

# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Winter 2003 (Issue #121)

## *Thriving in Community*

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## Communities Directory

Third Edition

published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, Rutledge, Missouri, USA  
Shipped with annual updates included.  
2000; 456 pages; paperbound; 8-1/2x11 inches; ISBN: 0-9602714-8-1

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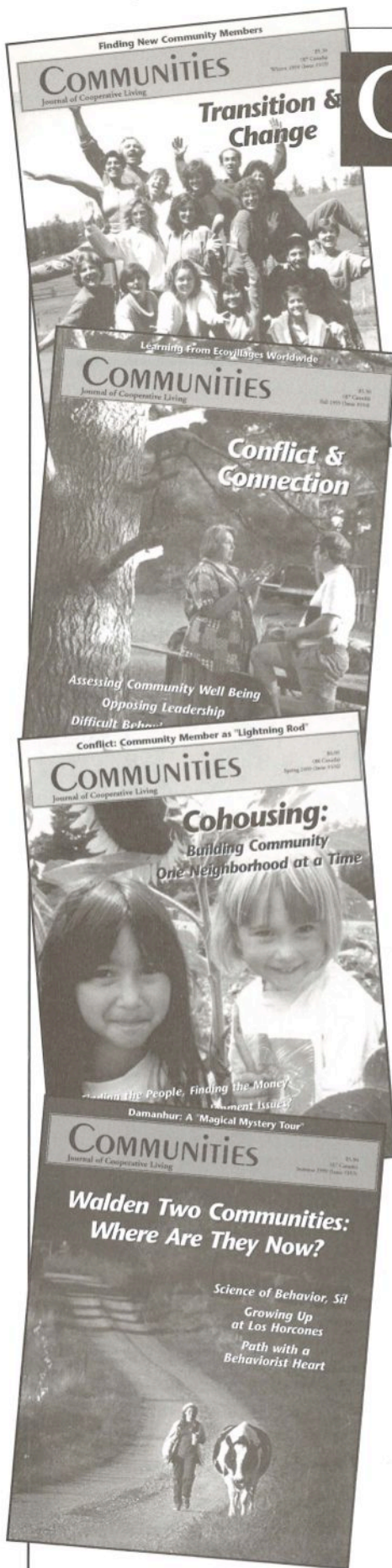
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The book *Communities Directory: A Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living* is the essential reference tool for those interested in finding or creating community. Compiled once every 4 to 5 years by the nonprofit organization the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), this is the eagerly awaited successor to earlier editions, which sold over 36,000 copies.

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# COMMUNITIES

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(From left) Addie Day and Amie Hoff at Sahale, Good-enough Community's rural retreat center in Washington state.

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Photo, Dan Brown.

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# COMMUNITIES

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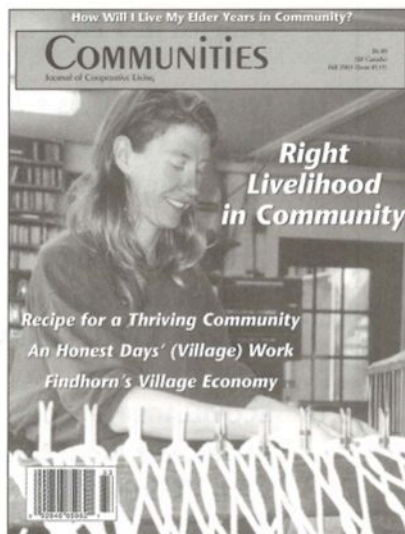
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# LETTERS



Send letters to *Communities* magazine, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, or [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org). Your letter may be edited or shortened. Thank you!



## Right Livelihood in Communities

Dear *Communities*:

Regarding your issue of "Right Livelihood" in *communities* (#119, Fall '03) I want to tell you about what they do at Kibbutz Tzora in Israel. When Kibbutz Tzora was established in the 1950s, its founders earned their living primarily by farming the land. But as agriculture became increasingly difficult financially, they looked to new sources of income, establishing a furniture factory, building a wedding hall, and selling dresses made in the kibbutz. Then, in 1996, they created Tzora Active Systems, a company that develops, manufactures, and markets products for the aged and the handicapped. The company, which employs 55 kibbutz members, is best known for their EasyTravel "electric scooter" (an electric wheelchair). Kibbutz Tzora has sold these in 25 countries, the majority of sales being in the U.S. and Europe. They also make

motors that can be easily added to manual wheelchairs, as well as devices which allow a person with impaired mobility to exercise his upper or lower limbs in a sitting position. The majority of the company's development engineers are second-generation kibbutzniks. The availability of such exciting job opportunities right in the community has helped keep the second generation at home on the kibbutz. Otherwise, like the majority of kibbutz-born young people, they would probably have long-ago sought better jobs in Tel Aviv or Los Angeles.

Nechemia Meyers  
Rehovot, Israel

## Intentional Communities Worldwide

Dear *Communities*:

Your readers may be interested to hear that the International Communes Desk is a contact office between the different forms of communal living around the world. (The word "commune" in our name is there for brevity, not for exclusivity. It covers communes, kibbutzim, cohousing, ecovillages, and other intentional communities.) We have an English/Hebrew website: [www.communa.org.il](http://www.communa.org.il), which you are cordially invited to visit. We also produce C.A.L.L. (*Communes At Large Letter*), a biannual journal about communities, for communities and by communities. The editor is a member of a young Israeli urban commune, accompanied by an editorial board of three kibbutz members. Since we firmly believe that all of us can benefit by learning about one another, you are invited to contact us at [solrene@tzora.co.il](mailto:solrene@tzora.co.il) or by snail mail. Thank you!

Sol Etzioni  
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## Urban Ecovillages!

Dear *Communities*:

I live in Los Angeles, and I find myself feeling so alienated. Community is tough to find and maintain here. With the way things are going, I sense ecovillages will be the wave of the future. Modern life is expensive and tough on nuclear families—and community is a basic necessity not only in these modern times, but in all times. I would certainly be interested in looking into being a part of a ecovillage that is working. Are there any in this area?

Nancy Dolin  
Los Angeles, California



Yes, Los Angeles EcoVillage is 30 or so "intentional neighbors" living in two apartment buildings and adjacent rental homes near the corner of White Huse and Bimini Place in central Los Angeles. Contact founder Lois Arkin at lois@ic.org.

And consider getting involved with Urban Ecovillage Network (below). Good luck!

Dear Communities:

I'm writing to let your readers know about the fledgling Urban Ecovillage Network (UEN), which was formed in association with the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). UEN aspires to be a tool and practical resource for founders, members, and supporters of urban ecovillages. We've established a webpage ([urban.ecovillage.org](http://urban.ecovillage.org)), and want to make contact with all interested urban ecovillages. We want to record various approaches to the urban Ecovillage challenge so future activists don't have to re-invent the wheel. We hope to be a clearing house for all sorts of information related to the specific challenges of creating urban ecovillages: i.e., outreach, zoning, financing, retrofitting, education and training, eco-tourism, small green business development, urban permaculture approaches, etc. We also hope to develop a Directory of Member Resources. We've set up an "Urban All" listserv to facilitate interchange and discussion. (Sign up at [urban.ecovillage.org](http://urban.ecovillage.org).) Anyone interested in the issue of sustainable neighborhoods is invited to participate, and any and all suggestions, thoughts, comments, concerns are welcome on how to make UEN practical and effective.

Orion Kriegman  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
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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 the Writer's Guidelines: *Communities*, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-652-8517; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org).

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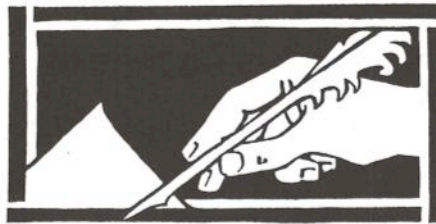
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### What is an "Intentional Community?"

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

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE



# Tangled in a Field of Dreams

As FIC Executive Secretary, I wear many hats. This past summer I tripped up responding to a proposal for a new FIC office facility in northeast Missouri. This is the story of my confusion, and what I discovered about it.

In recent years, FIC-newcomer Ma'ikwe Ludwig has had the dream of establishing a Community Resource Center (CRC) somewhere in the US, which she'd help build and operate. In conversations with the Fellowship last winter, she came to see the advantages of hitching her wagon behind our horse, and came to the spring '03 FIC meetings with a proposal to write a grant to fund construction of a spacious, comfortable, modern office featuring Earth-friendly technologies.

It looked like a good deal all around. Ma'ikwe would stand a better chance of getting her CRC funded by working under the FIC banner—the preeminent organization offering information about contemporary intentional communities; the Fellowship would get a much needed new facility, certain to be a boost for both morale and productivity.

While the current FIC Office is located at my community, Sandhill Farm, only some of the office staff live there. The rest come from Dancing Rabbit, our neighboring community just three miles away. Not surprisingly, the Rabbits wanted the new office located on their property; the Sandhillians wanted it on theirs.

Both were invited to make a pitch over the summer, and both came back with similar offers. That put it squarely in the laps of the FIC board, which was asked to break the deadlock during the fall '03 meetings. It was a decision no one wanted to make. Both communities have strongly supported FIC's efforts over the years and it was awkward picking one over the other.

It took me until deep into the meetings before I realized I was wearing three different hats in the conversation.

The obvious hat was the one I wear as FIC staff. I argued for the office at Sandhill because, as Executive Secretary, I use the office all the time. I work there as often as 3-4 times a day, and my files are commingled with other FIC records. More, I was the

## COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

### Special Community Seekers Guide, Spring '04.

How to find your ideal community—or should you start your own? Visiting communities—how to be a great guest. Assessing and comparing communities. Signs of a healthy community (and things to watch out for).

Patricia Greene and Diana Leafe Christian, editors.

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original FIC Office Manager and have a thorough background in how to handle oddball requests. I know where the bodies are buried, and I know where the files are buried, too.

If the office moved to Dancing Rabbit, it would not make logistical sense for my work space to move with it. I'd continue to work at home and would no longer be available to help at the office day to day.

After the first two days at the FIC meetings nothing was resolved. I went for a long walk and contemplated what was at stake for me. As I looked closely at why I was hanging on so tightly to the office being located at Sandhill, I discovered two other hats.

With all the attention I'd given to how much handier it would be for my staff work to have the office at Sandhill, I'd hidden from myself how much I wanted the location for my community.

I've been involved in intercommunity networking since 1979, and I've enjoyed Sandhill Farm's blossoming role as one of a handful of places which actively encourages the curious to stop by and see what community is like. I wanted the new, improved FIC Office to be at Sandhill so that it would solidify my community's future as a network node.

But that's not all. Underlying my dreams for Sandhill was how much I wanted the new office for myself. This was the most selfish hat, and the one I wanted least to expose. In my quarter-century as a networker, I've never had a decent office space, and Ma'ikwe's proposal offered the tantalizing prospect of having downright pleasant working conditions the rest of my life.

My current space is a small room in the FIC trailer. While nice when I work late and don't want to disturb anyone, it's hot in the summer, cold in the winter, and crammed full of boxes all year round. I'd love something better!

Once I figured out that all these interests were at play, I could lay aside the hats representing my community and myself, and concentrate on what was best for the Fellowship. While I still thought Sandhill would be a fine choice, I knew that Dancing Rabbit would be as well, and I was in a unique position to unblock the logjam by shifting my support to siting the building at my neighbor's. FIC would be well served, and it was more honoring of Ma'ikwe, who hopes the office will become the CRC and who hopes to live at Dancing Rabbit.

As for the hats I took off, I still covet a better work space, and continue to believe administrative functions are a good fit for my community. Now however, I realize it's better to seek support from my community for those things—rather than to hijack someone else's dream to serve my own.

Gaid Schaus

### What Happened to Issue #120?

Observant readers will notice that this issue, Winter 2003, is marked #121, while the previous regular issue of *Communities*, Fall 2003, was labeled #119. What happened? We published a special extra issue (#120) to bring us into compliance with the Post Office for maintaining our status as a quarterly publication eligible for shipping magazines at Periodical Rates. Over the years, we'd gradually slipped behind in our production schedule until finally, in 2000, we only released three issues instead of the four required as a condition of our permit. While the Post Office has been patient in giving us time to come back into compliance, they've insisted we publish the extra issue by the end of the year or lose our permit.

While we could have handled this in a variety of ways, we ultimately chose to not include the extra issue as part of subscription fulfillment. Instead, we produced a special issue focused on delivering what we were already committed to doing—the 2003 Directory Update (changes in community listings that surfaced in the past 12 months). Only those who subscribed to both *Communities* and the Directory Updates got that special issue.

But don't worry. Everyone with an active subscription beyond issue #119 will have their expiry boosted by one. In the end, subscribers will get all the copies of the magazine they are owed, whether they ever saw a copy of the mysterious #120 or not.



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# COMMUNITY GRAPEVINE



The four-volume *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World* is a new reference work from Sage Publications, edited by Karen Christensen and David Levinson of Berkshire Publishing Group. Published primarily for college and high school libraries, the reference work is about communities of all kinds—including neighborhoods, rural small towns, indigenous villages, community development, community activism, and Internet communities—the human webs that provide essential feelings of connectedness, belonging, and meaning,” as Karen Christensen writes. (See “Reviews,” pg. 58.)

The 53 entries on intentional community were edited by international community scholar (and *Communities* magazine “Community Living Worldwide” columnist) *Bill Metcalf* of Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. He and *Diana Leafe Christian*, editor of this magazine, co-authored the *Encyclopedia’s* “Introduction to Intentional Communities” article.

Many long-time activists with the **Fellowship for Intentional Community** (FIC), and regular writers for and former Guest Editors of *Communities* magazine

## Heard it through the grapevine ...

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

Community Grapevine, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-652-8517; [communities@ic.org](mailto:communities@ic.org)

contributed articles. These included FIC activists *Geoph Kozeny*, producer/editor of the “*Visions of Utopia*” video and “Peripatetic Communitarian” columnist (“Intentional Communities and Daily Life”), and *Laird Schaub* (FIC Executive Secretary and *Sandhill Farm* member (“Intentional Communities in the United States and Canada—Current Movement”), as well as former *Communities* magazine Guest Editors *Tim Miller* (“The Farm,” and “Harmony Society”); *Deborah Altus* (“Twin Oaks”); and *Daniel Greenberg*, Director of *Living Routes, Inc.* (“Intentional Communities and Children”). *Encyclopedia* contributors who’ve written for *Communities* magazine include *Albert Bates*, director of *Ecovillage Training Center* at *The Farm* (“Ecovillages”); cohousing architect and *Cohousing* author *Charles Durrett* (“Cohousing”); *A. Allen Butcher*, community scholar and former member of *Twin Oaks* (“Communal Economics”); and *Jan Martin Bang* of *Solborg Camphill Village* in Norway (“Intentional Communities in Scandinavia and the Low Countries”). *Bill Metcalf* also contributed “Intentional Communities in Australia and New Zealand” and “Intentional Communities in Latin America,” and *Diana Leafe Christian*, “Intentional Communities and Governance.” The encyclopedia set will be available in various public, college and university libraries.



**Celebrating Community** is a new project designed to create a network of Canadian intentional communities, including cohousing neighborhoods and aspiring ecovillages, in order to help them share and learn from each other. Project creator *Hugh Perry*, author of the community-related novel, *Silent Partners*, is in the process of creating a database of all Canadian communities (he estimates there are 70+), to post them on the *Celebrating Community* website ([www.silentpartners.ca](http://www.silentpartners.ca)). The website also hosts a book page with reviews of books about intentional community.



*David Wann*, co-author of the book *Affluenza* and a resident of *Harmony Village Cohousing* in Golden, Colorado, is



putting together an anthology on cohousing to be published in 2004 by Fulcrum Publishing. Photos and articles will cover topics ranging from Common Houses to common meals, work parties, meetings, children in cohousing, celebrations, interactions with local governments, and much more. For more information on the work in progress, see [cohousing.org/news/daveWannBook.html](http://cohousing.org/news/daveWannBook.html).



The Utopian World Championship 2003/2004 is "a worldwide competition in visionary thinking," according to the sponsoring organization, SOC of Stockholm, which writes: "Join the search for (utopia) ... where visions about our future societies can be expressed." To enter the competition, submit a proposal written as an essay in English. The competing essays will be judged first by the public through on-line elections, and then by a jury representing a broad range of disciplines and perspectives. The winner of the championship will receive 1000 Euros, and the sponsoring organization will give the winning proposal to heads of state and other relevant institutions and nongovernmental organizations worldwide. Entry deadline is January 31, 2004, and deadline for submission of proposals on April 30, 2004. The application forms and complete rules for entry are available on their website: [www.soc.nu/utopian](http://www.soc.nu/utopian).

SOC Stockholm describes itself as a "nonprofit, politically independent organization for experimental and social art" founded in 1999 in Sweden.



Intentional communities and ecovillages were the subject of the 3,010th **New Dimensions Radio show**, a 30-year-old internationally syndicated radio interview program which will air on participating stations worldwide sometime in early 2004. Host *Michael Toms* interviewed *Diana Leaf Christian*, editor of this magazine and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*. Topics covered included **Earthaven Ecovillage** in North Carolina, the **Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC)**, the FIC's **Community Bookshelf** mail-order book service, and, of course, *Communities* magazine.

## Honoring Shirley Risser

This fall Shirley Risser, founder of Sharingwood Community in Snohomish, Washington, passed away in her sleep at age 90 in her home, surrounded by family and friends.

Shirley was in her 70s back in 1984 when she rolled up her pant legs and, with a critical eye, wandered down a well-overgrown track. There were several nice trees, and the property had the quiet, end-of-the-road feel that she was looking for. The real estate agent arrived and she made him bushwhack well into the woods. They never did find the corners of the property, but during the walk she became convinced, "This is the place." She plunked down most of her widow's estate on the down payment, and started the several-year process of turning her community dream into a reality. There were endless planning and details, zoning hearings, and of course finding people to follow her star, but Shirley was tenacious and her bright charm turned people into allies. The land payments ate away at her remaining estate, and although much had been accomplished, it was down to one last call. She had put so much energy into this dream, so much of her resources, but her money was almost gone. One last call to the list of contacts, one last plea, its now or never. And they came. They invested. They built roads, infrastructure, homes. And today Sharingwood Cohousing is home for 85 people.

Shirley remains in my mind the quintessential "Little old lady in tennis shoes." Perky, bright, quick to make a joke. She could have easily dominated the community in the early years. She did not. She stood aside and let others move the dream in new directions, understanding that community is shared dream. Shirley taught us that those with courage enough to follow their dreams are the ones who make the world a better place.

—Rob Sandelin

*Rob Sandelin is a longtime member of Sharingwood Community and a frequent contributor to this magazine.*



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# Taking Aim on the Future ...

By Taking a Bead on the Past

**D**uring the opening check-in at the FIC's fall organizational meetings—held last September at The Vale in Yellow Springs, Ohio—Nancy Lanphear (partner of new board member Fred Lanphear) shared a story about sharing stories.

She'd recently been to an event where a presenter wore a necklace comprised of beads, each representing a major story in his life. If you pointed to a bead, he could tell the story it stood for. Experiencing the potency of that necklace, Nancy understood that oral tradition is a richer medium than she had previously imagined.

Hearing about the bead necklace reminded me that my community had done a weekend retreat three years ago on the subject of spirituality (pretty daring stuff for a secular community). Output from that weekend included learning how to design and use a backyard labyrinth—without getting lost, physically or psychically—and the creation and investiture of a bead necklace which told the story of my community's spiritual connection to our land. We "speak" the beads at the start of retreats and every year on the anniversary of the community's birth.

I connected with Nancy's sharing in another way as well. As a consultant and workshop presenter, it's become clear to me over the years that the surest way to build rapport with the client or the audience is to tell stories that illuminate the points I want to make. The very best ones are about personal aha! experiences, where

I struggled in the moment and ultimately learned an important lesson. So I already had a lot of respect for stories, which must be the oldest form of communication. Going back even before email.

In the course of the FIC meetings, Nancy's story found fertile ground among some of us. By the third day, incubation had advanced to the point where the idea of an FIC necklace was spontaneously birthed during a breakout session on the

subject of what we might be inspired to do in the event that space aliens whisked away all organizational staff and our bank account into the bargain (yes, that was really the topic—see what fun you miss when you don't attend FIC meetings?).

Jenny Upton, Earl Loftfield, and I formed one of the small groups wrestling with the question of what new inspiring

things FIC might do which would not require any significant dollars to implement, and about which we were personally excited to help effect. After fumbling around a bit to get traction (space aliens, indeed), the thing that bubbled up was stories: FIC has been around in its current incarnation since 1986, and its roots go back to the late 1940s. We have a lot of stories, and we aren't telling them nearly enough.

What better place to start than at FIC meetings. It's often a challenge for new people to get a handle on exactly what we do and why. Stories have the power to bring that to life. Right here, right now.

**FELLOWSHIP  
NEWS**



BY LAIRD SCHAUB



The board liked our idea almost as much as we did, and over the winter Jenny and I are going to cast a wide net in search for beads of all types, as candidates for inclusion in the FIC necklace. In addition, we'll come up with an opening ritual to introduce the necklace, and a closing ritual which will include the selection of a bead representing the meetings just ending, and the choosing of a necklace keeper, who will be responsible for bringing it to the next set of meetings.

The necklace inaugural will take place opening day of the spring 2004 FIC meetings, to be hosted by Highline Crossing in Littleton, Colorado. We'll invite many key players from FIC's past, to help us tell the stories and imbue the

**The FIC originally began the late 1940s. We have a lot of stories, and we aren't telling them nearly enough.**

necklace with the power aggregated by the contributions of many.

We have some catching up to do. The spring meetings will be our 35th, and as recently as last September we didn't have a bead to our name! Worse, 35 beads will not be enough. We'll also want a number of special beads: one for the 1993 Celebration of Community, one for each edition of *Communities Directory*, one for our becoming the publisher of this magazine, one for launching our website, one for Geoph Kozeny's *Visions of Utopia*, etc. So many stories; so few beads.

And of course, there will be a bead representing the amazing story of how the FIC came to have a necklace ... . Ω

*For information about attending next Spring's FIC meetings, contact our site coordinator, Jenny Upton: jenny@ic.org or 434-361-1417 (after 5 pm Eastern).*

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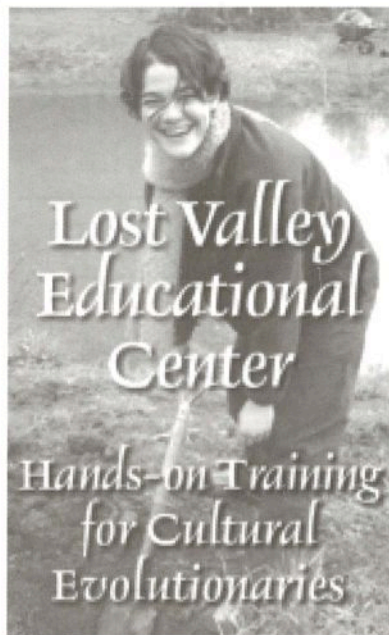


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# “Salons and Skill-shares and College Tours, Oh My”

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

I'd say the hottest interest in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) these days is on helping support new FEC “communities-in-happening.” Groups we are trying to offer support to include Meadowdance in Vermont, Eco-Farm in Florida, and possibly an income-sharing pod at a renewed Pragtri Farm in Washington state. We're planning to donate some labor to Meadowdance's building project, and we also have some money set aside for “inspirational visits,” where we have communards who are in the area stop by smaller or newer communities to establish and maintain live contact between us and them. I was excited about Emerald Earth in California joining us too, but unfortunately their group hasn't been able to maintain income-sharing.

Like the Fellowship for Intentional Community, FEC faces the challenge of operating as a dispersed organization. We've added regular conference calls (among the Executive Committee and the Community Development Action Group) and some live online chatting to help us

stay in touch with each other. Also once or twice between semi-annual Assemblies the secretary (that's me) contacts every person who took on tasks at the Assembly to check in on how it's going, and those reminders seem to help keep projects moving.

After tons of data entry mostly by members of East Wind Community in Missouri over the past few years, we finally got almost our entire “Systems & Structures” archive available on our website ([www.thefec.org](http://www.thefec.org)). This has sample documents from past and present FEC communities, such as bylaws, successful applications to the IRS for 501(d) tax status, outreach literature, and more. Many of the documents are historically interesting but too dated for contemporary use; hopefully, over time we'll add newer material. Thanks to Marc at Jolly Ranchers in Seattle, the entire archive can now be viewed by topic as well as by community.

Jeffrey of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Mis-

souri has taken on researching how our communities could self-insure for fire risk as we do for health care. (There certainly is a need for alternative institutions to fill the insurance gap, as my community, Walnut Street Co-op, is having trouble finding any coverage at all under co-op ownership, let alone affordable coverage. For those who don't know, there's been a

## FEDERATION UPDATE



BY TREE BRESSEN

*Tree Bressen is Secretary of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, a former Board member of the Fellowship for Intentional Community, a consensus facilitator and teacher, and regular columnist for our “Process in Community” column. She lives at Walnut Street Co-op in Eugene, Oregon.*



major shake-up in the insurance world since 9/11, and most companies refuse to consider anything non-standard these days.) Jeffrey is also trying to create a program that would treat labor as a "fungible" currency, meaning communities could trade around the hours they owe to FEC and the labor-exchange hours they do for each other.

Phoenix from Twin Oaks Community in Virginia has been going around speaking about community to college classes, sometimes with Pax, also of Twin Oaks, and other Twin Oakers. She's often able to get funding from the schools, thus making this a very successful program.

There is interest in adding occasional skill-share events to our FEC Assemblies, and the first of these is a proposed session on seed-saving that would happen as part of this Winter Assembly. We figure January is a good time for gardeners to get together and learn, and we'll be meeting right near FEC-member Acorn Commu-

nity in Virginia which operates an heirloom seed business.

**We've finally got almost our entire "Systems & Structures" archive available on our website.**

We've been sponsoring salons in our communities on topics related to our values. The topic for this cycle is voluntary simplicity and consumption. It will be interesting to hear back what members of our communities have to say about how this affects their lives.

I think FEC communities fill a unique niche in the communities movement as the most accessible, due to: (a) being visible, (b) having no joining fee or set financial requirements, and (c) requiring no particular skills to join. So anything you all can do to help spread the word about us is most appreciated!

FEC's last Assembly was hosted by Sandhill Farm and Skyhouse (a subcommunity of Dancing Rabbit) in Missouri. Our next Assembly is scheduled for January 4-8 at Twin Oaks, and then in spring '04 we'll be in Seattle at Jolly Ranchers/Beacon Hill House. Ω

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## Arctic Winds

**F**rozen tundra. Birds caught in the immensity of huge skies. Lakes locked with ice and laced with birch and cedar. Black dots of moving reindeer on a sea of snow. A land where animals nudge you, carry tree branches on their heads. A place where raging rivers freeze and snow falls in countless ways and blankets endless stretches of lonely Earth.

I button my parka and wait on a road where cars come by from time to time with long stretches of white in between. The Arctic Circle is freezing cold. Desolate winds blow over fields of white. Yet the skies are some of the most beautiful in the world. Pastel blues. Deep reds and greens. This is the land of the northern lights. Of solar winds and earthly magnetic fields.

Of electrons gone crazy as they collide with flying particles to create a celestial tempest of rainbow hues. The ancients say that a fire fox sweeps its tail across the snow leaving trails of swirling light—the Aurora Borealis.

Not so long ago the Sami, or Laplanders, still herded their reindeer on

wooden sleds and moved about the Arctic freely. Like the Inuit, the Sami sang the songs that they say guarded their souls on long winter's nights and made the Earth feel good. Clad in skins and furs, with silver-white feathers and long bands of berry-coloured cloth, the Old People carried wooden arcs and

arrows of bone across vast stretches of land. They did not cultivate the soil but ate only what they could find. They crafted wooden bowls from trees. The whole sky was their bedroom, in this place where light and beauty brought—and still bring—eternal dawn.

That was before the church wiped out pride and governments put in fences between countries and people discovered snowmobiles and helicopters. It has become far easier to sit in warm cafes than to herd the old ways, sing the old songs and struggle through cascading pitfalls to guard one's soul against human darkness. And yet, there are still sacred islands here to venerate the sun, sacred stones and sacred trees to conjure the power of the land, and a deep gratitude for the life force given by



*Marti Mueller is Chair of the International Advisory Council of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). She works with UNESCO and the United Nations on programmes to empower indigenous people; [marti@auroville.org.in](mailto:marti@auroville.org.in).*

*Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.*



reindeer, bear, wolf, and salmon. And as I would soon experience, an exciting renaissance of young Sami poet-shamans rising to remember the old and to evoke the new.

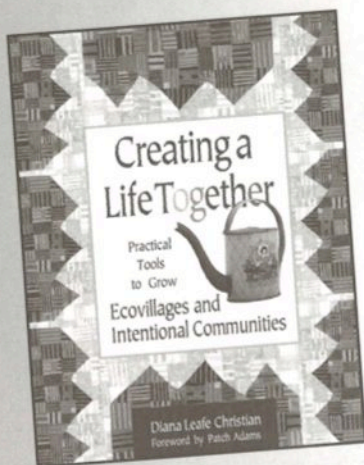
I rub my hands to keep warm and enjoy the sky, an exquisite translucent turquoise blue. Ice clings to nearby granite rocks. Birch trees stand silently waiting for spring. A few dark ancient snow-clad pines look on. A gray hawk circles slowly overhead. Then a car suddenly speeds in from the horizon. Ulla's mother brakes to a halt and I climb in. "I take you Ulla's house," she says,

**To yoik is not to sing about something; it is to sing something into being.**

laughing. Between cigarettes she inserts Ulla's CD into the car's tape deck. Ulla is a young Sami who was taught by her uncle to *yoik*. She is famous now. To *yoik* is not to sing about something; it is to sing something into being, to give it life. And so these young Sami people sing. Ulla. Mary Boine. Wimme. They sing in their village homes and they sing in New York, Tokyo, and Paris. They sing of ice and bones and the old ways when people ran across midnight snows chasing wild beasts across the tundra. They sing about their ancestors who moved on long slender carved pieces of wood and carried their houses with them through deep snows, where the edge of survival always clung close like a shadow on a shoreless sea. And as they moved, they held the Earth sacred in their hearts and minds.

We sit on Ulla's floor. She sings and drums while her sandy-haired child clutches her leg. This young Sami woman evokes the pain and joy of another world that joins other worlds where people struggle to remember the remaining fragments of their rich but disappearing cultures. Through the

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Restored prairie grasses

window I watch the bright sky become opaque. Ulla's songs carry me across unmarked paths where light pierces the darkest of storms and touches everything that makes us prisoner to our own fears, the sinking sun, and the engulfing darkness. I close my eyes and think of skies full of more stars than worlds can count, where the heavens tremble and roar, where spirits run deep and wide. I sing you. I sing me. I sing the "breathe me free" and wander the windswept fells to the source of all things.

Some of the Sami old people have understandably given in to life's heavy burdens, losing faith in what was theirs, and forgetting to remember to remember. Others climb the winds like great birds with huge wings. They alight where fears and the world of material desires cannot touch them, and where, in their flight to freedom, their dreams and visions of a new future find passage. The North Star guides us only to the gate of our own awakening. Do we not all seek the light of love and self-esteem? Do we not all dream of peace and stars that show the way that illuminate the walk between worlds and provide the keys to our own transformation?

Nature has given us so much. And yet, in our greed, we have stolen time from ancient civilizations and lands that were not ours, but belong to the universe. We have fenced in the wild ways of whole cultures that used to live and still sometimes continue to live close to nature. The Old People knew and have always known intrinsically that the Earth is our Mother and that if she dies, we will die with her. This is their gift to us.

Later, to Utsjoki, then back to Helsinki. Weaving the broken world into a whole again is like threading the story of a new creation, of the rich chaos of changing seasons, of dreams that shield us from whatever makes hearts grow cold, of visions that remind us that if we love everyone, we love ourselves. We are birds, free to fly wherever the mind can journey. And the journey is complete only when we understand what we have learned from it. Ω

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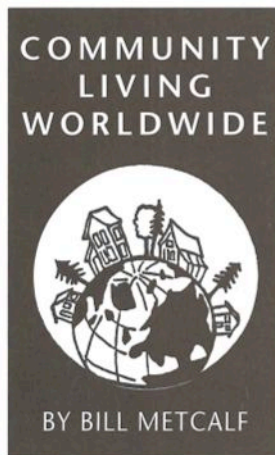


# Heartwood:

## Urban (and Rural) Community Living in New Zealand

Midnight, Sunday: I am folding *Chip'n Away* newsletters, adding inserts about a community gathering, stuffing and addressing envelopes—working with members of Heartwood, one of New Zealand's most interesting intentional communities. During over 30 years of research, how often have I helped with such tasks, in how many communities and with how many great people!

Heartwood community began in 1971 in Christchurch, a small city on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island. A group of social, political, and environmental activists in their 20s pooled their limited money and almost limitless energy and, borrowing from far and wide, bought "Chippenham," a rambling brick mansion built in the early 1860s, to establish an urban commune. They were as full of enthusiasm and energy as they were lacking in communal experience but, against all odds they survived. In the following year they borrowed further to buy a nearby large house, "Mansfield," with a back yard adjacent to Chippenham. In 1973 they were secure enough to purchase a small farm, "Gricklegrass," at Oxford, 45 kilometres away, and establish a whole foods bakery in Christchurch, which they ran as a worker-owned co-op for about eight years.



One of Heartwood's founders is now a New Zealand Cabinet Minister. Several other early members, though no longer residents, remain involved in supportive roles.

Today, Heartwood has about 25 adults and children living in their two large houses in Christchurch and on their rural farm. Members are responsible for earning their own incomes, from which they pay a weekly fee of up to \$NZ120 (\$US80) to cover food, utilities, building maintenance, and debt repayments. Each community resident must work at least two hours per week on Heartwood projects. Each of the three dwelling units maintains its own household budget and is part of an overall Heartwood community budget.

All this valuable property belongs to a nonprofit "Incorporated Society," whose membership consists of most current and some former residents. The Heartwood entity, however, is more than a tool to facilitate property ownership—it also seeks to have a role in wider social matters. Current issues include purchasing a beach house for members and guests, restoring an 1859 cottage at Chippenham, and creating a learning centre at Gricklegrass in conjunction with a local alternative school.

*Our international correspondent, Dr. Bill Metcalf of Griffith University, Australia, has studied contemporary and historic communal groups worldwide since the 1970s. Past president of the International Communal Studies Association, a Fellow of the Findhorn Foundation, and author of From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality (University of New South Wales, 1993), his newest book is The Findhorn Book of Community Living (Findhorn Press, 2004).*

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To become a new resident of one of Heartwood's three community residences, current members of that residence must unanimously accept the person. (This is true when moving between residences as well. If someone living at Mansfield, for example, wanted to move to Gricklegrass, all Gricklegrass residents would have to agree.) After being a resident for six months, the new person is expected to apply to join the wider Heartwood community and take a role in the affairs of the larger group.

Heartwood meetings are held eight to ten times each year. Each of the three households meets as needed, roughly monthly. A six-member Heartwood Council consists of two long-term Trustees (former members), two current members, an accountant, and a member of another intentional community. While decisions are made by Heartwood members, this Council reviews fees and annual budgets, considers major sales and purchases, and

examines any household decisions which perhaps challenge community ethics.

Heartwood residents have many occupations: film-maker, librarian, health care worker, business executive, student, farm worker, teacher, etc., while some are supported by pensions of one sort or another.

## ***New Zealand has a long and rich history of intentional communities.***

Several are single parents, and their children thrive in this social environment. The usual range of communal roles, such as food-buyer, bill-payer, etc, are allocated at house meetings. The ubiquitous cooking roster ensures that evening meals are prepared more-

or-less on time, and that all communards dine together—often the only time they have from their busy lives to be together. The meals I share with them are filled with good food and humour. Three to four times each year they hold house cleaning/maintenance work bees and, about as often, community parties.

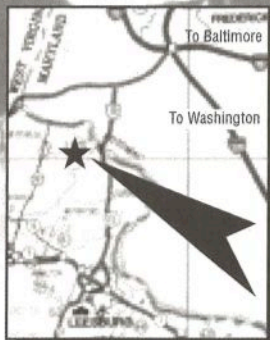
During my stay at Heartwood I take part in a long meeting to address the

important issue of commitment and participation. Some members feel that others have been treating Heartwood merely as a cheap and convenient place to live without putting sufficient energy into the management and well-being of the larger group. Some highly committed members feel that others show little regard for, and knowledge about, communal ethics and philosophy. Others say they feel a lack of basic respect from some members. In response, several members say that Heartwood meetings are boring or intimidating. A Maori resident says she feels unable to compete with some of the more vocal members, while a *pakeha* (non-Maori) man says he didn't think it was important to attend meetings because, in his eyes, it was being well managed already.

Raised, argumentative voices are obviously going nowhere, so members stop, examine their meeting process, then go around the group and share their thoughts and feelings. Four single mothers describe the additional problems they face in raising children communally—they want more help from other members—but

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those other members might not feel able or welcomed to do so. The sombre, heavy tone is enlivened when Andrew, with tongue in cheek, describes the whole discussion as “New Age blah blah”—and yet central to their continued existence as an intentional community.

Heartwood plays an important role in promoting intentional community living in New Zealand. Their newsletter, *Chip'n Away*, goes to over 40 New Zealand intentional communities. Dave, the editor, sees it as an important way to exchange practical information while fostering a sense of intentional community culture. New Zealand has a long and rich history of intentional communities and, in fact, I am primarily here to research Federative Home, an urban commune in Christchurch 100 years ago, not far from where Chippenham and Mansfield are today. One of the purposes of *Chip'n Away* is to foster an appreciation of New Zealand's rich and proud communal history.

I sleep and eat at Chippenham. The large kitchen is classic urban commune design, with people coming and going, the phone ringing, children seeking attention, music playing, etc. I eat at the large table with half a dozen others, share some good Kiwi wine, and we talk late into the night about communal living here and elsewhere. Chippenham's large former “ballroom” is now used for community meetings and parties, to watch TV, and just to hang about. I feel comfortable here.

Chippenham, like any 140-year-old mansion, needs expensive maintenance. While providing a superb communal home full of fascinating nooks and crannies and rich in New Zealand's history, it also costs a lot of money and requires a great deal of members' time to keep it intact. Members now need to employ a heritage architect to oversee repairs to their roof and barge boards.

Mansfield, reached through Chippenham's backyard, is about 80 years old. It has a different feel, more family-oriented somehow, with all rooms connecting through a central lounge. While lacking the architectural grandeur

of Chippenham, several members tell me they prefer it as a place to live. In its backyard residents have constructed several small “sleep-outs” (huts) in which residents can escape the hubbub of communal life.

Gricklegrass farm's 100-year-old house has had two wings added, each with bedrooms opening onto a verandah and central, grassed courtyard. The original idea was that as well as housing the rural members of this intentional community, Gricklegrass would also be a sort of “country house” for the urban members, just as the two city houses would provide urban conveniences for those living in the country. This has never really worked out, however, with urban members rarely getting out to Gricklegrass, whose members tend to only come to Chippenham for community-wide meetings. Obviously there is a great, untapped potential here for everyone to live richer, more diverse lives but, for a host of reasons, this has not happened.

After our Heartwood meeting we share delicious home-made ice cream made by Gricklegrass folk from cream from their cows. This ice cream somehow provides a unifying note to the meeting of what appears to be a somewhat disparate group—albeit of warm-hearted and charming people. I wonder why Heartwood members do not meet together more often and have more fun and symbolic exchanges? Why do they not devote more time and energy to developing what sociologists call “we-consciousness”? At least part of the answer becomes obvious when they try to set a date for a follow-on meeting. Most members are heavily involved in a wide range of

other groups, plus work or study, or have family demands against which Heartwood's time needs must compete. While most intentional communities have this dilemma of competition between private and community time, it seems more acute in urban groups. And yet, perhaps ironically, it appears that the most active communards are also those most active in the wider community. Perhaps, because they lack a unifying philosophy, this eclectic range of people react to

intense communal living by yearning for many outside activities?

I first visited Heartwood in 1980 as part of my Ph.D. research. I felt comfortable and welcomed then, just as I do today. As in most intentional communities, there is a tension between private and communal demands and responsibilities. Most, including Heartwood, fall far short of fulfilling their amazing potential. At the bus stop at the end of my stay I talk with Dave, a resident for 13 years, about this issue of unfulfilled potential. After admitting that the Heartwood community is far from what it could potentially be and that community living can be challenging, Dave smiles ruefully and adds, “But my life has been incredibly enriched by the sheer diversity of people I have lived with here.”

Frankly, for any mainly urban intentional community to survive for more than 30 years reflects a rare success story. Heartwood community, for all its challenges, has proved remarkably resilient—and New Zealand is a better country because of it. Ω

**One of their founders is now a New Zealand Cabinet Minister.**



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# Fostering Community Via the Internet

Though Labor Day is long gone, the annual Communities Conference at Twin Oaks is still very much on my mind. I wish it could have lasted longer.

In the several weeks since then, talking with various communities and people looking to visit one or more of them, I found that a lot of people were saying how difficult it was to get both the time and money together to do all the visiting they wanted to do. This is true for me as well. I've also found that it's not always easy to find out enough information about one intentional community or another just from their websites. A website alone doesn't always—really can't—address all the questions and concerns an intentional-community-member-wannabe like myself might have. Yes, I could write and/or email the particular community, but, truth be told, I would feel like I'm imposing on them if I asked too many questions. Intentional communities certainly have to have a lot of other people they're corresponding with besides myself, and probably don't have a lot of time to respond to all the questions from all the potential visitors. I'm sure they address dozens of the same questions repeatedly to different people writing them. I don't envy them that.

So after a bit of thinking about all of this, it occurred to me that a new Internet discussion list would be a good place for the many communities and people interested in visiting them could all get together and talk about their needs and wants ... or just for people and communities to introduce themselves and get to know one another and see what can happen when people get together. So I got online and created a new discussion list: IC-info. This list hasn't even been up a week yet and already we've been con-

tacted by many interesting and interested people. Dapala is a sustainable technologies educational center in Washington state that has transitioned to an intentional community. Dapala is also looking for new members and has paying positions. Their people have joined this discussion list and are looking forward to talking with people who would be interested in joining them ... or even just

talking. Dapala is also looking for suggestions on redesigning their website. Of course the friendly members of this discussion list can lend a hand with this too. In addition, we've already broached related areas such as incorporation and constitutions, topics which would or should be of interest to communities in their formative stages. It also looks like a couple people have already forged a con-

## MY TURN



BY KEN FISLER

*Ken Fislser started using email in the mid-1980s, taught about computers for several years at colleges and in adult education programs, and has been published a couple dozen times in a variety of publications. [ken@cleveland.lug.net](mailto:ken@cleveland.lug.net).*



nection via this list. We're barely started and I'm already encouraged.

I'm sure that discussions won't be limited only to what I've mentioned above. We can well imagine that conversations will branch off into other, related topics. And if one community or another would have need of, say, someone who knows how to build a pond or tan a hide or code a dynamic webform, that would be a completely valid topic also.

The talent pool of all these communities and member-wannabes could either find a way to do the job or go a long way towards it. Basically, this list hopes to provide another way we can help and support each other and get to know each other. Nor is it inconceivable for us to hold a "virtual conference" with all the kinds of workshops we had at Twin Oaks—except that the workshop discus-

sion will take place online. I'm sure other people will have other ideas too. If you got 'em, bring 'em.

All messages to this list will be archived, so newer list members will be able to catch up with what's been said and veterans can find postings and information that were sent in earlier. There are also places (courtesy of Yahoo) to store files and photos. I'm sure we'll find a use for those.

So if you want to join in (i.e., subscribe to this list), you can either (1) go to [groups.yahoo.com/group/IC-info/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IC-info/), click on "Join This Group," and follow the instructions, or (2) (the easier way) send email to [IC-info-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:IC-info-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), and then do a Reply to the confirmation email that Yahoo will send back a few minutes later.

We hope to see you online! Ω

***This could be a good place for communities and people interested in them to introduce themselves ...***

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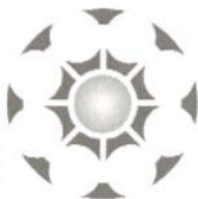
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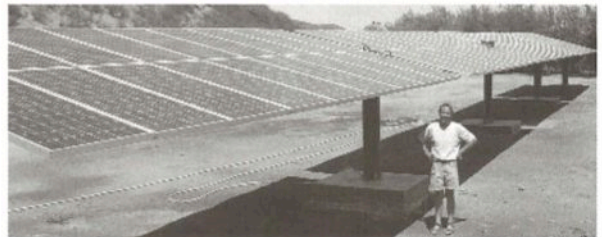
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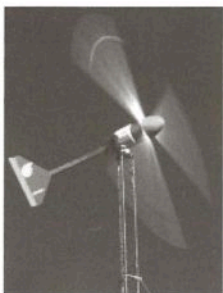
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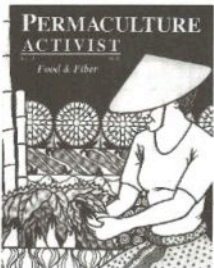
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## Send it to Committee

One of the most common causes for a bogged-down community meeting is a failure to delegate agenda items. How many times have you sat through a community meeting going through inordinate details, wishing you were anywhere else but in that room? It's a typical problem, but reasonably easy to avoid with some care and intention.

People's time is precious. Their time is a resource and a gift that needs to be honored and respected, or else people attending meetings get resentful and stop giving it. Those few hours each week or month when the group is gathered together in meeting should be reserved for the items of community business that really do need the attention of the entire group, rather than items that are small or only concern a few people. Another way of handling these smaller items should be created that allows

the necessary action to go forward. If an item doesn't require most of the community's active engagement to implement, then it probably doesn't need time on the whole group's community meeting agenda.

In order to follow this approach, you need at least three things: (1) agenda screening, (2) a functional committee structure, (3) facilitators and other meeting participants who notice as soon as an agenda item is "small enough to fit in a box" so it can be handed off to the appropriate committee or sub-group.

*Agenda Screening.* A previous article in this magazine ("Agenda Planning: The

Experienced Communitarian's Technique for Making Meetings Flow," *Communities* #113, Winter 2001), offered a detailed description of the process of creating an agenda. Suffice it to say here, whoever is creating the agenda ahead of time (or even creating it on the spot) should carefully consider whether a proposed item really needs the attention of the whole group, or whether it can be better addressed by a committee or an individual member.

If the item is just informational and doesn't require dialogue, post it on a central bulletin board, send it out to people's mailboxes, or use email instead of talking about it. The same guideline applies if the item only requires one-way communication, such as a poll or survey, unless the survey is so simple that you just need a quick show of hands, e.g.,

"How many people will be here for dinner next Saturday night?" Save the meeting time for real dialogue and exploration, plus community bonding and getting to know each other better if appropriate.

Often someone suggesting an agenda item for whole group consideration doesn't necessarily know the proper routing. It may not have occurred to that person that the item could be handled in a different way. So it's up to the agenda creators to educate the members who approach them. This spreads knowledge throughout the group and nurtures an ethic of valuing group time.



*Tree Bressen is a professional group process consultant who works with intentional communities and other nonprofits on how to have meetings that are lively, productive, and connecting. She lives at Walnut St. Co-op in Eugene, Oregon. [www.treegroup.info](http://www.treegroup.info).*



**Committees.** “Teams,” “crews,” “working groups”—call ’em what you will—there are two basic types of committees: standing committees and ad hoc committees. Standing committees deal with ongoing community needs, such as Outreach, Finance, or Maintenance. An ad hoc committee is formed for a particular short-term purpose and disbands when its task is complete. Examples of ad hoc committees might include common house design, road building, or a team that convenes to revise a particular community policy.

In order to be functional, committees need both a diverse range of competent, knowledgeable people on them and a clear mandate from the larger group to function as a committee. I’d say the most effective size for getting real work done is usually three to five people. Occasionally there are compelling reasons for going larger.

**Mandates from the Whole Group.** The mandate from the whole group should explain as precisely as possible what it expects from the committee—think of a job description with a clear list of responsibilities and tasks. To avoid upsets and misunderstandings, be explicit about the boundaries between this particular committee’s domain and the rest of the community. Is the committee expected to research and report only, to make recommendations for the larger group to decide on, to make decisions themselves, or to implement decisions and take action?

Some communities allow items onto the main meeting agenda only after a committee has shaped the item into an actual proposal (“Our community should do ‘A’”). I think that’s a mistake, because it runs the danger of setting the committee up for failure if the item is so large or complex that they can’t possibly guess in advance all the opinions and feelings that would come up in the whole group as a result of the proposal. I recommend instead that on large issues (such as the work policy, pet policy, or major community construction), the process begin in the whole-community meeting where a general sense of the group can be gathered,

and some directions for the next steps can be outlined. Then a committee can take the work further and return to the larger group later with a more specific proposal on the matter.

If the committee keeps open communication with the rest of the community, and during the next presentation in community meeting explains how they got from the general direction to the specific proposal, then they are set up for success instead of failure. An effective presentation by a committee will include: (1) a refresher

**People’s time is a resource and a gift that needs to be honored and respected.**

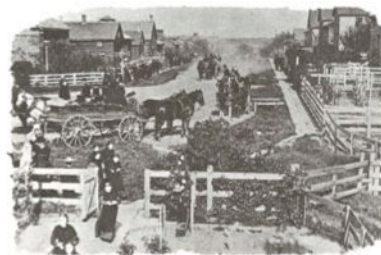
on what the last community meeting determined on the issue, (2) a report on any additional research done or steps taken since then, (3) a description of what alternatives the committee considered, and (4) an explanation of why they chose the alternative they did and how it meets the variety of community needs that have been expressed. The last part in particular (the explanation), will reassure community members who aren’t serving on the committee that their concerns have been heard and are being taken seriously.

Open and frequent communication between the committee and the rest of the community builds trust, which over time can lead to the committee being given more responsibility by the rest of the group. Communication can include posting when and where meetings will be held with an invite for non-committee members to sit in; sending out minutes soon after a committee meeting has been held; talking one-on-one with community members (especially those who may be particularly concerned about an item the committee is working on); and making regular progress reports to the larger group.

Another thing that’s useful to include in the mandate is a timeline, either for regular intervals (e.g., “Finance Committee will send out a first draft of the annual budget by Nov. 1 each year”) or for particular accomplishments (“Landscaping Committee will get the area around the dining hall planted by fall equinox this year”). Ideally a timeline not only sets a deadline for completion of a project but also serves as a planning tool so that the

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committee members can be realistic about time commitments. Many people are unrealistic about the amount of time required to actually get something done. While this is sometimes a blessing—how many founders would have started their communities if they'd realized just how long it would take?—mismatched expectations about timelines can also lead to upset and resentment between people.

*Committee Personnel.* While, practically speaking, most committees get filled with whichever warm bodies are willing, there are benefits of using a more conscious process. If a committee is convening to work on a thorny community issue, then you need to have the diverse opinions and tendencies of the group represented on that committee.

In addition, it's helpful to have a variety of skills on hand. Try to find a balance among initiators and maintainers, visionaries and pragmatics, people with

***Serving on a community committee can be a fabulous place to learn new skills.***

information and people to carry things out. Ideally a committee would include multiple genders, a variety of ages, and old and new members. Ideally it would have at least one or two people with communication skills, both interpersonally and in writing—essential to the work of many teams.

While it's easy to fall into having the entire finance team populated by people who are a whiz with numbers and spreadsheets, having one or two people who aren't math experts will help the committee stay in touch with how to explain things to everyone else in a less technical, more down-to-earth manner. And of course serving on a community committee can be a fabulous place to learn new skills. I didn't learn much about financial planning growing up. I served on the annual budget crew at Acorn Community for several years running, however. I now successfully operate my own business, partly as a result of learning the ins and outs of community finance.

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Realistically, if you want to get a really solid crew functioning, it's in your interest to invite specific people to join the committee. Effective nonprofits cultivate relationships with people who might serve on their boards months or years down the line. Thinking ahead about who to nurture into taking a role on a particular important committee and setting up mentorship and support for that person is a great way to prevent future problems and a "scarcity of committee members" from even arising.

At the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), we also consider assigning a facilitator to any committee of six or more people.

*Decision Boards, Decision Time Periods.*

Other time-saving options are Decision Boards or "three-week rules," currently in use at Sharingwood Cohousing (in Washington state) and Earthaven Ecovillage (in North Carolina). Committees at Sharingwood post pending decisions that they believe are within their purview on a Decision Board where all community members can see it; committees at Earthaven post the minutes of their meetings, including their decisions, by email to members and on clipboards in the kitchen and their main meeting hall. Community members have a certain number of weeks to raise concerns (three weeks at Earthaven). If concerns are raised, then the matter is referred back to committee or to community meeting for further work. If no concerns are raised by the end of the review period, then the decision becomes policy. This is a great efficiency improvement that would probably benefit any intentional community of more than 20 members.

*Alert Facilitators and Meeting Participants.* Lastly, the facilitators, and in fact everyone in the meeting, would do well to train themselves to notice as soon as any agenda item is too minor to take the whole group's time. "Small enough to fit in a box" is how some groups term these items, which can be handed off to the appropriate smaller committee.

With these techniques in place, your meetings should run more smoothly and free up people's attention to focus on the most important issues. And you'll accomplish more in less time—which feels good no matter how you slice it. Ω



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**UNITS AVAILABLE NOW!**



BY DENE PETERSON

# ElderSpirit

*Living the Spiritual Quest of Later Years*



At ElderSpirit's Groundbreaking Ceremony (left to right): Todd Peacock, general contractor; Dene Peterson, project director; John Heffernan, board president; Lois Humphreys, mayor of Abingdon; Joseph P. Johnson, Virginia House of Delegates, Danny L. Goins, architect, The Highlands Group.

**E**lderSpirit Community in Abingdon, Virginia is about aging, and also about living and housing, and eventually about dying. It is about all these—not as an ending or as a failing, but as an opportunity, a possibility. As far as we know, our affordable, mixed-income cohousing community is the first cohousing project in the United States exclusively for older adults. And it's the first residential community formed around the purpose of later-life spirituality.

In 1999 our group purchased 3.7 acres, and construction is now beginning for our 29 homes. They should be ready for move-in by the end of August, 2004. It's exciting to see the work of the past four years coming to fruition!



Our origins go back to 1967 when a group of women working in Appalachia in areas of community service and development organized the Federation of Communities in Service (FOCIS). The group later expanded to include men as well as women. As some members approached retirement age, we thought about forming a retirement community, and in 1995 formed a committee, "FOCIS Futures," to look into this. The idea for ElderSpirit was conceived and nourished by this committee.

For several years we had three or four meetings a year. After learning about the cohousing movement, we decided that cohousing would be the model we would follow, and agreed on the above-described values. Our group identified strongly with the ideas on later-life spirituality expressed by Drew Leder in his article, "Spiritual Community in Later Life: A Modest Proposal" (*Journal of Aging Studies*, Vol. 10, Number 2, pp. 103-116, 1996). We adopted the name "ElderSpirit" from this article.

Several people interested in the project lived in or near Abingdon, and they invited all who had shown interest in the project to come to an "Immersion into Abingdon." Our friends gave us a tour of the town; showed us the health, professional, and shopping resources for seniors; and told us stories and experiences of living in Abingdon. The town has many features that make it attractive for retirees—a rails-to-trails walking, cycling, and running trail; the Barter Theatre; several arts and crafts establishments; a fine health activities center with indoor pool; and an annual arts festival.

I moved to Abingdon to look for property and found 3.7 acres bordering the Virginia Creeper Trail. To purchase the property, we borrowed \$45,000 from 23 FOCIS members. The Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago awarded FOCIS a three-year grant for pre-development expenses, which provided salaries for a part-time staff. I was hired as project director, and another member, Jean Marie Luce, became community coordinator.

My first years have been what I'd call a "steep learning curve"—as my job was



Dene Peterson (left) and John Heffernan confer at the groundbreaking ceremony.

to get the physical project designed and built! I discovered that affordable, mixed-income multi-family housing is a new concept indeed. There was government money available for low-income housing, but no one knew how to combine this with housing for those who didn't fit the low-income guidelines. The final plan has 16 homes for rent to income-eligible (that is, low-income) residents, and 13 houses for sale.

Jean Marie was responsible for gathering more community members. A nucleus was formed when two members

***"You aren't just forming a community, you are a community."***

of the committee, Catherine Rumschlag and Kathy Hutson, moved from Big Stone Gap, Virginia to Abingdon, joining Dene, Jean Marie, and a couple who lived nearby, Anne Leibig and Dick Austin. Catherine and Kathy purchased a house adjacent to the community property, and prepared an apartment in their home for a friend, Lenore Mullarney.

Jean Marie was involved in and helped form an organization, the "Col-

lege for Older Adults" (COA) in Abingdon. In the opening term of COA, she taught a class using Drew Leder's book, *Spiritual Passages*, and several participants in that first class have become community members. For three years a different member of the ElderSpirit group has taught a class during each term, with similar results.

Abingdon officials allowed ElderSpirit to be registered as a Planned Unit Development rather than as a subdivision, so our design wouldn't be limited by restrictions governing subdivisions. They also allowed fewer than the usual number of required parking spaces to provide more green space and less paving.

Future residents have been involved in decision-making from the beginning. Many participated with the architect in design sessions for the site plan and house plans, which resulted in small clustered one-story homes which are wheelchair accessible, including the bathrooms. Parking is on the periphery except for homes on the upper side of the slope, which have adjacent parking.

We have continued to meet to determine our by-laws as well as various policies and procedures. While an incorporated Owners Association is the legal owner of the property, most community decisions are made by an unincorporated Resident Association comprised of both homeowners and renters.



Construction of the homes and Common House is being financed through bank loans, however, construction of rental units is supported by grants and loans from the State. Since these are affordable housing units, the state requires that, to qualify, intended renters meet income requirements.

During our four years of forming community we've had meetings, celebrations, work projects, and retreats. We've helped each other in need. When Lenore Mullarney needed daily assistance because of her declining health, five members formed a Care Committee to help her. Lenore also hired someone to assist her when community members weren't available. She was in charge as long as she was able, and during the final weeks of her life had the service of the local Hospice. Assistance and visits from friends who weren't available for regular help provided wonderful support during those times. Lenore died at home, surrounded by friends. The experience confirmed our hope and desire that in ElderSpirit Community we may be able to care for each other until we die.

Drew Leder visited our group in the spring of 2000 to conduct a workshop on later-life spirituality. It was so successful he repeated the workshops for two more years. These visits became the Annual Meeting of ElderSpirit Com-



***I discovered that  
affordable, mixed-  
income, multi-family  
housing is a new  
concept indeed.***

munity. This year 40 people came to our seminar/retreat on later-life spirituality.

When we realized how the land would be disturbed by construction, member Dick Austin suggested a ritual of "asking permission of the Earth," and everyone agreed. Dick designed this ritual, which we carried out on a beautiful day in June, 2002, where we asked forgiveness from all the plants and animals that have long inhabited this property. The formal groundbreaking, held March 13th, 2003, was attended by state and local officials, officers from participating banks, and about 50 friends.

At the present time, 14 of our 16 rental units have been reserved, and six of our 13 homes purchased. Our Residents Association meets monthly for a business meeting and potluck lunch.

The most recent couple who bought a house were from out of town. When they couldn't attend a regular meeting we invited them to a special potluck supper. When they sent their earnest money they expressed appreciation of the hospitality, and "... even more, the wonderful spiritual power that your community has displayed." Their words encourage us to think that we have had some success in gathering a community with a desire and some experience of later-life spirituality.





What brought these people together? Each has his or her own story. For example:

Betty is in her 70s. Her niece works next to the ElderSpirit office, and Betty lives upstairs in her niece's house. Betty came to meet the office staff and hear about our plans, and she knew ElderSpirit would be her next home.

Irene lives in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. She was a friend of Kathy's and Catherine's when they lived there, and she was the first to sign up. Irene's daughter and her grandchildren live in Abingdon, so Irene has an added incentive to move here.

Mary is a widow and a retired English teacher living in Damascus, 20 miles from Abingdon. Mary teaches and attends classes at the College for Older Adults. She was an early member of the community, and serves on our Board and on the Admissions Committee.

Paschal is a friend of Mary's. When both their partners were living, the two couples did many things together. Mary introduced Paschal to ElderSpirit, and Paschal plans to buy a house in the community. He does complain a bit about

the scarcity of men in the group, especially when he is the only man at a meeting. (Of our 26 members, five are men.)

Elizabeth comes from San Luis Obispo, California. She visited her daughter in Dungannon, Virginia, 30 miles from Abingdon. Her daughter

became interested, and came to Abingdon for the Seminar/Retreat in June, 2003. At that time Carol made her decision, and later completed the admissions process. Carol and Elizabeth will be moving to Abingdon in early October to participate in our gatherings, renting an apartment until the community dwellings are ready.

Martin and Ann saw our sign, "Future Site of ElderSpirit Community," on the Virginia Creeper Trail. They noted the phone number, and took the steps to become members.

We are all becoming a community as we meet and make decisions about our future life together, and enjoy the relationships we have now. As Drew Leder once observed about us: "You aren't just forming a community, you are a community."

*Dene Peterson has been an administrator, as her mother said, "since the age of two." She has extensive experience in fundraising, and was responsible for a two-million dollar renovation project at the University of Michigan.*

***Drew Leder's  
workshops on later-  
life spirituality were  
so successful we  
continued them for  
two more years.***

knew about ElderSpirit, and Elizabeth liked the concept and the idea of being near her daughter.

Carol is Elizabeth's friend, and lives in Santa Barbara, California. Carol



*Taking a break at a Drew Leder workshop. Drew Leder, third from left.*



# Seeing the Forest *and the Trees,* Part I

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN

*CAN SUSTAINABLE LOGGERS  
AND NATURAL BUILDERS IN COMMUNITY  
HONOR THEIR VALUES AND STILL MAKE A LIVING?*





**O**n a crisp autumn morning in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, Shawn Swartz, a tall, sandy haired young father of two, lifts a chainsaw and makes a final cut along the back edge of a 150-foot high yellow poplar. He's already cut out a fan-shaped face notch from the opposite side of the trunk. Tall and ramrod straight, the poplar has been growing on this mountain flank for over 60 years, a pioneer forest species that re-inhabited the abandoned fields of corn, wheat, barley, and melons when small farmers fled the region during the Depression. Shawn knows just when to slip out his chainsaw and step back. With a barely audible creak, the overhead canopy begins to vibrate and wobble. Then comes the sickening sound of tearing, ripping wood, and the 12-story giant sways, and in near-slow motion, topples and then falls to earth with a thundering crash.

The founders of Earthaven Ecovillage purchased this 320 acres of mountain forest with the idea of creating a village-scale community of about 150 people. Their permaculture-based site plan calls for preserving and improving perpetual forest stands on most of their land, but clearing homesites (for passive solar gain, solar panels, and gardens) and about 40 acres of flatter arable land for future agriculture use.

When they bought the property in 1994, a mixed hardwood forest covered everything but a single dirt road and an ancient log cabin. Today, nine years later, is the beginnings of a real village. On a south-

facing hillside in the center of the property is the Hut Hamlet, with tiny earth-plastered dwellings and a three-story residence, each with green metal roofs and lime washed in shades of peach and pink. The buildings are surrounded by small gardens, solar panels, young fruit trees, and the occasional chicken coop or rabbit hutch. Nearby are a strawbale kitchen/dining room/bathhouse, a composting toilet building, and the gravel beds and ponds of a small constructed wetlands. Below is a children's play area and a green meadow where one family pastures a cow, milk goats, and a flock of chickens. The background music of babbling brooks and bird song is punctuated by the sounds of children playing, clucking chickens, the hammering and sawing of construction,



*The rectilinear timber-framed Village Terraces residence*

***They're motivated by the long-term vision of an ecovillage raising most of its own food, sustainable forestry, natural buildings, and right livelihood***

and the frequent high-pitched whine of a bandsaw in the nearby lumberyard.

Other centers of village life are across the creeks or down shady footpaths.

- Earthaven's round timber-framed Council Hall, with strawbale walls finished in earthen plaster and lime washed in peach.

- The Trading Post community store, offering snacks and camping supplies.

- The White Owl Lodge, a member's cafe which doubles as a morning yoga and

meditation space and an evening coffeehouse, with living quarters upstairs.

- Village Terraces, a three-story, 4300-sq.-ft. multi-family dwelling now under construction, with apartments, business bays, and common kitchen and bath facilities.

- Benchmark neighborhood, with its start-up permaculture plant nursery and Bellavia, its two-story community building which houses a small apartment, an artist's studio and living space, and offices of the *Permaculture Activist*.

- The A&A House, a 5,000-sq.-ft., three-story residence made of recycled fruit-juice pallets, with an extended family's living quarters, overnight accommodations for guests, classroom space, a crafts workshop, and the Earthaven library.

Further along the gravel roads radiating from the village center are nine other neighborhoods with a few completed homes and some under construction, including one site with a rent-by-the-hour carpentry workshop and a tool-rental business.

Right Livelihood is a huge issue here, hence the attempt by community members to provide shelter, food, utilities, and other village services, and to come up with

***Right Livelihood:*** "Clarifying what you are passionate about, then finding a way to make your living in pursuit of that passion."

—Geoph Kozeny

***Ecovillage:*** "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 continued into the indefinite future."

—Robert and Diane Gilman



ways of earning a living on the land, whether through renting power tools, publishing a magazine, giving workshops, or selling eggs, snacks, or nursery plants. One goal of an aspiring ecovillage is that no one drives off-site to earn a living, but people live and work in the ecovillage in a way that, as the Gilmans' definition suggests, "contributes to healthy human development," "is harmlessly integrated into the natural environment," and "can be successfully continued into the indefinite future."

### **Making a Living on the Land**

At the heart of the community's developing infrastructure and evolving village economy is Earthaven Forestry and Building Company (Forestry Co-op or FC). Founded in 1998 by Shawn and four others, the Forestry Co-op is a worker-owned business that uses sustainable logging practices to clear homesites and future agricultural sites and designs and builds passive solar homes of wood from the land. Ten to twelve community members

(the number varies over time) are worker-owners. Their average age is 30. Shawn heads up the forestry products division—logging and milling. Co-founder Chris Farmer (known as "Farmer"), a young man with long blond hair and an intense gaze, is an experienced directional tree feller, building designer, and lead car-

members would otherwise have to do themselves or pay outsiders to. And the Forestry Co-op does this while following the community's agreements to keep biomass on the land and use it for building materials wherever possible.

This worker-owned business is one of the highlights of the community's Saturday tour. Earthaven tour guides show off the Co-op's building projects—the Trading Post, Bellavia, Village Terraces, and the show-stopping White Owl Lodge, with its two sweeping narrow wings, rosy earth-plastered walls, and huge cob and mosaic snake curving around three sides of the building.

Forestry Co-op members are also visible in the region as passionate sustainable forestry advocates. They're active in a local organization to stop the

building of a chip mill, as well as participating in Western North Carolina Alliance's Forest and Communities Task Force, Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, Dogwood Alliance (a sustainable logging organization), Native Forest Network, and

## ***Can community members work in a way that reflects their vision and values, benefits others, does no harm to people or the Earth, and still makes a decent living?***

penter who manages the building division. The co-op offers services to the community that it would otherwise have to accomplish through community work days or by paying commercial loggers, and services which individual community



*The round-pole timber-framed White Owl Lodge*



## About Sustainable Forestry

Ideally, sustainable forestry requires logging mostly in winter, when the ground is frozen, to minimize damage to the earth by heavy equipment and falling trees, and avoiding logging in spring, when the ground is most vulnerable. It means not logging adjacent to streams in order to preserve the leaf canopy so the water stays cool enough to maintain fish habitat, logging only minimally within 50 feet of a stream, and protecting stream water from any runoff from disturbed soil with strawbale barriers or other means. It means felling trees directionally, so they won't hit and damage other trees that are to be left standing, and so the fallen trees can be skidded and

loaded in a way that does the least damage to the earth. It means replanting any bare soil from the skidding operation with grasses to minimize erosion. At Earthaven it means also felling the small-dimension logs, even down to eight inches in diameter that no commercial logger would ever touch—because this is a young forest and small-dimension trees are mostly what grow here.

As sustainable loggers, the Forestry Coop advocates “worst-first” logging for the community’s perpetual forest stands, which means taking the smallest and least healthy trees first and leaving the best genetic stock to propagate and harvest later, so that the forest will get progressively healthier and stronger over time, and the animals, fish, birds, and other forest creatures will still have a habitat.

Compare this to commercial loggers, who take only the largest trees because there’s more profit at the sawmill: large-dimension saw logs yield far more board feet than slender ones. Thus commercial operations practice “best-first” logging, usually called “high-grading”—taking the biggest and therefore genetically healthiest trees, and logging right up to stream beds. Smaller dimension trees are sometimes left to grow to maturity, but most of the time are cut off at the base and grabbed up six at a time by a fork lift-like vehicle that carries them vertically to trucks that haul them off to chip plants or paper mills. The ground is left ripped and torn with patches of bare earth, and strewn with heaps of branches and slash. Animal and bird habitat is destroyed, which diminishes if not eliminates their presence in that area. Nearby trees may have broken-off limbs or large patches of bark skinned off, which compromises their health or slowly kills them. The bare earth is vulnerable to erosion. Stripped of their protective leaf canopy, streams clog up with soil runoff and slash. The fish die. If the loggers reforest the site, they plant a single species all at once, resulting in a monocrop landscape of single-age, single-species trees, which makes a forest much more vulnerable to disease and insect predation than a natural forest with its diverse species at different developmental stages.

Comparing commercial logging to sustainable forestry is like comparing agri-biz to organic framing. In the former, the environment is harmed, you get a greater yield, and the products are much cheaper. Without customers’ paying a premium for sustainably harvested lumber, no one could make a living doing sustainable forestry because they can’t produce enough lumber, and produce it at a low-enough price, to compete with commercial lumberyards or Home Depot.

—D.L.C



Chris Farmer felling one of Earthaven’s 60-year-old trees.





ROD RYLANDER

Milling lumber with the portable bandsaw.

## Harmlessly Integrated into the Natural Environment

The Co-op is devoted to sustainable forestry, but logging in this labor-intensive way at such a small scale makes it challenging to be financially viable (see "About Sustainable Forestry," pg. 33), so they needed a value-added product to make a decent profit. And since Earthaven members need homes and buildings, the FC created a vertically integrated business which feeds logs to their sawmill for lumber to be used in natural buildings they design and construct themselves. Cheap logs become more valuable lumber which becomes even more valuable buildings. And to make this work, and to honor Earthaven's "save it and use it"

ethic, the FC has to cut down and use small trees, 8" in diameter and under, which commercial loggers would simply send off to chip and pulp mills.

They began with timber-framed buildings in order to use the least amount of wood the most efficiently, and to avoid using any plywood sheathing for strength. (Most plywood is unsustainably harvested from old-growth forests, and its veneer layers are glued together with toxic glues and resins that outgas formaldehyde.) They also wanted to use natural insulation such as straw-clay or blown-in cellulose, and earthen plasters with clay from the land to finish interior and exterior walls.

So they came up with two timber-frame designs. One, with classic square posts and beams that span rectilinear spaces, they used for the storage barn, the Hut Hamlet's multi-family dwelling, Bellavia, the Trading Post, and Village Terraces. The other, a round-pole timber-frame design with peeled logs for posts and beams for circular or non-rectilinear buildings, they used for the White Owl.

In their lumberyard a gas-powered Woodmizer portable band saw is used to cut logs into various lengths of dimensional lumber (some of which are re-sawn into clapboard) and into thicker timber frame posts and beams. They also process small-dimension logs. Each log is run

Western North Carolina Green Building Council. And they, perhaps more than any other Earthaven members, create and sustain solid relationships with the community's old-time country neighbors, mostly elderly folks with skills to teach about rural Appalachian life, and who can appreciate and support young people learning how to pioneer their own way in this southern mountain forest.

I, too, admire and respect the Forestry Co-op. They're motivated by the long-term vision of an ecovillage raising most of its own food, and inspired by the values of regenerative forestry, beautiful natural buildings of local materials, and right livelihood. And because of them, 10 to 12 community members—approximately one-fifth of the community—don't have to drive somewhere else five days a week just to make ends meet. As veteran community observers know, the more members who stay in the community to make a living, the healthier the community's economic and social fabric and the better its long-term chances of success. So the Forestry Co-op helps fulfill Earthaven's ecological and economic vision, models and demonstrates several of the

community's primary values, and contributes to its financial and social well-being. If there was ever an example of right livelihood in a community setting, this is it.

Yet I worry about them. Is it possible to serve so many masters? Can community members work in a way that reflects

***Cheap logs become more valuable lumber which becomes even more valuable buildings.***

their vision and values, benefits others, does no harm to people or the Earth, and still makes a decent living?

The Forestry Co-op's story illuminates what often happens when visionaries with sustainable values meet up with economic realities trying to earn a living in community.



through the mill four times to remove its outside bark surface, yielding four long slabs with one flat wooden side and one curved, bark-covered side. Commercial lumberyards consider these “waste wood” and burn them. Community members use the slab wood as firewood to heat various small homes throughout the village. “Fitches,” slender boards with bark on both edges, “are the next boards cut from the log. But Farmer realized that the small-dimension logs and fitches could be milled into at least one or two 1x3s or 1x6s. While these dimensions can’t be used as structural building members, he designed an innovative wall-truss system that uses 1x3s and 1x6s to create non-load bearing,

10-inch thick wall cavities. When wrapped around the outside of timber frame posts, these wall truss cavities provide a space in which to stuff enough

weather protection for the posts. (And the beautiful posts and beams aren’t buried in the walls, but remain visible from inside the building.)

***“These buildings will last for a very long time, but they’re so natural that if you tore the roofs off, most of their materials would literally rot right back into the ground from which they came.”***

Moreover, the FC takes rough-sawn boards to a local mill to be planed and tongue-and-grooved into planks for ceilings and floors, yielding long thin strips removed from each edge. Most lumberyards burn these; the FC sorts this rip-saw waste into lath strips to anchor earth-plaster onto walls.

natural insulation for R-28 walls, as well as providing flat interior and exterior wall surfaces for plastering, and external

In the future the FC plans to chip up their waste wood to create “chip-slip,” another kind of natural wall infill in which the chips are coated in clay slip and stuffed in 10” wall cavities for insulation-plus-thermal mass, just like clay-straw infill.



Forestry Co-op worker-owners. (Standing, from left) Gregory Clark, Mihaly Bartalos, Brandon Greenstein, Chris Farmer, Joe Dofflemyer, Cheryl Bennett, Clark Goslee, Allison Cerulli, Darren Geffert. (Seated, from left) Shawn Swartz, Jason Stiers. Not pictured: Robin Allison, Paul Caron, Robert Carran

ROD RYLANDER



## Building Homes Sustainably

Living in an aspiring ecovillage raises challenging questions about how much to spend on basic necessities like food and shelter. Homes at Earthaven are built without construction loans from banks, for example, partly because of the way the group owns its land and partly because they don't want banks involved. And most members don't have steady incomes from regular jobs, but earn various part-time incomes on or off the land, telecommute, operate fledgling businesses, or live on savings. So members must build their homes with savings or with private loans, which usually means building inexpensively. Yet people want to make environmentally sustainable choices, "vote with their dollars," and honor bioregional values.

Obviously the most renewable natural building resource in their forested bioregion is wood. And every Earthaven member is responsible for the development of the village, including clearing sufficient land for agriculture. "So" asks Shawn, "given our intentions to live sustainably and bioregionally, to help clear the land for agriculture, and to use sustainably harvested lumber, what kind of buildings should we build?"

—D.L.C



Gregory Clark working on Bellavia, a neighborhood community building.

Because Earthaven supplements its spring water with roof water catchment, they needed roofing material with a relatively clean surface and large overhangs to protect the vulnerable earthen materials from weather—so the FC tops off their buildings with metal roofs with extra-wide eaves.

"These buildings will last for a very long time," says Farmer, "but they're so natural that if you tore the roofs off, most of their materials would literally rot right back into the ground from which they came."

### Supporting "Healthy Human Development"?

It's obvious the Forestry Co-op lives up to its values and is environmentally sustainable. But right livelihood requires financial sustainability as well. In their first five years, because the company has focused on keeping its buildings and forest products affordable to community members, it hasn't made sufficient profit to raise the wages to match the increasing expe-

rience and responsibility of its longer-term members, and upgrade its sawmill equipment, without outside loans. And while the situation is now improving, the FC has had its share of financial challenges.

*Part II (Spring '04 issue), will examine the group's specific financial challenges—which are common in vision-driven community businesses—and how they're resolving them.*

*Diana Leaf Christian is editor of Communities magazine, author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities (New Society Publishers, 2003), and a member of Earthaven Ecovillage.*

*For more information about Earthaven Forestry and Building Company: forestrycoop@earthaven.org.*

**Sustainable Logging**

**Milling (using even scrap wood)**

**Sustainable Natural Building**



# 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

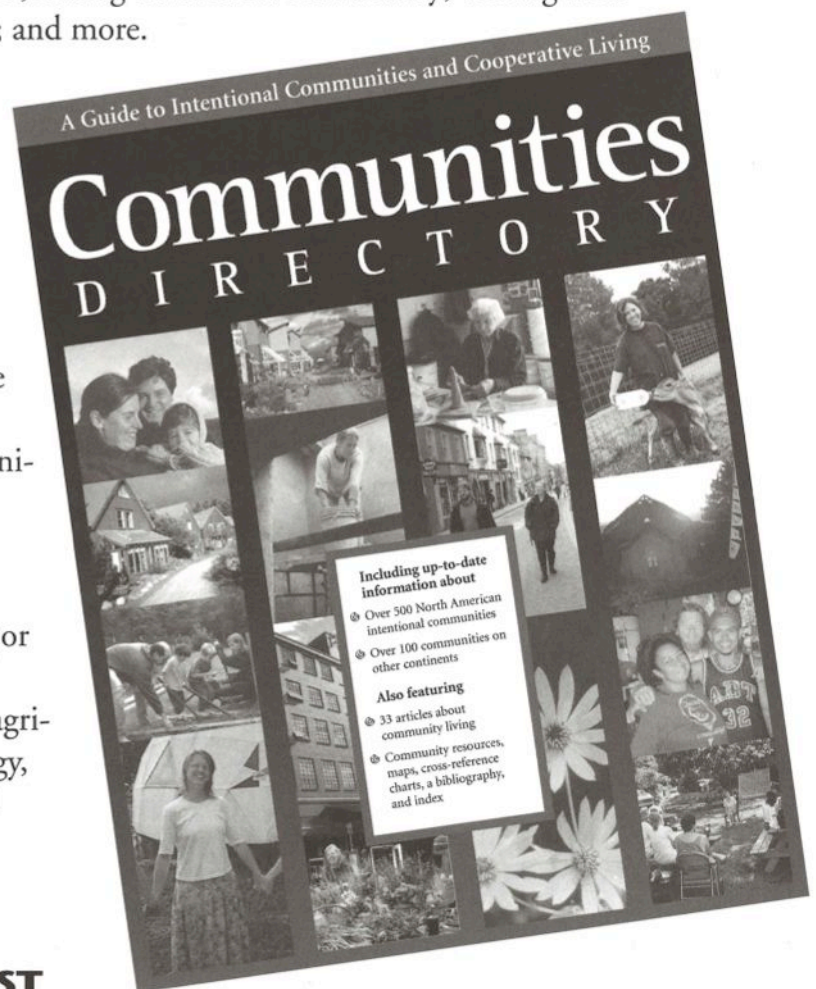
These charts allow you to quickly scan for the communities that fulfill your criteria. The charts will show you in a flash which communities match your needs and desires.

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



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# Thriving in

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN



**O**ne evening last winter the White Owl Lodge was crowded with many small tables where communitarians and neighbors enjoyed a cozy dinner by candlelight ...



# Community

FROM THE EDITOR

Outside was the wild mountain forest we're slowly clearing to make space for eventual homes, gardens, and agricultural land. Inside was the steady and rhythmic hum of animated conversation, the clink of wine glasses, the occasional bursts of laughter, and sometimes children squealing as they raced from table to table. The crackling fire in the massive stone fireplace radiated light and warmth.

It was Friday night, and this was the Community Supported Dinner, where several of our members earn a little income preparing a gourmet feast for the rest of us.

The food was amazing, as usual, and the company excellent. My dinner companions at our small table included a passionate young activist in sustainable forestry and sustainable agriculture and a 25-year master woodworker and philosopher who still takes on a few pages of Hegel every night.

Every place your eye could fall on in this timber-framed building was beautiful, revealing the work and artistry of community members. Built by the community's worker-owned forestry and construction co-op, the café's free-standing peeled timbers and diagonal braces looked like indoor "trees" holding

up the roof. The rounded river rocks covering the Russian masonry fireplace were laid by one of our members, a stone mason. The wide curving oaken bar and curving oak stair case were built by the master woodworker. The striking blue, cream, and orange tile work in the kitchen was set in place by several other community members, including the owner of White Owl, a community cofounder who built the café to offer all of us a

place to enjoy community culture.

I sat there basking in the aftermath of a delicious meal and the firelight, candlelight, and community bonhomie. "It doesn't get much better than this," I thought.

While our group, like any community, certainly has its share of difficulties and challenges, it also has times of great good will and wonderful shared experiences. "What," I wondered, "are the things that help make a community feel this good? What helps a community thrive?" That night I was certain it was good people and stimulating conversation, excellent food in a wonderful atmosphere,

music, singing, and beauty and craftsmanship in the physical environment.

When I asked our readers what makes a community thrive, we got several expressions of basically the same answer: "Create your own unique community culture, and then honor and maintain it."

And what contributes to community culture?

"Lifelong learning; emotional and spiritual growth," say Collette Hoff of Goodenough Community and Nancy Lanphear of Songaia Cohousing, both in Washington state. ("And lots of singing.")

"Delicious food and shared meals," says Ma'ikwe Ludwig of Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage in Missouri.

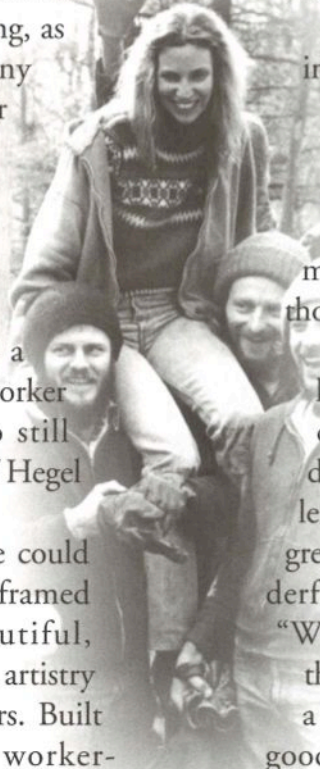
"Understanding and honoring your sacred community land," says Jesse Wolf Hardin of the Earthen Spirituality project in New Mexico.

"Shared extended-family living and service to others," says Mike Green, of Camphill Communities in general and Camphill Soltane in Pennsylvania in particular.

They're all right, of course. Ω

*Diana Leaf Christian is editor of Communities magazine. She lives at Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.*

**"It doesn't  
get much  
better  
than this."**





# Still Thriving

## After All These Years



*At Goodenough's retreat property, Sahale, Addie Day and Amie Hoff*

**A**t the Goodenough Community, a 34-year-old non-residential community in Seattle, we began to thrive when we began developing our own unique community culture.

The culture of any tribe or traditional society, and whichever of the many sub-cultures of North American culture we may identify with (for example: progressive political culture, politically conservative culture, ecologically sustainable culture, New Age culture, and so on) adds texture and feeling to everything we do. Our (sub)culture surrounds us like the air we breathe. It shapes our behavioral habits, our language with each other, and our interpersonal style. It usually does this in subtle ways, such as influencing our ideas about what we consider "natural," what we consider "beautiful." Culture causes us to take some things for granted and to question others. Culture defines what is acceptable and expresses itself in customary ways such as our symbols, traditions, values, and jargon.



One way the Goodenough community learned about creating our own community culture was to slowly recognize that we as a group didn't have one. Instead of culture's gifts of custom, order, and values, what we saw around us was disorganization and confusion about our values and preferences. More specifically, we noticed that we had "problem children" in our midst and a lot of frustration with the inability of parents to supervise their own children. Yet, many of our parents were reluctant to receive feedback on their parenting and defensive when other community members made suggestions for improvement. Children were often disrespectful and wouldn't take direction from adults.

It was difficult to inspire people to participate in community activities. Some of us didn't like structured activities. We disagreed over what we wanted our community atmosphere to be like—some thought we were too intimate and overly friendly; others interpreted our lack of cohesiveness as coldness or lack of caring. Our cultural expression was notably absent. For example, we had songbooks that we rarely used because of complaints that the right songs weren't in them. We didn't use our community sports equipment because it was difficult to get players on the field or people around the ping-pong table.

Our leaders complained of being disrespected and resisted. It seemed impossible to get them to do the team-building necessary for us to collaborate effectively. Our attempts at leadership training usually exposed underlying conflicts about the nature of leadership and the nature of training.

This barren survival mode continued for our first three years. Our community life was dry. It was cold, hard.

By the fourth year we realized what was missing and decided to activate men's and women's cultural programs. Our men's and women's groups each chose a new team of leaders, carefully selecting people who enjoyed creative expression such as singing, dancing, making music, telling stories, and so on. Our cultural awakening happened slowly. Leadership teams took on projects to improve our lives. For



*Men after a work day at Sahale.*

instance, the men began an initiation process with our boys, and parents began to ask each other for help with their children. Parents and children met together and agreed upon a variety of new ways of doing things; for example teaching children to be responsible for all of the children younger than they were. As our values came into focus our confusion abated. We began to acquire a richly cultivated environment.

## **One way we learned about creating our own community culture was to slowly recognize that we didn't have one.**

Now our programs to create and maintain Goodenough community culture include a men's culture, a women's culture, a Conscious Couples Network, a Family Enrichment Network, a Third Age group (for those over 60), and a group for

20- to 30-year-olds. Overlaying and supporting all of these is our annual Human Relations Laboratory, a week-long learning seminar which we began in 1970, and our formal learning program, the Village School for Human Development. Developing these programs took years, and it was arduous work.

We're proud of our community culture, and want to encourage every intentional community to develop their own unique and rich culture, because it can make so much difference to individual and community well-being. I'd like to share with you some of the methods we used.

1. First we developed a clear statement of our intentions, expressed as a covenant. We began by memorizing it and repeating it often at business meetings and cultural gatherings. (*See box, pg. 43.*)

2. We began to use programmatic themes. First there's our annual general theme, which guides our entire community. Each cultural program is encouraged to apply the theme to their own work.

Our current community-wide theme is, "The Power of a Story Comes from Within."

The version of this theme used by the Village School for Human Development



is “Understanding our Lives Involves Working with our Stories.”

Using a theme allows a multi-dimensional approach to support learning by using movies, videos, books, journals and magazines, music, skits, stories, poetry, ritual and guided meditation, movement and dance, art and images.

3. We hired some talented, expressive people from beyond our community to train us in cultural expression. Greg Garbarino, a singer and guitarist, taught us how to use singing at certain critical moments of a meeting. Dyanne Harshman taught us the Dances of Universal Peace. Claudia Fitch, a well-known artist, helped us see the value of painting and drawing and other visual arts to give form to our feelings and insights.

4. We implemented individual growth plans so that everyone, including children, are guided by goals for their development in the year ahead. We consider age-appropriate developmental tasks, identify problems, and plan strategies.

5. Our parents defined the kind of culture they wanted for adults and children. This includes:

*An archery lesson at Sahale. (From left) Bruce Perler, Phil Stark, and Gabe Hershman.*



*Young families as well as middle aged and elders are involved in Goodenough.*

## **Developing a unique and rich community culture can make so much difference to individual and community well-being.**

- Children are to be respectful of guidance from all adults.
- In turn, adults have been trained to use positive reinforcement.
- Children are to defer to the elderly and wait their turn at meal times.
- Parents have granted other adults permission to help them in difficult interactions with their children.
- Parents collaborate in developing growth plans for one another's children, using this wisdom in their shared parenting.

6. We planned together and co-trained each other to improve the traditions we value. We have come to enjoy periods of silence. For instance, we usually observe

an hour of silence after the noon meal and cleanup. We have practiced singing grace and special versions of “Happy Birthday.” We highlight decade birthdays and send people off for vacations and journeys. We take special care to look out for our elderly with stairs, chairs, and any other needs or hazards they may encounter.

7. We learned to value and use specialized skills and training. We discovered that we lacked agreement in many practical areas and that the best way to deal with this was to talk about and then agree on how to do certain things. As a result we identified “Ten Living Arts” for our behavior with each other.

- Expressing our inner life openly and accurately—learning transparency
- Drawing out and understanding the other person
- Being relational (the capacity to intuit and naturally respond to the cues and needs of others)
- Creating a loving atmosphere
- Bringing order to our lives
- Choosing happiness
- Making the most of time
- Being creative and enjoying social creativity
- Having a mature relationship with money
- Making peace
- Culture as resource



Three years ago, after a year of preparation, we made the decision to develop a physical infrastructure with living and working facilities. We bought property for two projects—a rural retreat center, and an in-town center.

Our rural retreat center, which we have now named *Sahale*, meaning “Heavenly” in the Chinook language, has become a wonderful home to our community. The past two years doing retreats on that land has allowed us to appreciate and demonstrate our cultural accomplishments.

However, we were unable to secure permanent financing for the Seattle building we had been working on for two and half years because the financial insti-

***We would rather have our relationship with each other and a meaningful culture than great physical facilities.***

tutions we approached considered the building design too unusual to be easily resold. We had to put the property on the market. And although we did find a buyer and sold the property, we are still more than \$400,000 in debt. We have been in a process of grieving and learning. As of this writing (October, 2003) we’re completing six weeks of evaluation and re-planning.

What is so very clear to us now is that Goodenough’s community culture has been holding us steady, helping us express our feelings, and comforting us. We were greatly helped in our process by a ritual of letting go that we conducted in the building before we sold it. Our culture is our most valuable resource. Right now, we would rather have our relationship with each other and a meaningful, feelingful culture than have great new physical facilities. We consider this evidence of thriving!



*Members celebrating a 50th birthday party.*

## About Goodenough Community

Goodenough Community is an intentional learning community with members living in group and individual households through the greater Seattle area. Established in 1969, we currently have an active population of 35 members, with approximately 200 people participating in events and programs annually. We are a covenantal community, which means we have agreed to uphold and live up to our Covenant, which was adopted in 1984 and revised three times as we’ve continued to learn about community living.

### Goodenough Community Covenant

*As a member of the Goodenough Community, I commit to being the best version of my self:*

- *By entering fully into life’s experiences;*
- *By giving my self fully to the process of transformation through the expression of love;*
- *By trusting the good intentions of each one of us;*
- *By relating to others with respect and acceptance;*
- *By making and keeping agreements with great care;*
- *By being constant through conflict;*
- *By honoring leadership in others as a method to develop the leader in myself;*
- *By taking responsibility for my unique and significant role in the world;*
- *By acknowledging the inner and interconnectedness of all creation, thus being safe and at home in the universe.*

*So be it!*

—C.H.

*Colette Hoff, cofounder of Goodenough Community, is pleased to share more about the Ten Living Arts, the cultural programming, and the lifeways of the Goodenough Community. hoff@goodenough.org; www.goodenough.org.*



# Song and Story

It's the night before school starts in September, 2003, and you can hear us singing through open doors and windows out into the commons. Three of us, following a community tradition, have written new, personalized verses to an old tune ("The Cat Came Back"), celebrating what each of our community children did over the summer. A few of us sing the new stanzas and everyone joins the chorus. A few sample verses of "Schooltime's Back":

*Lucy went to Camp Sealth, and had a real good time.  
She got a lot of postcards, learned silly songs that rhyme.*

*David went a' hiking and found he likes to sing,  
He still waves round that sword and shield, as if he were a king.*

*Chorus: School-time's back, tomorrow is the day.  
School-time's back, summer is a gonner;  
School-time's back, summer-time has slipped away.*

*Ian traveled to the lake, only with his Dad.  
Flying off to Colorado, made his heart feel glad.*

*Amelia learned to ride a bike, and cross the monkey bars.  
She loved the rides at Seaside beach, tilt-a-whirl and bumper cars.*

*Chorus: School-time's back, tomorrow is the day.  
School-time's back, summer is a gonner;  
School-time's back, summer-time has slipped away.*

*Steve's now in 6th grade. He's often wearing red.  
He camped and hiked and traveled, spending morning times in bed.*

*Willem's grown at least a foot, he's dancing twists and twirls.  
Though the Cliff Hanger's his favorite, he'll give any ride a whirl.*

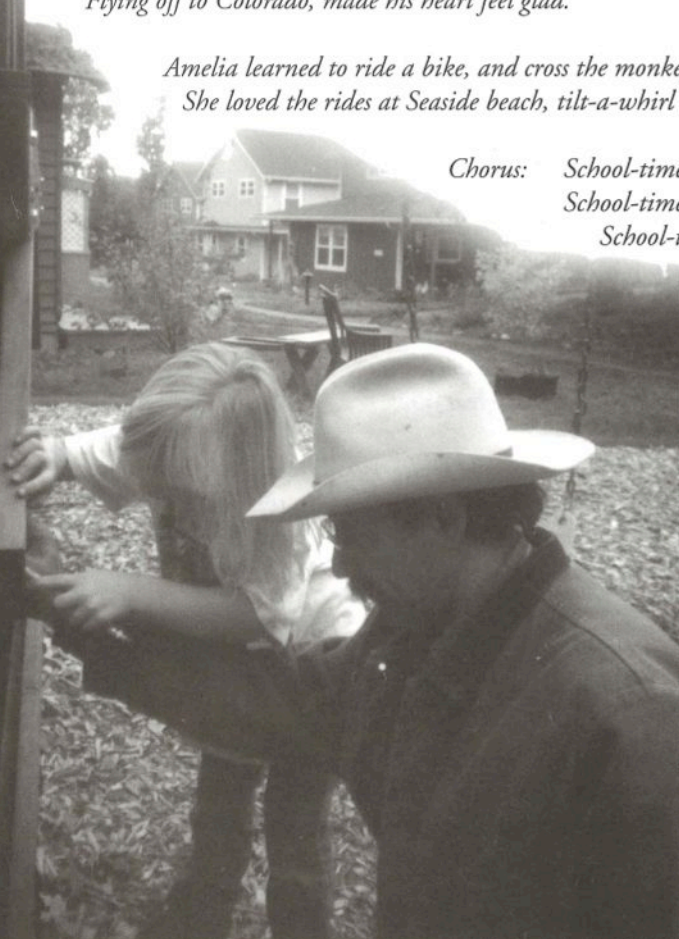
*School-time's back, tomorrow is the day.  
School-time's back, summer is a gonner;  
School-time's back, summer-time has slipped away.*

This evening event is one of many that brings together all the generations at Songaia, our cohousing community in Bothel, Washington. (See box, pg. 46) At our shared dinners in the common house five nights a week we often find ways of sharing conversations between adults and children. Other times the children gather around one table and have fun sharing with each other.

at

# Songaia

BY NANCY LANPHEAR





Every summer we hold our annual three-day community retreat. For the past two years we've held it at a beach/woodland property where we have a wonderful time telling stories, singing songs around the campfire, playing games, cooking and cleaning up together, and doing beadwork and other crafts. The beach allows the children such freedom and offers those of us above 13 to have adult conversations, sing, read a book, or enjoy doing crafts.

Earlier in the summer, we transformed the children's smallish two-swing jungle gym into a larger three-swing play structure with monkey bars, ladder and slide, and a sandbox. The day it was finished there was no question but that all the construction was worth it—with all 12 kids suddenly crawling all over it, swinging and sliding with squeals of delight!

***We established a mentoring program between our four oldest children and four of our adults.***

(I find myself swinging along with the kids whenever the spirit moves me. And several other adults, brave souls, often swing as well.)

Because one of our community values is lifelong learning, we established a mentoring program between our four oldest children and four of our adults. In this mentoring relationship, all of us benefit from giving our time and learning from others. Community living can offer relationships that bring great gifts, both for oldsters and youngsters.

At our sharing circle this last September (where we older ones take "adult time" and get childcare for the children), we talked about children and parenting. First we recalled the values and expectations that our parents held in raising us. Then we recalled what values/expectations we held or are holding for ourselves as we parent nowadays. Last we listed the values/expectations we have or will have as grandparents. The exercise was very helpful, as it indirectly got at the activity



of parenting, and gave us a new perspective on different members' many diverse modes of parenting.

We also have had a couple of circles that focus on the activity of growing older. We're raising questions of community care for our elders, how the younger folks can support us, and what we can expect from our neighbors or need to plan for from the resources outside of the community or from our families living elsewhere. One of my questions was how to allow the members of the community to participate in my dying, just as they have been a part of my living.

As a group we also work with "story," which we define as that which connects the different age groups, generations, and ethnic and cultural groups, and allows us as a community to come together where there may otherwise seem to be little connection. One afternoon some visiting friends introduced us to the "Great Story" or the "Universe Story," from the work of theologian Thomas Berry and physicist Brian Swimme. They also

shared the process of working with the "Universe Beads." In this process, a person creates a string of beads, with each different bead symbolizing and helping "hold" the story of the person's significant place in the universe. Several children and adults gathered on the commons that afternoon to hear our visitor Michael





## About Songaia

Songaia is a cohousing community with 24 adults and 11 children. We live near Bothel, Washington on nearly 11 acres of forest, meadows, and wetlands. Although we've been in existence as a community in the cohousing model for nearly three years, our land, many of our members, and the spirit of intentional community have been together here since 1988. Our physical infrastructure includes six duplex housing units, a Common House with an attached residence, a barn with a wood-working shop, an arts and craft room in progress, and an attached greenhouse.

Our common purpose is to explore the possibility of true community and discover what it is like to live toward building a peaceful world. Other values include "living lightly on the land, life-long learning, and honoring individual, family, and community needs."

—N.L.

share his beads—one for each event that was of significance to him—the birth of the universe, the forming of the elements, the extinction of the dinosaurs, the formation of North America and its many life forms, the emergence of plants and animals, the birth of Jesus and Buddha, the celebration of his marriage to Connie, each of his children's arrival into the world. Our community children held his bead necklace and asked about many of them, sometimes taking turns, other times being so excited about the activity that they all spoke at once.

### **We love being here.**

The Story of Songaia is of critical importance to us. We love being here. The woods, the meadows, the gardens, the commons, and our homes are all sacred space—places where we are learning to live together, where we can experiment with ways of being peaceful. How we share our community Story with others is one way of caring for them ... a way of giving hope for the future. We often sing

a song we wrote (based on the old tune "I love the Mountains").

*I love Songaia, I love community,  
I love the flowers, the dandelions, and the trees,  
I love the people, they mean so very much to me ...*

I believe that "thriving in community" means making it through the challenging times. I think this ability, even more than experiencing the smoother, flowing times, is what bonds us as a group and makes us more conscious.

If you were to stand outside our Common House in the evening you might hear the sound of singing—perhaps the old favorites, "Simple Gifts," or "New Community Bound," or even "Schooltime's Back." No matter the tune or the song, the words and melody will help to carry us through the tough times ... and thrive.

*Nancy Lanphear is a cofounder of Songaia Cohousing in coastal Washington, where she and her husband Fred have lived for 14 years.*





# Where There Are Cooks, There's Good Morale

BY MA'IKWE LUDWIG

It's breakfast time at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage. In the cramped trailer that has served as the community building for the last six years, breakfast is being served for the Cattail Eating Co-op, and the morning ritual of bonding over food is in full swing. Colie announces that she put rosemary in the pancakes this morning. This is met with a few wrinkled noses and a lot of interest from the more adventurous. There's hearty digging in, some discussion of the day's work, and a general good-natured bustle around the table.

Tony comes in late and is served pancakes from a more normal recipe but cooked in the same pan. "Is there some odd herb in the pancakes?" he asks quizzically. The story of rosemary pancakes is shared again—another small moment this morning of cultural story-building around the table.

Food is a many-faceted aspect of community life. I think it is safe to say that food has been a primary bonding tool for humans for millennia. In mainstream culture we no longer grow, gather, prepare,

and eat our food collectively: food has become just another way we isolate ourselves from each other, with single-serve

***"Is there some odd herb in these pancakes?"***

dinners, drive-thru fast food, and standing up in the kitchen eating out of a can. But we are far more likely to experience food

*Dinnertime at Camphill Soltane in Pennsylvania.*





collectively living in community. So, almost effortlessly, communities have returned to one of the primary bonding activities of tribal culture—nourishing each other through food. And that's all to the good, as far as I'm concerned.

Shared meals in intentional communities are like barn-raisings among the Amish: acts of essential, basic care of the community, acts that stimulate joy and caring rather than drudgery. When you help put up a barn or serve a good meal, you're essentially saying to your companions, "I care about you." Food is one way we embody our feelings for others, thus the traditions of "wining and dining" when we're wooing, mailing boxes of cookies to our kids at college, and baking cakes for birthdays. Food becomes part of intentional community culture that is unspoken and ever-present. In the hands of a skilled community cook, recipes are not simply a road map to getting a meal cooked, they are a road map to building a whole new culture.

There are practical aspects to this bonding as well: simple realities that,

when noticed, can create real gratitude between people. For instance, it takes a lot less time and energy (human and environmental) to make one big dinner for 25 than it does for 10 people to make smaller meals for the same number. Being able to eat freshly prepared meals every night and only

### ***Tony makes white bean galettes and tops them with roasted red peppers.***

having to cook them a couple times a month means you have a lot more time for other things. And it brings us variety—even good cooks get bored eating their own meals night after night.

When you understand the service cooks do for us in community, gratitude flows every time you sit down to a meal. It's easy to feel grateful about food—the reminders come several times a day and

are very tangible. Great meals are one of the harder things to take for granted in community because they're literally in your face multiple times a day. (Not that some folks don't manage to take a fine repast for granted, but I truly believe that community cooks get more direct appreciation than business managers, cow milkers, and agenda planners, simply because cooks touch everyone's senses directly every day.)

I've lived in two communities where cooking was a volunteer activity. Over a period of time, I've noticed a simple equation—when there are good cooks there is good community morale. People who are fed well have a higher tolerance for little annoyances, and have more time to do the things that brought them to community in the first place. They have the opportunity to relax a couple times a day that they may not have had otherwise. And all this makes for good morale.

Even mediocre cooks make life easier. But consistently good cooks can make all the difference in a community's well-being.



*Preparing a meal at Camphill Soltane.*



I'm not saying food is all that matters in community, or sharing meals is the only way to bond. There are a hundred different ways to make community work well, and there are people that, given the choice within a community, don't opt to be part of collective food making and eating. But for me, shared cooking and shared meals are at the very heart of communal bonds. This bias comes, no doubt, from my first community experience where everyone did eat together, and bonding in other ways was difficult for me. All I can say for sure is that by the time I arrived at Dancing Rabbit, it never even occurred to me to not sign on as part of an eating co-op. For me, community and food are inseparable.

Along with this preference has come the recognition that, even for those for whom food is a big thing, it's hard to cook well every day. So it's important to have a team of cooks rather than just one, because the quality of food in our lives affects the quality of life itself, and to cook well we need time off. Mediocre food saps the energy from people, and fails to nourish either body or soul at the level it takes to get community rolling and keep it rolling.

Healthy, delicious meals prepared with love give us moments of respite during even the most challenging times. When a rain-storm this summer flooded the hole we'd dug for a cistern next to one of our big buildings, and the building threatened to collapse into the hole, a whole gang of people were up at the crack of dawn working to abate disaster. Another thoughtful community member made waffles and took them out to the bleary-eyed crew. This resulted in real gratitude, and a renewed energy to finish the work. In this same mode of thoughtfulness, low group energy can be shifted in an afternoon of concerted effort by one person who notices that the group needs a lift and carefully prepares a special meal. Maybe it's the first chocolate anyone's seen in awhile, or a meal that

everyone knows is labor intensive to prepare. Maybe it's simply warm, fresh bread waiting at the end of a long day. Food heals and comforts; it brings us together. Sometimes, when things are rough, it keeps us together long enough to get through it.

Food is also one way we express our unique contributions to building community. We learn people by the foods they prepare or the quality of their attention in

***Five years later, I can't remember the contents of our conflict, but I sure remember his fabulous meals.***

the meal: Jeffrey makes us latkes; Tony makes white bean galettes and tops them with roasted red peppers; Cecil spends the whole day making tofu, and then stir fries it with spicy Szechwan sauce. Alyson

makes something new each time and takes real care in picking her menus; Laird prepares gourmet feasts and presents them with bright colors and edible flowers; Susan offers the "treat of the month" service, delivering sweets to the tables of those who choose to participate.

These are labors of love, and are recognized as such by anticipatory looks, satisfied bellies, and content communitarians. And each labor of love is different, with each person's own history and preferences worked into them. Diversity in community is often a double-edged sword—some folks can be too different from what we're comfortable with. But in the foods we prepare for each other, our diversity as community members has the potential to be expressed most graciously, and accepted most easily.

One day recently, after a summer of intense work and healthy meals, the general contractor for our unfinished Common House brought everyone donuts. In the midst of a half-day work party to clean up the land (which believe me, is capable of being a drag) someone rang the gathering bell, and we and the

*Dinner time at Sahale, Goodenough Community's rural retreat.*





contractor suddenly had a cheerful, mid-morning bonding moment over a bunch of sugar and grease.

It was lovely.

For all its bonding potential, food can also be a source of conflict in community—one of the top five in my experience. We fight about whether to prepare meat in our kitchens; we fight about what's truly organic; we fight about sugar and microwaves and what exactly "vegan" means. There's an endless list of things communities debate under the heading of food. But meals are also where we relax together, and moments are created in that relaxing that allow us to meet one another openly and resolve our differences. The benefit of "breaking bread together" isn't just a Biblical metaphor; it's literally true.

When I lived at East Wind community one of my persistent conflicts was with a member who's brilliant in the kitchen. He could turn any leftovers into an interesting, nourishing, irresistible lunch, and he did it every week. I could be mad as hell at this guy, and every Tuesday I'd walk into the dining room with gratitude brimming from my soul for the cook

in him. For me, his good food made it possible to live in community with him. Five years later, I can't remember the contents of our conflict, but I sure remember his fabulous meals.

We also bond in the growing and preparation processes. At a workshop a few years ago with Chuck Durrett, the architect who with his wife Katie McCamant brought cohousing to North America, I learned that the single most spontaneously used 15 square feet in a cohousing Common House is the space between the kitchen and dining room. People just like to hang out while food is

being prepared, or grown. I've had some of my best conversations over a row of emerging spinach, or over a pot of boiling pasta. The work scene that gets created around food is one that lends itself to conversation (as opposed to the time we spend working in front of computers, or doing accounting). Preparing food is tangible and that helps us be present, and except for those times of pulling in the harvest before a frost or the last 20 minutes of a cooking shift, it is generally a relaxed time. So people can, and usually do, connect well with each other while punching down bread or planting strawberries.

In the winter, as canning jars are opened, the people who contributed to the food are remembered. The gardener, the salsa maker, the canner, all appear in our memories at our winter tables, and the community seems to expand again to our summer population levels. It is not only that collective memory gets triggered (reminiscing, after all, is not unique to communitarians); it is that the real labor of real, committed people comes alive again and is appreciated anew. Bonds are maintained through the preservation and later sharing of food, even long after the person is no longer living in the community. The memories associated with pre-

## Cooks touch everyone's senses directly every day.



An outdoor meal at Lothlorien Co-op.

served food are like a kind of short-term cultural memory.

In the same way, recipes are shared culture. The passing down of granny's secret biscuit recipe is a time-honored family cultural tradition; in community, we do the same thing, often across space and time and between communities. When I wanted to learn to make "soysauge," I went to *The Farm Cookbook*, and suddenly had another connection to that well-known Tennessee community. When Nicole arrived this summer fresh from a communities tour, she brought a honey-mustard dressing recipe from Lost Valley in Oregon that quickly became a favorite when poured over Tamar's greens. And I carry a dozen uses for nut butters from my time at East Wind that have graced meals in many community kitchens since.

Food and culture have always been inseparable, and in our sharing, our memories, and our ongoing work, community culture is created and sustained every day by the meals we serve each other. Perhaps some day Colie's Rosemary Pancakes will be standard fare at community gatherings. That is, after all, how new culture gets created—in the small moments of our daily lives, when someone is paying attention.

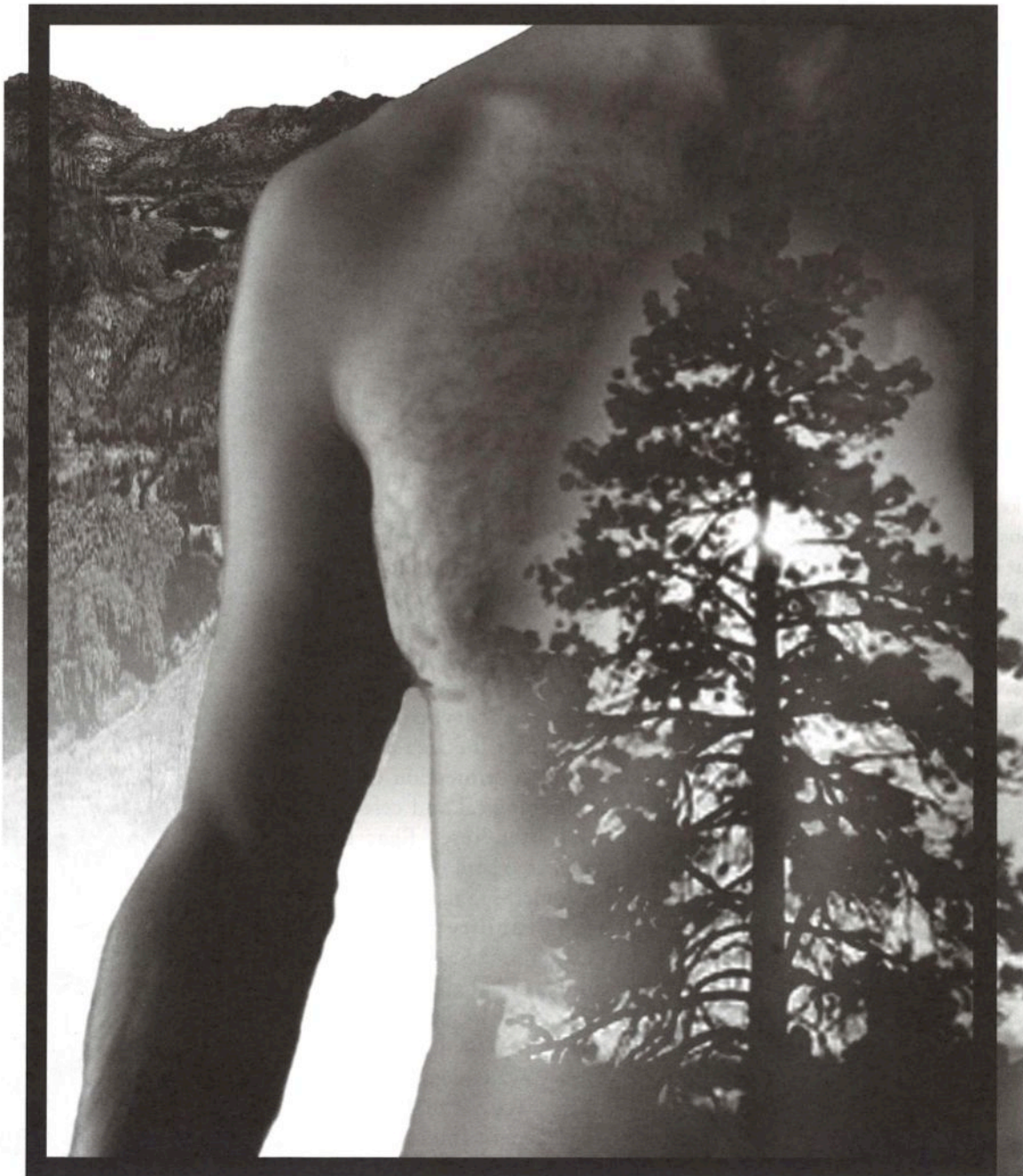
*Ma'ikwe Ludwig lives at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage as well as in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she teaches food ecology, is helping start a new food co-op, and organizing a spring Desert Bioregion Communities Gathering for spring 2004. She is the former kitchen manager at both East Wind and Sarvis Point communities in Missouri, and owns and runs the Good for the Earth Gourmet Food Company in Albuquerque. avatar@ic.org; 505-256-8328.*

Preparing a meal at Lothlorien Student Co-op, Berkeley.





# **The Ecology of Community, Part I: *Commitment to Place***





*A thriving community, in my opinion, is defined not by its size, how long its members live there, or how profitable or even self-sufficient it might be, but when its residents honor the land and each other, and collectively benefit the whole. It is the proactive expression of interdependency—between us, all of life, the ground we walk on, and the air we breathe.*

—J.W.H.

**T**here are seven usually shallow river crossings between where we park most vehicles, and the Sweet Medicine Sanctuary proper. While we transport gear in our little jeep, we encourage anyone who can walk to take the time to come in slowly, each barefoot splash of cool river water thrusting us out of our verbose minds and into our creature bodies, alerting us to the real world, awakening not only conscious presence but child-like engagement and delight. Come spring the roar of new life delivers us into a world of hunger and hope, and the winter is just cold enough to encourage a deep and helpful silence. Now in the fall the elk whistle, and golden cottonwood leaves glisten in the sun where once no trees stood.

When I first arrived here some 25 years ago I thought of myself as a veritable gypsy, loving all places equally, and loving the thrill of motion most of all. And if I were going to select somewhere to

settle down, I'd already decided it would be the mountains of Montana, or among the beautiful fir near the border of Oregon and California. You can picture my surprise coming to a halt in the volcanic Gila mountains of Southwest New Mexico, and feeling at home like never before. You can imagine how fortuitous and even destined my arrival felt, as well as how insistent the voices of the canyon were as they whispered for, and prodded me to stay.

For years after, I walked not only the seven river crossings, but the entire 10-mile trip to town for supplies ... having sold my truck, my motorcycle, and even the engine out of my converted school bus in order to raise the earnest money necessary to cinch my offer on the land. Long before this future community had either permanent residents or visiting interns, there was this single soul quieting the mind sufficiently to hear and adhere to the will, the intent, the song of a most special canyon place. Through the turning of the seasons I became increasingly aware of why I was here, and what I was meant to do. First I recognized—at the very deepest levels—that the land would mean my personal deliverance and refuge, reassignment, and reward. Next it sunk in that I was needed here, as much as I needed this place. That I was called to give back to the canyon, restoring its riparian forests and indigenous wildlife.

That the conservation and restoration of the area ecology meant the protection of the archaeological and ceremonial sites here. That the inspired land was teaching us something that we have a responsibility to try and pass on to the rest of human kind. And that even as we guarantee its wildness, we have to make this sanctuary available to all those who need its medicine or can benefit from its magic show-and-tell.

**One doesn't  
"seek out" or  
"design"  
community so  
much as answer  
an ancient and  
resident call.**





It's only now wholly clear to me that the world is a set of promises and follow-through, and that the residents of this Sanctuary have at least seven primary commitments that bind us to self and purpose, Earth and nature, and those folks whose hope and home is our own. We're not talking about dogma or rules, but rather, a common adherence to and faith in certain basic considerations, values, and goals. The continuity and cohesion are clear when it comes to Buddhist retreat centers, but also the most diverse communities devoted to the furtherance of diversity, such as gay and womyn's land, pacifists and eco-activists sharing communal housing, dance and theater collectives, large rural ecovillages as well as isolated wilderness sanctuaries like this one.

It seems one doesn't "seek out" or "design" community so much as answer an ancient and resident call. It's not only our minds deciding on a saner, more meaningful lifestyle, or rationally choosing between interesting groups or places ... but rather, an irresistible siren's song leading us into the moss-draped lap of coastal redwoods or the green bosom of the Rockies, to a farm in the heart of Midwestern grasslands, or to a certain clan on a particular bend of a destiny-laden river. We are often drawn to a specific bioregion as well as to a new way of being and doing. We're called to learn how to live in the company of like-minded and like-hearted folks engaged in the day-to-day work of magically remaking their lives, our society, and our world. Called into intuitive communication and relationship with the larger world, as well as with one another. Learning from the informative land, and learning how to best restore, inhabit, and honor it. A piece of property is so much more than a platform from which we launch even the most noble of social experiments, and more than a home base for our children and heirs. We're drawn into wordless intimacy through the power of our caring and the seductions of a hand-tilled garden—intimacy with the land that not only sustains but instructs

and affirms us ... that reawakens us to the sensuous experience and ageless wisdom of our native selves, that reunites us with the earthen as well as the ethereal.

Ecology is the study of interdependency among the innumerable elements of a beautifully interwoven whole. Impacting any single part will have unforeseeable effects on the rest, and one cannot understand any of the constituent parts outside of their greater context. Similarly, an ecology of communities looks at the ways in which human societies interact with, are influenced by, and are dependent upon the enchanted natural world.

Nature serves as the context for the most sustainable communities, whether a grouping of people or of other species. A spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy human society is unlikely without an awareness of—and a reciprocal relationship with—the larger, more-than-human tribe. Truly no community, urban or rural, exists apart from the land. Even the most

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insular and distracted populations act out their lives not on a stage but in a place. Ignored, taken for granted, and often covered with a suffocating layer of asphalt and concrete, the part of the Earth where people live nevertheless continues to exert an influence over the psychologies of those people and the form of their creations. A town's roads are shaped and routed by the local topography, and architectural design is partly a response to the predominant weather patterns. I believe that to some

degree a region even helps sculpt the characteristic temperament of its inhabitants. Consider the conservative independence fostered by life in northern Canada and Alaska, the austerity and simplicity of plains dwellers, the laconic sensuality of the steaming Southwest. Intentional communities in eastern North America feel different from those in the West, even when their vision and makeup are much the same. The character of Twin Oaks is a result not only of its founders' intentions, its internal processes and cottage industries—but by the history and hills, the energies and landscapes of Virginia. And the Sweet Medicine Sanctuary was formed not through effort and clever planning so much as in response to the personality of the wild Gila mountains, the imperatives and implorings of a palpable place of power.

Wherever it may be situated, a balanced, vibrant community consciously takes its cues from the natural world around it, and responds to the needs of that world as it provides for its own. The community functions in tandem with local Nature as co-members of a greater community, as pledged allies, and as lovers contributing to the well-being of the whole. Such a society can be said to be fundamentally and ritually bedded in the adjoining natural world, as much as plants are bedded in the living soil. It is this essential, comprehensible grounding that provides us with the wisdom of stewards, the chance for survival, and an essential opportunity for presence, grace, and delight.

*Part II of this article, in the Spring '04 issue, looks at reinhabiting and restoring community land.*

*Jesse Wolf Hardin is author of *Kindred Spirits* (Swan/Raven, 2001) and *Gaia Eros* (New Page, 2004). He and his partner and Loba Wolf Hardin host short-term and long-term residents for quests and wild foods gathering and preparation. The Earthen Spirituality Project & Sweet Medicine Women's Center Box 509, Reserve, NM 87830; [www.concentric.net/~earthway](http://www.concentric.net/~earthway).*



# Finding my Heart at Camphill Soltane

BY MIKE GREEN

*Camphill Soltane is an intentional community on 50 acres of rolling countryside in Chester County, Pennsylvania, made up of 40 companions (young adults with developmental disabilities) and 35 coworkers and their families who are long-term, live-in volunteers. Camphill Soltane is one of 100 Camphill communities worldwide, each guided by Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy, incorporating spiritual striving with respect and care for the natural world. Camphill Soltane's program features a continuing education "college program" for companions focused on developing the qualities for being a good human being.*

This past summer my wife Carol and I spent two weeks at Camphill Soltane, where our daughter Annie is a companion finishing her second year of the group's college program. Our goal was to prepare for and

then serve as substitute house parents ("house holders") at Gawain House, one of eight households at Soltane, while the permanent householders were on vacation. A householder helps inspire, organize, lead, and teach other members of the household, and the household is the foundation of Camphill community life.

This was our first experience of living in a Camphill community. I have visited almost all of the Camphill communities in North America during the past three years as a part of our work to develop a Camphill community here in Colorado, but had never participated in a Camphill community's daily life before.

Carol and I learned that life at Soltane can be very rich and at times demanding. We arrived with a great respect for the work of the community, and left with a much deeper appreciation of the daily

experiences of coworkers and companions which create this home and community. We learned that stepping into another person's shoes allows us to see through direct experience what we could never know through ideas and words alone.

I expected to find out more about how Soltane worked—with its weaknesses, dilemmas, and conflicts made more visible—and this did happen. What was so striking, though, were the efforts each day by so many companions and coworkers to do the best they could in all situations. Coworkers and companions expect a very high standard of behavior for themselves and for each other.

Eighty-five people living together seven days a week with appreciation, care, and struggle is powerful. I was startled that almost any event happening to anyone, such as sickness, personal problems, or a triumph or celebration, was known by all quickly. This concern did not feel like gossip but a kind of care rarely seen in everyday life. For example, I have a hip problem which bothered me at times during our stay at Soltane. On my problem days, people repeatedly asked about my hip. Empathy is strong, as people really are connected. I realized that, while Carol and I had less privacy and fewer individual choices, we were offered a rare sense of belonging and collective purpose. We so much enjoyed the many conversations around the kitchen counter, walking on the walking path, or late at night. We just felt full with people.



Companions attend Camphill Soltane's special college to learn effective living skills.





*Coworkers and companions are encouraged to enjoy the natural world at Camphill Soltane's 50 acres.*

Carol and I live a fairly typical life of over-activity, and our home is often a place we collapse rather than a place that nurtures us. As we participated in Gawain House life, I recognized all the ways Soltane creates a sense of home. Almost all of those who work here also live here literally 24 hours a day, seven days a week, creating a sense of relationship, connection, and foundation for life critical to all else at Soltane. People know they belong here. "Life-sharing" is what Soltane residents call this connection of living, learning, and working. We found such simple pleasure in all the opportunities for connection. One Sunday evening a community-wide potluck was born within a few hours' notice, accompanied by piano music, Brazilian dance, a sing-along from "The Sound of Music," and wonderful shared food.

I appreciated our work—making meals in the kitchen, cleaning house, assisting companions, working outside in the gardens. It meant a great deal to me to work hard with my hands rather than thinking

and talking so much like I do in my normal life. It was very satisfying to just work, not trying to figure out the meaning of it—just doing what was in front of me. "Making a home" is a real

***I began the two weeks focused on my helping companions, and ended realizing how much I was helped by them.***

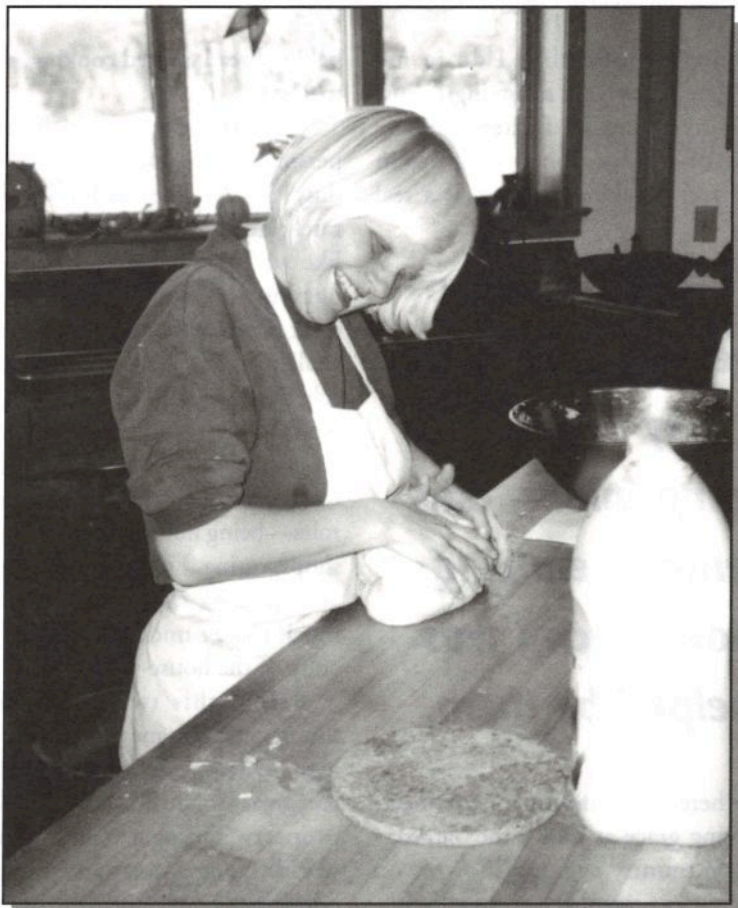
priority here, with morning circle meetings, saying grace at meals, the Saturday night community evening, flowers on tables, cleaning together, art on all walls,

baking bread, shared cooking, and shared meals.

It was very challenging though to find personal space and times for being "off duty" in the houseparent role. The work is rarely finished. At times Carol and I felt like we couldn't find any time that was ours alone. Living where you work has great benefits but also clearly presents real challenges for rest and private time. Our schedule would change, new demands would appear, and people would come to us at any moment. I can well see the dilemmas of coworkers balancing many roles—being house parents, leading workshops, caring for children, being a couple, and needing individual time. I have a much clearer understanding of the difficulty of the house-parent job.

Before this two-week stay, I had thought of Soltane principally as a college. During our visit I came to also recognize Soltane as a beautiful piece of property and as a part of the natural world. Companions and coworkers are continually interacting with nature in





daily life. The herbs and vegetables in our meals often come from the Soltane garden; berries and apples come from the 300-tree orchard. There is something significant about a household picking blueberries together, making blueberry pie from scratch, and then sitting down to a meal together. At night I would sit on the porch listening to the sounds of the land, often contemplating my usual sense of disconnection from nature. The effort at Soltane to keep us all aware of the cycles of nature creates a sense of well-being and a feeling of having your feet on the ground.

Cornelius Pietzner, one of Camphill Soltane's founders, once said to me, "The purpose of Camphill life is the fundamental transformation of all people in the community." I feel that Soltane is an environment that asks each person to learn and grow. What makes each day meaningful amidst many changing demands and much hard work is a perspective that Soltane life is self-development. People engage in critical thinking—"How can we do this better? What did we learn?" I realized that the challenge of "life sharing" and Soltane's daily activities invite each



person to become a better human being. Community residents are encouraged to exercise patience, kindness, listening, endurance, and flexibility.

The rituals, practices, and rhythm of daily life at Soltane helped me recognize myself more deeply. Art and beauty and music are cultivated in home life, in the grounds, and in meetings in many different ways. Nature is visible and nourished. Community is vital and alive. Values and ideas are explored. Spiritual life is nourished. Learning is appreciated.

As Annie's father, I'm very sensitive to the negative effects of someone being labeled "disabled." The label often has made Annie invisible to others as the wonderful person she is, with many admirable qualities. I have never experienced anything so powerful in dissolving this negative label as being in a Camphill life-sharing community. I noticed day by day that Carol and I came to see the companions of Gawain House as ever more whole people. Waking up and going to sleep under the same roof creates a special

opportunity for knowing each other. The context of Soltane allowed us to really see companions as people with many fine qualities—seeing beneath sometimes difficult exterior behaviors. The pace and style of Soltane activities is designed so that companions can participate and can contribute. This was a great benefit to me

## ***"How can we do this better? What did we learn?"***

as I could see the talents and wisdom of companions that I would have missed in conventional life. I learned each day so much from these many small interactions. I began the two weeks focused on my helping companions, and ended my stay realizing how much I was helped by them. They helped me find my heart. They helped me slow down and pay attention

to life right in front of me. I was encouraged to be honest. I so enjoyed finding myself through their eyes, smiles, and words. In a certain way I realize that Camphill's great gift is bringing people with disabilities out into the world—in a way that companions can touch peoples' hearts and invite them to "see."

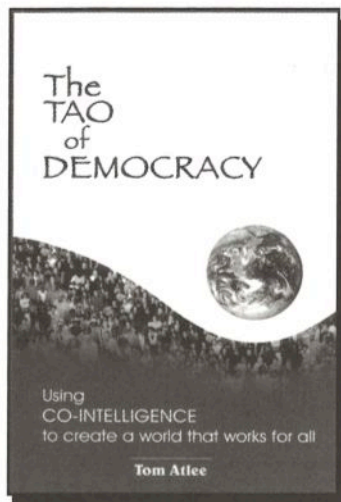
What did this time at Soltane mean to us? We learned more about Camphill life. We developed a much deeper appreciation of coworkers and of companions. We can recognize Soltane more clearly as a spiritual community where each person can learn and grow as good human beings. We feel stronger as a couple having shared this time as householders. It was a time that touched our hearts each day. It reminds us what makes life worth living.

*Mike Green is Annie Green's father, a companion at Camphill Soltane. He works with the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Training Group. Mikegreen@msn.com.*





# REVIEWS



## *The Tao of Democracy Using Co-Intelligence to Create a World That Works for All*

by Tom Atlee

The Writers' Collective, 2003  
Pb., 317 pp. \$15.95 + \$4.50 S&H

Available only from:  
The Co-Intelligence Institute  
[www.taoofdemocracy.com](http://www.taoofdemocracy.com)

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Although *The Tao of Democracy* wasn't written specifically for intentional communities, I'm so inspired by it—anticipating how my community could benefit from many of its techniques and processes—that my copy is now dog-eared, bristling with post-it notes, and with paragraphs underlined in yellow on nearly every page. I'm reading it a second time, going slowly, studying. I'm typing up and memorizing whole passages. I plan to use much of what I've learned when facilitating community meetings, in group process situations, when helping resolve conflicts (and when involved in conflicts myself), and when just

plain talking to fellow community members about our shared visions and challenges. The book is rich, juicy, and empowering. I want communities everywhere to benefit from it too.

Author Tom Atlee wrote the book for anyone who cares about productive, holistic, democratic process—from small groups and intentional communities to activist organizations, nonprofits, towns, cities, and nations. Growing increasingly frustrated with the dysfunction and combativeness of most activist groups, Tom turned his attention to the *process* of activism. How do groups of highly diverse passionate individuals make effective decisions, resolve conflicts within their own ranks, and tap the creative potential inherent in strongly held differences? As a result of his inquiry he coined the term “co-intelligence”—which occurs when a group uses certain kinds of techniques to access and benefit from shared and diverse beliefs, feelings, and experiences. As a result co-intelligent groups demonstrate considerably more intelligence, creativity, and holistic wisdom than most groups do.

“It's what intelligence might look like,” says Tom, “if we deeply understood wholeness, interconnectedness, and co-creativity.”

Given a supportive structure and resources, he says, diverse ordinary people can work together to reach common ground, creating wise and deliberate policy that reflects the best interests of everyone involved. *The Tao of Democracy* explores the evidence that this really works, shows numerous examples in groups both small and large, and considers the possibility that using co-intelligence “could allow us to produce a new culture capable of consciously evolving itself.”

What really excited me were the examples of techniques and methods already used by ordinary folks to achieve excellent insights, policies, and decisions—techniques and methods any of us can use right now.

For example, consider Semco, a Brazilian manufacturing company where transparency and openness about people's actions and company finances are taken to a whole new level. At Semco, before people are hired or promoted to leadership positions they're interviewed and approved by all who will be working for them. Every six months managers are evaluated by those

who report to them, and the whole company is evaluated by everyone, with results posted for all to see. Besides profit sharing (with employees deciding among themselves how to spend their percentage of profits), all financial information about operations costs, salaries, and profits and losses, are posted publicly. The books are open. Employees are trained in how to read

## **What if we had this much mutual accountability in our own communities?**

and understand balance sheets and cash flow statements. What if we had this much mutual accountability—and education about how to evaluate the data—in our own communities?

And consider community health. In 1992 the city of Seattle sought a way to improve its long-term cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. People knew they could improve sustainability if they regularly focused attention on it, and they could focus their attention by regularly assessing and measuring sustainability. But what factors would they measure? So organizers of the Sustainable Seattle Civic Panel convened 10 topic groups with a hundred people who spent more than 2500 volunteer hours figuring out ways to measure Seattle's sustainability over time. They finally settled on 99 indicators of Seattle's community health, including not only indicators of economic health, such as the hours of work at the median wage required to support basic needs, but also quality-of-living factors such as the tons of solid waste generated, and recycled, per person, and the percentage of Seattle citizens that grew vegetable gardens, and the number of wild salmon runs in local streams. The group found and publicized statistics for these indicators whenever possible, and encouraged city institutions to regularly measure and report them also. Similarly, the Himalayan country of Bhutan doesn't focus on its Gross National Product, but on its “Gross National Happiness,” as measured by four factors—equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, conserving its fragile mountain ecology, promoting basic humane values and culture, and strengthening good local governance.



What indicators would we come up with to measure the health and sustainability of our own communities? The percentage of members who earn an income on site or who attend community meetings? The percentage of families with children? Soil fertility? The amount of organic produce grown? The number of songbirds in spring?

Then there are Citizens Deliberative Councils, in which a group of people are selected (often by a professional survey organization) to make policy recommendations about one or more particularly challenging issue in a town, neighborhood, or whole country. Each person in the group represents a particular segment of the population—or a strongly held view by a particular segment of the population. The number of individuals representing these widely diverse segments or views are in proportion to their actual numbers in the region being represented. (A group selected for Canada in 1991, for example, consisted of 12 articulate people from every socio-economic level and geographic region. Nine were English speaking, two were French-speaking, and one was a First Nations citizen.) The citizens deliberative council receives presentations on all sides of the issues by experts and has professional facilitation for their deliberations. Much emphasis is given to deeply listening to one another's stories, to "walk a mile in each other's moccasins." The Canadian group, for example, after one weekend of intensive presentations and meetings, came up with agreed-upon shared policy recommendations for Canada's serious economic and political challenges which no group of Canadian legislators had ever been able to do. Other, similar citizen's deliberative councils have taken place in India, Australia, England, and Denmark.

Consider the application of this process for creating proposals in intentional communities, for example, an ad hoc committee with people from all perspectives about, say, a community's agricultural future. Imagine proponents of tilling, no-tilling, polyculture, monoculture, only-small-livestock, no-livestock, etc., who might craft an innovative proposal for the community's farming policy that could take into account the interests and concerns of everyone in the community.

Other cited examples of applied co-intelligence include Listening Circles/



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Talking Stick Circles, Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry, Principled Negotiation, Transformational Mediation, Multiple-Viewpoint Drama, and many more. I especially liked Fran Peavey's Strategic Questions—a series of open-ended questions that focus attention on, clarify, and illuminate issues for people and help them feel empowered to create solu-

## What indicators would we come up with to measure community health and sustainability?

tions and take action; Juanita Brown's World Cafe—small groups of people going from small table to table for specified periods of time to discuss issues of importance; and Jim Rough's Dynamic Facilitation—addressing conflict by drawing out people's comments (listed as Challenges, Solutions, Concerns, and Information) on large easel paper sheets posted around the room, and allowing the visual display of the issue this way to trigger innovative solutions.

The author uses co-intelligent examples like these and others to further explore the nature of respect, passionate truth-telling, heartfelt listening, deep dialogue, and using diversity as group strength. He explores the nature of democracy and democratic deliberation, of power-with and shared power as compared to power over, the dimensions of consensus decision-making, and especially creating what he calls a Wisdom Culture, in which people would "use diversity to generate or access deeper, broader, higher forms of wisdom than any person or culture could alone ... consciously engaged in a continuous process of growth and transformation." In fact, he says, in the current ever accelerating and ever more dangerous political, economic, and environmental climate, such a Wisdom Culture is necessary if we are even to survive.

Unfortunately, because *The Tao of Democracy* is self-published on demand (you order it from the website and are mailed a copy) it doesn't have a wholesale price and bookstores can't afford to stock it. The owner of a tiny radical activist bookstore in Toronto was all set to carry it on my recommendation but had to decline once

## Visions of Utopia: Experiments in Sustainable Culture

Geoph Kozeny, a core staff member of the first two editions of the *Communities Directory* and a featured columnist in *Communities* magazine, spent 4 years creating this documentary about intentional communities. Now you can actually see how some communities look "up close" while you listen to community members tell their stories in their own words. Featuring:

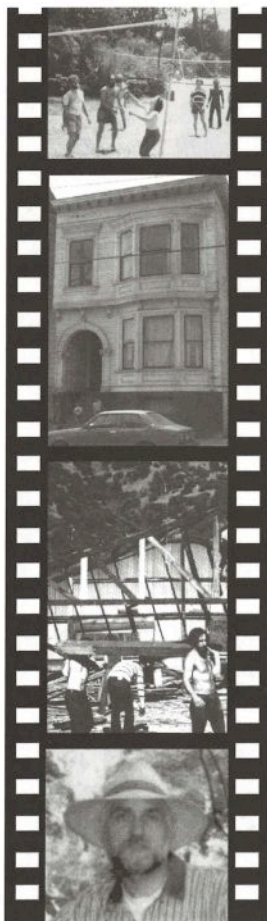
- A brief history of 2500 yrs of shared living
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  - Camphill Special School ('61, PA), Twin Oaks ('67, VA), Ananda Village ('69, CA), Breitenbush Hot Springs ('77, OR), Purple Rose Collective ('78, CA)
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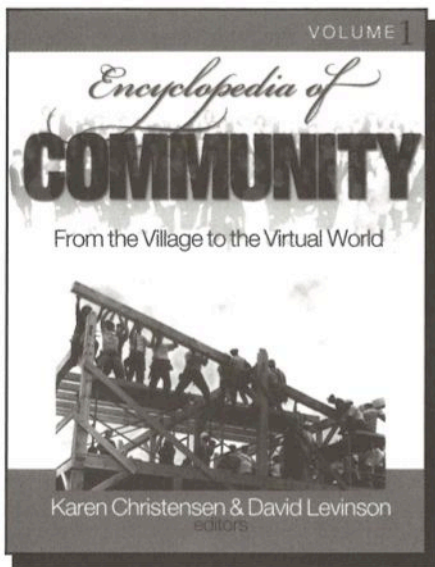
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he learned how it's distributed. (And also because it's self-published, the book's too-thin paper cover curls back in a humid climate and won't lie flat.)

But no matter. This seminal book will get out there nonetheless, and hopefully will go a long way in helping activists, communarians, and ordinary citizens realize that, by drawing on the smorgasbord of co-intelligent processes, we're all considerably smarter, more innovative, and more powerful co-creating together than we ever could be alone.



## *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World*

Karen Christensen & David Levinson,  
Editors

Sage Publications/  
Berkshire Publishing Group, 2003  
Hb, Four Volumes, 1,839 pp. \$425.00

*Reviewed by Diana Leafe Christian*

Probably there's a rule somewhere saying you can't review a whole encyclopedia, especially one you've personally written for, but here's this brand-new serious, academic-yet-accessible reference work about community, and I can't resist. The *Encyclopedia of Community* was created for college and high school libraries and costs \$425. So while you may not want to run out and buy the four-volume set, you might want to suggest that your local librarians do.

The *Encyclopedia* was created to help offer inspiration and information about

that elusive experience that increasing numbers of people try to recall, long for, and don't get enough of—a sense of community, a sense of connection. It includes the major topics of traditional city neighborhood and rural small town communities, indigenous communities, community activists, and much more. It's impressive list of topic editors include Michael Shuman (author of *Going Local*) and Ray Oldenberg (author of *The Great Good Place*). Sample entries (most of which are short articles): Saul Alinsky, Civil Disobedience, Feminism, Grass Roots Leadership, Jane Jacobs, Arthur Morgan, Burning Man, Harlem, Las Vegas, Levittown, Silicon Valley, Warsaw Ghetto, Chinatown, Hollywood, Little Italies, Homelessness, Gentrification, New Urbanism, Sprawl, Smart Growth, Utopia—a juicy smorgasbord of information and inspiration.

But its entries on intentional communities interested me most. It's not one section, but many different entries interspersed alphabetically throughout the work, although many are lined up after the phrase "Intentional Communities and ... " The editor of the 53 Intentional Communities entries is our own Bill Metcalf of Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, community scholar and *Communities* magazine columnist. I had the honor of co-authoring the "Introduction to Intentional Communities" entry with him, and also of writing the article on "Intentional Communities and Governance."

Even so, I didn't know what-all I'd find in the IC entries *Encyclopedia*. I loved it that friends and colleagues in the communities movement wrote about "Ecovillages" (Albert Bates), "Cohousing" (Charles Durrett), and "Intentional Communities and Daily Life" (Geoph Kozeny). (See "*Community Grapevine*," pg. 8.) I was pleased to see 11 entries on communities in different areas worldwide (India, Japan, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, Eastern Europe and Russia, and five different entries for Western Europe). Two geographic entries, "The United States and Canada," and "Israel," had two entries each—"Current Movement" and "—History." Very cool.

But what was not included also intrigued me. There was no entry on "Communes" or "Sixties Communes." Um, aren't they part of our contemporary history? I expected the historic U.S. com-

munities (Amana, New Harmony, Oneida, Zoar, etc.), and the big German Protestant communities (Bruderhof, Hutterites). Of course there were entries for The Farm, Twin Oaks, Auroville, and Findhorn. But why nothing on Camphill Communities, Catholic Worker Communities, or L'Arche? How come Arcosanti was listed but not Alpha Farm or Ananda Village? Why The Family (aka Children of God) and Hare Krishnas, but not the Sirius (western spirituality), Lama Foundation (eastern spirituality), or Koinonia (activist Christianity)? In Europe, why Damanhur but not ZEGG or Kommune Niederkauungen? And Down Under, while Riverside Community is listed, why not Crystal Waters? (And in Latin America, where's Gaviotas?)

And the only prominent person categorized as one of the Intentional Communities entries is Osho, a.k.a. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. (Huh?) If I were doing a Who's Who of Intentional Community luminaries I'd certainly include Dorothy Day (Catholic Worker movement); Karl König (Camphill movement); Stephen Gaskin (The Farm); Kat Kinkade (Twin Oaks); Caroline Estes (Alpha Farm); Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson (Sirius); Jan Gudman-Høyer (cohousing, Denmark); Katie McCamant and Charles Durrett (cohousing, North America); and Robert and Diane Gilman and Ross and Hildur Jackson (ecovillages). And for that matter, why not international IC scholar Bill Metcalf, or Laird Schaub and Geoph Kozeny, veteran FIC activists extraordinaire?

But I quibble. Browsing through this stimulating reference work has simply got me playing "Here's how I'd do it." But in fact folks, this is what long-time intentional community activists might have never thought likely—a mainstream-culture library work that takes our little humble home-grown alternative culture seriously. Please tell your librarian about it. (And if he or she buys one for your library, you could find yourself down there happily browsing and perusing these entries for hours.)

*Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities magazine and author of Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow an Ecovillage or Intentional Community. She lives at Earhaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.*



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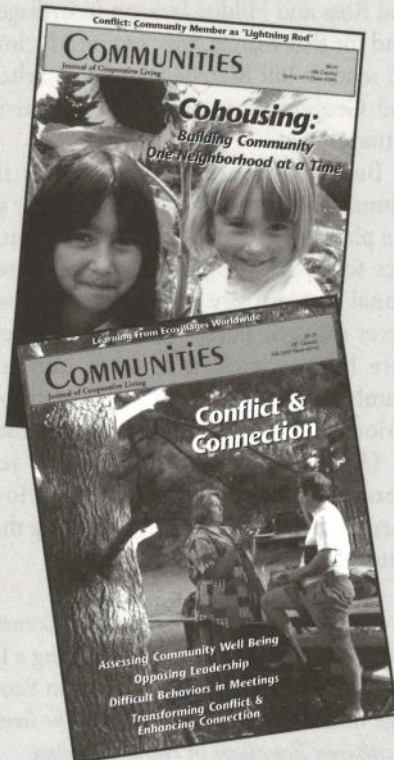
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# Reach



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 page 68 of Reach to place an ad. THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING 2004 ISSUE (OUT IN APRIL) IS JANUARY 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: dir-updates@ic.org or 540-894-5798 for more information on these free listings.

## COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

**ABUNDANT DAWN COMMUNITY, Floyd, Virginia.** Our 90 acres of beautiful mountain land is home to 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, tinkers, 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](http://www.abundantdawn.org) POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; [info@abundantdawn.org](mailto:info@abundantdawn.org)

**ARC RETREAT CENTER, near Minneapolis, Minnesota.** Emphasizing peace, justice, prayer, simplicity. We seek adult volunteers and staff for up to one year or longer commitment to join a resident ecumenical community, which provides hospitality for guests seeking retreat and renewal. Health insurance and monthly stipend provided. For information see: [www.arcetreat.org](http://www.arcetreat.org) or contact ARC, 1680 373 rd Ave. NE, Stanchfield, MN 55080; 763-689-3540; [arcetreat@hotmail.com](mailto:arcetreat@hotmail.com)

**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@aquarianconceptscommunity.org](mailto:info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org); <http://www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org>; [www.aquarianconcepts.org](http://www.aquarianconcepts.org) <http://www.glob-alchangemusic.org>

**AQUARIUS COMMUNITY, Vail, Arizona.** Share picturesque mountain wilderness ranch blessed with ideal weather. \$150/mo. includes utilities. SASE. Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641-0069; [jkubias@hotmail.com](mailto:jkubias@hotmail.com)

**BREITENBUSH HOT SPRINGS, Detroit, Oregon.** We are an intentional community set up as a worker-owned cooperative. We support ourselves by running a retreat and conference center. The work and business ethic is one of stewardship and service. We are located in the Oregon Cascade Mountains next to one of the last remaining old-growth rainforests. We have several hot tubs and natural hot spring pools and a steam sauna. We

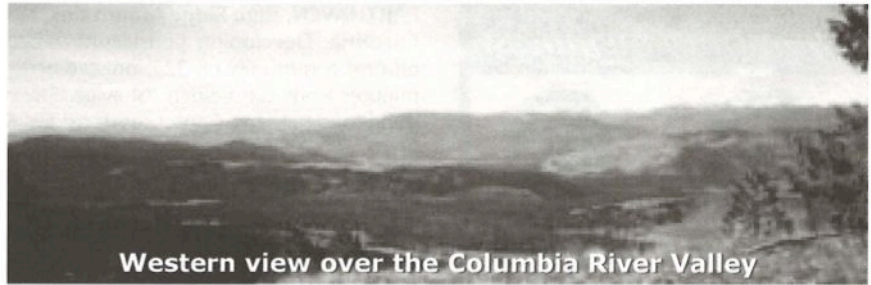


are on the Breitenbush River, which provides us with the means to generate our hydroelectric power, and all of our buildings are heated geothermally. Currently there are approximately 50 community members year round, with an additional 30 seasonal workers in the summer. We are looking for community-minded, hard working individuals in the areas of housekeeping, kitchen maintenance, construction, office, childcare, marketing and massage (Oregon LMT required). We provide modest housing and a wide variety of benefits to our staff. Our mission is to provide a safe and potent environment for social and personal growth. Send inquiries to: Personnel, Breitenbush Hot Springs, POB 578, Detroit, OR 97342; 503-854-3320-1, ext. 216.

**CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota.** Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres-woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), dollmaking shop, food processing kitchen and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a nondenominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories, plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us—families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "co-workers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three weeks vacation and meet each person's needs as possible. For information: 15136 Celtic Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378; 320-732-6365; Fax: 320-732-3204; CVMN@rea-alp.com; www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org

**DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri.** We are actively seeking new members to join us in creating our vibrant home and sustainability demonstration project. We are building our homes with earth-friendly materials on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. We live, work and play together; with cooperation and feminism as basic principles. We grow much of our food and share delicious organic meals together every day. We make our decisions by consensus. If you're looking for a nurturing home where you can live more sustainability and make a difference

# Mountaintop Sanctuary



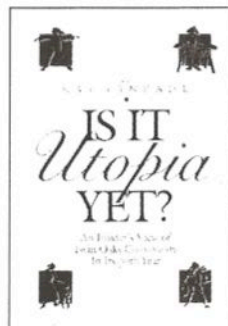
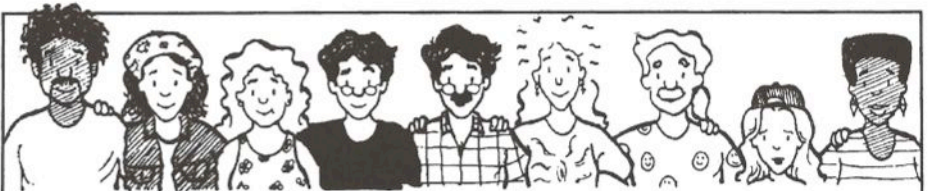
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## An Insider's View of Twin Oaks Community In Its 26th Year by Kat Kinkade

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

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**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](http://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 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*

**ECO-FARM, Plant City, Florida.** We are a small, farm-based intentional community near Tampa, Florida looking for others seeking this type of community. Our core group has interests in achievable sustainable living, alternative energies, books, drumming, environmental issues, farming, social justice, etc. We farm vegetables and ornamental trees, and also have a small farm mechanic shop in which community members participate. If interested, check out our web site at [www.ecofarmfl.org](http://www.ecofarmfl.org) and phone: 813-754-7374.

**ECOVILLAGE AT ITHACA, 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 175 acre site near a vibrant college town. Stay overnight in our lively community of two completed cohousing neighborhoods, share a meal in the Common House and visit our 10 acre organic farm. EVI welcomes you! Check out our web site at:

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**FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY, Spring Valley, New York.** We seek co-workers. Located 30 minutes north of NYC, we are an intergenerational community founded in 1966, centered around the care of the elderly. Now numbering about 150 elderly, co-workers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. Check out our web site at [www.FellowshipCommunity.org](http://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@fellowship-community.org](mailto:rsffoffice@fellowship-community.org)

**THREE SPRINGS COMMUNITY, North Forks, California.** Our 160 acres, including annual creek, pond, rolling hills and CSWA organic garden, is held in a non-profit land trust. After seven+ years, we have grown to seven adults and two children. We are now seeking new members who share our values of consensus decision-making, simple living and inter-personal growth. Send letter of intent. 59820 Italian Bar Rd., North Fork, CA 93643; [www.3springs.org](http://www.3springs.org);

**TWIN OAKS, Louisa, Virginia.** Twin Oaks has been crafting culture and sustainable community for over 35 years. We are currently looking for new members, and would love to have you visit. Right now we would especially like more woman members. We can offer you: work in our community businesses, an abundance of homegrown organic food, a thriving social scene, and an established culture of non-violence, feminism and egalitarianism. You can offer us: your talents and skills (or your unskilled enthusiasm) and your desire to live an ecological and income-sharing lifestyle. For information: Twin Oaks, 138-R Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; [twinoaks@ic.org](mailto:twinoaks@ic.org); [www.twinoaks.org](http://www.twinoaks.org)

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

**SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO.** Great start-up community, cooperative housing or site for retreats. Four small houses built of recycled materials, a workshop and large storage area. Four fenced acres with fruit trees, shade trees, hot boxes and organic garden. Very rustic, simple living with mild year-round climate. Solar friendly, a/c power close by. Telephone in. 55 miles south of Albuquerque in New Mexico. \$38,000 terms/\$32,000 cash. Call Mike 505-379-6208 or 505-854-3208.

## COMMUNITIES FORMING

**COMMUNITY HOMESTEAD AVAILABLE, Central Point, Oregon.** Help needed. S.S. income couple in 60's, handicapped problems, is seeking honest-to-goodness/wantabe homesteaders. Singles or partners, from all over. 30 acre fenced and irrigated homestead. Share experiences and expenses. Help each other get an eco-village and small community-oriented cooperative together (ie. crafts/outside occupation, market garden for income, freezer/canning needs together). Would like to hear soon from non-smoking, non-alcoholics, dependable workers, age, race, sex orientation not important. Willing to relocate in southern Oregon. We need encouragement and bright ideas about what to do. Seek folks who are like-minded, self-sufficient/supportive and have a desire to experience a challenge for themselves. Be willing to help organize. Judy and Gary Lefler, POB 3308, Central Point, Oregon, 97502-0012.

**EASTON MOUNTAIN RETREAT COMMUNITY, Greenwich, New York.** Community forming at the Easton Mountain Retreat. Seeking creative, psychologically mature individuals interested in deepening spiritual life, meditation, non-violence, social justice and celebration. Currently four gay men running a

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**LUNA HAVEN RANCH, Apalachicola, Florida.** Ten acres, beautiful forest, grass marsh, navigable creek, fenced garden, large shed. Good fishing, sailing. Currently, there is a house, a cabin and sites for three more houses. Present residents: myself, 58, my octogenarian parents, four dogs. I hope to live out my days here in company with open-hearted people who desire to live and work in harmony with each other and this lovely place. Like gardening and/or bookkeeping? You would be especially welcome! Help build this vision? And yes, Luna Moths live here. *Kristin Anderson, POB 386, Apalachicola, FL 32329; 850-653-2249; [www.longdream-gallery.com](http://www.longdream-gallery.com); [kwrks@gtcom.net](mailto:kwrks@gtcom.net)*

**MEADOW SPRINGS HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMUNITY, Platina, California, 96076.** 94 acres, plus national forest and school. Children and families welcome. Vegan, no domestic animals, eschewing drugs/alcohol/smoking. 530-352-4271; 831-425-3334; [brotherlittlestar@bigfoot.com](mailto:brotherlittlestar@bigfoot.com)

**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](mailto:nhnamaste@yahoo.com)*

**NOAH'S ARK 2, Texas.** East of Austin, northwest of Houston. Job sharing, progressive city-dwellers co-creating short-term rural weekender nature retreat and long-term earth-sheltered "Liberal Survival Center" since 1995. Part-time silence/solitude acceptable/recommended. Lovers welcome, not haters. Eight-page brochure \$1. *1030 Voight, Houston, TX 77009-7317; 713-863-0433; [sharingfutures@aol.com](mailto:sharingfutures@aol.com)*

**ROCK RIVER, Floyd, Virginia.** Extroverted, confident, competent, well-adjusted pagan warriors wanted for immediate opening. Couple preferred. She/he: carpenter, plumbing and light electric. She/he: organic gardener, computer maven, crafter, business skills, and/or massage therapist. Conscious and crazy, spiritually oriented, musical. No tobacco, all else in moderation and context. Self-starters with skills, talents, good attitude. To be part of building a self-sufficient, in-the-world community. Happy, healthy, stress-free,

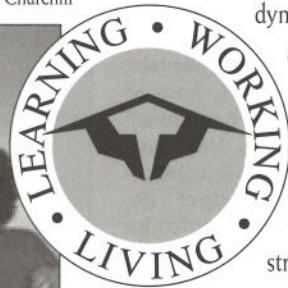
*"We make a living by what we get,  
 we make a life by what we give."*

Winston Churchill



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

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



For more information or to arrange a personal visit:

**Camphill Soltane**

224 Nantmeal Road, Glenmoore, PA 19343

610.469.0933 • Fax: 610.469.1054

Email: [info@camphillsoltane.org](mailto:info@camphillsoltane.org)

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**ROUNDHOUSE FARM, Swanville, Maine.** 56 wonderful acres with a beautiful round stone community building in the mid-coast region near Belfast. Two simple houses under construction. We are looking for others who share our desire to enhance our spiritual paths as a diverse group of people living in a committed community to nurture ourselves, our land, our neighborhood and our world. We are committed to organic gardening, shared meals, varied housing and honoring each person's uniqueness. Let's talk. Contact *Nan or Jo* at 915 Oak Hill Road, Swanville, ME 04915; 207-338-5559.

**VEGAN COMMUNITY, Quitman, Arkansas.** Vegans with children seeking vegans with children (about six families) to gardenize forty acres of previous pasture land in a popular lake recreation area. Beautiful year-round creek runs through the property. Initial housing could be inexpensive mobile homes. 973-209-7643.

**WILD ONION COHOUSING, Northwestern Vermont.** A rural, village-based community forming in northwestern Vermont. We are a

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

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**YOUR COMMUNITY CAN BE STRUCTURED FOR HARMONY.** Applying simple principles of the sacred architecture of Vaastu science, the house can generate vibrant, life-supporting influences for the occupant and community: a kind of deep ecology. See:

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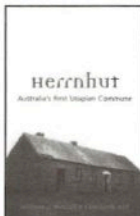
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Extent & Nature of Circulation	Average No of Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months	Actual No of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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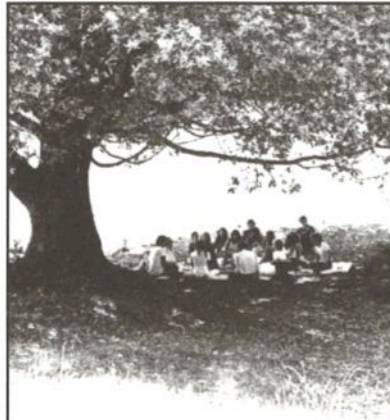
## PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 72)

with democratic values when they're envisioning how they want things to be, with many members encouraged and empowered to take on leadership roles. Typically, attempts to implement this model result in many folks assuming responsibility for general management roles: organizing the work, creating and administering budgets, assigning tasks, checking in with team members and offering encouragement, brainstorming logistics, monitoring progress, and making reports. However it's rare for the charismatic role to be widely shared, and it commonly shows up at the organizational level rather than at the project level—which is likely a workable arrangement, since the camaraderie that frequently results from working closely with others can energize the decentralized project teams, especially if team members are able to tap into the inspiration and motivation generated in the larger group setting.

In that light, a critically important strategy for building effective communities and social change organizations is to clarify and better articulate our overarching visions, and to find ways to translate that idealism into enthusiasm for doing the work. Some people come by that skill naturally, and we should encourage them to use it and to teach it—to a large degree it's a learnable skill that we can cultivate and nurture. Once we learn to spread around the charisma, we can look forward to greater success in accomplishing our common goals, and the profound satisfaction that comes from participating with enthusiasm. Ω

*Geoph Kozeny has lived in various communities for 30 years, and for the last 16 years has been on the road visiting communities (over 360 to date). His "Visions of Utopia" video documentary describes the history and everyday reality of intentional communities, and he's now editing a follow-up tape which will profile eleven additional communities. He loves to give presentations on the history, reality, and lessons of shared living; to invite him to bring his informative and inspiring show to your town, geoph@ic.org.*



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## Success, Vitality, and Charisma

Although there are many ways to evaluate a community's success, I rely on two primary questions: "Do the members whole-heartedly believe in the system they're using?" "And are they participating with enthusiasm?"

Other criteria used by scholars to measure community "success" include the age of the community, the number of members, financial growth (both cash flow and net worth), goals accomplished, and the retention of grown children as adult members. While all these scholarly measuring sticks are mostly observable and quantifiable, my two primary questions deal with qualities rather than quantities and are inherently subjective and changeable. Other significant but hard-to-measure aspects of success include how much personal growth the members experience, and the impact that the community and its members have on friends, neighbors, and the surrounding culture.

How does one measure "vitality" except by surveying the community members themselves? Members may be getting the work done, but are they thriving? A community can be a success for some of its members and at the same time leave other members feeling alienated, uninspired, and frustrated. Further, it's common for a community to rank higher in some of the areas than others—and effectiveness and morale can change from time to time—so you'll get a different result if you measure in different ways or on different days. What's most important, then, is an assessment of members' attitudes and feelings rather than a tally of concrete accomplishments. I'm not suggesting that information about longevity, size, finances, completed projects, and kids is unimportant; indeed, all the various factors need to be considered together when making an evaluation. However, I recommend putting inspiration and participation at the top of the list of things to look at, followed closely by members' personal growth

and the community's impact on the world around it. My short list in a nutshell:

1. Members' inspiration.
2. Members' participation.
3. Members' personal growth.
4. The community's impact on the wider community.

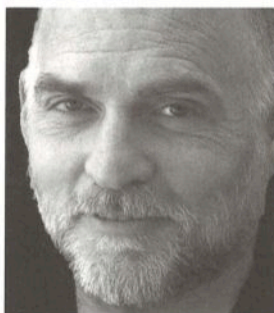
These four hard-to-quantify assessments are all greatly influenced by the group's having a well-articulated common vision, and that begs the question of having effective and inspiring leadership. Historically, strong dynamic leadership has been a good predictor of successes to come, and to a large degree it hardly matters which yardstick is used to measure success: inspiring leadership tends to lead to community longevity, membership growth, financial vigor, etc.

Theoretically leadership can be centralized or shared, however (my egalitarian bias notwithstanding) I have yet to witness a thriving decentralized, shared-power group that relies on more than a handful of its most responsible and assertive members to provide ongoing vision and inspiration. Responsibility, accountability, and initiative are commonly shared roles, but charisma—a leader's ability to promote a vision and to evoke enthusiastic participation from those involved—is a rare (and potentially dangerous) quality. I include the "dangerous" caveat here because charisma, like all other traits and tools, can be used for

good purposes or not, and having good intentions does not guarantee good results. Charisma usually attracts respect, admiration, and loyalty—feedback that tends to result in ego gratification for the leader that can become addictive and an end in itself. But that's another story, material for a future column ....

For the sake of exploring what's possible, consider the "leaderful" group, a model for shared responsibility and participation. This is a term often used by organizations

(continued on p. 71)

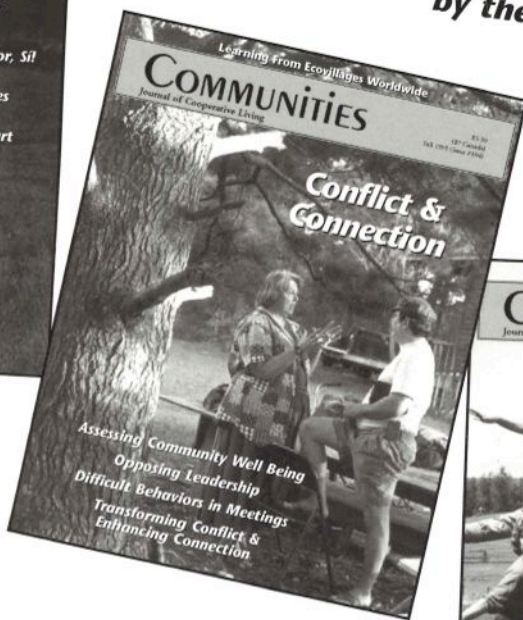
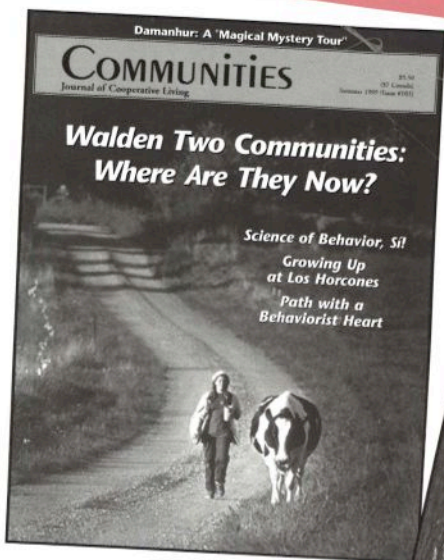


BY GEOPH KOZENY

***An assessment of members' attitudes and feelings is more important than a tally of the community's accomplishments.***



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