

Do We Really Value "Diversity"?

COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Fall 2004 (Issue #124)

Spiritual Community

Rocky Mountain High

On the Edge of the Abyss

Spiritual Beings, Material World

"Truth Practice" and Social Justice

"Doing the Work"



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Volume One

by Geoph Kozeny
Now Available on DVD
94 minutes; 2002; VHS; ISBN: 0-9602714-9-X; [Video/DVD Format Info](#)


A companion piece to the *Communities Directory*, this video documentary features profiles of seven diverse communities, plus a fascinating history of 2500 years of shared living intentional communities. Volume Two (now in the edit phase) will profile eleven other contemporary communities.



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After exploring the *Communities Directory*, you'll want to experience some of the communities listed -- "up close." See and hear community members tell their stories in their own words. This documentary, more than four years in the making, was produced by Community Catalyst Project in association with the FIC. The project's producer/director, Geoph Kozeny, is a veteran community networker, community consultant, author, and former long-term FIC board member. The two 90-minute documentaries are in color and professionally produced.

Volume One (now available) includes:

- ◆ Profiles of seven diverse communities.

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COMMUNITIES DIRECTORY

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

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

33 NEW ARTICLES

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

MAPS

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

CHARTS

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

RESOURCES

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

NEW SECTION— RECOMMENDED READING LIST

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



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COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

FOCUS

Spiritual Community

FRONT COVER

In the dome at Lama Foundation, Taos, New Mexico.

Photo: Beth Garrigus

BACK COVER

Members of the Des Moines Catholic Worker see social justice activism as spiritual practice.

Photo: Frank Cordaro

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35 Rocky Mountain High

In the clear, rarefied air of the southern Rockies, the bells of Lama Foundation will call us home. *Scott Thomas.*

38 Why I'm Moving to Findhorn

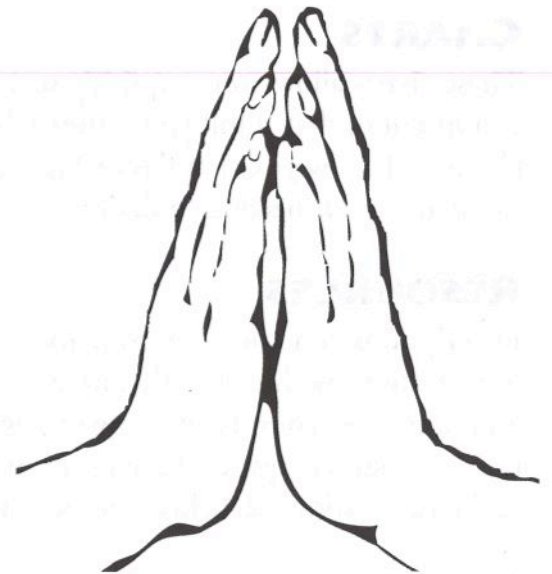
A self-professed "cynical New Yorker" cannot stop returning to this famous British Isles community. *Irwin Wolfe Zucker* tells why he "feels like a lantern" when he visits Findhorn.

40 On the Edge of the Abyss

Does living in spiritual community make you feel inspired, or like "an enormous mass of quivering shadow"? *Amy Sophia Marashinsky* takes a humorous look at her journey to Sirius Community.

44 "Truth Practice," Intimacy, and Social Justice

Living in community intimacy, the rigorous mental practice of stripping away what's false, and social justice activism are mutually reinforcing, declares *Parke Burgess*, who does all three at once.



47 Spiritual Beings, Material World

Bolivian ecovillage founder *Enrique Hidalgo* asks us to ground spiritual aspirations in the hard, humbling work of serving others in the physical world.

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Dan McKanan explores the diverse spiritual expressions at Camphill and Catholic Worker communities.





21 **Burning Man! Art, Culture, and Community Through the Gift Economy**

Frank Deitle shows us why he returns every year to this surreal art-and-fantasy desert happening.

27 **You Know You Live in Community When ...**

Mother and daughter communitarians—one in Seattle, one in Kansas City—find community members seem to have the same experiences, no matter where they live. *Virginia Lore and Maril Crabtree.*

28 **Our “Community Tree”:
Describing our Complex Structure to Newcomers (and to Ourselves)**

This four-generation community with multiple businesses and nonprofits had trouble explaining their structure—until they realized they’d grown like a tree. *Webb Evenson.*

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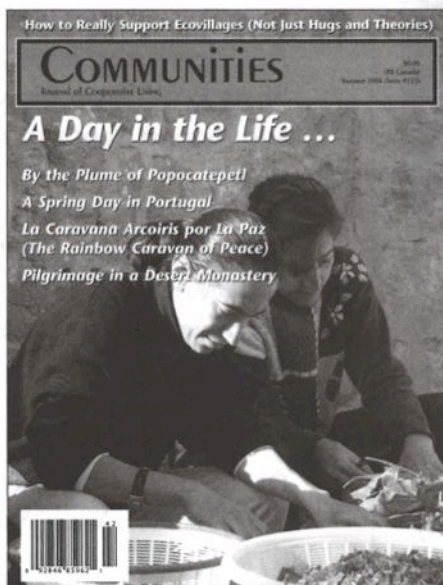
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LETTERS



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



Structural Conflict, Interpersonal Conflict

Dear *Communities*:

I just wanted you to know that your article, "Structural Conflict' and Interpersonal Conflict" (*Summer '04* issue), was made mandatory reading here at Emma's, and we're planning a meeting to discuss how to apply it to our own inter-personal dynamics. I think it will help us get down to the real business. Thank you!

Katie Howenstine
Emma Goldman Finishing School
Seattle, Washington

Health Coverage in Communities?

Dear *Communities*:

The "The Day in the Life" issue (*Summer '04*) arrived in my mailbox around the time I sustained multiple injuries from a fall. Due to the injuries I am unable to do much. I need help with the basics, including fixing my hair and dressing. I am unable to cook, clean, etc.

As I read the stories of life in the various communities profiled I noticed the busy life of the writers of each story, which made me wonder how communities respond when one of their own is injured. Whether the member simply has a broken right hand or a more serious injury resulting in life-long medical problems and disability, I am interested in how communities have faced losing a working member, the special needs of the individual, and dealing with medical bills. I hope *Communities* magazine will consider devoting an issue to this issue.

Kiri Christina Hyatt
San Antonio, Texas

In communities in which members have independent incomes, which appear to be most communities (not counting the Hutterites), while most fellow community members will go all out to help the injured person, the community itself doesn't pay medical expenses. In income-sharing communities, there is usually a health fund to cover illness and injuries, or actual health insurance.

But for all of us, there's the Ithaca Health Fund: www.IthacaHealth.org. We don't have to live in Ithaca, New York to use it. See "Our Own Low-Cost Health Fund: How Communitarians, Or Anyone Else, Can Benefit from this Grassroots 'Insurance'" (#114, Spring '02)

Starting New Communities

Dear *Communities*:

A member of another forming community spoke about the frustrations of starting a new community. We have been going through the usual trials in building Concord Village Cohousing. Here are some of the things we use as guiding principles:

1) Leaders never show discouragement in front of the group, we are always positive and never criticize. People are attracted to hopefulness, and few respond well to criticism. Lots of new folks will show up for one meeting and leave because the group isn't what they thought,

or the group's vision doesn't match theirs, or they aren't willing to compromise, or they get scared, and so on. The group is like a net that will catch few fish. You've got to have lots of fish swimming into your net so that you'll always have enough people even as you redesign your net to try to keep more. Therefore, we try to learn everything we can about marketing and market constantly. Have some brochures made up early in the life of your group, carry them everywhere you go and distribute them.

2) Start a website. It will attract lots of people if it's reasonably well done. There are services that will host your first site for free and provide site building tools.

3) Focus on relationships more than getting things done at meetings. If people don't feel warm and welcomed and truly accepted, they won't return. Think carefully about every meeting so that new people get recognized and acknowledged.. Make sure to do introductions and also thank everyone who has completed a task since the last meeting. Try to get people to take on at least a small task; doing so will help them feel part of the group. Above all, meetings should be energizing rather than draining.

4) Encourage members to keep improving relationships between meetings. Between business meetings our leaders make a point of building connections with newer members through get-togethers, such as at a coffee shop or over dinner.

5) Do information sessions at places where there are potential cohousers. Find out what the typical demographic is for potential cohousers in your area. In our area, it's Quakers, Unitarians, and patrons of health food stores.

6) Once you have several people coming regularly to meetings, have a social event once every month or two.

We've come up with a "sound bite" to describe our project to people we meet who are interested. "We are a group of people getting to know one another, whose aim it is to build a community where relationships are as important as the homes we live in." We encourage our members to make this phrase their own and use it so they can easily describe our vision in a few words.

These are some of our thoughts. I hope they help.

Tom Hammer
Concord Village
Hockessin, Delaware
thammer302@yahoo.com
tom.hammer.tripod.com/cohousing

Articles for Community Seekers

Dear *Communities*:

I get the impression most articles are by and about people *in* community. How about an issue or two about people seeking community?

Possible topics might include how to afford visiting; ways of travel; length of stay (I found stays at small places should be short, in case you get bored or don't get along, while in a large place, you can stay busy and avoid those you dislike). How to pinpoint where to invest your time and money with a visit. Should you believe what community spokespeople tell you prior to a visit, or should you view them as you would an Army recruiter—someone who'll tell you anything just to get you to join? For example, one income-sharing community told me my student loan debt was little or no problem, then four years later told me it was. *Communities* often tend to put new members in charge of answering inquiries by potential visitors. But shouldn't more long-term members answer their questions? I'm sure there are more article topics for community seekers. Also, I imagine readers completely new to the whole concept of intentional communities could better relate to articles by and for community seekers, rather than by and for people who've already found their communities and lived in them for years.

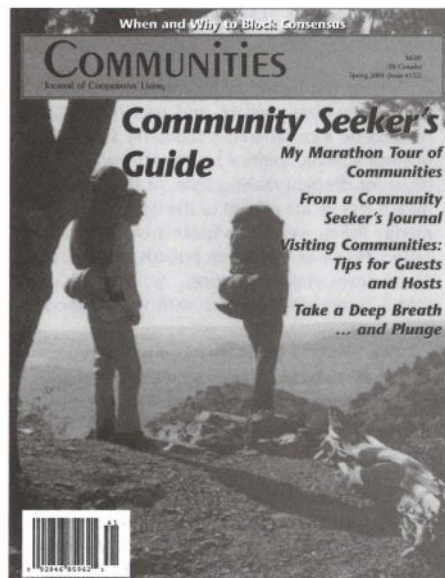
Logan
Louisville, Kentucky

You're absolutely right. You must have written this before publication of our Spring '04 issue, "Community Seeker's Guide."

"My Marathon Tour of Communities," "Excerpts from a Community Seeker's Journal," "Planning a Community Visit," "Visiting

Communities: Tips for Guests and Hosts," and "Take a Deep Breath ... and Plunge," are some of the articles in that issue.

However, we would do well to run an ongoing column for community seekers that appears in every issue. (Also this is a hot topic for me, as I'm writing a booklet about just this subject.) So thanks, Logan, for a really good idea which we'll put into practice. Check out the upcoming Winter '04 issue for our first "Seeking Community" column. —Ed.



Kudos

Dear *Communities*:

You're doing a phenomenal job with *Communities*; it's a splendid publication!

Leslie Greenwood
Ganas
Staten Island, New York



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Communities Editorial Policy

Communities is a forum for exploring intentional communities, cooperative living, and ways our readers can bring a sense of community into their daily lives. Contributors include people who live or have lived in community, and anyone with insights relevant to cooperative living.

Through fact, fiction, and opinion, we offer fresh ideas about how to live cooperatively, how to solve problems peacefully, and how individual lives can be enhanced by living purposefully with others. We seek contributions that profile community living and why people choose it, descriptions of what's difficult and what works well, news about existing and forming communities, or articles that illuminate community experiences—past and present—offering insights into mainstream cultural issues.

We do not intend to promote one kind of community over another, and take no official position on a community's economic structure, political agenda, spiritual beliefs, environmental issues, or decision-making style. As long as submitted articles are related to the theme of community living, we will consider them for publication. However, we do not publish articles that 1) advocate violent practices, or 2) advocate that a community 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.

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What is an "Intentional Community"?

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

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Lessons from Summer Camp

From ages eight to 16, I spent most summers at a boys camp in northern Minnesota, where I learned valuable life lessons outside the immediate orbit of family and school.

At age eight it was scary to leave home to live with strangers for a month, yet I was drawn to the adventure. There were two sessions each summer: a four-week stretch, followed immediately by one of three weeks. You could attend either, or both. That first summer, four weeks seemed adventure enough.

Afterwards, my father met me at the train station and inquired if I'd had a good time. Suddenly I was crying—a sure sign that I'd missed my family more than I knew. Still, amidst the blubbing, my first words were, "Can I go for seven weeks next year?"

Lesson: Though doing a thing may evince feelings of sadness and loss, you may still have made a good choice.

Camp was seven weeks long and there were no showers. While you could swim all you wanted, there was danger of polluting our end of the lake with soap if everyone bathed there. The answer was elegant: saunas. Every other day we relied on Finnish heat to finish the day, and I loved it. We would emerge from the sauna mole-like in the failing light and—fresh from the 200° heat—plunge our steaming bodies into the cool lake water. I have never felt cleaner in my life.

The sauna stove was wood fired and with as much use as we gave it, the camp burned lots of wood. Luckily, we were smack in the middle of the North Woods, so there was plenty around. Each year there would be a big work day where we cut and laid up the fuel for next summer's saunas. In those days (circa 1959) the chain saw was a novelty. The camp director would rent one from town for the day and it sounded and smelled like an Army truck in need of a muffler and piston rings. The adults and big

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

Student Co-ops, Winter '04.

• Life after student co-ops: Are co-ops 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. non-students, diversity, "community co-ops." • Why a student co-op handbook is so necessary for this type of community; tips for writing one.

Julie Pennington, Guest Editor: julieepennington@hotmail.com.

Art in Communities, Spr '05.

• How important is art to the health, wealth, and well being of communities? Who creates art in community and who defines what community art is? What roles can art play in community livelihood? Is aesthetics the forgotten permaculture principal? • The "Art of Process"—bringing creativity and art to group dynamics in community. • 101 art actions and projects you and your community can do. We will look at many communities worldwide, from those founded specifically as arts centers to those seeking to integrate art with other aspects of community living.

Scott Horton, Guest Editor, LaSemillaBesada@hotmail.com; 510-433-0894.

kids worked around the saw; the smaller kids shuttled the cut wood down to the lake one armful at a time, to be stacked in sheds next to the sauna.

Hauling wood all day as a nine-year-old is my first clear memory of making a conscious choice to enjoy work. It was the moment where I accepted the internal discipline to stick with a job until it was completed. I *still* have pride about that.

Lesson: You have choices about your attitude toward work, and one of the secrets of a happy life is cultivating catholic tastes in what you find enjoyable.

It was at camp that I learned to canoe. Not just the technique—I learned to become one with a paddle, and find a productive pace I could sustain all day. I learned how to read the wind and vector the canoe for the most efficient course (even before I took my first physics class and discovered that's how you fly an airplane).

When is stepping forward meddling and when is it lending support?

This became my entrée into the vast portions of northern Canada which are still wilderness—places one can reach relatively inexpensively and experience portions of the Earth that have remained virtually untouched by humans—where you can safely drink the water on which you glide, feel in your bones the incredible age of the planet, and be humbled by the ridiculous obsession of humans with self-importance.

Lesson: There is a meditative and restorative quality about immersion in wilderness that is more spiritually profound than anything I've tasted with organized religion.

When I was 13, there was a counselor (John) who didn't hit it off well with us boys. He tried hard enough, but no one liked him. After a couple weeks of struggle, the director (Doug) announced that John was returning home to be with his ailing mother. Gradually, it came out that John didn't have a sick mother; he'd left when he and Doug had come to the mutual conclusion that it just wasn't working out, and it would be better all around if he left early.

Lesson: Things aren't always what they seem and telling the unvarnished truth is not necessarily the best way to proceed. You should assess how the information is likely to land and take that into account.

Later, I could see why Doug chose to ease John out with the fabrication about his mother: Doug didn't want the kids to think they had the power to oust a counselor they didn't like, and, more subtly, he probably didn't want the kids to feel responsible for John's failure as a counselor (like kids who feel guilty when their parents divorce). Still, who are we to decide what others can handle? There is subtlety here I struggle with to this day. I've seen truth used as a weapon, with intent to hurt. And I've seen the withholding of information erode trust so badly that relationships never recover.

Finally, as an older camper, I first encountered the question, "When am I ready to speak?"

Sunday mornings all the campers (about 70 of us) would gather in a rough-hewn outdoor amphitheater for a "service." It was the only time each week that there was a nod to the Christian culture from which we mostly came. The camp did not have a religious portfolio, and the talk each Sunday was broadly ecumenical. Sometimes it was given by Doug, sometimes by a counselor. Once though, it was given by an older camper, which suggested the possibility that I could be that person.

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Forty years later I cannot remember a single thing said in one of those talks, yet I recall clearly wrestling with the invitation to speak. This was a generic opportunity (I had not been personally approached) and I notice that I've been wrestling with some version of that invitation ever since. When do I know enough to put myself forward as a speaker? When do I have enough skill to ask people to pay me for my services? When do I have a potent enough idea and sufficient skills as a wordsmith to offer something for publication?

Over the years I have become a speaker and author, and I have learned that my public work is best if I'm learning as well as teaching. My stepping forward gives me the chance to see how well I understand what I'm talking about, through hearing myself and noticing the comprehension and application of what I'm sharing with my audience. I've learned (painfully) that a significant portion of the time I have been driven to speak by ego (hey, look at me!), by a callow desire to be seen as wise, influential, articulate, courageous, etc.—all of which tends to crowd off the road my desire to serve. How does one fuel the drive to be of service while keeping a governor on one's ego?

The holes, or flat spots in my presentation tend to point to where more work is needed, providing insights into a deeper understanding of the topic, or better bridges to the audience. One can always get better. Let me give you a recent example illuminating the complexities:

My community holds retreats each winter, one feature of which is financial planning. We review last year's numbers and create a budget for the coming year. This year I volunteered to organize the financial information and be the presenter for that topic—every member is expected to volunteer for some organizing role during the retreat and this was a piece I had been unhappy with in recent years. As a professional facilitator and nonprofit administrator I have considerable experience in working with budgets and felt this would be a good place to contribute.

While the deliberations went smoothly and we completed the budgeting with time left over (a rare and joyous event!), I nonetheless got criticized afterwards by the community member who had presented the finances the previous year. She was embarrassed by the contrast between her work and mine and felt I had uncooperatively withheld my support for her efforts the prior year. Where I thought I was respecting her right to organize the material, she felt I was sabotaging. When is stepping forward meddling and when is it lending support? When is refraining from speaking respect, and when is it petulant withdrawal? Even though I sit with this question all the time and have wide experience in its application, I can still get it wrong.

In the end I did not give a talk at camp, yet my soul was touched by the opportunity to do so. Though it has been decades since I've set foot on the camp property, the lessons live in me yet. Most profoundly my time there awakened a spiritual inquiry about how to be in the world that has sustained me through the 40 years it has been since I started wandering and wondering in the wilderness. That's what I did—and still do—on my summer vacations.

Laird Schaub

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

Shaw EcoVillage: Bicycle Power and Activist Youth in the Inner City

Josue Duran and Jamaal Morgan are typical of most students at Caesar Chavez High School in Washington, D.C. In some ways, however, they definitely stand out from the crowd. As members of the EcoDesign Corps, a program of Shaw EcoVillage, the two teenagers recently started a promising donation project that turns cast-off, industrial soft drink syrup barrels into plastic rain barrels. These barrels will be provided to local non-profits and low-income residents during summer 2004. If successful, they hope to develop the project as a youth-led business.

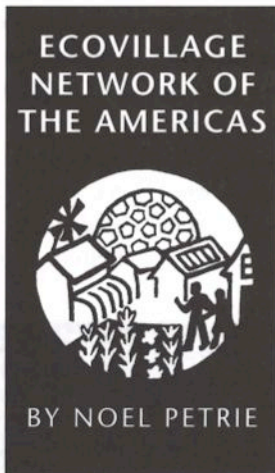
Josue and Jamaal's goal is to let their friends and neighbors know that practical, affordable ways exist to reduce the toxic run-off from rooftops and streets that after a thunderstorm drains directly into DC's sewers and, ultimately, into the Anacostia and Potomac rivers.

Such forward-looking, youth-led projects were not always a hallmark of the Shaw neighborhood. Though Shaw was once home to Duke Ellington and still is considered the heart of DC's African-American community, it has recently been associated with crime, gang violence, and disrupted families—especially during the crack

cocaine epidemic of the mid-to-late 1990s. In 1997, a group of Shaw community leaders, with support from Manna CDC and the National Building Museum, decided to create an organization that could train at-risk youth to be catalysts for sustainable change in Washington, DC neighborhoods—Shaw EcoVillage.

Shaw EcoVillage (SEV) is a community-based 501(c)3 organization finding creative ways to develop and tap the energy, imagination, and leadership skills of urban young people to create innovative solutions to real-life community issues. We do this through the EcoDesign Corps and Chain Reaction programs.

EcoDesign Corps empowers youth by engaging them in hands-on community-based projects and providing them with the design skills (architecture, landscape architecture, public art, and planning) and community organizing skills necessary to create sustainable economic, environmental, and social change in DC. Chain Reaction educates youth about the role of the bicycle in sustainable communities, equips youth with job skills, and provides residents of Washington, DC, with safe, affordable, and pollution-free transportation.



Noel Petrie is Outreach and Development Coordinator for Shaw EcoVillage Project. Additional reporting for this article by Robert Donnan, Natural Assets Program of the Aspen Institute. Shaw EcoVillage: www.shawecovillage.com; 202-265-2019.



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Participants in the EcoDesign Corps create and implement their projects after assessing neighborhood needs from surveys and conversations with local residents and program partners. As a result, they develop a firsthand understanding of community development and the urban planning process. These young people often present their ideas and proposals to public officials and collaborate with other neighborhood organizations. They ultimately realize they are an important part of their community's decision-making processes, and that they can help implement their community's projects too, both right now and in the future.

Shaw EcoVillage's EcoDesign Corps focuses on design, community action, and environmental stewardship. "If young people develop positive habits of mind regarding themselves and their environment," says Mike Hill, Executive Director for Shaw EcoVillage, "they will act to change the world to meet their expectations of what it should be. If we provide them with the skills needed to make change, they will start immediately. Our programs make Washington, DC, a better place for young people, and in turn, they make DC a better place for everyone."

In recent years, for example, EcoDesign Corps participants developed a street tree maintenance brochure that was distributed to at least 300 local residents; designed and planted beds in a community garden; developed the original idea for Chain Reaction Youth Bike Shop, a youth-led micro-enterprise; created a historic bicycle tour based on specific historic figures in Shaw; and created and distributed a poster, "How it is—and how it should be," based on a survey of 116 young people about their community priorities for Washington, DC.

Additionally, youth interns constructed a storage shed at the site of the Chain Reaction Bike Shop, and—working in concert with DC Green-

works, another conservation-minded, community-based DC nonprofit—installed a living roof on top of it. At the time of its construction, it was the only building in Shaw neighborhood with a living roof, which we call a "greenroof," and, as such, an important reminder that low-impact development can indeed be made accessible for all DC residents,

"I think one reason low-impact development could really take off is it's economically sensible for people to have greenroofs and rain barrels," says Leslie Byford, an EcoDesign Corps intern. "The

Before, I'd get frustrated with issues, now I address them.



More than 50 Shaw youth have learned basic bike repairs and safe riding techniques.

CHAIN REACTION YOUTH BIKE SHOP

economic incentive is greater with green-roofs, because they can lower heating bills in winter and lower electricity bills for air-conditioning in the summer.”

Chain Reaction trains participants in bicycle mechanics and retail sales, and provides local residents with inexpensive transportation by repairing used bikes for resale. Students in the programs learn safe riding skills as well as problem-solving, mechanical and entrepreneurial skills.

The seed for Chain Reaction was planted by a group of EcoDesign Corps interns during the summer of 1998. Interns established a need for inexpensive transportation and identified bicycles as a sustainable option. Chain Reaction participants can complete 1st Gear (introductory), 2nd Gear (intermediate), and 3rd Gear (advanced) bike mechanic’s training. Students who complete 3rd Gear are eligible for jobs in the Youth Bike Shop. Chain Reaction sponsors group rides twice each month and the neighborhood Bike Festival each spring. In the process, Chain Reaction promotes healthy, pollution-free transportation. Chain Reaction is the only bike shop in the Shaw neighborhood.

Since its grand opening in May 2001, Chain Reaction has been an asset to the Shaw neighborhood in many ways. More than 50 young people have learned basic bike repairs and safe riding techniques; 10 youth mechanics have been employed in the Youth Bike Shop; mechanics performed more than 1,500 customer bike repairs; 200 bikes were recycled for resale; four Bike Festivals celebrated biking; Chain Reaction staff provided safety checks and bikes at community events; and six youth mechanics were hired by for-profit bike businesses (summer 2003).

Omar Estrada, 20, has been involved in the Chain Reaction Youth Bike Shop and its programs since 1999. Although no longer a youth participant he is still active in the program through volunteering. Omar describes how his time at Chain Reaction affected his life: “It has helped in the way I deal with issues and problems. Before, I’d get frustrated with issues, now I address them. I’ve taken this with me to my work at Revolution Cycles. My time working with Shaw EcoVillage was a worthwhile experience—exciting, and thought-provoking.” Ω

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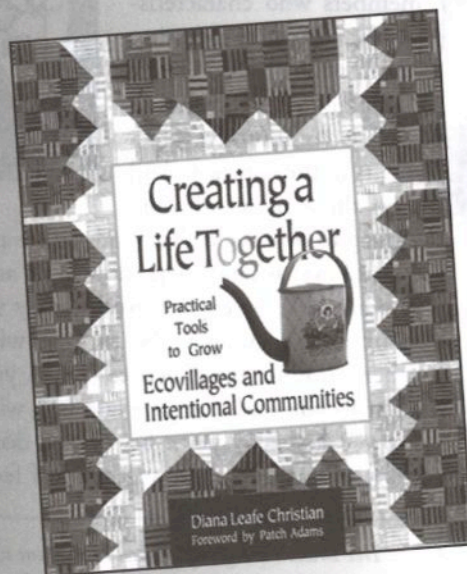
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Working on Your Issues with Someone

(Whether or Not They Join In)

As an avowed “process junkie,” it’s easy for me to believe that everyone should work out conflicts. And from there it’s easy to fall into thinking that everyone should be willing to work out conflicts in my preferred mode: direct, verbal discussion—that is, what is usually referred to when people in alternative culture use the term “processing.”

However, it seems like every community has members who characteristically dread processing and strenuously resist engaging in it, regardless of explicit community agreements to the contrary. And even those of us who are willing to process in that mode still want control over when, where, how long, and in what style we engage. Realistically we aren’t always going to be in sync with others around these desires. So if you want to talk and someone else isn’t willing yet, and may never be, or you don’t want to talk but you’re still tired of feel-

ing crappy about your issues with someone, what are your options?

I don’t think there are any one-size-fits-all solutions, but here are some exercises you can try for working on a conflict yourself, regardless of the other person’s participation. Some of these suggestions draw on the methods of process-oriented psychology (also known as “process work”), as pioneered by Arnold Mindell. His *Deep Democracy of Open Forums* (see pp. 71–73 on “innerwork on stalemated conflict”) and *Working on Yourself Alone* (chapter 9 on “relationship work”) are useful sources for this



approach.

Feel free to contact me with feedback or success stories, and if you have other ideas for exercises please send those in as well (my email address is below). And keep in mind that the most important aspect of any of these exercises is first to be compassionate with yourself.

Tree Bressen is a group process consultant who works with intentional communities and other non-profits on how to have meetings that are lively, productive, and connecting. She lives at Walnut St. Co-op in Eugene, Oregon. Her website, www.treegroup.info, offers free tools and resources. tree@ic.org.

Exercise #1

1. Get yourself settled in a quiet space. Breathe and center for a few minutes.
2. Think of someone you feel in conflict with. Picture them in your mind. See their ways of moving and speaking, their way of being in the world.
3. Now let yourself become that person for a little while. What are they like, how do they move?
4. What is it about them that bothers you? Can you express that sense in a movement? What would it look like? Can you distill that movement down to its essence?
5. Now ask yourself what essential quality that movement expresses. Is there something about that essence that you are needing more of in your life? Let yourself meditate on this for a little while.
6. Come back into your regular reality and reflect on what you experienced. Did you learn anything?

Every community has members who dread processing and strenuously resist engaging in it.

Exercise #2

Follow initial directions as in Exercise #1, substituting the following at steps 4-5: What about this person is similar to you? How do they remind you of yourself? Do you shun certain aspects of the other person because seeing yourself reflected in that way makes you uncomfortable? Is there a way in which you are needing more of that quality in your life?

Exercise #3

Again, follow directions in Exercise #1 above, and this time at steps 4-5 ask yourself: How am I unfree? What keeps me from following my instincts and impulses with this person?



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Exercise #4

This exercise relies on the theory that if we have an experience we are stuck in, we can create shift by choosing to route our experience into a new “channel.” Channels are ways of taking in and processing information. For example, most Americans rely primarily on the visual channel. Other channels include sound, movement, proprioception (your inner felt sense of your body), and relationships.

Here’s how it works: Think of a time someone made you angry. Stop and feel what is happening in your body as you sit with this. Is your heart beating fast?

Are you having hot flashes on the back of your neck? Do you feel like running away, like strangling someone, like what? Now switch to a different “channel” while conserving the process. For example, make a picture of your feelings, or express them in noise, or act them out in movement. Then sit and reflect on what you noticed.

Exercise #5

1. Imagine a confrontation between yourself and your opponent.
2. What is the main thing you are trying to convey in this situation?
3. Why is that important to you? Dig underneath a little. What is the essence of your message?
4. Now ask yourself, what is the main thing your opponent is trying to convey? What is the essence of their message, and why is it important to them?
5. Ask yourself, is there some little bit of truth in what your opponent wants to convey?
6. Also ask yourself, if our last confrontation became highly charged and dramatic, is there a reason it became so? Answer the question, “We got dramatic because ...” (for example, “She got dramatic because she felt ignored,” or “I got dramatic because I was afraid the co-op would fail.”).
7. Reflect on this.

Exercise #6

If you are feeling fearful of encountering someone at a community meeting or

meal, it may help to ask yourself what is the worst that can possibly happen. For example, perhaps the worst thing is that you might blow up at her, or maybe she might blow up at you, or maybe you might embarrass yourself in front of the group. Sometimes sitting and imagining how that would really be and what would happen next can be helpful, because often even if our worst fears did come to pass, we would survive, and maybe even

something good would come of it. For example, if others witness your dynamic they might have insights or support to offer afterward.

Taking this further, you could enroll a friend to play the part of the person you are in conflict with, giving them enough information so that they can play the role effectively (if all of you live in the same community together your partner will probably be able to do this quite well). Then practice different scenarios, so you can try out different responses in a safe setting and build up your confidence.

Exercise #7

If you are having trouble letting go of upset with another person, there is probably a reason, perhaps something else you can learn from the situation. Try to be open to that message. If you sit and meditate on it and it’s not coming to you, or you feel blocked or numb, then consider getting some help by consulting tarot cards, the *I Ching*, runes, or a similar tool to help your unconscious self communicate with your conscious mind, or to help your soul communicate with the universe. Ask an open-ended question such as, “What do I need to learn from this situation?” or “What is my next step here?”

Exercise #8

Consider doing a ritual to help you let go. Personal rituals are as varied as the people who design them. The common thread of ritual is connecting with something larger than yourself. Ω

Shivalila: Yes, We're Still Here

About a year ago five of our adults left our small income-sharing community on the Big Island of Hawai'i. One departing member settled next door, thus maintaining some continuity between her two children and our three. Still, our eight adults had become three; a significant change.

For nine years Shivalila had operated with several important principles: each adult had more than one lover, and as I wrote in *Communities*, ("Lovers, Friends, and Parents." *Summer '03*), we equally valued co-parenting, raising our children with other children of various ages, pursuing rural self-sufficiency and ecological sustainability, and sharing decision-making about our common resources.

Today we're still focused on our relationships, generating an income, community outreach, building our house, and reorganizing.

Our relationships seem simpler than ever. Ma'ayag, Kaika, and myself have all lived together, sharing fundamental values, for about 10 years. We continue to

raise each other's children (now 16, 8, and 5), share all assets and income, and share a primary sexual bond. We have learned a lot about how we cooperate and how we conflict with each other, and so far have found that we enjoy each other and this communal lifestyle enough to want to keep living together.

In the last two years we have needed to focus more than ever on making money, and so launched two businesses—producing an organic ginger and hibiscus cooler beverage, and custom-milling local woods. The juice business took off with good publicity and a lot of promotion, but when we became so few, growth in the beverage business slowed considerably. Over the summer, a new round of promotions and several new accounts restored growth somewhat. With the wood-milling, we have a lot of lumber laid by, which we steadily trade for goods and services we would otherwise have to buy with cash, and occasionally we sell a sizeable amount of lumber. Our expenses are less now with fewer people, so we get by.



Diga Kern, a musician, farmer, and aspiring playwright, is a founding member of Shivalila, where he has lived for almost 10 years. His article, "Lovers, Friends, and Parents," appeared in the Summer '03 issue. dragonseyecenter@earthlink.net



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Together with former community member Malaika and a team of dedicated volunteers, we operate Dragon's Eye Learning Center, which is basically a large event facility for ongoing classes and seasonal events. Right now we are offering jungle gymnastics for kids, and four weekly dance classes. We also host a homeschool cooperative three days a week at the Center. We have officially incorporated and applied for 501c(3) status, and have received a number of grants including full funding as we enter our third year of children's theater programs. Last year's play, "We Can Make a Difference," which 23 kids developed and performed in schools and public theaters, addressed issues which concerned them about the state of our planet.

The Learning Center is adjacent to a massive new structure which right now serves as our home, but may become more of a community center in the future. At 10,000 square feet, it sits above our cement water cistern with decks and a kitchen. After 10 years living under tarps (mind you, our hut was quite elegant, actually), it feels good to be in a real house with floors, solid plumbing and wiring, and plenty of dry space. The finish work will take a lifetime at our current pace, but the house is comfortable and functional enough for now.

Our community reorganization is ongoing. We just read *Creating a Life Together*, which has been an excellent nuts-and-bolts guide for the process of determining our legal structure. We have settled upon a structure of three companion organizations: one LLC as a title-holding entity for our land, one LLC for the businesses, and the nonprofit corporation to administer our community service effort. A sympathetic local lawyer has assisted us immeasurably, and

these legal structures are now mostly in place.

We feel it's important to draft a new description of our community's values and vision, and we are in the midst of doing this now. In the past, we relied upon articulations from the originators of Shivalila Community of the Paiute Mountains, California, 1975-78, but

**We feel it's
important to draft a
new description of
our community's
values and vision.**

it has become increasingly apparent that we need a document which describes our own unique application and understanding of their values which resonate so deeply with us. It's likely we'll change our community name as well, but haven't come up with one that we like yet. Perhaps that will be the lot of some inspired new member.

So, at three adults and three children are we still a community? Yes! Will we grow as a community? We hope so. We have classified ads in three alternative publications, and have developed a procedure for considering new members. Our requirements reflect lessons we've learned by trying to live with a lot of people over the years. Besides fundamental agreement over ideals, parenting, and so on, we want to meet people who really like us a lot. There's got to be some chemistry, some inspiration, and enough assertiveness to join in sharing considerable power with the three of us.

Last fall I met some members of Twin Oaks and envied the supportive and diverse culture a large long-term community can provide for its members. We are meeting some of these needs through cooperation with alternative folks in our rural neighborhood, but are still somewhat isolated from community-minded people. I certainly extend an invitation to any communitarians visiting the Big Island to come and "talk-story" with us, as we say in Hawai'i. Ω

Do We Really Value “Diversity”?

Asking the Hard Questions at Wild Sage Cohousing

The vision statement of many cohousing communities contains a phrase about honoring diversity among members. Part of the vision statement of my group, Wild Sage Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado, reads: “We support connections and relationships at all levels, consciously seeking and valuing diversity and the challenges it brings”

Economic diversity is a hot issue in Boulder, where rental and housing prices have spiraled upward since the late 1980s. Having survived the last 14 years by living in increasingly smaller apartments, at age 42, I am now purchasing my first home, all 640 square feet of it. At \$106,000 (about two-thirds of market value) this carriage house in Wild Sage Cohousing is part of the city of Boulder’s permanently affordable program. This means if I ever sell, the price of my house will remain propor-

tionately low. (Boulder County has about 3000 such permanently affordable homes.)

Boulder began its affordable housing program with the intention of helping middle-income households (such as those headed by teachers, nurses, store managers, police officers, and city employees), to buy homes in town, as compared to buying homes in areas miles away and less expensive than Boulder and commuting. Some affordable housing is in mixed-use developments, where homes are clustered with shops and offices. My home in Wild Sage Cohousing is in one such area—a former drive-in theater in north Boulder.

Boulder Housing Partners, which administers Boulder’s affordable housing program, acquired the drive-in site in the mid-1990s and began a



Ellen Orleans, a process consultant for Wonderland Hill Development Company, lives at Wild Sage Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado.

Excerpted with permission from the forthcoming anthology, Reinventing Community: Stories from Cohousing, edited by David Wann (Fulcrum, 2005).

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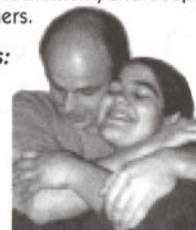
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public-private partnership with for-profit and nonprofit developers to create affordable housing, including some housing units in Wild Sage Cohousing, which shares the site.

A major impetus in developing the drive-in site was to significantly increase the number of affordable homes in Boulder. Of the 329 housing units to be built there, 43 percent will be affordable. Of the 34 housing units to be built at Wild Sage, 21 are market rate, nine are permanently affordable, and four will be built by Habitat for Humanity. (This is a nonprofit Christian housing group which uses volunteer labor, donations,

and sweat equity from future homeowners to build and rehabilitate houses. Habitat for Humanity then sells these homes at no profit, and finances them with affordable, no-interest loans.)

When I joined Wild Sage in March 2001, the members were a mix of people seeking affordable housing units ("affordable buyers") and market-rate housing ("market-rate buyers"). We were also seeking families for Habitat for Humanity-built homes who would be a good fit for cohousing. Unlike cohousing groups that have to search for land, we already had the drive-in site, but we hadn't yet chosen our individual units. Individual unit design was evolving, and price estimates for housing units changed monthly.

It was a nebulous time, and that cloudiness carried through to the buyer categories. A mild friction existed amongst us. For instance, during my first year with Wild Sage, I'd hear assumptions such as, "Since we'll be moving from larger homes to smaller ones . . ." or "Let's have a

meeting about timing the sale of our current houses to match the purchase of our cohousing units." People making remarks like this didn't recognize that many affordable buyers were currently renting and would be moving into larger homes than those in which we currently lived. Although the Wild Sage vision statement mentions "consciously seeking and valuing diversity," some members seemed pretty unconscious about actually honoring the diversity we lower-income people represented. I didn't push the matter, though. I was still new enough in the group to not want to challenge anyone.

The following year I left my adjunct faculty job

at the University of Colorado and found steadier work, and was happy in my new job. One Wild Sage member (I'll call him Pete), asking me how much I was making.

"Thirty thousand a year," I said.

"Wow, that's practically volunteer work," replied Pete, who worked in high tech.

I didn't tell him it was the most I'd ever earned in my life. More importantly, I didn't tell him, as I should have, that I considered his remark insulting. For me, Pete's remark drove home the salary gap between some of my future neighbors and myself.

That year money conflicts began brewing at Wild Sage. Boulder Housing Partners changed some of its rules about required square footage and the prices of affordable homes, which raised the prices of housing units in Wild Sage Cohousing, with market-rate homes raising disproportionately more than the affordable ones. Increasingly at meetings, talk arose about market rate buyers "subsidizing" affordable buyers.

**Pete's remark
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These conversations felt condescending but, since none of the affordable buyers were speaking up, I didn't either. Finally, at one meeting, when Pete again said, "Yeah, but we're subsidizing you, so ..." I lost my composure.

"Actually Pete," I wanted to say, "affordable buyers are subsidizing your overpriced salary, which wouldn't exist if the people you rely on for your health care, city services, and foamy mocha lattes got paid a living wage." I wasn't quite as quick and eloquent as that, and I said it while I was facilitating a meeting (which is highly unprofessional), but the effect was immediate. The room got quiet. Finally someone from our process team said, "This sounds like an important discussion to have at a later time."

After the meeting three affordable buyers approached me. One said, "I'm glad you spoke up. I've been wanting to say something for a long time." The other two said they were starting to feel guilty, as if they weren't pulling their weight, simply because they were buying affordable homes instead of market-rate ones.

As a way to explore the growing divisions in our group, we tried an activity to help members think outside their own experience during a discussion about our annual Homeowner Association dues. Our Finance team had been wondering if the category of one's unit—market-rate, Habitat-built, or affordable—should be taken into consideration when determining dues. We arbitrarily divided into groups of three. In each of these groups, the members were again arbitrarily assigned identities, either as a market-rate buyer, Habitat-built buyer, or affordable housing buyer. If a member was assigned, for instance, the identity of an affordable buyer, no matter what category of unit they

were actually buying, during this exercise they needed to speak from the perspective of an affordable buyer. I then posed the question about Homeowners dues.

The result surprised me. A few market-rate buyers, for instance, were only slightly over the eligibility limit for affordable housing and could barely afford their units. Other market-rate buyers were unemployed and concerned about down payments. One Habitat buyer wanted to pay the same Homeowners Association dues as everyone else because she didn't want to feel indebted to the group. A market-rate buyer was eligible for affordable status and was considering switching to an affordable home. This exercise was a success; it got us talking and helped us gain empathy for each other's financial situations.

A few months later, tensions rose again with a sudden "garage shortage." In part, this shortage was caused by a new rule that allowed affordable and Habitat buyers to purchase garages. Again there were scattered comments about garages being an extravagance for Habitat and affordable buyers.

These comments point to a belief that one group of people best knows what another group needs. For instance, one of Wild Sage's many single

momms told us that, for her own sanity, once a month she treats herself to a day at a spa. A market-rate member commented that someone buying a discounted house shouldn't indulge in such "luxury." But who are we to judge how someone prioritizes their money?

Such judgments aren't always a one-way street. One time, a potential member (another single mom) was considering purchasing our most expensive home. A few days later, an affordable buyer apparently remarked, "What is she, a princess?"

***"What is she,
a princess?"***

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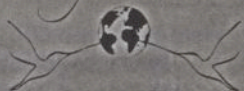
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Maybe this potential buyer was a princess or perhaps she simply had a high-paying job. Perhaps she had invested well or had recently moved from a part of the country where homes cost more. The point is that when we make snippy comments, whether based on envy or distrust, it's a sign we aren't taking the time to learn about an individual. Assumptions are walls. What we need are bridges.

One bridge-building exercise we used at Wild Sage was designed to take a hard look at the community "dirt" we'd swept under the rug. For this activity, I wrote twelve statements that summed up, in tactless and thoughtless ways, unspoken concerns about anxiety, participation, and finances. A few examples:

- "I'm tired of subsidizing 'affordable units.' I don't make much money myself."
- "If Habitat buyers can afford to purchase a garage, they should pay more for their houses instead."
- "Market-rate buyers are patronizing. I'm sick of how clueless they are about gender and class issues."

I purposefully made the statements harsh to cut through the politeness that sometimes kept us from honest conversation. I again asked the community to divide into small groups comprised of at least one buyer from each category. I asked them to read and discuss the statements. Some groups focused on how realistic the statement seemed ("No one really thinks that, do they?") while other groups directly tackled the issue raised. The ensuing discussions succeeded in, if not vacuuming up the dirt under the rug, at least lifting up the rug to reveal it.

Another bridge-building exercise we used is "Standing in Each Other's Shoes." For this activity, the group

forms a circle. The facilitator reads a statement and if it is true for an individual, they take a step forward. The resulting inner ring of people is then encouraged to look at each other, acknowledge their commonality, then step back.

If the statements are mild, such as "I have a dog" or "I like vegetable lasagna," the activity simply encourages connection among members. However, if the statements are riskier, say, "I have been in an abusive relationship," or "I have been threatened because I am gay," or "Someone I

cared about has recently died," the exercise drops to a deeper level. When you stand in that inner circle, amid people who have experienced similar suffering or heartbreak, the affinity is more profound.

To help the group explore money differences, I prepared statements reflecting economic concerns. One statement, "My Wild Sage home is larger than where I live now," addressed that casual remark I first heard two years ago. Another statement was: "I am concerned about Homeowners Association dues and I'm not sure I can handle my mortgage payment." After reading this statement I said, "I imagine buyers from every category can identify with that statement. This, I hope, will remind us that money worries are not confined to a single income level."

As we continue to build community at Wild Sage and participate in bridge-building exercises, my hope is that someday we won't need them. It's not that I imagine our conflicts will magically go away, but instead that we will know each other well enough and trust each other deeply enough to initiate these discussions on our own. Preferably in the Common House, over a big slice of vegetable lasagna. Ω

This helped us gain empathy for each other's financial situations.



Bairning

Art, Culture, and Community Through the Gift Economy



FRANK DEITL



FRANK DETTLE

Flat, barren, hot, utterly desolate, hauntingly beautiful—the salt flats of the Black Rock Desert in north western Nevada span thousands of acres, cradled by distant craggy mountains. For one week every August a fantastical city of 30,000 people manifests out of the fine playa dust, then disappears without a trace.

I journeyed to Black Rock City for the first time in 2001 with my girlfriend Shay and good friend Paula. I had attended many festivals, raves, and gatherings, and imagined the Burning Man festival to be not much different, simply larger in scale. I was wrong. Upon our arrival at the gates, greeters dressed in outrageous costumes (biker/hooker/clown) commanded us out of our vehicle, gave us all big hugs, and

The city itself sweeps around an enormous arc comprising three fourths of a circle, three miles in circumference. Center Camp is at the “bottom” of the arc; theme camps line the inmost curving street of the circle (the

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Esplanade), and the Man-Who-Glows-Neon-at-Night, the wicker effigy which will be burnt as the highlight of the event, stands majestically on a platform in the center of the vast open space within the arc.

Visible from any crossroad, the Man’s position exemplifies excellent city planning as it allows even the most disoriented of citizens to figure out where they are. Civic entities are clustered around Center Camp, including a Post Office, a citizen patrol dubbed the Black Rock Rangers, the Information Station, the Department of Public Works, and medical facilities. There is even an airport just outside the city. And all of this is run entirely by volunteers!

Our initiation happened to be a puppet show hosted by two topless girls on a stage waving batons with monkey heads attached to the ends. The lovely ladies invited us up onto the stage and proceeded to fill us in on things we would need to know for the week. “You must learn to go by ‘-ish’ time,” said the girl with the yellow monkey head. “Yes, nothing ever happens when you think it’s supposed to. Let go of expectations!” said the girl with the blue monkey head. “And never forget the importance of being ‘squishy.’ You must be squishy to feel really good at Burning Man,” they both added.

I sat on that stage and gazed out over the formation of the fantastical city before me. I witnessed the construction of pyramids, teepees, domes, castles, piñata totem poles, and performance stages; the passing of giant furry animals, fire-breathing dragons, stilt walkers, naked people, painted people, aliens, gods and who knows what else. All of this was occurring as if it were an everyday normal activity. I sat in astonishment; I doubted the reality of what I was seeing. I imagined I’d been propelled into a Salvador Dali painting, overwhelmed by surrealism. Over the course of the week however, a strange thing

occurred: I began to doubt the existence of the reality outside of this place! This was the extent and power that the experience conjured in me.

But the spectacle would be shallow and empty if it weren't for the sense of community—the atmosphere of joy, good will, caring, respect, and responsibility that permeates the culture here. I believe that what primarily makes this sense of community different than that at any other large gathering is the gift economy at Black Rock City. It is an intentional culture of contribution—no vending, selling, or buying of anything is allowed. This is what gives the event its vitality and what keeps people coming back year after year. Creating this environment of abundance relies on two primary principles: radical self-reliance and radical self-expression. The first downplays the need to “get” something; the second offers a meaningful opportunity to give. Putting this into practice takes some getting used to for those of us submerged in a consumer society, and I'm still learning how to operate in this mode. But through the

giving of gifts we create a sense of belonging. And this provides a solid foundation any healthy community can be built upon.

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I ventured to Burning Man the first year out of curiosity. I went back the next year out of a yearning

for something I wasn't finding in my everyday life. A wrenching feeling deep inside was tugging me back. I returned to this community of gift and the gift of community in a spirit of greater participation, to explore what I might learn. We packed our truck with 20 gallons of water, plenty of food, 25 ten-foot PVC poles and a parachute (to make our geodesic home for the week), tarps, carpet remnants, hundreds of feet of rope, a hammer, battery-powered construction tools, head lamps, bicycles, lawn furniture, sun block, costumes galore (I was up all night sewing the day before we left), decorations for our camp, massage oil, glitter, art supplies, kitchen supplies, condoms, a drum, and anything else a self-respecting Black Rock citizen might need in the desert for a week!

As we began to assemble our icosahedron dome, four people immediately appeared to assist us. I was initially taken aback by their eagerness and sincerity to help, but soon welcomed them as new team members. Such is the culture at Burning Man.
S e t -



ting up our camp, I wondered, "What on earth possesses us to put so much time, money, and energy into this pilgrimage?" My conclusion: I go for the promise of community and the chance to find new ways of expressing myself in the context of community. Nowhere else have I encountered such enthusiasm and encouragement to creatively express myself.

By evening, our camp is mostly set up. Decked out in my furry fleece-lined purple ankle and wrist cuffs, dog chain necklace with gold heart, and blonde Afro wig (going for the psychedelic rock star/porn star look), I am ready for a night on the town. At night Black Rock City really comes alive. Everything lights up like a giant carnival. Monstrous neon eyes hover in the sky. Green laser beams trace messages and designs on the dark faces of distant

mountains. Holiday lights seem to grow on things like moss in a rain-forest. Theme camps offer many degrees of interactivity: a giant 3-D maze with a lounge in the center, spanking machines, acrobatic per-

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formances, booming trance music to dance the night away. People adorn themselves in all manner of glowing, flashing, and sparkling attire. The

scene itself is intoxicating even before I have one drink at any of the many free bars on the Esplanade. Throughout the week the night life gets progressively intense until its climax at the night of the Burn. When I wake up (usually rather late) I engage in a regular morning ritual. I walk right down to the corner of our block, mug in hand, where our friendly neighbors always have fresh coffee and pancakes for anyone passing by. What a wonderful way to connect with the folks who live in and frequent our neighborhood! We talk about the latest rumors, the previous evening's activities, life ... whatever, it doesn't matter. We are all just having this incredible experience together, sharing, letting our guard down a little more than usual, and remembering how to connect with real people again.



FRANK DETLE



FRANK DEITEL

Next door, an eclectic group from Arizona who called themselves “The Temple of Virtual Wisdom,” welcome us regularly to their spacious camp for meals and socializing. Here, God and Mrs. God ask, “Which deity would you like to be this week?” and allow us to choose our persona from a binder of divine beings (complete with name tags). I become Eros, Greek god of love.

Another camp on the other side of the city offered massages. Massage tents are very popular in Black Rock City. In the waiting area for this particular camp, participants were encouraged to bathe each other’s feet in vinegar water (which neutralizes the alkalizing affects of playa dust). This proved such a simple, delightful, and sensual gift to give and receive. I remembered how important it is to touch and be touched.

The night of the Burn, the entire city gathered around the Man. Giant

double-decker art cars guard the outside perimeter of this sea of people. Drummers pounded rhythms for hundreds of fire dancers

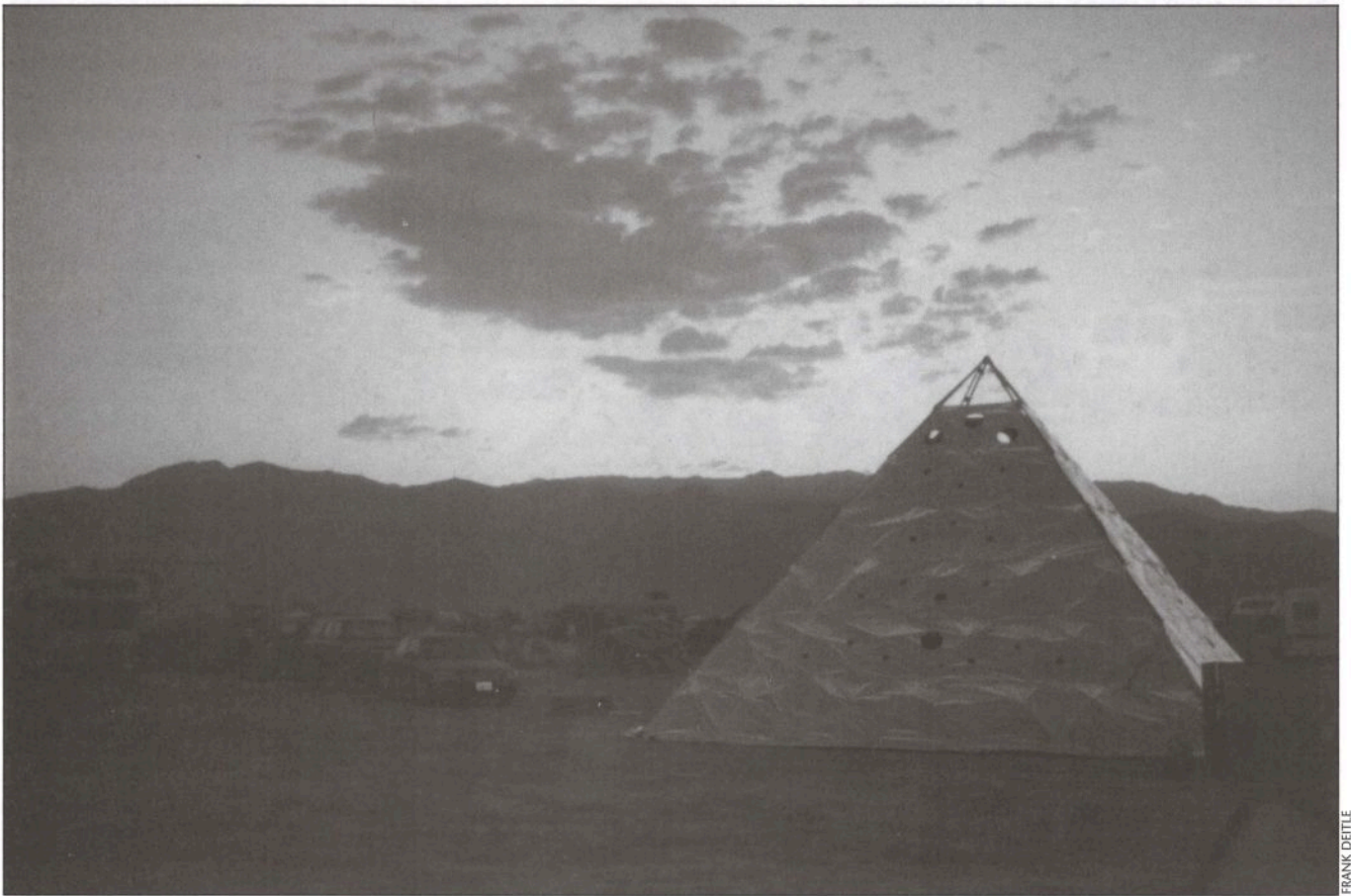
It is an intentional culture of contribution—no vending, selling, or buying of anything is allowed.

around the Man. Anticipation mounted as we talk excitedly to our neighbors. There is a sense of genuine bonding with everyone there. The drumming gets louder ... and then a huge explosion as the Man

ignites! The most spectacular display of fireworks I’ve ever seen ensues. The convection of heat issuing from this enormous burning effigy sent tornado-like dust devils spinning out from the center. Everyone started dancing with abandon and breaking off into hundreds of smaller drum circles.

After some dancing, I sat to meditate amidst the crowd. In my calm, a sweaty young burner approached me, asking for water. I offered my water bottle. After a long deep draw of its coolness, he put his hand on my shoulder, looked me straight in the eye, and gave me the most sincere thanks I think I have ever received. It really touched me. And I contemplate not taking those little things for granted. You always have something to give. There is always the opportunity to connect.

Burning Man gives me an opportunity to explore more of who I am, who I can be, and who I want to be. Who am I as a teacher, student,



FRANK DEITLE

healer, artist, musician, philosopher, performer, lover, and sexual being? Burning Man is an opportunity to explore more of what communities are, what they can be, and what we want them to be. It is an exploration of the relationship between the individual and the group. The community provides the individual with the space to express herself and the individual's journey of personal creative discovery in that space becomes her gift back to community. The most important gift we have to share with each other is ourselves.

The intentional communities movement and the Burning Man event have much to offer each other. Here is a novel opportunity to try new ideas, new ways of relating, and new ways to physically structure a community. If it doesn't work you get to tear it all down and start fresh again next year. And if it does work, you have something to build on. I can envision holding communica-

tion workshops or ecovillage design and permaculture courses with interactive art to help express these ideas. I could even imagine a Fellowship for Intentional Community retreat taking place at Burning Man. Nowhere will you find a larger con-

The drumming gets louder ... and then a huge explosion as the Man ignites!

centration of creative, open-minded individuals. Burning Man is whatever the participants collectively decide it to be. It is the closest I have ever come to a truly democratic and egalitarian society.

My whole body tingles as I recall images of golden sunsets behind

wrinkled brown mountains across the expanse I know as Black Rock City. Haunted by memories of a place that for one week I call home, I reflect on what Burning Man has to teach us all. I still seek my niche, my place in the Burning Man community. I yearn to connect with more people on a deeper level. It occurs to me that the best way to do this is through the act of giving. What you give is what you get. And this compels me to search my depths to discover my unique gifts. Gifting represents for me the true creative potential of our humanity through a sharing in the celebration of Life.

Frank Deitle studied Environmental Studies and Agroecology at Prescott College in Arizona. He is now enrolled in the Iyengar Yoga Institute's Advanced Studies/Teacher Training Program in San Francisco. www.burningman.com.



AMY SOPHIA MARASHINSKY

You Know You Live in Community When . . .

BY VIRGINIA LORE AND MARIL CRABTREE

- You don't have to go to a bookstore to find a good read.
- You can't remember the last time you took the trash out.
- You can always find someone to take you to the airport, watch your pets, water your plants, and eat your brownies.
- Someone's always up for a hike or a hot tub.
- You've talked about world peace, the global economy, and the Bush administration—all before breakfast.
- You know at least one person who has been arrested for demonstrating their beliefs.
- You know what "polyamory" means.
- You feel guilty about your TV viewing habits—if you have any.
- You have to try 14 keys to find the one you want.
- You know a dozen ways to cook tofu.
- Your parenting style regularly comes up for review.
- Your spending habits regularly come up for review.
- There's always something fattening in the kitchen.
- The leftovers are still there only because you hid them in a yogurt tub.
- Laundry day is any day the washer is free.
- You've had to sell your kayak because the community already has two.
- The question "but where will we put it?" plays a big role in your buying decisions.
- Honoring the process is more important than making the decision.
- Deciding when to start planting the community garden requires the negotiation skills of Bishop Tutu.
- You know someone who has carried a grudge since 1972 when the mailboxes were reorganized without consensus.
- You hate to admit it, but you're that person.
- You fantasize more about winning a weekend getaway than about winning the lottery.
- Other people's kids call you "Mommy."
- You know where to go for a hug.

Virginia Lore is a cofounder of Duwamish Cohousing in Seattle, Washington; Maril Crabtree is a cofounder of Hearthaven, an urban community in Kansas City, Missouri. Both have contributed previously to Communities magazine. Virginia is Maril's daughter.

Our “Community Tree”

Describing our Complex Structure to Newcomers (and to Ourselves)

BY WEBB EAVENSON



Author Webb Eavenson (rear) leads wilderness camps for children at Lamborn Valley, like this one, in 2000.

I've lived at Lamborn Valley Community here in a beautiful fruit-farming valley in the Colorado Rockies for 23 years, since I was four. Founded by my grandmother, Lu Vorys, and by my parents, Addie and Greg Cranson, Lamborn Valley is a Christian community of about 25 people. We run an alternative school of about 35 students, a wilderness camp, a 136-acre organic farm, a solar construction company, and a health food store and restaurant.

In our early days we were small enough that a defined structure wasn't really necessary. We worked through tough issues by sitting together praying and talking (probably enough to earn degrees in psychology, communication, philosophy, sociology, government, and theology). However one task was always long and arduous: explaining how things work in our community to newcomers and to our many visitors. On the one hand, describing how we functioned gave us a chance to get to know

new people; on the other hand, we had to do this so often the task became exhausting and emotionally draining. Having grown and developed organically from such simple beginnings, our community had become big and complex with its nine different bank accounts, profit and nonprofit legal entities, individual and communal assets, elders and young adults, and innumerable tasks and responsibilities all intertwined synergistically. We all saw the need to define our vision and structure, not only so that newcomers would know where to fit in, but also to help us make and implement our decisions more smoothly.

We came up with an analogy of a tree with its roots, trunk, branches, and leaves to explain and give visual representation of the many parts of our community. Drawing this tree not only clarified ambiguities, but helped to show community members and shorter-term residents how their work fit into the whole. It especially helped our young people to know that they

belonged. We have four generations in our community. Half of our members are under 21, and our oldest member is 78. The tree analogy bridges the generation gap. It honors the elders, giving them a way to share the things they know with young people.

The tree diagram settled such questions as: Who's in charge here? If things aren't going well, whose responsibility is it and how do we fix it? Where does my job end and yours begin? Where does the wisdom of experience apply? What role does money play? What role ownership of other resources? What is the best balance between service to others and service to ourselves? What keeps the system from becoming rigid and arbitrary?

It can be hard to know which questions or requests require asking the whole group and which can be decided unilaterally. We found that by "mapping" things out on the tree we spend less time questioning each other's motives and have more time for finding solutions that are more in keeping with our community vision and the Holy Spirit. One of our seventeen-year-olds, for example, wanted to grow his own garden but felt constrained because he knew it wasn't his farm. By using the tree diagram he saw that he was more free than he thought; he now has a whole one-acre vegetable garden that we all help in, and he sells organic produce in our store.

We don't really feel that we "invented" the tree analogy, but more like God opened our understanding to what He was doing already in and through us. Now we are feeling more supported, inspired, unified, and free to grow in a variety of directions.

We're happy to be bearing good fruit from this tree!

Using a tree as a metaphor for our community arises from the idea that Nature and its intelligent design has both the freedom to grow and the structure to guide that growth. It's also a living organism and so moves in seasons and cycles, just like our community. We decided to use seven steps, in a repeating cycle, parallel with the growth of a tree, to describe our governing structure.

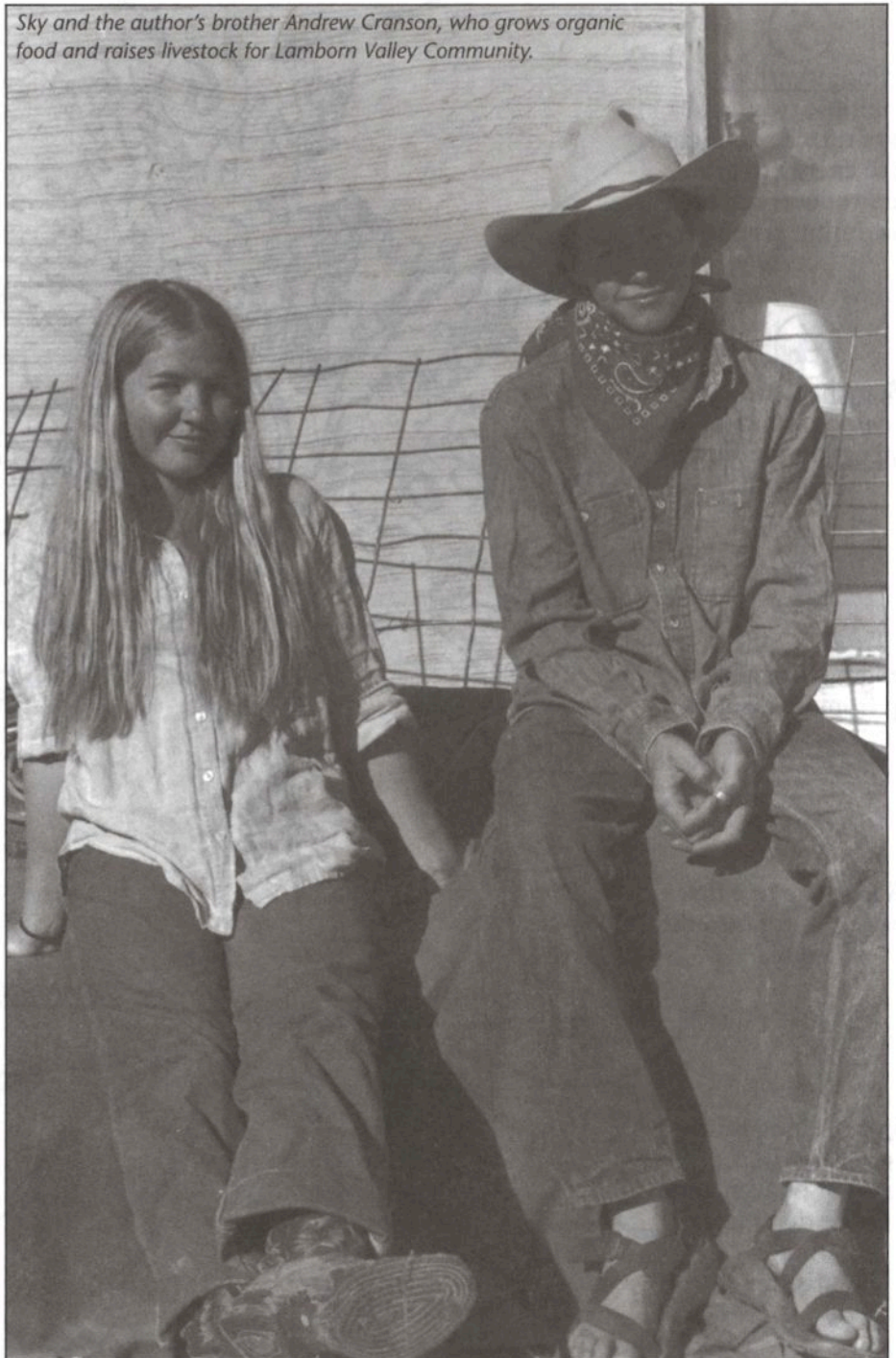
Level One—Roots: Potential. This is the deepest, invisible part of the soul,

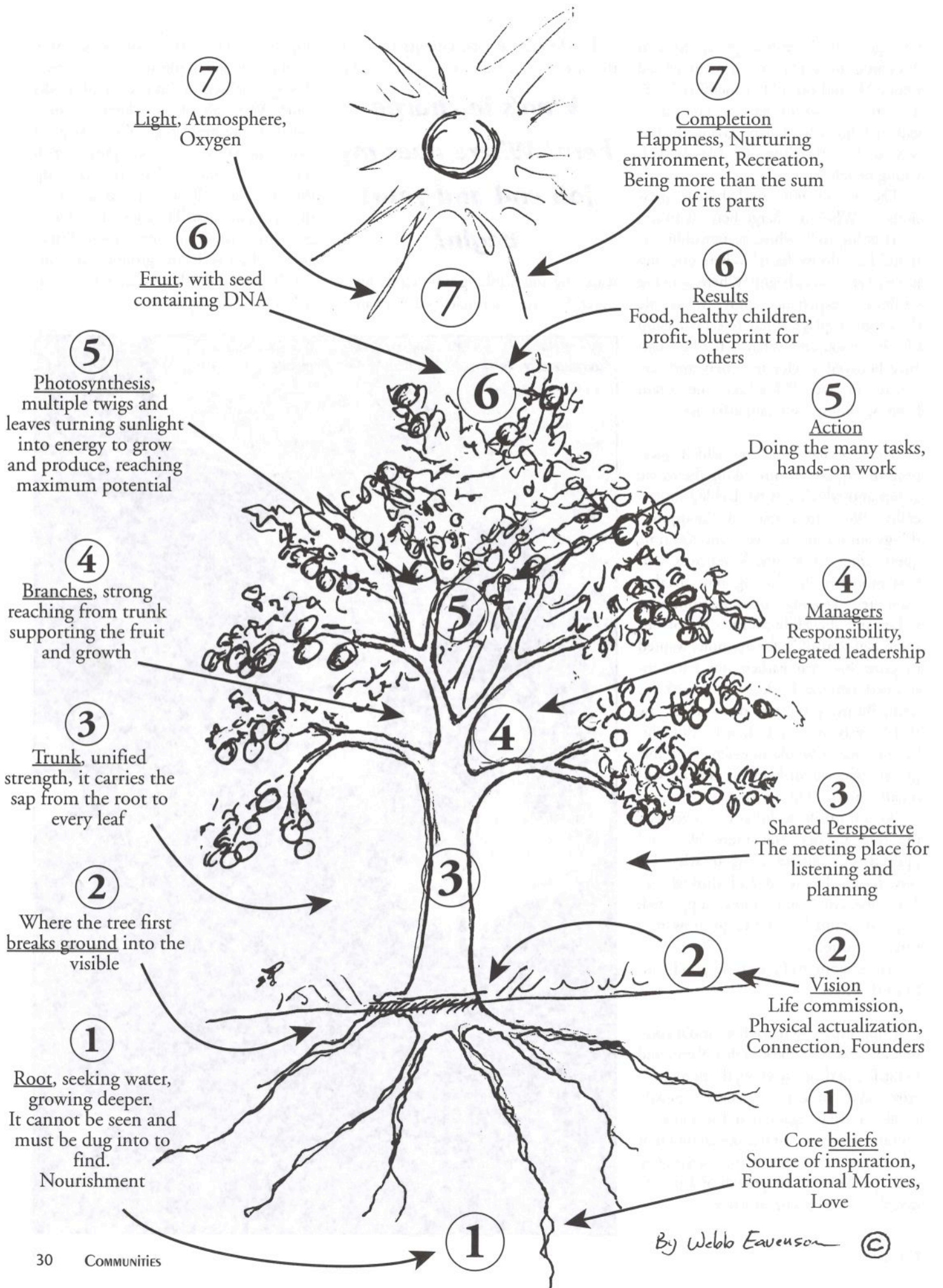
Who's in charge here? Where does my job end and yours begin?

searching and drinking from God's living water. It starts as a single seed, a dream, a

potential. The seed works its way through the soil of life and circumstance, through stillness and prayer. Will it take root? When all of the elements come together, the answer is "Yes" and great trees will grow. The seed grows small roots, and sending its first stem up through the soil, is our community's inherent potential. The roots continue to grow over time, and ever more firmly anchor the tree in the ground, continually drawing nourishment from its potential in God's living water.

Sky and the author's brother Andrew Cranson, who grows organic food and raises livestock for Lamborn Valley Community.





By Webb Evenson ©

Level Two—Seedling breaking through the soil: Manifestation. This is the community purpose becoming manifest in the physical. It is the inherent idea breaking through into the light. It is the foundation, where we find the vision and mission statements and where we honor those who have created a space for our community.

Level Three—Trunk: Perspective, Decisions, Agreements. This is where, with all of the depth of our hearts, gifts, weaknesses, and struggles, we come together as a group. With a strong, unified will to grow, it grows in a single direction as one body. We come together to explore ideas about our community's tasks and projects at Level Three, always in prayer and consensus. Seeking a shared perspective, we try our best to honor each other and keep the unity of the spirit, remembering the Root and what we are commissioned to do at Levels One (Root) and Two (Seedling breaking through soil). Each level is built on and grows out of the level before it. We see Level Three, where the branches come off the trunk, as "Perspective," and "seeing as a whole." It's where we make agreements. We step out from the Trunk and branch out with responsibility.

Level Four—Branches: Projects. We move out from the Trunk and branch into responsibilities with support and encouragement from the unified group at Level Three (Trunk). The shared perspective of Level Three delegates, empowers, anoints, and nourishes those stewarding each Branch (Level Four), or project, of the community. Our Level Four branches are: an organic farm, a school, a natural foods store and restaurant, a wilderness camp, and a solar construction company, all supported by the Level One (Root) belief in community as a way of life, with Jesus as our model.

Level Five—Twigs and Leaves: Work, Activities. From this Level Four (Branch) place of responsibility comes the actual doing of the tasks, the field of Action. It's where everyone in the community jumps in to do the work, whether individually or in teams. It's the level of manifestation and inclusion. The Twigs and Leaves spread out to absorb the maximum amount of sunlight, doing the "work" of photosynthesis, turning light into carbohydrates and growth. This is what builds the physical substance of the tree itself. It's important to note that the sap—communication—flows in both directions. For example, if a person working at Level Five, Twigs and Leaves, has an objection or suggestion for a better way to do something, they can bring it to either Levels Three, Branching

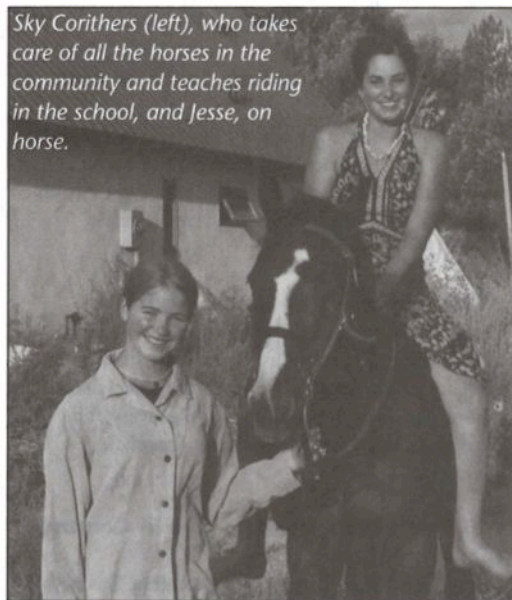
Out from the Trunk (decisions and agreements), or Level Four (individual projects). This allows the incorporation of feedback and ensures the living vitality of the body. A good manager manages "up" as well as "down," and everyone needs to be heard. This is where the children can join the adults in work and the adults join them in play.

Level Six—Fruit: Results of our Labor. These are the Results of our Work, yielding healthy, whole individuals who contribute to each other, to the community, and to the world by living meaningful lives. In our community, the Fruit also means growing good organic food to sell in our store or serve in our restaurant. It's living sustainably. It's raising inspired children. The Fruit shows up in many forms. Some are tangible Fruit—our people, physical health, money from the sale of goods and services. Other Fruit is intangible—our friendships with each other, love and connection, our quality of life, and joy itself.

Level Seven—Fruit returning to Earth: Appreciation, Enjoyment. This is the day of rest. It's appreciation and enjoyment, recreation, or re-creation. It's Fruit ripening and dropping off the tree, delivering its DNA blueprint to the soil and thus nourishing the Roots in Level One or planting seeds of new trees. And it's the atmosphere around the Tree, rich in oxygen, which also nourishes the Roots.

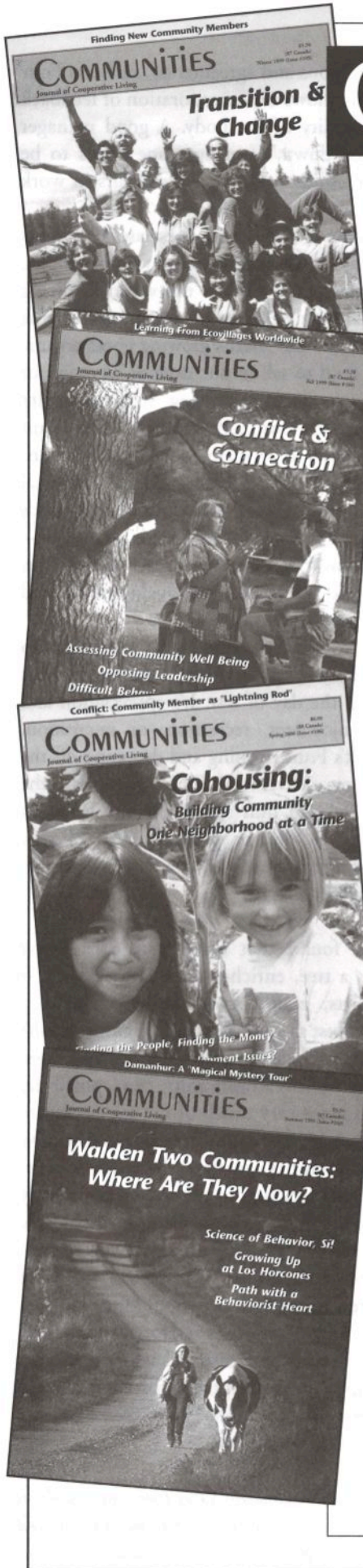
Our community has found that being part of a living organism, envisioned as a tree, enriches the quality of life. It helps us share our hearts, maintain our values, and keep growing toward the light. Just as one tree standing alone doesn't have the energy to change a whole ecosystem, but a forest does, one healthy community can't positively influence very much of the wider culture around it, but a whole network of healthy communities can affect the wider culture. If you're seeking to strengthen and clarify the mission, purpose, roles, and structure of your community, we invite you to consider using an analogy like the Tree. The forest needs many different kinds of trees, but each needs its own strong, supportive, yet flexible structure to keep healthy and thriving. I would be happy to share more information about our Tree analogy with readers who might like to create one for their community (guques@hotmail.com).

Webb Eavenson, 26, has lived in Lamborn Valley Community with his parents and grandmother since the community was founded. Planner and developer of the tree analogy for the group, Webb helps explain and manage it.



Sky Corithers (left), who takes care of all the horses in the community and teaches riding in the school, and Jesse, on horse.

Our tree analogy helps us share our hearts, maintain our values, and keep growing toward the light.



COMMUNITIES

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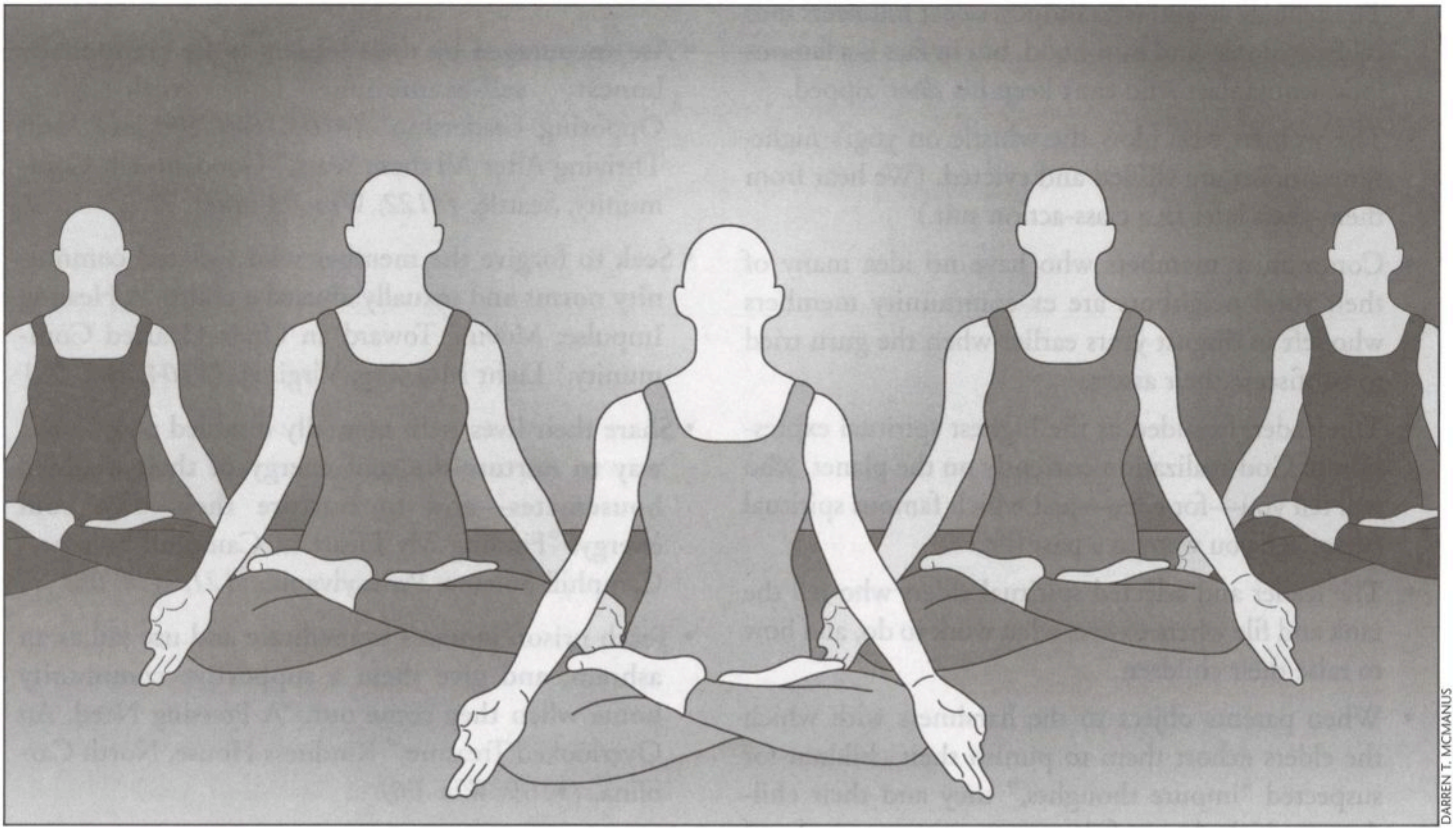
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#124



Avoiding Spiritual Community

Embarrassing admission—I've avoided "spiritual community" as a theme for this magazine during the whole decade I've been editor, since 1994.

Partly it was from impatience—the half-conscious fear we'd get articles that were preachy and self-righteous. Or filled with platitudes. Oozing with treacle.

(But that's *not* what we got. We got humor. We got passion. No pap.)

I'll own up to a deeper, more painful reason for avoiding this topic—there's a lot of crap that can go on in spiritual communities, especially in some led by one

authority figure, or the authority figure and a select few. Editing this issue has helped me see that I've been harboring, for years, really, deep disappointment and anger about spiritual leaders betraying spiritual trust. I want spiritual teachers to be emotionally honest. Devoted to their spiritual Source. Joyous. Humble. Dedicated to service. Impeccable in their integrity. Not hypocritical. Not self-aggrandizing. I don't want them to abhor sexuality and the physical body, or if they do, because it's part of their spiritual tradition, I want their own behavior to be consistent with their values. I don't want them to prey on their devotees.

Consider these community tales ...

- The celibate swami who inducts select followers into celibate monk- and nun-hood, but in fact is a famous local womanizer who can't keep his *dhoti* zipped.
- The women who blow the whistle on yogi's night-time amours are vilified and evicted. (We hear from them years later in a class-action suit.)
- Community members who have no idea many of their rural neighbors are ex-community members who left in disgust years earlier when the guru tried to confiscate their assets.
- The leader, heralded as the highest spiritual expression of God-realization currently on the planet, who will tell you—for a fee—just which famous spiritual personage you were in a past life.
- The leader and selected spiritual elders who tell the rank and file where to live, what work to do, and how to raise their children.
- When parents object to the harshness with which the elders exhort them to punish their children for suspected “impure thoughts,” they and their children are kicked out of the community, stunned and penniless. Their friends and relatives in the community are forbidden to help them or even speak their names again.
- The spiritual teacher who not only drinks to excess but exalts alcoholism as a form of divine *lila* or spiritual wisdom.
- The spiritual leader who gets AIDS and infects some of his followers.

We hear stories like these from ex-members of these communities, and from journalists. Yet ex-members can distort and exaggerate for all kinds of reasons, and some journalists aren't above exaggeration or distortion themselves, just to sell papers. (See #88, Fall '95, “*Intentional Communities and 'Cults'.*”)

And further, what's *my* problem—why so much charge on the subject that I avoid this theme for our magazine for ten years? (Why don't I just get therapy or something?)

Abuses of trust like the above are only a small part of the story. We can find abundant examples of spiritual communities which are generous, honest, and devoted to service. In fact, we've run a decade's worth of stories

about such groups already. Here's a few examples. Consider communities in which members:

- **Are encouraged by their leaders to be emotionally honest, self-examining, and truth-telling.** “Opposing Leadership” (#104, Fall '99) and “Still Thriving After All these Years,” Goodenough Community, Seattle. (#122, Win '03 issue)
- **Seek to forgive the member who violated community norms and sexually abused a child.** “A Healing Impulse: Moving Toward an Open-Hearted Community,” Light Morning, Virginia. (#104, Fall '99)
- **Share their lives with mentally disabled people as a way to nurture the soul energy of their disabled housemates—and to nurture their own soul energy.** “Finding My Heart in Camphill Soltane,” Camphill Soltane, Pennsylvania. (121, Win '03)
- **Teach prison inmates to meditate and use jail as an ashram, and give them a supportive community home when they come out.** “A Pressing Need, An Overlooked Treasure,” Kindness House, North Carolina. (#109, Win '00)
- **Feed the homeless, help earthquake victims, get arrested to stop government policies they consider heinous, or seek peace in the Middle East.** “Risking Jail, Creating Community,” Little Flower Catholic Worker Community, Virginia; “Agents of Goodwill,” The Farm, Tennessee; “Following the Lord ... Into Chicago Politics,” Jesus People USA, Chicago. (#100, Fall '98) “A Spring Day at Tamera,” Tamera, Portugal; and “Pilgrimage at a Desert Monastery,” Deir Mar Musa, Syria. (#123, Sum '04)

You'll meet more emotionally honest, compassionate communities like these in this issue.

So I'm abashed—and I admit, dead wrong—about the quality of articles we got. They're wonderful, as you'll soon see. Egads, we should have run this topic years ago!

Hare Om, Shalom, Blessed Be, Amen—and May the Force Be with You.

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

Just after the break of dawn I hear them. The bells. Their sound has been present every single day since Lama Foundation was begun in 1968 here in Taos, New Mexico. To me, the bells define the reason we are here—to remember. They say it is now morning meditation time, or breakfast time, or practice time, or meeting time. They are always a gentle reminder of where the group mind is focusing right now.

We call Lama Foundation a spiritual community because of our practice of religious traditions and commitment to personal growth. When I mention I live at Lama, people will say, “Oh yeah, you’re Buddhists, right?” Well, not entirely. For 36 years we’ve been investigating how to get high, naturally. Lama was created from the culture in which people like Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert (now Ram Dass), and Meher Baba were influential. The founders, Steve and Barbara Durkee (now Nuradin and Asha, respectively), and Jonathon Altman, had a vision to create a family-oriented monastery for the investigation of “inner space.” Since

then, many of the practices taught and practiced here have included Sufi zikr, Hindu chanting, Native American sweat lodge, Insight Meditation, yoga, Japanese tea ceremony, and other creative practices. These are often taught in retreats, primarily from May to September. Lama was a pioneering effort that became a model for other retreat centers worldwide and gave some internationally known teachers their start. Ram Dass’ renowned ’60s-era bible, *Be*

Here Now, offering instructions for the lay seeker on how to really “get high,” was written and published at Lama. The old bus in which he wrote most of the book is still here and inhabited part-time.

People come from all over the world to share teachings, many of which seep into our curriculum. Many Lama residents believe that personal growth comes from our connection to Spirit, however we perceive it to be, and this sometimes includes suffering. Like a bean in a stewpot, one must simmer until done, thoroughly. Among the ’60s-era communes in the Taos Valley, Lama is the only one to have survived—even through a devastating forest

Rocky

High

Mountain

BY SCOTT THOMAS



The dome at Lama Foundation is often the venue for music and other performances.

BETH GARRICUS

fire—mainly because it wasn't committed to sex, drugs, and rock and roll, but to spiritual practice, karma yoga, and conflict resolution.

However, we're actually high all the time, literally. The 110-acre community is nestled in a mountain forest near the base of Lama Mountain (*lama* is a local Spanish colloquialism for "mud") at 8600 ft. in the southern Rockies. When looking out to the west, with a vast sea of land and sky equally sharing the landscape, one gets the

feeling of being in the Heaven realms, with no other people on Earth.

Lama is unusual among spiritual communities in that no one teacher resides here permanently. The practice of living in community is the real teaching. The resident circle becomes the teacher. Few secrets survive here for long. Our commitment to community process is present in the way we cook, dance, do business, have fun, make decisions, and work. We make all our decisions in business meetings by consensus, and roles in these meetings include a facilitator, heart guardian, and keeper of the heart. The facilitator sticks to the agenda, calls on people, and serves as a servant to the circle. The heart guardian, known to other groups as a "vibes watcher," will ring a bell (there it is again) if the discussion gets too unfocused. The keeper of the heart sits in full meditation for 20 minutes, as disengaged from the discussion as possible, in order to maintain a space of respect and acknowledgment that the "spirit of guidance" is moving the process, not any one individual. We circle for a brief prayer before a group activity like cooking, eating, building, or meetings, acknowledging again our inherent oneness.

Many of us believe that our connection to the physical plane is just as critical as the nonmaterial. The Earth is truly our Mother and we must take care of her. We find the highest form of right livelihood is creating a sustainable way to be on the planet. That includes building with appropriate technologies and earth-friendly materials like passive and active solar energy systems, local lumber, recycled materials, and adobe, straw-clay, and strawbale housing. Every year sees community friends (our "beloveds") returning to facilitate building projects that allow others to learn the skills needed for life, culminating in our popular yearly workshop "Build Here Now." Using biodegradable cleaning products, composting, and recycling helps keep our waste stream clean and to a minimum. We increase our resources, doing more with less, by catching water and watering trees and plants with our greywater. And a lot of focused land restoration has allowed our property to recover wonderfully from a large fire scar, creating an oasis in an otherwise barren high desert environment. Most of our

water flows from a mountain spring. The spring has been depleted at times, but has never failed to be an endless font of life, which gives us the very ability to exist here. It is common to see rabbits, deer, elk, chipmunks, squirrels, mice, skunks, red-tailed hawks, and even bears wander through Lama Central looking for food. Nighttime is often

disturbed by the collective call of a pack of coyotes somewhere in the distance.

***Like the tiny bean in the
stewpot, many of us
depart softer and tastier
than when we arrived.***

We see our outreach as allowing as many seekers as possible to participate. Retreats, hermitages, visitors' open house days, Shabbat meals, and other activities allow friends, new and old, to share in searching for an ever-expanding way to experience reality in the "mystery school." The lines between retreatants, staff, and visitors have blurred a lot in the past eight years, and we are designing our programs to be as inclusive as possible. Even during the winter months a steady though slower flow of visitors are allowed to stay, with an evolving "winter staff" who remain after the busy summer season to help finish projects. Yet sometimes the throngs grow too big for the land or community to support. The residents also go into their own retreats and the doors must close, if only for a while.

An abiding principle of Lama is that all traditions, no matter how old, have a kernel of the truth hidden within the outer forms, and that it is possible for people from different backgrounds and faiths (or no faith) to come together to share the light. Practitioners of faiths usually at odds in the geopolitical realms are inspired to share the space and let go of attachments to "being correct" or "defending the faith" and simply be friendly. Many of us hope that this is a way of inspiring others to do the same, to respect each other and not have to prove that theirs is the "true religion."

Part of the mystery is asking what Lama is really about. Many come to the mountain for various reasons: to learn com-

munity, to practice their path, to visit the grave or *maqubara* of Sufi saint Samuel Lewis, to heal from world-weariness, to enjoy good food, to make new friends or reunite with old ones, to be close to nature, to learn new skills, or to teach what they know. Anyone can arrive and we remain open to the possibility that that seeker could become the next program coordinator, board

member, or kitchen guardian, or take on any other role of responsibility. It seems as if the mountain itself is what decides who comes, who stays, and who goes. It is beyond our small, individual personalities to define what is really going on. We only receive the "transmissions."

The experience can be truly transformational. Like the tiny bean in the stewpot, many of us depart softer and tastier than when we arrived. Hard edges are smoothed. Inner triggers are loosened. Inner light shines just a

little brighter. We go into the world with more gladness, detachment, and optimism, knowing that the mountain will likely be there for us should world-weariness create the need to drink from the well once again. Enduring, life-long friendships are made. The web of connection is expanded. Light is increased in a world obscured by darkness. The candle in the prayer room continues to burn. And the bells continue to ring.

Scott Thomas lives on Lama Mountain in northern New Mexico. He is currently a Contributing Member of Lama Foundation, and a regular contributor to Communities magazine. Lama Foundation: www.lamafoundation.org.

It seems as if the mountain itself is what decides who comes, who stays, and who goes.



MARY NEIKIRK

Why I'm Moving to Findhorn

BY IRWIN WOLFE ZUCKER

I'm a native New Yorker. I am cynical about everything, including the Findhorn Community in Scotland. Yet for 25 years I've returned every few years as a visitor, and each time I visit Findhorn I experience what I'd call my Higher Power taking over. I fill out and I am at my best.

Let me tell you why.

Findhorn has stayed away from leaders. Since the three founders—Eileen Caddy, Peter, Caddy, and Dorothy MacLean—stepped down, Findhorn has governed itself through consensus and a management body. True, not a whole lot gets done very quickly (I am being tongue in cheek here), but isn't that the secret of democracy? "He who rules least, rules best."



FINDHORN FOUNDATION



Converted whisky-barrel homes in Findhorn's ecovillage.

teaching relationships with each other. The brushing against each other cleans up scruffiness, fills out pockmarks, polishes, and adds knowledge. It is direct. It is a psychological level of education. Meditation can do this also, but I believe work groups are quicker.

Working with Nature. Findhorn believes in an underlying structure and intelligence, in working with Nature and the "invisible kingdoms." Their gardens thrive without commercial fertilizers and pesticides. Where do the bugs and rabbits go?

People self-guide. Although there is a requirement to go through the introductory "Experience Week," after that members and guests are on their own. No elder pontificates.

Learning by experience. Experiential learning leaves it up to "Spirit." There is also meditation, introspection, reading, working together (which counts for a lot), community ritual, the arts, and "oversight" (see below).

No formal methods. Findhorn has no written doctrine, no meditation style, no "spiritual leaders," and no doctrinal methods or disciplines for achieving spiritual growth.

Group work structure. Working in groups puts groups of people into



Inside Findhorn's Nature Sanctuary.

FINDHORN FOUNDATION



May Day celebration on the Community Village Green.

FINDHORN FOUNDATION

"Oversight" or magic. What do you call, or how do you explain, a higher level of consciousness manifesting itself in such a way that everyone feels it? The mission at Findhorn is growing people. That I can see by visiting. Experience Week guests usually leave on a high. Coincidences happen frequently and consistently enough for me to have no way to explain it. When you've felt what I have, you don't argue with it. This may be why Findhorn members tend to be so modest.

I feel like a lantern when I visit. My wife says she doesn't believe I am still so positive about the community after all these years.

Irwin Wolfe Zucker, M.S.W., is retiring and moving to The Findhorn Community this fall. He has been the Connecticut "Resource Person" for the Findhorn Foundation since 1980.



On the Edge

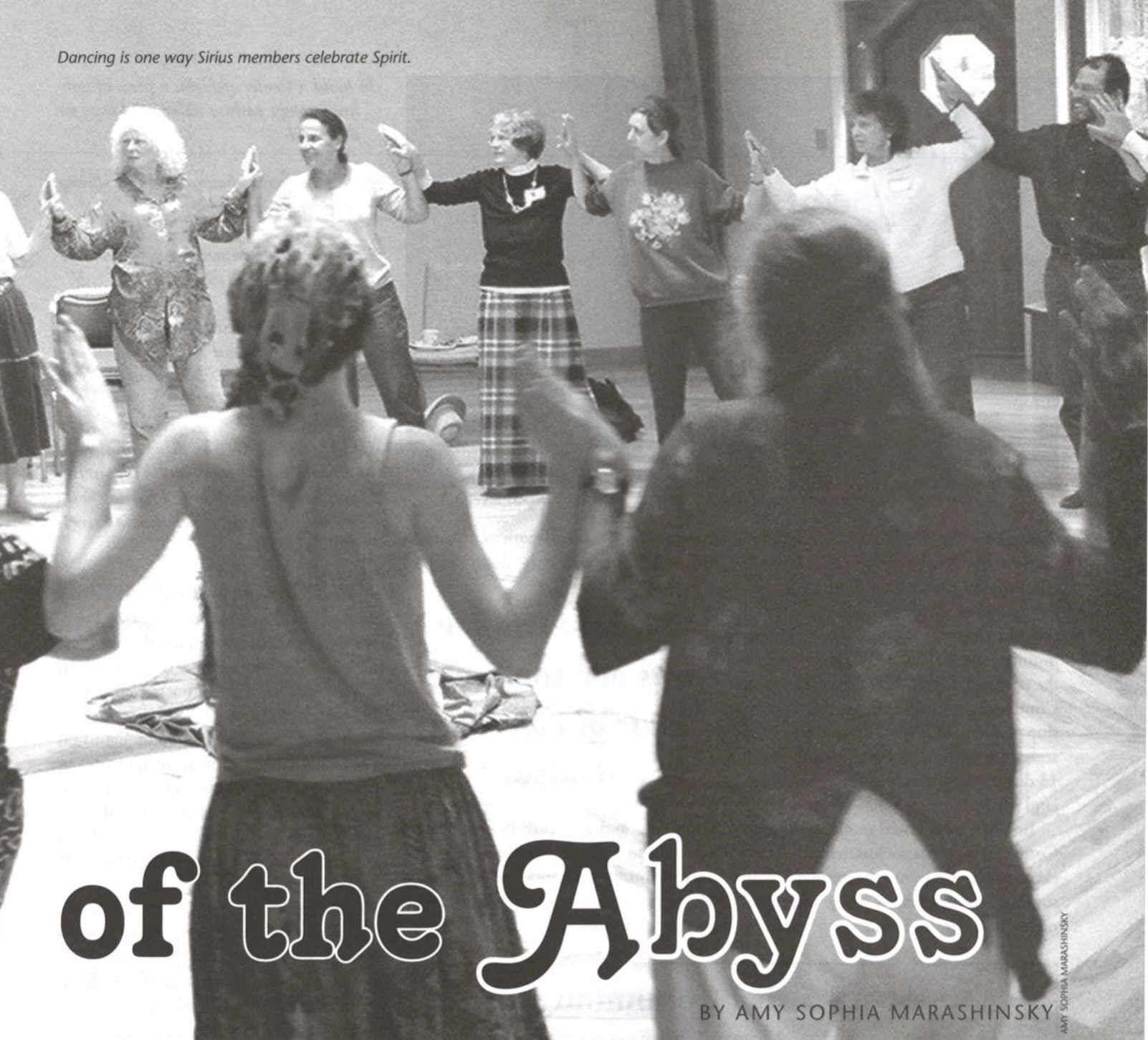
In 1992 I left my two-bedroom, rent-stabilized apartment in New York City in search of the right place for me to live. It was a leap year, as I recall, and I leapt.

Prior to my leap, I was part of an eclectic spiritual group in the city. We didn't live together, but we did gather at the full moon, go on short retreats,

and create events for the solstices and equinoxes—and I wanted more. I wanted to live in nature, in community, with spiritually ecological people whom I resonated with, and whose main focus in life was their spiritual path.

The main impetus for seeking spiritual community was the growi

Dancing is one way Sirius members celebrate Spirit.



of the Abyss

BY AMY SOPHIA MARASHINSKY

AMY SOPHIA MARASHINSKY

I had experienced in my New York City group. I had had a taste of the Grail and now thirsted to quaff the whole cup. That was the first time I had ever been with a group of people who held each other's evolution as important and actually focused on it and made it a priority. Because of

Here it all was, my dream!

the safety provided by a spiritual focus, I was able to bring out into the open more of myself, the pieces that had been hidden for fear they wouldn't be accepted. I directly experienced the power for positive change in a group of spiritually aligned individuals.



AMY SOPHIA MARASHINSKY

Community members enter an attunement process before beginning business meetings.

After two incredible and challenging years working with the group I knew it was time for me to leave New York City, my home of 17 years, and move on. I thought that if I wanted spiritual community I would have to buy the land and do it all myself (I had never heard of Communities magazine or the Fellowship for Intentional Community). My search for community included living in 13 different places across three New England states.

In 1997 I was elated to discover Sirius Community in Massachusetts. What first excited me were my encounters with some of the members. They impressed me with their love and deep commit-

ment to their spiritual path. The sense I had when I was with them was of

At times I felt like I was one enormous mass of quivering shadow.

belonging, and a feeling that they were part of the spiritual family I had been unconsciously searching for—especially when I considered Sirius Community's mission and purpose:

To build a Center of Light, a place of spiritual energy, positive vision, and hope for the world.

To be a nonprofit educational center, offering programs for the public.

To support the spiritual growth of community members and visitors.

To honor the presence of God/Divine within each person and within all life, and to see everyday life as our spiritual teacher.

To be a center for the demonstration of attunement to nature, and a cooperative and ecologically-based lifestyle; with organic gardening, recycling, and energy-efficient building.

Here it all was, my dream! Now I didn't have to found a community myself. I consider spiritual community the fast track to evolution. And Sirius is a Center of Light. And ... light attracts darkness. I believe one's personal "darknesses"—the places that need healing—are brought into the Light by visiting, living, or apprenticing at Sirius. During my first three years here all my wounded places appeared and were right in my face. At times I felt like I was one enormous mass of quivering shadow. At other times I was extremely happy to have spiritual family, a group of people I deeply resonated with who supported my spiritual growth unconditionally. Now, after five years, I feel immense gratitude for the gift of being able to live here at Sirius.

Personal growth has never been easy for me. I think that in order for humans to grow we have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to the edge of the abyss—and even fall over the abyss—until we decide to change. Now, thanks to Sirius, I can reside on the edge of the abyss. I've even built a house here.

Two of Sirius' Founding Principles are especially important to me.

We honor the Divine Presence in each person and in all of life.

Everyday life is our spiritual teacher, and we are committed to resolving any con-

About Sirius Community

Sirius Community is located on 90 acres of meadow and woodland in Shutesbury, Massachusetts, and today has 25 adults and eight children. The community was founded in 1978 by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, former members of Findhorn Community in Scotland. Corinne and Gordon received guidance in meditation to purchase the property, and did so along with the other two cofounders, Bruce Davidson and Linda Reimer. The name Sirius was also received in meditation. Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky, has been described in esoteric writings as the source of love and wisdom for our planet.

Sirius members meet weekly to make decisions, share insights about their spiritual growth, and work through conflicts. Many live in natural-built, passive-solar homes. Some live off the grid. They honor a common spiritual essence, yet many follow diverse spiritual paths, including those of the Findhorn Foundation, Yogananda, Sai Baba, Alice Bailey, David Hawkins, Wicca, shamanism, the Course in Miracles, various Native American traditions, and so on. Their literature reads, "Sirius is committed to honoring the highest principles common to all religions."

—Editor

Sirius Community's Meditation for Healing and Peace

Find a time and a place when and where you will not be disturbed. Sit comfortably with your spine straight. Let go of all thoughts of the day or present situation. Focus your attention on your heart chakra (located in the center of your chest in the region of your heart). Now breathe in and out of your heart chakra. After doing this for some time, breathe love in and out of your heart chakra. Give yourself completely over to this experience.

Now focus your attention on your third eye, or sixth chakra located between your eyebrows. Allow yourself to listen and be totally present in the moment. Next, see, sense, or feel your entire being filling with Light. Focus on breathing in and out, with a balance between the head and the heart, Divine love and spiritual Light.

As you go deeper into this experience of love and Light, see, sense or feel the presence of your soul. Then allow yourself to merge with it. Now invoke those Higher Beings who guide and overlight the evolutionary purposes of our planet (Christ, Buddha, Allah, the Force, God, Great Spirit, the Goddess, or any other spiritual presence that you feel aligned to).

Allow the energy of Spirit to flow through your heart and mind out into the world and world situations that are greatly in need of healing, upliftment, or transformation. Continue to hold this focus for the duration of your meditation time.

As you bring your meditation to a close, see yourself continually filled with Light, love, and peace as you go about your day.

Any prayerful meditation done in this way adds to the healing of our world.

—Amy Sophia Marashinsky and Bruce Davidson



Sirius is currently home to 25 adults and eight children.

on those days when I am feeling sorely pressed or when I'm out of harmony with another community member. After all, I tell myself, there would be more time for my own work, if I wasn't living here. I must admit, though, that these thoughts are never more than the merest firefly flickers. Deep down I know I can live in no better place for my own spiritual path. When I look at the world situation, I see clearly that humanity is at a spiritual-ecological crisis point. So for me, the fast track to evolution—living in spiritual community—seems the only sane choice.

Amy Sophia Marashinsky is author of *The Goddess Oracle* (Element Books, 1997). Her jobs at Sirius community include housing focalizer, and editor of the community's quarterly newsletter, *The Attunement*. www.amysophia.com; info@amysophia.com. www.siriuscommunity.org.

flicts that arise with other members of the community.

One of the ways we resolve conflicts is by taking responsibility for our piece in creating them. Often we choose to see the conflict as occurring in our ego or personality (rather than happening "to" us), giving us yet another opportunity for soul growth.

Service is a key component of the spirituality here. Many spiritual traditions declare: "Service is love made visible." At Sirius, we aspire to treat our guests as the Divine. We also try to apply Findhorn co-founder Peter Caddy's axiom: "Love what you do and

who you are with." For me, as an author—which is a pretty reclusive lifestyle—Sirius affords me many opportunities for service, which brings

I know I can live in no better place for my own spiritual path.

me great joy. Some of my favorite ways of serving are mediating conflicts and sitting with and helping people in psychological or spiritual need.

Sometimes, though, I wonder whether I should be living someplace else, especially



Author Amy Sophia Marashinsky.



“Truth Practice,” Intimacy, and Social Justice

PETER GOLDBERG

Author Parke Burgess (second from left) in the meditation hall at Providence Zen Center.

In November 2001, I made the firm decision to become a monk, and was furious about it. The events of September 11 and its ugly aftermath drove me to a monastic despair. Forced to accept that I lived in a world mired in falsehood and foolishness, startled awake from an American dream that seems innocent enough but turns out to be built on a toxic foundation of madness and greed, the life of a monk seemed the only possible path. I gave away most of what I owned. I quit my job. I moved across the country to Providence Zen Center.

Throughout my stay in the monastery I grieved fiercely. I grieved my own loss of innocence, and I grieved for a world paralyzed and imperiled by violence and fear. After several deep, beautiful months at the monastery, however, I chose to return to the secular world. I still was, and remain, a monk of a kind. I lead a secular life, to be sure, but my whole intent remains distinctly monastic. I daily rededicate myself to the

service of all beings. I eschew money, products of our commercial culture, and self-serving lies.

I went into the monastery a well-meaning, liberal-minded, despairing, aspiring Zen monk; I emerged a spiritually radical, secularly monastic, brightly hopeful Zen revolutionary. That's when I decided to join the Emma Goldman Finishing School (formerly Beacon Hill House), an income-sharing activist community in Seattle.

I entered the monastery, at least in part, to clarify the relationship between spiritual practice and social change. I joined Emma's to bring my newly wrought understanding into actual practice in the world. I came to realize that changing the world, living in community, and doing spiritual practice are not three different things. Actually, they are the same thing. Now, I don't mean that they are always the same thing no matter what; in practice, in fact, those three efforts often seem to pull in different

BY PARKE BURGESS

directions. But if we do somehow manage to balance and harmonize activism, community life, and spiritual practice—then we know we're living a meaningful life. And, conversely, if any of those three elements are in discord, or missing altogether, then we're probably making some kind of mistake.

In activism we try to change the broad structures of the world; in communal living we practice human relationship; and in spiritual work we aim to clarify the mind. These three classes of action plot the spectrum of human endeavor from the public, to the intimate, to the private. Our actions flow outward into the world from the privacy of our minds, through the intimacy of our relationships, into the public arena of social policy and practice; and the realities of the broader external world shape our intimate relationships, and influence our thoughts and feelings to our deepest, most private, core. That's why it is

impossible to divorce any of these elements of the human experience from the others. Just as we have one life to live, we have one project in that life: and that project includes everything.

A person can't sit Zen for long without discovering that the very source of our troubles lies in the thick of billions of synapses firing impulsively—causing and reacting to a hot brew of hormones raging through our veins—all framed by the heaviness of our fear of impending death. Depressing, I know, but inescapable. The folly of most of what passes for a human life lies in the attempt to escape the inevitability of our demise, and to justify the chaos of our thinking and emotions with lofty-sounding but lame fairy tales. And, lest we think this is a private matter between ourselves and our hormones, these fairy tales turn out to be the very same ones we use to justify our lust for power and our oppression of the less fortunate. The whole mess of our stratified and violent society is born in that private realm, the mind. Until I quell the injustices I inflict within myself, poverty will accost the world; and until I calm the wars raging in my own soul, I'm unable to make peace on the land.

So, spiritual practice involves tending the seeds of our actions in the world, seeds planted deep within the mind. Though different religions use very different languages and metaphors to explain this work, the heart of every authentic practice I have encountered amounts to this: just see what's true. That kind of practice I call "truth practice." And, as it turns out, this practice does not involve planting some new kind of seed called "truth;" rather, it's about thinning the weeds of falsehood that spring up everywhere, willy-nilly.

Reflexively, we add things to our experience that we simply invented. All of us do it constantly, day and night. We add thinking that has nothing to do with reality (like when we worry about events in the future that will never take place); and we add emotional energy to our experience (when, for instance, we allow a natural response of anger to putrefy into resentment). The process of addition

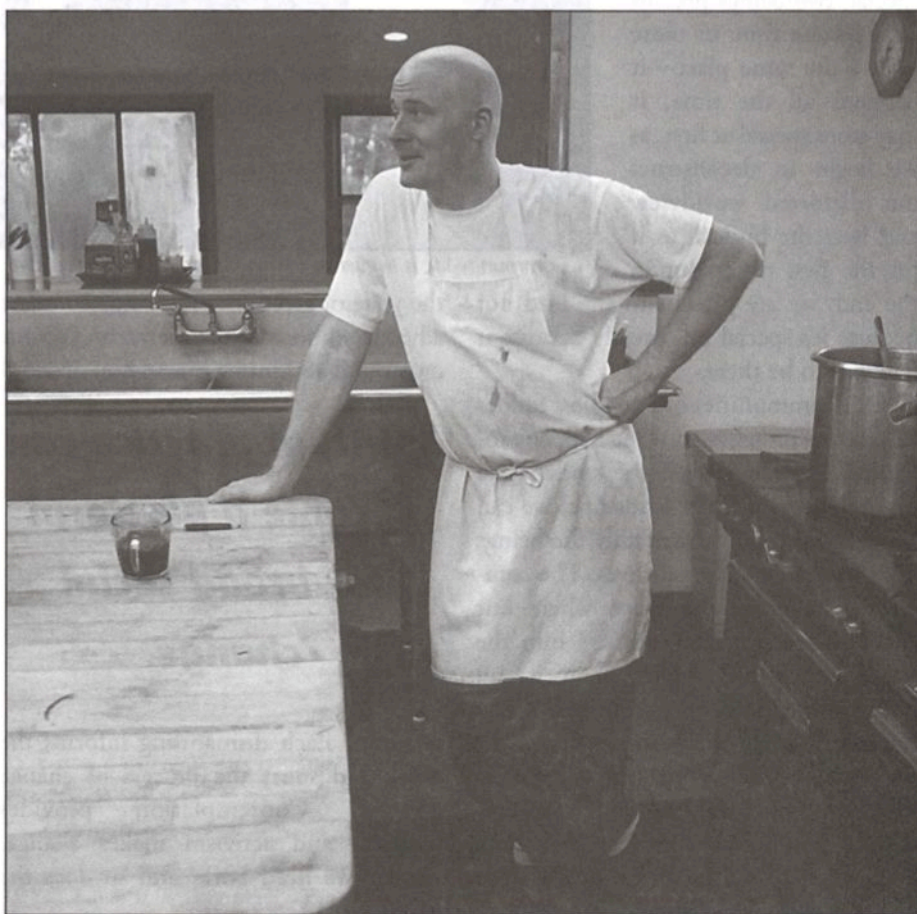
begins, I believe, in the human tendency to privilege our preferences. When we want something, it gets extra weight in our worldview; or when we strongly don't want something, that sentiment of repulsion also gets extra weight. This weighting, different for each of us, distorts our very perceptions. We tend not

The whole mess of our stratified and violent society is born in that private realm, the mind.

to see what we wish were not true, but substitute (or add) exactly what we had hoped to see. We arrange our mental landscape around the terrain of likes and dislikes, creating gravitational forces that exist only in our minds, not in the world of real things.

This strategy causes endless trouble because it fosters a subjective image of reality sharply dissonant with the world as it actually is. As a consequence, we experience constant collisions between our image of the world and the real world itself. In this way, we introduce a great deal of unnecessary suffering. In modern times, this strategy threatens to undermine the human experiment entirely. The accretion of thousands of generations of distortion presses down upon humankind, made all the more perilous by the past few centuries' explosion in technological capacity. The sheer density of what we add to our perceptions has become so great, the very biosphere that supports us has begun to crumble under its weight.

Consequently, the practice of truth must necessarily be one of subtraction. We learn to release our attachment to our preferences, and to clear the lens with which we perceive the world of the dust and grease of our fears and greed. Then, the truth can appear without distortion. Then, if we want to improve the world,



The author during a cooking shift at Providence Zen Center.

PETER GOLDBERG

our clarity of perception allows us to act in the exact way that offers the best chances of success. So, in the deepest possible way, the spiritual practice of truth is a revolutionary project. We dismantle the hierarchies of preference right at the source, at the moment of perception. And we abolish the mental habits of privilege, wherein certain ideas and emotions reflexively carry greater weight than others.

When a bird sings, we no longer neglect it because the song is indifferent to our fate; but begin really to hear it. In this way, we and the bird connect; we experience our inter-relatedness; and, if you'll pardon the expression, we become one. But I've already said too much, as if something special happens between the bird and us. This would privilege the experience, making the same fundamental error (but in reverse) that we make when we neglect the bird's song. Our relationship with the bird is not special; two beings present at the same time in more or less the same place—it happens all the time. It may seem special at first, as we begin to deconstruct our distorted worldview and hear the birdcall as if for the first time. But in the end, we are present to the bird not because it's special but merely because it happens to be there.

Our communities offer endless fodder to practice presence to what-happens-to-appear. As we overcome the tendency to distort our own inner landscape, we can begin to encounter more fully the beings with whom we share our lives. The community becomes the place where our spiritual practice first ventures into the world of culture, which in turn can become a platform for broad social change. The ideals which we dream for the whole world, we practice in community. But these ideals will only take root in our community life after they have been planted and nurtured in the deep and rich soils of the mind.

Activism and contemplation must meet, become friends, fall in love, and work it out. Activism without contem-

Activism and contemplation must meet, become friends, fall in love, and work it out.

plation is nothing but a struggle for power. Contemplation without activism is little more than escape. We must break



Community life is livelier at Emma Goldman Finishing School in Seattle.

the yoke of greed (the lust to accumulate advantage) both in the hierarchies of our own mind and in the hierarchies of social

Spiritual practice can become a platform for broad social change.

relations. Each dismantling informs the other and spurs the process of change onward. Contemplation provides wisdom, and activism makes change. Clearly we need both, and so does the world.

I live at the Emma Goldman Finishing School because there activism can become intimate. And at the deeper reaches of intimacy, whether we call it by name or not, we experience the truth together: the inevitability of death and, so, of loss; our fears; and the almost indomitable human instinct for joy. Our community is the place where our public and private lives intersect: where our collective struggle to forge a meaningful way of life unfolds.

As a house full of activists, we experience many aspects of social change more or less together. We encounter not only each other's actions but, in ever-deepening ways, each other's minds. In sharing our lives, we admit the riot of our synapses, hormones and deepest fears into the fabric of our experiment to make a better world. Here, we cannot pretend that the state of our minds has nothing to do with our ability to shape the world, because it effects how we cook a meal, get through a torturous house meeting, or paint our trim. We don't merely draft vision statements, or wave angry signs in the streets, or write impassioned essays—we are inventing models of a better world in our living room, developing the skills to navigate them in our kitchen, and living and falling in love and breaking up and giving birth and aging and dying, all at the same time.

This is the real work of change.

Parke Burgess has practiced Zen for a decade and now works full time as an environmentalist. The Emma Goldman Finishing School is a member of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, where spiritual work is valued but not a core part of the mission. Parke's website is www.things-asis.net. Emma Goldman Finishing School: www.egfs.org.

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

BY ENRIQUE HIDALGO

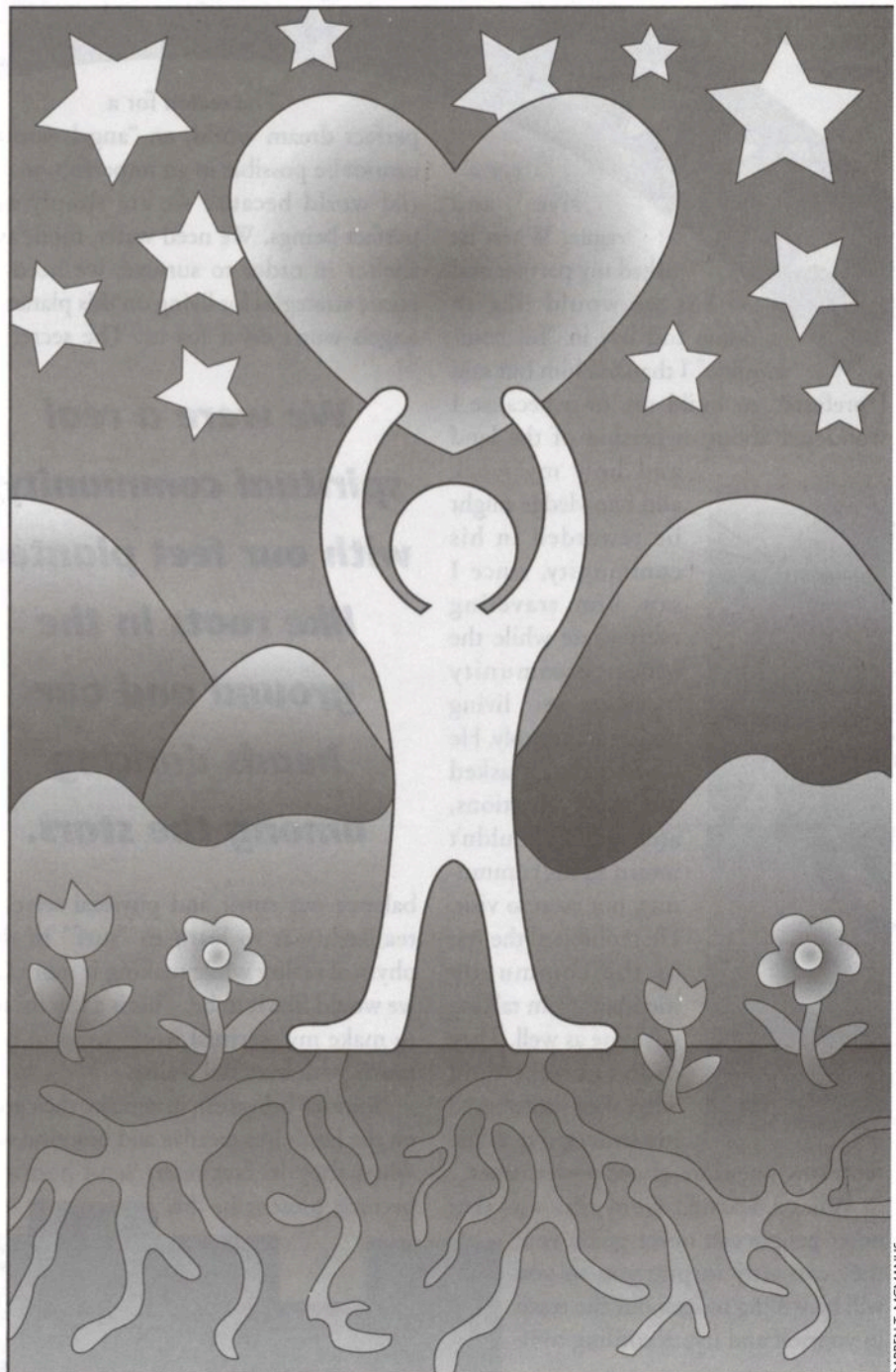
Spiritual Beings, Material World

I am currently living in the most spiritual down-to-Earth community I could ever imagine, Quilla Tunari Ecovillage and El Poncho Eco Center in Bolivia. Let me tell you why I say this.

As a child in Bolivia I soon realized my world was not the same world as that of the rest of the kids in my class. I felt different. I wondered if I wasn't from this planet, but from somewhere else in the universe. My interests ranged from hypnosis to UFOs, from the Bermuda triangle to ancient Egypt. My first English instructor became my first spiritual teacher—a Gnostic lady who taught me how to get out of my body and travel in the astral dimension. Later other unusual people entered my world and taught me. I was a silent kid moving lots of energy inside my own world—living always two meters above ground.

Later I became aware of human activity in the planet and saw how humans were destroying their own habitat. As I had been living in an angel-like world, I reacted with disgust to this. Forests being burned, pollution everywhere, war and destruction—world leaders and heads of state were creating hell for all of us and we passively let them do it. I couldn't stand this situation and began dreaming about a different, better world. When I went to university, my studies in agricultural economics were deceiving because they taught me only how to efficiently take as many resources as possible from the planet to make a profit, with no mention of how to respond creatively to the damages money-making ventures were causing to our common home.

One night I was instructed by a dream on how to proceed. I saw a circular building



DARREN T. MCMANUS

and a community of people living in it. When I woke up I drew that building, and that dream symbol of community became the shooting star I would later follow.

A few years later I met a man who described himself as an Andean shaman. He and his followers lived in a spiritual community on land he owned, and he offered to give me spiritual guidance. He made it clear that he knew far more than I, and offered information and advice about most subjects. Yet when I asked a tough existential question, he became

e v a -
sive and
vague. When he
asked my partner and
I if we would like to
come and live in "his
community," I thanked him but said
I preferred to build my own because I
wondered about ownership of the land
and how my work
and knowledge might
be rewarded in his
community, since I
saw him traveling
everywhere while the
other community
members were living
poorly and simply. He
replied that I asked
too many questions,
and said I shouldn't
return to his commu-
nity, not even to visit.
He prohibited the rest
of the community
members from talking
with me as well. They
didn't understand
why; they just obeyed
his orders. I'd asked
too many questions about power issues.

What I learned from this was that other people can never guide you; they can only inspire you so you will be willing to seek out the truth in yourself and live according to it.

I came to realize that spiritually oriented people usually seek a dream world that is far better than the painful real world that surrounds us—a world full of harmony, where love and care fill all the gaps and nothing disruptive occurs. But they don't find this easy to manifest. Materially oriented people, on the other hand, operate very well in material reality and reach their material goals much more easily than spiritually oriented people.

The search for a perfect dream world, an "angel world," cannot be possible in an imperfect, material world because we are simply not perfect beings. We need water, food, and shelter in order to survive; we need to create strategies for living on this planet—angels won't do it for us. The secret to

***We were a real
spiritual community,
with our feet planted
like roots in the
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heads dancing
among the stars.***

balance our spirit and physical selves, I realized, was to learn to "surf" in this physical reality while making it more like we would like it to be. This is a key for me to make my spiritual world work in harmony with material reality.

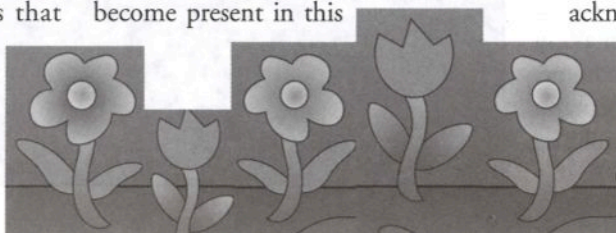
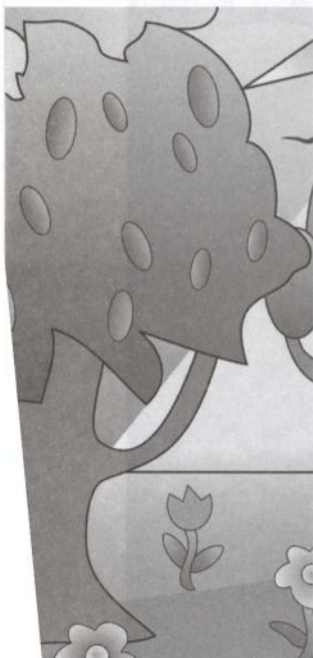
Spiritual beings can materialize their goals on the Earth in a creative and beautiful way when they in fact really land here and become present in this

reality, rather than trying to escape into a dream world.

In order to find our truth, we must seek from the inside out, not the outside in. This means that any guru or shaman is just another human being, evolving through his or her limitations. Such people can only inspire us with their example, but the truth will be present from within our own spirit. Consider how we often give away our power to others and limit ourselves to being spectators or followers, whether of economic, political, spiritual, and even envi-

ronmental gurus. We create situations in which we no longer decide anything ourselves because we have given our power over to "authorities." This is what is happening in the world today and it is exactly what happens in most spiritual sects which form intentional communities. Politicians decide for us, gurus decide for us, teachers decide for us. But I believe it is in our power to decide our own future. If we let our own power shine from within, we will inspire others; if we are able to connect our spiritual reality with material reality, we will probably become balanced individuals capable of visualizing our future and succeeding in whatever we choose to envision.

I was always attracted to the Yin Yang symbol, showing the dynamic movement of the white on the black, and the black on the white. This symbolizes for me the perfect balance between spirit and matter, because we are exactly that—spiritual beings inside a material body, capable of sensing the most marvelous feelings. Seeking to become light beings is to me the acceptance that darkness exists. The more light we seek, the more we are acknowledging the darkness, and darkness is nothing but the other side of light. For me "darkness" is the material world, nature, the many spiritually oriented



want to deny—our physical reality. Nature's creatures kill in order to eat; we have an appetite for the physical and society's taboos about it. Our "dark side" wants to be explored, because it is our connection with the material world—that is why we fear it the most.

Because of these realizations, I decided to become a professional designer of sustainable systems and give all my love to my work, and to all the people who crossed my path. Thus Quilla Tunari Ecovillage and El Poncho Eco Center have become my home. Here there are no gurus, no shamans, but rather families who work together and respect one another. We work hard every day and are committed to healing the planet by working in this material reality. When we have problems we try to solve them because we know that perfection exists only in our minds—as friends, as brothers and sisters, as neighbors.

When we started three years ago we had not yet created a sense of bonding or connection, but I was amazed the other day, when El Poncho Eco Center decided to build a roof for an elderly lady in the village with three grandchildren to feed. The ecovillagers worked until five p.m. as

usual, but they came back an hour later and kept on working on their own until midnight to finish the roof. It brought tears to my eyes. The Eco Center was not paying the extra hours, but the spirit of community created a spiritual bond which I hadn't seen until that day. It showed that with no leaders, no rules, and no payment, but only a great desire to

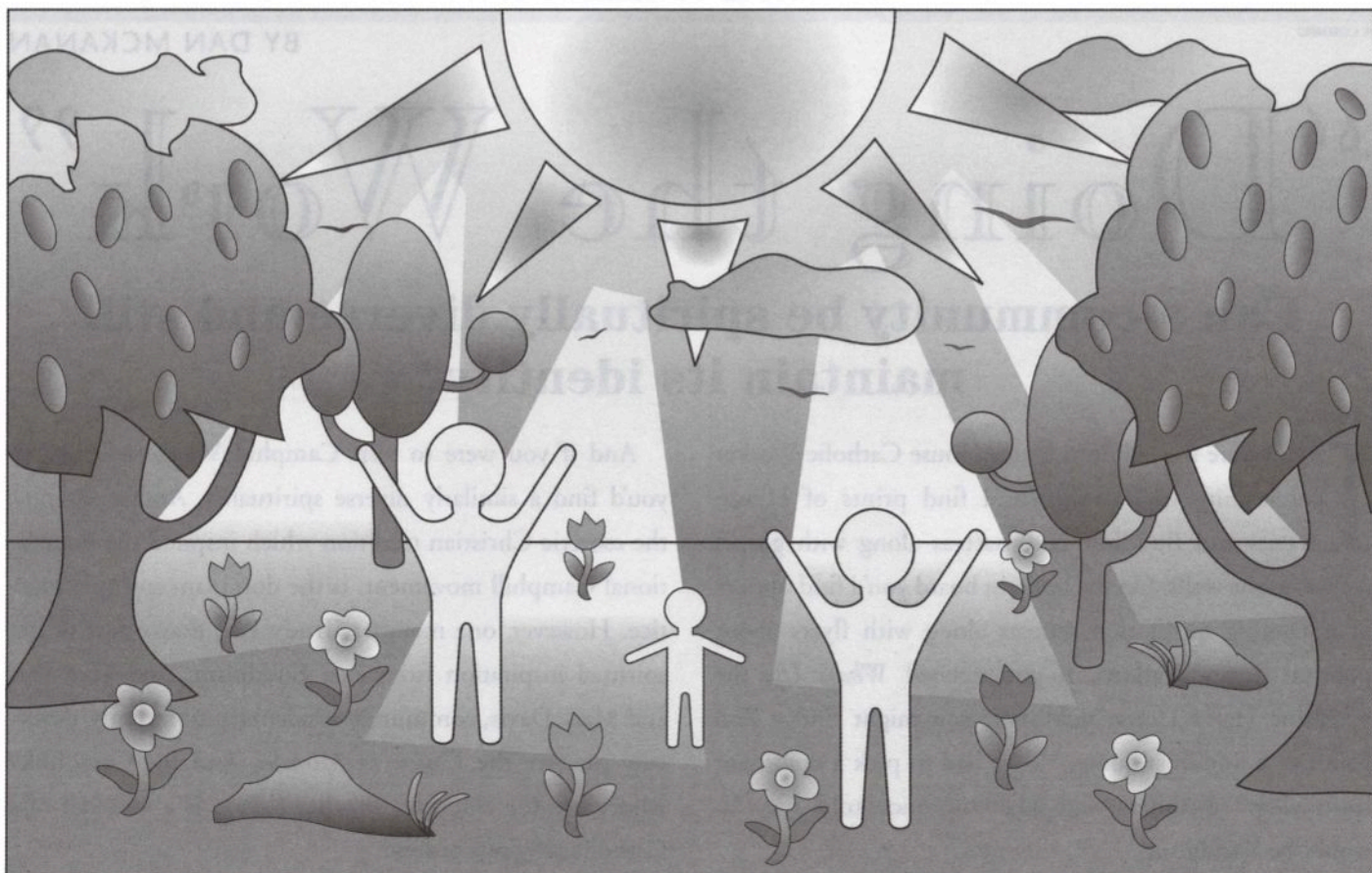
***I felt that God
inhabited my body,
that angels showed
me the path.***

work together and help someone, we were a real spiritual community, with our feet planted like roots in the ground and our heads dancing among the stars. That day we worked until the roof for the children was finished; we had managed to unite our spiritual goals with our material tasks. For a few hours that day I felt that God inhabited my body, that angels showed me the path. Still, we were more than angels, since as immaterial beings they

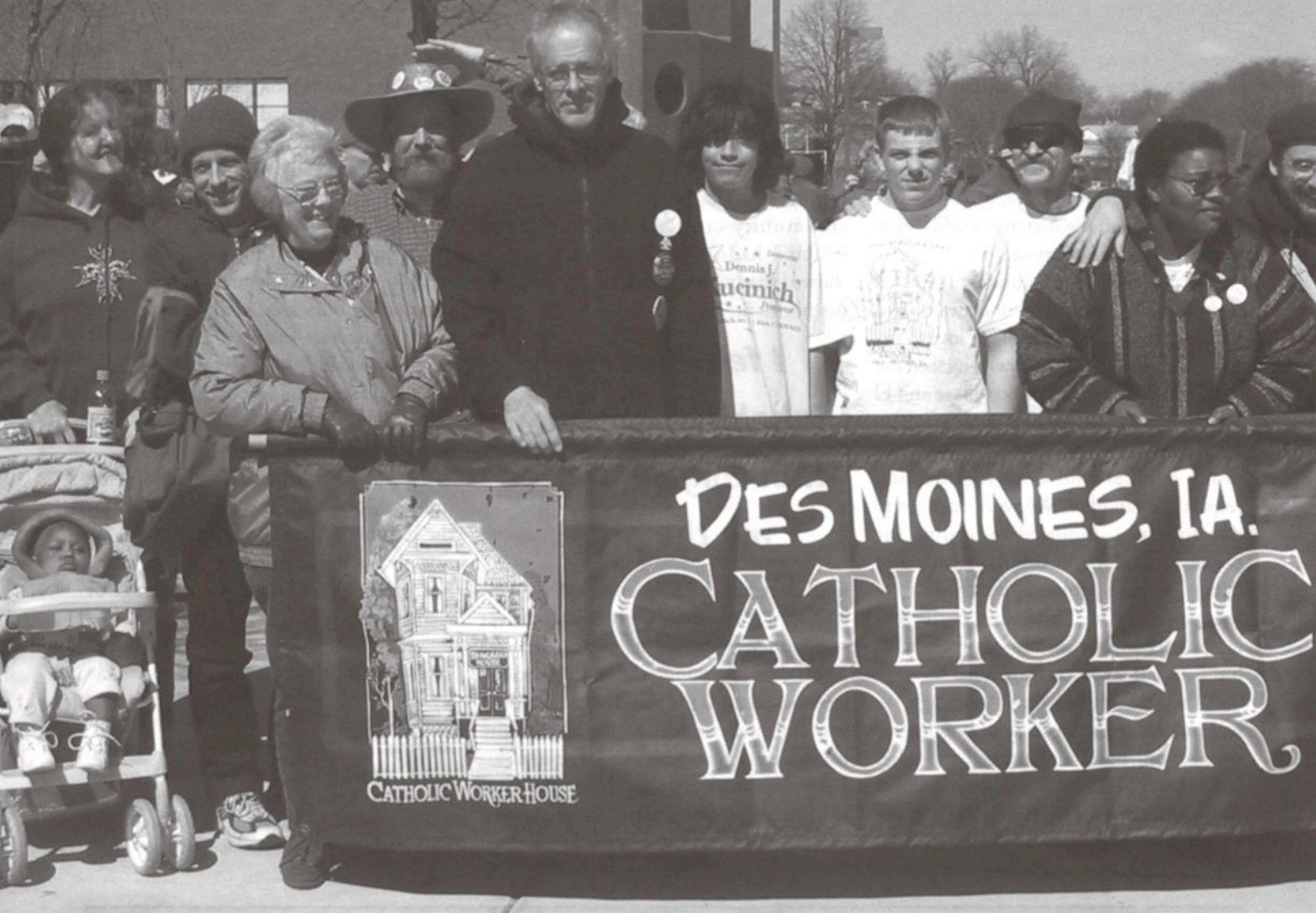
could not have accomplished that material job! But love had been the powerful tool that accomplished it through us. The greatest guru of all lived inside my friends and myself. Ever since that day, our working group is stronger, and I can assure anyone that while our community is highly spiritual, we are the owners of our destiny ourselves, and we know that every action we take will bring consequences. So along with any prayer we can say, good planning and considering consequences in our material reality is important to bring the desired results.

I am like a little tree, always seeking the universe, but with my roots down into the ground. I thank the Great Spirit for not giving me dogmas. I can be a free being, capable of taking the challenge of facing life as it is.

Enrique Hidalgo, cofounder of El Poncho Eco Center and Quilla Tunari Ecovillage in Marquina, Bolivia, is the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) representative for the Northern South America region. He can be reached through the Latin American Permaculture Institute (ILP): ecovillas@hotmail.com. El Poncho Eco Center: <http://communities.msn.com/ilppictures>.



DARREN T. MCMANUS



FRANK CORDARO

BY DAN MCKANAN

“Doing the Work”

Can a community be spiritually diverse and still maintain its identity?

If you were to walk into Haley House Catholic Worker community in Boston, you'd find prints of Hindu avatars and Buddhist bodhisattvas along with gospel scenes on the walls. On the bulletin board you'd find notices of upcoming meditation retreats along with flyers about political demonstrations. If you opened *What's Up*, the magazine Haley House publishes, you might find a Zen haiku or a Buddhist quote. “If we had to pick a dominant spirituality,” member Matt Daloisio once told me, “it would be Buddhism.”

And if you were to visit Camphill Village Minnesota, you'd find a similarly diverse spirituality. Anthroposophy, the esoteric Christian tradition which inspired the international Camphill movement, is the dominant spiritual practice. However, one member, Trudy Pax, draws part of her spiritual inspiration from Zen Buddhism. And Tom Farr and Mary Davis, community residents until recently, devotedly practice the *Course in Miracles*. And the Camphiller who tends the chickens, Brother Kilian, is a member of a Catholic religious order.

Similar diversity exists in many other Catholic Worker and Camphill communities. "The makeup of our house has always been ecumenical—Catholics and Quakers and Lutherans and Episcopalians and atheists," observes Larry Ray-Kiel of the Seattle Catholic Worker. "Many people are bitter about some of the social structures of the Church and the awful things it does institutionally, but they want to do the work."

Residents of other Catholic Worker and Camphill communities echo the notion that "doing the work" is what holds these communities together. Because Camphill and Catholic Worker communities derive their Christian identity from their shared hospitality or educational work (*see box, pg. 53*), they are able to embrace many new members, regardless of their individual spiritual identities. These communities are both spiritually grounded and broadly inclusive.

Spiritually Grounded, Broadly Inclusive

From the beginning, leaders of both Camphill and The Catholic Worker movements understood clearly that they would be open to people of many spiritual and religious traditions. In an age when Protestants and Catholics scarcely spoke to one another, Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin originally wanted to call it the "Christian Worker." Both he and co-founder Dorothy Day had a clear sense of the importance of lay leadership and independence from official church structures, and this left plenty of room for Quaker artist Fritz Eichenberg, Jewish intellectual Marc Ellis, and many other non-Catholics to play central roles in the development of the Catholic Worker movement.

For Camphill founder Karl König, a practice of religious openness flowed directly from Rudolf Steiner's theory that social health depends on both a cultivation of, and a clear distinction between, economics, politics, and spirituality. Steiner correlated these three

areas with the principles of the French Revolution, arguing for the practice of political equality, economic fraternity, and absolute spiritual liberty.

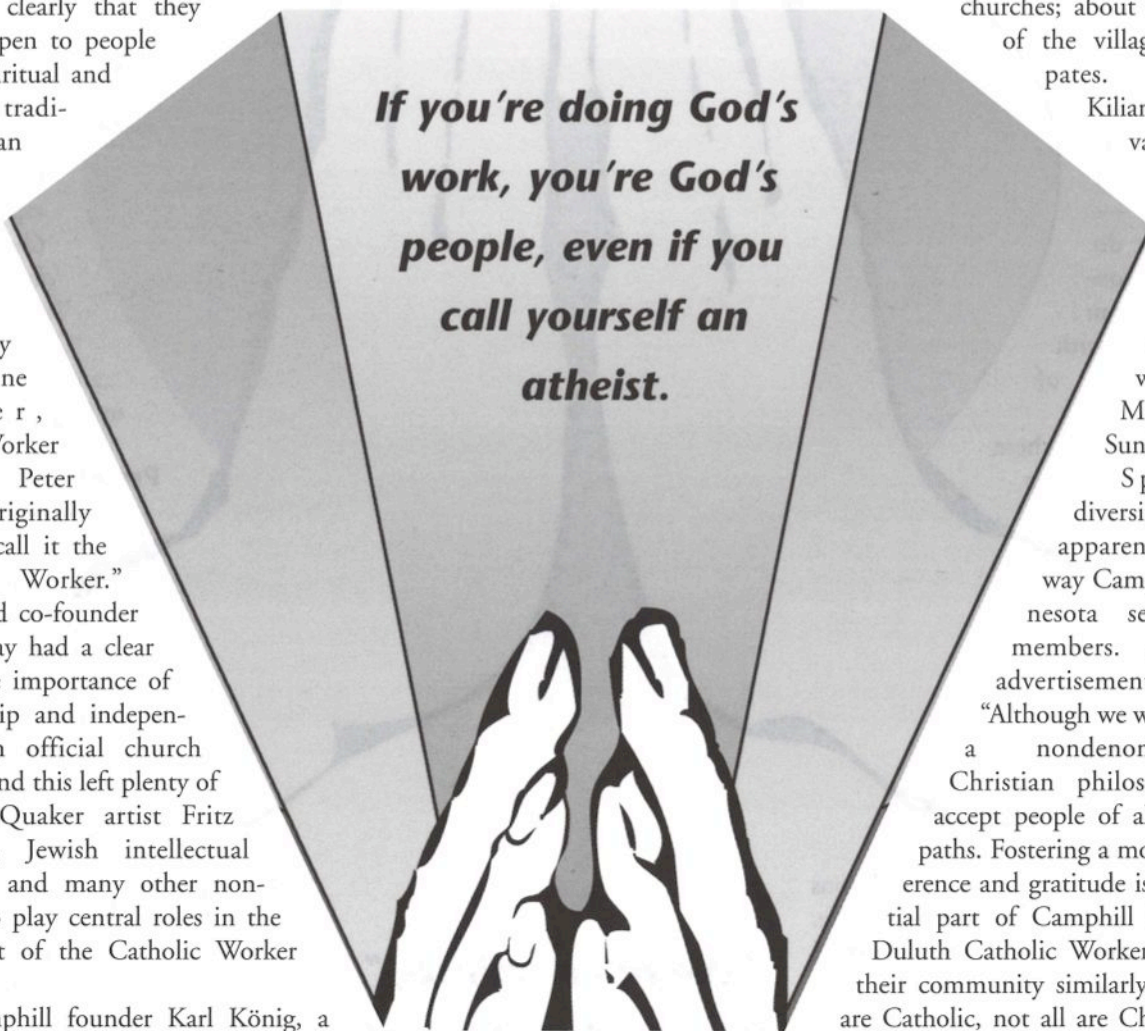
At Camphill Minnesota, spiritual liberty is expressed in a variety of ways. Grace is said before every meal, led by a disabled "villager" or a nondisabled "coworker," rotating through almost everyone in the village. Most choose traditional Anthroposophical blessings; others select prayers from a multicultural collection published by the mother of one of the villagers, or simply use the family prayer they learned as a child.

Sunday worship at Camphill Minnesota is organized to honor both the community's identity and its residents' diversity. The first Sunday of the month often features the Service of Offering, an Anthroposophical gathering at which all are welcome. On the third Sunday a "gathering" is hosted by one of the community houses in a regular rotation, and these reflect the spirituality of the individuals who lead them. During the remaining Sundays, people travel in vans to local

Catholic and Methodist churches; about two-thirds of the village participates. Brother Kilian provides van service to those

Catholic villagers who attend Mass every Sunday.

Spiritual diversity is also apparent in the way Camphill Minnesota seeks new members. A recent advertisement reads: "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." The Duluth Catholic Worker describes their community similarly: "Not all are Catholic, not all are Christian — but all are encouraged to make progress along their spiritual path. We set time aside for prayer and meditation, rotate leadership in Sunday evening liturgy, and seek to provide an environment for spiritual growth."



Why Do People Join These Communities?

But why would non-Anthroposophists or non-Catholics be interested? Most who've joined these communities were intensely drawn to the hospitality and activism of Catholic Worker communities, or to Steiner's "curative education" approach at Camphill communities, and to the pattern of life that this work makes possible. For example, in her search for a community to join, Trudy Pax visited many groups with theories she admired but whose practices didn't suit her. Camphill Minnesota's Anthroposophical theory didn't attract her, but she found the community's practice both impressive and inviting. Similarly, David Stein of Saint Francis Catholic Worker told historian Rosalie Riegle Troester, "I don't see the Catholic Worker as having the remotest thing to do with being Catholic. I justify [joining the community] on logical and rational terms — having to do with environmentalism, having to do with the elevation of human dignity."

Others join these groups as part of a more general spiritual search. Many become converts, not so much because they are persuaded of the absolute truth of Anthroposophy or Catholicism, but because they are impressed with the way those traditions provide a foundation for community life. Christine Elmquist, for example, arrived at the Camphill Village in Copake, New York, with a master's degree in theology but no particular personal religious commitments. She embraced Anthroposophy because she loved its model of community, but even today she prefers the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (author of

Life Together, about living in Christian community), to those of Rudolf Steiner. Similarly, Louise Cochran, daughter of a Presbyterian minister, says, "I never would have become a Catholic if I hadn't come through the left door of the Catholic Worker."

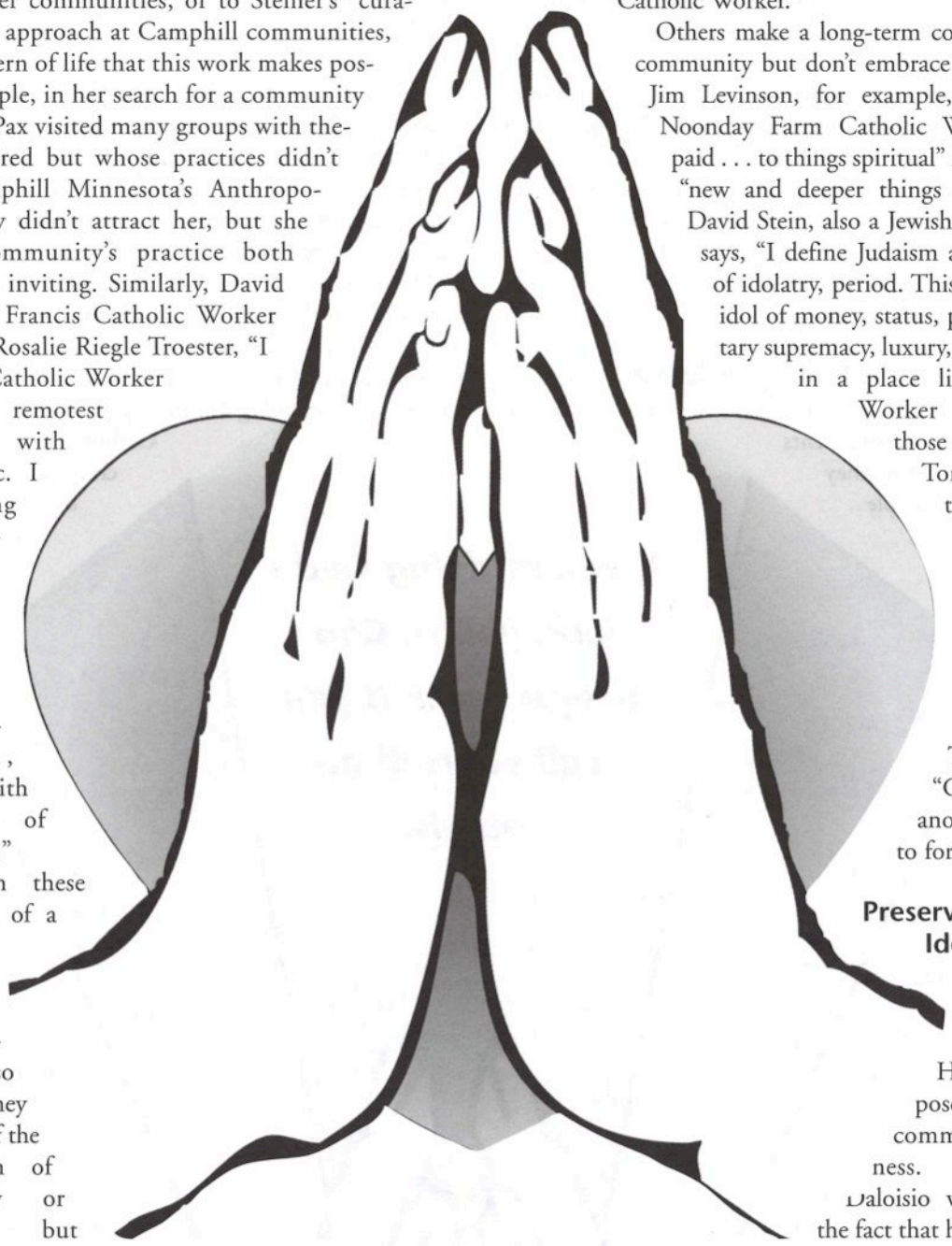
Others make a long-term commitment to the community but don't embrace its spiritual path. Jim Levinson, for example, testifies that at Noonday Farm Catholic Worker "attention paid . . . to things spiritual" has helped him do "new and deeper things within Judaism." David Stein, also a Jewish Catholic Worker, says, "I define Judaism as the repudiation of idolatry, period. This society makes an idol of money, status, power, clout, military supremacy, luxury, fashion. . . . To live in a place like the Catholic Worker is to renounce those idols." Similarly,

Tom Farr believes that life in community helps him practice the forgiveness of self and others espoused by the *Course in Miracles*. "Every day," Tom explains, "Camphill provides another opportunity to forgive."

Preserving Spiritual Identity

Still, the spiritual diversity at a place like Haley House can pose a challenge to community cohesiveness. Indeed, Matt Daloisio was frustrated by the fact that he had to look *outside* this Catholic Worker group to find a supportive Catholic community. So how do communities like these that are open to spiritual diversity preserve their identity? Many Catholic Workers and Camphillers say that the key is an emphasis on shared work, rather than shared belief.

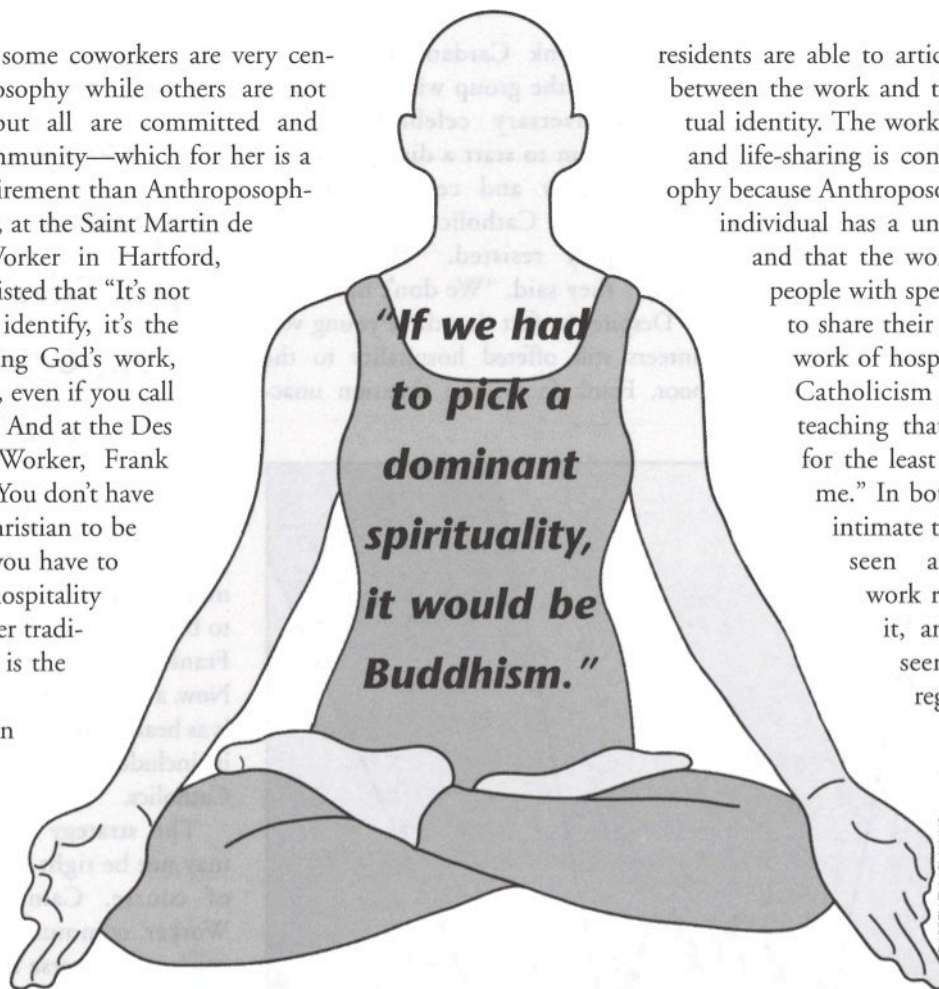
Christine Elmquist is a member of Community Homestead, a Wisconsin community largely modeled on Cam-



**"We're anarchists,"
they said. "We don't
have to."**

phill. She told me some coworkers are very centered on Anthroposophy while others are not really interested, but all are committed and pulling for this community—which for her is a more essential requirement than Anthroposophical belief. Similarly, at the Saint Martin de Porres Catholic Worker in Hartford, Brian Kavanagh insisted that “It’s not so much how you identify, it’s the work. If you’re doing God’s work, you’re God’s people, even if you call yourself an atheist.” And at the Des Moines Catholic Worker, Frank Cordaro explains, “You don’t have to be a Catholic Christian to be part of this. What you have to do is buy into the hospitality and respect the larger tradition, which in part is the Catholic Church.”

The “work” is an adequate basis for the common purpose of these communities because most community



residents are able to articulate the relationship between the work and the community’s spiritual identity. The work of curative education and life-sharing is connected to Anthroposophy because Anthroposophy teaches that each individual has a unique spiritual destiny, and that the world is impoverished if people with special needs are not able to share their gifts with others. The work of hospitality is connected to Catholicism because of Jesus’ teaching that “Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me.” In both cases, the link is so intimate that life-sharing can be seen as Anthroposophical work regardless of who does it, and hospitality can be seen as Catholic work regardless of who does it.

From this perspective, a community can lose its identity or common purpose either by

About Catholic Worker and Camphill Communities

Catholic Worker and Camphill communities, two of the most vital networks of service-oriented communities in the world today, were both born during the global crisis of the 1930s. The Catholic Worker movement was founded in New York City by radical journalist Dorothy Day and French philosopher Peter Maurin. Drawing on Catholic social teaching, they hoped to “create a new society within the shell of the old” by forming communal farms and urban “houses of hospitality.” Soon the movement was also deeply involved in resistance to war. Catholic Workers affirm human dignity and encourage everyone to honor that dignity through face-to-face work with the poor. Today the Catholic Worker movement includes well over 150 communities in the United States and around 20 more worldwide. Many Catholic Workers identify hospitality to the poor, resistance to war, spirituality, and community as their guiding practices. www.catholicworker.org.

The Camphill movement was founded by Karl König, an Austrian pediatrician and follower of the Christian esoteric

philosopher Rudolf Steiner, founder of Anthroposophy. König devoted his life to “curative education” for children with disabilities, and both this vocation and his Jewish ethnicity soon forced him to flee the Nazis. With other refugees he formed the first Camphill at an estate in Scotland, and since then the movement has spread throughout the world, coming to the United States in 1961. Today there are more than 90 Camphill communities worldwide and eight in North America, along with a comparable number of similar communities not formally affiliated with Camphill. Some are schools for children or youth; others are villages for adults with disabilities. More broadly, Karl König understood the movement as a new social order called to restore the European ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Camphill communities today are deeply involved in advocacy for people with special needs, caring for and healing the Earth, and in providing more supportive models of community life. www.camphill.org.

—D.M.

ceasing to do "the work," or by community members actively repudiating any religious interpretation of their work. The latter situation occurred in the Des Moines Catholic Worker around the time of its 50th anniversary. Over about eight years, gradually all the Catholic members moved out, leaving a small group of young community members with no affinity for the Catholic faith. When former

member Frank Cardano and others approached the group with plans for a 50th anniversary celebration, and pressed them to start a dialogue about Dorothy Day and certain religious aspects of the Catholic Worker movement, they resisted. "We're anarchists," they said. "We don't have to."

Despite the fact that these young volunteers still offered hospitality to the poor, Frank found the situation unac-

"Every day," he explains, "Camphill provides another opportunity to forgive."

ceptable. Still, he understood that as long as he stood on the outside, he had no moral authority to tell them they needed to be more Catholic. Within a few years, Frank had rejoined the community. Now, a decade later, he believes the house is as healthy as it's ever been, even though it includes as many non-Catholics as Catholics.

The strategy of "doing the work" may not be right for every community, of course. Camphill and Catholic Worker communities are able to be spiritually diverse in part because their "work" is so clearly defined. But the Camphill and Catholic Worker model could, I believe, be adopted by service-oriented intentional communities rooted in non-Christian as well as Christian traditions. Sharing work is an ideal way to deepen our own spiritual lives while learning from the spiritual realities of others.

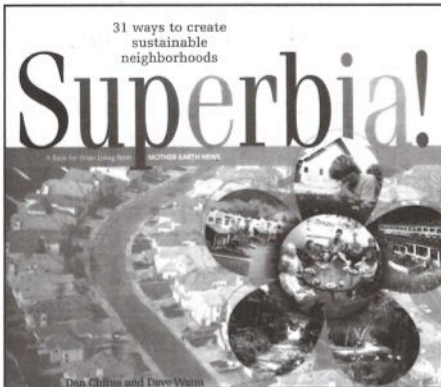
Dan McKanan is writing a book comparing Camphill and Catholic Worker movements to a variety of communities connected to 19th-century social reform. He lives in Saint Joseph, Minnesota, frequently visits Camphill Village Minnesota, and teaches theology and peace studies at Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict.

*Quotations in this article are drawn both from interviews conducted by the author and from Rosalie Riegle Troester's oral history of the Catholic Worker movement, *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Temple University Press, 1993).*



DARREN T. MCKANAN

REVIEWS



Superbia! 31 Ways to Create Sustainable Neighborhoods

by Dan Chiras and Dave Wann

New Society Publishers, 2003
Pb., 229 pp. \$19.95

Reviewed by Diana Leafe Christian

Reading *Superbia!* filled me with energy and hope. After demonstrating how suburban living isolates and alienates us socially and damages the planet (lots more than you'd think), Colorado-based eco-activists Dan Chiras and Dave Wann propose dozens of ways suburban and urban dwellers can reconnect socially and reduce environmental impact—then show 31 (“superb”) examples of neighborhoods already doing it.

I was so inspired by these ideas and examples that I recommended *Superbia!* to almost every sustainability activist I met on a recent visit to the Northwest—participants of Lost Valley Educational Center’s summer sustainable living program; Rob Bolman a Eugene-based natural building activist; and Lois Arkin,

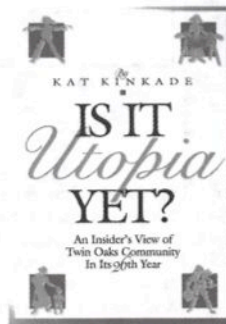
founder of Los Angeles Eco-Village (and my co-teacher at Lost Valley)—who with neighbors in inner-city L.A. are *already* doing much of what Dave and Dan suggest. I even recommended it to Mark Lakeman, director of Portland’s wonderful art-and-neighborliness City Repair project (and that fine project is noted in the book).

So of course I recommend *Superbia!* to you.

The authors advocate reinventing existing neighborhoods, both suburban and urban, to make them livelier and more productive, and to meet our need for a sense of place. Three things are wrong with suburbs, they say. First, the physical layout creates the social isolation and distance from basic resources that encourage us to drive miles daily just to meet a friend or buy a loaf of bread. Second, suburban culture reinforces “extravagant, private lifestyles” and encourages us to ignore cultural values (such as wanting to live in a culture of decent, caring human beings with whom we interact regularly). And third, suburbia

is perpetuated by local government incentives, zoning laws, and bank lending policies, even though this housing style doesn’t serve our society’s needs. Suburbs, the authors point out, were engineered for consumption, not efficiency; for cars, not people; for housing, not community—even though Gallup and Roper polls say three out of four home buyers want a house in a good neighborhood more than a fancy trophy home.

What do we want instead? “If a neighborhood is worth staying in and improving,” the authors observe, “it needs to be safe, healthy, economically stable, diverse, accessible to nature and culture, friendly, and supportive.” A sustainable community, they note, citing architect Peter Calthorpe, is one which “exacts less of its inhabitants in time wealth, and maintenance, and demands less of its environment in land, water, soil, and fuel.” They suggest 10 basic principles for recreating a neighborhood: that it be human scale and walkable; that it include not only residences but also shops, services, and businesses; that it encourage



An Insider’s View of Twin Oaks Community in its 26th Year by Kat Kinkade

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

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residents to conserve resources; and that it include open spaces, public facilities, streetscapes, and variety. They show us two examples—Village Homes in Davis, California, and Harmony Village Cohousing (where Dave lives) in Golden, Colorado.

Start out with baby steps, they suggest in “Germination: First Steps.” Establish community dinners, a community newsletter, bulletin board, a roster of people’s skills and services, a Neighborhood Watch program. As

people get to know each other better, start a discussion group, a neighborhood babysitting co-op, an organic food-buying co-op. Create car or van pools; create a neighborhood work-share program. When people know each other even better, get bolder. Create a neighborhood asset inventory; create a neighborhood mission statement (example: “... a cooperative neighborhood of diverse individuals sharing human resources within an ecologically responsible community”).

In “Leafing Out: Bolder Steps,” they suggest that neighbors go further, recommending projects from tearing down backyard fences, planting a community garden and orchard, establishing neighborhood composting and recycling, planting fruit trees, and/or creating an edible landscape (as N-Street Cohousing in Davis, and Los Angeles Eco-Village have both done), to starting a CSA farm (which EcoVillage at Ithaca has done), creating a van- and truck-share program, and/or retrofitting homes for energy efficiency (which LA Eco-Village has done).

And in “Your Neighborhood Blossoms: Boldest Steps,” they recommend projects from creating a neighborhood-wide energy system, establishing environmentally friendly water and wastewater systems, creating a common house, creating community-shared office space, and establishing a community entertainment program, to narrowing or eliminating streets, retrofitting garages or spare rooms into apartments, and/or creating a neighborhood coffee shop, market, or other cottage industries.

But in by far my favorite chapter, “Can This Dream Become a Reality?” Dave and Dan show that people in neighborhoods all over North America, from Bellevue, Washington to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, are already doing many of these projects. Nothing like successful examples to inspire and encourage. I’m stoked!

Superbia! is packed with good photos and illustrations, and there’s a whole chapter full of many resources for learning more about each and every suggestion. My only quibble is that the title didn’t help me understand soon enough that the book was this good. It put me in mind too much of suburbia as it usually is, and I almost missed the book’s rich and relevant content as a result.

If your friends or family members don’t live in community but you suspect they long for more connection and communion in their own lives, *Superbia!* may just give them the vision—and the tools—to make it happen right where they live.

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Ed Eaton of Our Sun Solar, in cooperation with Plenty-Belize and Camp-Us will be instructing a complete 5-day course for native Belizeans and others wishing to support and learn energy independence. The course will install water pumping systems in one or more Mayan villages in the Toledo District. Local entertainment will be provided along with daily breakfast and lunch. The last night participants will stay in a rainforest village guest house. It is hoped that adequate subscription to the course will assist in Plenty's efforts to preserve the fragile culture and ecosystem of this world biological treasure.


Discount airfares from Miami and London are being developed.

Details:
thefarm.org/etc
ecovillage@thefarm.org
POB 90 Summertown
TN 38483-0090 USA





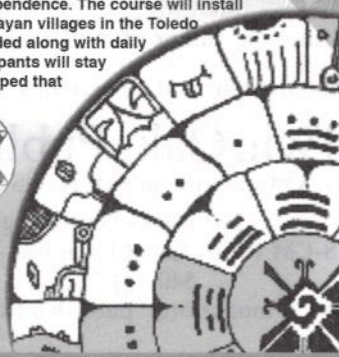
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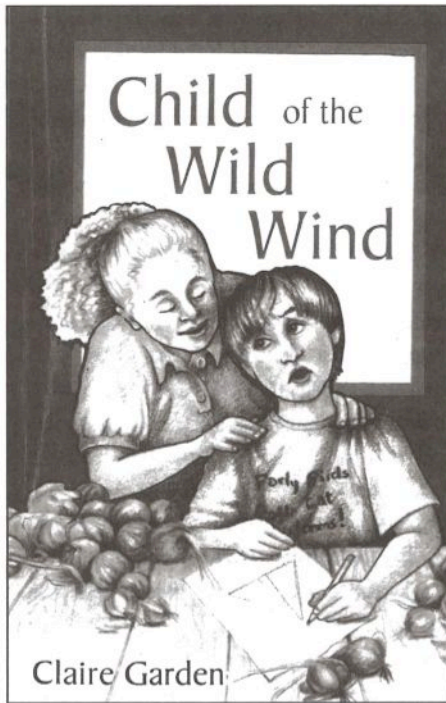


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Child of the Wild Wind

by Claire Garden

Electronic eBook Publishing, 2003
Pb., 162 pp. \$13.95

Available from:

Electronic eBook Publishing
PO Box 211
Powell River, BC, Canada
www.electricbookpublishing.com

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

How many times do you find a novel set in intentional community? And when you do, how often does it portray community accurately? While I've read the occasional mystery novel in which the protagonist visits an intentional community somewhere, it's usually a trite, media-stereotype portrayal of a 60s-style "commune" where no one works but most smoke weed, eat sprouts, and expound metaphysically. Or, worse, the place is run by a charismatic-yet-diabolical leader with obedient followers who smile serenely. I don't remember ever reading a book about a community that actually *felt* like one.

Until Claire Garden's short novel, *Child of the Wild Wind*.

Claire ought to know. She lived at East Wind for a year and a half and is a founding member of Terra Nova community in Missouri. She absolutely gets

community right. Her two fictional income-sharing communities in the Midwest—the rather dysfunctional “Wild Wind” and the brand new and hopeful “Plum Creek”—sure do feel like rural income-sharing communities I've known. People work at community businesses, live in small living groups, and get their duds at Commie Clothes. The usual cast of community characters pass through the dining hall. The usual kinds of friendships and conflicts rise and fall. Everyone is family. People take showers with no doors. Nudity is normal and unremarked on.

Claire's main character is Mockingbird, a 12-year old boy coming of age in

community, with friends ranging from little kids (and he's on the childcare team) to teenagers of all ages, as well as his dad and other community adults. Claire sure does seem to get her adolescent characters right. They act and talk just like community kids I've known. The characters and their motivations seem wholly believable. Mockingbird and his friends run into challenges, get new insights, do course-correction, learn new behaviors, and grow and change. Mockingbird feels like a real kid, and a really likable one. He's also funny, with a wry, self-deprecating sense of humor.

More than once when community members, or the community itself, func-



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Herrnhut


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William J. Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf

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

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

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tioned badly, or well, it was thoroughly familiar. These things have happened to me and my community friends too.

The book also promotes ecological sustainability, as we watch characters build passive solar natural buildings and set up off-grid power systems.

I did find myself exclaiming in alarm from time to time, though. Not for normal reasons though, since I thought the plot and dialogue was fine, but because I thought some descriptions of community processes were so foreshortened in time or underestimated in money they could mislead a reader unfamiliar with community. Mockingbird's dad, for example, wanted to join Wild Wind and live there the rest of his life after just one brief visit. Egads! Wild Wind's new-member process, though described well, was extremely short in duration. What about the well-being of the newcomers, and the community, since no "long engagement" period allowed the parties to better understand if there was a good fit in values, vision, and purpose? Further, the main characters started a new community far too easily and quickly and with a relatively small, so it seemed, source of start-up funds, then maintained their financial stability partly from a member's craft items selling successfully at a New York art gallery. I don't think this is realistic! But this isn't really a fair criticism, since I'm an admitted fanatic about these matters. What am I worried about—a reader might go out and try to join a community or start a new one based solely on what they'd read in this novel?

Another minor concern: since it's electronically published it's not as robust as regular books, and some of the pages fell out. But overall, I liked *Child of the Wild Wind*. If you'd like to share a sense of community life with friends (or to give your community mates a novel that finally does community living justice!) consider giving them this book. And though it's written for all ages, I think young people might enjoy it especially.

More good news: *Child of the Wild Wind* is the first novel in a series of five. Thank you, Claire!

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Revised Edition

Building Constructive Communication

- Learn How to Receive Critical Feedback
- Develop Skills For Self-Talk
- Understand Giving Constructive Feedback Effectively
- Find Out How to Handle Special Problems



Patti Hathaway, CSP

Giving and Receiving Feedback

by Patti Hathaway

Crisp Publications, 2002

Pb., 104 pp., \$13

Available from:

Community Bookshelf
store.ic.org

Reviewed by Diana Leafé Christian

Written for the business world—but certainly helpful to communitarians—*Giving and Receiving Feedback* covers how to listen carefully to and evaluate critical feedback, how manage one's own inner state and take any necessary self-corrective action in relation to it, and how to give others constructive as well as critical feedback. It's a quick read, filled with many illustrations, short subsections of pithy information or suggestions, and brief checklists to measure your own skills in this important communication process.

Men and women respond to critical feedback differently, says the author, because, according to some research, in general, they communicate for different reasons—men to build independence and status; women to build connection and intimacy. Other research indicates that when charged to solve an insoluble puzzle, many men will think that they can't solve it because there's something wrong with the puzzle, and many women will think they can't solve

it because there's something wrong with *them*. This research in gender differences helps explain, says the author, why most men tend to take criticism better than most women do. And according to other research, people between 18 and 34 tend to be more touchy about critical feedback since they're still forming their self identity.

Regardless of our gender, or age, the author advises against reacting to critical feedback with counterattacks or silent resentment, but instead suggests assessing how the other person is delivering the feedback (choice of words, vocal tone, facial expression, and body language) to get a sense of their motivation. Is the criticism future-oriented, offering you new actions to consider? Is it past-oriented, or destructive, with words like *always*, *never*, and *should*? We need to observe this in order to know how seriously to take the feedback.

We also get advice for dealing assertively with critical feedback. When we suspect certain criticism is manipulative or unjustified, we can use "fogging"—calmly acknowledging that there may be *some* truth in the person's feedback. "You could be right about the part where ..."; "What you say makes sense in terms of ..."; "Perhaps I could" Fogging allows us to receive critical feedback without becoming anxious or defensive, and like a fog bank (since how can you shoot arrows at a fog bank), allows us to remain relatively unaffected.

An assertive way to deal with valid criticism is to simply admit the truth. "You're right. I didn't ..." Learning to just admit the truth desensitizes us over time to critical feedback from ourselves or others. It allows us to recognize mistakes as mistakes, rather than as character flaws, and allows us to move forward, rather than becoming bogged down in depression or self-criticism.

But the most powerful assertive response, says the author, is to proactively seek more information about the subject of the feedback. We actively prompt additional feedback by listening carefully and asking questions

to elicit more information "What, specifically, did I do that ..."; "I'm not sure what you see as the problem. Can you give me some examples?" This breaks any manipulative cycle of criticism the person may have with us, and improves understanding and communication. It also helps us see if there's anything we can do about the situation.

More advice: Seek feedback about how to do work projects before doing them; don't automatically assume the person is right or wrong, but take time to evaluate it; don't passively accept it in a victimy way, or the other person will lose respect for us; don't make globally negative assessments about our own character or ability based on one mistake.

You'll find equally helpful advice on offering feedback to others.

Giving and Receiving Feedback does not go as far as if it were written by someone living in community. No focusing on feelings and needs, self-revealing vulnerability, or expressing and releasing strong emotions. Nonviolent Communication, Radical Honesty, or Co-Counseling it ain't. But so what? The techniques in the book work well in my experience, and when it comes to good communication skills and dealing with conflict in community, we can use all the help we can get! Diana Leafé Christian is editor of *Communities magazine*, and author of *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities* (New Society Publishers, 2003).

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Directory Update



The Fellowship for Intentional Community wants to provide the most up-to-date contact information we can find for intentional communities. We do this primarily through our Communities Directory. Since we cannot create an updated Communities Directory every few months, we regularly publish the late-breaking information here in Communities magazine. All of the information in this "Directory Update" section has come in since the 2000 Directory was released.

The information here is condensed and abbreviated. It will be more thoroughly presented in future editions of the Communities Directory. For example, these communities will be listed in the cross-reference chart (population statistics, number of acres, leadership and decision-making structures, diet, schooling, spiritual practices, and so on), and on the regional maps of North America showing approximate community locations. For a copy of the 2000 Communities Directory, see store.ic.org or contact your local library.

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

New

Boföreningen Vildsvinet
Örebro
Sweden
ulrikakeriksson@hotmail.com
www15.brinkster.com/vildsvinet/5/2004.

Central Florida Cohousing (Forming)
Attn: Dave Finnigan
770-329-1152
davefinnigan@yahoo.com
5/2004.

Cohousing Bristol (Forming)
Attn: Mark Johnston & Lorraine Pitt
20 Cornwall Road
Bristol
England
0117 9422569
abigail@spring96.freeseerve.co.uk
www.cohousing.co.uk/bristol.htm
5/2004.

Dharma House Community Project (Forming)
Attn: Nik
France
groups.yahoo.com/group/DharmaHouse/
5/2004.

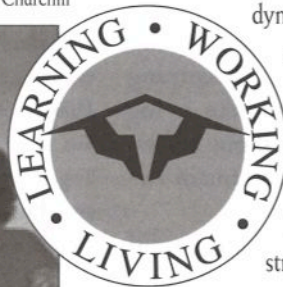
Duck Mill
Attn: Gary Sidell
Lawrence, MA
gsidell@duckmill.com
cscotthanson@duckmill.com
www.duckmill.com/
5/2004.

Finca Brian Y Emilia (Forming)
Apdo 2-8000
San Isidro Gral
Costa Rica
506-396-6206 cell
www.fincabe.com
25-acre family farm in development for 26 years. Seeking guests, travelers, volunteers, possibly form new community. 7/2004.

Grand Rapids Cohousing (Forming)
Attn: Steve Faber
719 Livingston Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI
616-456-0485
steve@cityvisioninc.org
<http://www.cityvisioninc.org/co-housing.htm>
Forming cohousing with 18-25 units.
5/2004.

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

Winston Churchill



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

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

For more information or to arrange a personal visit:

Camphill Soltane
224 Nantmeal Road, Glenmoore, PA 19343
610.469.0933 • Fax: 610.469.1054
Email: info@camphillsoltane.org
www.camphillsoltane.org



Hudson Valley Ecovillage
Attn: Kevin Skvorak
212-996-1830
"k.skvorak" <k.skvorak@verizon.net>
groups.yahoo.com/group/HVEcovillage/
5/2004.

Koinonia Partners
1324 GA Highway 49 S
Americus, GA 31719-9599
229-924-0391
volunteer@koinoniapartners.org
www.koinoniapartners.org
We are an intentional Christian community welcoming people of all faiths. Koinonia was founded in 1942 by Clarence Jordan as an interracial farming community working to be "a demonstration plot for the kingdom of God." Koinonia went on to become the birthplace of Habitat for Humanity and several other social justice projects, including Jubilee Partners. We are committed to non-violence and peaceful solutions to society's problems, reconciliation among all people, Christian discipleship, and the empowerment of the poor, the neglected, and the oppressed. We come together united in our belief in God, to participate in community life, outreach ministries, and business enterprises.

Our 573 acres of land in rural Georgia are home to large pecan orchards; fields of crops; an organic garden; two villages of Partnership Housing; wooded areas including a Peace Trail; and the main campus, with a museum, bookstore, bakery store, dining hall, office, and residences. Our ministries include a community outreach center with programs for youth and senior citizens; tours of our community; and classes and seminars on peace and justice issues, Koinonia history, and the peaceful co-existence of different faiths. These ministries involve a lot of work, but we make time for devotions and a shared meal during each workday. We are sustained by donations, sales of our products, farm revenues, and the labor and prayers of our community and its supporters. We welcome visitors and volunteers. We have guest housing for visitors as well as RV accessibility. Volunteers may attain extended status, and are provided with room, weekday lunches, and a small living stipend. 6/2004.

Lansing Cohousing
Attn: Michael Hamlin
Lansing, MI
hamlinmi@math.msu.edu
5/2004.

Nevada City Cohousing
Nevada City, CA
info@nccoho.org
www.nccoho.org/
5/2004.

NWA Cohousing (Forming)
Attn: Denise Thomas
1215 S. Dunn Ave
Fayetteville, AR 72701
groups.yahoo.com/group/NWAcohousin
gcommunity/
5/2004.

Pittsburgh Cohousing (Forming)
Attn: Elizabeth Hakas
hakasev@upmc.edu
5/2004.

Port Townsend Ecovillage
Port Townsend, WA
kkolff@olympus.net
5/2004.

Vialen
Sweden
hem.passagen.se/vialen/
Completed, 13 units, cohousing. 5/2004.

Wade Ranch
Attn: Joy Wade
530-241-1007
40-acre permaculture avocado farm, collective buy-in, bordering National Forest, seeking wealthy vegetarian, bilingual, hard working, permaculture interest. 7/2004.

Updates

Tres Placitas Del Rio
info@tresplacitas.org
www.tresplacitas.org/
New email and website. Change in description: Building 7-11 units on 2.5 acres. 5/2004.

Lost/Disbanded

Community of Hospitality
Georgia
Lost Address. 6/2004.

Intentional Community Houston
Texas
Disbanded group first listed *Communities* magazine #114. 11/2001.

L'Arche - Homefires
Canada
Lost Address. 6/2004.

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Community Calendar



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. Speakers include Lois Arkin, Los Angeles Eco-Village; Albert Bates, Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm; Robert Gilman, Context Institute; Max Lindegger, Crystal Waters Ecovillage, Australia; Greg Ramsey, award-winning green architect; Laird Schaub, Fellowship for Intentional Community; Liz Walker, EcoVillage at Ithaca, and others. www.ecovillage.org/conference/.

Sep 23-26 • 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.*

Sep 24-Oct 1 • Permaculture Practicum

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Part Two of the Permaculture Design course; applying permaculture fundamentals to real-life projects, for Permaculture Design Certificate. Chuck Marsh, Peter Bane, Andrew Goodheart Brown, Keith Johnson \$675 incl. meals, camping; indoor lodging also avail. *Culture's Edge Workshops, 1025 Camp Elliott Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711; 828-669-3937; culturesedge@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org.*

Sep 24-27 • 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 con-

nected with others. Donation, incl. lodging, meals. Childcare available. *541-937-3351, #109; naka-ima@lostvalley.org; www.lostvalley.org.*

Sep 25 • Wild Plants for Food & Medicine

Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Corinna Wood of Red Moon Herbs. Identify, harvest and prepare wild plants as food and medicine. \$75, incl. lunch. *redmoonherbs.com; 828-669-1310.*

Sep 25-26 • Reduce Your Urban Environmental Footprint

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. Lifestyle choices and environmental impacts of packaging, driving, clothing, appliances, heating, air conditioning; hands-on projects; Life Cycle Assessment; buying locally, environmental & financial priorities; indoor air quality. Peter Reppe, instructor. \$185, incl. meals, lodging. *www.lostvalley.org; info@lostvalley.org; 541-937-3351, #109.*

Sep 25-Oct 8 • Permaculture Design

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Permaculture principles and ethics, ponds, on-site water development, erosion control, forest farming, organic gardening, mulching, composting, plant guilds, alternative building materials, community economics, more. Certificate of Permaculture Design. Penny Livingston, Brock Dolman, guest instructors. \$1350/\$1250, incl. meals, lodging. *OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 95465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.*

Sep 27-Oct 1 • Ecovillage Design Course

Kakwa Ecovillage, McBride, British Columbia. With Max Lindegger, award-winning sustainable community developer; cofounder, Crystal Waters Ecovillage in Australia; and director, GEN-Oceania. Topics include physical infrastructure: water, energy, roads, waste; decision-making and governance; community vision; internal community finance, dealing with conflict; permaculture principles in relation to ecovillages; financing property; dealing w/local government; design methods and processes; project planning and management. \$800 CDN, incl. meals. Camping \$8/night; hostel, \$14-\$30. *www.kakwaecovillage.com/workshops.htm; info@kakwaecovillage.com.*

Sep 30-Oct 2 • 31st Annual Communal Studies Association Conference

Pittsfield, MA. Hancock Shaker Village. Theme is "Travels & Journeys." Papers, presentations, programs, tours. For communitarians, academic researchers, and anyone interested in learning more about historic and contemporary communities. *Elizabeth DeWolfe, edewolfe@une.edu; www.communalstudies.org.*

Oct 2 • Nourishing Traditional Foods

Red Moon Herbs at Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain (Asheville), NC. Corinna Wood of Red Moon Herbs. Support optimum health with hearty foods and time-honored preservation methods, increasing nutrients and digestibility of nuts, grains, vegetables, meats, and milk prod-

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Oct 9-10 • Earthaven Experience Weekend

Earthaven Ecovillage, Black Mountain, NC. Tour Earthaven's natural Earth-friendly buildings, off-grid power systems, water catchment systems, constructed wetlands. Q&A panel of Earthaven members; monthly Council meeting; community work project; share community meals. Ecovillage slide show w/Diana Leafie Christian, author of *Creating a Life Together*; medicinal plant walk w/Red Moon Herbs. Coffeehouse evening of games and home-grown entertainment with Earthaven members. \$100 per person (ask us about child and family rates) incl. all meals, but not camping (\$7/night) or indoor accommodations, \$11-\$30/night. info@earthaven.org; www.earthaven.org; 828-669-3937.

Oct 22-25 • Naka-Ima 1: The Basics

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (See Sep 24-27)

Oct 30-31 • Art of Community Gathering

Graham, FL (near Gainesville). Fellowship for Intentional Community-sponsored weekend of networking and workshops. Consensus/facilitation, permaculture, ecovillages, cohousing, community nuts & bolts, biodiesel, elders in community, music, dancing, videos. With Laird Schaub, Geoph Kozeny, Meryl Daniels, Mike Orbin, Tony Sirna, and more. \$85, incl. meals, camping; \$95 after Oct. 15. *Art of Community*,

1174 NW 13th, #124B, Boca Raton, FL 33486; www.ic.org/artofcmty.html; artofcmty@ic.org; 561-750-6675.

Nov 4-8 • 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.

Nov 5-7 • North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) Annual Institute

Ann Arbor, Michigan. Workshops, presentations, leadership training for residents of student housing co-ops and others interested in them. www.nasco.coop; info@nasco.coop.

Nov 12-14 • Introduction to Permaculture

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Brock Dolman. Hands-on practice. Pattern observation, water catchment and infiltration, erosion control, forest farming, polycultural food diversity, micro-climate analysis, natural building, and much more. \$375/\$325, incl. meals, lodging. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.

Nov 13-15 • The International Ecovillage Designers Conference

Crystal Waters Ecovillage, Conondale, Queensland. EcoLogical Solutions, 59 Crystal Waters, 65 Kilcoy Lane, Conondale Qld 4552, Australia; www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au; info@ecologicalsolutions.com.au.

Nov 19-21 • Democratic Decision-Making

Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), Occidental, CA. Practical tools to enjoy more effective and participatory meetings. Values and goals, democratic organizational structures, consensus & other decision-making processes, facilitation skills, planning for and running effective meetings, conflict resolution, crafting agreements. Dave Henson, Adam Wolpert. \$375/\$325, incl. meals, lodging. OAEC, 15290 Coleman Valley Rd., Occidental, CA 85465; 707-874-1557, #201; oaec@oaec.org; www.oaec.org.

Nov 19-22 • Naka-Ima 1: The Basics

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (See Sep 24-27)

Nov 25-28 • Living In Actualization in an Interuniversal-soul Cultural Community

Aquarian Concepts Community, Sedona, AZ. (See Sep 23-26)

Dec 10-13 • Naka-Ima 1: The Basics

Lost Valley Educational Center, Dexter, OR. (See Sep 24-27)

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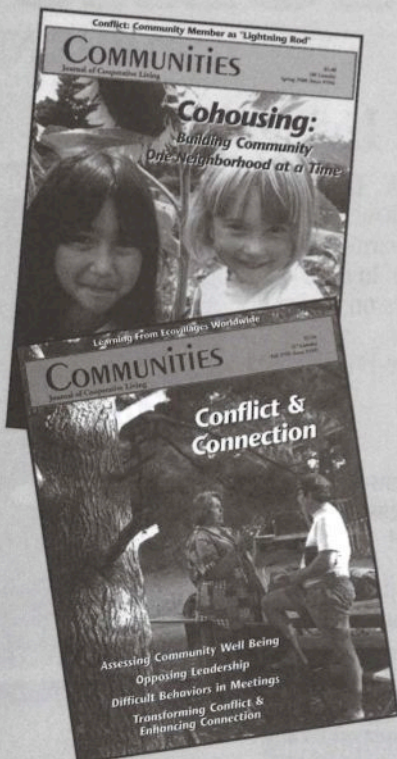
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Reach



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

*You may use the form on the last page of Reach to place an ad. **THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER 2004 ISSUE (OUT IN DECEMBER) IS OCTOBER 20.***

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

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

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

COMMUNITIES WITH OPENINGS

ABUNDANT DAWN COMMUNITY, Floyd, Virginia. Our 90 acres of beautiful mountain land is home to three small pods/sub-communities. One (Tekiah) shares income. The others (Dayspring Circle and Earth Pod) do not. Most community members work primarily from home in pod or individual businesses. We are a stable, experienced group with a sense of humor. We like to sing and we eat together regularly. Our land includes a river, forests, pastures, barns, gardens, basic infrastructure, and fairly civilized temporary housing. We are committed to dealing thoughtfully with conflict and to considering carefully the impacts of our actions on the planet. We are looking for new members. We seek builders, organic gardeners, musicians, scientists, tinkerers, artists, business people, youth, wisdom, enthusiasm and community experience. We welcome individuals and families of diverse peaceful lifestyles. Please see our web site for more information: www.abundantdawn.org POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; info@abundantdawn.org

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 *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, Future Studios live performance hall, recording studio, audio and video productions, CosmoArt, CosmoTheater. 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 NATURE RETREAT, Vail, Arizona. The community's 25 acres of land including solar powered buildings need reorganization. Purchase, rent, share mountain ranch blessed with optimal weather. Room only \$150/mo. SASE. Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641; 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 geot-

hermally. 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, child-care, marketing and massage (Oregon LMT required). We provide modest housing and a wide variety of benefits to our staff. Our mission is to provide a safe and potent environment for social and personal growth. Send inquiries to: Personnel, Breitenbush Hot Springs, POB 578, Detroit, OR 97342; 503-854-3320-1, ext. 216.

CAMPBILL VILLAGE MINNESOTA, Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Part of the International Camphill movement. Located in rural central Minnesota. Life-sharing community of 60 people, 25 of whom are adults with special needs. We are on 400 acres-woods, fields, river, ponds. We have a dairy farm, beef farm, weavery (rugs and scarves), woodshop (toys and household items), bakery (bread, cookies, cereals), dollmaking shop, food processing kitchen and large vegetable gardens. We provide our own bread and biodynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a non-denominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories,

plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us—families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "co-workers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three weeks vacation and meet each person's needs as possible. For information: 15136 Celtic Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378; 320-732-6365; Fax: 320-732-3204; CVMN@rea-alp.com; www.camphillvillage-minnesota.org

DANCING RABBIT, Rutledge, Missouri. We are actively seeking new members to join us in creating our vibrant home and sustainability demonstration project. We are building our homes with earth-friendly materials on our 280 beautiful, rolling acres in northeast Missouri. We live, work and play together; with cooperation and feminism as basic principles. We grow much of our food and share delicious organic meals together every day. We make our decisions by consensus. If you're looking for a nurturing home where you can live more sustainability and make a difference 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. Aspiring ecovillage on 320 forested acres near Asheville. Multi-generational, 60 members. Omnivores; vegetarians; some raise livestock. Spiritually diverse. Natural-built homes, organic gardens, off-grid power, composting toilets, constructed wetlands. We value sustainable ecological systems, permaculture, consensus and right livelihood. Businesses/services—Red Moon Herbs, *Permaculture Activist* magazine, sustainable forestry, permaculture design/installation. Workshops on permaculture, natural building, herbal medicine, starting an ecovillage. Seeking hard-working, visionary people, including organic growers, families with children, people with homesteading skills. www.earthaven.org. Free Information Pack or larger pack \$10. info@earthaven.org; 1025 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-

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R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; visit@eastwind.org

ECO-FARM, Plant City, Florida. Community-minded couple seeking working partners in small vegetable and tree farm near Tampa, Florida. Some of our interests include sustainable living, alternative energy and building methods, permaculture, horticulture and books, as well as fun activities such as drumming, hiking, boating, camping and concerts. We also volunteer for and support groups involved in environmental and social justice issues. We farm conventional and unusual vegetables and fruits using IPM and organic methods. The farm also has a working mechanic shop and just about any other tool necessary for sustainable living. Check out our web site at www.ecofarmfl.org or call Jon at 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.

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

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

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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, 2000 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

COMMUNITIES FORMING

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

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY, Burkesville, Kentucky. Community forming on an organic/biodynamic farm in rural Kentucky. Secluded and private with frontage on the Cumberland River. Farm has been certified organic for 13 years. Four tracts available from 5-25 acres, ranging in price from \$15,000 to \$50,000. Long



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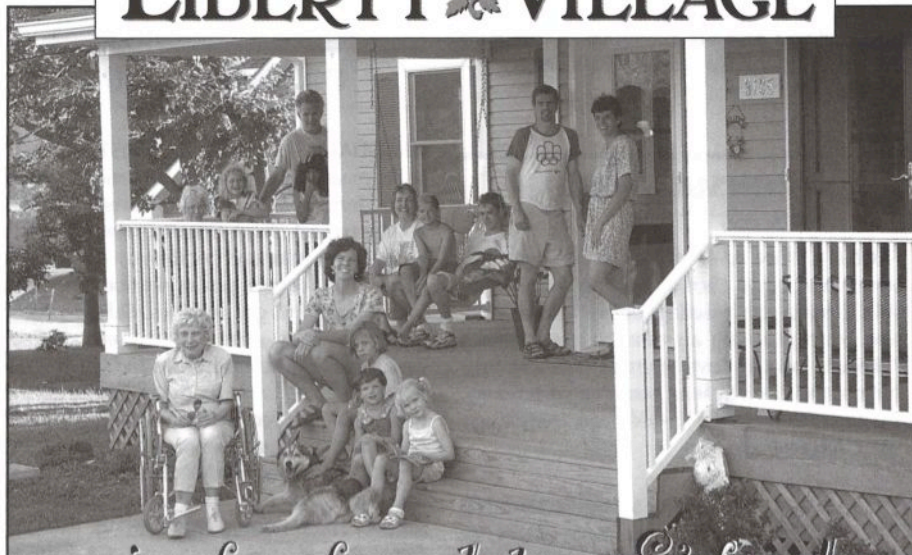
MAGICKAL COMMUNITY, Washington State. I'm planning to start a community for magickal people: wiccans, pagans, shamans, gypsies, etc. It's still in the planning stages—I'm currently looking for land in the mountains of Washington. My intention is to purchase the land and build small homes for families to rent. Tents and mobile homes are an option to start. In the center will be community halls, spiritual centers and a school where the children can be part of a home-schooling collective that teaches classes in witchcraft/ritual/magick along with basics. I want to build a street of magickal shoppes—ideal for pagans with online businesses! This will be a community for magick folk who might have to work in the non-magick world, but who wish to live with their own kind. Still in planning/dreaming phase. I'd like to hear from any magick folk out with ideas/interest or desire to be a part of the startup! Ronindaeymoon@hotmail.com

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

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WINDTREE RANCH, Douglas, Arizona. Living simply in the high desert on 600 acres, mild winters, tobacco/drug free, vegetarian, multi-generational. Physically demanding. Internships and retreats available. Request application. www.windtreeranch.org; 4200 E. Summerland

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

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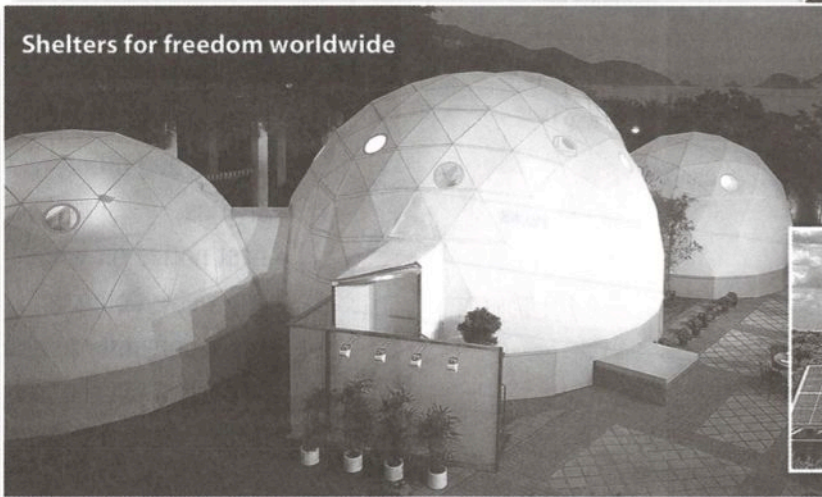
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PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 72)

upholding “right” values and enforcing “justice” upon those who were in the “wrong.” Unfortunately, as with most holy wars, neither the Branch Davidians nor their lawyers had a chance to present their side of the story until after the tragedy was history.

Given that dangerous dogmas can come from either a religion or its detractors, the clearest peril is from those groups that adopt an elitist attitude, believing, “My way is right, all others are wrong” (or worse, that all others are doomed to hell and damnation, with no hope of salvation). Thus an obvious question for a person exploring spiritual communities would be “How do I tell the zealots from the genuinely spiritual?” My advice would be to look beyond the stated basic principles and evaluate how the community members embody spiritual values in their everyday lives, especially in the practices of reflection, self growth, and honesty; the expression of mercy, kindness, compassion, and love; and the doing of good works (over and above any efforts to spread the religion).

In the spiritual communities that have impressed me, the members appear to be authentically inspired and happy, and their lives seem to work well for them. These communities all have rituals and routines to bring people together, to challenge assumptions, to bring egos into line, to get the work done, and to explore the great mysteries of life. As long as they welcome questions, do good works, and exist in harmony with folks not on their path, I can indulge them in a little dogma here and there. If their rules and norms get too rigid and constraining, then I start to question the wisdom of their culture. It’s a delicate dance ...

Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 31 years, and has been on the road for 16 years visiting communities—asking about their visions and realities, taking photos, and giving multimedia shows about the diversity and vitality of the communities movement. Presently, he is working with a team of community activists to draft a pamphlet series of progressive “talking points” to help influence the upcoming elections, and in his nearly nonexistent spare time he is editing part two of his Visions of Utopia video documentary about intentional communities.

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Dancing with Dogma:

The Fine Line Between Religion & Spirituality

“Religion is what gives spirituality traction in the culture,” contends Huston Smith, author of the classic textbook *The World’s Religions* (first published in 1958 as *The Religions of Man*). Smith, one of the world’s foremost authorities on comparative religion, shared that insight as an afterthought following his answer to the question “Why is it that all religions seem to end up with some leaders who are egotistical, dogmatic, and controlling?” His answer to that was, essentially, that religious leaders are human and therefore subject to the same temptations and pitfalls as the rest of us. His “traction” comment was intended to be encouraging, assuring us that if an individual is exposed to religious rituals and materials, there is a chance that some spiritual awakening and growth may result—in spite of corrupt or misguided leadership. In that light, the important focus should be on spirituality, not religion.

Here’s my functional definition of religion: A system of beliefs and social norms that exposes people to spiritual ideas and experiences, and helps them incorporate spiritual values into their daily lives. A religion is a group thing, and most religions include an organizational structure—though that’s not a necessary component so much as a convenience that can offer efficiency and continuity in passing along the teachings. A person’s “culture,” though broader and more pervasive than a religion, can fill these same roles, although the structures tend to be less obvious and therefore less subject to question.

“Spirituality,” on the other hand, is ultimately a very personal thing: a vital connection to the life force, a sense of the sacred, an understanding of “the meaning of life,” and a moral framework for how to live one’s life. Ultimately it’s what shapes a person’s beliefs about God, forms the basis of their “faith,” and determines their sense of their personal role in the cosmic drama. For many,

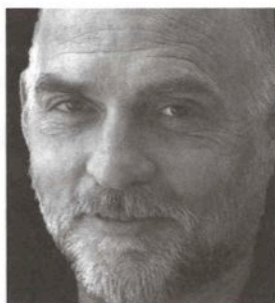
religion provides the lens through which spirituality is seen. However, when one’s personal understanding gets expanded into a rule or guideline for others to follow, the usual result is dogma.

A little dogma can be a useful thing in the overall flow of life. In this context I am defining “dogma” to mean “a strongly held opinion or belief that is accepted without question.” Once you think something through, it can be valuable and time-saving to create a routine that guides future actions. Take tooth brushing, for example. Rather than have a debate with yourself each and every time before brushing—about the hygienic and aesthetic pros and cons of the action—it’s efficient to tell yourself, “Brushing reduces cavities and leaves my teeth feeling clean, so I’m going to brush after every meal,” and leave it at that. That’s a very useful, functional dogma. However, it’s when simple dogmas start to block out new input—the information needed to review, reevaluate, and create a new and better norm—that they become problems.

To put dogma into a historical context: Spirituality has never launched an Inquisition, imprisoned a non-believer, nor burned an accused witch at the stake ... those examples are all the result of religion gone amok, stories of religious zealots embarking on narrow-minded paths and closing themselves off from the opinions of those outside the church. Further, at times the problem expands beyond the activities of an overly zealous religion and into a hysterical overreaction by the prevailing forces of society—for example, the FBI

and ATF’s 1993 slaughter of the Branch Davidian community at Waco, Texas (see *Communities* #88, Fall ’95), which was a catastrophe of prejudicial stereotyping, poor reconnaissance, and nonexistent fact-checking supervised by government agents who likely believed that they were

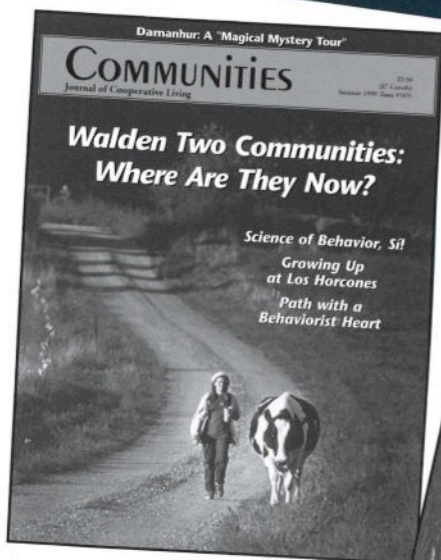
(continued on p. 71)



BY GEOPH KOZENY

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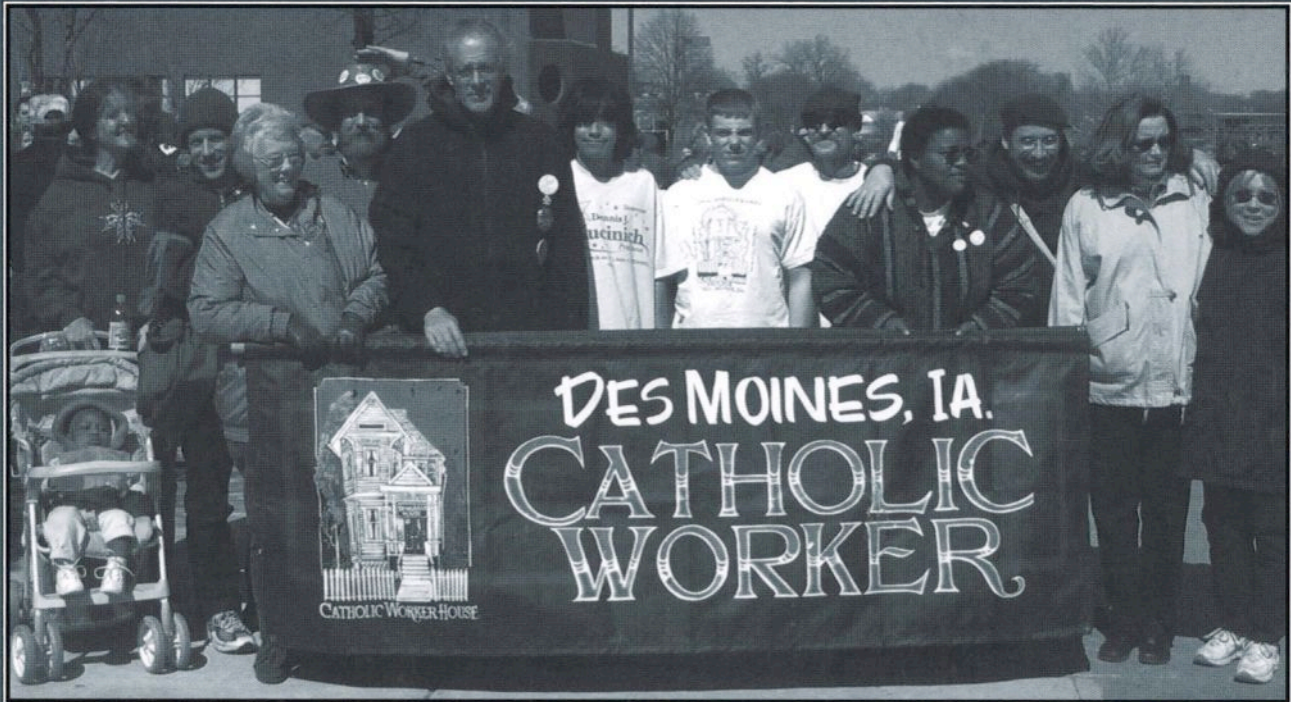
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