaard was still in the design stage, we won first prize in a Danish competition for the best sustainable

design for the 21st century. By 2001 when we moved in, 500 people were on the waiting list.

From the beginning in 1995 we wanted to make living at Munksoegaard desirable and affordable for all age groups and levels of society, so we came up with an innovative ownership method, the first of its kind in Denmark.

We wanted to make living at Munksoegaard desirable and affordable for all age groups and levels of society.

In one of our 20-unit housing clusters residents own their individual residences and a share of their common space, and access to all our common property, as in any standard cohousing community. A second housing cluster is cooperatively owned, which means that every resident owns the whole cluster and leases the right to live in a particular housing unit, and in this case, the Danish welfare system partially subsidizes the purchase price. The remaining three housing clusters are rental units, with one reserved for young people, one for senior citizens, and the third for anyone of any age. In these clusters low-income residents can apply to have part of the rent paid by the government.

These various ownership arrangements ensure that low-, medium-, and high-income families can live at Munksoegaard. We consider it especially important for community health and happiness that young people at the beginning of their working lives are able

**Today our local officials
bring visitors over to
show off our ecovillage.**



to live here: The fact that the full range of ages is represented is treasured by all.

We are 100 percent self-managed. We have no hired caretaker; we painted our houses ourselves; we mow the lawns, clear the roads of snow, and maintain our own wastewater and central heating system. This allows us to reduce our costs and also to build a strong feeling of community solidarity.

We divide up community tasks according to our abilities. No one, for example, would expect an 80-year-old lady to do landscaping work; it is perfectly fine if she bakes cakes and makes coffee for our meetings instead. Consequently, Munksoegaard is also a good place to grow old, as there is always someone to offer help when needed.

Government assistance was also very important in building Munksoegaard. When we began our property search, we wanted a site within 30 minutes of Copenhagen by public transport, and with access to at least 20 acres of farmland. We also wanted one where we had freedom to experiment with our own heating system and wastewater management—in short, we wanted sympathetic local officials who would be kindly disposed towards some crazy ecologists who wanted to build 100 housing units!

We found what we were looking for in Roskilde, a town 30 km from Copenhagen. The local councilors (similar to locally based state legislators in the United States) were not only kindly disposed toward our project, but positively enthusiastic to be the home of the largest ecological village in Denmark. The mayor himself took an interest in the project right from the start, and soon the more progressive officials within the local government followed suit. The officials who were not so keen about the project, however, pointed out that they would have to bend the rules and search for new ways to do things that they had never done before, often responding, “That is not possible” or “We usually don’t do it like that,” to our requests. When we couldn’t persuade the local bureaucrats, we had to go to our councilors and most of the time they helped us out. For example, existing regulations don’t permit developing a housing project with three different ownership structures, so we appealed to our councilors to persuade the local officials to interpret these regulations in a way that was favorable to us.

Today, in fact, many local government officials are rather proud of us. Not only are we on very friendly terms with them, but whenever they have visitors, they bring them over to show off our ecovillage.

(Continued on page 59)

Ten Years of the Danish Ecovillage Network

BY HILDUR JACKSON

The Danish Network of Ecovillages (LOS), organizes projects that help ecovillages as well as those that promote localization and bioregionalism. Founded in 1993 by members of ecological, social, and spiritual community projects in Denmark, LOS hosts celebrations, exhibitions, and seminars, and has published books, booklets, videos, a CD-ROM, and our quarterly ecovillage magazine, *LOSNET*.

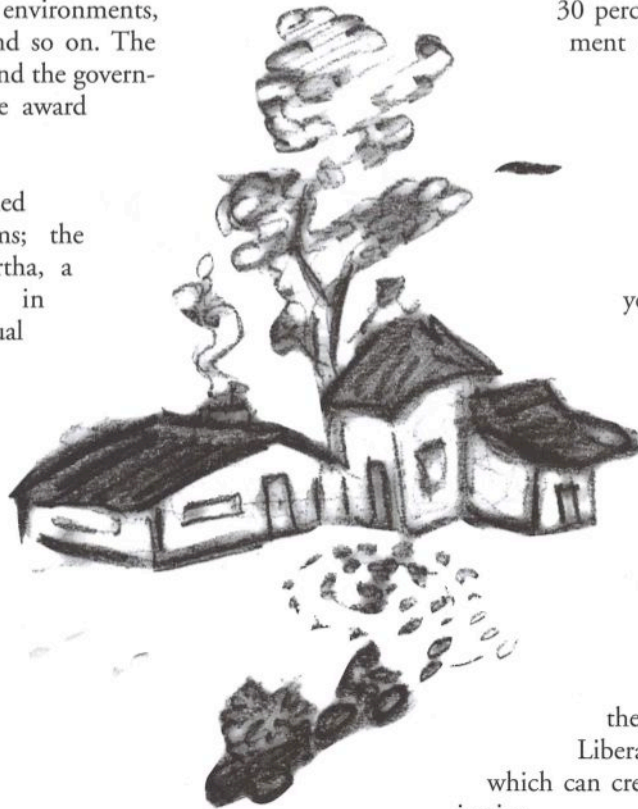
In 1997 LOS initiated a Danish national competition for the best sustainable settlement for the 21st century, with 500,000 Danish Kroner as prize money, donated by Gaia Trust and five national government ministries, including the Ministry of the Environment. The competition focused on whole settlements and their methods for renewable energy, local wastewater treatment, social environments, health, food production, and so on. The judges, appointed by LOS and the government ministries, spread the award among nine projects. The first prize went to Munksoegaard for its planned sustainable ecological systems; the second prize went to Hertha, a Camphill community in Jutland, for its social-spiritual integration of handicapped and non-handicapped people. In 1998 LOS edited a beautiful, inspiring book with the best ideas from the competition, *Welcome to the Future: Sustainable Settlements in Denmark*.

To help raise funds so that aspiring ecovillages can buy land, LOS brought a proposal to the Danish Parliament to award 100 million Danish Kroner to 20 new Danish ecovillage projects, at 5 million Kroner each, enough for each project to buy sufficient

land. In return for the grants, each ecovillage must become specialists in a different area of sustainability, such as wastewater treatment, conflict resolution, and so on—thus developing 20 different grassroots-based sustainability research institutions. The Parliament hasn't approved the proposal so far, but we hope to see results some day.

Banks and credit unions are reluctant to give construction loans to ecovillages, because they must undertake special risk evaluations because of ecovillages' non-standard legal features (such as joint ownership of land) and unusual ecological features (such as off-grid power, biological wastewater treatment, and so on). So LOS lobbied the Danish government successfully to pass a law guaranteeing a 30 percent government reimbursement on credit union loans to ecovillages. But even though this reduces their risk, credit unions here continue to automatically reject loan applications from ecovillages.

Ecovillages aren't yet on the Danish political agenda, and the new conservative government eliminated subsidies to all green projects, including ecovillages. But the concept is spreading. When Munksoegaard members moved in in 2001, 500 people were on the waiting list. We see ecovillages as a vision for the future for Socialists and Liberals alike, and as a model which can create real global equality and justice.



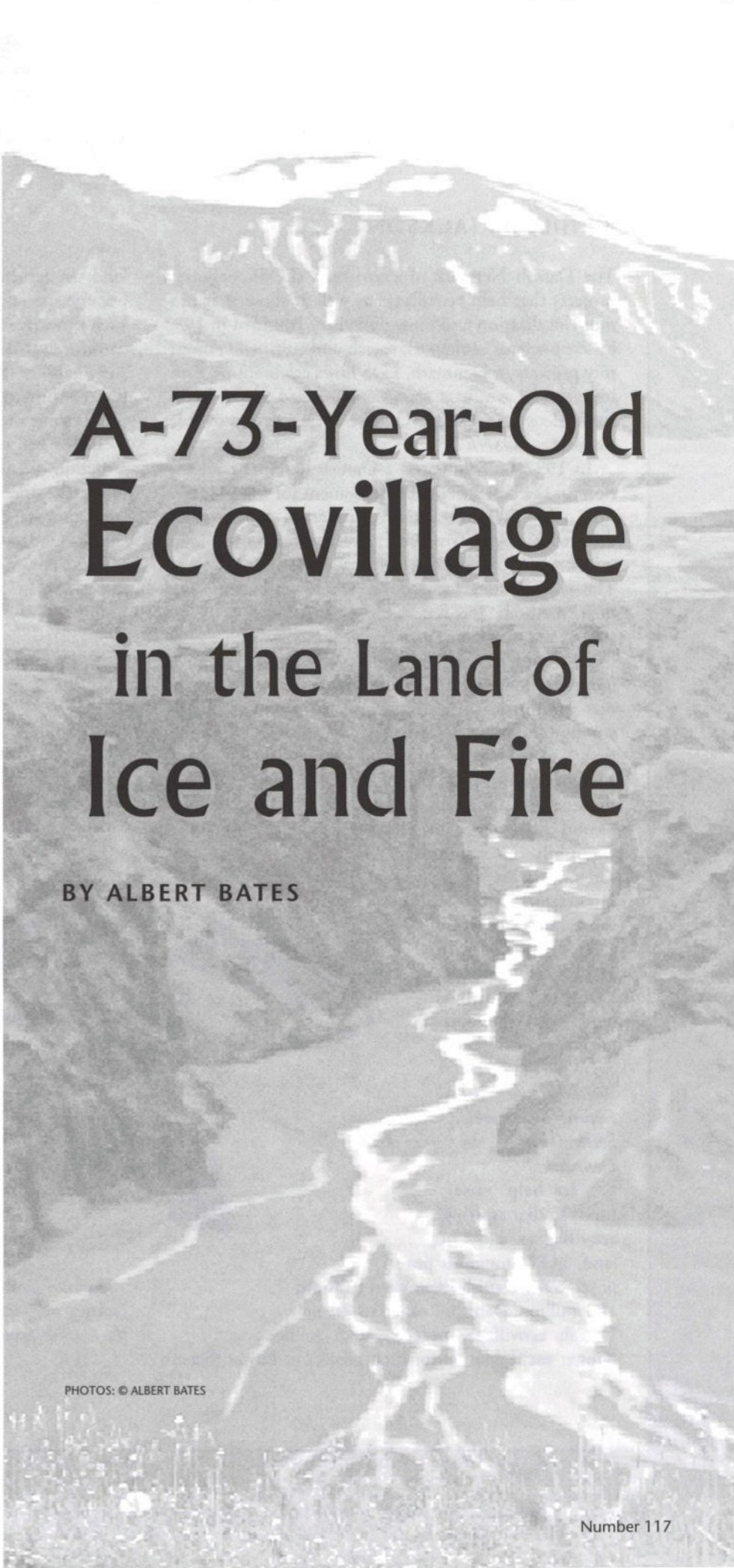
Hildur Jackson is co-founder, with her husband Ross Jackson, of Gaia Trust, Global Ecovillage Network, and the Danish Ecovillage Network.

A little over an hour from the airport the roads narrow down to two lanes, and our tour group comes upon a crossroads and a community building with large blue letters: "Borg." No relation to *Star Trek*, just an Icelandic town hall and post office. Turning off on the dirt road we pass lush fields of grass and frolicking Icelandic ponies, their long manes and tails catching the wind. A little ways up the road a sign marks the driveway to Sólheimer by announcing the availability of food and lodging. We descend down the drive and pull up to the parking area beside the large glass building, once a greenhouse, now a restaurant and coffee shop, in the world's oldest ecovillage.

Just up the hill near the sculpture garden is the geothermally heated swimming pool and the original community dining hall, dating back to the early 1930s. It still bears the Anthroposophic-style, hand-carved wooden trim of that period. We choose instead to stroll downhill, past the constructed wetlands that handle sewage and greywater for this community of 70-80 residents. We're headed to the greenhouses and nurseries that supply fresh vegetables year-round, and the plots of diverse young tree seedlings and saplings that are part of the ecovillage's national reforestation efforts. Gummi, who guides our group through this sweet young forest of pine and birch, tells us how Sólheimer came into being.

When I used to think of Iceland I imagined a barren volcanic island covered with snow, populated by the descendants of the Vikings, still speaking a dialect close to the original Norse. This was the place, the *Sagas* said, that sent the Berserkers in long ships to the coasts of Europe where they raped, plundered, and pillaged, wearing nothing but sword belts and shields.

Though just 1300 miles from the North Pole, temperatures are pleasant, not much different from Boston. The difference, of course, is that Iceland's winter lasts a bit longer than most places. Three hours of daily sunlight in December can give cabin fever new meaning. The old style of housing, still



A-73-Year-Old Ecovillage in the Land of Ice and Fire

BY ALBERT BATES

PHOTOS: © ALBERT BATES



*If ever a
place needed
ecovillages,
it's Iceland.*

found in some remote fishing villages, was largely earth-sheltered. Driftwood posts and beams supported a slate or flat-stone-shingled roof cloaked with turf, which extended to a high berm that enclosed three sides of the building. Tunnels sometimes connected houses throughout a village, making snow shoveling unnecessary.

Abundant geothermal energy and the national grid made this kind of hobbit-house obsolete in the second half of the 20th century, and today the country's 300,000 permanent residents are housed in separate rectilinear houses and apartment buildings in cities and towns that look much the same as many parts of Scandinavia.

The connection to Scandinavia goes back a long time. Although Iceland was originally settled by Celtic missionaries on their regular circuits between Ireland and the St. Lawrence valley from the sixth to eighth centuries, C.E., the Celts were run out by the Norse at the end of the ninth century. The Viking town of Islandingabok was built in 874 near what they called Smoky Bay ("Reykjavik" in Icelandic), taking the name from the steam venting from thermal springs.

The Viking clans assembled a parliament in 930 at Thingvellir, an outdoor amphitheater overlooking the Oxoro River. The Norse parliament members perched on canyon walls where the Atlantic Plate rises 70 meters as it continues to inch Iceland away from Europe. Over the centuries Denmark eventually came to rule Iceland, and remained until 1944, when the island was occupied by Nazi Germany. After the war, because of its valuable strategic position as a forward base for B-52s to reach Moscow over the Pole, Iceland became an independent country and host to NATO.

The island country has a harsh, rugged, landscape, with geysers, volcanoes, and cinder fields stretching from the base of mountain glaciers to its rocky shores. The overall warming of Earth's climate affects the island profoundly, with receding ice cover, frequent flooding, and the greater availability of crops and foliage. While throughout the 20th century visitors joked "If you get lost in an Icelandic



forest, stand up,” new stands of timber, much of it started as seedlings at Sólheimer, now cover many once-barren hillsides. Sea-grass is being planted on eroded soils to begin the reforestation succession.

At one time birch and willow covered up to a quarter of the country. Then

The same batch of geothermal spring water generates electricity, supplies hot water to kitchen, bathrooms, and radiant heat, runs through a heat exchanger, and de-ices the walkways.

overcutting trees or charcoal and the introduction of sheep (but you love those Icelandic sweaters don't you?) removed virtually the entire forest cover, causing severe erosion of the tillable land. People began abandoning their farms in the 18th century, and out-migration to Reykjavik continues today. Some 450 native plant species, brought by winds, currents, birds, or icebergs after the last Ice Age, have survived competition from the 90 exotic species introduced by the colonists. Unknown other species have been lost to history. Another tale can be told of the Icelandic fishing fleet and the heedless decimation of the marine fisheries, from whales to cod. If ever a place needed ecovillages, it's Iceland.

Sólheimer is blessed by a hot spring that generates near boiling water at prodigious rates—12-15 gallons per





second. This is more than adequate to provide central heating and hot water and to supply a large number of greenhouses that grow vegetables and nursery trees year-round. Gummi tells us the hot spring is what originally attracted Sesselja Hreindis Sigmundsdottir, the community's founder, to this remote location in the Icelandic countryside.

In the late 1920s Sesselja wanted to create an Anthroposophical care center for developmentally challenged children after becoming familiar with the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and Karl König. She founded Sólheimar in July of 1930 at the age of 28. But raising handicapped children with "normal" children, bathing them in the warm springs, serving vegetables grown in winter, and giving everyone useful work as they matured scandalized her neighbors. Steady pressure from concerned government agencies culminated in an order from Parliament in 1946 to close her school. The order was never enforced however, because the Allies took Keflavik air base from the

Germans and dissolved the Parliament. Help from the Reykjavik Lions Club and other supporters allowed Sesselja to continue her work, and as more settlers arrived and took up her cause, the village grew.

Today nearly half of all residents are what might be considered handicapped, but all are able to work to the best of their abilities in Sólheimar's numerous production shops: woodcarving, candle making, ceramics, weaving, oil painting, herbal soap and shampoo, and paper making. Sólheimar encourages individual artistic expression and gives its residents ways to provide practical income for the community. Sólheimar also generates business from its tree nursery and organic and Biodynamic agriculture, including hydroponic vegetables in steam-heated greenhouses. Guest houses, the café, and the gift shop add to community income.

In 2002 Sólheimar opened Sesseljuhus ("Sesselja's House") Iceland's first ecocenter, named in honor of Sesselja on the 100th anniversary of her

birth (she passed on in 1974). The ecocenter's primary function is to offer environmentally-related courses in a setting that demonstrates green technology. The interior theater seats 100, and exhibit halls, smaller conference rooms and offices are all wired for Internet, sound, and film projection. The thoroughly earthquake-resistant building substitutes cement with rammed earth, and uses sustainably-harvested timber products for trusses, a variety of natural materials for insulation, recycled tire rubber for floorboards, and driftwood for interior paneling and trim. It's 100 percent PVC-free. It has a wet composting toilet, energy-efficient lighting, earth-chilled and geothermal-warmed air circulation, and heat recovery, solar photovoltaic, and geothermal electricity systems, as well as several innovations not seen before.

One of these innovations is a five-stage reuse of geothermal water before final discharge. Water enters from a nearby hot well at 180° (83°C) (a new



well was drilled after the 2000 earthquake reduced the flow of the original well). The water is harnessed by a Varmarafali bimetallic converter which passes cold water over an opposing microcircuit, which generates an electrical current based on the temperature differential. The initial prototype is small, but a next-stage 1 kW Varmarafali generator will eventually supply much of the power for the building's interior lighting, airflow, and film projection. Given Iceland's enormous geothermal and snow resources, practical, no-moving-parts devices like the Varmarafali converter which tap temperature differential are a significant advance over the steam-turbine methods currently used in Iceland.

Second-stage water leaves the Varmarafali at 176° (80°C) and is used for hot water in the kitchen and bathrooms, or alternatively run through the radiant heating system. Third-stage water is captured in the greywater drains and from radiator exhausts at 140° (60°C) and run through a heat exchanger for convective air flow at the underground point of entry for incoming air. Fourth-stage water at 95-105° (35-40°C) is sent under the outdoor walkways (for de-icing) and thence flows by gravity into the biological digestors and constructed wetlands where, still warm, it keeps useful microflora active year-round.

Petur Sveinbjarnarson, president of Sólheimer's nonprofit foundation, has done a magnificent effort of attracting favorable publicity and bringing aboard corporate sponsors for improvements like Sesseljuhus. When I last visited in 2002 Iceland's daily newspaper issued a full color, eight-page Sunday supplement on Sólheimer that went free with all the paper's editions throughout country. In 2002 an image of Sesselja at Sólheimer was honored on an Icelandic postage stamp. However, where there is acclaim there is also reaction, and Petur has suffered some unwarranted personal attacks on TV and radio. The complaints range from the outlandish: Sólheimer embezzles government money and drugs its handicapped residents so it needn't care for them, to the merely concerned: Sólheimer spends funds for ecological

buildings and sculpture gardens instead of hiring staff to care for more disabled people. Recently there have also been some unfavorable audits by government agencies complaining about everything from the lack of uniformity in coffee cups to the low caregiver-to-patient ratios. There are concerns that, as a tax-exempt nonprofit entity receiving government support, Sólheimer's industries compete with taxed for-profit businesses.

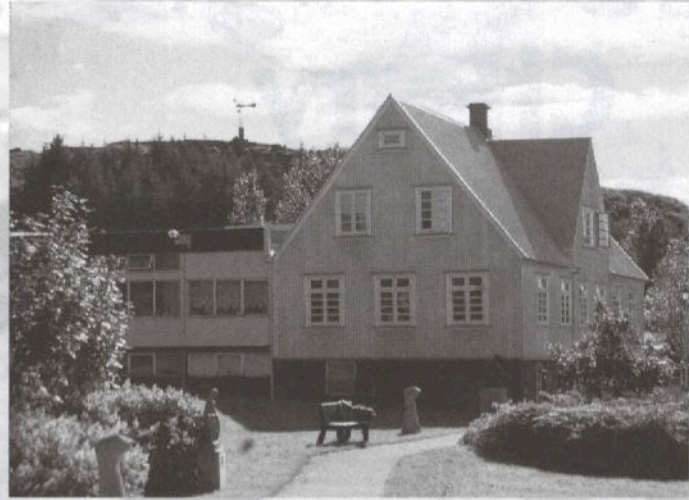
None of these complaints are new. Many are nearly identical to the complaints Sesselja dealt with in the 1930s and 1940s. However, Sólheimer is threatened by governmental controls,

In 2001 an image of Sesselja at Sólheimer was honored on an Icelandic postage stamp.

and Petur suggests that to assist with his efforts to resolve these issues, he welcomes donations, tours by visitors, and favorable media recognition, perhaps for being the oldest ecovillage, or perhaps for being maybe the best example of an ecovillage anywhere in the world. Ω

Albert Bates is International Secretary of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA), and director of Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee. ecovillage@thefarm.org.

To contact Sólheimer: solheimer@solheimar.is; www.solheimar.is; Grimness 801 Selfoss, Iceland; +354-1486-4430; fax +354-1486-4427.



Why Camphill Communities Are Ecovillages

BY JAN MARTIN BANG

In Camphill Communities (which are also based on the Anthroposophical principles of Rudolf Steiner), most of us live in large extended families consisting of villagers (mentally handicapped people) and non-handicapped co-workers. We live together in large residences, sharing our lives, our meals, our living rooms, and our bathrooms. Everyone, co-workers and villagers alike, work in a variety of workplaces. In my community, Solborg Camphill Village in Norway, these include a Biodynamic farm, extensive vegetable gardens, a bakery, a weavery, a large forest for timber and firewood, herb growing and drying, and a cheese-making workshop. I have eaten meals at Camphill communities where the table came from the carpentry shop, the tablecloth from the weavery, the plates and cups from the pottery, the candles (which are lit at every meal) from the candle shop, and virtually all the food, including bread, milk products, jams, vegetables, herb teas, honey, and meat and meat products.

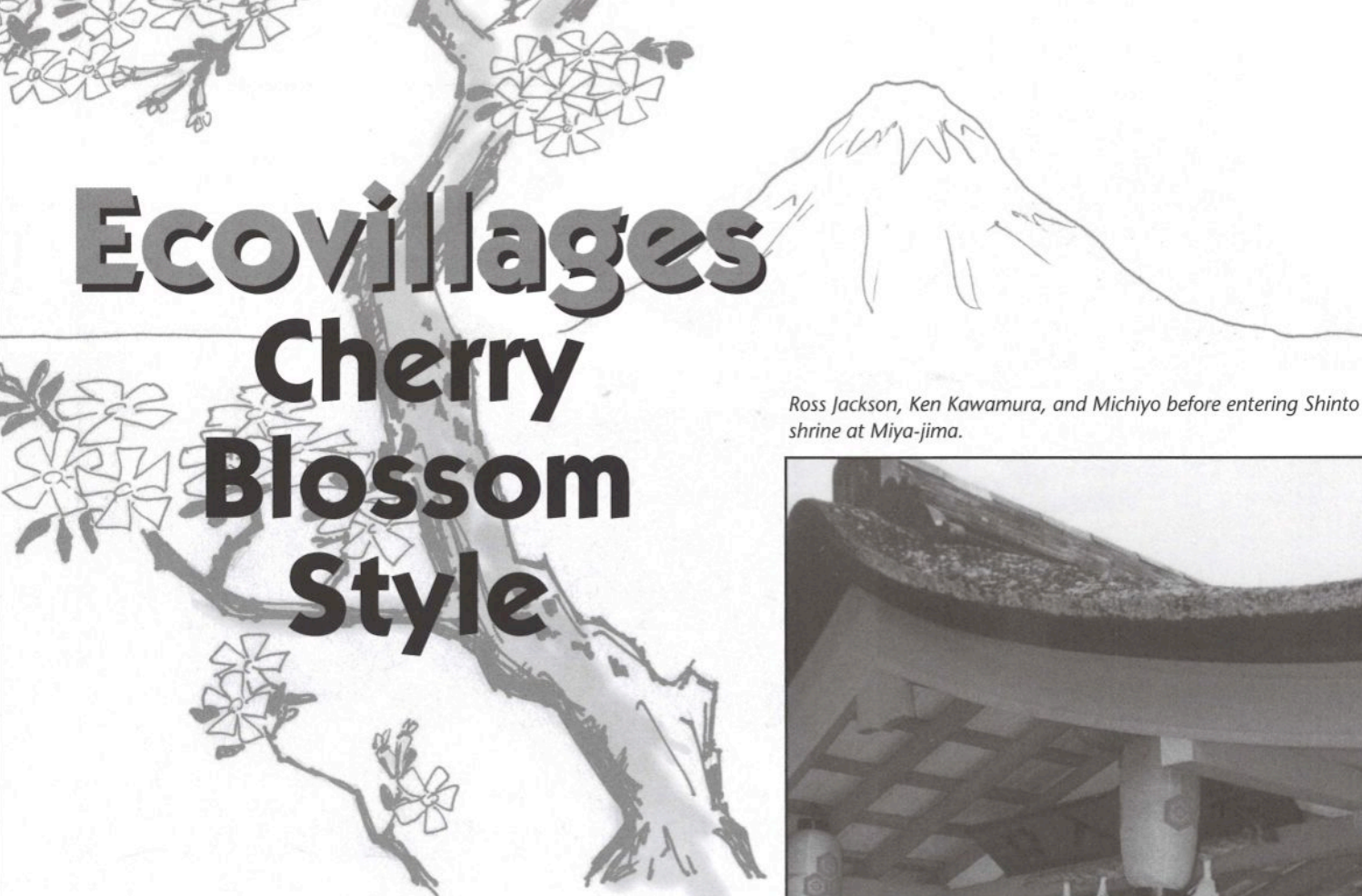
This self-sufficiency is not an end in itself, but rather a way of saving money, and ensuring that each person is employed doing something that is useful to the village. In mainstream society, mentally handicapped people are usually marginalised and “looked after” and so denied an active and useful role. In the world of Camphill, every person has something to contribute, and feels self-worth even when fetching the milk or laying the table.

The farms and gardens in Camphill Villages are always Biodynamic, producing food of the highest quality while nurturing both soil and wildlife. Generally the organic waste from the kitchens is composted. Horse transport is quite common, being very efficient and low cost at a village scale. Many use a wastewater treatment method with ponds, reedbeds, and “Flow Form” water cascades. Buildings are largely constructed out of natural materials.

Camphill Villages are true ecovillages, and I believe we would score higher on GEN’s Community Sustainability Assessment Tool, both socially and ecologically, than many communities that actively identify themselves as ecovillages. We are largely self-sufficient: We eat home grown, organic food; often recycle, compost, and treat our own waste; and attempt to integrate a spiritual world view into our everyday lives. We strive to create fellowship in our economic life, and a flexible equality into our social sphere. In short, Camphill ecovillages offer a self-reliant, deeply satisfying, sustainable way of life.

Excerpted from the author’s presentation for the International Communal Studies Association Conference, 2001.

Jan Martin Bang lived in a kibbutz in Israel for 16 years, where he was active in the Green Kibbutz movement. He and his family now live at Solborg Camphill Village in Norway.



Ecovillages Cherry Blossom Style

Ross Jackson, Ken Kawamura, and Michiyo before entering Shinto shrine at Miya-jima.

BY HILDUR JACKSON

Kobunaki, a 250-home ecovillage soon to break ground on 30 acres near Kyoto, is the first ecovillage in Japan. In direct contrast to ecovillage projects in other countries, it's not a grassroots effort, but a "top down" response to Japan's environmental and economic crises by a group of local elected officials and a visionary real estate developer, Mr. Akimura (whom I only know as Akimura-san). A team of eight young professionals (farmers, biologists, architects, landscape designers) led by Akimura-san's son Takashi, will design the project and become its first residents.

My husband Ross Jackson and I learned of the Kobunaki Ecovillage when we were invited to visit Japan in November, 2002, to help inaugurate Japan's Nippon Ecovillage Network. During our trip I had a chance to share a delightful evening meal with the young designers. Amidst much laughter and sharing of our dreams and visions, we each described our backgrounds. The team has expertise in all relevant aspects of ecovillage design, except group facilitation and conflict resolution. These young people were selected from among five hundred university graduates who interviewed for the design project, and six out of eight are women. How the rest of the ecovillage residents will be found is yet to be determined.

Kobunaki Ecovillage is creating a model for developing an ecovillage not seen before; its founders will have to invent their own way as they go. Will it work? Will Japan once again take a good idea that originated elsewhere and carry it out quickly, professionally, and more effectively than in other countries? Akimura-san as landowner, funder, and father is a real strength,

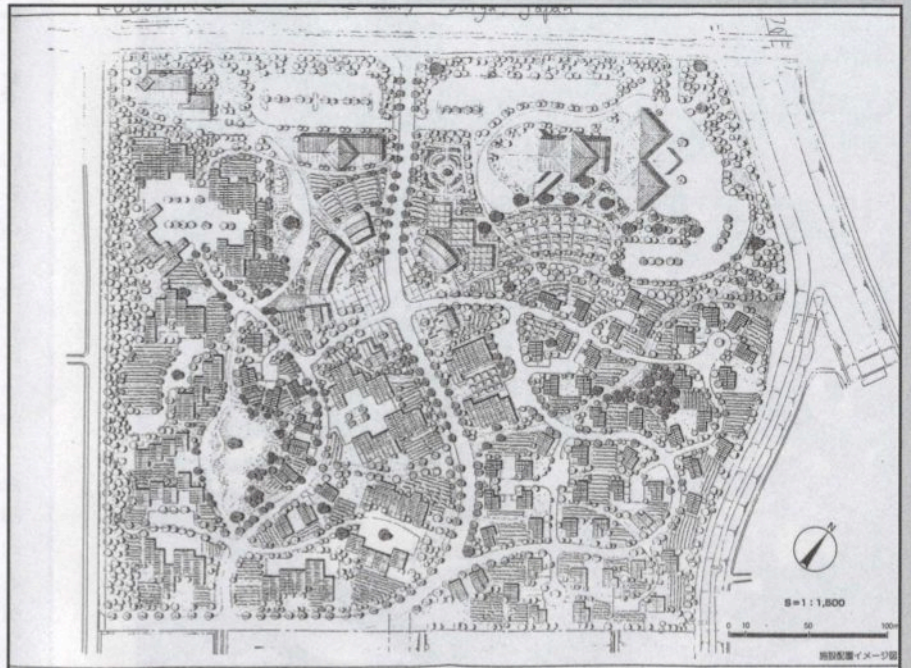


but his background as a traditional developer could also be the group's Achilles heel. And how does an ecovillage group, which must create social as well as ecological sustainability, develop real democracy and equality under such circumstances?

Akimura-san, Ross and I, and Bernard Lietaer, the alternative-currency expert, were among those present at the launching of Nippon Ecovillage Network at Lake Biwa near the ancient city of Kyoto. In our presentations to the large gathering I focused on the social aspects of ecovillages after a Japanese professor showed slides of ecological houses at Findhorn and ecovillages in Denmark. Bernard spoke about alternative currencies (Japan has the largest diversity of alternative currency systems in the world), and Ross spoke of the ecovillage movement as a long-term strategy to counter the negative aspects of commercial globalization and return real power to local communities.

We later traveled south to Hiroshima at the invitation of Kenichi Kawamura, a conservationist, businessman, and college professor, to meet with officials from the city, local businesses, a peace organization, and a local think tank. The officials wanted to hear our ideas about how to promote peace, and wanted to learn about creating ecovillages as a peace strategy. Since the bomb, Hiroshima has become a center of peace activism. I was deeply moved. They seemed to really understand the ecovillage vision, and shared our own concern and anguish for the future. Like us, they saw that a society of ecovillages would be much more decentralized, more reliant on renewable energy, and less dependent on oil and the enormous political power centers that result from a world dependent on fossil fuel—a more peaceful world.

A few days later Hamamoto-san, the leader of the Hiroshima think tank, took us into the mountains to see traditional villages and get a feeling for the traditional Japan. The trees were glowing with red and yellow colors, and the old villages were beautiful, with people still terrace-farming the steep mountain slopes. On the way back we stopped at Hamamoto-san's house. Noting that the last name Akimura



(above) Site plan for Kobunaki Ecovillage. (below) Ross Jackson, center, Peter David Peterson (left), and one of the young ecovillage designers at the future site of Kobunaki Ecovillage.





(above) Ross Jackson (center); Bernard Lietaer (far right). (below and facing page) Traditional village in the mountains near Hiroshima.



The Japanese Quest for Sustainable Alternatives

One evening we sat down with our old friend Bernard Lietaer, an economist and international expert on alternative currencies who frequently consults in Japan. We wondered why in Japan decentralized sustainable strategies such as alternative currencies and ecovillages are initiated by businessmen and government officials, while in other industrialized nations such strategies are usually ignored or dismissed by those in power.

“Japan is now in its twelfth year of economic stagnation,” Bernard pointed out, “and is the first of the major economies to hit the wall economically. The standard explanation for the economic down-turn is mismanagement and lack of reforms. But the problem is more basic—it’s ‘structural’—which means that things don’t improve with business as usual. So what are Japan’s structural problems?”

“First, is the age wave (that is, many old people), which will not go away. Second, jobless growth will not go away—and new technologies will just make it worse. Third, the environmental crises will not go away. And neither will monetary instability. Japan has all these problems. Eighty-seven countries have gone through major monetary crises over the past 25 years. Chronologically, Japan got hit first in 1990. Europe has started in 1995 and the U.S. in 2001.”

“In Europe we still believe it’s not a structural problem and that things will soon improve. But the Industrial Age is dying. Japan is realizing this is a structural problem., saying ‘We need to invent new ways of organizing society.’ This is now accepted in Japan. But there is not yet consensus on the new development mode. So everybody is trying new models.

“The Japanese are more open to radical new ideas like ecovillages and complementary currencies because they have tried all the conventional solutions in the early 1990s and none of them worked.

Bernard expects that in five years Europe will have the same realization: that they need to find new solutions to structural problems and find new definitions of sustainable economic development. And later, the United States will do the same.

—H.J.

means “autumn village” and Kawamura means “river village,” and so “mura” must mean “village.” Ross proposed that ecovillages should maybe be called “ecomura” in Japanese. There were laughs all around; everyone seemed to like the idea.

Back in Tokyo, our Danish friend Peter David Pederson arranged a dinner with more sustainability advocates. Peter David runs the E-Square environmental consultancy in Japan, publishes a Japanese Internet magazine on sustainability, and his Tokyo offices house the headquarters of Nippon Ecovillage Network. Peter David invited Koji Itonaga, a professor of architecture who is also the president of the Permaculture Center of Japan; our old friend Peter Harper from the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Wales; Gunter Pauli, the “zero emissions” consultant associated with the Colombian ecovillage Gaviotas; and Takashi Kiuchi, former CEO of Mitsubishi in the United States, chairman of Japan’s “Future 500” project, and recent publisher of *Learning from the Rainforest* in Japanese.

The consensus feeling we observed from dinners like this in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hiroshima is that ecovillages will take off in Japan. They still have so much deeply grounded feeling of community, respect for nature, and a tradition of seeking balance and harmony, that embracing ecovillages will be easy and natural for them. Japan is the only industrialized nation that still has its traditional villages intact, and this may make all the difference. Many Japanese developers besides Akimurasan are ready to start ecovillage projects, we were told. When the Japanese decide to do something, it really happens. So we’ll be watching! Ω

Hildur Jackson and her husband Ross Jackson co-founded Gaia Trust, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), and the Danish Ecovillage Network. She is editor with Karen Svensson of the book Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People (Gaia Trust/Green Books, 2002).



Ecovillage

Organizations and Internet Resources:

Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). Supports and encourage the evolution of sustainable settlements worldwide with information and networking. gen.ecovillage.org.

Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA). The GEN organization for South, Central, and North America. ena@ecovillage.org; ena.ecovillage.org.

- **ENA International.** *Albert Bates, Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm.* PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org.
- **Ecovillage Network of Canada.** *Lee Davies, tycoed@attcanada.ca;* <http://enc.ecovillage.org>
- **ENA Central Office.** *Linda Joseph, 64001 County Rd. DD, Moffat, CO 81143;* ena@ecovillage.org; ena.ecovillage.org.
- **Mexico and Central America.** *Giovanni Ciarlo, giovanni@ecovillage.org; www.laneta.apc.org/rem/; www.laneta.apc.org/rem/huehue.*
- **Caribbean.** *Liora Adler, Lioraadler@aol.com; liora@lacaravana.org.*
- **Northern South America.** *Claudio Madaune, Colombia, ecoaldeasna@ecovillage.org; Enrique Hidalgo, Bolivia, ilpermacultura@hotmail.com; groups.msn.com/ilppictures.*
- **Brazil.** *Andre Soares, ipec1@terra.com.br; www.permacultura.org.br/ipec; Marcelo Bueno, buenobagus@yahoo.com.*
- **Southern South America.** *Silvia Balado, Argentina, gaia@gaia.org.ar, www.gaia.org.ar/; Lucia Battezzore, Uruguay, 7generaciones@jacaranda.org.*
- **Eastern U.S.** *Daniel Greenberg, daniel@ic.org; Manda Gillespie, manda@ecocitycleveland.org.*
- **Western U.S.** *Lois Arkin, crsp@igc.org; Jeff Clearwater, clrwater@earthlink.net.*

- **Mobile Ecovillage initiatives.** *Alberto Ruz, currently organizing conferences and gatherings in Peru.* www.lacaravana.org.

GEN Europe/Africa. *Lucilla Borio, Italy.* info@gen-europe.org; www.gen-europe.org.

GEN Oceania/Asia. *Max Lindegger, Australia.* lindegger@gen-oceania.org; genoa.ecovillage.org/.

GEN South Asia. *Vinya Ariyaratne, Sarvodaya Peace Movement, Sri Lanka.* gensa@sri.lanka.net; www.sarvodaya.org.

GEN's Community Sustainability Assessment Tool

Comprehensive free, downloadable checklist in English and Spanish on the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) and GEN websites to help people get a basic idea of how sustainable their community may be, compare their current status with their ideal sustainability goals, and learn what actions they could take to become more sustainable. The checklist can also be used by community founders as a planning tool. With questions in seven areas—covering ecological, social, and spiritual sustainability—the process takes two or three hours for one person to complete, or considerably longer if done by the whole group (such as three separate two-to-three-hour sessions.) It requires envisioning the lifestyles, practices, and features of the future community, but doesn't require research, calculation, or detailed quantification.

ena.ecovillage.org/English/index - click on **Community Sustainability Assessment Tool**.

Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). Membership organization serves intentional communities and community seekers in North America with information and networking. Publishes *Communities* magazine, *Visions of Utopia* video, *Communities Directory*, *Community Library Reprint Series*, and audiotapes on various aspects of com-

munity living; offers mail-order books and resources about intentional community living through Community Bookshelf; hosts regional communities gatherings. FIC website lists intentional communities and offers links to individual community websites. *FIC, Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342; 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org; store.ic.org.*

Living Routes - Ecovillage Educational Consortium. Hosts live-in educational experiences at ecovillages in Europe, India, and the U.S. for college credit. www.livingroutes.org; daniel@livingroutes.org.

Directories, Books:

Communities Directory: A Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living. Fellowship for Intentional Community (2000). Information on over 600 communities in North America—where they are, what they're doing, how to contact them; maps; comparison charts; articles about community living. Pb. 446 pp. \$30 postpaid. *FIC, Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-462-8240; 669-883-5545; store.ic.org.*

Eurotopia: Directory of Intentional Communities and Ecovillages in Europe. Silke Hagmaier, Julia Kommerell, Martin Stengel, Michael Würfel, Editors. Ökodorf Sieben Linden (2001). Pb., 414 pp. www.eurotopia.de.

Directory of Ecovillages in Europe. Barbro Grindheim and Declan Kennedy; www.gen-europe.org.

Ecovillages and Communities in Australia and New Zealand. Global Ecovillage Network Oceania/Asia, Inc. (GENOA). genoa.ecovillage.org.

Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People, Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson, Editors. Gaia

Resources

Trust/Green Books, (2002). Overview of ecovillage movement worldwide, with articles, interviews, and photo essays about ecological, social, and spiritual-cultural aspects of ecovillages on six continents. U.S., Chelsea Green Publishers Pb., 181 pp. \$24.95 U.S., \$26.95, Canada. (See review, p. 60.) Available in the Americas, from ENA at a discount, on-line at: ena.ecovillage.org/English/ then click on the Ecovillage Store.

Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities. Findhorn Press (1995). Proceedings of Findhorn's 1995 conference on this topic. www.findhornpress.com.

Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities. Robert and Diane Gilman, Gaia Trust/GEN (1991). Out of print; available through used-book sources. Brief description and comparison of aspiring ecovillages worldwide.

Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community, Diana Leafe Christian. New Society Publishers (2003). Practical, how-to information based on the experiences of founders of successful ecovillages and intentional communities in the 1990s. Pb., 272 pp. \$22.95. www.newsociety.com; store.ic.org. (See review, p. 60.)

Community Bookshelf. Mail order books on intentional community living, ecovillages, cohousing, consensus decision-making, effective meetings, conflict resolution, and sustainable living. Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342; 660-883-5545; bookshelf@ic.org; store.ic.org.

Publications:

Communities magazine. Fellowship for Intentional Community. Rutledge, Missouri. Articles from experienced communitarians on various aspects of community and ecovillage living—raising children, growing older conflict and

process, effective meetings and decision-making, plus updates of *Communities Directory* listings. Quarterly, 80 pages. Sample issue (\$6, US; \$7, Canada; \$8, other countries); year's subscription (\$20, US; \$24, Canada; \$26 other countries). 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342; 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org; store.ic.org.

Ecovillages, Newspaper of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas. Bi-annual, 16 pages, in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. Suggested donation \$25. ENA c/o Kailash, 64001 County Road DD, Moffat, CO 81143, or: ena.ecovillage.org/English/Intro/donation.

Permaculture Activist magazine. Serves the permaculture movement in North America. Quarterly; single issue \$5.50; subscription \$22. PO Box 1209, Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-6336; pcactivist@mindspring.com; www.permacultureactivist.net.

Videotapes and CDs:

Visions of Utopia: Experiments in Sustainable Culture, Geoph Kozeny, producer/editor. Community Catalyst Project (2002). 94-minute video documentary. VHS. Profiles seven diverse communities (Camphill Special School, Twin Oaks, Breitenbush Hot Springs, Purple Rose Collective, Earthaven Ecovillage, Ananda Village, and Nyland Cohousing); explores the "glue" that holds communities together and candid assessments from community members about what works and what doesn't. \$30, postpaid, US; \$32, Canada; \$34, other countries. Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63563; 800-995-8342; 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org; store.ic.org.

Ecovillages: The Dream of the Dreamers, Michael Tarkowski. Video documentary of a 2001 ecovillage meeting in Poland, www.gen-europe.org/e-shop/.

Ecovillages in Europe. Two-minute CD with photos of 12 ecovillage European ecovillage projects, including Findhorn, Torii Superiore, Munksoegaard, and others, www.gen-europe.org/e-shop/.

Workshops, Courses, Live-In Educational Experiences

Crystal Waters, Maleny, Queensland, Australia. study@crystalwaterscollege.org.au.

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, Rutledge, MO. dancingrabbit@ic.org.

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. culturesedge@earthaven.org.

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. ecovillage@thefarm.org.

Findhorn Foundation, Forres, Scotland. conference@findhorn.org.

Living Routes - Ecovillage Educational Consortium. Hosts live-in educational experiences at ecovillages in Europe, India, and the U.S. for college credit. www.livingroutes.org; daniel@livingroutes.org.

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. info@lostvalley.org.

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. oaec@oaec.org.

O.U.R. Ecovillage, Shawnigan Lake, BC. our@pacificcoast.net.

Sirius Community, Shutesbury MA. sirius@siriuscommunity.org.

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Economic and Social Council. It was in attendance at Habitat-II in Istanbul, the World Social Forum, and the World Summit in Johannesburg, handing out its books and action plans to delegates and policy makers. Working with a coalition of UN agencies, private companies, and governments, GEN began to provide training seminars and consulting services to municipal leaders, architects, and city planners throughout the world.

Ecovillages today are typically small communities with a tightly-knit social structure united by common ecological, social, or spiritual views. These communities may be urban or rural, high or low technologically, depending on circumstance and conviction. Oködorf Seiben Linden is a zero-energy cohousing settlement for 200 people in a rural area of eastern Germany. Los Angeles EcoVillage is a neighborhood around an intersection in inner Los Angeles. Sasardi Village is in the deep rainforest of Northern Colombia. What they share is a deep respect for nature, with humans as an integral part of natural cycles. Ecovillages address social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability in an integrated way, with human communities as part of, not apart from, balanced ecologies.

Although influenced by utopian philosophers such as Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Rudolf Steiner, Arne Naess, Bill Mollison, John Seed, Ralph Borsodi, Leopold Kohr, George Ramsey, Helen and Scott Nearing, J.R. Rodale, and others, ecovillagers break new ground, learn as they go, and bring needed change to zoning laws, tax laws, building codes, and social patterns, in support of sustainable human development.

The year 2003 finds GEN at a new crossroads. It maintains much of the same structure it began with a decade earlier: three elected regional secretaries and three elected regional delegates make up the board; the international secretary has been dropped; and an advisory council has been added. But our seed funding from Gaia Trust has come to an end and ecovillagers, being outside of, or in the early stages of, the wealth-creation

process, are unable, through membership dues, to pay for the expensive administration of a global network (just bringing six people from six different countries to a meeting can be very costly!), so at this writing the future of GEN is uncertain. It may be that GEN will become a smaller, more volunteer-based, collection of communication efforts. Or it may be that readers (such as yourself) will see the vital importance of shortening the glacial learning curve of *homo sapiens* and will help to fund the next wave of useful and attractive experiments in sustainable living.

As environmental scientist Bill Metcalf (and *Communities* magazine columnist) first observed in 1977, any real solutions to the global environmental crises of the present era must necessarily begin with changes in lifestyle. Ecovillages are now providing both an individual vessel and a cultural vehicle for rapid evolutionary transformation. Ω

Albert Bates is one of the three Regional Secretaries of GEN and a founder of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA). He is director of Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee, ecovillage@thefarm.org.

Donations to GEN, made payable to Global Ecovillage Network, may be sent to Ecovillage Training Center, Box 90-C, Summertown, TN 38483.

*For online giving:
www.ecovillage.org/English/Intro/Get_Involved.html*

The desire to create a sustainable lifestyle is one thing that unites us here at Munksoegaard: We share the goal of minimizing our ecological footprint on the Earth. From the beginning we prioritized sustainable initiatives: In order to keep our CO2 emissions low we would have a central heating system based primarily on wood pellets with an oil back-up; the project would be located close to public transportation; we would carpool; we would have extensive water saving initiatives, including urine-separating toilets and a shared laundry using rain-water catchment.

But these technological initiatives wouldn't be sufficient for a sustainable reduction in our ecological impact: We'd also need to fundamentally change our lifestyles—to fly less, drive less, heat our houses less, use less water.

In order to guide us in improving our behavior, we decided to undertake ecological audits. Since we have only lived here two years, we have only undertaken one audit so far. What did it tell us?

We learned that, as a group, we use 38 percent less water than the average Danish household, and 25 percent less electricity. Carbon dioxide emissions from our heating system and electricity consumption are both 60 percent lower than the average. Our residents who use the carpool drive only 5 percent of the Danish average.

We also calculated these figures for each of us individually. The variation in our community was enormous. The person who released the most CO2 through transportation released 90 times as much as the person who released the least. The person with the highest consumption of water used 10 times as much as the one who used the least.

These figures tell us several things.

We'd also need to fundamentally change our lifestyles—to fly less, drive less, heat our houses less, use less water.

First, we learned that so far, our use of sustainable technologies, rather than changes in our behavior, has accounted for greater reductions in water and power consumption, driving time, and CO2 emissions. This is most obvious in our use of water: The greatest impact has come from the urine separating toilets; consumption of hot water has not been greatly reduced and would require a change in habits, such as, for example, taking shorter showers.

The figures also benefit us on a personal level, helping each of us move towards a more sustainable lifestyle as we compare our consumption with others living in comparable circumstances. We also work with the figures on a collective level, trying to identify patterns in our CO2 emissions and work out whether relatively high readings are the result of technological or lifestyle factors.

When we can, we encourage using new technology or changing our lifestyles to reduce consumption or CO2 emissions. For example, electric power consumption in our common houses tends to be relatively high, but we don't know which gadgets or appliances are responsible. We're currently studying this and will make the results available to the community in due course.

Meanwhile, we're hopeful that by using increasingly efficient technologies and our own increasing awareness of resource use, we'll reduce our impact on the environment and improve our effectiveness as a demonstration site. Ω

Lone Samuelsson, who has a Masters degree in Economics, has been one of Munksoegaard's most active founding members since she first joined the project in 1996.

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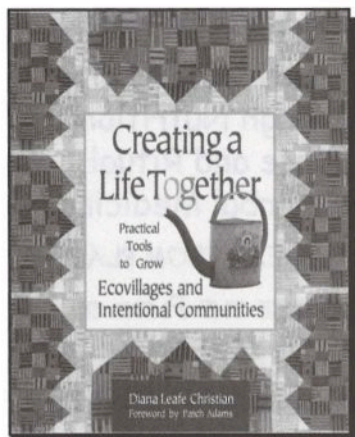
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REVIEWS



Creating a Life Together:
Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community
Foreword by Patch Adams

by Diana Leafe Christian

New Society Publishers, 2003
Pb., 272 pp. \$22.95

Reviewed by Geoph Kozeny

If *Creating a Life Together* had been available in 1972, probably it wouldn't have taken me five tries to start a community that would last for more than 13 months. But with no such "how to" resource available, my cohorts and I plunged into it the hard way—by trial and error. After flailing around through those first four attempts, then living for ten years in a community that succeeded, and subsequently visiting 350-some communities to figure out what worked for them and what didn't, I was resigned to the idea that someday I'd have to write the definitive manual on creating and sustaining intentional communities. I'm eternally grateful that Diana Christian did it first.

As I compare the topics featured in *Creating a Life Together* with my ancient annotated list of things to include in my intended book, I'm thoroughly impressed

with how she covered the bases. It's all here—from conceiving a community, through building a vision and gathering a group, to finding and buying land, and ultimately how to get along together and make it work. (See excerpt, "Accountability and Consequences," pg. 16.) Further, it's written in a readable, captivating style that makes extensive use of interviews and vignettes from the everyday life of real communities. (As a testimony to Diana's thoroughness, pithiness, and the relevance of the information, the publisher, a former communitarian himself, chose to publish a book twice the length he'd originally agreed to once he read the manuscript.)

The breadth and depth of this work should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Diana's credentials. As editor of *Communities* magazine, she's perused scores of insightful and practical articles over the last ten years, and, always looking for a good story, has sought out and interviewed dozens of veteran communitarians, especially community founders, about what went wrong and what worked well. (Not to mention learning many hard lessons firsthand, through the break-ups of two community start-ups she was involved in before joining one of the communities profiled in the book.)

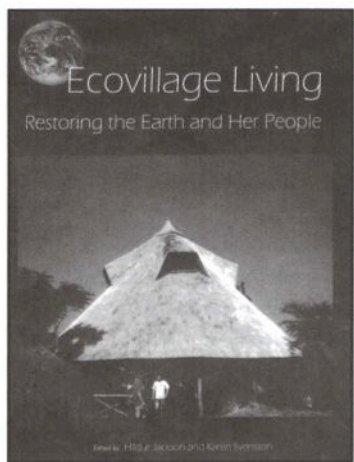
Creating a Life Together includes abundant examples from thriving ecovillages and communities as well as numerous anecdotes from groups that failed (although the latter sound strikingly familiar, they're usually presented as fictitious models)—making for a very effective community-building guidebook.

Information is presented logically, using the metaphor of growing a successful garden: *Planting the Seeds of a Healthy Community* (major bases to cover and planning pitfalls to avoid); *Sprouting New Community* (techniques and tools); and *Enriching the Soil* (communication, working with conflict, adding and sustaining members). However, this seemingly straightforward order is offered only to make the concepts easy to digest. "Don't assume these steps are linear," Diana cautions. "The process of growing a community is more organic—simultaneously ongoing *and* step by step." She makes it clear that circumstances may dictate swapping the order, doing many steps at once, skipping steps if appropriate, and even adding new ones of your own.

The "Seeds" section examines basic concerns, including a general overview of what has worked and what hasn't, the founder's role and its challenges, crafting a clear vision, raising start-up funds, and establishing effective and empowering decision-making structures. The "Sprouting" section, comprising the bulk of the book, focuses on the critical importance of good documentation, legal structures, working with lawyers, finding and buying land, zoning, refinancing, balancing privacy with group involvement, and setting up internal community economics. The "Enriching" section digs into the most critical aspects of sustaining a community once it's established: how to work with the beliefs and emotions that underlie conflict and agreements for handling conflict, constructively offering and receiving feedback, and how to help each other stay accountable to the group. Additionally, a very helpful appendix features numerous sample documents of community visions and agreements, several dozen extremely helpful community-building resources, plus links for finding hundreds more on the Web.

Creating a Life Together is a comprehensive, engaging, practical, well-organized, and thoroughly digestible labor of love. Hopefully scores of wannabe community founders and seekers will discover it *before* they launch their quest for community, and avoid the senseless and sometimes painful lessons that come from trying to reinvent the wheel. This book is a gift to humanity—helping to move forward the elusive quest for community, fueling a quantum leap towards a fulfilling, just, and sustainable future.

Geoph Kozeny is producer of the video documentary Visions of Utopia: Experiments in Sustainable Culture. geoph@ic.org



Ecovillage Living:
Restoring the Earth and Her People
 Hildur Jackson & Karen Svensson, Eds.

Gaia Trust/Green Books, 2002

(U.S.) Chelsea Green Publishers
 Pb., 181 pp. \$24.95 U.S., \$26.95, Canada
 Available from, ena@ecovillage.org.

Reviewed by Diana Leaf Christian

This large-format book about ecovillages, edited by Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) cofounder Hildur Jackson and GEN staff member Karen Svensson, offers an overview of the ecovillage movement, including sustainable intentional communities, Earth-restoration projects, sustainable neighborhoods, and sustainability educational centers. With dozens of short, one- and two-page articles, interviews, and photo essays, it's an engaging smorgasbord that invites us to dip in and sample whatever we like.

And it's absolutely gorgeous, packed with full color images that'll knock your socks off. Every photo seems to somehow radiate a golden-rosy glow. Its pages are thick and glossy and even *smell* good. My first reaction was, "Wow, *this* book will put ecovillages on the map."

I enjoyed the vivid ecovillage site plans, and graphs and charts about permaculture and biological systems in the ecological section. The two-page photo essay "Ecological Buildings" is especially ooh- and ahh-worthy, with rounded Anthroposophical institutes curved cob structures with living roofs, and multi-level wooden chalets with thatched roofs. But these are probably the most exotic structures in the whole ecovillage world, and not at all typical (though they sure make great press). Articles in the social



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

**Lansing
 Cohousing**

section touch on internal community economies and alternative currencies, Camphill communities, health services, and sustainability education; my favorite was Sergio Lub's web-based Friendly Favors mutual aid system. Highlights in the cultural/spiritual section include delicious photo essays of Huehucoyotl, Damanhur, and Auroville; Will Keepin's principles of spiritual activism; and Ross and Hildur Jackson's analysis of why ecovillages are crucial for global survival. In the "creating an ecovillage" section I especially liked Hildur's practical suggestions about how to get a group together and start the process, and Max Lindegger's right-on advice about working with local government zoning and building officials.

This is an unabashedly GEN publication, and in fact a GEN-Europe publication, since by far the most ecovillage projects represented are in Scandinavia and Germany, along with several articles each about Findhorn and the Sri Lankan Sarvodaya movement. The editors took pains to include ecovillage projects in Africa and the Indian Subcontinent (and Crystal Waters in Australia), yet South and North America are represented minimally. Not a word about Dancing Rabbit, Earthen, Lost Valley

Educational Center, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, O.U.R. Ecovillage, or Sirius, for example. (Lesson: if we want our ecovillages represented in this global organization, we need to get involved with it!)

And while I enjoyed this anthology's dazzling beauty and Euro-centric focus, I do have quibbles. Articles on various biological systems initially grabbed me with delight, until I realized that in spite of the intriguing schematics, there wasn't much about how the processes worked or how to replicate them. The ZEGG women's opinions about how men and women should relate, and Tamera members' opinions about how children should be raised, left me restless. I want to know what aspiring ecovillages have actually *accomplished* in terms of social sustainability, not their founders' theories about it. Overall, the articles and interviews differed widely in their approach, depth, and breadth—with some offering inspiring glimpses and others making me wonder why they were included. I yearned for a tighter, more organized, and more coherent editing focus.

Ecovillage Living made me realize the kind of ecovillage book I'd *also* like to see: a rigorous, grounded, lively compilation of you-are-there profiles of various established

ecovillage projects worldwide. It would include *Our Ecological Footprint*-style comparative data on how sustainable each project appears to be—ecologically, socio-culturally, economically, and spiritually. Some ecovillage projects would rate high in ecological sustainability, for example, but lower in, say, communication and process, while others would show the reverse, and all would be working towards balance. (Is such a work out there yet?)

And yet, *Ecovillage Living* may be the just the kind of book to share with our friends, both those who love ecovillages already as well as those who haven't a clue. This new GEN publication is beautiful, engaging, delicious for the right brain, and easy to fall into. I think it really *will* help put ecovillages on the map. And that's a blessing for us all.

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine and author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community.

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community calendar



This is a calendar of:

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

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

Please send us suggestions about what we might include in future calendars. Also note that the Fellowship publishes a quarterly newsletter (free to FIC members) that includes announcements of and reports about similar events. Information about joining the FIC can be found on p. 78.

Ongoing: Community Apprenticeship in Spiritual Living.

Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. Two-month minimum of hands-on learning: Gardening, green building, spiritual service, and much more. 413-259-1251; sirius@siriuscommunity.org; www.siriuscommunity.org.

May 2-4 • Bamboo Construction

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Basic techniques of selecting, harvesting, curing, joining and preserving bamboo. Albert Bates, Matthew English. Techniques drawn from Oscar Hidalgo, Simon Velez, Nicano Nor, and others. \$325, incl. meals, lodging. ETC, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.

May 2-4 • Katúah Bioregional Congress

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Explore problems and celebrate solutions in agriculture, the local economy, environmental protection, health, culture and energy. \$125-\$150 sliding scale, incl. meals, camping. 828-669-7552; katauhbioregion@hotmail.com.

May 11-18 • Community Experience Week

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Experience intentional community living, for anyone seeking to learn more about living in community, and as a first step for residency at Lost Valley. \$300-\$450, sliding scale, incl. meals, dorm lodging. Dianne Brause, 541-937-3351; diannebr@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

May 16-18 • Introduction to Natural Building: Materials, Methods, Systems

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Cob, strawbale, slip-straw, earthen plasters and timber-framing, and their use in Earthaven's innovative buildings. Mollie Curry, Paul Caron. \$225, incl. meals, camping. Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

May 17 • Introduction to Constructed Wetlands

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Overview of bioremediation and pest management using biological wastewater systems, incl. water chemistry, siting, sizing, plants, and low-maintenance design techniques. Albert Bates. \$50, incl. lunch. ETC, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.

May 22-25 • Living in Actualization in an Interuniversal-Soul Cultural Community

Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. Gabriel of Sedona, Niánn Emerson Chase, and others. \$700 (\$500 preregistration). PO Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; www.aquarianconcepts.org.

May 22-Jun 30 • Ecovillage Apprenticeships

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Organic food production, natural building, wastewater, ecological community design. All courses during apprenticeship provided free. \$1200 obo. Selective application process. ETC, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.

May 23-25 • The Farm's Communities Conference

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Celebration and exploration of community living. Workshops, panels, music, dancing. Topics include relationships in community, group decision-making, living sustainably, and more. SI/Sc. \$125-\$80, incl. meals, camping. The Farm, address; phone; email; www.thefarmcommunity.org/conference.

May 25-Jun 1 • Permaculture Fundamentals

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. First half of complete design certification course: permaculture principals and philosophy. Swaling, pruning, compost teas, forest farming and landscape acid. Patricia Allison, Albert Bates, Goodheart Brown, Adam and Sue Turtle, David Smith, Kay Barnes. \$600, incl. food, lodging, materials. ETC, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.

May 28-31 • Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) Spring Meeting

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Planning, policies, reports, consensus decision-making by FIC board members, staff, and volunteers, publishers of Communities magazine, Communities Directory, Visions of Utopia video, and Intentional Communities Web Site. Visitors welcome. FIC, 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org; www.ic.org.

May 30-Jun 1 • Carpentry for Women

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, Occidental, CA. Safe, effective use of hand and power tools, structural integrity, recycled wood, repairs, basic techniques—cutting, nailing, squaring, and leveling; tour of various OAEC buildings. \$375, incl. meals, lodging. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.

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For more information and complete curriculum, write:

The Farm Midwifery Workshops
P.O. Box 217 • Summertown, TN 38483
Phone: (931) 964-2472
e-mail: midwifeWS@bellsouth.net
www.MidwiferyWorkshops.org

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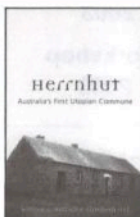
William J. Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf

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.

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May 31 • Listen to Your Body: Self-Healing with Biofeedback, Imagery and Breath

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Explore mind-body connection, relaxation and breathing techniques, accessing body wisdom through imagery. Cathy Holt. \$75, incl. lunch. *Culture's Edge Workshops*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jun 2-Jul 11 • Permaculture in Community Apprenticeship

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Experience in Sustainable Living-Summer Program. Permaculture basics, hands-on experience, plus bee-keeping, greywater and pond systems, herbal medicine, forest gardening, organic gardening. \$900, meals, camping. Tammy, 541-937-3351; tammy@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Jun 2-Aug 1 • Organic Gardening in Community Apprenticeship

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Hand labor, biointensive gardening, permaculture. \$300/mo. incl. organic vegetarian meals, lodging. 541-937-3351; garden@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Jun 2-Sep 26 • Plan B - Practical Leadership and Natural Building

O.U.R. Ecovillage, Shawnigan Lake, BC. Cob construction including foundation and woodwork; introduction to other natural building practices. Sitting and design, choosing sustainable materials, site and crew management, group process, and more. Ianto Evans, Michael G. Smith, Elke Cole, and others. \$4,000 (US), \$6,000 (Canadian), incl. meals, lodging (except for week off in July). Lesser fees for

shorter courses (6/2-8/29; 6/16-8/29, 6/16-9/26).
Email Elke Cole, elke@cobworks.com.

Jun 5-8 • Building with Cob: An Introduction

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Constructing buildings with sand, clay and straw. Class discussion, hands-on experience, tour of natural buildings at Earthaven, and more. Mollie Curry. \$295, incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jun 6-9 • Naka-Ima

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Naka-Ima is about realizing our vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically ourselves. Through the practice of honesty, in the context of supportive and loving community, we will explore together how to be alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others. \$425, incl. lodging, meals. Childcare available. 541-937-3351; naka-ima@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org. Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (See Apr 11-14.)

Jun 14 • Introduction to Permaculture

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. (See Apr 12.)

Jun 14-15 • The Fine Art of Earth Plasters

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Experience the beauty and sensuality of this earthy art, by preparing, tinting and applying interior and exterior earth plasters. Mollie Curry, Chuck Marsh. \$150, incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jun 18-22 • Ecovillage Design

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Master planning and ecological design for villages, historical communities, conflict resolution, communication skills, consensus, facilitation, forms of government, leadership, public speaking, recruiting, inclusion, tax status, finance, building and architecture, economics, labor systems, children and elderly, health care, sex, putting a plan together, best practices. Live and work in an ecovillage for a week and get a sense of the issues. Greg Ramsey, Albert Bates, Gwynelle Dismukes, and guests. \$600, incl. meals, lodging. ETC, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; www.thefarm.org/etc/courses.

Jun 19 - Aug 3 • Permaculture and Ecovillage Residency

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Trainings and skill development in ecovillage life, including design implementation, organic gardening, natural building, regenerative forestry, and self-governance. Permaculture Fundamentals and Design Practicum are included. \$2250, incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.

Jun 19-22 • 2003 North American Cohousing Conference

The Cohousing Network, University of Colorado, Boulder. Learn from and network with the country's most experienced cohousing residents and professionals. Workshops by cohousing experts and professionals for people interested in cohousing or wanting to create a cohousing neighborhood, and residents of completed communities. "Professional Day," for people currently working in the industry or wanting to help design, develop, build or market

a cohousing neighborhood (6/19); tours of cohousing communities in northern and southern Colorado (6/19-20); day-long workshops by national cohousing leaders (6/20); keynote speaker (6/20); community dinner (6/21).

\$310 before May 1; \$ 350 afterwards. Additional for lodging,, meals, at University of Colorado. Information and reservations: 303-772-5851; russellconsult@aol.com; or register on-line at www.cohousing.org.

Jun 20-22 • Papercrete Building Workshop

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Make strong, lightweight, insulative building blocks of pulped waste paper, sand or sandy dirt, and cement, cast into forms and hardened through sun exposure. Learn how to make papercrete, various application-specific material combinations (for blocks, mortar, plaster), the Papercrete-making procedure, and how to build a human-scale mixer for yourself. \$250 incl. meals, lodging. 541-937-335; info@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.

Jun 20-28 • Fundamentals of Permaculture

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Part I of Design Certificate course. Multi modal format. Ethics and principles, observation, pattern, design; climate, forest, soils; cultivated ecology (gardens, plants, animals); building design, energy, water, waste; developing settlements (land use, appropriate technology, economics, and finance, urban applications). Patricia Allison, Peter Bane, Andrew Goodheart Brown, and guests. \$675, incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

Jun 21-29 • Creative Residency

The Hermitage, Pitman, PA. Free residency for gay male artists and craftsmen. We provide room, board, workshop space, some tools, and plenty of creative time in exchange for two-three hours daily work requirement. *Johannes Zinzendorf, The Hermitage, Pitman, PA 17964; BroJoh@Yahoo.com; www.ic.org/thehermitage.*

Jun 29-Jul 4 • Starting and Sustaining Intentional Communities

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, Occidental, CA. Finding and financing land, legal structures, non-profits, decision making, finding like-minded people, financial organization, legal and insurance issues, zoning, long-term planning. Tour of Sowing Circle community and several other local intentional communities. \$550, incl. meals, lodging. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.

Jul 4-6 • Introduction to Natural Plasters, Paints and Pigments

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center, Occidental, CA. Hands-on intensive to make and apply a variety of nontoxic interior wall finishes with clay, sand, and straw, from fine clay plasters to milk paints. Techniques and recipes suitable for earthen and conventional (sheetrock) wall systems, for new or existing interiors. Janine Björnson, Kate Lundquist. O.A.E.C., 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.



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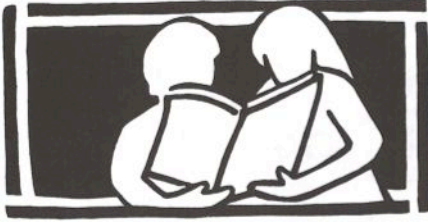
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DIRECTORIES UPDATES



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

59 Degrees North (Forming)

Homer, AK
907-235-7475
Chris and Tom Laing <laing@homernet.net>
<http://www.homernet.net/59north/>
12/2002

Anarres Ecovillage (Forming)

Northampton
UK
<http://www.anarres.info>
11/2002

Bartimaeus Community (Forming)

23069 Ryen Dr NW
Poulsbo, WA 98370
360-692-8064
Nancy Conrad <nancyconrad@sprintmail.com>
Barbara Buckham <bbuckham@earthlink.net>
<http://bartcommunity.org/>
12/2002

Big Island Cohousing and Ecovillage

Attn: Noah Glassman
Hawaii
noahglassman@yahoo.com
<http://www.geocities.com/noahglassman/>
12/2002

Big Rock Farm

Box 82
River Hills, MB R0E 1T0
Five years in existence. 11/2002

BO-90

Copenhagen
Denmark
<http://home.worldonline.dk/bo90/home/bo90>.
htm
12/2002

Boston Cohousing Network

Attn: Diane Simpson
dsimpson@digitas.com
<http://www.bostoncohousing.org/>
12/2002

Canon Frome Court

Ledbury
Herefordshire HR8 2TD, England
United Kingdom
webmaster@canonfromecourt.org.uk
<http://www.canonfromecourt.org.uk/>
"Canon Frome Court is an intentional farm community founded in 1979. We have about 30 adults and 15 children on 40 acres." 11/2002

Carbondale Cohousing (Forming)

Carbondale, CO
Mark R W Webber <anmark@sopris.net>
12/2002

Carrowmore Community

Petersburgh, NY
<http://www2.taconic.net/homewright>
11/2002

Center of Unity Schweibenalp

<http://www.schweibenalp.ch/>
11/2002

Chicago Cohousing Network

Attn: Hal Mead
2205 Maple C-1
Evanston, IL 60201
847-869-8493
h-mead@nwu.edu
<http://www.chicagocohousing.net/>
12/2002

Cohousing Australia

Australia
<http://www.cohousing.org.au/>
12/2002

Cohousing Network Japan

Japan
<http://www.cohousing-japan.org/>
12/2002

Cohousing Network of South Australia

Australia
+61 8379 8240
cohousinga@hotmail.com
<http://www.pickknowl.com.au/homepages/dundas/>
12/2002

Corktown Cohousing (Forming)

Detroit, MI
12/2002

Corvallis Cohousing (Forming)

Corvallis, OR
541-754-3028
Bruce Hecht <brucehe@peak.org>
12/2002

Dorothy Day Cohousing

Attn: Karen House
1840 Hogan Street
Saint Louis, MO 63106
314-621-4052
314-436-0277
teka10@juno.com
5/2002

Dutch Cohousing Association (LVCW)

<http://www.lvcw.nl/>
11/2002

Eastern Village Cohousing (Forming)

2 Bethesda Metro Ctr. Ste. 707
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-654-6670
202-546-4654
info@ecohousing.net
Ann Zabaldo <zabaldo@earthlink.net>
<http://www.ecohousing.net/deveasternvillage.htm>
Units 60, Acres 0.75.
12/2002

EcoFarm Community

Attn: Debbie Butts
4321 Needle Palm Rd
Plant City, FL 33565
813-754-7374
"Debbie Butts" <debbutts@gte.net>
11/2002

Ecotopia Romania

Stanciova, Timis
Romania
<http://www.geocities.com/comunitate>
11/2002

Ekobyn Balarn

Attn: Seija Viitamaki-Carlsson
4821 V. Troste
820 70 Bergsjo
Sweden
+46 652-7126
seija@bdab.se
<http://www.bdab.se/ekobyn/>
12/2002

Forest Glen (Forming)

Attn: William Reynolds
3529 Dell Trail
Chattanooga, TN 37411
423-624-6821
cisland@aol.com
12/2002

Forming Community (NY)

Attn: Ilyse Samon
540-362-282
camrabe@yahoo.com
"Forming a cohousing community in the Catskills of NY. IT will be rural, with a CSA, and eco-friendly homes. Looking for other interested parties."
10/2002

GaiaYoga Gardens
Pahoa, HI
<http://www.gaiayoga.org/>
11/2002

Granny's Health Garden
Attn: Maura K H
General Delivery
Kurtistown, HI 96760
808-960-6906
808-221-1387
grannyshealthgarden@hotmail.com

"We are located on the rainside of the Big Island of Hawaii. While we are currently working towards getting the homestead up and running sustainable, we are also concentrating on starting our tropical wellness herb garden and fruit orchard. Campsites are available for a work exchange of five hours per week while we build more living structures (we are currently harvesting and drying bamboo for the next cabin). We are in the very beginning stages of everything and could use lots of help with gardening, permaculture based landscaping, alternative energy and building (solar and gravity based systems), and much more. The property is drug and alcohol free. Our diet preference is vegetarian though we are open to all. We are hoping to find some long-termers but are flexible and do prefer a one month trial period for the benefit of all. We would like to know what interested folk hope to experience during their time in Hawaii and any relevant experience etc." 11/2002

Green River Commons (Forming)
Greenfield, MA
413-773-5633
[Dorothea Sotiros <dsotiros7@yahoo.com>](mailto:dsotiros7@yahoo.com)
<http://www.greencoho.org/>
Units 20, Acres 44. 12/2002

Het Huis van Antonia
<http://www.hethuisvanantonia.nl>
11/2002

Hummingbird Ranch
Mora, NM
<http://www.globalfamily.net/website/60-hummingbird.html>
11/2002

Keveral Farm Community
St Martins by Looe
Looe
Cornwall PL13 1PA, England
United Kingdom
rainbow@argonet.co.uk (Tristan Dorling)
<http://www.keveral.org>
11/2002

Loco (Forming)
UK
+44 20 7787 669
coordinator@cohousing.co.uk
<http://www.cohousing.co.uk/loco.htm>
12/2002

Mountain Gardens Community
near Denver
Wheat Ridge, CO
<http://www.geocities.com/vikkibooks/MGCLC-comm>
11/2002

Munksøgård
Attn: Thomas Lejre
Munksogard 17
Hillelev, 4000 Roskilde
Denmark
lejre@ruc.dk
lars.levinjensen@munksoegaard.dk
<http://www.ecovillages.org/scotland/scns/membersprojects/Munkes2.html>
12/2002

Pacific Gardens Cohousing Community
Attn: Susana Michaelis
Green Comm. Environmental Centre
504-150 Promenade Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9R 6M6
Canada
250-754-2554
info@ecoconnections.ca

<http://www.ecoconnections.ca/cohousing>
"Pacific Gardens Cohousing Community has purchased 4.33 acres on the Chase River in Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island. The property is beautiful, with a spectacular view of Mount Benson (and sunsets) and the river running across the back of the property. It is a delightful piece of "country in the city", covered with trees, an old orchard, seasonal pond and all manner of bushes and wildflowers blooming in the spring. We are currently seeking new members to participate in the planning and design of this exciting project!

We envision a 25 unit environmentally friendly building that will maximize green space and provide the best opportunity for social interaction. There will be a large common-house within the building which will provide amenities such as a commercial sized kitchen, dining room, living room, teen room, library, office, kids room, craft room, woodworking room and possibly a members only coop store. Each unit will be fully self-contained and individually owned (similar to strata-titled condos). The approx. price range is \$90,000.Can. to \$180,000. based on square footage etc.

The property is very private and unique. Down by the river in the forest of fir trees, you can imagine yourself far away from civilization with no buildings in sight and just the sound of rushing water. We are within a block of the bus and easy cycling or walking to town or shopping mall. There is an elementary school a couple of blocks away, a high school and Malaspina University-College within easy reach by walking, cycling or bus.

We are committed to a chemical free environment both inside and outside and will use the best available green technology. Pacific Gardens Cohousing will be multi-generational and inclusive of all people who genuinely care about living in harmony with the earth and each other. " 11/2002

Portland Eastside Cohousing (Forming)
Attn: Peter
Portland, OR
503-239-5366
12/2002

Prairie State Cohousing
999 S. Plum Grove Ln
Palatine, IL 60067
847-705-6400
510-549-9980
[Mike Venetis <mike@bigelowhomes.com>](mailto:Mike.Venetis@mike@bigelowhomes.com)
[Bill Polits <bill@cohousingco.com>](mailto:Bill.Polits@cohousingco.com)
12/2002

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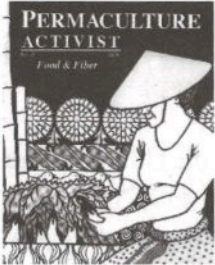
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www.EducationRevolution.org

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 SUMMER 2003 ISSUE (OUT IN JULY) IS APRIL 20.

The special Reach rate is only \$.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$.50 per word thereafter for all ads) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? We offer discounts for multiple insertions as well: \$.23 per word for two times and \$.20 per word for four times. If you are an FIC member, take off an additional five percent.

Please make check or money order payable to Communities, and send it, plus your ad copy, word count, number of insertions and category to: Patricia Greene, 13 West Branch Rd., Charlemont, MA 01339; phone and fax, 413-337-4037, email: patricia@ic.org (If you email an ad, please include your mailing address, phone number and be sure to send off the check at the same time.)

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: dirupdates@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 three small pods/sub-communities. One (Tekiah) shares income. The others (Dayspring Circle and Earth Pod) do not. Most community members work primarily from home in pod or individual businesses. We are a

stable, experienced group with a sense of humor. We like to sing and we eat together regularly. Our land includes a river, forests, pastures, barns, gardens, basic infrastructure, and fairly civilized temporary housing. We are committed to dealing thoughtfully with conflict and to considering carefully the impacts of our actions on the planet. We are looking for new members. We seek builders, organic gardeners, musicians, scientists, tinkerers, artists, business people, youth, wisdom, enthusiasm and community experience. We welcome individuals and families of diverse peaceful lifestyles. Please see our web site for more information: www.abundantdawn.org POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; info@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. 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 record label, CosmoArt, CosmoTheater, and audio and video productions. Light construction, stone masonry, landscaping, cleaning and maintenance. Serious spiritual commitment required. POB 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; info@aquarianconcepts.org; <http://www.aquarianconcepts.org/>; 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.

CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres—woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), doll-making shop, food processing kitchen and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a non-denominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories, plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us—families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "co-workers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand whenever 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

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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 company 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, 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+ onsite members include permaculture professionals, artists, woodworkers, sustainable loggers, builders, farmers, parents, engineers, and entrepreneurs in Forestry Coop, 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 (including video): info@earthaven.org; 1125 Camp Elliott Road, 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



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members value ecological awareness, equality, cooperation, and nonviolence. Personal freedom is important to us. We enjoy flexible work schedules, incorporating choices from our successful businesses and domestic labors. Write or call and please contact us before visiting. East Wind Community, Box CM-R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; visit@eastwind.org

ECOVILLAGE COHOUSING, Ithaca, New York. A great place to live! We are creating an 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 biodynamically. 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.FellowshipCommunity.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

MEADOWDANCE, Plainfield, Vermont. We are an egalitarian, child-centered community that welcomes human diversity, ecological sensibility, mutual learning and joy. Currently a cooperative house of twelve members, we're working on founding an ecovillage on our 200 acres of woods and meadows nearby. Rather than outside jobs, we work at community businesses and other community work. In Fall 2003, we plan to open our small private school to a few local students in addition to our own children. Organic food, consensus governance, mutual regard and creativity. www.meadowdance.org; info@meadowdance.org; POB 247,

Plainfield, VT 05667; 802-454-1183.

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;

SOUTHWEST SUFI COMMUNITY, Southwest New Mexico. We are located on 1,900 acres with a year-round flowing creek in the mountains. The community roots come from the vision of Samuel Lewis and his successor, Moineddin Jablonski, Sufi teachers in the lineage of Hazrat Inayat Khan. The community was founded as a spiritual retreat center with a supporting residential village, on land stewardship principles, including a nature preserve. We invite participation from those embracing inclusive spiritual paths, with respect for all religions and spiritual traditions as having divine origin. The Voice of the Turtle Retreat Center provides opportunities for teachers and students from the world's spiritual traditions to share their wisdom. Presently all residents are independently self-supporting. However, community-based employment is a long-range goal. To visit or for more information contact: rashad@gilanet.com; 505-538-1798; POB 373, Silver City, NM 99062.

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 is proud to announce that we have nearly reached our population capacity of 92 adults (and 16 children). We still encourage people to participate in our 3-week visitor program to get a taste of life in a rural community. We are an income sharing community which chooses to value all our internal work equally, from milking cows to making tofu. We are also taking our message on the road! We are giving presentations at colleges and universities around the country. If you know of a school that might be interested in having us give a presentation, please contact kate@twinoaks.org. Write to twinoaks@ic.org for more information about



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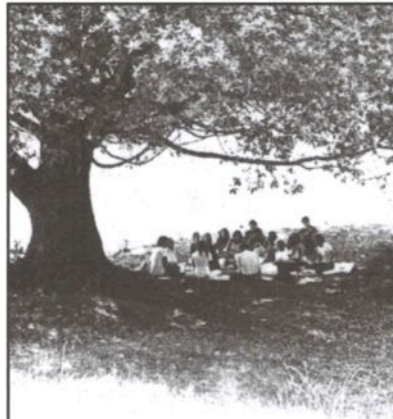
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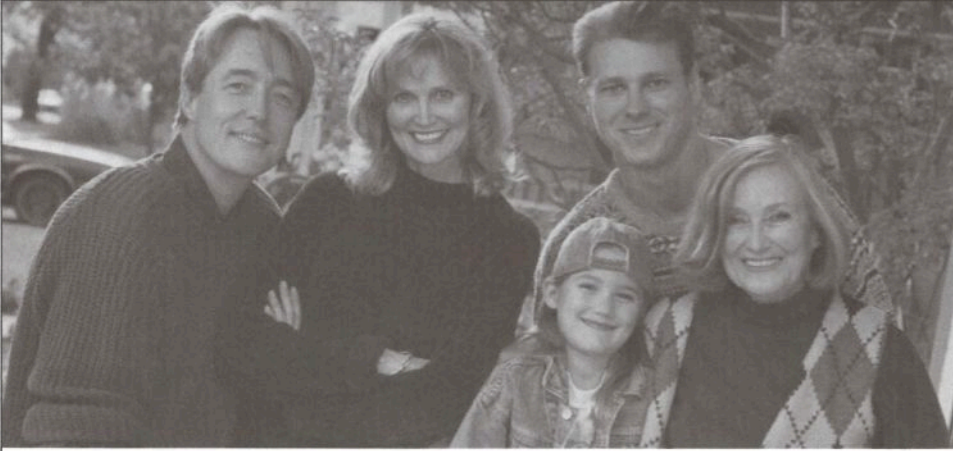
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NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire. Intentional Cohousing Community, nature sanctuary, permaculture, activism. Loving more relationships. Real investments. NGC, POB 31, Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; nhnamaste@yahoo.com

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WILDROOTS, Southern Appalachians. Cooperative land project seeks members/investors (\$2,500+) as well as owner-financed acreage for anarchist/anti-authoritarian ecovillage. Interests include permaculture, natural building and primitive lifeways as well as educational programs and publishing projects. Contact: wildrootsnc@ziplip.com

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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](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

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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 80)

- Participatory democratic decision making (where members feel heard and have influence on decisions that affect them);

- Communication and conflict resolution norms (including skills trainings and availability of ongoing support);

- Health care services, with an emphasis on prevention (cradle to grave);

- Economics (sustainable yields, ecological costs factored in, most products and services consumed locally or regionally);

- Holistic culture (history, celebrations, ceremonies, rites of passage, arts, entertainment, spirituality, mythology);

- Education and outreach (passing the baton to the next generation, and spreading awareness and know-how to the wider world).

With an innovative and impressive list like that to strive for, it's no mystery that the ultimate goal has not yet been manifested. Yet the visions are universally inspiring, and the multitude of prototype eco-communities are serving as the wider culture's research and development centers: conceiving and testing the social, environmental, and technological systems upon which a sustainable future must be built. Ω

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 30 years, and has been on the road for 15 years visiting, documenting, and helping out at communities. He recently released Visions of Utopia, a full-length video documentary about intentional communities.

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Striving for Sustainability

The ecovillage model gives us something to strive for: a human-scale community based on social, environmental, and technological systems that can be sustained into the indefinite future. So far, however, I've not found even one of these noble experiments that is fully living the ideal. It's clear that a lot of progress has been made, however new challenges seem to arise as fast as solutions to existing challenges are found. As Karl Marx theorized, often yesterday's solution becomes today's problem.

For example, chemical-based agriculture was originally seen as a boon to civilization, and it took decades to recognize, much less understand, the long-term ecological dangers inherent in the ongoing use of many commercial fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Even the practice of regular plowing can take a high toll in terms of soil erosion and mineral depletion. The return to organic farming practices has burgeoned over recent decades and, predictably, ecovillages have enthusiastically adopted that philosophy. Yet an innovative technique embraced today may end up being modified or abandoned tomorrow as new information and understandings emerge. The reality: we do our best with what we know, and everything is subject to change as we learn more.

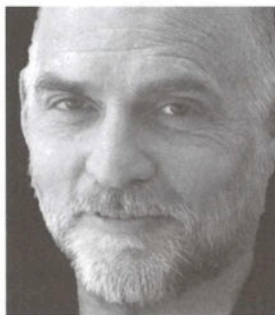
I personally am inspired by the visions and priorities of the various ecovillagers that I've met, and I would be skeptical if ever I met one who claimed that they had fully manifested their goal. So far this has not happened, and I take it as an indication that they are paying attention and using good sense in assessing the challenges.

There are common themes that emerge across the ecovillage movement, though the list is not cast in stone—what one group emphasizes, another group may overlook. A very common shared philosophy is known as “permaculture,” which means either “permanent agriculture” or “permanent culture,” depending on which authority you ask. The latter definition includes the first, and is far more like-

ly to succeed in the quest for sustainability. After all, how can a lifestyle be sustainable unless its people can get along, communicate, share resources, and make cooperative decisions that take into account everyone's needs and concerns?

It's functionally impossible to create a thorough and complete list of all the design features being pursued by groups identifying with the ecovillage movement—while it's a vast and immeasurable set to start with, it's also growing by leaps and bounds, and therefore in constant flux. However, a list of themes that regularly show up in ecovillage experiments and literature would typically include:

- Human-scale (large enough to allow specialization in a full complement of trades, small enough to avoid the alienation of large impersonal cities);
- Integrated multi-function design (various systems work together, the by-product of one becomes a resource for another);
- Membership diversity (spanning ages, cultures, vocations, interests) emphasizing mutual acceptance and support;
- Preservation of the natural environment (and restoration where it's been damaged);
- Energy generated using sustainable sources (solar, hydro, wind, biomass) and non-wasteful use patterns;
- Watershed stewardship and water conservation practices;
- Non-polluting resource-recycling waste management;
- Diversified, primarily organic food production;
- Nontoxic buildings (including homes, common spaces, work and storage areas) arranged in clusters with pedestrian orientation;
- Efficient non-polluting transportation with priority on light-use vehicles (pedestrians, bicycles, electric carts, horse-drawn, etc) ;
- Resource sharing systems to minimize per capita consumption;



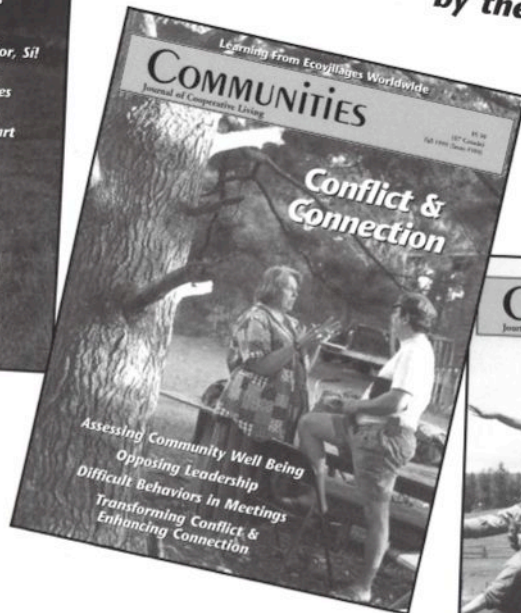
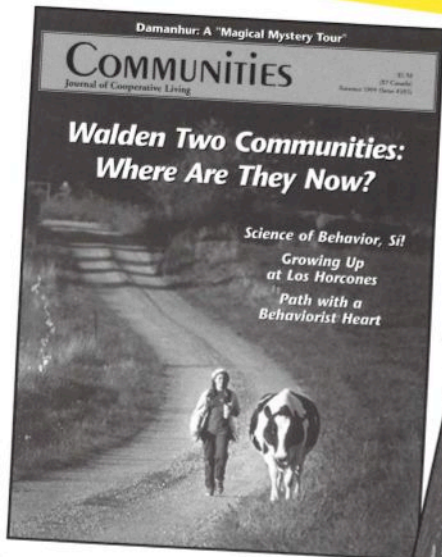
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I personally am inspired by the visions and priorities of the various ecovillagers that I've met

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