When and Why to Block Consensus

COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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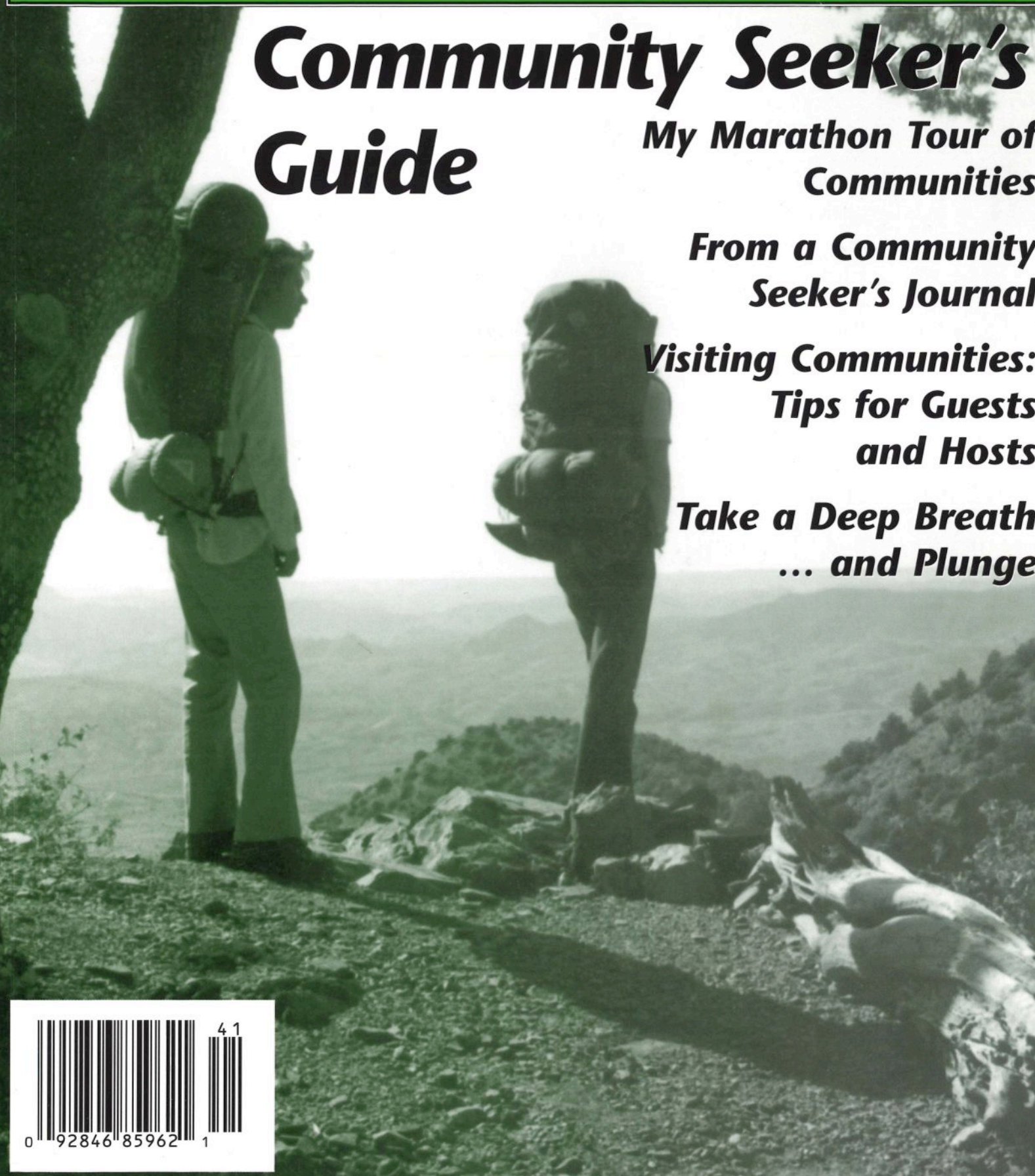
Spring 2004 (Issue #122)



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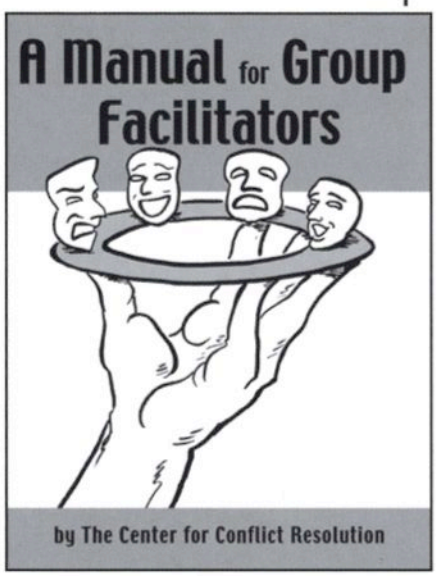

by Center for Conflict Resolution
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The staff of the Center for Conflict Resolution put their experience in working with groups into *A Manual for Group Facilitators*. This is an informal outline detailing useful and effective techniques to help groups work well. More than a simple "how to," the manual contains a discussion of the values, dynamics, and common sense behind group process that have been verified by our own experience. It includes information on such topics as:

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community
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JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

FOCUS

Community Seeker's Guide

FRONT COVER

Where will we live in community? View over Big Bend National Forest, Texas.

Photo: Rod Rylander.

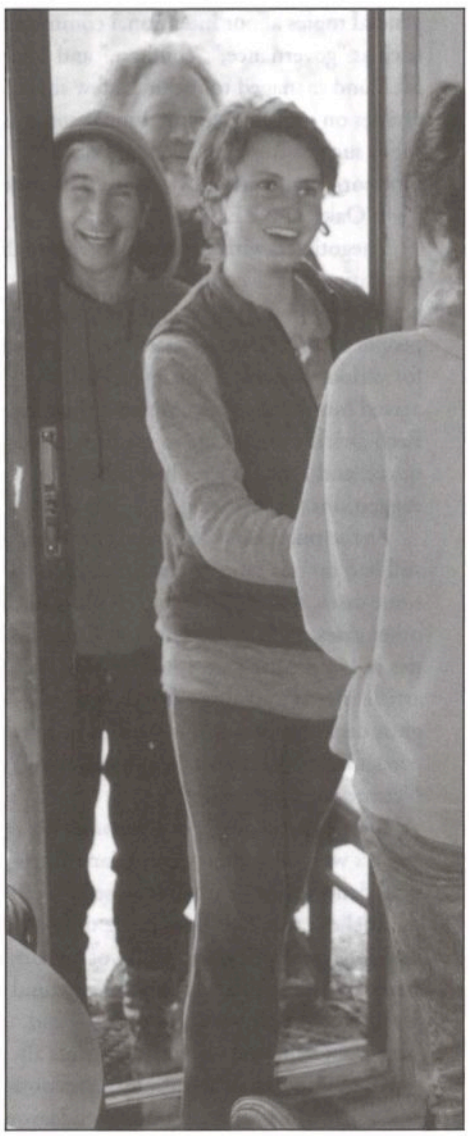
BACK COVER

The Communities Directory is an excellent place to start the search.

Photo: Rod Rylander.

#122
Spring 2004

FEATURE



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Journal of Cooperative Living

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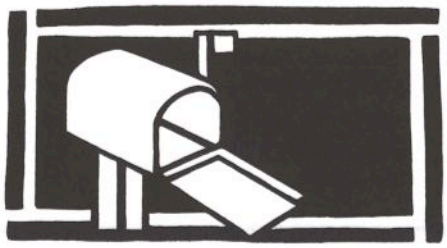
LETTERS



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

About the Review of *New Encyclopedia of Communities*

Dear *Communities*:

It is a generally accepted tenet of good behaviour for authors and editors not to respond to reviews of their work, no matter how bad the review nor how idiotic and clueless (the author thinks) the reviewer is.

I respond to Diana Leafe Christian's review of *The Encyclopedia of Community* (Winter '03, pg. 61) not for these reasons but because I agree with almost all she says and would like to explain the process.

The Encyclopedia of Community was largely the inspiration of Karen Christensen and David Levinson of Berkshire Publishing Group, in the U.S. Karen approached me in 2001, when I was still President of the International Communal Studies Association, and we discussed what might be in such an encyclopedia.

To secure financing and marketing success, Berkshire's policy was that this encyclopedia must cover as wide as possible a range of community topics, of which intentional communities would be just one of about ten areas. In many ways, of course, I would have preferred an Encyclopedia of Intentional Community, wherein the entire 1,200,000 words could be about intentional communities, rather than only about 10 percent of that which was allocated. Had I insisted on this, then this encyclopedia might not have happened at all or would have happened under a less capable intentional-community editor. Even if an *Encyclopedia of Intentional Community* could have been produced, it probably would not have had been very popular because its narrower focus would mean that few libraries would order it.

Berkshire Publishing Group organised the finances and logistics, and recruited ten distinguished scholars, each to be responsible for a broad sub-category of community. I agreed to be Advisory Editor of intentional community matters.

My "wish-list" of intentional community topics ran to several hundred, but it is Berkshire's policy to have fewer and larger articles. So, for instance, rather than there being small sections on a wide range of intentional communities and their founders, they were lumped together under a country or region, with macro articles commissioned. Tight word limits presented enormous challenges. For example, my original suggestion for Australia included about a dozen articles but these were all put together and then all of New Zealand was thrown in as well, with all their histories and contemporary stories within only 3,500 words! We also included general topics about intentional community such as "governance," "children," and "daily life," and managed to include a few short articles on well-known intentional communities such as Auroville, Damanhur, Findhorn Foundation, Riverside, The Farm, Twin Oaks, and ZEGG.

I negotiated with Berkshire to ensure that this listing was as comprehensive as their parameters would allow, and then sought people to write articles. A few people refused for various reasons, while several others agreed but then never completed their task. Each article came to me to confirm its adequacy, and I sent at least half back with suggestions for rewriting.

As the publishing deadline drew near, we still had no one writing certain articles. In some cases, topics had to be left out while in other cases, such as "Intentional Communities in Latin America," I had to write the article myself over just a few days with a great deal of support from various people, particularly from Linda Joseph of Ecovillage Network of the Americas.

I hope this explains to *Communities* readers why the issues which Diana Christian identified in her review arose.

I believe that Berkshire made the right decisions, and we can be proud of a mainstream encyclopedia which will be around for many years, in most educational and large public libraries, and which treats all forms of intentional community as serious and worthwhile forms of human endeavour.

Communities Magazine Postal Information

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And perhaps one day we will have an *Encyclopedia of Intentional Community?*

Bill Metcalf
Griffith University
Brisbane, Australia

Dear *Communities*:

A quick addition to the piece about the *Encyclopedia of Community* in "Community Grapevine" in your Winter '03 issue. You mentioned me as one of the *Encyclopedia's* contributors who has written for *Communities* magazine in the past, however left me out of your list of former Guest Editors. I guest edited #76, "Education in Community," back in the mid-1990s.

Editing and writing both are creative endeavors of course. The important point is that I'm pleased to contribute on every level I can to *Communities* magazine and the movement it supports. And I applaud all of those writers who contributed to the great resource that is the *Encyclopedia of Community,* as well as to those at Sage Publications and the Berkshire Publishing Group who held the vision of creating an academically oriented reference work on community.

My appreciation to Bill Metcalf for inviting *Encyclopedia* contributions from many activists in the communities movement.

Allen Butcher
Denver, Colorado

Corrections about Twin Oaks' Hammocks and Tofu

Dear *Communities*:

In your Fall '03 editorial, "Right (and Left) Livelihood," Geoph Kozeny makes extensive reference to Twin Oaks Community to illustrate his thesis that the choices communities make about right livelihood are often compromised by incomplete knowledge and made difficult by members' philosophical differences. While I applaud Geoph for tackling such a complex issue, I was disappointed that the situation at Twin Oaks was not more accurately presented. On the subject of the hammock business, it was stated that we recycle natural fiber hammocks for our customers (when in fact we recycle polypropylene hammocks for our customers). Unfortunately, Geoph didn't mention that we manufacture a hammock made from 100 percent recycled fiber (mostly plastic soda bottles) for those who want and can afford a "greener" product.

Secondly, there is a strong suggestion in the article that Twin Oakers are wrestling with concerns over the healthiness of their soy products. It should be made clear that Geoph was expressing his own personal concerns about the healthiness of soy, and not presenting the views of Twin Oakers. Soy is big business and it goes without saying that much of the research on soy is underwritten by competing financial interests. The soy products we produce are whole foods (not concentrated soy supplements) and are certified organic by the USDA. The vast majority of Twin Oakers are proud that we produce such a high quality food product for local health food markets and delight in having an abundant supply of soy for ourselves.

That said, I doubt any Twin Oaker believes soy is *the* perfect right livelihood product. Producing tofu requires considerable energy inputs (both in production and storage), lots of water, and lots of plastic packaging, and we are well aware of these compromises. Our community is very concerned about right livelihood issues and we are thankful that *Communities* magazine chose to highlight us.

Bill Oneida
Twin Oaks Community
Louisa, Virginia

Geoph Kozeny responds:

I'm glad you got inspired to set the record straight. I knew that Twin Oaks recycles the polypropylene and not the natural fiber hammocks, and am chagrined that that gaff ended up in the published column. And I'm glad to hear about the 100 percent recycled fiber hammocks now available—definitely good new news. And I readily admit that the questions about soy are my own, not Twin Oaks', and I had intended for that to come across in the original article (and sorry that it didn't).

Intentional Communities on the Radio

Hello:

I noticed in your journal that ABC Radio National in Australia is helping to facilitate intentional communities. Here in the United States, while there are many problems with the corporate media, your readers may want to be aware that there are some encouraging efforts. There is an all-progressive talk radio network at www.ieamericaradio.com, that features hosts like Thom Hartmann and Marianne Williamson who talk about how we can involve ourselves in the direction of our society. There are also courageous liberal women like Enid Goldstein on KNRC, Randi Rhodes on WJNO, Arnie Arneson on WKXL, and Laura Flanders on Working Assets Radio who would love to hear from people who share a cooperative vision. It's vital that progressives express their thoughts with each other over these participatory forums that are being streamed all over the world. Sometimes people don't have a vision of cooperative living. Maybe the friends of *Communities* magazine could share some ideas.

Preston Enright
Denver, Colorado

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 interfere 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, 828-669-9702; communities@ic.org.***

Advertising Policy

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

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

Communities Advertising, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711, 828-669-9702; communities@ic.org.

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

Opening Up to Strangers ... and the Strange Ways that Kindness May Be Repaid

I want to tell a story illuminating what my community, Sandhill Farm, has learned about finding people who will become good members. It is a story about humility and the mysteries of marketing. This is also the story of Julez (pronounced "Jules"), who was a Sandhillian for seven productive, dynamic years—she was just the kind of member every community wants.

The tale begins years before we'd ever met Julez, when three friends from a sister community on the East Coast wanted to come out to our Midwestern farm and help with the harvest for a week. The three didn't have their own car and they talked a visitor into driving them 1,000 miles in his vehicle.

Though the visitor, Dick, was most accommodating, it turned out he got quite sick on the all-night drive west and we wound up pouring him into bed as soon as the car pulled up at our farmhouse. While the three friends flowed right into the rhythms of harvest, Dick stayed under the covers, trying to sweat out his illness. We fed him broth and brought him tea. Slowly he got better. But by the time he was well enough to get out of bed, the week was up and it was time again for trial by car. The four of them eased back into Dick's sedan and motored into the sunrise.

Dick seemed a decent enough fellow, but who knew? From our perspective, his two outstanding qualities were: 1) he did our friends and us a good turn by chauffeuring them to and from the harvest; and 2) he sure was sick a lot. The seasons changed and after a time Dick's visit faded into just another oddity in Sandhill's cabinet of curiosities.

Fast forward a few years until the day Julez showed up on our doorstep, along with her partner Marcus. They were touring on bikes and shopping for a community to join. As we were looking for new members at the time, we were sniffing each other out. During dinner one night we asked them how they came to know about Sandhill (these

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Laird Schaub is Executive Secretary of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (publisher of this magazine), and a cofounder of Sandhill Farm community in Missouri.

were the antediluvian days—before *Communities Directory* and the flood of information available on the Internet). Julez put her fork down and said it was an interesting story...

Growing up in small town Minnesota, she'd had a dream for many years of doing a long distance solo bike trip. Two summers before, she made her dream a reality, peddling from Minnesota to Maine. At that point she hadn't met Marcus and wasn't thinking anything about intentional communities (though a college roommate, Denise, had once told

Never underestimate the power of word of mouth.

her about the exotic excitement of having visited a commune during spring break). Julez was just looking for adventure, and for the most part she found it.

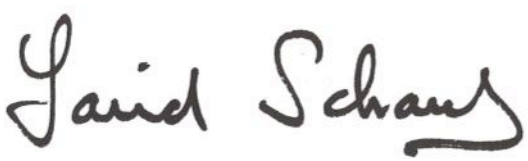
All told, the trip lasted more than a month, and of particular interest here was a couple of days while traversing Michigan. She bumped into a fellow cyclist while ducking out of inclement weather one day and they decided to ride together for a bit. It was a break in the routine, and he was an interesting conversationalist. Somehow in the course of their brief time together, the talk worked its way around to community living—about which this fellow had many positive things to say. He'd done a three-week visitor period at Twin Oaks in Virginia and was mighty impressed.

This stirred memories of Denise's spring fling at the commune, and Julez was intrigued. Being a Minnesotan though, she suspected she'd prefer something closer to home. Were there any communities in the Midwest? Well, as you've likely figured out by now, the serendipitous cyclist was none other than Dick, and he assured Julez that she had choices there as well. For instance, Sandhill Farm was a lovely place he knew about in Missouri. Wonderful hospitality.

Thus the seed was sown. Dick and Julez peddled their separate ways, and never saw each other again. A year later Julez met Marcus, and when he expressed an interest in exploring intentional communities, Julez remembered that Dick had spoken glowingly of Sandhill. Somehow she nosed out our location and made arrangements to stop by on their bike trip. And that's how Julez found her way to our community.

Sandhill was already 14 years old when Julez biked into our lives, and we'd been trying to manifest additional members almost every one of those years. After hearing Julez' tale, I reflected on how much effort we'd put into crafting zesty descriptions for community listings, placing enticing ads and flyers in places we thought likely to lure prospects, and painstakingly replying with grace and humor to the numbing stream of inquiries. I shook my head. In the end, it turned out that nothing was more effective than Dick's random bike chatter, drawing on a fever-induced euphoric memory of a week in our bed. That was humbling. Here I was trying to puzzle out community marketing in Missouri, and I'll be damned if he didn't show me.

The moral of the story: never underestimate the power of word of mouth. Alternately: be careful how you treat the stranger at the door—though he may not have been sent by our Father in heaven, he may be the Mother of all recruiters.



COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

A Day in the Life, Summer '04.
What's a typical day like in your community? Can we use a "typical day" to get at what's unique about community living? We'll look at large communities and small, well-established ones and those just getting started. We're seeking urban and rural, secular and spiritual, those whose members have independent incomes and those that are income-sharing. Cohousing, co-ops, communes, Christian communities, ecovillages, ashrams, retreat centers—we want to hear from *you*.

Diana Christian, Editor.
communities@ic.org

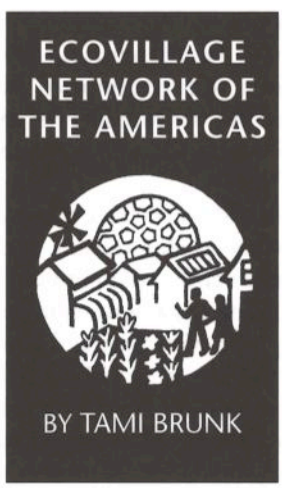
Spiritual Communities, Fall '04.
What are spiritual communities and why do people start them? What do people hope to get out of them? Are spiritual communities easier to live in, or more difficult, than secular communities? What are the unique joys and challenges of spiritual communities? What makes a community "spiritual"?

Diana Christian, Editor.
communities@ic.org

Student Co-ops, Winter '04.
- Life after student co-ops: Are co-opers moving on to other forms of community? Moving to the suburbs? Keeping ties with their student co-ops? How else do co-ops influence their members later in life?
- Current debates in the student co-op movement: student vs. nonstudents, diversity, "community co-ops."
- Why a student co-op handbook is so necessary for this type of community; tips for writing one.

Julie Pennington, Editor.
julieepennington@hotmail.com.

Baptized by Pachamama



Today, I held my breath, dipped my head under the icy waters of the Urabumba River and promised my soul and spirit to Pachamama–the Quechua name for Mother Earth. My mom and dad, Midwestern fundamentalists, wouldn't be happy. Nevertheless, I did step out onto that rock, raise my hands to thank Mount Mancay Huelque, drop three perfect coca leaves into the swirling water and jump in. I had been converted. And I was not alone.

Seven hundred villagers assembled at Camp Veronica in the fall of 2003 during the Call of the Condor Bioregional Gathering in Peru. We came from all across the globe—from the Amazon jungle, the pueblos and cities across South America, the Scottish highlands, the neon-lit streets of Los Angeles and Mexico City, Asia, and the mythical countryside of Transylvania. We carried with us into this Andean Valley the stories of our homelands—ghetto children growing up with dreams devoid of flowers and trees, rivers choked with chemical waste, subsistence farmers pushed to starvation by the global economy. These stories pushed us here, as they pushed us each to seek solutions to the machine-culture's devastation of our shared planet. We came to breathe life into an ancient South American prophesy that promised heaven on earth—when the long-dueling energies of the Eagle and Condor finally join together, in a harmonious dance of peace and renewal.

Months before, I'd received a notice for the event on the bioregional listserve. Photos of the massive snow-capped peaks overlooking the Sacred Valley made my heart jump. And the mention of ecovillages—a concept I'd never encountered before, intrigued me. When I saw the side note that volunteers were needed to help set up a "temporary ecovillage" to house the event, I said—*I'm in!* After a year spent in graduate studies focused on the environment, I'd come to believe that the great crisis of our time—large-scale destruction of our earth and land-based cultures—must be challenged on every level. I also felt strongly that a new vision must be cre-

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Tami Brunk lives in Columbia, Missouri, where she is conducting research on the Ozarks bioregion, and working toward a masters degree in environmental writing. For more information on the Call of the Condor gathering: www.lacaravana.org/condor.

Note: We preserve the spelling of our Commonwealth authors.

ated to replace our old, destructive living patterns. Ecovillages, like the bioregionalist movement, seemed to offer real alternatives. I questioned whether I ought to take time away from studies on my Ozark Bioregion to travel so far away. But I also felt strongly that the goal of becoming more rooted in our own bioregions must be joined by a sense of solidarity with kindred spirits across the globe.

At the Call of the Condor gathering, I would experience the challenges and magic of communal living. Each morning and night we came together in a big blue and white circus tent provided by the traveling ecovillage—the Rainbow Caravan of Peace. Mornings were plenary sessions, where we hammered out the finer points of our week-long community contract. Evenings featured traditional Andean dancers and musicians, puppet shows, improvisational theater, storytelling and guitar strumming to Earth-loving lyrics. Following plenaries, we sat in councils themed Ecology, Spirituality, Arts and Culture, Traditional Cultures, Children, Social Movements, and Health. Afternoons, we chose between workshops on subjects from the same seven themes: Ecological Design. Solar Energy. Permaculture. Building an Ecovillage. Hindi Dancing. Indigo Children. Organizing a Bioregional Congress. Ecological Economics. And at every available moment, a new ceremony would begin. We joined in circles for sweat ceremonies, sun salutations, and ayahuasca journeys, just to name a few. I was often overwhelmed, feeling the event was *too much*. Is this just a bunch of noise and show? I wondered. My own attention was usually scattered, my energy fragmented.

We gathered for the final ceremony on Sunday night, and listened as a circle of indigenous elders shared their words of insight and gratitude. The sun burned down into the folds of the luminous mountains encircling us, with three perfect rays streaming out across the face of the sky. We let out a collective gasp to see two great birds circling above us—an eagle, and a condor. The Bolivian elder whose turn it was to speak acknowledged that the event hadn't been perfect. "But," he added, "they came, so we must be doing something right."

I spent the next week as an observer at the Ecovillage of the America's council meeting. We were still all nestled in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, now at Camp Kachicata, several kilometers upstream from Camp Verónica. Here I saw Beatrice Briggs, consensus facilitator extraordinaire, work her magic. She started the meeting with the wake up call "We have no money." Miraculously, this became an opportunity for the group to exercise their considerable creativity in brainstorming fundraising strategies. I sat in a circle with council visionaries from Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Los Angeles, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Colorado, Bolivia, Peru, Canada , Mexico, Tennessee, and other places too as they revitalized a network that hadn't met for three years. I remember Penélope, a Colombian caravanista and I, whispering to each other, "Isn't this incredible?!" The very air seemed to buzz with a heady electricity. I had never seen a group of people—so diverse yet so unified—fully engaged in the process of collective decision making. Truly, I thought, this is what a global community looks like.

The very air seemed to buzz with a heady electricity.

Two months after I've returned to Missouri, I'm finally integrating what I learned in Peru. I was challenged there—by my own deficiencies speaking and understanding Spanish, by my difficulty remaining centered in large groups, and by my assumption that true change only happens on the physical plane. I have long believed that a shift in the worldview of North Americans toward a more holistic model is a hopeful thing. I think, though, that it is a shift many of us find challenging.

Tom Atlee, in his book *The Tao of Democracy: Using Co-Intelligence to Create a World that Works for All* (The Writers Collective, 2003) suggests this challenge is one of developing "wisdom culture," a way that we can talk and experience a global culture that isn't reductionist and homogenized. A global wisdom culture would use diversity to generate and access deeper, broader, higher forms of wisdom

than any person or culture could do alone. Atlee's vision includes participatory processes for self-governance at all levels, including collaborative visioning, policy generation, problem-solving, administration, oversight, and widespread understanding of the social technologies (many of them part of our indigenous heritage) which allow us to reach creative consensus without compromise.

Truly, I thought, this is what a global community looks like.

At Condor, we had the opportunity to transcend our tendency to work in a single area—be it environmental, spiritual or social justice—in our single language and cultural context. In effect, we had the opportunity to experience the wisdom culture that Atlee talks about. It's a mind-blowing experience!

I know I am not alone in stepping back from the river's shore in fear, clutching at my single-minded Midwestern world view for comfort. Now I choose to move forward, dive in, and immerse myself, like the big-hearted adventurers I met in Peru, in service to our shared home. What we do for Pachamama, we do for ourselves. As we work toward harmony in our own homeplace—with our mountains, rivers, and high-flying birds, and as we continue to foster and strengthen bonds with like-minded people across the globe, we will come to understand the words of the Mayans: "I am another one of yourself." Ω

Radical Resource-Sharing

FEDERATION UPDATE

BY TREE BRESSEN

The communities in the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC) occupy a unique niche in the spectrum of community living.

Potential members don't need to buy in; don't need to have any particular skills; don't need to bring a home-based business with them. The main requirements are a cooperative attitude and a willingness to work. And our communities almost always have space available to take in new members.

That doesn't mean we're a perfect match for everyone, and individual communities do sometimes have further limitations on who comes in. For example, Twin Oaks in Virginia, concerned about the ratio of dependents to full-time workers, limits how many seniors and children can live there at any one time. Sandhill Farm in Missouri doesn't allow members to join with big debts such as student loans.

However, overall the FEC communities are much more accessible than many others. The rural communities usually have established businesses that new members can plug into. The urban communities are located in major cities where members can find an assortment of job opportunities. Furthermore, the average amount of "income labor" (work that brings money into the community) at our communities is typically around 20 hours a week, as contrasted with 40-50 hours a week for many people living "outside."

How are we able to accomplish this? It's simple: we share.

We share houses, taking one room per person instead of one building per person. We share food, preparing one to three meals a day for the community and giving one or two people the job of buying in bulk whatever is not provided from the gardens. We share vehicles, which are available for any member to sign out as needed—at East Wind in Missouri a fleet of 17 cars, vans, and trucks serves 75 people. And we share money, putting whatever comes in from the businesses into a common pot.

Our level of resource sharing frees up our time to be with our children, to grow some of our own food, to create a rich cultural life, and to get involved politically with the outside world.

It also frees up our ability to support the communities movement. In the past some folks in the Fellowship for Intentional Community (publisher of this magazine) were uncomfortable with the amount of influence people from FEC communities had in the organization, given that the actual population from FEC groups is a tiny fraction of the communities movement as a whole.

Tree Bressen is a professional group process consultant for intentional communities and other organizations. She has served as secretary to the FEC since 2000 and hopes to someday help form an income-sharing "pod" at her home community of Walnut St. Co-op in Eugene, Oregon.

Sometimes they felt like the FEC contingent was too radical. But it's exactly the radical choice to share resources that has enabled our communities to send multiple people away to attend week-long meetings twice a year. And both FIC offices are located in FEC communities where they don't pay any rent for the space.

Potential members don't need to buy in; don't need to have any particular skills; don't need to bring a home-based business with them.

I lived for years in an FEC community and currently make my home in a non-income-sharing community. I've become very interested in how our organization can support people who don't want to do full-on income sharing in sharing more resources.

For example, nine of us in my adopted hometown of Eugene, Oregon recently formed a car co-op. We wrote a fabulous set of core agreements, and bought one classy old Mercedes that we run on biodiesel fuel. Three of our families live in a low-income co-op across town, and we park the car there because two of those families have small children and because it's the most central of our locations. When someone wants to reserve the car, they fill out a calendar

Eugene Car Co-op's Core Agreements

1. We strive to treat all members fairly and give everyone an equal voice. To that end, our decisions are made by consensus. While members may occupy roles for a time in service to the group, that doesn't make any one person more important than another.

2. Human-powered and mass transportation are our first and primary form of transport. We consciously choose to promote ecologically sound transportation alternatives.

3. We are an advocacy group as well as a demonstration project. We publicize and document our effort for the benefit of others. We emphasize reproducibility in our approach and methods. We expect to actively assist the start-up of other car co-ops.

4. Environmentalism is a priority to us. We use the most sustainable technology and energy sources accessible to us (such as efficient machines, biofuels, etc.), and encourage carpooling.

5. We recognize that the most important factor in our success is our relationships. We emphasize and encourage personal growth: building safety and trust, compassionate communication, and self awareness. Members are expected to work out conflicts that arise, and support each other in doing this when needed. We aim to build social connections and a sense of community among our membership—we are involved in each others' lives.

6. We help each other gain new skills: interpersonal, organizational, financial, technological, and so on. While most skills can be taken on at the option of the member, we do expect all incoming members to learn the skills and qualities required to participate effectively in the consensus decision-making process, which include active listening, patience, caring, and meeting facilitation.

We recognize that all aspects of this co-op are part of a process and therefore open to adaptation in accordance with the changing needs and desires of members.

form on our website. One person handles the accounting, while another does maintenance.

I believe that part of why our car co-op has been so successful is because all the members either now live in or used to live in intentional communities—we have a natural ease in working together, a willingness to take on the work that needs to get done, and a commitment to communicating well with each other. Ω

About the FEC

The Federation of Egalitarian Communities has offered a mutual support network since 1976 for intentional communities who share a common set of principles. Each of our communities:

- Holds land, labor, income, and other resources in common.
- Assumes responsibility for the needs of its members, receiving the products of their labor and distributing these goods equally, or according to need.
- Practices non-violence.
- Uses a form of decision-making in which members have equal opportunity to participate, either through consensus, direct vote, or right of appeal or overrule.
- Works to establish the equality of all people and does not permit discrimination on the basis of race, class, creed, ethnic origin, age, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Conserves natural resources for present and future generations while striving to continually improve ecological awareness and practice.
- Creates processes for group communication and participation and provides an environment which supports people's development.

Currently we are seven full member communities: Acorn (Virginia), East Wind (Missouri), Emma Goldman Finishing School (formerly Beacon Hill House, Seattle), Jolly Ranchers (Seattle), Sandhill (Missouri), Skyhouse at Dancing Rabbit (Missouri), and Twin Oaks (Virginia), and six "communities-in-dialogue." www.thefec.org.

When and Why to Block Consensus

It might seem odd that people who teach consensus process are not themselves in consensus about what constitutes an appropriate block.

Standards vary widely. I'd be willing to bet it's a disagreement that goes back many years before the 1981 publication of the classic manual *Building United Judgment.* That book describes how the collective producing it almost broke up over their inability to come to agreement on how to address blocking. In their case, the breakthrough came when the authors agreed to include multiple viewpoints in the text, each set off in its own box.

That solution met the needs of that particular situation. But what are practicing groups to do who need clarity in order to move ahead? My aim here is to describe different standards in use, explain roles and functions that blocking can serve, and leave it up to you to decide.

First, let's be clear on the areas of agreement, which are substantial. I have seen no source of information on consensus that allows for blocking based on individual preference. That is, all the trainers and books agree that blocks must be based on a member's perception of group needs rather than on something they want for themselves. This is a key point on blocking and the one most often overlooked by newcomers to the process. Consensus is not extreme voting—it's a genuinely different method that requires participants to adopt a bigger perspective and focus on group needs.

Second, it's essential that any blocks which emerge are fully understood as to what the blocker's concern is and why they feel that way. Accessing that knowledge will assist a meeting in discerning whether to continue further work on the proposal or to lay it down.

Third, in a well-functioning group, blocks shouldn't happen very often. Consensus guru Caroline Estes is known for saying that a person should only block half a dozen times in their lifetime, total, for all the groups in which they participate. If blocking is happening often, the group needs more training in consensus process.

C.T. Butler, in his booklet, *Formal Consensus,* sets a high bar for blocking. He maintains that the entire group must agree that a block is based in a group principle or the group's well-being in order for the block to hold. This standard is a reasonable response to the context in which C.T.'s methodology was developed: political groups who had to deal with government infiltrators and provocateurs.

In contrast, communitarian Laird Schaub says that the blocker only needs to be able to convince at least one other member of the group that the block is based in an explicit value held by the

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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.

group. (The other person doesn't need to feel the same way as the blocker, they just need to admit the validity of the analysis.)

Using that model, blocks are most likely to arise either when two different values that a group holds come into conflict with each other (e.g., ecological sustainability vs. affordability when constructing a community building) or when there are different interpretations of an existing common value. As Laird puts it: "I urge a community to not be dismayed by discovering that different members have different spins on what a common value means. You weren't really thinking you all thought the same way on everything, were you? I didn't think so. So expect differences to arise."

Blocks must be based on a member's perception of group needs rather than on something they want for themselves.

The standard used by Quaker elder Caroline Estes is that one can only block when the outcome for the group would be otherwise catastrophic. Not just bad, but disastrously bad. She also says that it's not okay for one person to prevent the group from taking risks, so long as the group is making an informed choice.

As an example, she tells a story of Pacific Yearly Meeting which, during the Vietnam War, was determined to send a ship bearing humanitarian aid to the North Vietnamese. Such an act fell under the official definition of treason, but the Quakers have long been a determined, pacifist people, and energy was building in support. Near the end of the meeting, one person stood to speak. This person pointed out that technically such an act would put in a liable position not only all the Friends in the room, but all the members of Pacific Yearly Meeting, many of whom were not in attendance at the meeting that day to give their assent to such a drastic risk. The person sat down, and the clerk (facilitator) announced, "Friends, we will now adjourn for lunch."

The correctness of the person's action was clear, as there was widespread agreement that it wouldn't have been fair to subject absent members to severe legal penalties. Over lunch, the people in support of the proposal got together and went forward with their plans to charter the ship—just not in the official name of Pacific Yearly Meeting. Note that the strong desire to act did find an outlet, and one that truly addressed the concern which had been raised.

However, the story above brings up an interesting question. Why didn't the person object sooner? Could they not get a turn to speak? Did the concern not occur to them until the eleventh hour? It seems to me that if they'd spoken up earlier, the rest of the group would have seen the wisdom of the statement, and rather than ending at a block, the whole group would have shifted to a search for new solutions.

In fact I've sometimes suggested this as a filter to people who are wondering whether a block is appropriate; I tell them that if there's not a sense of resonance from others who hear the block, then it's probably based in self-interest rather than the group's needs, and therefore the blocker should likely stand aside instead. In that sense appropriate blocks cease to exist, because they result in a shift in group insight which converts them from barriers held by one person into concerns to be integrated by the whole.

However, blocks also serve as a safety valve in the system. I once worked with a land trust that reported a high frequency of blocks. As I inquired further, I discovered that in their process blocking was the only way to say, "I need more time for discussion on this item before we make a decision." I encouraged the group not to rush so much, and to include an option in their decision-making for "I have some concerns and would like to dialogue more" that would feel different and more positive than blocking, thus reserving blocking for catastrophic-level concerns that emerge after substantial discussion.

While we all wish for good process with people who listen fully to each other, there are a lot of real groups out there that aren't operating that way. For those groups with weak process, blocking is the way to

ensure that if someone is being railroaded, they have a way to stop the train.

On the other hand, the blocking option is much more likely to be invoked by assertive personalities who can resist peer pressure from the group, and sometimes these are the "problem" members of the community.

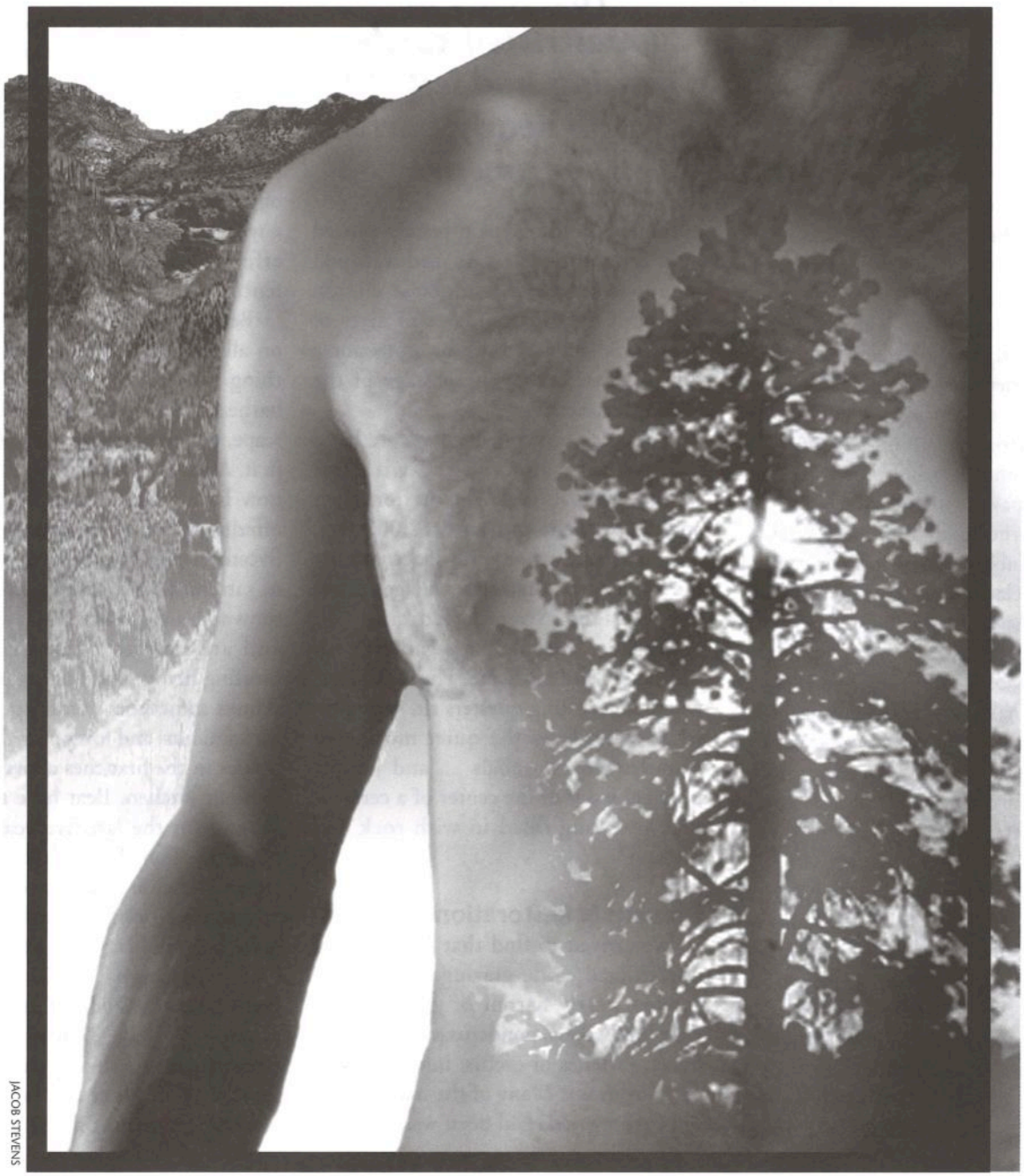
That's why teacher Rob Sandelin advocates a voting fallback, so that one member can't exercise a "tyranny of the minority" over the group. If someone knows they can be outvoted, Rob thinks they'll be more likely to act cooperatively. Other trainers, however, raise the concern that groups with voting fallbacks may avoid the hard work of coming to consensus. I've been happy to see that cohousing communities, which all have voting fallbacks in their bylaws due to requirements arising from conventional bank financing, rarely if ever invoke them in practice.

In a well-functioning group, blocks shouldn't happen very often.

Rob's home community, Sharingwood Cohousing, has another safety mechanism in place to protect the integrity of the consensus process. Part of their standard for blocking is that the person who blocks must meet multiple times with the people who made the proposal in order to try to craft something that will meet the concerns. If this requirement is not fulfilled, then the block doesn't count and the process can proceed. That policy is a way of codifying the need for anyone who is considering blocking a decision to work constructively on ways to resolve their concerns, which is an essential part of making consensus work.

When teaching consensus I tend to de-emphasize blocking, focusing on the process as "the power to listen" rather than "the power to block." However, as a key feature that distinguishes consensus from majority voting, it's critical to recognize the place of blocking in the system. Ω

The Ecology of Community, Part II: *Reinhabiting and Restoring Community Land*



JACOB STEVENS

A community needs land not only for house sites or food production, but for the inspiration, instruction, and identity it affords. Together the place and people invest in a relationship that is communal and reciprocal, serving both the Earth and the communitarians who love and commit to her. Setting aside a section of ground as habitat for indigenous plants and animals ensures that we too will always have places where we can feel more native, more at peace, more alive. Doing whatever it takes to purchase, "rewild," and restore a piece of sacred Gaia makes us worthy of her blessings, in turn restoring the fabric and balance of community, the health and meaning of our personal lives.

Securing, rewilding, and resacramenting rural property is a way to manifest our values and ground our beliefs. And the restoring of even a small section of our land to its natural state does more than perhaps anything else to help restore the health and wholeness of our personal selves and alternative communities.

Obviously, environmentally oriented folks can and should recreate community anywhere they live, in public housing and suburban blocks, organizing childcare and growers' markets, planting gardens on any flat roofs, and planting forage for birds on the unpaved strips between the sidewalk and the road. But there is also a special combination of intimacy, physicality, revelation, and vibe with rural, land-based groups. Pooling resources and moving to rural property can be difficult in terms of jobs and school, but it offers a chance to make a career of life, and a place to learn what no university can ever offer. And after vision, intention, and commitment, purchasing a piece of land can be the next step towards founding and growing community, .

However, rural properties for wildlands restoration are likely to be the most isolated, with unmaintained access roads or no roads at all, but that also means they sell for less than more "convenient" or "agriculturally viable" pieces. They may be too marshy for development, but be perfect for recreating a bird-loving wetland. Or the property could be a narrow canyon that's half a flood plain, and the other half "unusable" rocky terrain—as our own community land was first described!

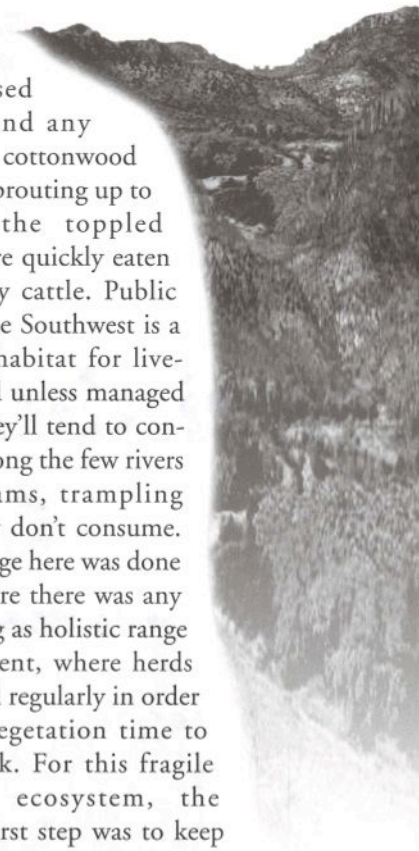
Of course it was this commercial undesirability that attracted us to what became the premier wildlife sanctuary in this region, the ground and inspiration for our community, and the focus of our care and cause. Our property is located on a gorgeous bend of a river, seven jeep-sinking crossings from the nearest pavement in southwest New Mexico. The county is over 80 percent national forest, with minuscule holdings of privately owned land in one of the last undeveloped mountain ranges in temperate climes. Nearby is the Gila, millions of acres of public wildlands set aside for protection a full 40 years before the passage of the Wilderness Act.

109 years of unrestricted cattle grazing had left the canyon nearly barren of green.

The area's pine-filled valleys are laced with streams and spotted with hot springs, while its peaks rise up from their ancient sea beds to nearly 12.000 feet. Scattered throughout the sanctuary are the remains of a pithouse village, where the ancient Sweet Medicine (or "Mogollon") people once gathered for instruction and medicine. The rock ledges where our visiting questers sit, were polished smooth by the quiet motion of countless yucca sandals .... and juniper trees grow out of the center of a ceremonial kiva long filled in with rock and earth.

Fencing & Restoration

We arrived to find that 109 years of unrestricted cattle grazing had left the canyon nearly barren of green. There were hardwoods, ponderosas, of course, a dozen varieties of cactus, but no grasses or wildflowers. Many of the magnificent old cottonwoods had been washed away by erosion-caused floods, and any willow or cottonwood saplings sprouting up to replace the toppled giants were quickly eaten by hungry cattle. Public land in the Southwest is a difficult habitat for livestock, and unless managed closely they'll tend to congregate along the few rivers and streams, trampling what they don't consume. The damage here was done years before there was any such thing as holistic range management, where herds are moved regularly in order to give vegetation time to grow back. For this fragile riparian ecosystem, the obvious first step was to keep any free-ranging cattle out with effective and well maintained fences.



Because our property is surrounded on all sides by national forest, the last thing we wanted to do was to stretch barbed wire across an unmarked landscape, but we could see the potential value in it. After 11 years of being fenced off we now have a dense forest of red willows, offering shelter to the endangered willow flycatcher and hundreds of other species of rare birds and mammals. Young cottonwood are already 30 to 40 feet tall, and are host to poised kingfishers, roosting heron, and nesting osprey. Wild skunks sometimes climb up on our laps for handouts, and foxes munch on juniper berries in the branches above a primitive outdoor kitchen. Bear have moved back in, and for the last five years a pair of mountain lions have felt safe enough to return and raise their spotted kits.

Assistance with the cost of the fence came from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, through their innovative Partnerships In Wildlife Program. Anyone can apply for the limited program, by demonstrating their commitment to restoring a piece of land, and by promising to maintain it in part as habitat

for waterfowl or other foraging wildlife. This program also helped cover the costs of our first tree plantings, and soon the warm months were given over to revegitating the canyon with long-missing native species.

One of the first things we did was to research what species of plants and animals live on or near the property now, and which have been recently forced out by competition from invasive non-native species. The most noticeable incursion was the horehound. At first we welcomed this attractive, hardy plant, but it wasn't long before this species formed a solid crusty plane of yard-high vegetation too thick to walk through, forcing out the natives. It was hard accepting the hands-on responsibility of removing the horehound plants, one at a time, feeling for them as we make room for natives again.

The Eurasian tamarisk is another invader. Once released into North America, these riparian salt cedars are fast-growing and herbicide resistant, producing a shower of mineral salts that make the soil inhospitable to any competing shoots and soon smother the willows and immature cottonwoods. Digging them up by hand was labor intensive but necessary.

We arrived here thinking this dry, usually hard ground was particularly durable, and never considered limiting our pedestrian traffic to trails. Only as the paths to certain places took shape on their own, did we come to realize how much greener, how much more alive it was wherever we didn't walk.

For most of my life I've balked at guided tours and marked trails, so it was with some trepidation that I arranged the first of hundreds of surface rocks into borders channeling our paths. Soon the borders were catching any eroding soil. Like the stone check-dams laid across every arroyo and drainage, these lines of rocks serve as slightly raised seedbeds for a progression of wild blossoms.

We soon saw the importance of limiting our impact in other ways as well. Nesting bald eagles moved out of their

colored cliffs when we rode in with a loud vehicle, and only returned to the canyon when things quieted back down. We made the difficult decision not to have pets on the sanctuary, and immediately began noticing how much closer the deer and coatamundi, the birds and lizards would come to us. Binding land-use covenants were signed and entered into the courthouse records that put a cap on the amount of people who could live here, while specifying the number and type of structures we could build.

To avoid constant conflict with the wildlife we were attracting, we ended up not growing a domestic garden. The surprise benefit was the large variety of indigenous foods that now flourish naturally here, including tasty nettles, lamb's quarters, acorns, black walnut, cattail, currant, mulberry, grape and prickly pear, to name a few. Wild foods are yummy and require no watering, weeding, or battling with hungry insects, raccoons, or javalina.

From the beginning we were aware of the keen balance between having enough people here to make functional community and effective outreach, and having too many guests or too much activity, and impacting the very solitude and silence, wildness and spirit that people come here for. One solution has been to sign land agreements stipulating a maximum number of full-time residents and structures, to set the highest requirements for potential permanent members, and to keep the size of periodic workshops and gatherings down to 30 guests or so at one time. And by asking for presence, focus, and follow-through from our students and interns, a natural filtering has occurred, drawing in the most adamant and enthused seekers, and leading others less intentioned or less interested to find more appropriate communities to join.

We ended up not growing a domestic garden.

Walking back out across the canyon's seven river crossings, one can't help but feel the presence of the ancient people who lived here for thousands of years. Listen carefully and we can still hear their songs and drums, the laughter of randy elders and boisterous kids. Look close enough at the life and magic unfolding around us, and we can soon discern patterns and poems inspiring and informing our worthy efforts at consciousness, caretakership, and community. Resonating with the vibe of place, and heeding its needs and lessons gives us most of what we need to create a new and balanced world. Living on or pilgrimaging to special natural places, sets the tone for beautiful and meaningful community. Giving back to the land enlivens the many blessings gifted to ourselves, as well as our ability to pass on love and wisdom to others.

Jesse Wolf Hardin is author of Kindred Spirits (Swan/Raven, 2001) and Gaia Eros (New Page 2004). He and his wife Loba founded a riverside sanctuary and teaching community to host short- and long-term residents for quests, wild foods gathering, and preparation, presence and purpose. The Earthen Spirituality Project & Sweet Medicine Women's Center Box 509, Reserve, NM 87830; www.concentric.net/~earthway.

COMMUNITIES

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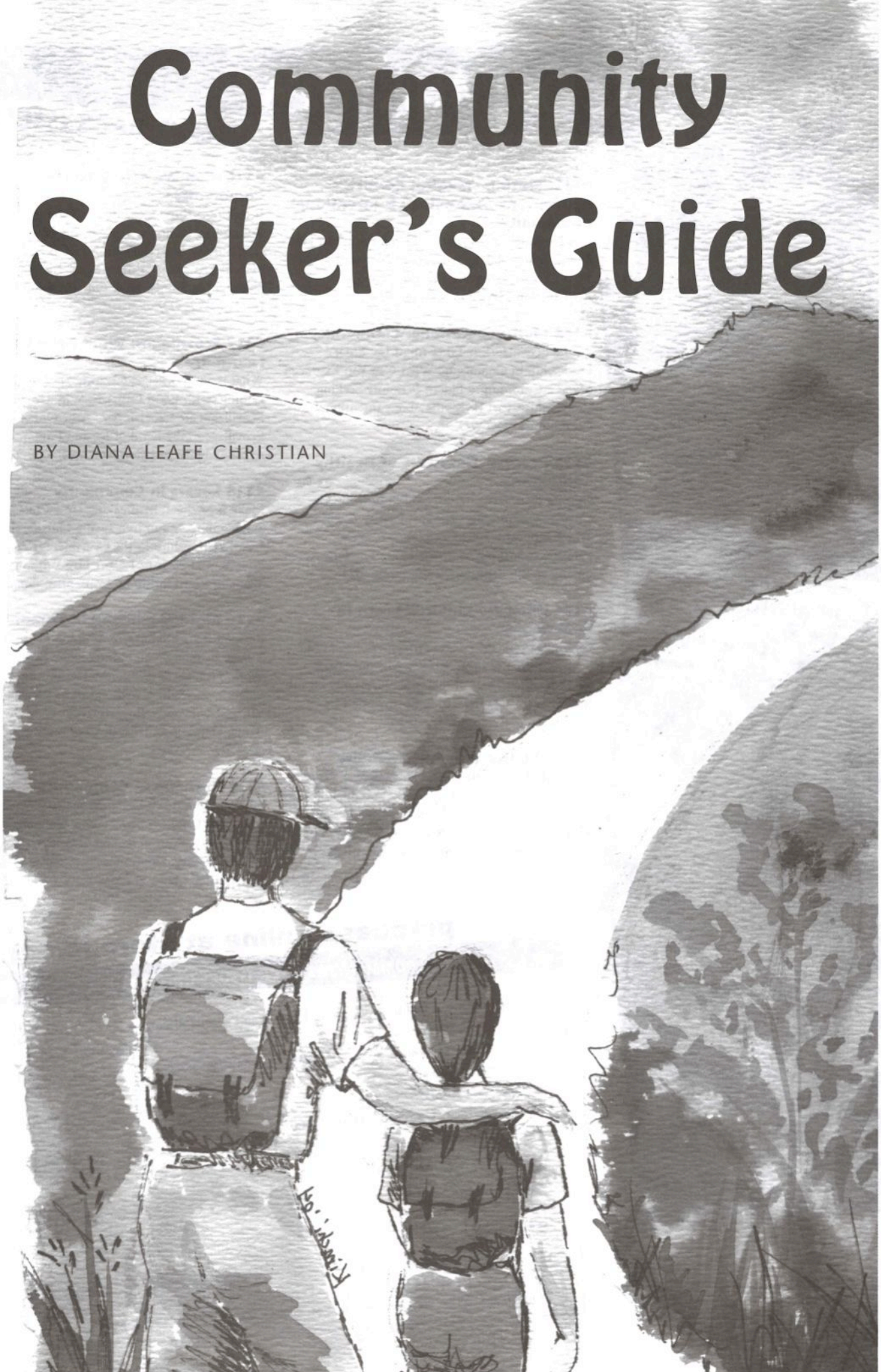
Community Seeker's Guide

BY DIANA LEAFE CHRISTIAN



KIMCHI RYLANDER

"Is this Earthaven?" or "Where can I find the registration center?" asks the earnest, hopeful visitor in my driveway. Most of the time I'm glad to direct people on down the road. But occasionally I grow weary of answering questions or giving directions (even though, as a member of our promotions committee, it's my *job* to encourage people to visit). What is this—"Come here, go away?"

Yes, it is, and I'm afraid it's pretty common in communities with a high-profile outreach program and a steady stream of visitors. ("We're not *'eco-world'*!" snapped one of our members once, when approached once too often while trying to finish a work project in his yard.) I'm glad to say we do have a fine visitors committee here, and welcome guests warmly. Yet many communities can get burned out on helping and hosting community seekers, which is why a well-organized visitors program, with trained and gracious hosts and community tour guides, is essential.

Not doing so has repercussions. A lovely visitor I met here last year told me she was considering writing a story some day, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Community Seeker." I laughed at her take-off on the book title *Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner,* but it really wasn't funny. She had visited various communities—at considerable time and expense considering plane fare and car rental, not to mention losing income from taking off work—only to find herself crying herself to sleep in her sleeping bag at night. The communities were certainly seeking members and encouraged visitors. And she had first asked and gotten permission to visit. But these groups didn't really have a way to help visitors meet their members or get a sense of their daily community life. At the shared meals she was often politely acknowledged and then ignored, the conversation swirling around her about in-group topics. She was often sent to do her share of community work—by herself, or with other visitors—still not interacting with the folks she'd come to meet. She often was given no hand-out about the community, and didn't know who to ask questions of, or when it was appropriate to ask. When she did get up the courage to inquire about basic issues such as what was the community's vision and purpose, or how are decisions made, or who owns the land, the community member often suggested she talk to someone else, or didn't know, or was slightly annoyed to be interrupted, even intimating that she was being a bit pushy.

It's our aim in this issue of *Communities* magazine to offer tips and techniques that work well for both visitors and community hosts. We want communitarians to get a sense of what visiting their community may be like, and how to make it easy for seekers to know if your community would be a good fit. And we want to help interested travelers and community seekers to better understand how to visit communities gracefully and successfully.

Many communities can get burnt out hosting community seekers, which is why a well-organized visitors program is essential.

Wonderful folks have stepped forward with articles. Jane Gyhra tells about visiting multiple communities in a months-long odyssey. Sue Stone shares observations from a several-year multi-trip project. In our "My Turn" column, Suzanne Hirsch reflects on the challenge of seeking community in that most stimulating, stressful, and expensive urban environment—New York City. Marty Hiller describes the exhilarating and harrowing ups and downs of finally joining her chosen ecovillage. Experienced community visitor and community member Julie Pennington, this issue's co-editor, offers sage advice for planning a tour of communities, and how to be a pleased and pleasing guest once you get there.

We hear from communities too. Laird Schaub recalls the unusual way his community attracted a beloved long-time member, and Tree Bressen explains why entering an income-sharing community can be financially easier than other kinds of communities. Kristina Janzen tells how enjoyable it can be to host guests at her community, and the relatively informal, friendship-based way they accept new people. In the column "Our Story," Johannes Zinzindorf describes the difficulties of learning how to attract the right people to his gay/spiritual/18th-century-style community, and Hans Peters describes the difficulties of new members who simply buy a house rather than make a community home.

And check out our Calendar listings. You'll find communities conferences where you can meet all kinds of community representatives who'll invite you to visit, and Community Experience Weeks and Weekends where community members go all out to give you a sense of life in their community.

Lastly, our own Geoph Kozeny—visitor to over 350 communities and producer of the video *Visions of Utopia*—suggests that we first get clear on what we truly do and don't want in community before setting out to find our ideal community home.

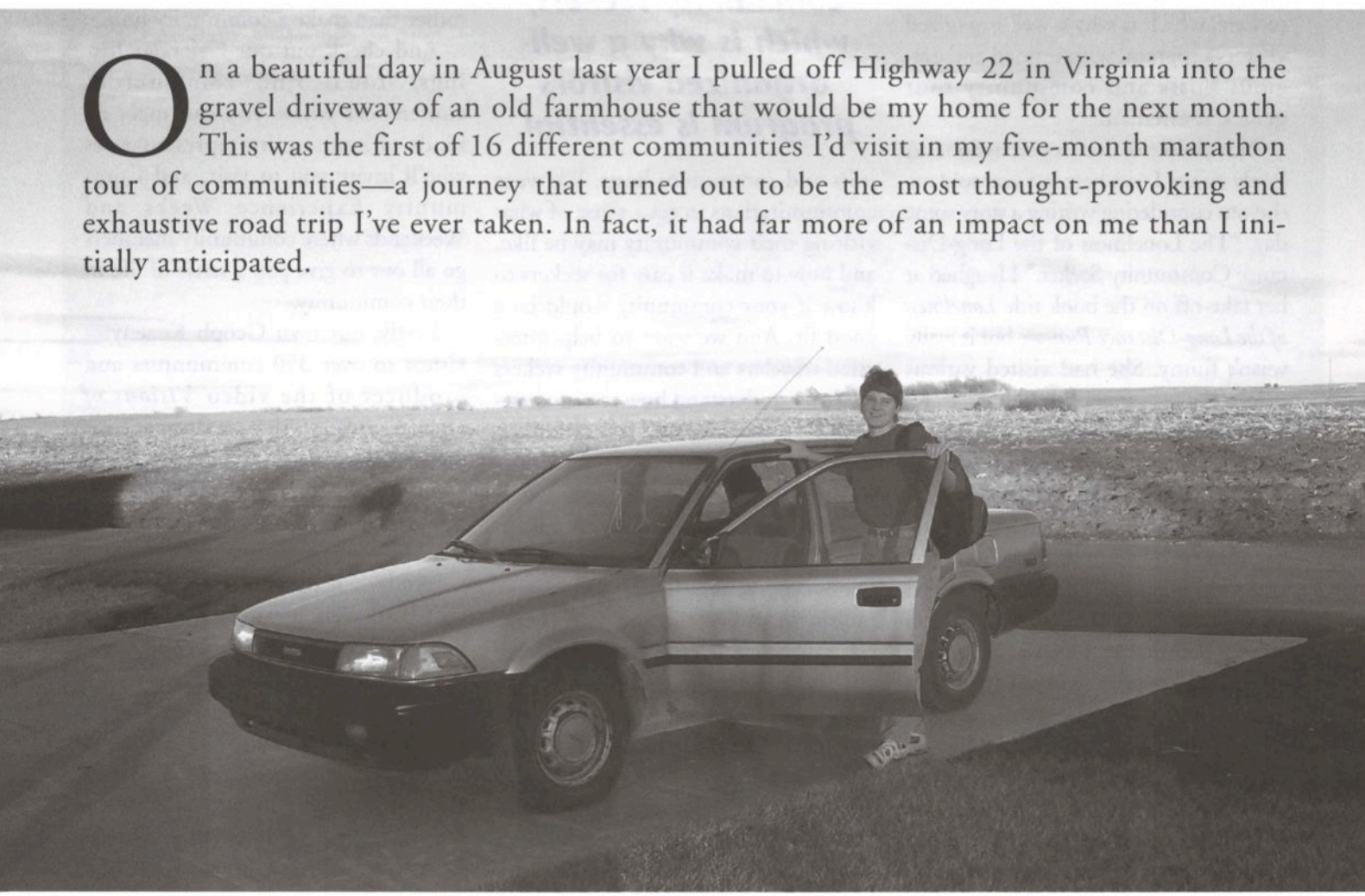
(And … if on your travels you do visit Earthaven, please stop by and say hello and get directions. Second small house on the left, with the green trim.)

Diana Leafe Christian is editor of Communities *magazine and author of* Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities.

My Marathon Tour of Communities

BY JANE GYHRA

On a beautiful day in August last year I pulled off Highway 22 in Virginia into the gravel driveway of an old farmhouse that would be my home for the next month. This was the first of 16 different communities I'd visit in my five-month marathon tour of communities—a journey that turned out to be the most thought-provoking and exhaustive road trip I've ever taken. In fact, it had far more of an impact on me than I initially anticipated.



The communities I visited ranged from some of the most conservative (a Catholic cloistered religious order) to some of the most liberal (former hippie communes) to ecological (rural ecovillages). My stay at each place ranged from a two-hour visitors' tour to month-long visits.

The itinerary:

Little Flower Catholic Worker Farm, Trevilians, Virginia. Rural farm and peace activist community comprised of a nuclear family and ongoing volunteers who promote living simply, nonviolence, and hospitality.

Twin Oaks, Louisa, Virginia. An 85-member rural income-sharing community which manages gardening, dairy cattle, and tofu-making, book indexing, and hammock-making businesses on about 465 acres.

Acorn, Mineral, Virginia. A 14-member rural income-sharing community which operates organic seed-saving and tinnery crafts businesses.

Innisfree Village, Crozet, Virginia. A 550-acre farm community of 60 people, where everyone, including their large population of mentally disabled adults, works in various task areas such as livestock care, gardening, cooking, cleaning, baking, and making craft items for sale in their woodshop or pottery.

Moonshadow, Whitwell, Tennessee. A rural community of an extended family and ongoing volunteers who practice permaculture and teach classes on sustainable living.

The Farm, Summertown, Tennessee. A well-known former ('70s-era) hippie commune on 1750 acres, currently with 157 members. Member-owned and community-owned businesses include midwifery services and teaching midwifery, teaching permaculture and ecovillage design, offering alternative education, as well as selling mushroom-production supplies, video services, and books, among other products.

Little Portion Hermitage, Eureka Springs, Arkansas. A 20 member rural Catholic monastic community of lay members and vowed celebates who garden organically, raise livestock, teach classes in spirituality and living simply, and run a small school.

Sandhill Farm, Rutledge, Missouri. A rural, 30-year-old income-sharing homesteading and organic farm, currently with seven members.

Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, Rutledge, Missouri. A nine-year old rural aspiring ecovillage of 20 members on 280 acres in the prairie, intending to be a village of 1,000 with many smaller subcommunities.

Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey, Dubuque, Iowa. A cloistered Catholic Cistercian order of 30 sisters who farm organically, offer retreats, and operate a candy factory on 550 acres.

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg, Indiana. A Catholic religious community, the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, whose 350 sisters run an 300-acre organic CSA farm, growing produce, raising beefalo and other livestock, and offer classes in organic farming.

Some seemed to combine consensus, voting, and hierarchical methods.

Humility of Mary (two locations) Cincinnati, Ohio, and Villa Marie, Pennsylvania. A Catholic religious community of 223 sisters whose ministry includes education, health care, social services. They also operate an organic CSA farm, raise sheep, and operate an Earth Spirituality center.

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, North Carolina. A nine-year old rural aspiring ecovillage on 320 forested mountain acres. Currently with 59 members, they intend to be a village of 150 with 10 neighborhoods.

Mt. Tabor Benedictines, Martin, Kentucky. A rural Catholic community of five Benedictine sisters who operate a retreat house and serve the needs of the poor in the Appalachian Mountains.

Christian Appalachia Project, McKee, Kentucky. An inter-denominational human service organization serving low-income people in the Appalachian region with mostly volunteers who live together family-style.

Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. A Catholic community of 145 Benedictine sisters who run a liberal arts college and a hospital, and offer other social service work as needed.

The first thing I noticed about every community was how they looked and what that told me about them. Some, usually older communities,

were landscaped beautifully, even with a professional-looking sign at the entrance. Others, usually newer ones, looked like their buildings had just dropped from the sky, with piles of construction materials everywhere. But most were in the middle, with normal-looking residential dwellings. I got the impression that communities that made an effort to make their entrances attractive had more of a sense of pride in their place. Little Portion Hermitage in Arkansas, for example, had both a beautiful entrance and a prayer garden tucked between their

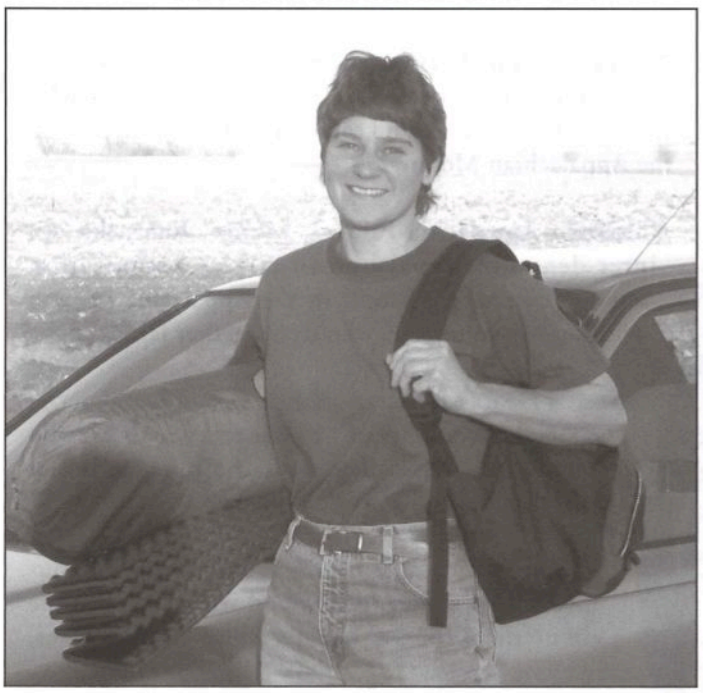
Two communities I visited even had mandatory recreation time.

chapel and commons/kitchen area complete with fountains and pools, trellises and vines, a deck, a gazebo, sculptures, and decorative grasses and flowers. Moonshadow in Tennessee, while not landscaped extensively, had artistic designs on every building. Seeing touches of tasteful artwork around a community really lifted my spirits and gave a whole different impression of the place that I wouldn't have had without it.

Once at a community, I would quickly start learning about their methods of communication, process, and decision-making. It was at Sandhill Farm in Missouri where I first experienced "check-ins," where people around the circle take turns telling the group how they are doing. I thought this was great—until I experienced a check-in at a larger community that took so much time it made their weekly meeting drag on longer than I liked. Different decision-making methods also intrigued me. I observed the Planner-Manager system of Twin Oaks, where people volunteer to manage various ongoing processes such as cooking or hammock making or oversee operations of the whole community. I also got to experience the widely popular consensus decision-making method and the hierarchical, leader-decides method used in most Catholic communities. Some seemed to combine consensus, voting, and hierarchical methods. For example, at Sacred Heart Monastery in South Dakota, the leader (the Abbess), and a nine-member council are established by democratic vote of all 145 permanent members. Goals are set by consensus, with a trained facilitator brought in. (One member of this monastery mentioned how, by using a facilitator, they successfully reduced the 120 goals they'd selected down to four manageable goals.) The council advises the Abbess on major decisions, while she makes minor daily decisions alone.

Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey in Iowa had a unique decision-making method. Similar to the combination method used by Sacred Heart Monastery, it also included a private communication process with the Abbess. All 30 members must sign up to meet with her once a month to discuss how they are doing and to offer any observations or suggestions for the community. I was told if they don't sign up for a scheduled time, the Abbess will go looking for them, since not signing up often indicates the member is going through a rough time. The current Abbess is so loved by the members that she got voted in for her fourth six-year term. Also, in order to stop harmful gossip, this community had the policy that secrets are not allowed and everyone has the right to mention anything they have heard to the Abbess who can then use the information as she sees fit!

I learned to ask at each community, "What do you like the least about this community?"



One big difference I noticed between secular and Catholic religious communities was the length of temporary or provisional membership. While it's usually a year or less in most secular communities, it can be six to eight years in Catholic religious orders. Of course this is really comparing apples and oranges, since in the latter people don't simply

join an intentional community, but take vows for a lifetime religious commitment. However, even those in which members take annual vows have a provisional membership period of two years.

In addition to the usual long trial period, Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey has a feedback and evaluation process in which for the first two years a potential member meets monthly with several permanent members who affirm her positive traits and discuss areas she needs to work on to help the community. For the last four years, these meetings are only once a year but involve all community members. A temporary member of this community who doesn't show an effort to make any requested behavioral changes is asked to leave. No wonder some of these religious orders have lasted nearly 1500 years!

One thing I liked about a few of the larger communities was when groups of members lived in small groups eating dinner together once a week or more, and doing other activities together such as celebrating birthdays, cleaning house, and of course having recreation and fun. Two communities I visited even had *mandatory* recreation time: one once a week and the other five times a week!

One community I visited seemed a little less welcoming than the others. For example, when I emailed requesting permission to visit, their short reply said I must first read three of their founder's books, which described their values, and only if I agreed with these values and was still interested, could I visit. I didn't have time to read the books, but was determined, and asked to visit anyway. They allowed this but put me in a retreat house six miles away from the community center. I had to do quite a bit of persuading, in fact, to be able to meet some of the other members and join them for a meal and a work party. This left me with quite a negative impression!

It turned out to be as much a spiritual journey as a physical one.

Some of the communities I visited allowed public nudity on their property, and I quickly discovered this was a turn-off for me. One community tour guide told me nudity was allowed only at the swimming hole, but after talking with other members, I learned that this was not enforced at all and "public" nudity—meaning, being nude anywhere in the community—occurred regularly. Therefore, I suggest that visitors to communities ask which rules and regulations are truly enforced (and may have consequences), which will give an idea of what that community truly values.

Author Jane Gyhra.

A helpful question I learned to ask at each community was, "What do you like the least about this community?" The answers sometimes surprised me and made me wonder whether I'd want to join them after all. Some answers I received were:

"filth"
"strong-willed members"
"lack of guidance when wanting to join"
"construction mess"
"having to support myself financially" (!)
"disliking the decision-making method"
"allowing questionable people to join the community"
"gossip"
"communication problems between managers and workers."

But it was the deep soul searching I experienced which perhaps surprised me the most on this journey. The various issues communities were wrestling with swirled around in my head as I drove from place to place.

"What does it really mean to live sustainably?"
"Is dumpster diving for food really living simply?"
"Can some protest marches cause more harm than good, and how does one determine this ahead of time?"
"Can a pet policy be created that satisfies both members who like pets and members who extremely dislike them?"

Traveling through the state of Kentucky caused my

mind to work overtime! It started by seeing some of the Appalachian mountains blown apart in the zeal to mine coal. Then I heard the stories of black lung disease, and people's lives or whole towns uprooted when coal companies bought up mountain property and started mining there. Passing through these mountains made me realize that any community that claims to have environmental values needs to consider limiting the amount of electric power generated by such an Earth-destroying practice. This led me to start figuring out what other indicators I would look for in communities which claim environmental values and practices. Does the community:

Reduce electricity from nonrenewable sources?
Grow or buy locally grown organic food?
Use biodegradable chemicals?
Reduce fossil fuel use?
Recycle, even human waste if possible?
Stop excessive materialism? (Every item we purchase has an impact on the Earth through harvesting of raw materials, the manufacturing process, transportation, storage,. and display.)

The insights and new ideas I gained on this community journey affected me deeply; in fact, it turned out to be as much a spiritual journey as a physical one. For one thing, what I value in life became more clear to me. Also, the exciting but complex interaction of community members with different kinds of personalities and the cooperation required to make community living work will be food for thought for many years. Most importantly, the journey helped me realize that my moral and religious beliefs are number one for me when looking for a community. It became apparent that, for me, all community issues and problems eventually distill down to this sooner or later. Therefore, I found I couldn't consider a community that had an eco-friendly vision that wasn't accompanied by spiritual beliefs to morally guide its actions. To me, it is just as important *how* and *why* something is done as it is that it just *is* done. So, thanks to my marathon tour. I decided to join a religious community. So although I'm no longer turning into gravel driveways that lead to yet another community, this experience will be forever very precious to me, for it helped clarify who I am and what I believe in.

Jane Gyhra spent several years in an intentional community in Michigan which operated a retreat camp She is currently is a provisional member at Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey. Her interests include practicing ancient Indian crafts, exercise and sports, and exploring various spiritual beliefs.

Sue Stone and Geoff Stone.

Excerpts from a Community Seeker's Journal

BY SUE STONE

From 1994 through 1998, Sue and Geoff Stone, who had lived in Ozark, Arkansas for 14 years, visited dozens of communities looking for one to join. Here are excerpts from Sue's journal, with her personal observations and insights of the sometimes inspiring, sometimes arduous, community-seeking process.

December, 1994, Missouri.

On Winter Solstice weekend in December Geoff and I visited a small community on 75 acres in Missouri I'll call Warm Springs. We felt comfortable there soon after we arrived. The couple who'd invited us, Sam and Debra (not their real names) seemed genuinely interested in us and our ideas and experiences. It was easy to talk with them and we seemed to have a lot in common.

When we first arrived, I was surprised to see just an ordinary little house. We had tea with Sam and their two boys, who were making pumpkin pies in a toaster oven. The boys took us on a tour. It was pretty land, but there wasn't much there in terms of physical infrastructure: a shed for outdoor cooking, a teepee, a sweat lodge, a children's fort. The home-schooled boys were impressive: mature, knowledgeable, serious.

Saturday I helped Debra fix up the teepee and Geoff helped Sam prepare the sweat lodge. Debra took me on a short hike to a spring. She told me about the women's group that meets there, and showed me the women's altar. She told me about how they had lived in a teepee when the boys were small.

Saturday night was what community is about for me. Other people arrived, including another couple, Roger and Sarah, and their son, and two men from St. Louis. We had a potluck dinner, talked, and played drums. Geoff and I talked a lot with Roger, who actually owns the land. He had lived at Ananda Village in California, and told us about that community. He was excited to learn about Geoff's greenhouse, and I got the feeling that we would really be an asset to their community, if we chose to go there.

The bathroom was a choice between an indoor toilet which didn't flush or a long walk to a cold outhouse.

The solstice ceremony was held around a fire. We lit candles and spoke of our feelings about the past fall and the coming of the winter and the new year. We went into the teepee and talked and played drums. That night Geoff and I slept in our tent, at least tried to, as it was really too cold to sleep well. The moon was full, and we were beside the creek and I could hear it all night.

The weekend was hard in a lot of ways. The bathroom situation was a problem, a choice between an indoor toilet which didn't flush or a long walk to a cold outhouse. I was tired from not getting enough sleep, and felt grubby and uncomfortable and cold much of the time. And there was also the unknown: What is going to happen next, and when, and what will it be like?

A new guest came the next day for the sweat lodge ceremony to be held that afternoon. I liked hanging around inside near the stove that morning, talking and drinking coffee. One visitor was a musician, a drummer; another was a young man from Syria. The third was a storyteller, very interesting and personable. They were all so nice—friendly, warm, interested in us and seemingly glad to have us there.

KIMCHI RYLANDER

I kept crying at the ceremonies. It all felt so right to me. I felt awkward and uncomfortable and apprehensive, and yet like it was where I wanted and needed to be. Even though Geoff and I couldn't stay for the entire sweat lodge ceremony, I loved it and I felt wonderful afterwards, and I felt so loved and appreciated. They thanked us for being there!

What I really appreciated about these people was their dedication and commitment to the land. Sam wants to respect the land as the Native Americans do, and do the celebrations and ceremonies to honor it and work with it. Sarah worked with Starhawk and does rituals with women's groups. The group also wants to have a garden and passive solar houses. And they have already worked hard to build good relationships with the local community.

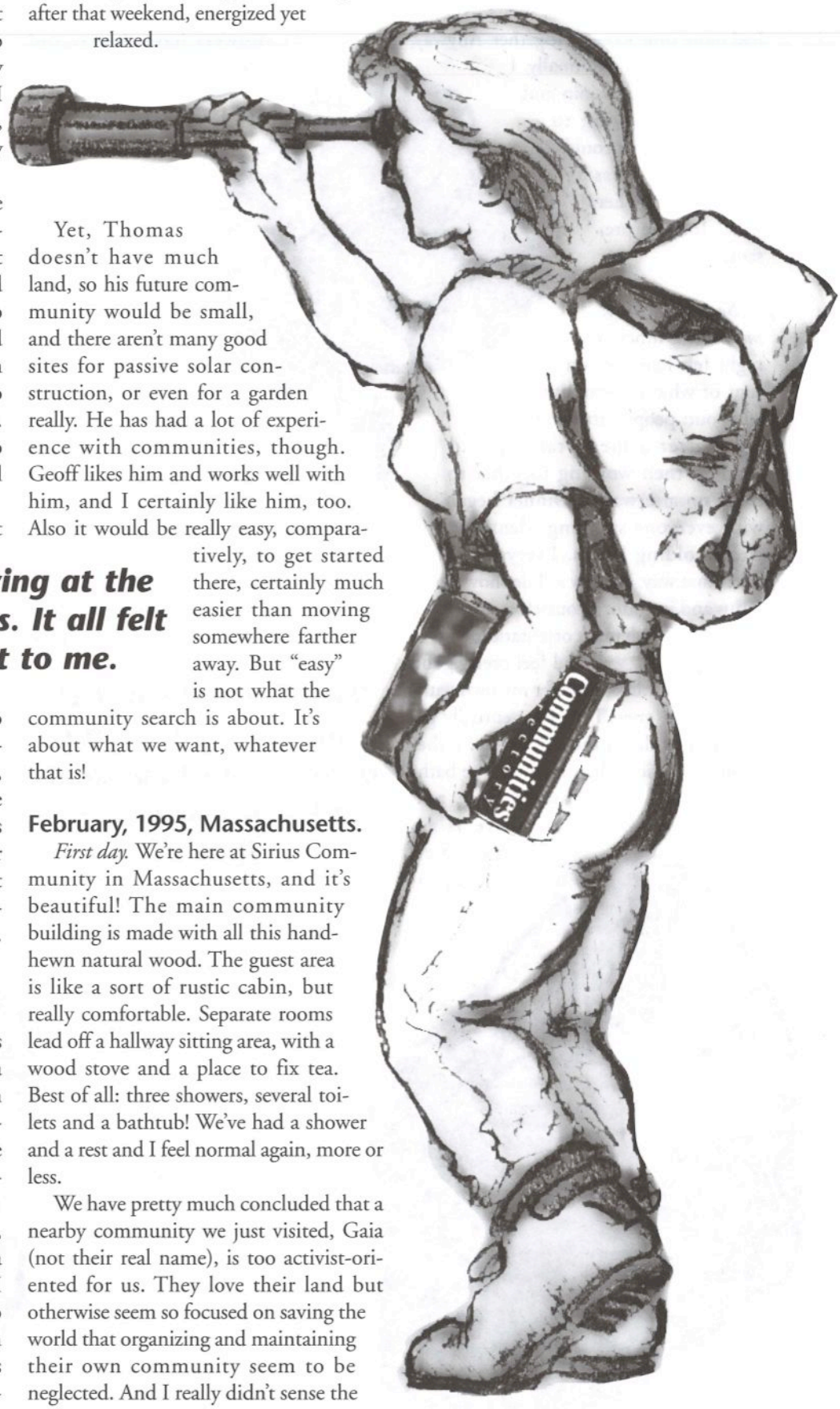
They'd like to buy more land adjacent to their property. I could see us being part of that, and helping to buy that land. The problems I could see with this community are that there doesn't seem to be much opportunity for getting jobs outside, and the land is pretty isolated. Also, it would be a small community. They are only two hours from St. Louis, so that is a resource for people and a market for products or services. What I liked best about it was the people, the Earth ceremonies, and their dedication to the land. It seemed like a definite possibility.

I kept crying at the ceremonies. It all felt so right to me.

January, 1995, Arkansas.

A few weeks later we visited Thomas (not his real name), who plans to start a community on his small parcel of land in the crystal-mining area of Arkansas outside of Hot Springs. We were there to take his workshop on ferro-cement construction and attend his birthday party.

His land is really pretty, and has a nice, year-round stream. I found Thomas a kind, interesting, and talented guy. I enjoyed walking in the hills, learning to do ferro-cement work, and talking with him and his friends. The party was another taste of how I imagine community would be: good music, really interesting conversation, and especially drumming by candlelight. I felt so good after that weekend, energized yet relaxed.



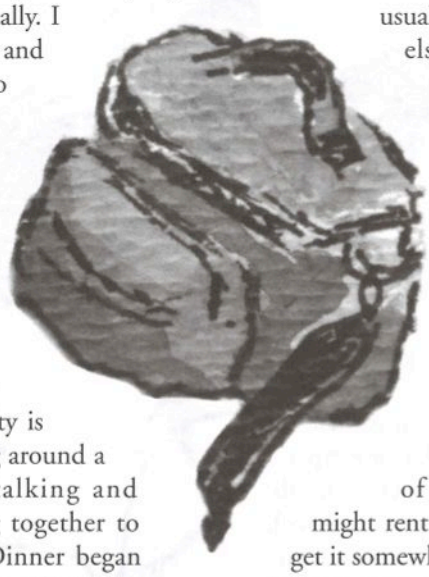
Yet, Thomas doesn't have much land, so his future community would be small, and there aren't many good sites for passive solar construction, or even for a garden really. He has had a lot of experience with communities, though. Geoff likes him and works well with him, and I certainly like him, too. Also it would be really easy, comparatively, to get started there, certainly much easier than moving somewhere farther away. But "easy" is not what the community search is about. It's about what we want, whatever that is!

February, 1995, Massachusetts.

First day. We're here at Sirius Community in Massachusetts, and it's beautiful! The main community building is made with all this hand-hewn natural wood. The guest area is like a sort of rustic cabin, but really comfortable. Separate rooms lead off a hallway sitting area, with a wood stove and a place to fix tea. Best of all: three showers, several toilets and a bathtub! We've had a shower and a rest and I feel normal again, more or less.

We have pretty much concluded that a nearby community we just visited, Gaia (not their real name), is too activist-oriented for us. They love their land but otherwise seem so focused on saving the world that organizing and maintaining their own community seem to be neglected. And I really didn't sense the central focus.

I expect Sirius to be different. It is much more physically comfortable, of course, but it is 16 years old, so they've had more time to get it together. Anyway, it is nice to be here, finally. I expect I'll want to join and already I'm trying to figure out how it could be done. I guess I should just "be here now" for the present.

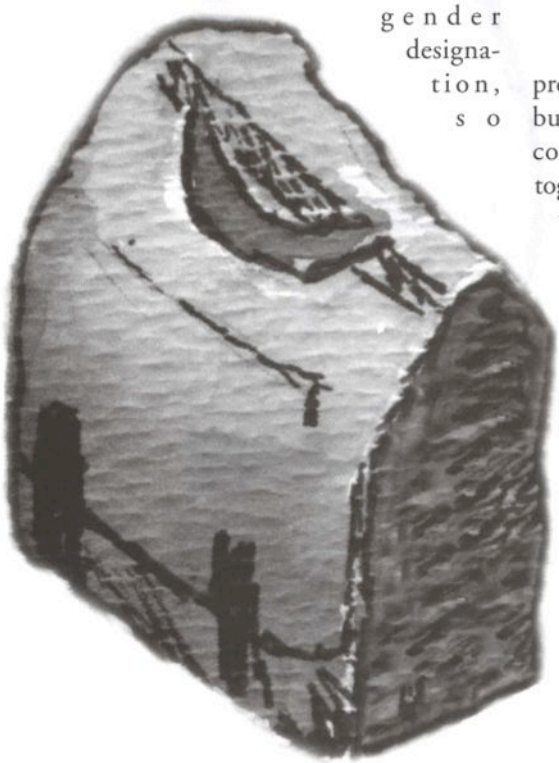


Second day, morning. Dinner last night felt like my concept of what community is all about: people sitting around a table after a meal, talking and sharing, then working together to clean up afterwards. Dinner began with everyone standing silently in a circle holding hands. Everything here starts that way. We saw a slide show about Sirius and introduced ourselves, met some members, and had an orientation.

I slept really well and feel pretty good today. I still think I'd prefer my own bathroom, but I guess I might eventually get used to this down-the-hall set-up. Other members besides the guests use the bathrooms here, and there is no gender designation, so you might be washing up or showering or using the toilet next to someone of the opposite sex. Of course, the toilets and showers have doors, and usually there isn't anyone else there, but it still seems strange.

In some ways Sirius doesn't fit my concept of a community, as most of its members don't live here. It seems more like a church. You pay dues to belong and donate eight hours of work a week. You might rent living space here, or get it somewhere nearby. You have to earn your own living somehow. There are shared meals, but you have to subscribe to them, and take your turn supplying and cooking a meal. You can pay $25 a month for a share of garden produce, and $20 to use community bulk foods. It's not like the sort of community where everyone lives together. But they are, nevertheless, working toward goals which are similar to ours.

"Easy" is not what the community search is about. It's about what we want, whatever that is!



Second day, afternoon. So far I feel really good here. Right now I'd love to stay forever. After breakfast we had a tour. Breakfast (and meals in general) are in the farmhouse, the original building here. There's a kitchen and a living/dining room with a wood stove, a few chairs and couches, and three long tables, with windows looking out over the garden. It's cozy and neat, though well-used. Also, there is a library and a bulletin board. People hang out there before and after meals. Before meals and before going off to work projects everyone stands and holds hands in silence for a few minutes, to "realize oneness." There's a short blessing before meals, sometimes announcements, and the menu. After meals, they discuss what work needs to be done.

After the tour we spent two hours in a meeting where we were told how Sirius operates. I got the feeling that the only way to get here would be to move to the area and find some way to live, and meanwhile spend months or years working through the membership process. I was told later that "exploring members" can rent space here, assuming it's available and that you have enough income. Anyway, it's not as hard as I thought it would be. The people are so nice—warm, friendly, helpful. I'm sure there are problems at times, but they all seem happy and relaxed. I haven't noticed anyone rushing around or looking stressed.

Again at lunch it was relaxed and congenial, lots of interesting conversation. People just pitch in and help clean up, and it seems to go quickly and smoothly. After lunch, I helped with a mailing at the farmhouse, and Geoff helped with firewood. I went for a walk on the trail through the woods.

Every place I've been so far I can imagine myself living, so I guess I can't be sure my feelings at this point are a reliable gauge. After one day, how can I really have enough information? This is really the first operational community I've experienced. I just keep thinking how good it would be to live here. But there are disadvantages; for example, housing costs seem double those in Arkansas, and there aren't many jobs close by. It would be a half-hour commute to get to work, most likely. And part of the reason for community living is to get away from that stuff! There's a possibility of a job here in the community, perhaps, or a business operating out of the community eventually. So it might work out, if we really wanted to be here.

Dinner last night felt like my concept of what community is all about.

Third day, evening. Geoff and I spent the time before dinner discussing pros and cons and possibilities. We just go around and around and back and forth. I am already tired of the uncertainty, but I guess it will go on anyway!

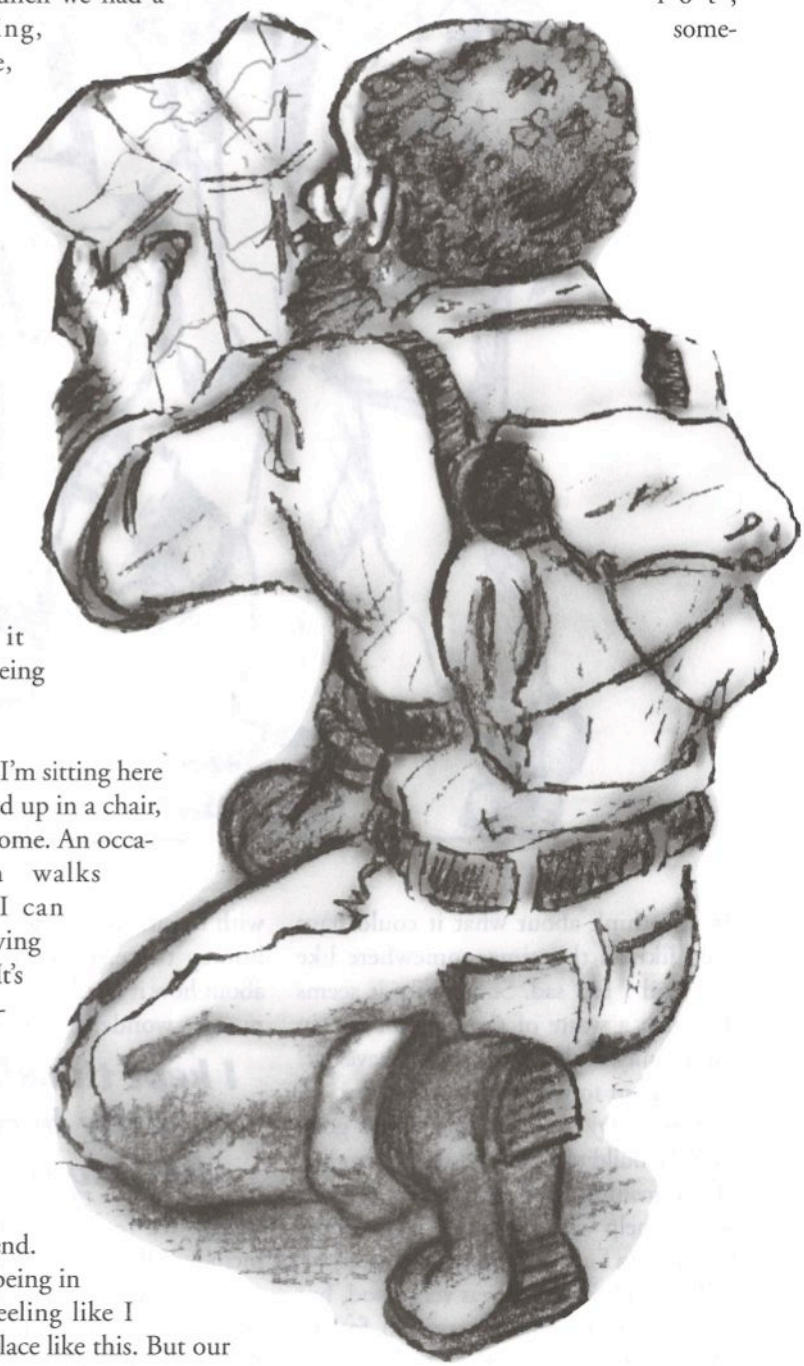
Last night one of the founding members, Bruce, gave a talk on the role of community in the modern world. He said there is typically a breakdown of the forms and structures in society, then a period of chaos. Then comes a time of creation of a multitude of possibilities for new forms and structures, after which there is suddenly a "quantum leap" to a new form, a new level. He talked about how it is easier to grow and evolve and expand one's consciousness in a supportive and energized environment such as Sirius. He talked about how living outside is oppressive and can tend to hold one down and prevent this expansion, unless the person is very strong and evolved. This struck such a chord with me—that is exactly how living in Ozark feels to me!

After breakfast I had a massage with a woman who lives here, and it felt so good! Then I joined in for part of the circle dancing, in the new octagonal meeting hall. I kept looking around the room, at the people, the beautiful building, the woods outside, thinking, "I'm really here! I'm dancing at Sirius!"

There was a meditation before lunch. There was one yesterday, too, a half-hour "meditation for planetary healing." At lunch there were several visitors, as today was Open House, and the dining area was really crowded. Everyone managed to get fed and find a seat and there were several shifts for the dish-washing and cleanup. After lunch we had a closing meeting, where everyone, including the leaders from the guest department, shared their thoughts and feelings about the weekend. I said I was impressed by the care everyone seems to take with everything—people, buildings, dishes, etc.—and that it feels very good being here.

It really does. I'm sitting here by this fire, curled up in a chair, feeling right at home. An occasional person walks through, and I can hear people moving around upstairs. It's peaceful, comfortable, safe and secure; no need to lock doors or worry about other people. Everyone is a friend. It's hard for me being in this situation, feeling like I need to be in a place like this. But our search is about what Geoff and I both want, not just about what I want. If it were just me I'd try to find a way to be here at Sirius, but it's not just me. It could be another four years before Geoff is ready to do this. I hope it doesn't take that long! I wish we could just stay here.

I know I can't know enough in two days to be sure this would be the right place. I may visit others that are as good, or better. But I've spent 14 years of my life in Ozark and I'm tired of it! While there have been good times and I've grown and learned a lot, some-



JACOB STEVENS

times I think about what it could have been like all this time, somewhere like this, and I feel sad. Sometimes it seems like such a waste of time to not live in community, and how much do I have left? I don't want to waste any more time.

Fourth day, morning. Geoff has gone with the building crew to do some logging. He'll be coming back early to help fix lunch and I'll help with that. I decided to stay here and go for a walk, then take it easy.

Last night's dinner was very good, but there wasn't much conversation for us. The members sat together, and we were with the interns. It was comfortable and homey there, though. I was thinking about how it would be if we joined a community, wondering how long it would be

I kept thinking, "I'm really here! I'm dancing at Sirius!"

before we really had friends and felt included. It seems easy for me to feel left out and not part of things. I know people enjoy being with friends and carrying on their relationships, and it's not the same when new people are there, so I understood the situation. But I expect it might be hard at first in a community, like moving anywhere.

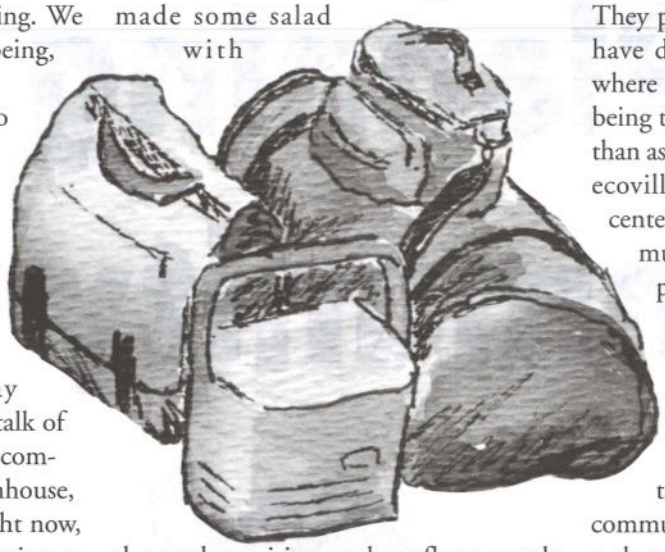
It's probably been good being here the extra days. On the weekend the guest department people were here for us, and there were four of them and six of us, so they'd be around at meals, etc., to talk to us and answer questions. Now people are going about their normal business, and there aren't many of them. Most work outside, and only a few work here, so it's pretty deserted and quiet. If the building

crew were working today on the conference center there would be lots of noise next door, but they are out logging. We have to find our own ways of being, which is more real.

I love this place, and I long to be part of something like this. Being here, though, would probably involve working outside the community, at least for several years. I have been feeling that I'd prefer a place where more people actually lived and worked in the community. That may happen here eventually. There is talk of building more member housing, community businesses, a larger greenhouse, and expanded guest housing. Right now, though, it would be more like moving to a new town in the ordinary way. You'd have to find a job, locate housing, and so forth. But you'd live here, or near here, and participate in the activities, work and meals and food sharing. It would be a good life, a large improvement on Ozark. But I'm not sure it is what we were picturing when we came up with this idea to live in community. We'll see, I guess, when we visit East Wind, what it's like to live in a community where people live and work all the time.

They talk here sometimes about how you can "create community" anywhere you live, and that community is not necessarily living with other people. Someone also said it's not so important what is accomplished in a physical sense in community but how it's done—the relationships and growth and learning of people. It's respect for your tools and your surroundings. It's your own growth and learning, peace of mind and spiritual focus that is important. It's the journey that matters, not the destination.

Fourth day, afternoon. I ended up making most of lunch, mixed together a few batches of leftover beans, made some cornbread, and found some apples. Geoff made some salad with the apples, raisins, and sunflower seeds when he got back. Another member was there, fortunately, to find a recipe and give suggestions. It gave me another taste of what community life would be like. Geoff went back to help with the logging again. I guess he is doing my four hours of work for today. Most of what is going on today is with the apprentices and a couple of members only. It seems like most of the work on the building and in the garden gets done by apprentices, as the members usually work only eight hours a week. I have decided to spend my last afternoon taking it easy, reading and writing. Hauling brush might be more fun, but this is my last day of vacation—might as well re-create!



Sometimes it seems like such a waste of time to not live in community, and how much do I have left?

New members, a family from the West Coast, live near us in this building, The father does carpentry, so he can earn a living anywhere. They have two young children and have been here five months. They probably aren't going to stay. They have decided they want a community where people mainly live together, that being the main focus and purpose, rather than as it is at Sirius, with the focus on the ecovillage, gardening, and conference center. This place doesn't suit them. Too much energy goes into the various projects, they said, rather than into real community living. In a way, I agree. It all seems quite scattered here. It's a nice place, but where is the community? I do understand the idea that "community" takes different forms, and this is a community in many ways, somewhat like a church is, but more so, because of the gardening and meal-sharing. But I think Geoff and I are looking for more than this in terms of people living together. Though we also want the gardening and sustainable living parts, too. Maybe we just won't find exactly what we want. Maybe we will have to create it ourselves ultimately, somehow. I'm sorry what I'm seeking isn't here. But I guess it's still a possibility. It'll be awhile before we are ready, and Sirius is still evolving.

Sue and Geoff Stone eventually found their community home in Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina, which they joined in 1999. Sue has been active on the membership and airspinning (minutes and decisions) committees, and Geoff on the finance committee.

BY JULIE PENNINGTON

Planning a Community Visit

ROD RYLANDER

ROD RYLANDER

People visit intentional communities because they're curious about community living, or to get ideas about land, work systems, or meeting facilitation for example, or to take workshops on community-related topics such as conflict resolution, permaculture, or meditation. However, the majority of people visiting communities do so because they're seeking one to join themselves. If you consider all that you could learn from visiting a community, it's possible to fulfill more than one purpose during your stay.

You may already have a sense of community living and may already know of several communities you'd like to investigate. Ask yourself what intrigues you about communities and what in particular you like about the communities you've heard of. What questions do you have about community living in general? Write your questions and concerns down and use them as a starting point to find out more.

The *Communities Directory* is probably the most useful resource for the initial criteria-gathering stage of the process. Flip through the *Directory's* cross-reference chart and become familiar with some of the points you'll want to consider in your search: location, purpose, population, decision-making style, shared or independent income, diet, substance use, and so on. Also check out the "Communities Seeking Members" ads in the back of *Communities* magazine.

Make a list of personal priorities. Are you looking for an ecovillage, a back-to-the-land-style rural group, an income-sharing commune, a cohousing neighborhood, or an urban co-op? Are spirituality, diet and health lifestyle, relationship style, or gender orientation most important to you? What kind of financial investment could you make to a group? As you ask these and other questions, consider your current lifestyle. What are the aspects of your life that give you happiness and fulfillment? What are the aspects you would most like to change? Be realistic and try to recognize those things that you don't want to live without or those things you most want to give up. In my own case, for example, what I love about my life at my co-op in Austin is the opportunity to abstain from eating animal products, enjoy local live music several nights a week, and the warm climate. This helped me set parameters for my search, such as geographic regions with a warm climate, proximity to a major city's cultural life, and places with a vegan-friendly diet. I'm uncomfortable with my dependence on cars, so I might keep my eyes open for a community with a car co-op or one small enough to bike around.

The more you know about what you're looking for, the easier it will be to plan your trip.

The more you know about what you're looking for, the easier it will be to plan your trip. This is also a great place to start a communities journal, like Sue Stone did. *(See "Excerpt from a Community Seeker's Journal," pg. 29.)* Write down all of your priorities now. It will be useful to reflect on them later (and after visiting many communities, some of them might change).

Now that you have an idea of your search criteria, it's time to start finding some communities that might suit you well. You'll find links to individual community listings on the websites of the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC), publishers of this magazine *(ic.org);* Ecovillage Network of the Americas *(ena@gaia.org);* and the Cohousing Association of the U.S. (*cohousing.org*).

If you cannot find a website for a particular kind of community, don't assume that such a community doesn't exist or isn't worth visiting (maybe they just don't have a website). Again, use the cross-reference chart, the map, and the index in the *Communities Directory* to hone your options. If you have time, attend a communities conference such as an FIC regional gathering, Twin Oaks' annual communities gathering over Labor Day weekend, The Farm's new conference in May, or a Northwest Intentional Communities Association gathering, to meet community representatives and find out more. Mention to acquaintances in the communities movement that you are planning a visit and see what they have to offer. Ask if your friends know anyone at the communities that interest you. Gather information and make a list of pros and cons of each of those top several communities that seem to most closely match your needs. Then ask members of these communities if the facts you have are still accurate. Keep in mind that

communities are made up of individuals. When the membership changes in small communities, it is likely that at least some aspects of the group also change. Make sure that the groups you are considering visiting are open to hosting guests.

Begin contacting communities several months before you'd like to visit. Many groups have set times that they are open or closed to visitors, so keep your travel dates flexible. Don't assume that they will be able to fit your schedule (although if they are, remember to acknowledge their accommodation). Also consider how much time you can afford to take off work for your trip and how much time you will need to accomplish your goals at each community. While planning my own long communities tour, I felt that I needed at least five days at each place, and this estimate worked well for me. I was searching for a community to join, but if you have different reasons for visiting communities, you might want more or less time than this.

It is a good idea to visit at least two communities on any given trip. It will help your perspective and make the most efficient use of your travel time. If you find one or two communities that you definitely want to visit, open up the *Communities Directory* to the maps section and draw a line between the two places and see which other communities may be roughly near the route. Even if you had no interest in some of these groups during your original research, consider them again. Every group of people living intentionally together has something to teach the community seeker. You might want to use communities along your route as rest stops in which to reflect on the previous community visit and prepare for the next. A spiritual retreat community with hot springs among cozy cabins would make for a great rest stop!

When contacting communities to request a visit, follow the community's suggestions described in their *Directory* listing or on their website. In your letter or email message introduce yourself and tell the group how you heard about them and why you are interested in visiting; for example, that you're considering

potential membership or in just learning more about community. Ask about their visitor policy. If you know someone at the community or even a friend-of-a-friend, mention this connection. Tell briefly about your experience, skills, or interests, and any special needs you may have. Provide contact information for someone to get back to you, and, if it's a snail-mailed letter, include a self-addressed stamped envelope. By enclosing a photo of yourself, a sketch, or something else that will make your letter unique and memorable, you are more likely to ensure a prompt response. Remember that some communities may get many requests to host visitors, or answer their correspondence infrequently, so don't be frustrated if you don't get an answer right away—one reason you should allow ample time to plan before your visit. If you don't receive a response from the group in two to three

Ask if it is a convenient time to ask about the community.

weeks, try another approach. If you've emailed, you might just send another email. If you've sent a letter, a phone call might be a better way to catch someone. Be considerate of the group and if you must call, try to do so in early evening rather than late at bedtime or first thing in the morning when members may be busy getting ready for work.

When you make contact with your potential hosts, they may or may not tell you everything you need to know about your visit. Many groups will send a letter describing what to expect on your visit and what you should plan to bring with you. If the group is not forthcoming with these tips, make sure and ask plenty of questions. What special items should you pack? What might the weather be like at that time of year? Will you need bug spray, a rain poncho, a flashlight? Be sure to find out where you will be staying and if you should bring a tent or sleeping bag. Are children and pets welcome with visitors? Will your diet be accommodated? What is the best way to get to the community? Can you provide your own transportation? What are the parking rules? What is an appropriate amount of money to cover your expenses? Who should you direct further questions to? Will this person be your host when you arrive?

While hosting visitors is often enjoyable for the community, it can also be a lot of work. The group would not open its home to strangers if it had nothing to gain. What can you do, then, to make your stay a mutually beneficial experience? Find out why this group is open to visitors in the first place. They may be looking for new members, but they might also need help with work, want to spread their philosophy, gain income from guest fees, or simply enjoy the motivation of having new people to spend time with. *(See "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?," pg. 43.)*

Many communities need help with work. You might offer to do those mundane tasks that make community members groan (think washing dishes). Also bring old clothes and your work gloves, in case they need help hauling brush, stacking firewood, or other outdoor jobs. It's a nice gesture to bring a gift if you can, but be sensitive to the culture of the community when choosing what to bring (don't present

Don't pretend that the community is exactly what you are looking for if it isn't.

home-brew to a substance-free community, for example). Try to bring either something functional from their wish list or a nice treat everyone can enjoy. Offer any special skills or talents you have. If you are a musician, offer to play a concert; if you're an artist, offer to create a piece for them or decorate a wall. Be creative.

Let's assume that you and your host have been in contact several times, you've made specific arrangements, and you're ready to be on your way. The time you spend traveling there, by bus, shared vehicle, or plane, is perfect for pulling out your community-visiting journal. Write what you know and like or dislike about what you've heard of the community, any questions you want to remember to ask its members, and your expectations.

When you arrive at the community, you will likely get a tour and be shown a

room, dorm space, or campground in which to set up your temporary home away from home. You should know who your main liaison in the community is, as that person can fill you in on mealtimes, community happenings, and any labor assignments they may have planned for you. If you don't have labor assignments, take the initiative to jump in and help wherever you see a need. The group may not have work and activities planned for your entire stay, so use this time to relax, get a feel for the community, talk to members, and reflect on your surroundings. It is a good idea to set aside time for journaling while you are there. Write about what you do, see, and feel. There is a lot to remember about the community you visit, so record facts for review later. Because food and diet are especially important to me, writing down what each community served at dinner helped me to recall memories and how I felt during each stay.

Talk to a variety of members, and remember the golden rule of "asking to ask." Before dumping a mass of questions on someone, ask if it is a convenient time to ask about the community. Don't be offended if the honest answer is "No." What for you is a vacation spot is really someone's home, and members have responsibilities and lives of their own that they will have to address. If you meet someone you are particularly interested in speaking with but they're too busy to talk, you might ask when a better time might be. Helping a community member to garden, wash dishes, or perform other tasks can also be a great time to chat about the community, if the member is comfortable doing so.

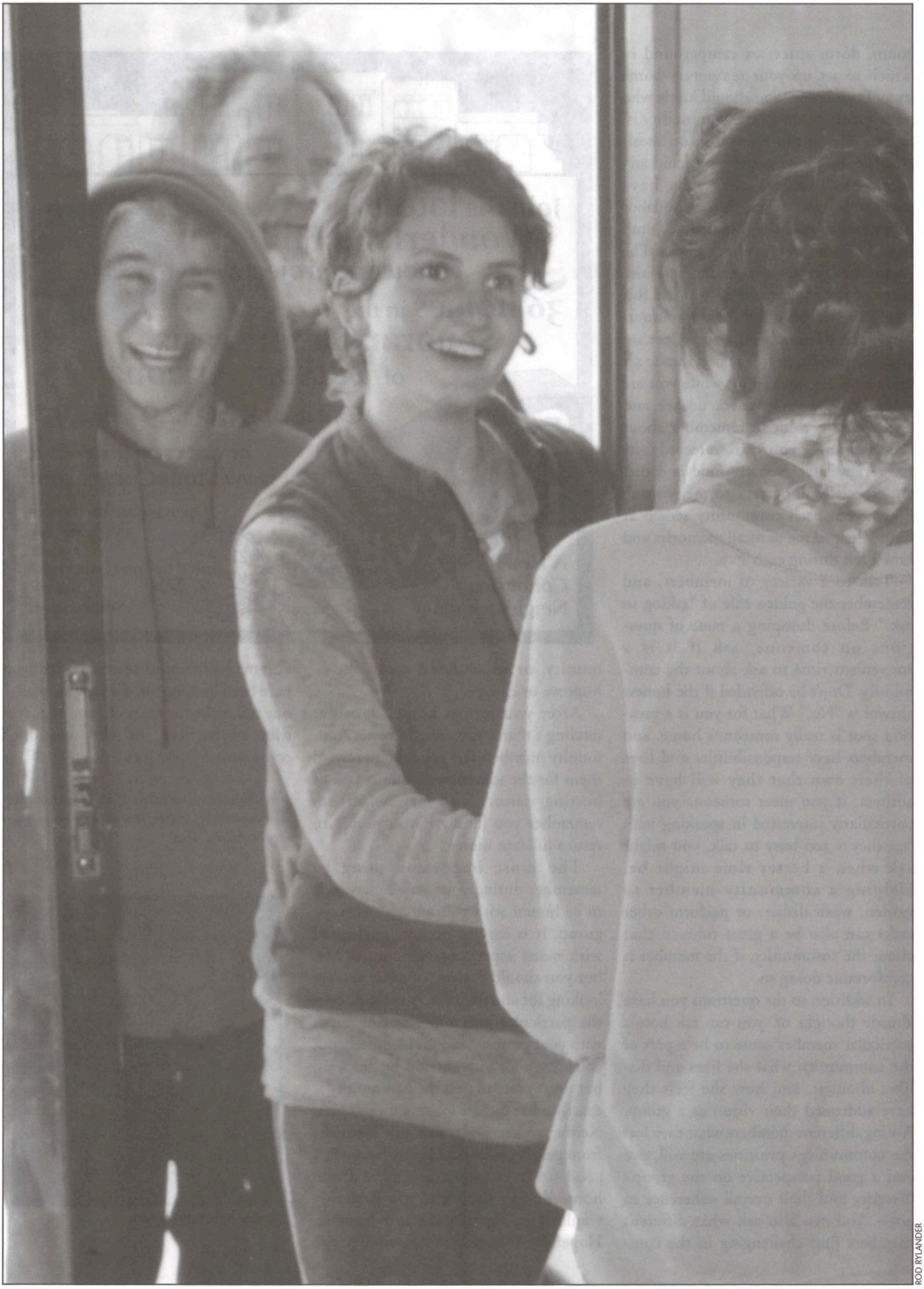
In addition to the questions you have already thought of, you can ask how a particular member came to be a part of the community, what she likes and dislikes about it, and how she feels they have addressed their vision as a group. Asking different members what they feel the community's priorities are will give you a good perspective on the group's diversity and their overall adherence to goals. You can also ask what different members find challenging in the community, or what they'd most like to improve or change.

After you return home, consider sending a thank you note. It makes community members feel good, helps reward them for the sometimes arduous task of hosting visitors, and may help them remember you kindly if you decide to return to learn more.

The most important thing to remember during your stay, however, is to be honest with yourself and with the group. It is easy to become enchanted with many aspects of community life, but you should remember what you are looking for and objectively evaluate how the particular group and setting mesh with your personal vision. Definitely put your best foot forward and be gracious, but don't pretend that the community is exactly what you are looking for if it isn't. Neither seekers nor communities benefit from gaining new members who aren't a good fit. If you don't find your dream home during the visit, you probably wouldn't be happy there as a member. Hopefully, though, the community you visit may turn out to be exactly what you have been looking for. Either way, plan it out and make the most of your opportunity to be part of the magic of community. Good luck!

Julie Pennington, co-editor of this issue, and veteran community visitor, lives at a co-op community in Austin, Texas.

Author Julie Pennington.



ROD RYLANDER

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

BY KRISTINA JANZEN

Coming home from work one evening, I walked into a scene of hustle and bustle in the kitchen of Orinda Co-op, our 25-year-old community of 100 or so friends living in a rural area near the coast of Southern California.

Janie was placing rolls into a linen-lined basket and directing Nicole where to find the extra butter. Howard stood whistling at the stove, basting pans of his special baked *chicken á l'orange.* Lana picked out the crystal glasses, and asked someone to bring in a few extra chairs. "Allie wants to set the main table for twelve," she said.

"We must be having visitors," I thought.

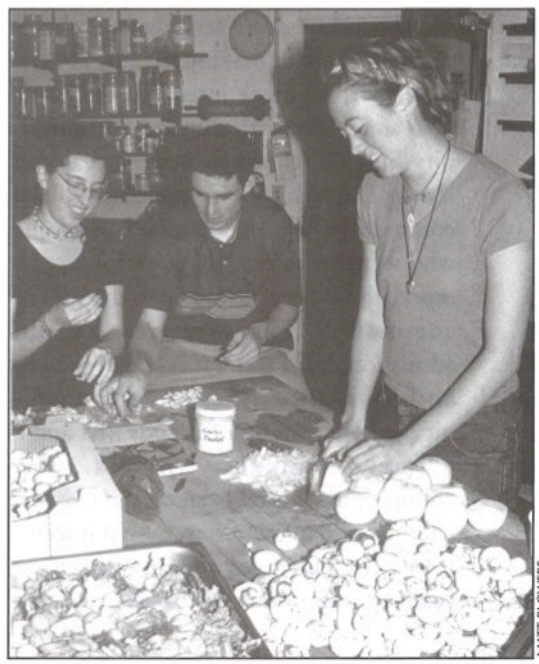
Visitors. It's always interesting to watch the interactions between ourselves and our guests. There's a certain thrill to opening ourselves up to new people, as it offers the chance to discuss ideas with outsiders who may or may not share some of our beliefs. It's also an opportunity to reminisce about our community history together, to tell stories about our struggles and our most embarrassing moments, to laugh at ourselves and to be proud of what we've accomplished. When visitors are open and engaged in what's going on, hosting them can be wonderfully stimulating. If they seem bored or the conversation becomes awkward, we can still have fun together, but it's less thrilling. The worst though, is when the visitor is contentious, condescending, or rude.

There's a certain thrill to opening ourselves up to new people.

In general, most Orinda members are open to visitors, but as a community we don't actively seek them. Typically visitors are personal friends, acquaintances, or family members of an Orindian. Usually the person has come to visit the individual member, but often he or she also has an interest in the member's life, and would like to understand more about our community as a way of getting to know the member. It's really all about making friends. We don't have organized procedures for visitors, but there are things that we commonly do for people who visit us for the first time. For example, they are invited to dinner or lunch with some of our most engaging community friends and/or those with whom they have something in common. Usually we'll tell funny stories, and talk and hang out together. If it's appropriate, we may show one of the videos we've made about our life or our history together. If the visitor is staying overnight, a room will have been made up for them, and Orindians who are "hosty" types will make sure the visitor has everything they need. If the visitor is someone who is really interested in our community life, we may invite them to our periodic "talks," our forum for getting out feelings, discussing ideas, and keeping current with each other. If this wouldn't be appopriate for a particular visitor, we probably wouldn't schedule this kind of community process while they're staying with us.

Inclusiveness, curiosity, a joy of hosting—these are traits we Orindians highly value in ourselves and in others. Thus we enjoy hosting visitors, especially if they are people we come to like. A likeable visitor is someone who is enjoying him or herself among us, who is respectful of our life, nonjudgmental, open, and willing to participate. An unlikable visitor is one who demands special treatment, who is disrespectful to the people providing the hosting, who is picky about activities, or who is more interested in preaching his or her beliefs or philosophy to us than in learning about us. However, when a person is visiting, we don't usually confront the negative behaviors or unlikable traits unless the person seems to want to stick around.

Different types of visitors pass through our lives: the one-time guest who has a limited relationship with one person in Orinda, often a business associate or a colleague that deserves some special regard; the family member of an Orindian who comes for a regular visit, but stays distant from the community; the regular guest who has visited extensively in the past and has become friends to some extent with many members of the community, but is not currently interested in being a part of things beyond the occasional visit; the girlfriend or boyfriend of a member, who has become important enough in the member's life for him or her to start bringing the new person around; the visitor who may have fit into one of the earlier categories, but who has become



MATT BLOWERS

more interested in becoming a closer friend, and maybe even a member.

New Members. We are also open to new members, but don't actively seek them. Again, it is about making friends. For the most part, we aren't interested in people who are in love with the idea of community but disinclined to making real and lasting friendships with members of the community. We are interested in people who want to be friends, even (or maybe especially) if they are averse to the idea of community. This may seem an odd admission, but I think it is one of the key positive charisteristics of our community–we are a group of friends first and a defined community second. Our emphasis has always been on the individuals involved in our group, even if it seems the individual's needs or wants seem to go against the community's needs or wants.

However, we do have standards for our members; for example, we expect that all of us and any new member will be open to hearing criticism from anyone. There is no obligation for anyone to change anything about themselves, or even to agree with the criticisms, but there is an obligation to listen with an open mind. There is also an obligation for honesty and directness from all members, old and new alike. Often, this ideal is difficult to live up to, and sometimes criticism comes out in the form of gossip about a person instead of communicating directly to them. We try to be sensitive to when gossip gets out of hand, and once it reaches a certain level someone brings up the grievance being expressed about someone in the group, and we resolve the issue. In general though, we are a pretty tolerant group, and only the most objectionable traits and behaviors are consistently confronted.

We are a group of friends first and a defined community second.

To become a member, or, as we put it, to "move in," one must come to a Committee meeting or a big talk and ask to join. The Committee, our governing body responsible for the practical running of the community on a day-to-day basis, consists of 13 elected members, but everyone is welcome to attend the meetings and voice their opinions. Often with a new member there has been a natural progression of friendship, and he or she has already been so much a part of things

that the "asking to join" is just a formality. But there are times when a new person doesn't seem like a seamless fit, and so he or she gets much feedback from others. In these cases, often times the petitioner is encouraged to change certain behaviors before being allowed to officially move in. Unlike many communities, we don't have a formal timeline for dealing with provisional members. Instead the time-frame has been based more on the circumstances of the specific person, their relationship with other community members, and their active commitment to "being around."

New Member Orientation. We have gone through phases of having a specific forum for educating new members, as well as not having anything formal set up at all. I think this depends on who the "new people" happen to be at the time. If there are several newer people around who seem to be "not getting it," we will start a New People's Talk—where new or potential members can ask questions of the long-time members who are willing to take on the responsibility of answering questions, making observations, and explaining away misunderstandings for newer people. The New People's Talk will meet regularly for a period of time. The most recent New People's Talk met each week for about a year and a half, ending about three years ago. We've recently been talking about starting it up again, but so far haven't. Instead, a few individual members have taken on the responsibility of getting to know the few new people who are around, and being available to address anything they are curious about.

A likeable visitor is someone who is enjoying him or herself among us, who is respectful of our life, nonjudgmental, open, and willing to participate.

A new category of "new people" has recently emerged in the teenaged and young adult children of community members. While the kids who have grown up among the community might be expected to have internalized the basic values and ideals of their parents and thus become adult members in a seamless transition, this has not been the case. As many long-standing communities have discovered, the children of community often decide to leave it for a more conventional lifestyle once they're grown. In Orinda today nineteen young people who have grown up here, a few other new people, and two of the community founders have started meeting regularly to discuss the values, ideals, and principles that initially led to the creation of Orinda. This new talk, "The Young People's Talk," has become a forum for lively discussion that has started to percolate into the mainstream talks in the community.

Visitors, New People, and Change. Orinda has changed over the years partly due to the influence of new members, both from the outside and from the grown children. For example, James's skill and interest in documentary filmmaking got us to tell our story on video—and then started a whole production company. Patricia's way of being a funny, engaged, loving mother inspired a new focus on

children in the community, and a mini population explosion. Nicole's love of fashion, Lana's fashion education, and Mara's entrepreneurial talents have gotten us into a new business making blouses. Peter's inquisitive mind and relentless questioning of "why this, why that," has opened up subjects we did not even think to wonder about before. This openness to new people's ideas has allowed us to grow, to change, and to better ourselves as individuals and as friends.

Author Kristina Janzen.

However, as our founding members age, many in the community have started to think about formulating in more specific terms the ideals and values that make our lifestyle preciously different from conventional American society. It is likely that as the founding members pass away, Orinda as a distinct community will also fade. If it is to continue, the young people of the community as well as new people will have to take on the challenge of living by the principles the founders originally set out to live by – which is what created Orinda in the first place. If I have any criticism about the way we have added new people, it's that we have been sloppy at times about challenging new people and younger people to live up to the ideals of the community. For to do so, the founding and long-term members of the community would also have to keep challenging themselves to live up to those ideals. Choosing to live in community is choosing to live a life guided by principles. If we lose sight of the ideals that make us Orindians, the community will dissolve back into the surrounding society. The trick is going to be in defining our values more specifically and making a commitment to live by them without giving up the wonderful spontaneity we have enjoyed so far.

We expect that any new member will be open to hearing criticism from anyone, to listen with an open mind.

Midway through dinner, activities around the table are in full swing. Allie and Bill are telling a story about one of Bill's misadventures with toilet paper. Bill is laughing so hard his eyes are tearing; Allie can hardly get her words out for the chuckles and giggles aching to explode. Miguel is slapping his leg and laughing out loud, Liz is smiling and laughing, Joan is trying to throw in her two cents. Our guest, Liz's friend Dan, is wide-eyed and smiling, laughing along with Bill, Allie, Miguel and the rest of them. This scene, the explosive laughter and belly-splitting tales told at the table among old friends and new acquaintances is familiar and precious to me. I love having guests at Orinda, for they give the rest of us the opportunity to reflect on our shared lives, on our best times, and on the times we have fallen down and gotten up together. If we got to know Dan better, he might learn the tragic stories along with the hilarious ones. In the meantime, though, it sure feels good to laugh from the gut.

Kristina Janzen grew up and lives in the community her parents and their friends founded in the early '70s, which she calls "Orinda Co-op" in Communities magazine articles. She works for one of the community businesses, and is completing a dissertatuon in ethnography about raising children in community.

BY JULIE PENNINGTON

Visiting Communities: Tips for Guests and Hosts

On the second night of my visit to an intentional community, I lay shivering in my soggy tent making plans for revenge. It was the second day of thunderstorms, and my precious few still-dry clothes were piled inside my sleeping bag for preservation. The water supply had been out at the campsite where I was sleeping for my entire stay, and the rain dripping through my tent roof was no substitute for a real shower. All I wanted in the whole world was running water and a roof. This was not at all what I thought my long-awaited community visit would be like. My damp skin, dirty feet, and angry attitude came together to transform me from the smiling guest I had been at arrival to the bitter pouting one I'd become.

In the months preceding the visit I wrote letters, emailed, and spoke on the phone with my future hosts. Because of time restraints on my part, I could not stay for the regular guest period, and the community worked with my requests and allowed me to come outside of the normal visitor program. I was grateful and asked the necessary questions to ensure that all my ducks were in a row for the visit to go over smoothly. I brought as gifts homemade jam and blankets that I had crocheted myself, and wrote checks to more than cover my expenses. When I arrived I took care to respect the members' busy lives and thanked them for every conversation and meal. I wanted to do my part to be a "good guest," one whom community members would be glad to have as a new member. I was so intent on my role as a guest that I acted nervous and awkward

and walked on eggshells to not disrupt their normal routines.

By day three of my damp and soggy predicament, still wearing my moldy dress and tangled hair, I was pretty sure I'd get no invitation to shower in someone's home or sleep on someone's floor. I knew that I had to stop walking on eggshells around these people and take responsibility for my own needs. I mentioned to leaders in the community, my host, and any other sympathetic ear that I was sleeping in the lightning with no water. But complaining that your neck hurts doesn't always get you a full-body massage. A few community members lamented my situation but did not offer any assistance, and I began to resent their clean clothes and well-rested spirits. I was feeling sorry for myself, and I was getting grouchier with each falling raindrop.

Why didn't I insist on what I needed? Advocate for myself more directly? I felt indebted to the group for their flexibility and assumed that I would have been pushing it to ask for anything more than the joy of their company and a place for my tent. This was when I threw my good-visitor hat into the plastic bag with the rest of my soaked belongings and became angry. I felt that if the community really wanted me to be there, they should take responsibility to pick up on my needs.

I spent the rest of my visit bitter and pouty.

Whether you live in a co-op, an ecovillage, an income-sharing commune, or any other type of intentional community, the best way to gain new members is through hosting visitors. It's an essential tool for furthering the communities movement and spreading the good word about community living, but it nevertheless is a task. I have come to believe that a good visiting experience is a two-way street. Both visitor and host must make commitments to one another for a short period, and there are things that each can do to make the time pleasant and productive.

Keep your objectives in mind and don't hesitate to ask for what you need.

As a guest, you can certainly take steps to get the most out of your experience. Set aside enough time for your stay to really get a feel for the community you are considering joining. Write a letter beforehand introducing yourself. Learn as much about the community as possible before the visit. Come prepared with questions and a good idea of what you're looking for. A piece of advice I've clung to during my visits to communities is "asking to ask." Remember that the community is not a tourist spot, but a home (and sometimes a workplace) to its members. Before ambushing residents with questions over their morning granola, it is a good idea to ease into conversation about the community by saying something like, "May I ask you a question?" By doing so, you give the member an opportunity to decline if she is busy or not in the mood to act as community spokesperson. Take the time to read other articles about how to visit communities (such as Geoph Kozeny's "Red Carpets and Slammed Doors" in the 2000 edition of the *Communities Directory)* or just ask experienced members for tips before you plan your trip.

Properly hosting a guest in a community takes a little more time and energy than simply showing the visitor where to eat and sleep. So what can we do as hosts to make the visitor's experience a good one? A structured visitor program sends the message to potential members that the community is well organized and cares about its guests.

A community should first decide what its position on visitors will be. What times visitors will be welcome, how long a visit can be, how many visitors you can host at a time, whether you can accommodate children, whether you can—or want to—accommodate pets, etc. Will there be one person or a team devoted to guests? What responsibility does the average member have to interact with the guest and tend to her or his needs?

It's a good idea for your group to draft a general letter about what to expect as a visitor in your community. Also, you might want to photocopy or reference an article about how to visit communities and send it to visitors ahead of time. A visitor liaison person or visitor team should be available to the visitors before their arrival to answer any questions and should inform other members of upcoming visits. Once the guests have arrived, the liaison person can make them feel welcome by introducing them to other community members. Suggest which members they can ask about various aspects of the community. Point out which members are in charge of labor, food, and finances, and which are long-time, experienced members, as compared to relatively newer members. Every community member has a special perspective on their community life, and visitors can make most efficient use of their time if they know whom to ask which kinds of questions. If you choose to do this, though, remember to ask the members' permission first for their various areas of expertise.

I've mentioned some steps you can take as a visitor before arriving at a community. But, as my soggy tale illustrates, good preparation may not grant you good-visitor status for your actual stay. What I learned from my visits this summer was the simple virtue of honesty. I was thrilled to be at the community I had dreamed about visiting for years, but my assumption that community members could read my mind put a damper on the trip. I am sure that members would have been eager to help had they only known what I needed.

Visitor periods are generally too short to learn every detail of community life, so it is to your advantage to make the most of your time spent there. If you consider the tips above before your trip, you'll be off to a good start. When you arrive, keep your objectives in mind and don't hesitate to ask for what you need. An attitude like I had could prevent you from getting what you came to experience. Keeping a journal of your stay is a great tool to help when you return home and consider membership in that particular community. You are there to gather information and check out the vibe of the group and the land. Keep your contact information of particularly helpful members, since more questions will probably arise after you leave and reflect on the experience. Remember your criteria for the community you'd like to join. Your visit may be exciting, and the members may be friendly and interesting, but no amount of warm personalities will make an omnivore comfortable in a vegan community or a lover of city amenities comfortable at a rural, off-grid ecovillage.

I am sure that members would have been eager to help had they only known what I needed.

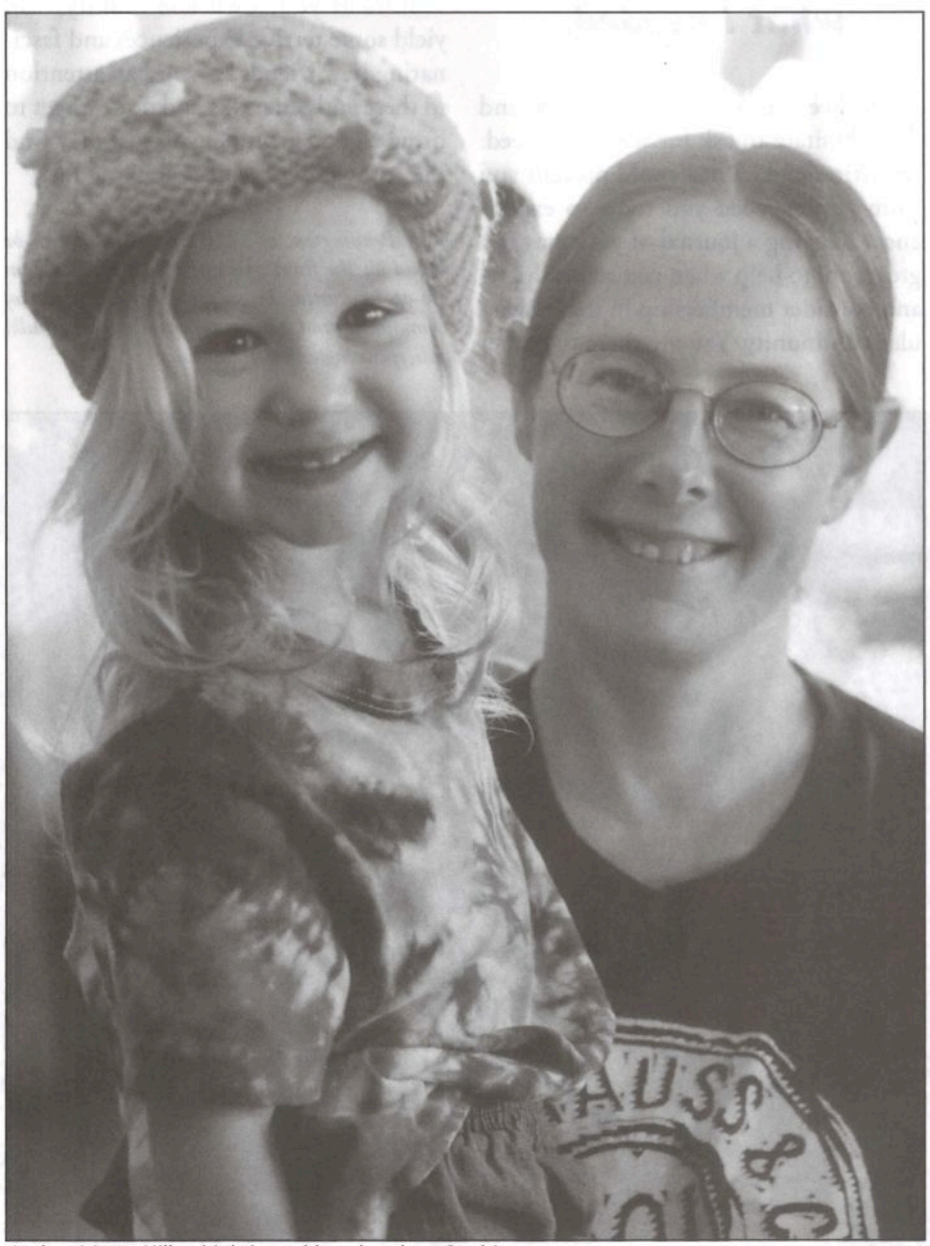
Since this summer, I've dried off, grown up, and learned a lot about what it means to be a good visitor and a good host. Visiting communities (and hosting visitors at your own community) can yield some terrific experiences and fascinating new friends. If you pay attention to these and other tips and don't forget to bring a good attitude, you just may find the "utopia" you've been looking for!

Julie Pennington, co-editor of this issue, can be found on the front porch of House of Commons Co-op in Austin, Texas, preaching the power of community and eating Tofutti Cuties in bulk. julieepennington@hotmail.com.

SUSAN PATRICE

Take a Deep Breath . . . and Plunge

BY MARTY HILLER



Author Marty Hiller (right), and her daughter Sophia.

Little did I know, as I contemplated dropping out of the core group of Mosaic Commons cohousing west of Boston last November, that a year later I would be living in another cohousing community in another state.

I'd spent six months struggling to manage the meeting load of a forming cohousing group, but as a single parent it had become too much for me. I wondered if any group would take me with such limits on my ability to contribute: it seemed as if I needed to already have the community I was seeking in order to find it.

I did a lot of soul-searching that month. Was I ready to give up on cohousing? I'd already watched half a dozen Boston area groups go belly up or skyrocket out of my price range. What did I want? What did I need? And how was I going to get it?

I wanted to live among friends; among people who accept and support each other. I wanted my two-year-old daughter Sophia to have playmates in the neighborhood. I wanted to live outside the city, but within driving distance of friends and relatives in New England. I wanted a place where I could participate without an unbearable workload. And … I realized something new: I wanted a strong focus on sustainability.

I'd just taken a sustainability class at the local CSA farm, and the experience was an epiphany for me. In it I discovered

a unifying framework for many things I was already doing piecemeal: buying organic, recycling and composting, conserving energy, resisting consumerism, and searching for community. I consciously understood for the first time why I was doing all this: that one of the guiding principles of my life is a desire to preserve the Earth—the things that matter—for the future. I decided to look at ecovillages, which would mean relocating.

I got on the web, and soon discovered that the second neighborhood group (SoNG) at EcoVillage at Ithaca was under construction and still had openings. I began to study EcoVillage at Ithaca (EVI) in earnest, and everything I saw looked good. Their first 30-unit residents' group, the FRoG neighborhood, the first of three planned adjacent cohousing communities, had been completed in 1997. EVI had an onsite CSA farm and 176 acres of land. Their houses were designed with ecological principles; their mission included an outreach program to educate the public about sustainability. Most importantly, the member bios they had posted on their website showed a lot of young children and people who looked like they'd be really fun to hang out with.

An hour later I was still waiting, and feeling bored and frustrated.

I emailed the SoNG membership coordinator, Elisabeth, and learned they had one non-subsidy family home for sale, but a family on the waiting list was interested in it. Elisabeth would let me know if it became available.

I continued searching for ecovillages on the Global Ecovillage Network website and found several interesting ones, but none that drew me in. One was too remote, another too expensive, another too urban, another had too few children. One wasn't far enough along.

A few days later I heard from Elisabeth again. The other family had decided not to buy the home in the SoNG neighborhood, so if I was ready to move quickly I might have a shot at it. The next business meeting was in two weeks; could we visit then?

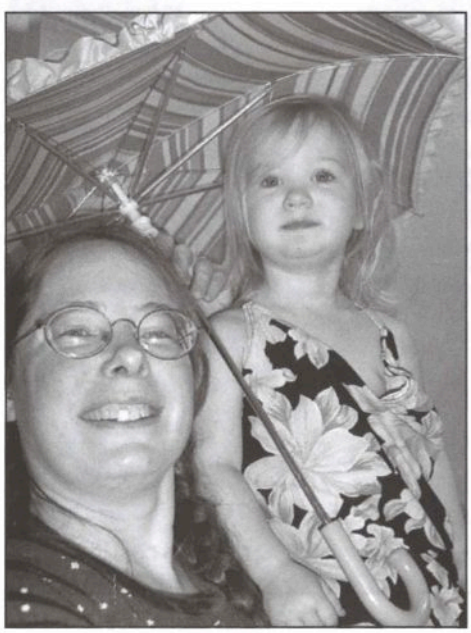
The seven-year-old first neighborhood at EcoVillage at Ithaca, FRoG

Big breath. Rapid schedule assessment. Yes, we could make it.

It was cold, windy, and dark when Sophia and I arrived at the common house Thursday night at dinnertime. My first impression was of warmth and clatter and many coats and boots and puddles on the floor. The dining room had an informal atmosphere and downscale décor, with mostly larger tables and a buffet set up in plain view of the kitchen and dish racks. The abundant pothos vines laced across the ceiling invoked a milder climate than New York in February. I felt immediately at home and also ill at ease, as I don't do well in crowds of people I don't know. I met several people, but remember nothing about who they were or what we talked about. It was a relief to retreat to the guest room after dinner and get some sleep.

The next morning Sophia and I went out to find Elisabeth, our host. The neighborhood was bare, snow-covered, and obviously under construction. The houses were custom built. One was stucco and the rest were unstained wood, giving the neighborhood a rakish air, very different from the color-coordinated FRoG neighborhood.

When we arrived we met Elisabeth and her best friend Laura. They both felt solid and down-to-earth to me. Elisabeth's house was small but luxurious. The bulk of the main floor was one large room, with a panoramic southern view and a kitchen that reminded me of one of those "build your dream house" magazines. The whole space was natural wood and earth tones. The bedroom and play area were in the basement. Elisabeth's family shares a common wall and a heating system with Laura's family, and the boiler is next door.



Elisabeth quickly gave me some basic information and arranged for Laura to give us an orientation Sunday afternoon. The available house was partly built, but I would still be abel to customize the details.

When we finished I had nothing more scheduled until the SoNG meeting the following morning. I'd been left with maps of the region and a calendar of events, but what I really wanted was to meet people and get a feel for the community. So I settled with Sophia in the playroom and waited to see who might come by.

An hour later I was still waiting, and feeling bored and frustrated. Finally I gave myself a lecture: "You are responsible for your experience here this weekend. If you can't get up the nerve to go out and meet people, your trip will be wasted and it will be your fault." So I bundled up and walked back up the path, watching for signs of movement in the windows and forcing myself to knock on strangers' doors.

I had to do this more than once, but the result each time was interesting conversations and further invitations. It wasn't that people were unfriendly; they just hadn't registered my visit as needing their attention.

The SoNG neighborhood meeting was unusually small, as half the members were in New York City for a peace rally. They'd only held the meeting so I and another visiting family, the Fitzkes, could attend. People sat on cushions on the floor and talked about their feelings. I really liked the Fitzkes, and was sad to know we were competing for the last available house.

At the orientation Sunday afternoon I learned that once you've met the neighborhood's membership requirements (visiting the community, reading their literature, attending an orientation meeting and two business meetings) you're free to make your own decision whether to join. The members neither assess you nor try to persuade you, but have decided to trust that the people who were meant to be here would know it. This was a huge relief, given my fears about whether I would be acceptable as a single parent. Their expected work requirement was two to four hours per week, which seemed like a manageable load.

The members neither assess you nor try to persuade you, believing that the people who were meant to be here would know it.

I also learned there was a house available in the FRoG neighborhood. sIt belonged to a family who were building a strawbale house in SoNG, but wasn't advertised yet. The Fitzkes were housesitting there, so they offered to give me a tour.

I hadn't met many FRoG members—only those who'd decided to move to SoNG—SO I felt ambivalent about FroG. My feelings were reflected in my reaction to the house: it was too big, had a tiny kitchen and an unappealing layout, and had too many stairs. And the Fitzkes said the air exchanger in the master bedroom closet made a noise like fingernails on a blackboard.

Shortly before I left, Phil, who'd recently moved to FRoG, asked about my impressions. I told him I'd expected an ecovillage to look more "eco"—I was struggling with the luxury-home feel I'd gotten in some of the houses. Phil told me his family had chosen FRoG over SoNG partly for that reason, as FRoG had made building choices that he felt were more consistent with their own ecological values. I think that may have been the first powerful positive statement I heard about the FRoG neighborhood.

I can see now, in comparing the two, that the neighborhoods express ecological values in different ways. Both have super-insulated, passive solar homes to reduce heating requirements, and members of both make compost. But many of the homes in SoNG have additional high-end features such as power from PV panels, composting toilets, masonry fireplaces, and strawbale insulation. FRoG homes are more frugal: their kitchens are small and dishwasher-free, they use convection ovens, their heat is shared by half a dozen units instead of two, and they share laundry facilities.

Back home in Massachusetts, I mulled over my reactions and daydreamed about the house in SoNG. I loved the idea of custom building but was afraid of the work that it entailed.

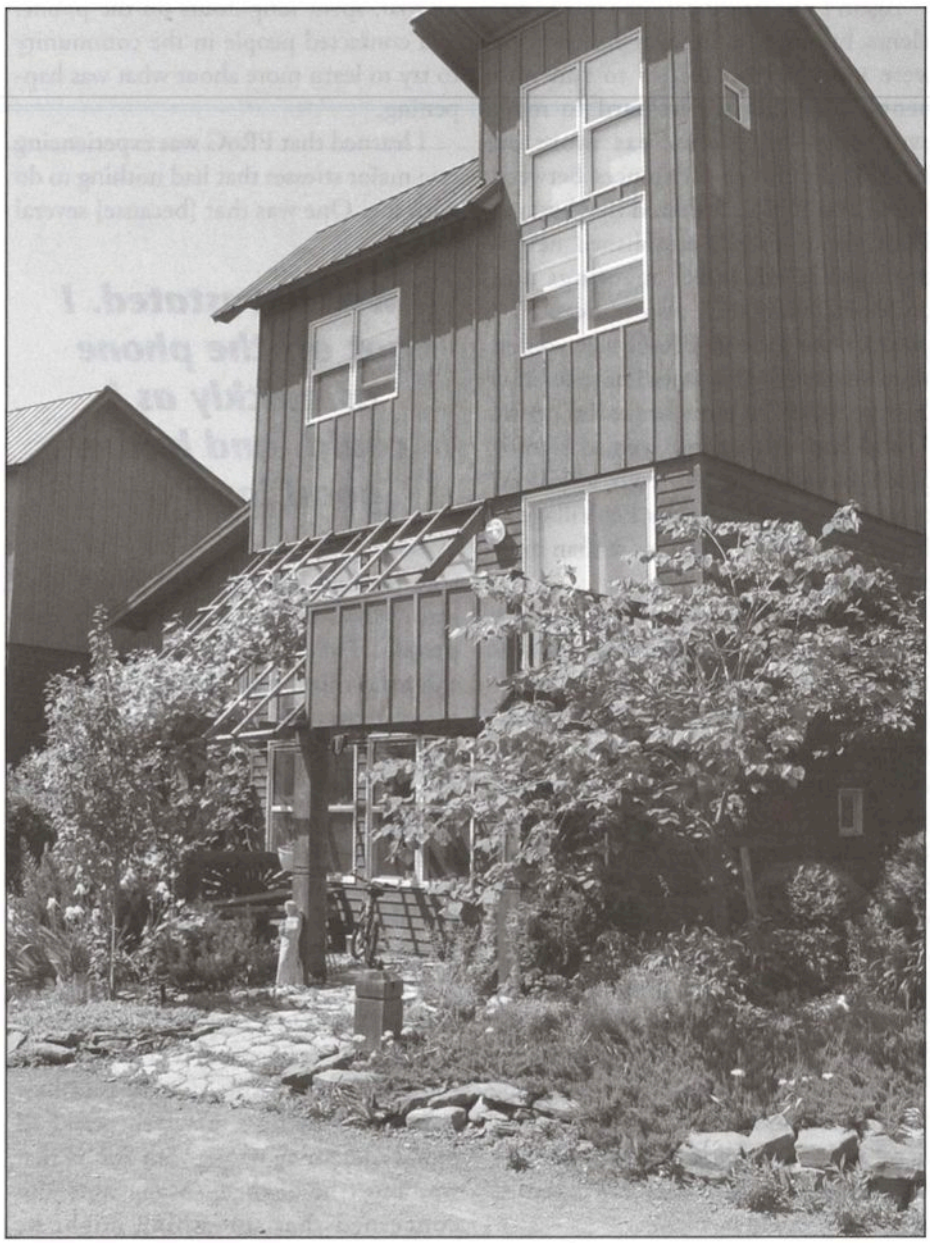
My dreams were brought up short when I learned the Fitzkes had already made an offer. Elisabeth suggested I should consider the house in FRoG, so I dutifully called the owner, Michelle, who was also FRoG's membership coordinator.

It wouldn't be available any time soon, but she would keep me posted. Michelle stressed the importance of choosing FRoG only if I wanted to live there, not just because I didn't get in to SoNG.

I asked Michelle about neighborhood conflicts in FRoG. She told me about the conflict resolution and mediation training they had sought after the community had been divided for the first few years by disputes which resulted in some residents leaving. She described how those skills had helped her resolve some recent conflicts about differences in parenting.

She said there's a feel-good grace period when you first move into community, and a year or two later all your conflicts start to surface. She's convinced that SoNG's big-happy-family feel is temporary, a result of its relative youth as a community. She doesn't think the level of conflict FRoG experienced was unique, but rather a developmental stage in the community maturation process.

I chewed on this information for a long time. I'm afraid of conflict. Many of my friendships over the years have dissolved at the first sign of it. Learning to stay present through conflict, and to accept when others don't, has been one of the great ongoing struggles of my life. But conflict is inevitable, I decided, so what really matters is how well people deal with it. And Michelle's description convinced me that over time members of EcoVillage at Ithaca had developed communication and process skills that are largely lacking in mainstream settings.



FRoG's passive solar-heated individual housing units can be retrofitted for solar panels in the future.

I'd expected an ecovillage to look more "eco."

A couple months later two new houses came on the market at FRoG. I hastily arranged a second visit.

This time one of the homes was very attractive to me. All three had the same basic floor plan, but the variations made all the difference. Proximity to the common house, fruit trees in the yard, a gas heating stove, and a rentable room on the ground floor distinguished this home from the others, even though it had the same excess of stairs and tiny kitchen I'd complained about before.

Again I was largely ignored by the residents, but the weather was nice so there were more opportunities to run into people. I didn't try as hard to meet everyone—my focus was more on learning about the differences between FRoG and SoNG. I realized that because FRoG is an already-established neighborhood it has fewer meetings and decisions to make. I also noticed that most of the kids in FRoG were older, which meant Sophia would have to cross over to SoNG to meet her social needs. That I had this option seemed significant: because it has two adjacent cohousing neighborhoods EcoVillage at Ithaca can offer so much more than most communities.

One question I was concerned about was how well an existing community—as compared to one still in formation—integrates its new members. The answer seemed to be, it depends on who you are. Parents find it easier to get integrated because they naturally have interactions with other parents. People who have a high tolerance for meetings, or can jump in and volunteer a lot of time, also get integrated—and appreciated—more quickly. But some of the newer residents I spoke with did feel isolated. This was hard for me, as I'm an introvert and don't make friends easily. But I decided I would be able to push myself to overcome that barrier—and I also knew the problem was only temporary, that once I was settled everything would be okay.

A few days after returning home I made my decision. I called and made an offer, and Doug, the seller, was delighted.

Two days later he called me back. He told me some people in the community were concerned about my decision, and a member of the FROG board had asked us to wait on the offer until they'd had a chance to discuss it among themselves. A number of them were concerned because they hadn't met me, and they also wondered about what had happened to my previous interest in SoNG.

I was devastated. Here was my nightmare come true: that I wouldn't be able to find a community that would take me. I got off the phone as quickly as I could, and had a good long cry. I wrote in my journal, spent long hours on the phone, and contacted people in the community to try to learn more about what was happening.

I learned that FRoG was experiencing two major stresses that had nothing to do with me. One was that [because] several core families had migrated from FRoG into SoNG and been replaced by new people. They were feeling the loss of those families, and the presence of so many newcomers essentially changed how the neighborhood felt. The second stress was that a family who'd joined FRoG the previous fall had decided they'd made a mistake and was leaving. The community also agreed that it was a mistake—so it was an awkward situation for everyone.

I was devastated. I got off the phone as quickly as I could, and had a good long cry.

Thus the community as a whole was concerned because they didn't know why I hadn't moved to SoNG. Perhaps they thought I saw FRoG as a second-best solution, or perhaps they were afraid I'd found something wrong with SoNG that was also true of them. Many were also concerned that something might be wrong with their new-member orientation process, since somehow they may have failed to represent themselves accurately enough to the above-mentioned family that was moving out. I was the first new person to choose the FRoG neighborhood since that family's decision to leave, so I was receiving the brunt of the community's unease.

The board requested that I make one more visit before deciding, and that I meet with them. I could have balked, or felt outrage at how they'd changed the how-to-join rules on me. There was a time in my life when I might have done just that. But I wasn't only moving into a house, I was moving into a community—and if I wanted them to accept me with all my flaws and limitations, I'd better be willing to do likewise for them. And their most important rule hadn't changed: after my visit, the decision was still mine.

So I visited a third time. I met a lot more people, and this time they didn't ignore me. I understood, finally, the reason for that—there's a steady stream of visitors and tour groups moving through the neighborhood, and when you're just trying to live your life, after awhile you tune the visitors out. Community members try to distinguish between casual visitors and prospective residents, but somehow my previous visits had failed to register.

My visit with the board was uneventful, and my conversations only expanded on what I knew already. So I renewed my offer, and this time it was accepted.

Today is the six-month anniversary of my move to EcoVillage at Ithaca. The community has already changed since my arrival—last fall we built a bridge across the gully between the two neighborhoods, and differences between the two neighborhoods seem smaller as a new entity, the whole Village, comes into being. And the community's work in sustainability has energized and shifted the focus of my work as a writer. Sometimes it seems like the rhythm of my life hasn't changed that much—I still spend most of my time alone or with Sophia. But the small differences of living in community are crucial. At common meals, Sophia plays with the other children so I can relax and have good conversations over dinner. Relationships with new friends and neighbors are easier to maintain. People have an ethic of caring and concern for one another here, and I find myself searching for ways I can contribute. A neighbor may still be just a neighbor, but when you have the flu on Christmas, chicken soup appears and the dishes miraculously get clean.

Marty Hiller, a writer and single mom to three-year-old Sophia, moved to EcoVillage at Ithaca last July, after spending most of her adult life in the Boston area.

The Challenge of Finding New Community Members

Two diverse Pennsylvania communities share their unique challenges in getting new members.

From 18th Century Living to Contemporary Artists' Retreat

What started as a gay religious community seeking permanent members in 1988 has now become a queer artist retreat center open on a seasonal basis. The Hermitage, a 63-acre farm in rural Pennsylvania, started out with very strict entrance requirements. That was our period of being certain that what we were creating was so fabulous and its appeal so obvious, that people would just naturally be drawn to our vision.

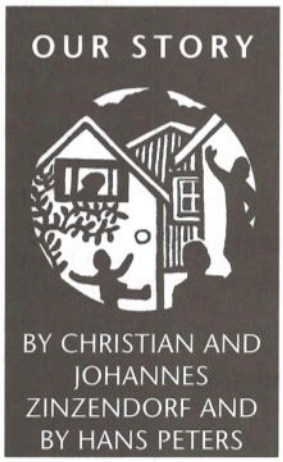
Wrong. So we rebounded to the opposite end of the spectrum, having basically no requirements beyond "Do you like us?" That was our begging period. It also failed.

Now we have changed again to a point somewhere between a strictly regulated intake period and no rules at all.

Fifteen years ago it all seemed so simple. We wanted to reestablish an 18th century religious community of single, gay brothers, living much as the original brothers had lived in the 1700s. We would bring in new members with a six-month novitiate period followed by a five-year probationary period. We developed a lengthy and extensive novitiate training program covering the history of the Moravian order and our modern adaptation of its early beliefs. While our order was no longer Moravian (an early form of Protestantism), or even Christian for that matter, we kept the idea of the Holy Spirit as a mother by extending the concept to embrace the entire planet in our "back to nature" movement. We had hymns to teach, special clothing (robes, for example) to make, and beliefs to be adopted, accepted, and practiced. We assumed that if at the end of the five-year probationary period everyone was satisfied with the arrangement, a temporary brother would become a full resident and member of the board of directors which, by definition, was limited to full-time residents.

So, what happened to this well-organized process? The first applicant said he had no intention of following our belief system. "That's your religion, not mine," he declared. We didn't have to ask him to leave, however, since we were living in the only building on the property at that time, a drafty barn, in the midst of a brutally cold winter. He didn't like the clammy linen sheets, the frozen chamber pot, or the straw mattress. No rigorous self-discipline for him.

Several years later another novitiate seemed the perfect choice. He loved the place, its beliefs, its spirituality, its rough-hewn character. He studied his lessons well. He was what we wanted potential members to be. Then we learned that, contrary to what he was telling us, he didn't believe what we believed at all. He was only apparently learning and applying what he was learning. He was fooling us so he could live on the property. He was still Christian and had no intention of changing. He seemed so honest that his dishonesty was a surprise.



Christian and Johannes Zinzendorf; BroJoh@Yahoo.com; ic.org/thehermitage; The Hermitage, Pitman, PA 17964.

After he left, we reappraised what we were doing. Times had obviously changed since the 18th century! Whatever it was that drew 88 men and boys to live at the original community in the 1700s was lacking now. Maybe we just weren't charismatic enough to draw people willing to give up the outer world to join our band of would-be merry men. Maybe

No one wanted to make the kind of commitment we had made.

the religious aspect of gay life was just too weird or the living conditions here just too hard.

We decided to change the focus and emphasize simply living in harmony with the land, the animals, and each other. We decided applicants could believe as they wanted to as long as we came together on the idea of a loving brotherhood. We dropped the novitiate training program, drastically shortened the probationary period to six months, and added a community work requirement of a half a day per week. This time we weren't looking for blind obedience to a revived religious order but for independent souls who nonetheless wanted to be with the two of us on the land.

Over the next few years, several men applied for and received their probationary status. One turned out to be an alcoholic who spent most of his days drunk. We ended up driving him to the bus station for a trip back home. Another turned out to be quite truly psychotic, beating Johannes up and turning the two of us against each other until we finally figured out what was going on. The third one was the most charismatic person we've ever known. He was developing his own spiritual path and wanted, so we found out, to take the place over for his own use as the center for his spiritual movement. This finally became clear and we asked him to leave.

At this point we no longer knew what we wanted in terms of community, or who. No one had worked out after more than a decade of trying to get a community of a dozen people to live here. At last it became apparent that no one wanted to

live the way we do, without electricity, running water, or a telephone. No one wanted to make the kind of commitment we had made. No one wanted to suffer the way we suffered each winter. No one wanted to live here permanently. Our first potential member seemed to be right after all—this was just our own project, our own dream to which no one else could relate.

So what was it, if anything, we still had to offer people? The community indeed offers a place of beauty and a retreat from the outer world. Perhaps it could mean that to others as well.

It's ideal as a place of creation, a place in which to make art. Not for a lifetime; not a year, not even a month. Let's start with just one week, we said. Let's host artists and craftsmen at no charge to come here to create. Others can come here at no charge for contemplation and meditation. They leave after a week. They work about three hours daily for room and board. The rest of the time is theirs to use in whatever creative way they want. We don't critique their art as a joining requirement, so there's no extensive application or interview process. A simple letter of intent including a brief biography with a statement of project(s) to be worked on during the week is all we require. Almost everyone who applies is accepted.

What this does is it gives us a specific, limited period of time with our residents. A week allows newcomers to know exactly what the place is like and whether they like it or not. Those who wish to return in future years can come for longer periods but at no point is the Hermitage a potential year-round home. From those who return, we plan on gathering members for the advisory council, which would help plan policies and implement them. From the advisory council, we hope members would want to join the board of directors which would eventually maintain the Hermitage itself without us (our definition of long-term success).

This past summer was our second year of weekly artists' residencies. We hosted a documentary film maker, two writers, a puppet maker, and a contemplative. We called the summer a success and we are planning next summer's schedule. Already this new plan feels better to us. It allows us to offer to others what the Hermitage has offered us all these years, the opportunity to create in a safe, beautiful environment in nature.

Art of Community Audiotapes

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

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

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

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

Conflict: Fight, Flight, or Opportunity?
Laird Sandhill

Consensus: Decisions That Bring People Together
Caroline Estes

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

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

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

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

Each tape, $8.95. S+H, $2, 1–4; $3, 5+. *Art of Community Audiotapes, Rt 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5545; fic@ic.org.*

Financial Pressures Send Home Buyers, Not Community Members, to Bryn Gweled

In 2000, Bryn Gweled Homesteads, a 124-member, Quaker-founded community near Philadelphia, celebrated its 60th anniversary. Regardless of any disputes over sharing responsibility, financial matters, pets, and other divisive issues, Bryn Gweled has managed to hold onto its basic principles of cooperation and openness to diverse views. We make decisions by majority rule-voting, but the minority is listened to and cared about. It is not unusual for heated debate to be followed by a unanimous community decision.

The individual listing agent may minimally understand that we're an intentional community.

Members own their homes and lease their three-acre homesites from the community, which maintains ownership of 240 acres. We have traditionally controlled membership through a fair and friendly process, hoping to select community-oriented people from the applicant pool and help reduce the likelihood of suburban isolation and anti-community spirit so prevalent in most large-lot mainstream neighborhoods. But in today's financial climate members who wish to sell their homes, usually in order to move to smaller, lower-maintenance housing as they grow older, have less interest in the continued well-being of the community and are more focused on their own financial needs. (This is even truer for the family and heirs of deceased members who inherit community members' homes.) Until recently using a real estate agent to sell a Bryn Gweled home was almost unheard of,. However, in the past two years, a high percentage of community members who wanted to move elsewhere have done just that.

Over most of our six decades the prevailing attitude has been that for incoming members, interest in the community should take priority over interest in a particular house, and that house selection should only take place after membership approval has been attained. The membership process basically consists of the prospective member or family meeting with all Bryn Gweled members in small-group visits, allowing everyone to see if it feels like a good fit. A dozen or more families are now "approved applicants," and are either waiting for the right house to come along or, in many cases, have given up and pursued living options elsewhere. None of the people in the approved applicant status appears to be interested in any of the three houses now available for sale.

Frustrated by this mismatch, some families wanting to sell their homes and move out of Bryn Gweled have ignored our tradition and turned to real estate agents. From the departing members' point of view, using real estate agents has brought results, but for the community, those results haven't been altogether positive. The sign goes up, and potential buyers begin to flow through. The individual listing agent may minimally understand that we're an intentional community, but the multiple listing system allows little if any transfer of such information to the selling agent, or even to other agents in the same listing office. In at least two cases, agreements of sale have been signed with the buyer having only the slightest inkling of our community's basic concepts. These incoming members and their real estate agents can bypass our membership process because it is tradition, not a community agreement, that the whole group must approve an incoming member before they buy in. Thus the membership process has been reduced to becoming, at best, an education of the buyer, who has not decided to join a community but to buy a house. Not only that, but the price of the house is inflated to cover the real estate agent's commission, which also goes against our traditional values.

Some in Bryn Gweled believe the membership process should be abolished altogether, and anyone who wants to live here for any reason should be allowed to

Hans Peters, Bryn Gweled, PO Box 75, 1805 Meadow Road, Southampton, PA 18966; 215-953-8884; www.bryngweled.org; info@bryngweled.org.

buy a house. Others favor an open policy of "house-shopping" early in the membership process. On the other hand, it is generally recognized that once an applicant is well along in the process, and no red flags have popped up, it is OK to begin to discuss which houses might be available for sale. And some members take a dim view of a newcomer making any agreement, even verbal, to buy a house before full membership approval has been given.

Those who want to abolish the membership process may eventually prevail, and if so, Bryn Gweled will gently slip into the anonymity of the vast suburban landscape surrounding us. But this is not inevitable. Bryn Gweled is still a viable, active community where most members participate in our hands-on, democratic self-governance and are engaged in issues important to them, from the environment and land use, to children and schools, both within the community and in the local area.

Our public relations, membership, and housing committees have begun to realize they must take a more active role in seeking new members interested in community living. We invite inquiries from interested people. Ω

The Quest for Communal Life in New York City

It seems like I'm trying everything. And yet somehow it's still not enough. Maybe I'm just impatient, but then I have a tendency for self-doubt. Are my goals too lofty? Please allow me to describe them to you.

I want to live in community. But I also want to work towards advancing society's recognition of community living as an option. As a psychologist working in a community-based mental health clinic, I constantly observe the tragic results of an alienated, individualistic society.

The three most common themes my lower-income clients present include inadequate housing, extreme loneliness, and low self-worth. They have lost touch with their personal goals and strengths as they continually struggle to make ends meet. Their fear and anxiety about their future exhaust the energy they might otherwise use to achieve their potential. They commonly perceive a solution to be pleading for disability benefits from the government. They compete with each other on matters of "deserving" disability benefits; often directing anger at other people in the same position.

Contrast this individualistic perspective with the varieties of community living arrangements, which I believe are psychologically healthier, and increase the potential for taking greater environmental responsibility, receiving social support, and achieving personal goals. Community living addresses the three common themes I find in clients (inadequate housing, extreme loneliness, and low self-worth), because they can foster a sense of connection and economic self-sufficiency among the lonely, depressed, impoverished, and disempowered. But the obstacles to building this dream are so numerous, especially in an urban setting like New York City where I live, that I sometimes wonder if the most that I can achieve is merely writing and talking about community. And that is mostly what I do.

But I cannot stop searching for ways to incorporate my social/housing activist dreams into my work. It is very hard to negotiate such a radical perspective within a generally conventional and status-quo-oriented field. I am driven to continue this effort to educate people about the existence of community living as well as to help them recognize its value.

As far as my own communal living experience, I have been dedicated to studying (as my dissertation was about student housing cooperatives), living in, and creating community ever since I left the student housing co-op that got me interested in all of this about 10 years ago. I have continued to move from one communal housing situation to the next, depending on the job, school, region, etc. Two and a half years ago I moved here to start a job in the Bronx. And now a new group of friends and I are building a

Suzanne Hirsch, Ph.D. is a bilingual (Spanish/English) psychologist in New York City currently residing in The Penington, a Quaker founded collective. She is forming a nonprofit organization called Collective Housing for Interdependent Living Initiative (C.H.I.L.I.) for individuals with low economic status. She welcomes feedback. Ecohouse2001@yahoo.com.

vision of our ideal community. But anything that involves a living situation in New York City means trouble—otherwise known as exorbitant sums of money for the high cost of housing. It's unfortunate, since communal living is ultimately so economical and my friends and I happily embrace simple living. Yet embarking on this endeavor is so expensive, that we are rendered only to imagine and continue to imagine how our vision would unfold.

Our conceptual community wouldn't just be a few roommates sharing the rent in a two- or three-bedroom apartment: that you can find plenty of in New York City. It's more like sharing a large house with at least 10-25 people, perhaps eventually a cluster of houses in the same area or different areas, comprised of individuals and families with diverse ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, skills, talents, and interests. With a democratic social structure, environmental values, and a vegetarian diet, we'd work together on group projects and share meals, skills, and resources. The rest is magic. Oh, I know it's also lots of work. My experiences living in community have taught me that. In fact I currently live in a kind of community, although it's not intentional.

When I first moved to The Penington, a Quaker-founded collective housing building, I had hoped it had participatory decision-making and a communal feel. However, it rarely has house meetings and is not intentional in nature, in that much of the household work and decision-making is done by an outside staff. So though I

I cannot stop searching for ways to incorporate my social/housing activist dreams into my work as a psychologist.

choose to stay for now, I am focusing my efforts, with the support of many others who live here, towards building a more democratic community elsewhere.

So what are my options for the various goals I've described? Should I save up my own money and buy a house and become a communal house landlord? Or maybe I should pool my money with at least one

other person towards buying a house to create such a community. Or perhaps I should start a nonprofit organization and try to solicit grants for the cause of community living. Or should I try to appeal to existing organizations for support? Then again, I could try to recruit individuals by sending out flyers inviting them to become part of a non-residential community that meets regularly to discuss the values we share and build a sense of cohesion that will gradually lead to our forming a residential one.

Too often I hear the perspective that communal living is at best temporary, "transitional," generally undesirable, and even abnormal.

At this point I am conceptually, and in some respects actually, exploring each one of these strategies. Maybe this process is just going to be like a race to discover which strategy succeeds first. Maybe all of these approaches will end up working together to ultimately lead to a positive result.

I feel frustrated though as I continue to think and talk about these concepts without finding the means to act on them. Sometimes it seems futile to continue working towards these goals. Some people are supportive of the concept of communal living, but too often I hear the perspective of the larger society (especially those in human services professions) regarding communal living is at best temporary, "transitional," generally undesirable, and even abnormal. Though I've gotten used to the fact that many of the louder values of society are and will always be different from my own, I still at times feel the strain from an overwhelming general disregard for something that is quite dear to me.

But I also feel hopeful when I read about people living and believing in community, and when I observe that many people, upon learning about or witnessing community living, discover an interest and willingness to give up some private space and possessions in order to enjoy its benefits. I don't intend to impose this concept on anyone who is not interested. But I do hope to see it eventually take a place among the variety of recognized forms of living.

Though my goals may be lofty and I should take care to avoid becoming daunted, I really can't stop pursuing this mission. It all begins with planting seeds through discussions. I will listen to the variety of both positive and negative reactions to these concepts. I will try to learn from my mistakes, tolerate the passage of time, and persevere with my desire to create a truly fulfilling home life. Ω

If you're searching for Community, could this be what you're looking for?

A diverse group of folks are coming together to rebirth Trillium Farm, an intentional community founded in 1976. This unusual situation combines the benefits of a pre-existing facility and an established land-based community with the excitement of a start-up, using *Creating a Life Together* as a guide.

Located in S.W. Oregon's Siskiyou Mountains, Trillium enjoys a powerful setting, nearly surrounded by thousands of acres of wild public lands, a scenic destination worthy of a week's backpack trip! Recently, four nearby cattle ranches became organic farms, signs of changing values in this canyon. Trillium is less than an hour drive to beautiful Ashland (liberal, theater, arts, university, ski town) and Medford (small city and regional economic hub).

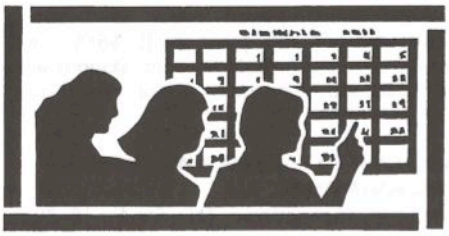
The Land and community buildings (historic farm house, school, offices, barn, guest cottage) are owned in common though affordable equity memberships in an LLC Land Trust. Five cabins (various sizes/conditions) and a building site (all with spectacular views) are available for private ownership purchase with a site lease. Four non-resident memberships are available as time-shares in the guest cottage. Grid electricity and phones service community buildings; private cabins have potential for solar power and phones. All have sweet tasting gravity-flow water.

Trillium is home to Birch Creek Arts and Ecology Center (501c3), offering diverse programs and internships. The two current members own Dakubetede Environmental Education Programs, offering accredited university courses (see *Communities* #108 June '00 p.36).

Trillium is 80 acres of deciduous woodland, meadows, ponds, conifer forest, and chaparral. An east-west trending river canyon captures sunshine, and a south-facing creek canyon fills with warmth during the many sunny winter days in this semi-arid climate. The 'banana belt" elevation is above valley fog, below winter snow-pack. Trillium is a crucial wildlife sanctuary; no dogs come to this special Land.

We invite folks to join us to create a new Trillium focused on education, the arts, and activism. Introduce yourself to us; we'll send you more info. Namaste'
Trillium Farm P.O. Box 1330 J'ville, OR 97530

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



APR 2–4 • SIRIUS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. Two-day immersion in Sirius community life: shared meals, work parties, meditation, community meetings, and more. *Sirius@siriuscommunity.org.*

APR 2–4 • THE FARM EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Learn first-hand about life in community. Community dinner, Farm history slide show/Q & A; yoga; community tour; work party; rock and roll benefit boogie; and nature walk. Workshops available on vegetarian cooking, midwifery, strawbale homes (tour), home-based businesses, community & global sustainability, and more. Camping, all meals (other accommodations avail. at additional cost). $175 (one person); $150 2nd person; $85 (students); $55 (children); $400 (family rate). *Douglas@villagemedia.com; Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com; www.thefarm.org.*

APR 2–5 • NAKA-IMA 1: THE BASICS

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Part one of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself. Through the practice of honesty, in the context of supportive and loving community, we will explore how to be alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. Childcare available. *541-937-3351, #109; naka-ima@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.*

APR 3 • NOURISHING TRADITIONAL FOODS

Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC.

Drawing on research of Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation and author Sally Fallon to support optimum health w/hearty foods and time-honored ways of preparing nuts, grains, vegetables, meats, and milk products. Balancing plant & animal foods, raw & cooked; seasonal eating; hands-on preparation (fermented vegetables; pre-soaked grains, nuts, and seeds; yogurt & simple cheese; nutrient-rich meat stocks). With herbalist Corinna Wood. $55–75 sl. sc, incl. organic lunch. *Red Moon Herbs, redmoonherbs.com; 828-669-1310.*

APR 12–MAY 9 • ECOVILLAGE APPRENTICESHIPS AT THE FARM

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Apprenticeship program in organic gardening, natural buildings, and fundamentals of permaculture and ecovillage design. Constructed wetlands; cob, strawbale, earthbag construction; compost toilets. Learn ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills, and the economics of sustainability. Field trips may include canoe trips on the Buffalo River, spelunking in a saltpeter cave, and visits to a bamboo nursery and local permaculture sites. College credit available. Instructors: Matt & Jennifer English; Adam & Sue Turtle; Murad Al Kufash from Marda Permaculture Center, Palestine; UN Architect of the Year Greg Ramsey; Scott Horton,; Jan Bang; Kiyokazu Shidara; Sizwe Herring; Ed Eaton of Solar Energy International; Patrica Allison and Goodheart Brown from Earthaven, and natural builders Howard Switzer and Katey Culver. $1,200 incl. tuition, lodging, vegetarian meals, participation in all courses. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org.*

APR 15–19 • NAKA-IMA 2: THE PRACTICE

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Part two of experiential workshop about realizing your vision and facing and dissolving the obstacles in the way of being fully and authentically yourself. Through the practice of honesty, in the context of supportive and loving community, we will explore how to be alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. Childcare available. *541-937-3351, #109; naka-ima@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.*

APR 18–20 • UNITY FEST

The Farm, Summertown, TN. An annual favorite, a unique blend of workshops and entertainment that brings people back year after year. *www.unityworx.com; Douglas@villagemedia.com; Thomas@villagemedia.com; Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com.*

APR 18–20 • VISIONQUEST WORKSHOPS: THE PEACEMAKERS SERIES

The Farm, Summertown, TN. Continuing Apr 30–May 2, May 30–Jun 1. Outlining your life's purpose: completing the past and setting your intention for the future. "The battle of the peaceful warrior is always with the self." *Douglas@villagemedia.com; Thomas@villagemedia.com; Vickie@thefarmcommunity.com.*

APR 20–MAY 2 • SIRIUS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. *(See Apr 2–4.)*

APR 21–24 • SOLAR INSTALLATION

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Week-long course from Ed Eaton of Solar Energy International, one of the foremost solar installation companies in the world. $490 incl. food, lodging (or $350 without lodging). *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090-; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org.*

APR 24–25, MAY 22–23, JUN 26–27, JUL 24–25 • WISE WOMAN WAYS OF HERBAL MEDICINE

Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Four-weekend women's pro-

gram to connect deeply with the Earth and themselves through observing plants developing from spring to summer, harvesting and making medicines together. Plant identification; wild crafting; practical botany;making herbal tinctures, infusions, poultices, oils, salves, and vinegars; wild food harvesting & preparation; the Wise Woman tradition; herbs for every cycle of a woman's life; herbal first aid; nutrition & traditional diets; pagan roots of healing; communication with plant spirits. $615,. incl. meals, camping (indoor accommodations also available. *Red Moon Herbs, redmoonherbs.com; 828-669-1310.*

APR 30–MAY 2 • VISIONQUEST WORKSHOPS: THE PEACEMAKERS SERIES

The Farm, Summertown, TN. *(See Apr 18–20.)*

APR 30–MAY 2 • FELLOWSHIP FOR INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY (FIC) SPRING ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Highline Crossing Cohousing, Littleton, CO. Planning, policies, reports, consensus decision-making by FIC board members, staff, and volunteers. FIC publishes Communities magazine, Communities Directory, distributes Visions of Utopia video, and operates ic.org website and Community Bookshelf mailorder book service. Public invited. *jenny@ic.org.*

MAY 1–9 • NATURAL BUILDING IMMERSION AT THE FARM

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Wattle and daub, earthbags, earthships, traditional Mexican styles (reed thatch, zacatlanlolo, slipform claystraw, and adobe), timber frame, domes and arches, earthen floors, earth plasters and alis, passive solar, foundations and drainage, living roofs, pole frame, dry composting toilets. Energy and resource conservation, economics of sustainability. Field trips may include visits to bamboo nursery, local permaculture sites. College credit available. Instructors: Howard Switzer, Katey Culver, Albert Bates, Adam Turtle, Matt English, Dayfd Rawlings, Bernice Davidson, Yolanda Hunter, Kiyokazu Shidara, Francesco Casini. $800, or $100 per day or $175/day for couples, incl. meals, lodging. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org.*

MAY 3-SEP 17 • PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP AND NATURAL BUILDING SCHOOL

O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Learn all aspects of natural building (straw bale, straw-clay, cob, willow, living roofs, earthen floors, radiant heat hybrid system, etc.) working on our Healing Sanctuary and Art Studio, plus community-building, goal-setting, scheduling, and personal growth. Also work in garden, greenhouses, w/animals. Buildings are constructed to code; engineers and building inspectors will be on-site sometimes. Eckhardt Beuchel, Tina Farmilo Alastair Heseltine, Craig Lawrence, Ianto Evans, and others. Fee incls. camping, vegetarian meals. $7200 (16 weeks); $3000 (12 weeks); $1200 ($6 weeks)—dates can be negotiated. *www.ourecovillage.org; our@pacificcoast.net.*

MAY 7–9 • EARTHAVEN EXPERIENCE WEEKEND
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. A taste of living at Earthaven: community tour (incl. natural Earth-friendly buildings and homes, off-grid systems, constructed wetlands, and more), community meals, panel presentation with community members, work project with community members, monthly Council meeting, Coffeehouse evening with entertainment. $100 per person (ask us about child and family rates) incl. all meals, but not camping ($7/night) or indoor accommodations at additional cost. *info@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org; 828-669-3937.*

MAY 7-9, JUN 11-13, JUL 9-11, AUG 20-22, SEP 10-12 • FUNDAMENTALS OF PERMACULTURE
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Part I of Permaculture Design Course. Cultural and social aspects of permaculture, hands-on garden and orchard work, pond making, natural building, graywater systems, erosion control, rock work, dances, circles, campfires. More hands-on and interpersonal activities than most permaculture courses. Patricia Allison, guest instructors. $400 incl. vegetarian meals ($100/weekend if paid separately). Plus camping $7/night; indoor lodging, $11-$25/night. *ehpa@direcway.com; 828-664-0067.*

MAY 7–10 • NAKA-IMA 1: THE BASICS
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. *(See Apr 2–5.)*

MAY 15–22 • PERMACULTURE FUNDAMENTALS
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. First half of complete design certification course. Ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills, and the economics of sustainability. Field trips will include visiting bamboo nursery and local permaculture sites. Instructors: Patricia Allison, Albert Bates, Adam Turtle, Winn Mallard, Sizwe Herring, Scott Horton, Dayfd Rawlings, Yolanda Hunter, Kiyokazu Shidara, Murad Al Khufash, Francesco Casini and others. $600 incl. food, lodging, materials. College credit available. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org.*

MAY 15 • WILD PLANTS FOR FOOD & MEDICINE
Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Learn how to identify, harvest and prepare wild plants as food and medicine; make tinctures, poultices, vinegars, salves, and oils to treat many common ailments; incorporate free, abundant wild plants into your diet to support optimum health. "Weeds" will never look the same again! $55–75, sl. sc., incl. lunch. *Red Moon Herbs, redmoonherbs.com; 828-669-1310*

MAY 21–24 • NAKA-IMA 1: THE BASICS
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. *(See Apr 2–5.)*

MAY 22–23 • WISE WOMAN WAYS OF HERBAL MEDICINE
Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Second weekend of series. *(See Apr 24–25.)*

MAY 27–30 • LIVING IN ACTUALIZATION IN AN INTERUNIVERSAL-SOUL CULTURAL COMMUNITY
Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. Ascension Science and Planetary Divine Administration. Four-day seminar, 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. Speakers include community founders Gabriel of Sedona and Niánn Emerson Chase, $500 pre-registration, otherwise $700. *Aquarian Concepts Community, P.O. Box 3946, Sedona, AZ 86340; 928-204-1206; 928) 204–1252; info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org; www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org*

MAY 28–30 • THE FARM COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE & ACTIVIST SUMMIT
The Farm, Summertown, TN. Also sponsored by Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). Workshops on consensus, conflict resolution,

right livelihood, green business, and more. Presenters include communities movement activists, leaders in ecovillage design, alternative lifestyle, and political movements. $75 incl. lodging, food approx. $5/meal or bring your own. *douglas@villagemedia.com; www.thefarmcommunity.com/conference.*

MAY 28–30 • INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL BUILDING
Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain NC. Cob, strawbale, slip-straw, earthen plasters, timber framing, and their use in Earthaven's innovative natural buildings. Mollie Curry, Paul Caron. $225, including meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

MAY 29 • STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Low impact surface-water management techniques for roads, parking lots and homes. Water harvesting and stormwater management; basics of uplands watershed hydrology, impervious surfaces mitigation, ground water recharge, sediment control, bioremediation, flood attenuation, and wildlife habitat creation. Brock Dolman $25 (no meal). *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

MAY 30–JUN 1• VISIONQUEST WORKSHOPS: THE PEACEMAKERS SERIES
The Farm, Summertown, TN. (See Apr 18–20.)

JUN 4–6 • SIRIUS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WEEKEND
Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. (See Apr 2–4.)

JUN 4, JUN 5 • CHAUTAUQUA: EVIDENCE OF TRAVELERS PAST
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. In our North Garden Stage, a magical evening of community celebration, surprising, talents and poignant insights, exploring themes of travel and of those who have come before us, presented by local musicians, actors, and storytellers. Last year's Chautauqua sold out, so advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended. $20–$10 sl. sc, advance purchase; $20–$12 sl. sc. day of show. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

JUN 4–14 • WORLD VILLAGE OF BAMBOO ARTISANS
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Bamboo artisans, teachers, and students internationally to share multi-disciplinary, cross-fertilization re: tools, techniques, and ideas, plus instruction from invited experts. Nine-day event organized cooperatively, with participants sharing tasks (cooking, cleaning, etc.). Exchanging information and experience primary goal; also media exposure of potentials of Bamboo as short-cycle renewable material. Camping out amidst forest, fields and Bamboo groves; non-tent shelter also available. $400 ($100 f/those from developing countries). *EARE, 30 Myers Road, Summertown, TN 38483-7323; 931-964-4151; WorldBambooVilla@aol.com.*

JUN 6-12 • DECORATIVE APPLICATIONS FOR NATURAL BUILDINGS
O.U.R. Ecovillage, Vancouver Island, Canada. Bas relief sculpture, mosaic, fresco painting, and more. Develop design processes through drawing and other visualization exercises; develop your personal aesthetic. Elke Cole, Tina Farmilo, guests. $700, incl. camping, vegetarian meals. *www.ourecovillage.org; elke@cobworks.com.*

JUN 11–13 • STARTING AND SUSTAINING INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Actualize your dream of establishing a land-based intentional community. Finding/financing land; advantages/disadvantages of various legal structures f/holding land; decision-making processes; finding like-minded people; financial organization; legal and insurance issues and costs; dealing w/zoning and regulations; long-term planning. Community tour (gardens, permaculture projects, natural buildings, kitchen food system.) Dave Henson, Adam Wolpert, w/ guest instructors. $425 incl. meals, lodging ($375 if registered two weeks in advance.) *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

JUN 11–14 • NAKA-IMA 1: THE BASICS
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. *(See Apr 2–5.)*

JUN 17–25 • PERMACULTURE DESIGN PRACTICUM
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Second module of full permaculture design course, site team design work, is requirement for certificate. (See May 15–22 for Permaculture Fundamentals.) $800, incl. food, lodging, materials. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org.*

JUN 17–20 • SUSTAINABLE VILLAGE DESIGN
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Part one: site selection, master planning and pattern design for ecovillage; consensus and conflict resolution, financial aspects, work issues, best practices. Join final part of our permaculture course for ecology, energy and resource conservation, social and community skills, and the economics of sustainability. Greg Ramsey, Albert Bates, Gwynelle Dismukes, Scott Horton, Dayfd Rawlings, Bernice Davidson, Yolanda Hunter, Kiyokazu Shidara, Jan Bang, Murad Al Khufash, Francesco Casini, and others. $400. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org. (See Jun 21–25, below.)*

JUN 21–25 • VILLAGE DESIGN PRACTICUM
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. Second half of complete village design course. Participants will design a full-scale conservation community under supervision of master planners and architects, incl. Greg Ramsey. College credit available. $400. *Ecovillage Training Center, PO Box 90, Summertown, TN 38483-0090; ecovillage@thefarm.org; 931-964-4324; www.thefarm.org. (See Jun 17–20, above.)*

JUN 18–20 • RECLAIMING ECONOMICS: LOCAL STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING COMMUNITY, ECOLOGY, AND SELF-RELIANCE
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Conference, networking, and barter fair. Speakers, workshops on local currencies, buying local; progressive credit institutions and micro-credit; alternative economic indicators; sovereignty of communities over corporations; and partnerships between producers, consumers, and local businesses. Barter Fair Friday night. $30/day,

incl. camping, before May 1st; $35 day afterwards. Meal passes f/$20/day. *www.reclaimingeconomics.org; rodkimry@earthlink.net; 828 669–7552.*

JUN 19 • FERTILITY AWARENESS FOR NATURAL BIRTH CONTROL OR PREGNANCY ACHIEVEMENT

Red Moon Herbs of Earthaven Ecovillage to be held at New Dawn Midwifery Center, Asheville, NC. Learn this effective and empowering form of natural birth control and achieving pregnancy—by observing and recording waking body temperature and cervical fluid. $75–95 sl. sc. Partners are encouraged to attend at no extra charge. *Red Moon Herbs, redmoonherbs.com; 828-669-1310.*

JUN 21–AUG 13 • SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION PROGRAM AT LOST VALLEY

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Holistic introduction to creating ecovillages and sustainable communities, two-month residential course, incl. permaculture design certificate course w/hands-on projects in organic gardening, eco-building, eco-forestry, appropriate technology, and community site design. Interpersonal communication in community; organizational and financial issues in community; opportunities to participate in Lost Valley's Naka-Ima personal growth workshops. Guest instructors incl. Lois Arkin, Rob Bolman, Tree Bressen, Diana Leafe Christian, Toby Hemenway, Mark Lakeman. College credit available through University of Oregon. *Marc Tobin, 541-937-3351, #104; sustainability@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.*

JUN 25 -27 • LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Basic oil technique, outdoor painting methods, color theory, and composition, slide-lecture on visual theory and landscape painting issues. Adam Wolpert. All levels welcome; participants must supply their own materials. $425 incl. meals, lodging ($375 if registered two weeks in advance. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

JUN 26–27 • WISE WOMAN WAYS OF HERBAL MEDICINE

Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Third weekend of series. *(See Apr 24–25.)*

JUN 28–30 • "THE COMMUNITARIAN VISION"- 8TH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNAL STUDIES ASSN. (ICSA) CONFERENCE

Amana Colonies, Iowa. Biennial conference of communitarians, scholars, and visionaries worldwide, seeking to understand and promote communal living through presenting papers, networking, and socializing. *www.ic.org/icsa.*

JUL 2–4 • INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL BUILDING

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain NC. *(See May 28–30).*

JUL 2–11 • NATURAL BUILDING INTENSIVE AT EARTHAVEN

Culture's Edge at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Three sections. (1) July 2–4: Introduction to Natural Building—cob, strawbale, slip-straw, earthen plasters, timber framing, and their use in Earthaven's innovative natural buildings Mollie Curry. $225. (2) July 5–9: Building w/Earth & Straw. Mollie Curry. $375. (3) July 10–11: Earth Plasters—Preparing, tinting, and applying interior and exterior earth plasters. Mollie Curry, Chuck Marsh. $150. Parts 1–3 $675 (save $55). All prices incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

JUL 2–5 • NAKA-IMA 1: THE BASICS

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. *(See Apr 2–5.)*

JUL 2–4 • SIRIUS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. *(See Apr 2–4.)*

JUL 5–AUG 7 • ECOVILLAGE APPRENTICESHIPS AT THE FARM

Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. *(See Apr 12–May 9.)*

JUL 9–11 • EARTHAVEN EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. *(See May 7–9.)*

JUL 9–12 • STARTING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY WATERSHED GROUPS

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Training to help create northern California coastal community-based watershed groups. Watershed processes, salmonid ecology, water quality monitoring, in-stream restoration, biotechnical engineering, uplands erosion control, road restoration, native habitat restoration,

sustainable forestry, community group process, and funding opportunities for watershed groups. Enrollment limited. Brock Dolman, with guest instructors. $200, meals, lodging. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

JJul 9-18 • Network for a New Culture Summer Camp East
Near Hancock, MD. Building sustainable, nonviolent culture through intimacy, personal growth, emotional transparency, radical honesty, equality, compassion, sexual freedom, and the power of community. Workshops on personal growth, honest communication, relationship skills, social change, and a day of sacred touch with Madrone. Also speakers Larry Kaplowitz, Teryani Riggs (ZEGG Forum). $495–$895 sl. sc., incl. camping, meals. Work exchange also avail. *www. nfnc.org/sc; sc04e@nfnc.org; 800-763-8136.*

Jul 10–18 • Natural Building Immersion
Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm, Summertown, TN. *(See May 1–9.)*

Jul 10–31 • Permaculture Design Course
Bullock Farm, *Orcas Island WA*. Three-week certificate design course. Design methodologies, observation skills whole-system design, annual and perennial foods; water/energy/waste techniques, appropriate construction, plant propagation and culture, herbs and fiber use, etc. *Douglas Bullock, John Valenzuela, Samuel Bullock, Joseph Bullock,, Toby Hemenway, Michael Pilarski and others. $1450 ($1350 by June 1) incl. mostly organic meals, camping space, materials, certificate. Bullock Permaculture Course, P.O. Box 107 Deer Harbor, WA. 98243; 376-376-2773; bullock_Orcas@hotmail.com; www.permaculturepportal.com.*

Jul 16–18 • Woodshop for Women
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Essential tools and their proper use; safe and effective use of power tools; structural integrity; and basic techniques such as cutting, nailing, drilling, driving, and leveling. Tour OAEC buildings w/different carpentry styles: standard professional, natural building, temporary, artistic, hippie funk. Kate Lundquist. $425, incl. meals lodging ($375 if registered two weeks in advance). *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

Jul 16-18 • Women's Work: Designing Sustainable Futures
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Introduction to permaculture for women and girls. Hands-on projects, lectures, discussions, personal empowerment, circles of song, dance, sharing. Patricia Allison, guest instructors. $125 incl. vegetarian meals. Plus camping $7/night; indoor lodging, $11-$25/night. *ehpa@direcway.com; 828-664-0067.*

Jul 23–31 • Permaculture Fundamentals
Culture's Edge workshops at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Two-week design certificate course in two 8–day sessions: *Permaculture Fundamentals* and *Design Practicum*. Ethics and principles, observation, pattern, design; climate, forest, soils; cultivated ecology (garden, plants, animals); building design, energy, water, waste; developing settlements (land use, appropriate technology, economics, finance, urban applications). Peter Bane, Keith Johnson, Chuck Marsh, Goodheart Brown. $675, incl. meals, camping. *Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

Jul 24–25 • Wise Woman Ways of Herbal Medicine
Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Last weekend of series. *(See Apr 24–25.)*

Jul 22–25 • Living In Actualization in an Interuniversal-soul Cultural Community
Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. *(See May 27–30.)*

Jul 23 - Aug 8 • ZEGG Summer Camp 2004
ZEGG Community (Centre for Experimental Culture Design), Belzig, Germany. Participants will work on personal and political visions and prac-

tical experience of cooperation and trust. Weekends: ZEGG speakers and invited guests present insights into ZEGG's community research. Weekdays: intensive groups to create temporary community, incl. morning attunement, men's and women's spaces, sharing circle/plenary, evening cultural activities (music, dance, theatre), and Children's Camp. *ZEGG, Rosa-Luxemburg-Straße 89, D-14806 Belzig, Germany; Tel: +49 33841– 595 10; empfang@zegg.de; www.zegg.de.*

JUL 23–AUG 13 • PERMACULTURE DESIGN CERTIFICATE COURSE
Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. Sponsored by Living Routes Educational Consortium. *livingroutes.org; sirius@siriuscommunity.org.*

JUL 25 • GREEN BUILDING TOUR
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Free community tour emphasizing natural buildings. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

JUL 29–AUG 2 • NAKA-IMA 2: THE PRACTICE
Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. *(See Apr 15–19.)*

JUL 30–AUG 1 • SIRIUS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WEEKEND
Sirius Community, Shutesbury, MA. *(See Apr 2–4.)*

JUL 31• WILD PLANTS FOR FOOD & MEDICINE
Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. *(See May 15.)*

AUG 5–8 • SOUTHEAST SUMMER PERMACULTURE GATHERING
Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Network with permaculturalists, organic growers, natural builders. Workshops (Food Fermentation, Herbal Elixirs), open space technology, projects, bonfires, music, great food. $100, incl. meals, camping. *Earthaven, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

SEP 3–6 • TWIN OAKS COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE
Twin Oaks, Louisa, VA. Workshops, community building, and fun. Ecovillages, communes, co-ops, cohousing, intentional relationships, group decision-making, living sustainably. $85 sl. sc., incl. camping, meals. *Communities Conference, 138 Twin Oaks Rd., Louisa, VA 23093; 540-894-5126; conference@twinoaks.org.*

SEP 20–25 • "ECOVILLAGES: TRANSLATION TO THE MAINSTREAM" - GLOBAL ECOVILLAGE NETWORK (GEN) CONFERENCE
Hollyhock Center, Cortes Island, British Columbia. For leaders and elders of the ecovillage movement, and professionals dedicated to sustainability. By application (limited space for 60 participants). *www.gen.ecovillage.org.*

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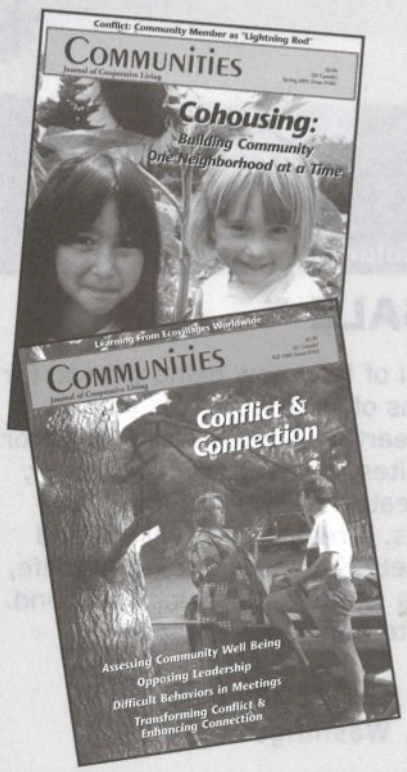

Reach

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 the last page of Reach to place an ad. ***THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER 2004 ISSUE (OUT IN JULY) IS APRIL 20.***

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

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

Communities listed in our Directory are entitled to one free update to their listing. Updates submitted for that purpose will appear in the Directory Updates section of Communities magazine, not in Reach. New, forming or existing communities not listed in our Directory may also receive a one-time free listing in the Directory Updates section. We suggest advertising in Reach as well to increase and extend publicity for your group. Contact: 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, pas-

tures, barns, gardens, basic infrastructure, and fairly civilized temporary housing. We are committed to dealing thoughtfully with conflict and to considering carefully the impacts of our actions on the planet. We are looking for new members. We seek builders, organic gardeners, musicians, scientists, tinkerers, artists, business people, youth, wisdom, enthusiasm and community experience. We welcome individuals and families of diverse peaceful lifestyles. Please see our web site for more information: www.abundantdawn.org POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; *info@abundantdawn.org*

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; www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org, www.globalchangemusic.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*

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 building 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.

CAMPHILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres-woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), dollmaking shop, food processing kitchen and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a 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.camphillvillag-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 in the world, come visit us. Help make our ecovillage grow! One-CM Dancing Rabbit Lane, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5511; *dancingrabbit@ic.org; www.dancingrabbit.org*

EARTHAVEN, Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina. Developing permaculture-based, off-grid community on 325 forested acres 45 minutes from culture-rich Asheville. Streams, ponds and gardens. Consensus decisions. Self-financed. Microhydro and solar power, composting toilets, constructed wetlands. Beautiful passive solar natural buildings. Council Hall, kitchen/dining room, trading post, cabins, multi-family dwellings, homes under construction. 40+ onsite members include permaculture professionals, artists, woodworkers, sustainable loggers, builders, farmers, parents, engineers, and entrepreneurs in Forestry Coop, Red Moon Herbs, Imani Farm, Permaculture Activist magazine, business consulting, Culture's Edge permaculture workshops. Multigenerational, children welcome. www.earthaven.org; Send $15 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* 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: *www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us* and contact: Liz Walker, 607-255-8276; EcoVillage at Ithaca, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY 14853.

EGRETS' COVE, Big Hill, Kentucky. We are looking for two households to join the four current ones. We live on 15 wooded acres in the hills across from a small lake near Berea. We are trying to use cooperation and innovative design to significantly reduce the ecological impact and financial demands of our lives. Members are engaged in a range of progressive issues including alternative education and food security. A great place for kids. For information contact: 260 Radford Hollow Rd., Big Hill, KY 40405; 859-986-5418; *itsus@apollo.chapell.com*

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 If you are interested in co-working or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; *rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org*

NESS COMMUNITY, Hermon, New York. Opportunity for individual, couple or small family inspired to engage in land-based voluntary simplicity and intentional community. We are reforming. One hundred acres in Adirondack foothills. Small cabin available. Rural area

with remarkable cultural and social diversity, and well-established network of community-minded folks. Contact: Ness, 381 Hewlett Rd., Hermon, NY 13652; *alimcginn@juno.com*

SHIVALILA COMMUNITY, Pahoa, Hawaii. We are seeking new members. Established in 1992, we have three adults and three children on our 37 acres. Values: honesty, nonviolence, shared parenting, income and assets. Organic juice and sawmilling business, homeschooling, marimbas, sustainability nonprofit, exotic fruit orchards, animal husbandry. Contact: *shivalila@aol.com*; or RR2 #3315, Pahoa, HI 96778.

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*;

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*; *www.twinoaks.org*

COMMUNITY HOUSES AND PROPERTY FOR SALE OR RENT

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

AIRVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA. For Rent. Community-minded alternative homesteaders looking for kindred spirit(s) to rent mobile home, share organic garden space in rural southeastern Pennsylvania. Commuting distance to York and Lancaster, PA and Bel Air, MD. Beautiful hiking trails and Susquehanna River nearby. 717-862-1737; 657 E. Posey Rd., Airville, PA 17302.

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

LAMA, NEW MEXICO. Build your family home or community retreat! Fertile mountain land for sale north of Taos. Five parcels ranging from 5.6 to 7.7 acres, equaling 33 acres, available separately or as a whole. Gently rolling meadows, groves and trees. Borders US Forest Service on north. Magnificent western views of Rio Grande Gorge and beyond. Includes 22 irrigable acres with water rights. Invididual parcels are $21,200/acre, total property $685.000. For information call: 1-866-586-1156, or visit *www.lamaland.com* to see pictures and map.

ORGANIC FARM FOR SALE, Burkesville, Kentucky. Perfect for a small community. Rural and scenic 80 acres. Alternative solar home, office with electric, outbuildings and large barn. Certified organic for 13 years. Fenced pastures. Mature fruit and nut trees. Private clean watershed, Cumberland River frontage. $139,000. Call: 270-864-4167.

ROCK RIVER, Floyd, Virginia. Part or Partnership. 25 acres for sale of 65 acre community in the Blue Ridge Mountains in fabulous Floyd, Virginia, half hour to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Two homes, three cabins, outbuildings, stream, pond, 1000 feet of river frontage, open field, woods. Land one hundred percent usable. Structures are all ready and welcoming. $425,000. Owner financing available. Call 540-789-7897; *rockriver@swva.net*

WOLF CREEK, OREGON. House and half interest on beautiful 62 acre, forest-zoned property in southwest Oregon 60 miles north of Ashland. Shared deed with one person, conservation easement oversight and active forestry. Information: Carter at *caro97497@yahoo.com*; 520-299-2746.

COMMUNITIES FORMING

EASTON MOUNTAIN RETREAT COMMUNITY, Greenwich, New York. Community forming at the Easton Mountain Retreat. Seeking creative, psychologically mature individuals interested in deepening spiritual life, meditation, non-violence, social justice and celebration. Currently four gay men running a retreat and conference center on 175 acres in upstate NY. We are engaged in healing work, body work, acupuncture, holistic med-

icine, education and spiritual retreats. There are many opportunities for cottage industries on the property. Developing an ecovillage that will include couples, singles, a monastery and retirement community. Contact: *john@eastonmountainretreat.com*; 518-692-8023; *www.eastonmountainretreat.com*

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, 60, my mother 87 years young, and our four dogs. I want to live out my days here in company with openhearted people who desire to live and work in harmony with each other and this lovely place and help with expenses. Like gardening and/or bookkeeping? You would be especially welcome! Luna Moths live here. Kristin Anderson, POB 386, Apalachicola, FL 32329-0386; 850-653-2249; *Kristin@kristinworks.com*

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*

NAMASTE GREENFIRE COHOUSING, Center Barntsead, New Hampshire. Intentional Cohousing Community, nature sanctuary, permaculture, activism. Loveing more relationships. Real investments. NGC, POB 31, Center Barnstead, NH 03225; 603-776-7776; *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*

PIGEON CITY, Ft. Hancock, Texas. 35 miles SE of El Paso. 200 acres plus with a mile of I-10 frontage. Started construction on top of a small hill with view of Mexico mountains and all of Ft. Hancock: 100x100 building for several businesses, café, everything store, shop space for woodworking and metal shop, another building for print shop, housing building. We see a central kitchen, extended family housing. Open relationships, close to school, children welcome. Consensus decisions. Bring your skills, ideas, single or family. No fees, share productivity. Come by (one block east of exit 72 and Texas I10) or write: Box 31, Ft. Hancock, TX 79839. Include phone for phone reply.

CONSULTANTS

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

SACRED ARCHITECTURE'S HARMONIZING INFLUENCES. Buildings can generate vibrant, life supporting influences. Visit: *www.vastu-design.com*;

INTERNS AND RESIDENCIES

THE GRAIL, Cornwall, New York. Small intentional women's community, an outgrowth of an international women's movement, seeks resident to work in exchange for room and board. Position involves coordinating upkeep/repairs of buildings, welcoming and orienting groups and light maintenance work. Tranquil setting on 50 acres near the Hudson River. Community operates retreat and conference center and welcomes international Grail members. The Grail's political and social actions have a spiritual foundation, so we seek women with a spiritual practice, respect for a variety of spiritual paths and an affinity for social justice, the environment and women's issues. Please be financially stable, emotionally mature and possess good communication skills and cultural sensitivity for our diverse membership. Email: *grail@conh.igc* for more complete description.

GREECE SUMMER STAFF. Community-based holistic workshop and retreat center in Greece seeking volunteers for staff adjunct positions June/July and Sept./Oct. Food and accommodation for about 30 hours of work a week following a two-week orientation training period. This is an opportunity to experience community-building in the context of a working vacation near gorgeous Aegean beaches.

Some skills that would be useful: vegetarian cooking, organic gardening, alternative technology, building and maintenance, healing. *Info@kalikalos.org www.kalikalos.org*

MOUNTAIN HOME, Coquille, Oregon. Room, board and formal teaching in exchange for help on 2004 projects: eco-forestry, permaculture gardening, natural building design, water systems and more. Call Clara 541-396-4764; *chipnclara@aol.com*

SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri. Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 15 to November 1, 2004. Gain experience in organic farming, construction, communication, and rural and community living. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Community and applying for an internship: Sandhill Farm, RR1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 63563; 660-883-5543; *interns@sandhillfarm.org; www.sandhillfarm.org*

WINDTREE RANCH, Douglas, Arizona. Land Stewardship Internships of 10-90 days. Living simply in the high desert on 600 acres, mild winters, tobacco/drug free, vegetarian, multi-generational. Physically demanding. Request application. www.windtreeranch.org; 4200 E. Summerland Road, Douglas, AZ 85607-9779; 520-364-4611; *windtreeranch@direcpc.com*

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CONCERNED SINGLES links compatible, socially conscious singles who care about peace, social justice, race/gender equity, the environment, personal growth. Nationwide/international. All ages; straight/gay. Since 1984. Free sample. Box 444-CO, Lennoxdale, MA 01242; 413-243-4350; *www.concernedsingles.com*

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PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, WEB SITES

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- hosts gatherings and events about community.
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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(CONTINUED FROM P. 80)

to the reality and subsequently thrive in that environment, but nearly as many decide to move back to a more urban, less physically demanding lifestyle."

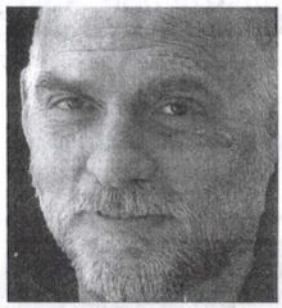
The list of vision/reality discrepancies is long and elusive, and provides only a hint of the work we face in looking within to understand what truly makes us tick and fuels our enthusiasm. And since our core desires and needs are ever evolving and changing, that work will never be done, really. Nevertheless, to mount an effective search and to make the best possible choices, you need to look deep within to figure out what has real meaning for you. You need to do your homework! 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 describes the history and everyday reality of intentional communities, and he's now editing a follow-up tape that will profile eleven additional communities. He has interviewed and counseled innumerable community seekers over the years, and is consistently inspired by the quest.

Seek First Community Within

"Can you give me a list of the best communities to check out?"

Ah, were it only that easy. In my occasional role as a resource guide and referral person for community seekers, I am called upon to engage in the mystical art of divination and clarification. What might be utopia to one seeker can as easily be unacceptable to another, and vice versa. Additionally, the quest for a community to join is often very similar to the search for a life partner: the standards for selection are very particular, and there is a lot at stake for the seeker. Usually the first step of that process is that I encourage the seekers to do their homework—to look within to clarify their values, goals, and priorities; and to create a written summary of the features that are wanted.



BY GEOPH KOZENY

Typically I refer seekers to the *Communities Directory,* which is renowned as one of the best resources available for the clarifying part of that exercise. Not only does the directory contain charts and maps and descriptions of hundreds of communities, the process of really digging into the book will reveal to the seeker a long list of issues and norms to consider.

To become a well-prepared seeker, you need to know exactly where you stand regarding each of those points illuminated by the *Directory,* and also to know exactly how flexible (or not) you are about each element. If you don't know the limits of what you can't live with—as well as those things that you can't live without—then you will find that your options are severely limited.

The quest for a community is often very similar to the search for a life partner: the standards for selection are very particular, and there is a lot at stake for the seeker.

Further, the more I study communities and seekers, the more convinced I am that most of us North Americans don't really know what we want at our core. I don't know how widespread this trend is in other cultures, but I suspect this phenomenon is a result of our culture's tendency to stress images and appearances over substance and meaning. We learn that "things" are more important to us than relationships, and that the relationships will come to us if we merely acquire the things or arrange for certain amenities. In the process we fail to identify those qualities and comforts which might really work for us.

For example, back in the '70s I was active in the Communal Grapevine network in Berkeley and San Francisco, and the organizers of that network were passionate about buying some rural land together and starting a cooperative intentional community there. However their search was severely limited by a combination of location and affordability. They wanted the land to be affordable, but with easy reach—an hour or two from San Francisco—so that they could readily access the amenities there: the theaters, the museums, their network of friends, and much more. They eventually found a beautiful piece of land slightly outside their original designated search area, about 130 miles north of the city, near the small town of Ukiah. For the first several months they went back to the Bay Area nearly every weekend, then it tapered off to once or twice a month, and eventually they found that it was rare if they made the trip more than a couple of times a year. Essentially, Ukiah was a thriving rural community with a lot of its own culture and amenities, and once they built their life there they discovered that those local connections and involvements fulfilled nearly all of their needs. Unfortunately they never guessed that in advance, and that lack of self-knowledge severely constrained their search and probably considerably raised the price tag of their project.

Another example of this discrepancy between needs and wants I described in the most recent (2000) edition of the *Communities Directory:* "I've witnessed dozens of back-to-the-land dreamers who moved to the country to do gardening, raise livestock, chop wood, and carry water ... only to discover that those things are hard work that cause calluses, sunburn, mosquito bites, sore backs, and are subject to the harsh unpredictabilities of nature. Many of those dreamers adapt

(CONTINUED ON P. 79)

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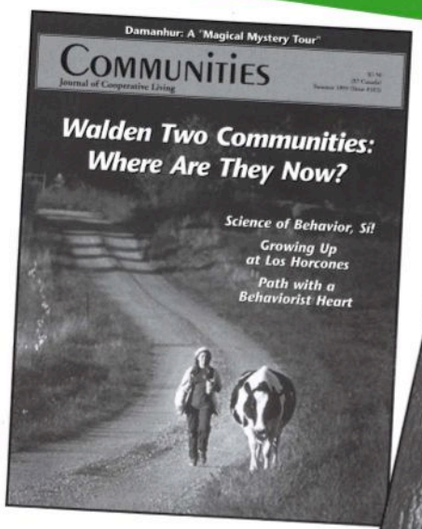

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