

Why Does Anyone Do This?

# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

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Winter 2004 (Issue #125)

## *Life After Student Co-ops*

***Why Student Co-ops Rock***

***Ruined for American Culture***

***Now I Want to Join a Community  
(or Maybe Start My Own ... )***

***The Toughest Issue We Ever Faced***



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# Communities Directory

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Welcome to the online Communities Directory, part of the **Intentional Communities** website, a project of the **Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC)** (in partnership with **other organizations**). Intentional Communities can update their listings online so you get the most up to date information possible. To list your community click [here](#).

If you are looking for an Intentional Community browse through our [alphabetic list](#) or [search our database](#). You can filter your search on many key characteristics of each community such as location, size, etc.

This website is funded completely by donations plus volunteer labor. If you find this site useful we encourage you to [donate](#) to our Communities Directory Fund.

The FIC also sells a **Communities Directory book**. Our last edition is still available in limited quantities. A new edition will be available sometime in 2005 and will feature updated information from this website.



Today's Randomly Featured Communities

**Dearborn Commons Cohousing** (Washington, United States)  
 Our Community Dearborn Commons is a new cohousing project forming to build a second cohousing community in the Jackson Place neighborhood of Seattle. The community...

**Gentle World Inc.** (Hawaii, United States)  
 We are a non-profit organization, educating the public as to the health, environmental and spiritual benefits of the vegan diet and lifestyle. We publish books, and...

**Women's Art** (New York, United States)  
 The Women's Art Co... private rooms...

**Koinonia Park** (Hawaii, United States)  
 We are an intentional... k...ing...

**Fairview Coop** (New York, United States)  
 Fairview Cooperative... AS...

**Huehucoyotl** (Mexico)  
 Huehucoyotl is an e...

**Twelve Tribes** (New Hampshire, United States)  
 The community in Lancaster began in 1988 when a small group of us had vision to restore an old, fire-damaged building down on Main Street. Amazingly, restoration...

**Kookaburra Park Eco-Village** (Queensland, Australia)  
 Forming  
 Kookaburra Park Eco-Village is situated just 2.5 kms from a small township called Gin Gin on the main highway north (Bruce Highway) in Queensland...

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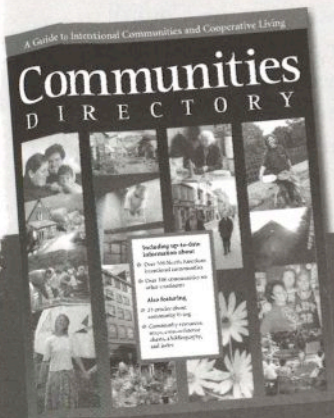
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Now all of the information from the Communities Directory is available online at [directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org). Browse our alphabetical list or search on a variety of characteristics to find the community of your dreams.

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[directory.ic.org](http://directory.ic.org) will also be the primary source for data for the next edition of the printed book, the Communities Directory, coming out in 2005. Update your information today!



The 2000 Edition of the Communities Directory is still available in limited quantities. Order yours today at [store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org). \$34 postage paid. Includes updates through 2004.



# COMMUNITIES

JOURNAL of COOPERATIVE LIVING

## FOCUS

### *Life After Student Co-ops*

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At an ICC Co-op in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Photo: Sheila Ritter.

#### BACK COVER

At the House of Commons, Austin, Texas

Photo: Julie Pennington

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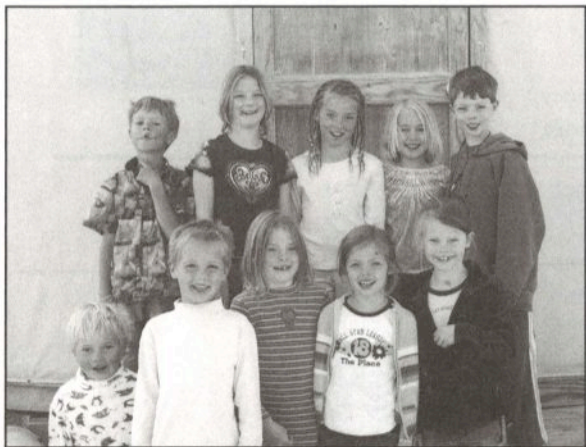
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# COMMUNITIES

Journal of Cooperative Living

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# LETTERS



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

Dear *Communities*:

Interesting that you're doing an issue on student cooperatives. My husband and I met while he was living at the Agrarian Effort cooperative house on the UC Davis campus. We now have three teenage daughters who do the annual trek back to the community with us for a Thanksgiving feast. I have a fantasy that one of my daughters will one day live there.

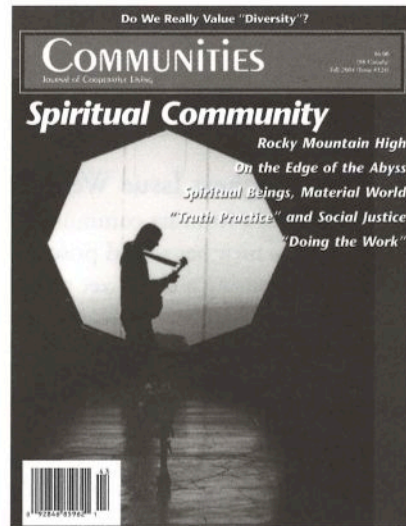
Joan Linney  
Santa Rosa, California

## Fall '04 "Spiritual Communities" issue

Dear *Communities*:

I'm reading the current issue with interest. Thanks for finally broaching this subject. I think it's a wonderful issue.

Ruth Lambach  
Communal Studies Association



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Hello:

I've been reading the current issue on Spiritual Communities (#124, Summer '04); enjoying as usual. At the end of Parke Burgess's article, "'Truth Practice,' Intimacy, and Social Justice," the FEC's website was incorrect. It's actually: www.thefec.org.

Tree Bressen  
Walnut Street Co-op  
Eugene, Oregon

FEC is the Federation of Egalitarian Communities. —Editor

### More Thanks

Dear Diana:

I thank you and the whole *Communities* staff for continuing to put together—issue after issue—such an inspiring publication.

Frank Deitle  
San Francisco, California

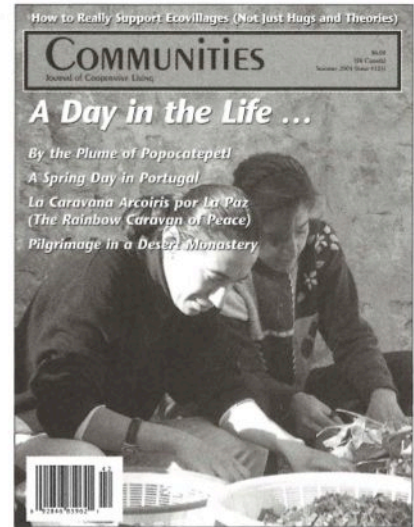
## Summer '04 "Day in the Life" issue

Dear *Communities*:

Mucho gusto en saludarla, senora Diana Christian, le escribo para solicitarle copia de un articulo escrito por Alberto Ruz Buenfil en la Revista *Communities*. I'm sorry for my English. I'm learning English. Thank you very much.

Angelica Urrea  
Santa Maria California

Angelica is thanking us for the article, "La Caravana Arcoiris por La Paz" (The Rainbow Caravan of Peace), about a traveling theater group teaching permaculture, ecovillage living, and other aspects of sustainability throughout Central and South America. See Alberto Ruz' new column, "No Mad' Living," about similar caravans worldwide, pg. 11. —Editor



# Peak Oil – The Day World Oil Production Will Begin to Decline... Forever.



Our *New Solutions* reports explore this and other topics in depth: Cuba's response to the sudden loss of oil in 1990, the geopolitical ramifications of oil, what intentional communities offer and more.

For a free sample issue of *New Solutions*, call 937-767-2161 or email [info@communitysolution.org](mailto:info@communitysolution.org). Yearly subscription/membership is \$25.



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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](mailto:communities@ic.org).

### Advertising Policy

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

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

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### What is an "Intentional Community"?

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

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE



# Using Email for Community-Wide Conversations? A Few Words of Caution ...

**We'll never get the genie back in the bottle.**

Email is here to stay and we need to figure out how best to live with this increasingly dominant, yet complicated mode of communication—especially as it's used in groups, such as among community members. There are things about using email this way I love—and things that scare me.

It's great for posting and requesting information, disseminating drafts of proposals, making arrangements, etc. It's cheaper than the phone, way quicker than a letter, and you can do it at your convenience.

Discussions are trickier. For starters, email is not a conversation; it's a fragment. While you can pretty well include all the ideation that accompanies a conversation, you're missing all the ancillary information (pace, tone, body language, eye contact, etc.) that enriches and fills out face-to-face communication. It is easy to project an erroneous spin onto email, and then take several communications to clear up mistakes—corrections that would be made on the spot if you could see the sender's face or hear their tone.

Another problem can be the time delay, which mushrooms geometrically with the number of people in the discussion. People do not receive, digest, and respond to email traffic simultaneously. One person's input may be formulated without having read the last three comments ... or maybe they *have* seen the last three comments (but can you be sure?). Sometimes people just zip off an email after having read the opening or last statement and never bother to read anything else.

You also need to be on guard about possible shifts in who's getting the traffic. Sometimes, a person gets the notion mid-stream to include a new person because they can see how their input would be relevant. Or in making a reply, someone inadvertently leaves off part of the cc list. Not everyone may be seeing all the messages, and the conversation can get hopelessly tangled.

## COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

### 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](mailto:LaSemillaBesada@hotmail.com); 510-433-0894.



How do you interpret silence? Is the quiet person happy with what's coming out? Confused? Indifferent? Too busy to check email? Is their server down? Hard to say.

Here's what I suggest for using email in groups. First, establish a protocol in which the person starting the discussion is the only one empowered to alter the list of who is receiving email on that topic. Anyone making a comment in the discussion is expected to use the exact list designated for that conversation. If you want to add someone to the list, ask the person who started it, whose job it will be to catch the new person up, and announce the change in the list to everyone else. If anyone drops out, that person should inform everyone that this is happening.

Second, if the discussion involves a significant number of people or goes on for any length of time (such as by the time you've got five or six messages), it helps greatly to have a facilitator manage the conversation, offer frequent summaries, identify partial results, and articulate remaining questions. The facilitator may be the person who started it or someone else: just have one. For complex topics, the facilitator may be posting almost as many messages as everyone else combined. Make no mistake, facilitating an email discussion is a job—just as facilitating thorny topics in live meetings. Yet the diligent work of one person can make a significant quality difference for the whole group.

But using email to deliver interpersonal feedback can get downright dangerous, and should only be attempted with great caution. In addition to the pitfalls outlined above, there is considerable risk of triggering a defensive reaction when delivering criticism. I advise against it unless you know the person wants the feedback and has told you that email is an acceptable way to get it.

When we are watching someone we are communicating with, we have instantaneous information about how our information is landing (are they confused; are they getting upset; are they encouraging?) and we make adjustments in the moment. With email, you are proceeding without knowing any of this. If someone feels attacked early in the communication, by the end of the message they may have worked themselves into outrage. It can get ugly.

## ***Using email to deliver interpersonal feedback can get downright dangerous.***

If you feel the urge to offer personal feedback by email, first try waiting until the urge passes. In most cases, a face-to-face meeting is a better idea. If not, I suggest asking the recipient if they're OK getting your comments via email, and giving them the chance to decline and suggest another format. Remember, pick a method that has the highest chance of being well received—not the method that is quickest or least awkward for you.

Attempting to resolve interpersonal tensions and conflict through email is a bad idea, and should be avoided if at all possible. Once tension and conflict are in the picture, I believe it is far better to attempt resolution by getting the full range of communication cues—you can see the person and they can see you. Given that trust is invariably weakened by tension and conflict, it is all too easy to put a bad interpretation on email received from someone you're in the soup with. Give everyone a break and don't try this! Cleaning up the mess takes much longer than the time you thought you were saving by firing off an email. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, pick up the phone.

Just because email is fast and convenient doesn't mean it's the best way to communicate.

*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.*



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*Diana Christian, Elke Lerman,  
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*Laird Sandhill*

**Consensus: Decisions That  
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*Caroline Estes*

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

**Building a Business While  
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*Carol Carlson, Lois Arkin, Harvey  
Baker, Bill Becker, Judy Morris, Ira  
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**Legal Options for Communities**  
*Allen Butcher, Aiy'm Fellman,  
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**We Tried Consensus and Got  
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*Caroline Estes & Laird Schaub*

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# Torri Superiore: Restoring a Medieval Italian Village

**N**ortheast of Monaco in the foothills of the Italian Maritime Alps, where the nearby affluent tourist playgrounds of Nice, Cannes, and San Remo seem a world away, you'll find the peace and comradeship of a close-knit ecovillage, Torri Superiore.

In 1989, a small group of Italian environmentalists began to buy up and renovate the medieval ruin of the village of Torri Superiore, a complex stone structure built in the 14th century on the hillside above the Bevara River. To defend the village from enemy attack, its medieval founders built Torri Superiore as one large architectural labyrinth, with all individual homes and business spaces connected by stairs and arches. The village was continuously inhabited until after the Second World War, when residents slowly began migrating to the industrial cities of Turin and Milan, or even just down to Torri di Ventimiglia, the newer vil-

lage on the valley floor. Since 1989, Torri Superiore's new community inhabitants have restored 160 rooms, and turned this former ruin into one of Europe's most beautiful ecovillages.

I am staying here as a guest instructor for the community's Ecovillage Training Course, and to enjoy a short holiday. Happily, I notice that these ecovillage students have access to both Diana Leafe Christian's book, *Creating a Life Together*, and to my own recently published *Findhorn Book of Community Living*. Torri Superiore members also offer courses in Permaculture Design, Meeting Facilitation and Consensus, and even Italian Cooking.

From my comfortable bedroom in the guest house, I overlook the steep terraces of the Bevara Valley. Terracing this hillside may have once been an example of small-scale sustainable agriculture, although overpopulation, wars, and soil erosion have seriously degraded this resource. Torri Superiore members are restoring the poor grey soil of this ancient landscape through permaculture design and good ecovillage planning, and have planted a wide variety of crops on these terraces, including vegetables, grapevines, olives, plums, and apples.

Thirty members own the property through a nonprofit organization, Associ-



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



azione Culturale Torri Superiore. Each member contributes 155 Euros (\$185) annually for its operation and upkeep. While most of the association's members visit regularly and help with the work, only 11 adults and five children live here permanently. Together they work hard to restore their seemingly endless stone walls, farm their narrow terraces, and operate their charming guest house and Ecovillage Training Centre. We guests and members eat all our meals together on a wide terrace overlooking the river and valley. Each resident pays 200 Euros (\$240) per month for food and utilities, while guest house residents pay a daily fee. Five of the members who live here receive low salaries to prepare meals and manage the guest house, assisted by volunteers.

Several members pool their income and expenses, while others are financially independent from one another. Each member must contribute labour to the community.

Only a few of the terraces I can see from my guest house window actually belong to the ecovillage. Italy's ancient, bafflingly complex pattern of land ownership means that parcels as small as a few square meters must be negotiated for with often hard-to-locate absentee owners. Today, Torri Superiore still owns only a few hectares of land; however, it's not one contiguous piece. Rather, various portions of their property are scattered over many different small terraces, some a half-hour's walk from the village. One community member tells me that his dream is to have even half a hectare (one acre) of fertile garden land rather than these many small patches of relatively poor soil.

The association members meet every spring and autumn to develop major plans and allocate responsibilities; the resident members meet weekly to discuss interpersonal issues and plan daily tasks. While minor decisions are delegated to individual project managers, all major decisions are made by consensus. Torri

Superiore members tell me that because they are a small group in which everyone knows each other very well, people rarely block a proposal.

While there's plenty of work to do here, income-producing work is hard to come by. Torri Superiore's popular guest house is their major source of cash. Nine resident members work on site and two earn a living offsite: one as a teacher in the nearby village and another as manager of a local winery.

To become a member of Torri Superiore Ecovillage, one needs to visit several times and work with the members, live on-site during a minimum six-month probationary period, and be accepted by every current member. New people do not pay a joining fee, although they would probably need an outside source of income, and must either rent living quarters from or buy into the Torri Superiore complex or live in the nearby village.

Community members encourage those who express an interest in joining to be very clear about their reasons, and try to ensure that each new member will contribute to the collective energy rather than drain energy, of particular concern given that community members live in the same building and share all meals.

Most current members are in couple relationships, although the intense communal life here means that single members probably don't feel as socially isolated as can happen in less close-knit intentional communities.

After a long dinner on their *terrazzo*, over our third glass of local red wine, my old friend Lucilla Borio tells me more. "Our common vision is to prove that it is possible to live communally and to have a really good life even though we work hard and are doing something that looks impossible on paper. We are trying to materialise a dream. We respect each other deeply and respect nature and want to do all we can to save the planet and create an ideal society."

***Its medieval founders built Torri Superiore as one large architectural labyrinth.***



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“No matter where we go or what we do, we cannot escape ourselves,” she adds. “When one lives in community it will all come out. Community living is not always a party; sometimes it’s damned tough!”

Another member, Massimo Candela, says that while community members feel overworked, their biggest problem is to combine communal living in an ecovillage with the strict legal requirements of running a tourist business with its expected high health and other standards.

“In some ways we are more of a tourist venture than an ecovillage, but I would like us to be more of a training centre.” Lucilla adds that while a shortage of money and good land is always a problem for Torri Superiore, more important than money and land is for members to feel appreciated for the good work they’re doing in restoring this environment and serving as a model of sustainable community living.

For some years, Torri Superiore was the European headquarters of the Global Ecovillage Network in Europe (GEN-Europe), and it still fulfils an important

networking function between intentional communities around the globe. Members see themselves as not just living in a small ecovillage within this beautiful valley but also as part of a worldwide movement to promote ecologically sustainable communities.

“Some parts of my personal dream I am unable to transform into reality,” says Massimo, referring to the hard work of restoring the community’s land and buildings. “In the beginning, I concentrated more on the spiritual path but I have lost that, little by little. I am

**We want to have a  
really good life even  
though we are doing  
something that  
looks impossible.**

now trying to find a way to again work on my inner path through the land and the gardens.”

Lucilla’s dream is to complete the restoration work of creating adequate seminar spaces and plenty of comfortable accommodations for students and visitors. “Then I want to release the ‘stone energy’ that we sometimes carry inside us from working with such a massive, heavy structure—and the enormous weight of 700 years of history. I feel that the stones really do absorb much of our energy.”

Why does she stay here? “I love waking up here in the morning, hearing cicadas and birds, and going to bed listening to the frogs. The smells and sounds of this place are magical. I can picture myself as an old lady making jams and soap here at Torri Superiore.”

I leave to walk along a narrow stone pathway, past centuries-old ruins, to swim in a beautiful natural pool in the Bevara River, and watch the sun set behind the Granmondo mountains. It doesn’t get much better than this!

Torri Superiore is not a utopia, but it is an exciting ecovillage. Here good people are doing their very best to live in harmony with nature and their neighbours, while serving as a global model of recycling and restoration, and social and agricultural sustainability



LUCILLA BORIO





Inter  
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# Nomadic Caravan Communities Worldwide

**L**a Noria-Huayca, Tarapacá, Chile. September, 2004.

Hóla, *Communities* readers. I'm writing from a small town in the northern desert of Tarapacá, Chile, our mobile community's first temporary base since we finally left Iquique, Chile, where we camped for several months. I wrote about our nomadic way of life, traveling through Latin America doing theater and offering classes in ecovillages and sustainability, in "A Day in the Life of La Caravana Arcoiris por la Paz" (The Rainbow Caravan of Peace) in the Summer '04 issue.

"No Mad' Living" is a new quarterly column of road stories collected while traveling in *La Caravana Arcoiris*, or stories from intentional communities, ecovillages, or traditional villages we meet along the way. We hope to add more Latino color and flavor to *Communities* magazine!

Other caravan communities, many inspired by our example, are forming in other parts of the world. In this first column, I want to tell you about some of these. A few are in the planning stages; a few are currently traveling; and some have finished their journeys and are settling down to create land-based communities. (Note: I use the word *caravanista* to mean someone who is, or has been, a part of our La Caravana

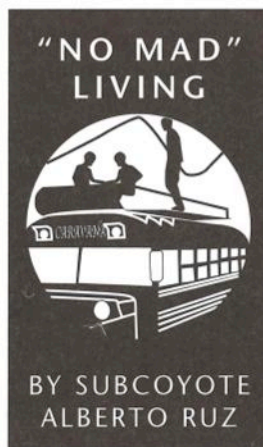
nomadic community, and *Caravanera* to mean "like La Caravana.")

**La Caravanne Amoureuse (France-India).** I learned about this group from Leo, a French former caravanista. *Marc Vello*, [www.marcvello.com](http://www.marcvello.com).

**The Electric Blue Monkey Theater Caravan (United States-Costa Rica).** This group wrote us asking for advice and contacts. *wethenomadicspirits@yahoo.com*.

**Carreta de la Paz (Colombia).** This project was born in Cali, Columbia, as the inspiration of two Colombian former caravanistas, Duende and Jorge. After Duende was killed in an accident last year the project did not move forward much, and now that Jorge is about to be a new father, I believe the seed group will be consolidating as a land-based ecovillage. Their beautifully written proposal is very "Caravanera" in inspiration and form. *Jorge Calero*, [www.lacarretadelapaz.8m.com](http://www.lacarretadelapaz.8m.com).

**Sustainable Biodiesel Caravan (California-Costa Rica).** This group traveled from the US to our Mexican ecovillage Huehucoyotl and met my son Odin there. They wrote several times, and now are building a land-based community in Costa Rica. I believe they were probably very much



*Subcoyote Alberto Ruz is a cofounder of Huehucoyotl Ecovillage in Morelos, Mexico, and The Rainbow Caravan of Peace, now traveling in Chile. [www.lacaravana.org](http://www.lacaravana.org); [info@lacaravana.org](mailto:info@lacaravana.org); [subcoyotealberto@yahoo.com](mailto:subcoyotealberto@yahoo.com).*

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inspired by La Caravana and our story. Gretchen Ferrell, [gretchsara@hotmail.com](mailto:gretchsara@hotmail.com); [costaricacaravan@yahoo.com](mailto:costaricacaravan@yahoo.com).

Karavana Ahimsa (America–Asia–Europe). This group intends to build a traveling caravan ship with recycled materials. Thomas, their main spokesperson, participated in the international ecovillage gathering, El Llamado del Condor (The Call of the Condor), in Peru last fall.

He now lives in Europe, and is helping to produce the international Beija Flor Gathering to be held in September 2005 in Brasil. Oscar Tinajero, fire keeper for the group, travels on his own and promotes their project everywhere he goes, including at the World Social Forum in India this year. *Oscar Tinajero, guardianfuego@hotmail.com; thomas@alerta.org.br.*

**La Rana Nomadic Project (Montana).** Long-time caravanistas Jason Gutzmer, a cofounder of La Caravana, and Penelope Baquero, whom Jason met and married in Colombia, now live in a converted school bus near Missoula, Montana, promoting and developing projects like ours. *penelope\_baquero@yahoo.com; www.bioneers.org.*

**Nomades Karavan (Buenos Aires).** The 13 Moons Peace Movement traveled in Brasil, Argentina, and Chile for three years in a caravan of buses, directly inspired by our La Caravana project and by their spiritual guide, the author Jose Arguelles. They continue producing many art and sustainability events in Argentina and Brasil; however, they are not traveling as a tribe anymore. They are planning to join La Caravana in our journey through Brasil to the Beija Flor gathering. *Anibal Luporini, allprincipito@yahoo.com.ar; karavana@tortuga.com.*

**The Caravan Trail (Nairobi, Kenya).** Information about this project came to us from Liora Adler, another founding member of La Caravana, when she attended the

World Environmental Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Rachel Wambu Kungu, rwaquel@yahoo.com.*

## We hope to add more Latino color and flavor to Communities magazine!

The Rainbow Serpent Caravan (Brasil–Costa Rica); Caravana Circo Yamara (Brasil–Mexico). Pit, a Dutch clown and social activist, spent a year in La Caravana in Ecuador. Since he left, his main focus has been creating new caravans of clowns, jugglers, and environmental activists, mostly from Brasil. As far as we know, the Rainbow Serpent Caravan is now in Mexico. *Ricardo Amazonas, malabarota@yahoo.com.ar.*

**Caravana do Beija Flor (Brasil).** Directly inspired by our project, this group will host La Caravana when we arrive in Brasil in 2005 and will travel with us to the Beija Flor gathering. *lucaluluca@hotmail.com.*

**El Guaguacirco (El Salvador–Panamá–Colombia).** Also inspired by us, and formed by two former Colombian caravanistas, Inti Agudelo and Milena, this group traveled in El Salvador, Panama, and Colombia. They are planning to join Jorge Calero and Carolina Velasco on a land-based ecovillage in Colombia, working with them on projects of permaculture, organic gardens, and art for social change. *Inti Agudelo, guaguacirco@lyos.com*

**The Fuel-Free Biodiesel Peace Caravan (Brasil).** Waldir Roge Rio Sachs, the group's founder, wrote and described plans for a project very similar to ours. *www.icandosomething.com*

**European Planetary Art Network (PAN) Caravan.** We learned about this group, which is also affiliated with the 13 Moons Peace Movement, from Pablo Bedmar, a Spanish caravanista who was in touch with them last year in Spain. They participated in the Llamado del Condor event and took part in our Vision Council for the Beija Flor gathering. *Mark Heley, markheley@lycos.com.*







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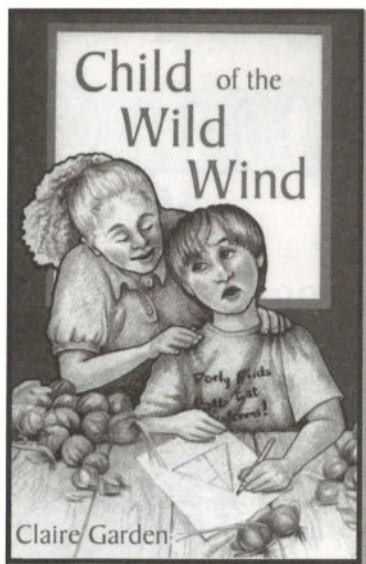
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## Journal of a Forming Community: Bream Lake Cooperative

**I**n July 2003, Chris Greene and Jo Dempsey purchased a modest house on almost two acres on Bream Lake, near Gainesville, Florida. They intend to create a housing co-op, Bream Lake Cooperative, and eventually establish an intentional community on a larger scale. Here are some excerpts from Jo's diary in February, 2004.

February 4, 2004, Wednesday. Today Chris and I hired Doug, a neighbor, to remove tree stumps with his backhoe and bulldozer. He also accidentally dug up the water and electric lines to the pump. So with his backhoe, he dug a trench from the outside electrical panel to the pump. Chris fixed the water pipe and temporarily patched the electrical, so we still have water. Frank (an electrician friend) will come over this weekend to run a new wire for us in the trench. Now with the stumps removed, we can move forward with planting an orchard. We plan to have citrus, avocado, peaches, plums, apples, figs, and nectarines. Down by the lake, we're also going to plant papaya, which grows like an annual here. Next month, we'll buy trees that have been grown in a greenhouse since last August and are about three feet tall. They should begin to ripen fruit in September. The winter will eventually get them, though. Some-

where we'll make room for blueberries and grapes.

February 7, 2004, Saturday. This afternoon Chris and I went to a potluck at Crawford's place, invited by Sura, who runs our food co-op. Crawford lives very simply on acreage in Citra, Florida, just a few miles south of us. It felt good to meet other alternative people in our area, and to start making some connections. The weather was absolutely perfect. In the late afternoon, we saw several groups of Sandhill cranes flying in to spend the night on a nearby island. Several hundred cranes gather there every evening, we were told.

February 9, 2004, Monday. Yesterday, Chris, Frank and I spent a good deal of time filling in the trench for the new pump wire. What a job! I am sore today. This morning I mailed some money to Andy in Hawaii

for starter roots for yellow and Thai ginger and turmeric.

February 12, 2004, Thursday. Yesterday Chris, John, and I worked around the house. John is an activist and an old friend of Chris's. John lives his convictions. He decided 20 years ago that cars are not an appropriate transportation method because they



Jo Dempsey, on a quest for "true health and the good life," is married to Chris Greene, formerly an organic farmer in New Hampshire for 20 years. For more information about Bream Lake Cooperative: [www.everything-is-related.info](http://www.everything-is-related.info).





are so wasteful of our resources, and he has not ridden in one since. He'll stay with us for a while, helping us get this place whipped into shape. Today Chris tilled and John raked and removed stumps; I finished painting Chris's new computer room.

**February 14, 2004, Saturday.** Last night we went to an ecovillage potluck in Gainesville. This group, about 15 people, have been meeting and talking about community for some time. After eating, we sat in a circle and each person had a chance to speak. Chris explained we strongly feel that community needs "glue" and went on to describe our ideals for community—that community members will foster the deepest kind of spirituality, a true sacredness for life, without following any organized religion; that they'll recognize the problems of greed in Capitalism (and authoritarianism in Communism), and strive to operate with the utmost integrity economically; and that they will recognize the problems of overpopulation and take personal responsibility in their own family planning. One participant responded that ecovillage shouldn't be about adopting any one person's social agenda, and that community glue could be seen as the desire to be in community.

This morning is rainy and dreary, a real winter day.

**February 17, 2004 Tuesday.** John and Chris continued spreading manure in the

areas where we will do row and trellis gardening. Chris tilled it in and then John covered it up with hay. It's important to get manure incorporated into the soil and then covered with hay as soon as possible, as this helps keep the fly population down. We don't want to upset the neighbors! The pump gave out this afternoon, and we spent the evening without water.

**February 19, 2004, Thursday.** Yesterday (cool and sunny) we spent a good portion of the day getting bids from four different pump contractors. We told them all that we want to irrigate extensively, in addition to supplying the house. Each one had a different solution. We finally decided to go with the last one we talked to, who told us exactly what was wrong with the pump (bad starting capacitor) and that we should irrigate straight out of the lake. He has a degree in geology from the University of

***We strongly feel  
that community  
needs "glue."***

Florida and said that irrigation from the lake is much preferable to pumping water out of the aquifer and that the irrigation water that does not evaporate or get absorbed by plants will drain right back into the lake anyway. (Chris later called our water district management and confirmed that it is indeed permissible to irrigate with lake water.) We decided to replace the pump instead of repairing it since it was showing significant wear and it was just a question of time before we'd need to replace it. It took only a couple of hours

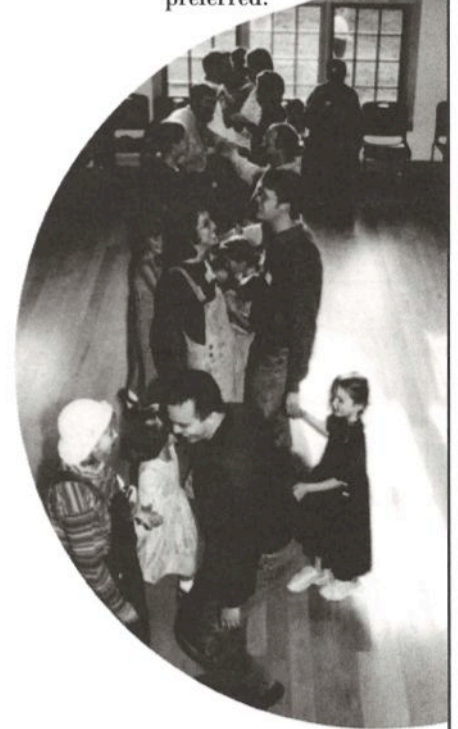
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today to get a new pump installed. It was nice to be able to wash dishes and take showers again. John went swimming in the lake; he said it was refreshing! It was an absolutely gorgeous day: not much wind, gentle warm sunshine, the kind of day where you feel like anything good could happen.

I spent yesterday afternoon finishing my first raised garden bed. Now I need to decide if I want more manure before I plant.

February 21, 2004, Saturday. Discussion around the table this morning: John said that the majority of ecovillages in the U.S. are classist because there is a cost to join. This is the real reason, in his opinion, they are not successful. Chris agrees that ecovillages are not as successful as they should be, but disagreed about the reason, saying it's because they have no glue, no rallying point, and that's why he is so passionate about his stance on root causes, which is why he really wants us to connect with others who are also passionate about these issues. Chris made the point that the US population is about 290 million, and the ecovillage population as a subset is minuscule.

I got my first garden bed planted today.

February 22, 2004, Sunday. Last night Joanna, Joanna's mom Helen, and Terry spent the night with us. We stayed up until midnight talking community. Joanna is very interested in creating an ecovillage and plans to meet with the Gainesville group next week. They left a book for us to peruse until we see them again at the next potluck in Gainesville (*Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*). What an absolutely fantastic book! We have to get a copy for ourselves. After lunch, Chris and I went to the Waldo flea market, and then we stopped at my parents' place. They gave us a couple of dozen eggs and two tents: John is to use the one he wants. He set up both tents down by the lake late this afternoon. He's sleeping in the bigger one tonight.

February 25, 2004, Wednesday. It started raining on Monday night, and by the time it quit this morning, it had rained four inches. I wonder if all the seeds I just planted got washed away or drowned.

February 26, 2004, Thursday. Last night we went to the potluck in Gainesville and returned Joanna's book to her. We listened to other members in the group. Some people want to be in community in Gainesville; some want to look for land now; some people are just hanging out to see what might happen. Everyone has such a different agenda

## John said that ecovillages are classist because there is a cost to join.

that it is very difficult to gel any sort of cohesiveness anywhere. Chris and I prefer a rural setting and most definitely we'd like to be with other people that share our convictions. We talked about our idea of community glue again. Today we dropped off ads for Bream Lake Cooperative with a couple of local alternative papers. Maybe we will get some response, but I think that we need to run some national ads—in *Communities* magazine, and maybe in the *Caretaker Gazette*.

February 27, 2004, Friday. This afternoon, Chris and I drove to Sura's in Citra to deliver our co-op order and to pick oranges from Johnson's U-Pick. It is just about the end of the season for them, as they have mostly navels. There are lots of oranges still on the trees, though. It will be so nice to have our own citrus in a couple of years.

February 29, 2004, Sunday. It's Leap Year! I continued working on putting the other three garden beds together. Peas and lettuce and radishes are coming up in the first bed so I guess all is not lost with that heavy rain. We are going to another ecovillage potluck in Gainesville tomorrow night. Although we haven't had much of a response to our housing co-op yet, we continue to talk with people about community at every opportunity. We're still confident that soon we will be a viable household cooperative, working on creating an intentional community together!

Ω



# Sharing the Wealth of Community with Foster Children

**W**e've been living with foster children in our house for nine months here at Pioneer Valley Cohousing in Amherst, Massachusetts. In many ways this experience has served to remind us just how supportive cohousing can be to its residents, and how far its influence can reach to improve even the lives of people beyond our cohousing neighborhood.

Last year, the week before Christmas, my neighbor sent an email message to our community: "Two children in Wildwood school need emergency placement in a foster home." I tried to retrieve my senses and quickly delete the message, but I hesitated just a bit too long. I'd been looking for some way to "act locally," what with feeling so powerless about the world situation and an imminent war in Iraq. Little did I know that my husband, Lyons, had already read the message, picked up the phone and called the school to get details on the children.

We talked about it that night. There were lots of reasons not to become foster parents: I run my own business and Lyons had recently started a new job. He also coaches soccer, attends town meeting, and chairs our community's Buildings and Grounds committee. We already had two

kids sharing one room and we would have to dismantle our home office/sewing room to accommodate more. Let's face it: we were already over-committed—not to mention living in a relatively small house.

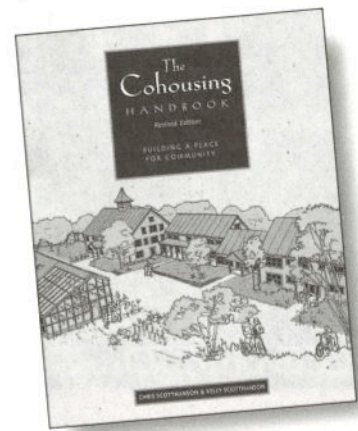
On the other hand, there were many reasons we thought we wanted to do this—we have so much wealth and there is so much need. I'm not talking about monetary wealth; I'm talking cohousing. We have what everybody needs: community. And we have seen firsthand what our community can offer foster children. We have seen four former foster children adopted into our neighbors' families, and five others find a temporary haven here.

While we struggled with this decision, I had an idea. I would post an email to the community explaining that if enough neighbors committed to helping us in very concrete ways, then we would give ourselves permission to consider this. If the community did not step up to the plate for these children—and for us—we would have to say "No." I made a list of what I thought we would need: someone to meet the children's school bus on Mondays so I could still take my 10-year-old son to piano lessons, adult babysitters on Tuesday nights so we could continue our dance classes, and an evening out once a



*Laura Fitch, who lives at Pioneer Valley Cohousing in Amherst, Massachusetts, is an architect in the firm of Kraus Fitch and Associates.*

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



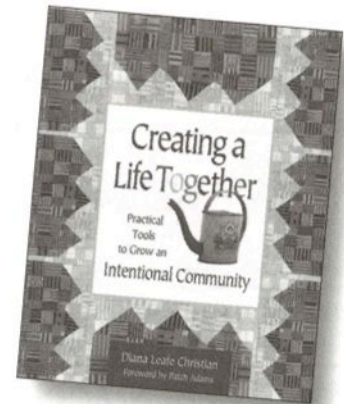
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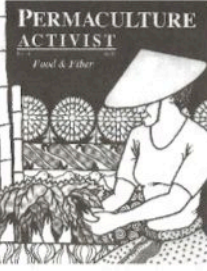


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month. The responses were positive on all of these and something else, too—our neighbor Jamie offered to cook for our family once a week for as long as the kids lived with us!

So “Yes” it was, and we entered a new chapter in our lives—one without regrets but with endless surprises, adjustments, and difficult decisions. Imagine this: on Christmas Eve Daniel and Katrina walked into our lives with terror in their eyes and two garbage bags of clothing. We spent our first day together singing carols around the piano, wiping tears, and worrying about fair distribution of presents.

We re-labeled some of the gifts lovingly purchased for our own sons, and braced ourselves.

When we first volunteered to take them in, the Department of Social Services (DSS) said it would be for two to three months. It wasn't long before we knew otherwise, but since things were going smoothly and the community was shoring us up, we didn't hesitate long before committing to keep Daniel and Katrina through the school year. Nine months later, we are still at it. It hasn't been easy, but really, it hasn't been all that hard either—thanks to living in cohousing.

So what is it that makes cohousing such a good place to harbor foster children? Quite simply, it's the neighbors—both young and old—and the trust and concern that is uniquely engendered by living in cohousing together. Besides the babysitting support and meals, our neighbors are there to listen when we need to blow off steam about our crazy new lives and to offer advice when we ask. And children who lived here just opened their arms and welcomed Daniel and Katrina in: for example, taping a big welcome banner on our front door the very first night.

We knew we had to establish boundaries early. I'm a stern individual so this comes naturally to me, but it was a sort of hell for Daniel and Katrina to have to adjust themselves to a whole new family culture. Living in cohousing helped. These children could see firsthand how other parents set boundaries.

They learned that many adults were looking after them, and wouldn't hesitate to show interest in them while reinforcing the boundaries we were setting.

They learned that many families in cohousing had no television sets or limited TV watching in ways they had never experienced. While they used to boast (to my horror) about how many R-rated movies they had seen, Katrina now points to the new release shelf at the video store and says, “That wouldn't be appropriate.”

It was only a few days after their arrival before Daniel abandoned his “game boy” in favor of playing with his new brothers and their friends. He soon realized that homework was something he could get help with from all the children in the neighborhood. And within a few weeks we had established enough trust to give our new children the gift of running freely around the community and within the Common House, knowing that many caring eyes were helping us watch them.

When we didn't have the time or energy to drive Daniel and Katrina to activities that we knew would be good for them, we quickly found parents of children with similar interests to help us. When Daniel outgrew his major behavioral problems, he blossomed into a mad scientist/inventor. We were exasperated at the idea of setting aside time in our busy schedules to first help him build a bridge, then a go-cart, then a hovercraft. We didn't want to stifle his creativity but he was driving us crazy with his projects. We turned to our neighbor, friend, and inventor John Fabel, and he was glad to step in as a helper and mentor. The hovercraft was actually built!

Five months into their stay with us, it became clear that Daniel and Katrina would not be reunited with their Mom before summer. We were really worried and agonized for weeks over how we could care for them in the summer months while working full time. Could we afford summer camps for four? Would we begin to resent the commitment and their presence in our home if we had to scale back our expectations for nice relaxing summer

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family time? Could we live with ourselves if we passed them on like a load of dirty laundry? Truthfully, we missed our own children and our relatively flexible smaller family of four.

Again we turned to the community and found the help we needed. Associate community members, Epi and Charlie Bodhi, living across town wanted to live "on campus" this summer and agreed to stay in our house with Daniel & Katrina while the rest of our family went on our long-anticipated trip to Alaska. It was hard to explain to Daniel and Katrina why we weren't taking them with us, but it was better than bumping them to another home (DSS could find no other homes in Amherst). Once Epi and Charlie agreed to this, they talked us back into it when we hesitated—they were really excited to be able to help and to get the opportunity to raise kids in a cohousing neighborhood, if only for two weeks!

Another neighbor agreed to watch Daniel and Katrina on the weekdays that we hadn't already set up camp. Everyone knew it would be damaging to bump them to another foster home. Our community had come to love our foster children and didn't hesitate to ask, "What can we do to help so you can keep them in the community for the summer?" They gave us the opportunity to take a much-needed break, and enough support to carry on after that.

Half way through the summer, DSS began Daniel and Katrina's reunification with their mother. It had been months since Daniel and Katrina had screamed at us, thrown tantrums on the floor, attempted to run away, or even said that they hated living with us. They wrote us love notes, and said that they wished their mother could live in the community. It scared the children that they might lose us, but I think they worried even more about losing the community. They had heard about our Fall "kids' day" and "retreat" and they asked me almost daily if they would still be here for the next one. We had estab-

lished a working relationship with their Mom so I assured them that we would see them often and invite them to these events.

But you learn quickly when foster parenting that there are no guarantees. Reunification with Mom was put on hold just before the next school year. What now?

Our two-to-three month commitment was looking like a joke. Once again, neighbors stepped to the plate, primarily with Epi and Charlie offering regular weekend respite time for Daniel, who just needs more space and time than

we can give him.

While the tasks have been endless, and the sacrifices many, the rewards have far outstripped them. We know we have done a good thing, not so much in bringing Daniel and Katrina into a safe, supportive home, but in sharing the wealth of our community with them. Ω

**While the tasks have been endless, and the sacrifices many, the rewards have far outstripped them.**

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# The Toughest Issue We Ever Faced

**O**ne of the events that convinced me I had joined the right community, which I'll call Willow Lake Commons, occurred at the point in our development when our cohousing group had an expiring option on the property we wanted and almost enough households to get a construction loan. We had to close the deal very soon or lose the whole project. Property values had risen more than 25

percent in our area since we put down the option on this parcel, and it was the last suitable property in the neighborhood we wanted to live in. If we lost it we wouldn't have been able to afford any other property in the area. The stakes were high.

It was significant to all our futures in this community when several new households discovered that one of the early and very active members of our group, whom I'll call "John," had been convicted of sexually abusing ("inappropriately touching") a child in the past. Although John maintained his innocence, he had served four years in prison. At first, our membership team had been very careful to inform any prospective new members about this as soon as they showed serious interest in joining our group. But with new people coming and going, committees

changing members, the pressure of dealing with design issues, and our group becoming larger and more complex, the task of informing new people about John's past was forgotten.

Some of the newer people who had not been informed initially were extremely concerned about living in such close proximity to a convicted sex offender. Some had young children. Others had been subjected to sexual abuse themselves as children. At least two households decided to leave. Some members who had been initially informed but hadn't considered the issue very seriously now had second thoughts.

John reiterated his innocence and pointed out that he had not been obligated to tell us about this; he had done so only to be as open as possible with the group. Some members believed

*While this article was originally sent by the author with the real community name, one community member didn't want the story made public. We think it's an important community issue, so our compromise, with the author's permission, is to run this story anonymously and change the name of the community.*

—Ed



John had been open and honest, and that the allegations were likely to have been fabricated or at worst exaggerated. They did not want to see the person they had come to value be excluded from the group for something that had happened years ago and may have been a false conviction. Other members were still concerned that they wouldn't be able to trust that their children could run free in the community or that they would feel comfortable watching John interact with community children.

We were already having difficulty attracting households with children to our cohousing community because schools in the area were so poor. With a convicted sex offender in our group, it might become impossible. John's presence could prevent Willow Lake Commons from forming at all. In addition, John made it clear that he felt he had been unjustly accused and convicted, and he intended to write articles and publish a book about his experience. Many felt the resultant publicity would lead to our community and all cohousing communities being labeled as places that harbored sex offenders.

We had the serious time pressure of potentially losing our property, and no one in our group knew how to resolve this conflict. So we hired an outside facilitator. She met with everyone in small groups, and privately if they wished, and then designed a process for resolving the conflict. It involved opportunities for all parties, including John, to express concerns and ask questions in order to examine their feelings.

In a final scheduled meeting, there would be a consensus decision on whether John would leave the community or the concerned households would leave. The community was very torn about this and many felt that

legally, they had no right to ask another member to leave. Even if John had committed a crime, according to the law he had "paid his dues," and had the same rights as anyone else in the community. But if he stayed and this destroyed the community, what would anyone have gained?

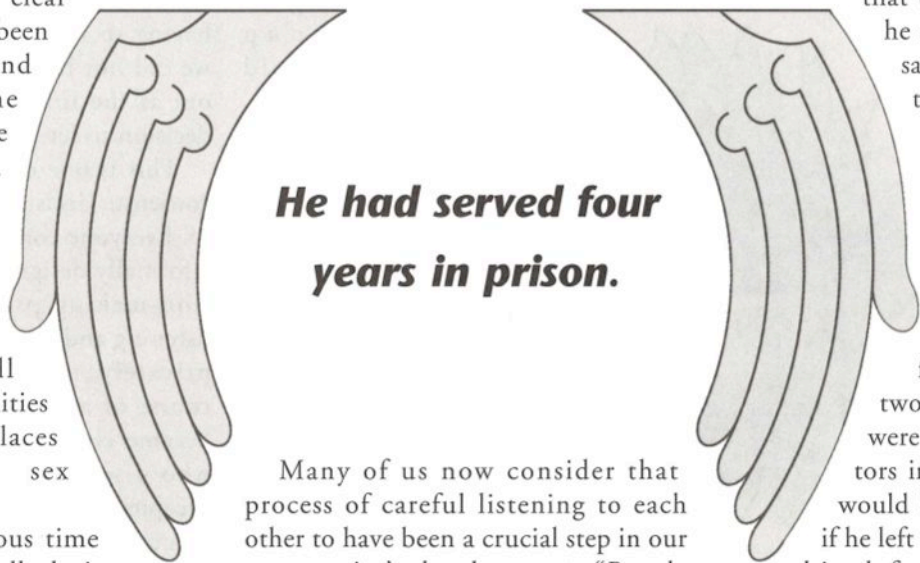
Either way, it was understood that at the end of the last meeting someone would be leaving. If John left, some households might leave in support of him. If John stayed, some households would definitely leave and others would feel uncomfortable with him there. Also if he stayed it would be more difficult to attract new households and the sensitive process of informing and working through their anticipated feelings of discomfort would have to continue, probably for years.

questions. He said he had served the four years to prove his innocence, because if he had admitted that he had "inappropriately touched" a child, he would have been given probation, not jail time. He denied any guilt. He told us that the child was a problem child in a troubled home who was using John as a pawn in a divorce action.

Everything changed, however, when one member, in spite of feeling that he was revealing a confidence, asked John about an earlier accusation of molestation, with a different child, which had been settled out of court with a cash payment. So there had been two formal charges of child molestation. John had confided this event privately to this member early in the process but had never told the rest of us about it. John had not included it in the story he told that day, but when asked he admitted it was true, saying he had forgotten to mention it.

This revelation was pivotal. For some members John's "forgetting" about the previously undisclosed incident and the fact that there were two unrelated incidents were the determining factors in their deciding they would be more comfortable if he left the group. For others, his defensive attitude and unapologetic demeanor in this meeting were decisive. But there were still legal questions. Could he be asked to leave? Was this discrimination? Many felt it legally could not be done. But if John refused to leave, most group members believed it would destroy our forming community.

A few days before the final meeting, a member who had a good relationship with John met with him privately to discuss the situation. She told him that the group would not ask him to leave, as we didn't feel we had the personal or legal right to do so, but some of the households would leave the commu-



***He had served four years in prison.***

Many of us now consider that process of careful listening to each other to have been a crucial step in our community's development. "People agonized over this decision and felt it was the most difficult one they had ever faced in their lives," said one member. "It raised issues of fairness, forgiveness, tolerance, and trust. It prompted discussion about whether or not cohousing communities could ever be places where everyone could be welcomed. It also led to discussions about whether we are our brother's keeper and should look out for each other—keeping an eye on the kids to protect them and keeping an eye on the offender to help him monitor himself."

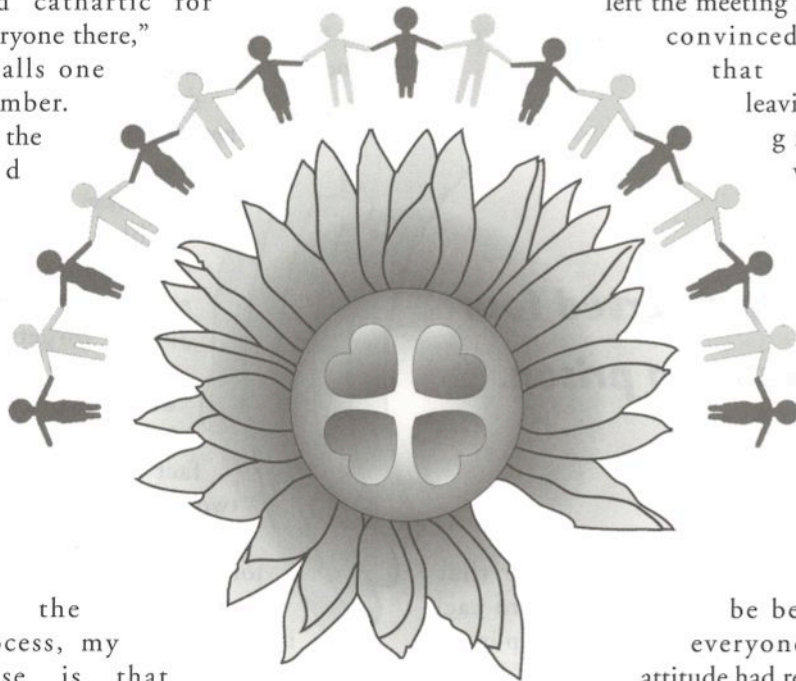
A week before the final meeting, John presented his story and answered



nity. Others would not leave but they would be very uncomfortable about his presence in the community “forever.” She felt that if John understood how the other households really felt, that he would understand how impossible the situation was for everyone and would not want to remain in the community. But John was defiant, defensive, angry, and unrepentant. He refused to withdraw from the group and demanded that the final meeting take place.

The final meeting began with the facilitator reiterating the process and then starting a round in which each member was given an opportunity, speaking from the heart, to say how they felt. “It was deeply moving and cathartic for everyone there,”

recalls one member. “At the end



of the process, my sense is that everyone including John felt heard on a deep level. I felt forgiven for my own error, including not informing newcomers of his background. And I felt heard with respect to my painful and divided feelings on the issue. This meeting was crucial for closure.”

Most people spoke; some passed. Some households, who had previously been open to John’s staying, confirmed that learning about the second incident had changed their minds. It demonstrated to them that, aside from guilt or innocence, John had not been open and forthcoming. Instead of a feeling

of concern and questioning, the preponderance of feeling in the room was now discomfort.

## Could he be asked to leave?

The facilitator directed everyone to look inward and gave John a chance to say his “last words” to the whole group, and anyone who wished could say theirs to him before we made a final decision. In anger and, so it seemed to many, in denial, John spoke, and then left the meeting, saying he would leave the group. The way in which he

left the meeting further convinced some that his leaving the group would

be best for everyone. His attitude had revealed him to be less than understanding and considerate of the rest of us.

After John left the room, the facilitator gave us extended time to express what we were proud of and what we were sorry about in the process. “What was powerful and instructive about this for me was the open-heartedness that people brought to this whole passage in the life of our community,” recalls another member. “I will never forget sitting in that large circle, talking about

what we were sorry about and what we were proud of, and the soul-searching way in which we spoke with one another—the painful honesty spoken as gently as we could and the connections it forged.”

No other households left the community after John left, and we were not divided by rancorous feelings, although two members still feel strongly that John was innocent and should have stayed. John remained on our email list for over a year, participated minimally in discussions, talked of renting a room with one resident or another, and kept some personal friends in the community. Eventually he moved to Europe where, he said, “People are not so provincial.”

Some still believe that John made the decision by angrily announcing he would leave, in effect saving us from having to make a decision at all. But we did not have to accept his walking out as the final decision. We made a decision to let him leave.

This is one of the best examples of consensus decision-making that I know of. Everyone concerned participated in a formally designed and accepted decision-making process that included listening and questioning, publicly and privately, until the most workable course of action available at the time became clear to everyone. Even those who disagreed that John was guilty accepted the final truth that under the circumstances, he had to leave—and they stayed.







SANDY THOMPSON

BY SANDY THOMPSON

*Author Sandy Thomson with children, closing the circle. "I personally feel blessed to be part of this wonderful gift to the children," she says.*

# A HOMESCHOOL WITH HEART

**T**wo years ago, several families at Heartwood Cohousing were unhappy with the public school here in Bayfield, Colorado, and we wanted to offer something better for our 12 community children. And so the Heartwood Homeschool Cooperative was born.



## The Tropical Rainforest

Each line of this poem was composed by a different child at Heartwood Homeschool Co-op.

Mist drifts through the giant trees,  
Toucans squawk, Beautiful butterflies flutter.  
Monkeys swing through the branches.  
Snakes slither on the ground and high in the trees.  
Monkeys swing on vines and fly through the air.  
Colorful parrots fly above the trees.  
Crocodiles swim in the river, underwater.  
Sloths hang in the trees, taking care of their babies.  
Agoutis scamper across the forest floor.  
Leaf-cutter ants chew the leaves out.  
Frogs croak by the ponds.  
Bees buzz around the beautiful big flowers.  
Ants march on the ground in thousands.  
Iguanas climb in the green leaves.  
Now it's getting dark. Howler monkeys are howling.  
It rains all night in the tropical forest.

—S.T.

A typical school day begins as our children meet up in the Common House before school. They drop off their lunch baskets, then walk through the community chattering like a flock of birds. At the end of the paved walkway they continue on a short path to the yurt "schoolhouse" through the piñon, juniper, and ponderosa forest. Sometimes they'll catch a glimpse of deer, coyote, or wild turkey. Inside the canvas yurt schoolhouse, they take off their boots and gather around the woodstove talking and playing like cubs in a cozy den.

At nine a.m. sharp, circle begins. Twelve kids, three teachers, and a lot of energy gather around the candle in the center of the circle. Each child is greeted and hugged by each teacher and then called into the circle with a song. We all recite our opening verse together and more songs and poems follow for the next half hour. We close the circle with a verse and gather around the candle for a moment of silence before we break up into groups for the day's classes.

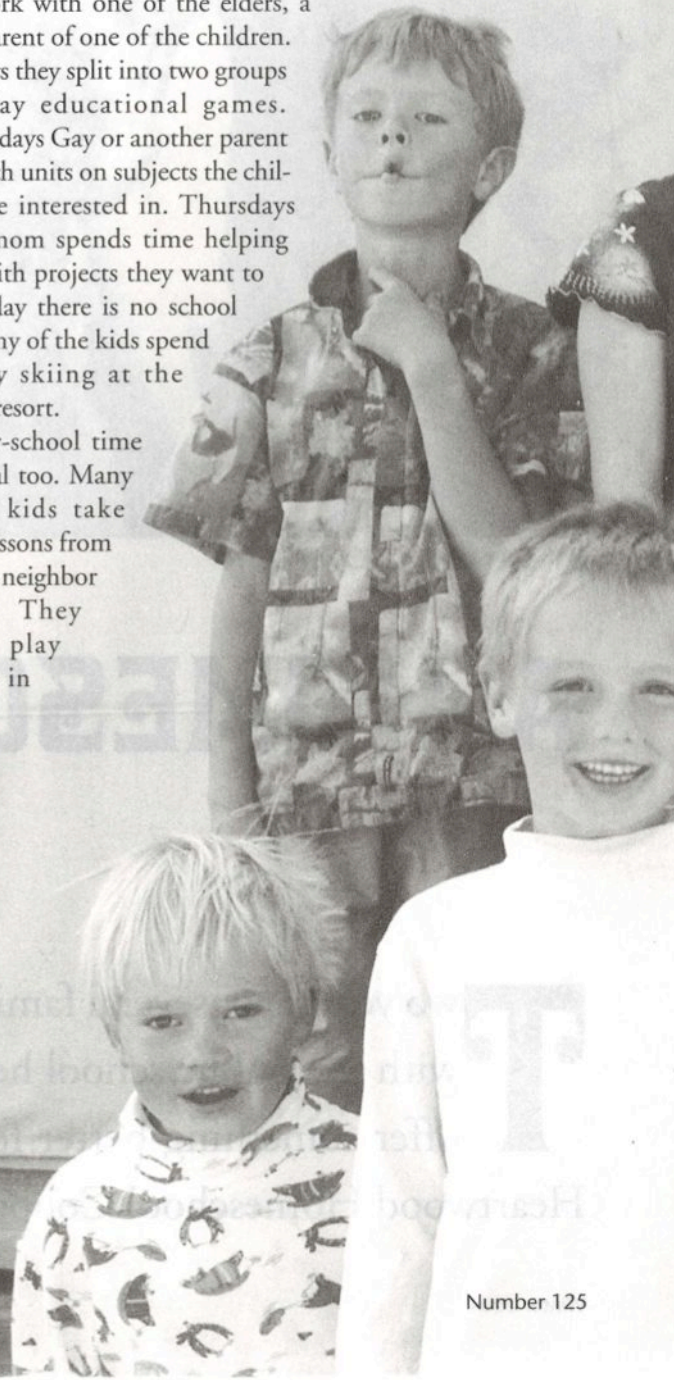
The kindergartners return to the Common House for their main lesson. The first-through-fourth-graders stay with me in the yurt for our main lesson, an hour and a half of intense learning. A typical morning lesson might include five minutes of mental math followed by a spelling test, with everyone sitting on the couch by the fire. Then the children move over to the table to do a writing assignment. From there they move back to the couch for a story. After the story, we may talk about it while they model something from the story with beeswax. Then they're back at the table to draw something from the story or write a few sentences in cursive writing in their main lesson books. If they finish early, the older kids may have more writing to do or relax until it's time for a snack.

The children all get their coats on and run back to the common house, often singing songs together. At the Common House one of the parents has prepared a nutritious snack. The children all sit around one table together and say a blessing before eating. After they finish, they clean up and go outside to our village green and the play structure, where they scream, yell, run, and make up games to play together.

Each day after snack is a little different. For example, on Wednesdays, Gay, a retired elementary teacher, rings the bell for them to gather around to see what she has brought. For the next hour they learn about nature. They might learn about the beavers they have seen in the mountains or about the rainforest in Costa Rica where one of the children is going on a trip. Nature hour over, the children gather once again for lunch. They all take their baskets and sit down for another blessing before they eat. They have an hour for lunch so they get plenty of opportunity to play together.

Each day varies after lunch too. Mondays they have handwork with one of the elders, a grandparent of one of the children. Tuesdays they split into two groups and play educational games. Wednesdays Gay or another parent will teach units on subjects the children are interested in. Thursdays Kyla's mom spends time helping them with projects they want to do. Friday there is no school and many of the kids spend the day skiing at the nearby resort.

After-school time is special too. Many of the kids take piano lessons from another neighbor here. They often play outside in little





groups, or ride bikes around the cluster. And Wednesday is a common meal night so they look forward to seeing each other there as well. Having so much time together has really taught them a lot about getting along and functioning well as a group.

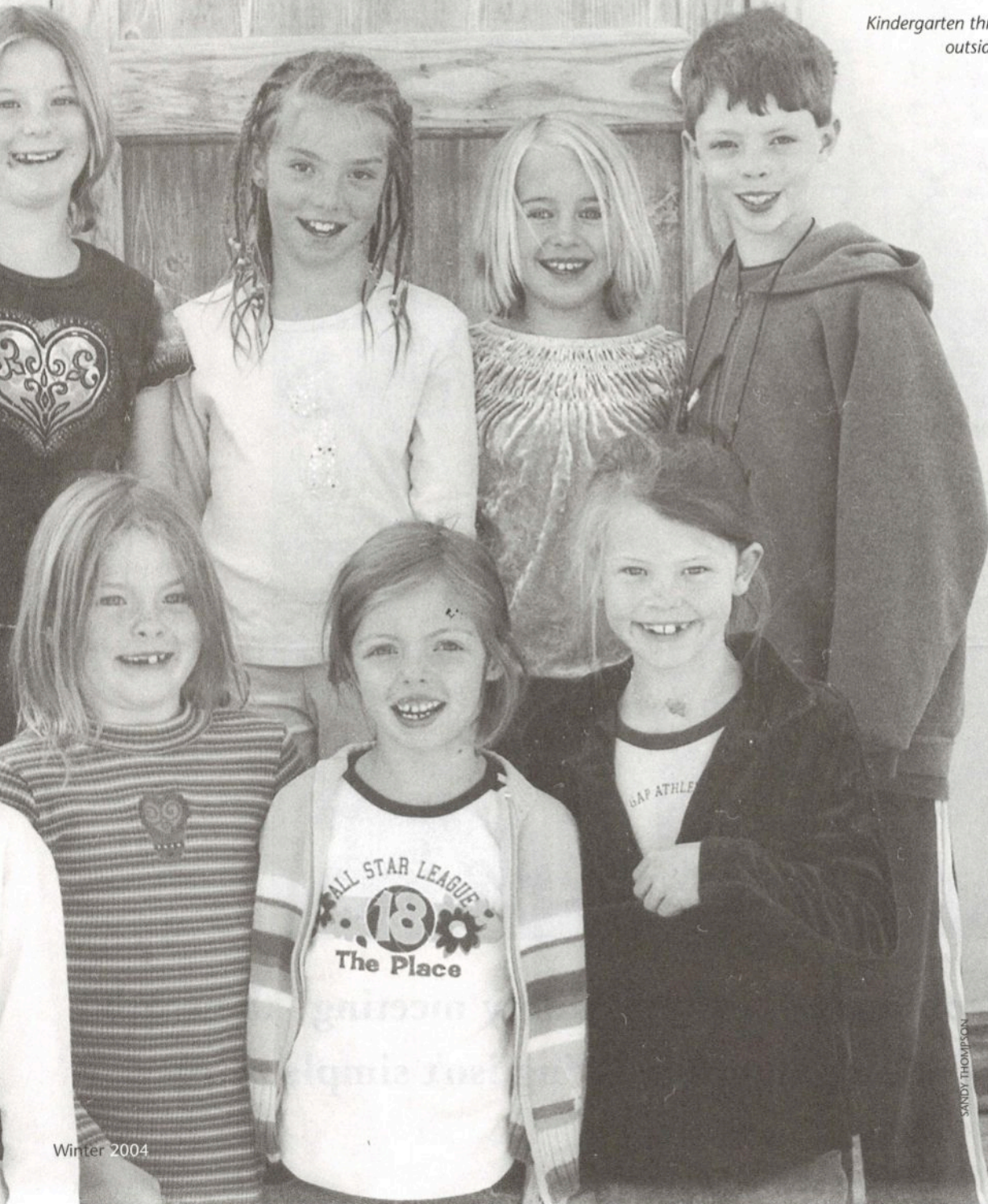
Every parent and even lots of non-parents in the community contribute what they can. There are rooms to clean, snacks to make, activities and festivals to coordinate, meetings to schedule, and caring for the teachers' own small children so the teachers are free to teach. Our homeschool is a truly cooperative effort, with the ups and downs associated with any co-op.

I personally feel blessed to be part of this wonderful gift to the children. It has been an incredible creative outlet for me and a chance to do something I think is important, right here in my community. No one gets paid. But I feel that what I get back from the kids and their parents is more than enough to keep me going.

***Our homeschool is a cooperative effort, with the ups and downs associated with any co-op.***

*Sandy Thomson is a cofounder of Heartwood Cohousing in southwest Colorado and the Heartwood Homeschool Cooperative. She lives with her husband Mac and their three children. [sandy@heartwoodcohousing.com](mailto:sandy@heartwoodcohousing.com)*

*Kindergarten through 3rd-grade children outside their yurt schoolhouse.*



SANDY THOMPSON



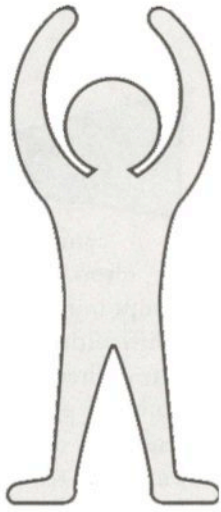
# Why Does Anyone Do This?



Darren T. McManus

**At this community’s third “floofy meeting” the truth comes out—community living isn’t simple *or* easy.**





**S**o, we had our weekly house meeting the other night. We recently decided to have every third meeting be what is now called a “floofy meeting,” where instead of having a detailed agenda and talking about house logistics and issues, we use the time to get to know each other better and talk about personal topics. You know, floofy kind of touchy-feely stuff, as opposed to “taking care of business.”

During this particular meeting (our third official floofy meeting), we decided to each share our experience of living in this

community. Nine of us share a 4000 sq. ft. house, Walnut St. Co-op, in Eugene, Oregon, and, despite our commonalities, we are definitely nine very distinct personalities. We’re an eclectic mix of teachers, facilitators, students, activists, introverts, extroverts, thrash-metal to folk to riot-grrrl aficionados, vegan to carnivorous, irreverent to slightly-less irreverent, opinionated to indifferent. We share dinner five nights a week, rotate chores, and do our best to help support each other when we can, which sometimes we do successfully and sometimes don’t.

During the two-hour meeting, people expressed a wide range of perspectives, feelings, and opinions. Two people here used to be romantically involved and are no longer, which makes for an interesting dynamic. Two others have been a couple for many years. Some people are extremely busy, and sometimes find it challenging to make time for the house, while others put in many hours each week to keep the co-op going.

The thing that struck me the most was how challenging it is for many of us, regardless of our

personal situation, to live in community. I suppose that that in and of itself is not too surprising given our upbringing, but it got me to question and wonder why, given all of these challenges, we continue to live this way. Isn’t the point of living in community to make our lives easier and simpler?

Yet, during this meeting, it didn’t seem like anyone’s life was necessarily easier or simpler. One person didn’t feel like she was getting enough support from everyone in the house. Another felt overwhelmed and stressed by all of the things that needed attention here. Someone else felt that living with so many people was difficult. Others expressed frustration at having to accommodate food needs,

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cleanliness needs, and social needs. I realized

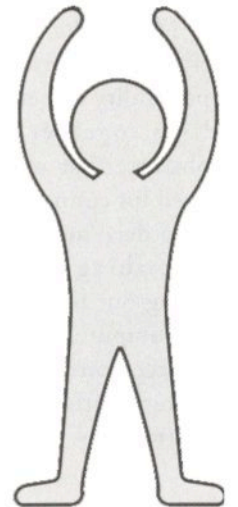
that living communally was more complicated for me as well. In past living situations, my cost of

living was lower, I had more control over my food and my space, and wasn’t necessarily putting any more energy into routine chores and tasks.

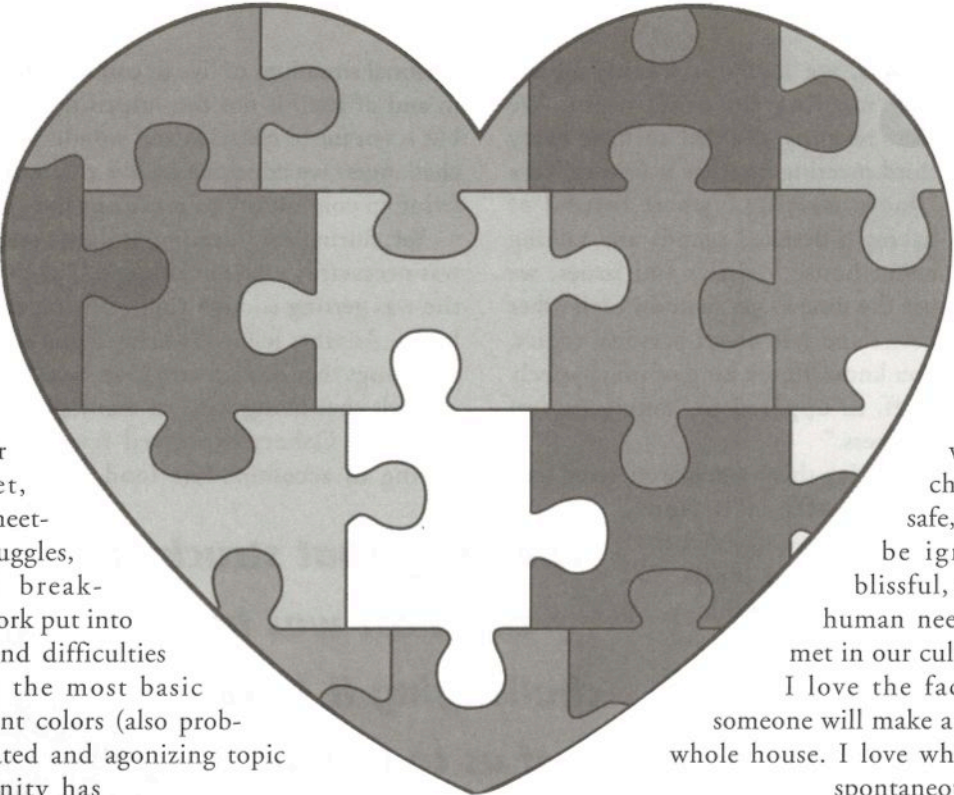
Had we been doing something wrong, or is it

just the way community living contrasts with our individualistic upbringings?

I thought of my experience spending time at Lost Valley Educational Center, another community about 20 miles southeast of here, which has become an almost second home for me over the past five years. For years I’ve seen many people come and go at Lost Valley, in frustration and dissatisfaction, their expectations shattered. Being close to many people in the community, I’ve





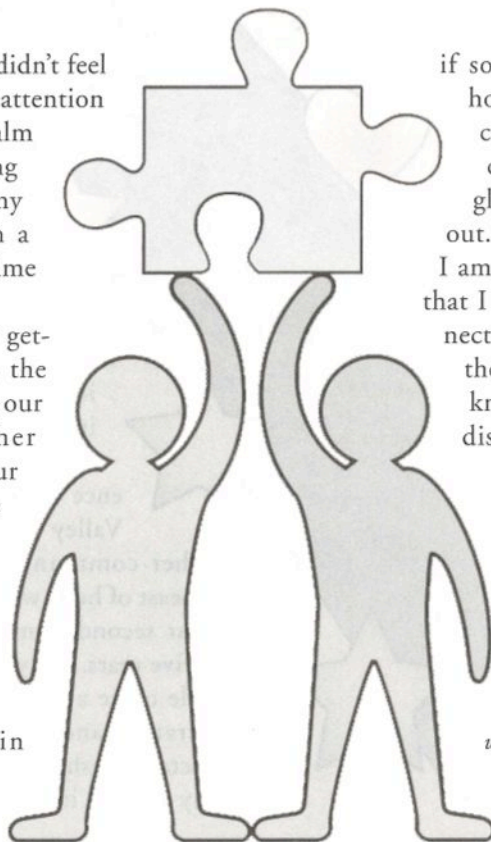


heard countless retellings of their challenges: ways that their needs aren't met, endless hours of meetings, financial struggles, communication breakdowns, hours of work put into the community, and difficulties in agreeing over the most basic things such as paint colors (also probably the most heated and agonizing topic our own community has had to make in the almost six months that I've lived here). And for what? Why do we put ourselves through all this?

As I shared during my turn in our meeting, I felt curious about this seeming contradiction. As I talked about some of these realizations, I noticed oddly enough that I didn't feel a charge around them. When I paid attention to my body, I noticed that I felt calm and relaxed. I had no sense of wanting to live anywhere else, and, despite my frustrations, actually haven't given a thought to leaving during the whole time I've lived here.

Maybe the experience of actually getting to be close to people (or even the possibility of being close), of sharing our lives together, overrides any other obstacle that might arise. Maybe our need for connection, family, and tribe is so deep and primal that it makes everything worth it. Instead of living our lives through televisions or computers, we desire real, face-to-face conversations. Rather than living vicariously through fictitious characters or silently stewing in

***Maybe our need for connection, family, and tribe is so deep and primal that it makes everything worth it.***



cynicism, we choose to attempt to resolve our difficulties and work together. We choose not to play it safe, to find a way to not be ignorant *and* to be blissful, and to meet basic human needs that are seldom met in our culture.

I love the fact that sometimes someone will make a special treat for the whole house. I love when some of us will spontaneously decide to rent a movie, make popcorn, and pile onto someone's bed; or walk over to the neighborhood bar to shoot pool and sing *karaoke* together. I love being able to stop and talk with someone for a couple of minutes, to have people who can pick me up from the airport, and to laugh at meals with, or to know that

if someone can't do something around the house that someone else will volunteer to cover for them. I love that sometimes we can support each other around our struggles and difficulties, and help each other out.

I am still curious about how to make the end that I believe many of us seek (simplicity, connectedness, sustainability, harmony) become the means rather than the end, but I also know that I am in good company in this discovery. Perhaps that is what we are all learning together.

*David Franklin is actively involved in putting on Naka-Ima workshops at Lost Valley Educational Center, writes, and leads workshops of his own in sacred sexuality, musical creativity, and men's issues. [www.David-Franklin.org](http://www.David-Franklin.org); [www.EvolvingCulture.com](http://www.EvolvingCulture.com); [www.Note-A-Day.com](http://www.Note-A-Day.com).*



# COMMUNITIES

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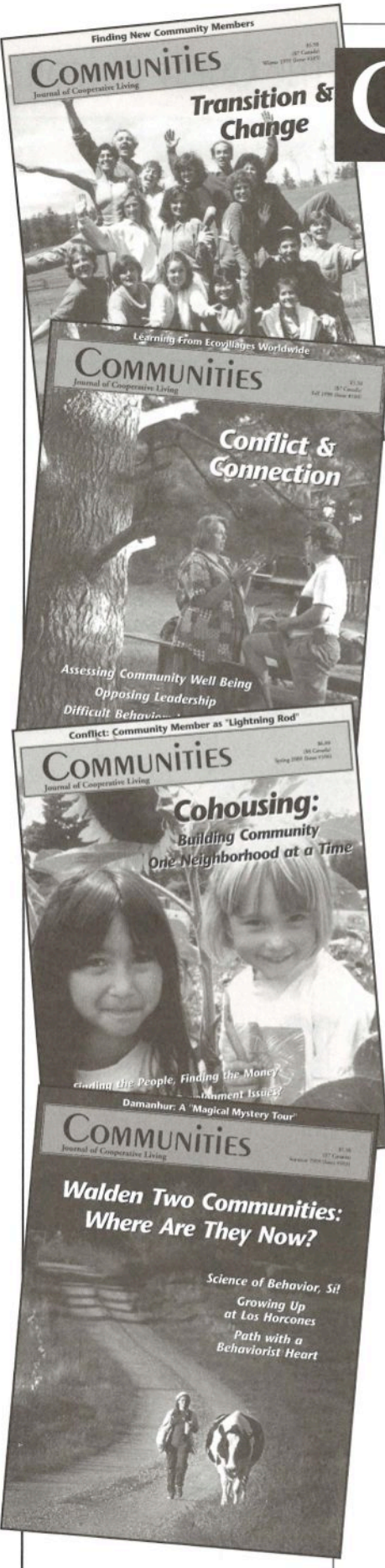
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#125







# Life After Student Co-ops

I lived in the House of Commons student co-op in Austin, Texas, for only three of my five college years, but it seems like a decade since co-op living so heavily influenced my personal identity and values. Soon after moving in, I knew that this was the way I wanted to live: sharing my home with lots of smart people, splitting up the chores, making decisions by consensus, cooking vegan food for my friends and housemates, talking politics into the



wee hours, embracing a diversity of social, spiritual, and economic lifestyles and values. As an angst-ridden teenager, co-op living allowed me to stick it to the man by controlling where my rent money went. My hard-earned cash circumvented the pockets of rent collectors and landed in a collective pot that we co-op members spent on maintaining the facilities of our house, buying organic foods locally, and otherwise taking direct control of our financial output.

During my time at the co-op, I was under the illusion that I could live there forever. After graduation, however, I realized that a student lifestyle was difficult to maintain in the framework of a budding professional career. For example, dinners were served before I got home from work. I also felt that my fellow housemates didn't understand what it meant to have responsibilities

to an employer versus personal study goals. My living situation continued to revolve around college students as my own adult life took me increasingly into the mainstream.

It's been only a few months since I made the difficult decision to leave the student co-op, and I have admittedly had a hard time cutting the strings. More than a few times, my drive to work has rerouted through the West Campus neighborhood and by my former co-op's main office. My compulsion to be involved in the organization plants me in a swiveling office chair at the "member center" with little or no proper business to conduct. I wait for prospective members to wander in so I can offer unsolicited advice about co-op living, proudly spreading the joys and benefits of living in community. (If my overt zeal scares you away, I apologize. )

***Soon after moving in, I  
knew that this was the way  
I wanted to live.***



ICC ANN ARBOR



I now live in a small rented house with my partner, trying to carry the skills and principles that I learned in my co-op into my current life. Cooking large quantities of food provides us with days of leftovers; we split up household chores like I did in my co-op days; and I still ride my bike to shop exclusively at my local food cooperative. But some aspects of community life have been hard to recreate. Consensus decision-making is different with two people than it is with 26. I miss the luxury of a spacious house with a beautiful porch to relax on. I often think of how economical buying in bulk was at the co-op, something that is difficult for just two of us to do.

I'm still active with the cooperative movement, from integrating the topic of community living into daily conversation, to serving on the board of directors for

North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO), an organized center for education among student housing cooperatives nationwide. Yet I'm still feeling out how to make the cooperative principles more active in daily life.

Because by definition student co-ops are geared towards college students, members who graduate or otherwise leave school inevitably move out. In the following pages former student co-op members will share how this experience has shaped their lives as young adults and offered a set of values they now hold dear.

*Julie Pennington lives in Austin, Texas, and works in social services with the homeless. She is inspired by French pop music but challenged by cooking for only two.*

*Whooping it up at a party at House of Commons Co-op, in Austin, Texas.*



JULIE PENNINGTON





Guest Editor Julie Pennington checking out which plants grow in the House of Commons garden, Austin.

## What is a Student Housing Co-op?

The primary goal of most nonprofit student housing cooperatives (“student co-ops”) is to provide low-cost housing to college students. Student co-ops differ from rented housing in that the student residents own and manage their co-op’s assets and earnings themselves. Instead of having an outside landlord, they make democratic decisions, often through consensus, about how they operate.

Most student co-ops are located close to major universities and offer opportunities to share the cost of housing and eat meals together in an environment that respects the academic priorities of students. Most have “quiet hours” so residents can study privately in their rooms or in common areas with fellow students.

Members of student co-ops are expected to offer an average of five hours per week labor to the co-op, in tasks ranging from house maintenance to cleaning, cooking, and contributing to group decision-making. One of the best results of living in a student co-op is that this way of life introduces members to cooperative businesses such as local food co-ops, and to intentional community living. Some enjoy community living so much that after college they join other intentional communities (or form their own).

More than 100 student co-ops are organized in North America alone, and each is unique. North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO), an association of campus cooperatives in Canada and the United States, serves as an advocate for student co-ops, offers them operational assistance, and helps develop new ones.

[www.nasco.coop](http://www.nasco.coop).

—J. P.





TEC ANN ARBOR

BY DAKOTA SMITH

# What I Learned Last Summer

I found myself drawn to House of Commons student co-op each time I visited Austin, Texas, where I was planning to work. I liked everything from the co-op's dinner conversation to sharing a beer on the sun deck with other residents to the Zen garden in the backyard. I stayed at the co-op as a visitor several times before I signed a lease for the summer.

Even though I wasn't officially a student, I heard no complaints from any university officials. I was in! And my little dog, too. The house members passed a proposal asking that she also live in the house—my first introduction to house meetings.

Lease-signing day began with a line of students waiting to sign up for rooms in the university system's nine houses. In conversation, I asked them about the houses they wanted to live in: first, second, and third choice. I also asked what brought them to the co-op. They said it was to live with friends, the relatively low housing cost, the countercultural atmosphere. Some were signing up just for the summer; others for the whole school year.

I got room five, a nice double room on House of Commons' second floor, with hardwood floors, a large closet, a shared bathroom, and windows looking out onto the sun deck.

At first, unemployed, I looked for summer jobs using the house's Internet access—and found other co-ops to distract me from looking for jobs. With 23 housemates, finding someone who wanted to chat or smoke on the porch or sun deck wasn't hard. The economy was gracious enough to allow me several weeks of this way of life.

The first house meeting is when officers are elected. When I made it known I wanted to run for Education Officer, I found myself running against Timothy. And I had to give a speech. To the best of my recollection, my speech went thusly:

"I would, uh, like to be education officer because I am, uh good at, education and planning events, and I would do a good job because I want to be education officer."

I realized I was losing them, so I blurted out:

"And I would throw a really great party, I swear! And there would be PowerPoint presentations!"



Hmph. Not the best speech of my life, but certainly not the worst. But as the eloquent Timothy spoke, I felt myself sweating. I was Nixon to his JFK. Plus he was cuter and had curly hair.

We both went outside so house members could vote. The first words out of our mouths were, "I would vote for *you*." I was being honest, but I wasn't sure he was until he said, "It was the PowerPoint presentations." We joked and talked and went back inside.

And it turns out I won. I walked into the position knowing that, years before, the house had adopted a proposal stating that when President Ronald Reagan passed away, a party would be thrown in his honor, and he had just died days before. Eager to show my dedication to this proposal and keep my campaign promise, I scheduled the party for the next weekend.

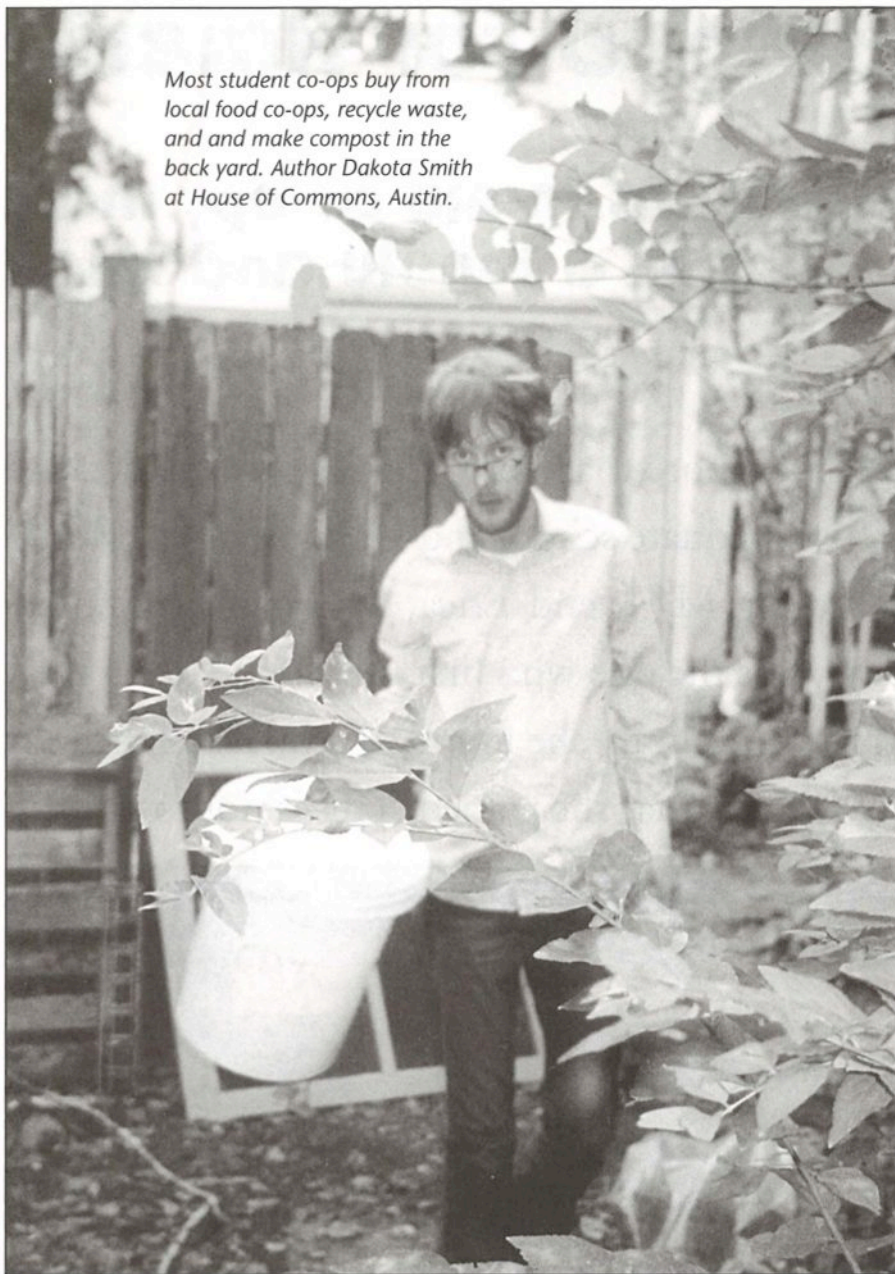
This is where I experienced what I'd call the magic of a student co-op. I saw a twinkle in several pairs of eyes when I put the announcement and sign-up sheet on the house bulletin board. People accepted party-hosting duties eagerly and the planning was underway. We invited people from all the other co-ops.

The party was a great success. Good food, good drinks, good music, good cooperation. I met and spoke with people from other co-op houses and the whole Austin co-op system. I talked co-ops, overheard others talking co-ops. Inside, outside, our house rules were respected and accepted. Eventually I went to bed and dreamed of cooperation.

Later I found a job and ended up on a different schedule than most of the students, but I could still see how wonderfully the co-op was working. Meals were provided five nights a week. People shared resources and skills. I fixed a computer or two. People helped me move. I loved it.

Now, looking back, I can see how living at House of Commons affected me. For example, I became a vegetarian again. I found the lack of a television set in the co-op soothing, and still don't own a TV. I shop at a food co-op. I share what resources I can with friends, whether tangible objects or skills. I've investigated musicians' co-ops which share recording, rehearsal, and living space. The changes I can see, the choices I make as a result of living in a student co-op, I like.

*Most student co-ops buy from local food co-ops, recycle waste, and make compost in the back yard. Author Dakota Smith at House of Commons, Austin.*



JULIE PENNINGTON

***"And I would throw  
a really great  
party, I swear!"***

I still go back and visit. Some former housemates still live there; others, like me, have moved out. I see them at the food co-op, or at a political rally, or riding their bikes. They've kept something too.

Everyone takes something from a student co-op when they inevitably leave, and yet the quality of the co-op itself doesn't change. I once read a line scrawled on the co-op wall that explains how so many can take something away from the co-op without diminishing its strength. It read:

"Leave it better than you found it."

*Dakota Smith notes that he is "one of 75,000 musicians in Austin." He lives with his partner and his dog Roxy.*



# Ruined for American Culture

## After life in my co-op, mainstream society seems a lonely and impersonal place

BY SHIMON WHITESON

It was more than four years ago that I decided to come to Austin, Texas, for graduate school and—almost as an afterthought—to live in a student co-op. My friend Erica, who had lived in co-ops during her undergrad days, was the one who first turned me on to the idea. She told me about the great community she found, the valuable life lessons she learned, and the new perspective that she gained. This is not to say, however, that she glamourized



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the experience. She warned me about conflict, about apathy, and about mooching. But even without this admonition, I sensed intuitively that everything I already knew about people would still be applicable in this strange, new environment. The structure of the community may be fundamentally different but its essential ingredient—people—remains the same.

In the four years that have passed since that serendipitous conversation with Erica, I've lived in three different student co-ops. That experience has crystallized my intuition about human nature into a strong conviction. Of course the driving forces of human nature remain unchanged in cooperative communities. That much seems obvious in retrospect. But more than that, even the smallest co-ops act as microcosms for the world at large, capturing all the essential elements of human nature, from the social and psychological to the political, in this little bubble. Most strikingly, they highlight the unending struggle between cooperation and competition that lies in each of us and is played out in all human endeavors.

***Co-ops offered me a tight-knit community and social network that a stranger in a new city would otherwise be hard pressed to find.***

What a great resume-builder! When prospective employers ask me what experience I have with financial responsibility, I can say I served as treasurer for a student-run co-op, managing the food budget of 20 people. When they ask me what leadership experience I have, I can say I served on the board of directors of

a non-profit organization with an annual budget of a million dollars. When they ask me what experience I have mediating personal conflicts, there will be too many examples to count.

To be fair though, this is only half the story. Co-ops are a good training ground for the real world because of their similarities to it. But there must be differences, too. In fact, it is precisely these differences between co-ops and mainstream society that draw people to them. In my case, co-ops offered me a tight-knit community and

social network that a stranger in a new city would otherwise be hard pressed to find. Mainstream society offered me only a lonely and boxy living space in an anonymous and impersonal apartment complex. In the time I have lived in co-ops, the list of positive differences between them and the rest of the world



has grown much larger. I only have to cook once a week. I never have to go to the grocery store. I don't even have to clean my bathroom because, inexplicably, other people actually prefer that labor. I can almost always find someone to talk to or hang out with and every semester I am handed, through no effort on my part, the opportunity to meet new people who invariably broaden my perspective. And then there's my personal favorite: the power of living without television. I've discovered a community of people who won't allow its hypnotic influence into their home and it is no exaggeration to say that, as a result, I am substantially improved as a person.

So where does all this leave me as my graduation looms ever nearer and I face the prospect of leaving student co-ops and finally entering the world I've sheltered myself from for so long? I still believe that the cooperative experience has armed me with the skills and perspective to succeed in the world at large. But at the same time, I must concede that this same experience has isolated me from that world and diminished my ability to feel at home in it. Recently, I got together with some old college friends I hadn't seen in years. Instead of catching up on each other's lives or telling nostalgic stories, we plopped down in front of the television and stared at it like zombies. *ESPN Sport-Center. The Daily Show. Reruns of Everybody Loves Raymond.* To say that my friends and I had grown apart would be an understatement. They were alien to me. For the first time, I became acutely aware that the rest of the world had not followed my particular path of personal development. What use is it, I wondered sadly, to discover a better way of living when everyone else is bent inexorably in a different direction?

Television is the most striking example but there are many others. Co-ops have largely sheltered me from the whole Amer-

ican phenomena of parking lots, freeways, and strip malls. The ever-shifting winds of popular culture do not, for the most part, blow through my co-op. Compared to the community I've lived in for the last four years, the rest of American society often seems a lonely and impersonal place.

Some people remain hopeful that this chasm can be bridged. For them, co-ops are not just communities but the seeds of revolution. They believe that those seeds have spread far and wide, the conflict between the community we love and the society we were raised in will be moot. But personally, I am not so optimistic or

ambitious. I dearly love co-ops and I want desperately to make them bigger, better, and stronger. But I love other things too and I am not ready to give over my whole life to a revolution that, frankly, seems extremely unlikely to succeed. It is inevitable then that pursuing my various goals and ambitions will require

me to reconcile the wonderful way of living I have discovered with the lifestyle that almost everyone else has stubbornly adopted.

I do, however, have a more modest hope. I believe that, short of making over the whole society, I can find ways to apply cooperative principles to my immediate social environment. Perhaps I will start a dinner club with my new friends. Maybe someday, when I have kids, I'll find a way to share childcare with my neighbors. None of this will compare to my current experience in co-ops but it will keep the aura of cooperation in my midst. It remains to be seen whether that aura will be strong

enough to sustain itself or whether, under the vast weight of The American Way, it will ultimately be crushed.

*Shimon Whiteson is working on a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence at The University of Texas at Austin. In his years in student co-ops, he served as treasurer, labor czar, trustee, and membership coordinator.*

## **What use is it to discover a better way of living when everyone else is bent inexorably in a different direction?**



ICC ANN ARBOR



# Now I Want to Join a Community (or Maybe Start My Own ...)



KEC ANN ARBOR

In the four years since leaving E-haus (pronounced “E-house”), my beloved student co-op, I have lived 14 months in a Quaker intentional community, visited existing communities in New England, met with a forming co-housing group in Vermont, co-founded a new community which disbanded after about a year, and am currently exploring the potential to form a new community/retreat/yoga center.





*E-Haus, the author's beloved student co-op.*

I never would have chosen this path without first living in a student co-op! Home-cooked dinners for 20, friends gathered with guitars and battered copies of *Rise Up Singing*, the frustrations and triumphs of hard-won consensus, the simple act of sitting at home and reading silently in the company of good friends—these are the experiences that compel me to continually seek out community. Already it's been quite a journey, and of course, it's only just beginning.

The cooperative principles that I learned at E-Haus have become a part of my life, but my visions for community have changed along the way. I've discovered that I need more privacy than I did in college. I've learned more realistic expectations building sustainable housing. Most of all, I now know that community can take a wider variety of forms than I ever imagined; for example, ecovillages, income-sharing communities, and spiritual communities, to name a few.

And I'm not alone. Of my former co-op housemates, several have made community central in their lives. One has joined an urban co-op in Madison, Wisconsin with her husband; one lives and works in a Quaker community and retreat/education center in Pennsylvania; one studied at the Ecovillage Training Center at The Farm in Tennessee, lived in an urban Boston co-op, and helped co-found the

Urban Ecovillage Network; and a group of former housemates started a small co-op in Philadelphia.

E-Haus was 12 to 18 college students within my small liberal arts college of only 1100 students. We came together around the idea of living in an environmentally friendly way, hence our name "Environmental House," which was soon shortened to "E-house." A few years later several co-op members found some large letters from a sign above an old school. Given the letters available from the sign, we then became "E-Haus." In an apartment building provided by the college, we set up a communal kitchen and living room, cooked six communal meals a week (all vegan and mostly organic), held community meetings every Sunday at brunch, made decisions by consensus with a strong Quaker influence, and rotated meeting facilitation

and household chores weekly. With funding from Students' Council, we bought kitchen equipment, cookbooks, compact florescent light bulbs, and other supplies. Co-op member dues covered food expenses at an amazingly low \$250

per person per semester.

Members of student co-ops change every year as old housemates graduate and freshmen move in, so maintaining long-term connections to co-op friends is tricky. Since its founding in 1990, E-Haus has been home to over 100 mem-

***I never would have chosen  
this path without first living  
in a student co-op!***



# Fourteen Days, Anyway

Mimicking the sorority house across the street,  
Dread-locked Matt and Gabe hung up a big banner "Rush Niko,"  
In front of our cooperative house,  
Named after Niko, a big black cat who lived there  
Back in the days when the house was a gay refuge.  
That year, twenty of us and three of Niko's kittens  
Lived at Niko Cooperative House.  
But we lacked the cooperative spirit,  
Each retreating to his or her own separate room,  
Each clique-ish with his or her own friends in the house,  
Ignoring the others,  
Busy with schoolwork, busy with clubs; selfish, apathetic,  
Rarely seeing each other;  
Very few even coming down to dinner—  
Until something happened that brought us all together.  
It was mid-January, 1996  
When the furnace broke.  
It was sub-zero weather outside,  
And the temperature inside dropped to a chilly 40 degrees.  
Amazingly, this was the first time we all worked together:  
Sharing blankets, lighting the fireplace in the big old living room,  
Assembling together on living room couches for all-night slumber parties  
With marshmallows and hot chocolate and textbooks,  
Heating pots of water on the stove to keep the kitchen and living room warm,  
Pitching in to rent space heaters for the hallways in between bedrooms.  
We were all working together as a community.  
Some of us thought it was a con by our house president  
To get us all to act more cooperatively ...  
After 14 days a handylady came out to fix the furnace  
And we all went our separate ways once more—  
But with a bit more kindness.



bers, ranging from students who lived there from one semester to three or four years. In 2000 we celebrated our 10th anniversary with a day of community service projects, good food, and music. A smaller group of housemates from my three-year tenure at E-Haus have held annual reunions for the past four years. In many ways we attempt to replicate the annual weekend retreats that were held while living at E-Haus. Bringing this smaller group together every year has created a tradition of its own and has been key in maintaining friendships and connections that were forged during our student co-op years.

The transition beyond college co-op life can be even more of a challenge than putting up with the endless meetings, chores, and frustrations of community living. In my case, going from cooking for 20 to cooking for one was a formidable task. This was compounded by moving to Sweden, where I was separated from friends and family by an ocean. My inability to create a similar sense of community in my new home overseas forced me to reconsider living in Europe and living on my own. I returned to the States after less than six months, and my first task was to email a former E-Haus member who was helping to organize a network of Boston-area co-ops. Within weeks I was offered a place at Beacon Hill Friends House in Boston, a

residential community based on Quaker values and beliefs. Having graduated from a Quaker college, I thought I was familiar with Quakerism and its unique decision-making process, but I quickly found that there was much more to learn. Beacon Hill Friends House was an incredibly diverse community: its 16 to 20 residents ranged in age from 18 to over 60 and came from many different countries and spiritual backgrounds. As a nonprofit run by a board of directors, the house had a very different feel than the more egalitarian cooperative I was used to, and the amount of bureaucracy inherent to living in the house soon became too much for me.

After a few months seven fellow residents and I became interested in starting a new rural community in Vermont. In

addition to our everyday conversations as housemates, we met monthly as a group to forge a mission statement, come up with a set of core values, explore a variety of ownership and organizational models, and visit other communities in the region. We took field trips to Sirius, Cobb Hill, and Meadowdance communities, and several small housing cooperatives in the Boston area. Through our own experiences at Beacon Hill Friends House and our visits to other communities, we developed a common vision based on what we liked and disliked in community living. Young and idealistic, we scoffed at the idea that we could end up

as part of the suggested 90 percent of forming communities that fail before settling on land: we were determined to be part of the victorious 10 percent! Yet after a year of meetings, retreats, and property research, our group slowly disbanded due to changing priorities among group members and various interpersonal conflicts. The dissolution of our project was heart-wrenching, and

I had substantial doubts about entering into the community-forming process again.

Of course I asked myself the common question, "Wouldn't it be easier to just join an existing community that fits my values?", but was stymied by the lack of established intentional communities in the mountains of central Vermont, where I made my new home. There I was surrounded by the

landscape of my dreams, doing work I loved (helping promote natural building), and exploring a variety of interests I had always wanted to pursue. But as I sat in my empty rented apartment, cooking for one, with no banter and camaraderie of pals throughout the place, I could feel there was something missing in my life. And so the process begins again: seeking out those who share my vision of what a community could be, exploring the forms it could take, and wondering how to

come up with the means to make it a reality. Seven years after moving into a student co-op, the question remains: how can I make community a more permanent part of my life?

*Kate Stephenson helps people learn how to create their own homes at the Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Warren, Vermont.*

## **The dissolution of our project was heart-wrenching.**



## **I could feel there was something missing in my life.**



# "Paying" New Members to Learn the Ropes

How one co-op helped new members get oriented to their community—and how your group can do the same.



At Sunflower House Coop in Lawrence, Kansas, early 1980s.

"The cockroach problem is out of control! We need to spray the house," warned a new member at our weekly student co-op meeting. A collective groan rose from the group.

"We spent the whole last year talking about that!" responded a longer-term member angrily. "Spraying goes against our environmental policy!"

We spent the next 30 minutes filling in the new member on our cockroach-eradication strategy and environmental policy. He felt embarrassed and hurt; longer-term members felt angry and frustrated; and valuable meeting time was

wasted. Our usual warm and friendly social time following the meeting didn't happen, as cliques of members left the room to discuss their hurts, resentments, and frustrations.

Sound familiar? While this particular scene happened at Sunflower House, a 30-member student housing co-op in Lawrence, Kansas, it's a common enough experience at communities everywhere. Communities often fail to teach their new members about the community's history, practices, and policies in any formal way. Instead, new members pick up bits and pieces as they experience daily life in com-

munity. This may work well for new members skilled at seeking out information on their own. But many new members don't have these skills or don't take the initiative to ask questions.

When members have widely varying amounts of information about how their community operates, the community's meeting process is far from democratic. Even as some gain more experience over time, huge gaps in their knowledge can still prevent the community from functioning well. An absence of formal education often means that new members learn community rules haphazardly and



without an understanding of why the rules exist. New members often don't learn the history behind certain decisions, nor do they learn the big-picture history of their community and how it fits into the broader network of communities. As a result, they may not support community practices that actually serve an important function. And new members may drive existing members crazy pushing "new" ideas that have been tried many times before.

I learned about this education issue firsthand while living at Sunflower House in the early 1980s. Many aspects of our co-op worked well. Members did a good job of sharing the cleaning, cooking, maintenance, and managerial tasks, largely thanks to a labor-credit system inspired by B.F. Skinner's utopian novel, *Walden Two*. But formal education about Sunflower House and its history, policies, and practices was not part of the labor-credit system. A handbook explained the group's history and

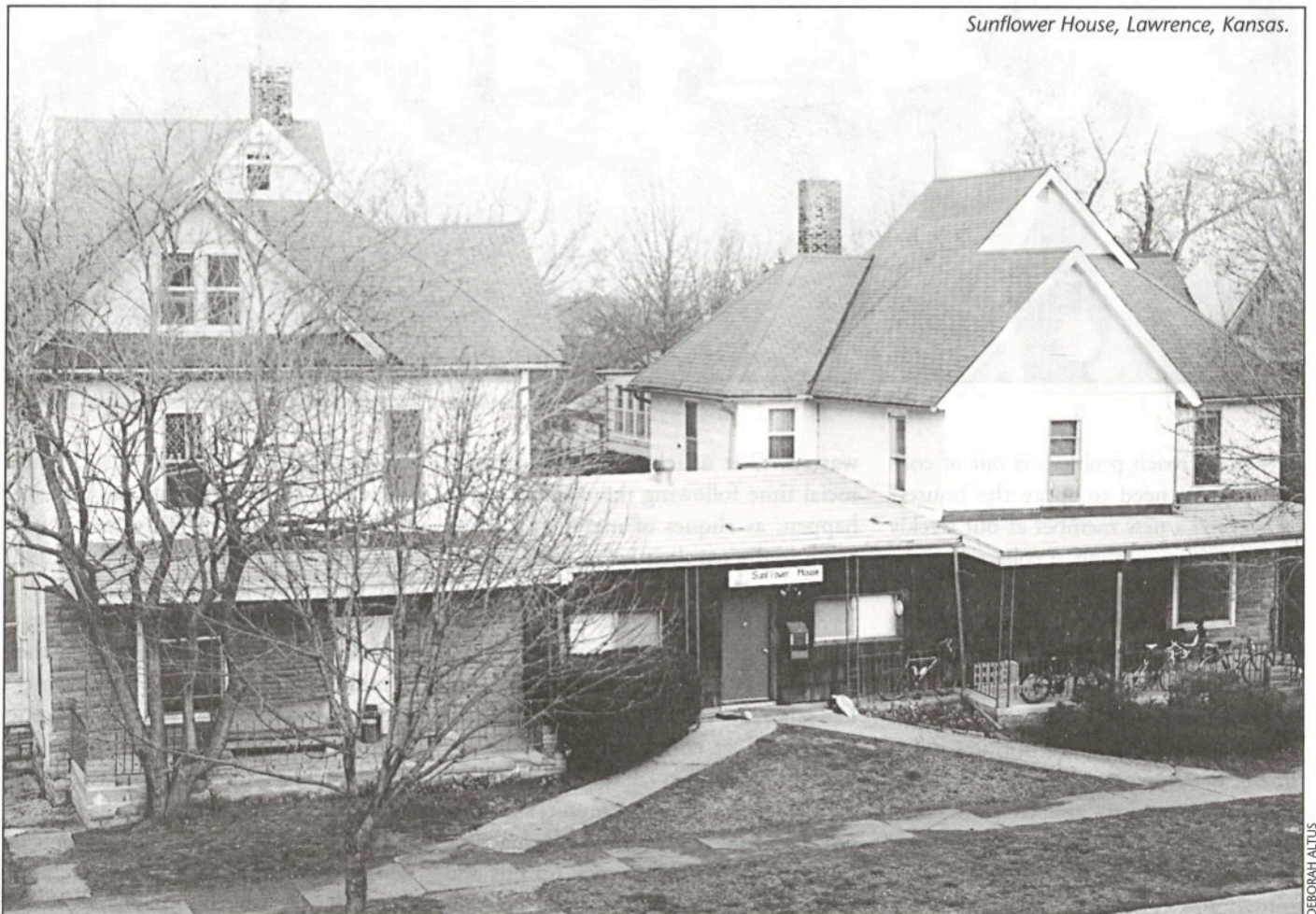
practices, but members typically didn't read it well enough to help house operations. And while the handbook outlined the rules, it didn't include the rationales for these rules. As a result, new members often wanted to make changes without

***New members may  
drive existing  
members crazy  
pushing "new" ideas  
that have been tried  
many times before.***

fully grasping the consequences. Hence the conflict about cockroaches, and a three-inch thick file that chronicled members' attempts over the years to eradicate these ever-present pests.

Along with the help of other members, I created an educational program for new members, based on "education modules"—a series of short chapters that outlined the history of the cooperative movement, the history of Sunflower House, the co-op's policies and practices, and the rationales behind these policies and practices. At first we offered the program without any labor credits. Members could read or ignore the education modules as they chose. Several weeks later we noted that almost no one had read them, so we decided to make Sunflower House education a formal part of the labor-credit system. Once new members could earn credits for going through the educational program, their participation reached almost 100 percent. To make sure it was truly the labor credits making the difference, we experimented by not granting labor credits for several weeks. Participation dropped sharply, even though members who had read the materials said they'd

*Sunflower House, Lawrence, Kansas.*



DEBORAH ALTUS



found them interesting and worthwhile. When we started offering labor credits again, most new members began reading the materials and learning about the co-op again.

New members began showing that they did in fact understand our rationales for various community practices by their comments at weekly meetings. I rejoiced to hear new members say such things as: "We buy our bulk goods from the food co-op because it's cheaper, it supports another co-op, and it keeps our spending local." Longer-term members sighed with relief as newer members quickly caught on to the group's way of life.

In order for the new-member education program to be included in the labor-credit system, longer-term members had to do a larger share of the "grunt work," such as cleaning bathrooms and washing dishes. The fact that the longer-term members were willing to do this suggests that they valued the education program and felt it served their own and the co-op's best interests.

Most communities, especially those that strive to share power democratically, would be likely to improve their functioning if they took the same steps: develop a formal education program and find a way to ensure that new members

**Communities often fail to teach their new members about the community's history, practices, and policies in any formal way.**

would take the time to learn—and master—the information. Ideally, the process would be set up to be so much fun that everyone would want to take part. Besides written materials, an education program could include tours, group discussions, games, skits, videos, role-

playing, and social gatherings with tasty snacks. Not to mention giving people labor credit for participation, and/or making final membership in the community contingent upon completing the program.

While a community must spend money and other resources to create an education program and subsidize new members' participation with labor credit, the benefits of getting new members quickly brought up to speed should far outweigh the expenses.

Democracy is meaningless if new members aren't educated about a community's history, procedures, and practices. Indeed, community education makes democracy more than just a nice word.

*Deborah Altus lives, works, and plays in Lawrence, Kansas. With Tom Welsh, Keith Miller, and M.M. Merrill, she co-authored the article, "Efficacy and Maintenance of an Educational Program for a Consumer Cooperative," in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1993. Deborah is also a member of our magazine's Editorial Review Board.*





**W**hat happens when you take a bunch of people of different countries, backgrounds, races, cultures, personalities, and abilities, and put them all together in one house? They could become friends, or they could become enemies. They could ignore each other. They could be distantly polite. Or they could become a community.

Here in Ann Arbor, in the 18 student and community cooperatives owned and managed by Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC), these diverse people *do* become a community. I know, because I've seen this process up close for many years, serving as ICC's General Manager.

BY SHEILA RITTER



Living Well in JCC Co-ops



Watching the interactions of our student and non-student member/owners has been fascinating. It has led me to ask questions, such as how do you learn to live with people who are quite different from you? George had severe depressive episodes and sometimes couldn't do his house chores. Jennifer is developmentally disabled and sometimes talks too loudly or breaks into other peoples' conversations inappropriately. Sue can't stand for long periods of time and must sit frequently, so she can't participate in some house activities. Can George, Jennifer, and Sue still be members of an ICC co-op?

I'm glad to say the answer is a resounding *Yes*.

The Inter-Cooperative Council's Statement of Beliefs and Values affirms the equality and the worth of all people. We welcomed people of all races over half a century ago, when segregation was the norm in Ann Arbor. We welcomed Japanese-Americans during World War II, when other organizations turned their backs on them. Today we welcome house members from all around the world.

We're not a perfect organization, however, and realize we still have much to learn—as an organization, and as individuals—about how to create a truly welcoming setting. Through our Diversity Awareness Committee, co-op members and ICC staff are exploring the unconscious prejudices many of us hold about people of other races, religions, genders, and sexual orientations.

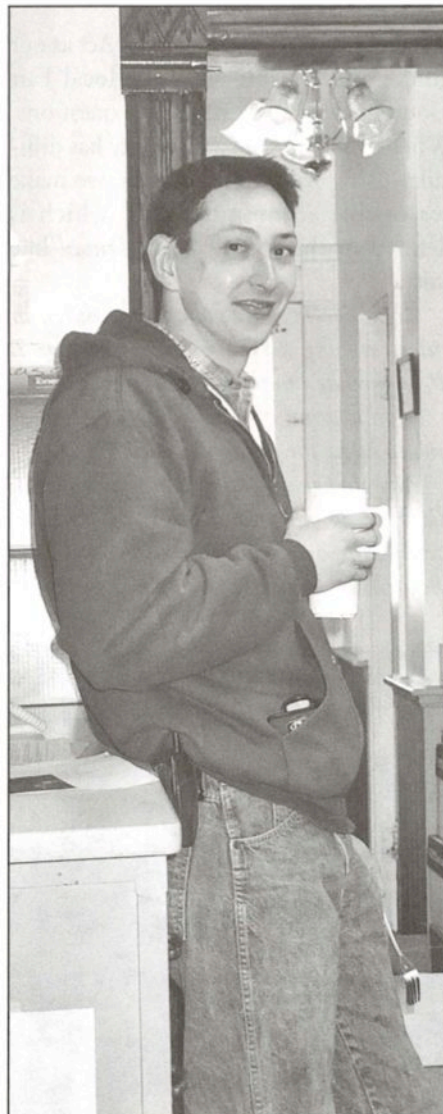
But in the area of mental health issues, physical disabilities, substance abuse issues, and just plain conflicts with other members, we've taken a proactive stance through our Living Well Team, a group of co-op members and ICC staff who assist people with these issues. We educate, advocate, problem-solve, and generally spread the word that living in community—even with co-op members with serious challenges like these—can really work.

We've added this sentence to our Standing Rules: "The members of the ICC prohibit and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of individuals due to physical or mental disabilities."

We started our Living Well Team when one of our houses began having problems. A member with drug and alcohol addictions sometimes behaved in ways that

## **How do you learn to live with people who are quite different from you?**

scared his housemates. Another co-op member was having difficulty controlling his anger. The remaining house members despaired of being able to do anything about these situations. So a small group of



house members and I began meeting to explore what could be done.

We decided that a team of trained people could make presentations at meetings, provide confidential mediation and conflict resolution, and work on finding ways to help solve these serious problems. They could, for example, write letters of concern to members whose behavior disturbed others, and offer suggestions on how to make things go better. We could help people understand each other better, and thus be able to live together more comfortably.

Our first big push was to write a manual on how to deal with these problems, including the basics of common mental health issues, what it is like to have a physical or developmental disability, how to know when someone has crossed the line from recreational substance use to a dangerous pattern. We wanted to offer lots of resources—emergency phone numbers, local and national info and support groups, and websites where they could get helpful information. Compiling the manual took about two years, and a lot of people's efforts, but we finally ended up with a wonderful resource, the *Living Well Manual*, which we gave to each ICC house.

Since that initial meeting more than two years ago, we've worked with a lot of members in all of our houses. For example, we now offer training for team members and any other interested ICC members. We attend house and board meetings to tell people about our services. We show videos about disability issues. We encourage people with disabilities to describe to their housemates how their disability affects their lives, with Living Well team members in attendance to offer moral support and answer questions. We meet with people who have concerns and we help resolve issues. We work closely with the ICC's Sexual Harassment Resource Team.

We're proud that the ICC has become a place where developmentally disabled young adults such as Marie, Erin, and Brian can have their first independent living experience. These three co-op residents all do PowerPoint presentations to tell others about their disabilities. They



## About The Living Well Manual

The *Living Well Manual*, which covers the following topics, is available on CD for \$3 from ICC Living Well Team, 337 E. William, Ann Arbor MI 48104.

**Emergencies:** What are they? What to do? Emergency phone numbers. **The Living Well Team:** Purposes. Contact information. ICC policy on members with disabilities. **Mental Illness:** What is mental illness? Mental illness fact sheets. Medications and mental illness. ICC, University of Michigan, and community mental health resources.

**Disabilities:** The ICC and physical/developmental disabilities. ICC, University of Michigan, and community resources. The Whitney House Fund. **Drug and Alcohol Issues:** What is substance abuse? Facts about addiction. ICC, University of Michigan, and community resources. **Living Well in Community:** Helping house members understand each other. Expressing concern and caring. Coping with disturbing or disruptive behaviors. Dealing with the impact of disability on house members. **ICC procedures:** Uncooperative behavior and disability issues. **Conflict Resolution:** How to use conflict resolution with disability issues. Steps in conflict resolution. **Appendices:** Resources. Americans with Disabilities Act. Fair Housing Laws. History and mission of the living well team. —S.R.

invite their co-op friends to their planning meetings, where they set goals for learning new skills and moving ahead in their lives. They teach us that they are interesting, fun-loving, and creative. They also teach us how to be direct and clear in our communication; for example, how to speak in a calm and respectful way when we say what bothers us and what we think would work better. I personally have learned a great deal, as well as enjoyed getting to know these wonderful co-op residents.

Over the years since we started the Living Well Team, we've learned the meaning of the term "reasonable accommodation." We use the Americans with Disabilities Act as our guide, and consult with our local Fair Housing Center when we have questions. When someone with a disability has difficulty living within ICC's rules, we make reasonable accommodation, which is defined in the *Living Well Manual* like this:

*A change in ICC policy, procedures, or rules, as long as the need for change is directly related to the disability.*

*Modification of ICC houses and buildings to allow for greater accessibility.*

*Any change that allows a person with a disability to have full access to ICC activities, public or community areas, or use of the facilities available to all house members.*

## Co-ops are ideal for learning tolerance, acceptance, and respect.

We also give people with disabilities more chances to "get it right" in terms of acting in a cooperative manner, and give her or him extra assistance if needed, often working with support people and local advocacy groups when needed.

In order to help cover the cost of making special arrangements for people with disabilities, ICC created the Whitney Fund, started with a generous gift from several local families with children who

have developmental disabilities. When these families decided to close their own independent-living house, they donated their remaining funds to the ICC. Next month we're having

a yard sale to raise money for the Whitney Fund, and already donations are coming in.

Whether large or small group houses, apartments, or townhouses, housing co-ops give their members a chance to learn from each other and care for each other. They can find out a lot about how people quite different from themselves live, while also learning how to cook, clean, do maintenance, run meetings, set goals, make decisions, and change their home environment for the better. They can learn to handle conflicts and solve problems.

I believe cooperation is democracy in action, empowerment of the individual. ICC co-ops focus on meeting people's needs, not on making money. Co-ops are an ideal place for people to learn caring, tolerance, acceptance, and respect. I passionately believe in creating a welcoming, inclusive community. It is a journey of love and adventure.

*Sheila Ritter, General Manager of the Inter-Cooperative Council, a 60-year-old cooperative community organization in Ann Arbor, helped start three co-ops in her college years, one of which is still thriving 30 years later. She has served as Executive Director of the North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO), and has produced slide shows and a video documentary about the cooperative movement.*



ICC ANN ARBOR



# Why Student Co-ops Rock

I missed student co-ops while I was flying through college. I've lived at Twin Oaks seven years now, and over the past few years of recruiting new members I've visited and worked and stayed up very late talking politics and possibilities at many student co-ops, and feel like I've started a belated love affair with this extraordinary institution. Here is a bit of what I have discovered.

Student co-ops are the breeding grounds for responsible communards. For many, coming to student co-ops means retiring from having parents who are carrying some of their domestic load. Most co-ops I've been to require members to do their own laundry, cook, clean, and do some other logistical/accounting overhead to make things feel fair. If you can thrive in this environment, it is a good step toward the lifestyle of most intentional communities.

Student co-ops are often peoples' first experience of an inclusive decision-making process. All the co-ops I've visited use some form of consensus decision-making. Learning the required listening skills to make consensus work, especially with people who may have difficult personalities (found in co-ops and every other kind of community), prepares the student not just for intentional com-

munity, but for all decentralized progressive political groups.

Which dovetails into the importance of student co-ops as a place to be introduced to all kinds of new ideas, both political and personal. If you make a sexist joke, you are much more likely to get called on it at a student co-op than in a dormitory or a fraternity. The co-ops I have visited have played an active role in providing political support for various causes working on or coming to campus. Benefit concerts, CSA (community-sup-

ported agriculture) links and participation, hosting campus political groups and activities, all lead to greater exposure of co-op members to progressive politics. Many who come looking for inexpensive and attractive housing, find themselves politicized or radicalized in ways they hadn't expected.

Student co-ops usually own their own buildings. This means rents are often

lower than in other on- or off-campus housing. It also means that fantastic murals or other student-driven renovations and improvement are more likely to happen than in conventional student housing, where landlords or dorm rules prohibit such creativity. Ownership is also an invitation to take responsibility. Those who grab it—by working on next year's



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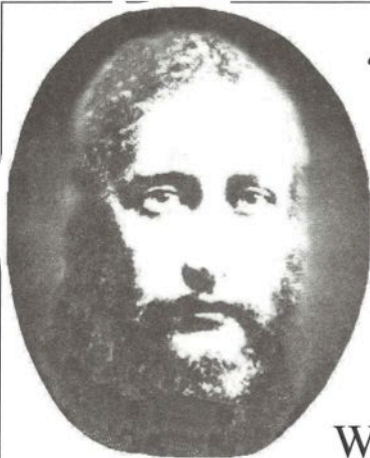
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*Paxus Calta has been a member of Twin Oaks since 1998.*





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member selection, or co-op finances, and/or keeping the kitchen going—are learning the basics of community life.

Communities and student co-ops share what, in my thinking, is the most radical economic practice in use today: sharing resources. The cultural and environmental importance of sharing material things is hard to overstate. Student co-ops are often the first regular experience people have with sharing that requires scheduling, from washing machines to cars in car co-ops. It is often hard to get

***Such experimentation would not likely fly at most intentional communities.***

sharing behavior to take root in mainstream society, but in co-ops and other kinds of intentional communities, sharing is one of the basic assumptions which make them work.

Student co-ops can also teach the communities movement. Many co-ops are institutionally daring, changing configurations regularly. Other kinds of intentional communities tend to be more ossified, daring less for fear of risking what has worked so far. Student co-ops, in part because of their regular and predictable turnover, are more free to re-invent the rules of living together with each successive “generation.” I am told that at Synergy co-op at Stanford, they would vote to change the room configurations every year. So one year everyone slept in a big dorm room-type space with lots of offices and other common space, and the following year they voted for all private rooms and less common space. Such experimentation would not likely fly at most intentional communities.

This is the kind of innovation, flexibility, and richness I'd like to see more of at Twin Oaks. I hope Twin Oaks and other FEC communities will continue to attract new members who got their community start in student co-ops! Ω

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# Should Co-op Leaders Be Paid?

I've worked with a fair number of organizations that ran exclusively on unpaid volunteer labor, or paid only a small professional staff while offering no compensation to the group's leaders (the board of directors). In most such groups the question comes up sooner or later about whether leaders should be paid for their efforts, and the question is controversial. This article is intended to help those faced with this issue find some clarity. It's applicable to just about any volunteer-based organization, but it's especially relevant to student housing co-ops. In fact, though I've put in a fair amount of time in volunteer organizations ranging from a radical environmental group to a community radio station, it was the time I spent on the board of directors of the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) student housing cooperative in Austin, Texas, that first got me really thinking in detail about the issues surrounding leader compensation.

Purists argue that co-op service should be completely voluntary and uncompensated, especially if the co-op in question is a nonprofit or exists to serve the community in some way. They argue that no one

should profit from the co-op, and that paid service of certain leaders taints the cooperative ideal. It certainly doesn't seem "cooperative" if some people get paid for their work while other volunteer members don't. And bringing money into the equation can seem awkward when one of the whole reasons that housing co-ops exist is to provide an alternative to profit-driven businesses.

These are valid concerns, and I'm definitely sympathetic to the desire for all co-op service to be purely voluntary.

There's just one problem—it rarely works. It's not often that I see a co-op or nonprofit organization that functioned effectively without paying at least some of the people to do some of the work. Those who have tried to go the 100 percent volunteer route have almost always limited their effectiveness. I'm not saying that it can't be done, and I applaud those who try, but I *am*

saying that it's rare.

If an organization is fulfilling its goals without any paid help, then by all means it should continue to do so. But if the group hasn't made much progress in years, and there's not a large pool of volunteers eager to do the work, then it's time to at



*Michael Bluejay runs a website design company in Austin, Texas, publishes how-to articles at MichaelBluejay.com, and remains an active volunteer for co-ops.*

*ICC in Austin: [www.iccaustin.coop](http://www.iccaustin.coop).*

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least consider greasing the wheels to get things rolling.

It's notable that those most staunchly opposed to compensating leaders are often the most staunchly opposed to picking up the slack themselves. That was my initial experience with the ICC student co-ops in Austin, where I was a member from 1997 to 2002. Every year the members elected five people to be the main coordinators for the group—or rather, they tried to elect five people, but there were seldom even five people running for the five positions. This was out of a membership of around 160. Folks, this is a leadership crisis. When nobody wants to help run the organization, the organization is in trouble. But it's not sufficient to blame the lack of involvement on “lazy members” because that does nothing to solve the problem. It also fails to take into account valid reasons why members might not be eager to step up to the plate. Being a leader on a board of directors often isn't a small volunteer effort, it's a big one. Such a responsibility could be overwhelming to anyone, but it's especially so to students in co-ops who are already trying to juggle school, a part-time job, and member work at their own house. And

besides the lack of time there's also the lack of money—students may simply be unable to afford to do any extra work unless they're being compensated for it.

For whatever reason, when there's little interest among membership in doing a job, offering compensation is an excellent way to generate interest in the job. It's certainly not the only way, but it's still very, very effective. I pushed for years for ICC to offer some modest compensation to its leaders, to no avail at first. When the group finally took its first baby step in that direction, it wasn't long before they had willing candidates for every office—and sometimes multiple candidates for the same office. The compensation wasn't the only factor

involved in the renewed interest, but it was certainly important.

Some might ask why only some people should be compensated when all the members of a co-op contribute labor. That's a good question, and it has a good answer: Because not all the work is equal. If few people want to do the work you're considering paying for, that's a good clue that that work is challenging enough that few people want to do it for free. Things that make a job worth paying for include:

- Long hours
- Big time commitment
- Boring, repetitive, or uninteresting work
- Big responsibility
- Lack of interest in the absence of compensation

This is quite different from house labor in a typical student co-op, which is usually fewer hours (five to seven),

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less of a responsibility (not that's it's not important, but it's not the same thing as overseeing a million-dollar budget), and which is required of house members whether they get paid or not (i.e., a guaranteed workforce). Leadership positions are often a stark contrast—they may require more time, more

responsibility, and few people may want to do them without at least some form of modest compensation.

You would never compensate leaders just for the hell of it. You would do so only if you need more interest or more accountability in your leadership positions.

Even so, these aren't the only possible benefits from paying leaders. Yes, you will expect to have people interested in applying to do a job or running for an office, and you can even have contested positions. And this provides a hidden benefit: with multiple people interested in a job, all of a sudden the organization has a choice as to whom they can pick. This can result in more qualified people in



those positions, and happier members since they actually had an opportunity to play a part in the selection. Another benefit from compensation is that leaders will be less likely to feel taken advantage of if they're receiving anything tangible for their efforts. Members will also have a greater ability to hold leaders accountable. Once someone is paid to do a job, they're really expected to do it, and to do it well. How easy is it to hold someone's feet to the fire over doing a poor job when they were doing it for free?

Compensation can be tricky because you have to make certain not to run afoul of labor laws. If your method of compensation makes it seem like the leaders are workers then you'll be subject to various labor laws and payroll taxes. It will definitely pay to consult with an attorney beforehand to design a way to reward leaders that won't run you afoul of the IRS. ICC's method is to award scholarships, in the form of a discount off monthly room charges.

Starting from scratch, it's hard to figure out exactly how much compensation will be fair and effective in recruiting potential leaders. Probably the minimum is around \$4-5/hr. for students who will be spending around four to eight hours a week on their projects. Yes, that's below minimum wage, but the point isn't to make leadership positions into a job (unless the organization can afford it), it's to make the positions attractive enough so that people will take them. Almost nobody would take a job for \$4-5/hr. But someone might decide to serve their co-op at that rate, while they wouldn't want to serve their co-op for no dollars an hour.

Of course, money is always a concern. Many co-ops and nonprofits operate on a shoestring budget and rightly wonder whether they can afford to pay their leadership. A better question might be: Can

you afford not to? Or more specifically: How much is good leadership worth to you? That's what it comes down to. Imagine an organization with active, effective leaders who got stuff done, moved the organization forward, and motivated and involved the rest of the membership. Clearly that is worth something. The only question is how much. \$1000, \$5000, \$10,000? The answer of

**Those most staunchly opposed to compensating leaders are often the most staunchly opposed to picking up the slack themselves.**

course will be unique to every organization, but the thing to focus on is how much an improved organization is worth.

And remember, you can always start small and increase the compensation if it doesn't elicit the desired effects. And you can always scrap the whole thing later if you decided it didn't work out.

If you do decide to compensate your leaders you will want to make certain you're getting what you pay for. If anyone can get the compensation no matter how poor a job they do, then it may turn out that they do a fairly poor job. The board of directors should decide what criteria has to be met to consider the job done and compensation earned, as well as who will make the determination whether the criteria were met. Yes, it's a little more hassle, but it helps ensure that the work is getting done and getting done properly. It's another good check on organizational performance.

For organizations who start paying their leaders, the rewards are often immediate and tangible. Remember ICC, which went from historically having fewer candidates than positions to fill, to having a full slate of candidates shortly after offering even modest compensation for them. The promise offered by paying leaders is an organization that is more active and more effective in fulfilling its goals—and ultimately, isn't that what we want most?  $\Omega$



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# Gratamira Social Club: The Ecovillage Lies Within

What might a chain of urban cafes have in common with an ecovillage? At Gratamira Ecovillage in Medellin, Colombia—everything. In many ways, our Gratamira Ecovillage defies the common definition of “ecovillage.” Our group doesn’t even own the Gratamira coffee ranch that serves as the hub of our ecovillage: we rent it, and though my partner Cristina and I still live here, the majority of our collective lives elsewhere. Though we originally planned to grow our own food and livestock, our rental agreement doesn’t allow us to grow anything. So how can we call ourselves an ecovillage?

The chain of cafes that Cristina and I own and manage are scattered throughout the city. They act as the little seeds of our Gratamira Ecovillage, spreading the word of alternative economies, collective living, and ecologically based business and living practices. We dream of an ecocity where recycling, clean transportation projects, rooftop gardens, graywater recycling, con-

sensus decision-making, trade economies, and yoga are the norm. At Gratamira and through our restaurant chains, we promote these concepts to key people such as environmental authorities, politicians, artists, and intellectuals.

Our history together began in 2000 when the ENA (Ecovillage Network of the Americas) council met in Colombia. Here, Cristina and I attended workshops in permaculture and consensus decision-making. We were on a quest begun in 1995 when we first heard of a mythical 100-person village where each villager has a role and all lived together in harmony. We weren’t sure if such a thing could truly exist but thought to ourselves—“that sounds really good!”

At the ENA council meeting, we found others who envisioned such a communal village and whose lifestyles and values mirrored our own. We were inspired to initiate the search for a location and fellow members to begin an ecovillage whose goals would be happi-

ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK OF  
THE AMERICAS



BY CARLOS  
“PATO” GOMEZ

*With degrees in engineering and sustainable tourism management, Carlos “Pato” Gomez has worked in environmental management, permaculture, conflict resolution, journalism, and the food and entertainment business. He founded the LeBon chain of cafes in Medellin, Colombia.*



ness, comfort, and social and environmental responsibility.

At the end of 2002, we moved from a small apartment of 60 square meters at the center of the city to the Gratamira Ranch, a historic building in the traditional neighborhood of El Poblado, in the southeast of Medellin. Our founding members included Cristina Gomez del Barco, civil engineer, artist, and yoga instructor; myself, production engineer, graduate with a masters degree in sustainable tourism, permaculture instructor, and Andean

region placeholder for the ENA council; Daniel Jaramillo, agronomist and permaculturist with degrees from Tagari Institute; and Juan Felipe Rodriguez, business administrator. We chose Gratamira because it was near our restaurants but far enough outside the city to allow us to share our day-to-day life with others in a near-rural setting.

Situated just a few meters above the pollution of the city, the Gratamira Ranch derives its name from the pleasant (*grata*) view (*mira*) it has over the Aburra Valley and Medellin. Built in 1940 and encompassing forty hectares, today its size has been reduced to 1.4 hectares, covering just four blocks. It is surrounded by some of the wealthiest suburbs of Medellin, whose residents serve as the primary clients of our cafes.

Surrounding the ranch is a natural water source, a native forest reserve visited by approximately 50 different species of birds, coffee and fruit-tree cultivation, vegetable gardens, and livestock. The house has been designated a historical landmark and lies within the 11,200-hectare Arvi Park, which acts as a buffer for the urban development of the cities of Rio Negro in the San Nicolas Valley and Medellin, in the Aburra Valley.

Our original intent was for our ecovillage to serve as a model for a sustainable

micro-enterprise. We'd envisioned planting fruit trees, flowers, and vegetables for consumption in our chain of restaurants. Ironically, as we soon found

out, all of this was not permitted under the rental agreement. Since our original vision was now impossible to achieve, Daniel and Juan went their separate ways and our ecovillage was fundamentally changed. But for Cristina and I, the seeds of communal living had already been planted. We knew we could accomplish more and have more fun with more people sharing our space and helping

us develop our projects.

Soon after Daniel and Juan left the collective, an exciting new project began to develop at one of our restaurants located in the touristic and economic heart of the city by the Plaza of Fernando Botero's sculptures and the museum of Antioquia. Here, a local economy movement called the Minga Nutibara was promoted. Every Saturday afternoon, visitors arrived from surrounding towns and neighborhoods to meet at the restaurant and learn about trade systems and alternative economies. In particular, many shared stories of the Argentinean Global Trade Network. The success of the Network in the wake of Argentina's financial collapse supported those Colombians who argued that within Colombia's own financial difficulties lay a mountain of opportunities.

Honorable elders, shamans, grandfathers, grandmothers, and priests came from the four corners of the country and made themselves present in this important space, giving their recommendations and best energy toward respect and strength of the best Paisa (rural) customs through promotion of a new form of community currency they referred to simply as "The Word." Under this new form of exchange, all important business transactions were made by giving one's

**Honorable elders,  
shamans,  
grandfathers,  
grandmothers,  
and priests came  
from the four  
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Colombia.**

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A. Total No Copies (Net Press Run)	4450	3990
B. Paid &/or Requested Circulation		
(a) Sales through dealers & carriers, street vendors, & counter sales (not mailed)	2714	2351
(b) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Including advertisers' proof copies/exchange copies)	1441	1381
C. Total Paid &/or Requested Circulation	4155	3732
D. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, & other free)	0	0
E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers & other means)	0	0
F. Total Free Distribution	0	0
G. Total Distribution	4155	3732
H. Copies Not Distributed		
(1) Office use, leftovers, spoiled	295	258
(2) Return from news agents	48	0
I. Total	4450	3990
Percent Paid &/or Requested Circulation	93%	94%

“word” to exchange one specific service for another.

At the Minga Nutibara, Felipe Guerra, 27, a web master and recycler ([www.ereciclaje.com](http://www.ereciclaje.com)), said he would exchange his knowledge and accounting abilities for a place in the city to live and work. Then my partner at one of the restaurants offered his grocery store that was strategically placed and available so that unofficially and “by the word,” we could initiate a center of reproduction, a space destined principally toward development of a means of production that would utilize all the waste from the restaurants, at every stage of production.

In December 2003, we celebrated a permaculture certification course with an intention to establish an action plan as a collective. After the workshop in three dif-

ferent sittings, we unified our criteria and became a collective—even though we didn't share the same roof. Today, we have four NGOs that represent us legally and the support of the mayor of Medellin. In relationship to sustainable tourism, we

work with a municipal garbage service company, the Civil Society Natural Preserve Network, and the sustainable tourism network of Columbia. Together with the founding members of the project, as well as with others that have always given us support, and with the visitors who come to

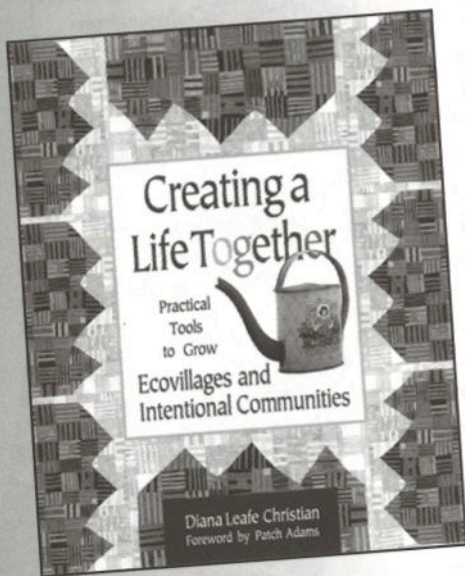
our ecovillage, our sense of community and micro-enterprise has continued enriching us all, moon after moon.

In addition to modeling ecologically designed practices such as using gray-water, vermiculture to produce compost from restaurant waste and recycling, Gratamira and its associated chain of restaurants host permaculture and consensus training workshops and playful, experiential performances to promote care for our Earth. This is our ecovillage: rented property in the mountains of the Aburra Valley where a group of dreamers of a better future share with their friends practices for the spirit (yoga, life celebrations, and transforming conflict); the physical body (organic gardening and healthy nutrition); and alternative economic, political, environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual relations.

Today at Gratamira, we are expanding our efforts throughout Medellin and into outlying communities. We look for land in different ecosystems of Columbia where we can promote replications of our model and help others create initiatives to promote the economic and ecological sustainability of our communities and free the souls of our members from dependence on money, thus allowing us to share the human growth that happens when we recognize ourselves in one another. Ω

**Our sense of  
community and  
micro-enterprise  
has continued  
enriching us all,  
moon after moon.**

## Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities



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[store.ic.org](http://store.ic.org) [permacultureactivist.net](http://permacultureactivist.net) [newsociety.com](http://newsociety.com)



# REVIEWS



## *Comuni, Comunità, ed Ecovillaggi in Italia (Communes, Communities, and Ecovillages in Italy)*

by Manuel Olivares

Rome, Italy. Malatempora, 2003

Pb. 131 pp.

manuelolivares@liberto.it

## *Diggers & Dreamers: The Guide to Communal Living 2004/2005*

S. Bunker et al., editors

London, UK: Diggers and Dreamers

Publications, 2004

Pb. 232 pp, £6.50.

www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk

## *Eurotopia: Gemeinschaften und Ecodörfer in Europa, Second Edition*

### *(Eurotopia: Intentional Communities and Ecovillages in Europe)*

V. Peters & M. Stengel, editors

Poppau, Germany. Eurotopia-Verzeichnis,

2004

Pb. 448 pp. www.eurotopia.de

## *Utopianz: A Guide to Intentional Communities and Communal Living in Aotearoa New Zealand*

R. Greenaway et al., editors

Christchurch, New Zealand: The STRAW

Umbrella Trust, 2004

Pb. 76 pp. NZ\$20.

straw@paradise.net.nz

Reviewed by Bill Metcalf

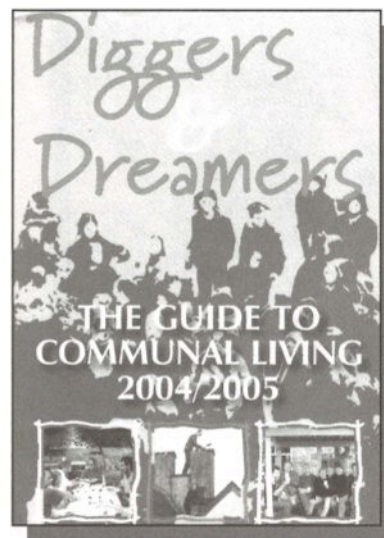
Since I research and write about intentional communities on the international scene, I'm an admirer of communities directories. These useful reference books serve at least four functions. 1) They allow communities to share their story, philosophy, and aims with readers, and help recruit potential new members and attract paying or working guests 2) They help general readers locate intentional communities to visit, or perhaps join, and can be useful in showing the range of communities within any area. Also, many directories include articles of general interest about this movement. 3) They help tourists plan an intentional community holiday. One might be able to cheaply work one's way through a foreign country by contributing labour to, and staying in a wide range of exotic intentional communities. 4) They help academic researchers and students track changes within this social movement, and identify and provide contacts for potential research within specific groups. Directories also provide a wonderful history of which communities have existed at what times.

The following four communities directories have appeared recently.



*Communes, Communities, and Ecovillages in Italy (Comuni, Comunità, ed Ecovillaggi in Italia)* describes Italian intentional communities in a series of short articles, many with photos, ranging from the large Damanhur Federation to many small newly forming groups, with

contact information for each group. It features several brief articles about the sociological and historical background of the intentional communities movement, describing several renowned non-Italian communities such as Auroville and Findhorn Foundation. I found this directory well-written, informative and thoughtful. It's available only in Italian, although the author plans an English version.



*Diggers & Dreamers*, updated and published every other year since 1989, continues to offer an up-to-date guide to intentional communities in the United Kingdom. The current edition describes 89 intentional communities in the UK, accompanied by a map, a useful comparative index, and a list of contacts. It includes a humorous article, "10 Myths of Communal Living." ("There is a leader really, isn't there?" "Community living will save my relationship." "You don't eat meat or smoke, do you?" "So now I'll have time to be creative." "But I came to community for shared childcare." "Peace, man." "Communities are just a bunch of old hippies." "One big mattress." "So I can just forget about money, right?" "I will get all the support I need from living in a community.") *Diggers & Dreamers* is published in small, shirt-pocket format. I found it an excellent value for the price.



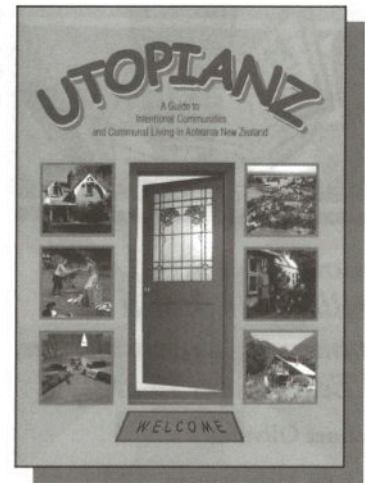
*Eurotopia: Intentional Communities and Ecovillages in Europe, Second Edition (Eurotopia: Gemeinschaften und Ecodörfer in Europa)* is a comprehensive guide to a wide range of intentional communities in Europe. The first edition was published in 1998 by a group of communitarians at Ecovillage Sieben Linden in Germany, with an English edition published in 2000. This recently released second edition will have an English translation in April 2005.



*Eurotopia* offers detailed listings of intentional communities, with contact information for each, for 24 European countries. These range from Germany, with 143 communities listed; United Kingdom, with 45; and France, with 31, to Austria, Ireland, Hungary, Norway and Portugal, each with four communities listed, and Bulgaria, Poland, Turkey, and Ukraine, with one community listed. *Eurotopia* also features 11 short articles about financial, interpersonal, and other issues in communities, as well as published and electronic

resources and a comprehensive index. It is packed with useful information—even for the non-German reader.

*Utopianz* is a small, neatly presented and fairly comprehensive guide to New Zealand's thriving intentional communities movement. Published by a dedicated group of New Zealand volunteers, this colourful reference work offers one to two-page descriptions, some with photos, of 24 intentional communities, ranging from Anahata to Volco Park, with contact information, aims, age, size, etc., for each, plus information about three forming communities. It also includes six brief articles about intentional communities, including one about the history of the communities movement in New Zealand, and another about Parihaka, a 19th-century Maori community. Two maps show locations of current intentional communities. A final section lists resources, books, and websites.



Reviewed by Bill Metcalf

In the 19th century, many fictional accounts were published about life in intentional communities. Most of these took the form of utopian novels showing how all social problems could be solved by living in closer, more communal ways. More recently, there has been an increase in fictional accounts of intentional community life which show them all to be dangerous "cults" wherein people are brainwashed and from which they must be rescued. In general, when fictional works make use of intentional communities those communities are presented in stereotypical and unidimensional ways suggesting that the authors know little of life within real intentional communities.

In *Names for Nothingness*, a teenage girl in Australia, Caitlin, runs away from home and school to join a spiritual community in northern New South Wales called Satya Deva. Members believe they should sever contact with their families and pasts, and live totally in the here-and-now. Their repertoire of adages include: It is only in a lack of all awareness that we reach awareness; To serve another's needs is to subjugate ones own desires, and this is the true path to happiness; Our role is to follow; To do simply as we are instructed; and To deny all individual desires. At the same time, members believe that sex is simply a basic need, and that it is an honour for female members

### *Names for Nothingness*

By G. Blain

Picador, 2004. Sydney, Australia.

Pb. 252 pages. ISBN: 0 330 36488 X

Austrian cost \$22.00. North America: higher

### *Spirit Wrestlers*

By T. Shapcott

Wakefield Press, 2004. Adelaide, Australia.

Hb. 280 pp. ISBN: 1 86254 645 2

U.S.: \$27.95. Canada: \$39.95

Available from:

Independent Publishers Group

[www.ipgbook.com](http://www.ipgbook.com)



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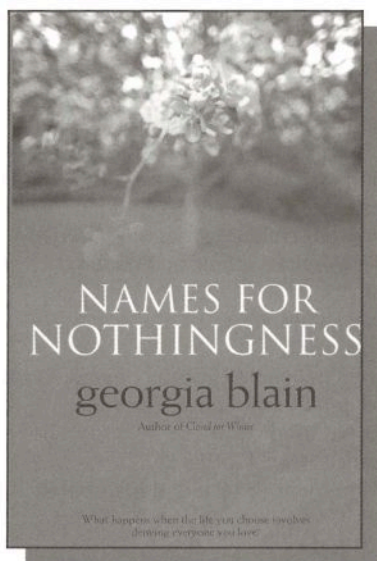
**Loving More, Box 4358C, Boulder, CO 80306**  
[LMM@lovemore.com](mailto:LMM@lovemore.com) / [www.lovemore.com](http://www.lovemore.com) / 1-800-424-9561



to be chosen by the guru, or another senior male, to meet that basic need.

Caitlin's mother and step-father try to liberate her from this community but fail to understand that she wants to stay. In fact, I came to pity her family even more than I might pity Caitlin—although it is unclear if that was the author's intention. The message could be that Caitlin's choice of this intentional community shows what a messed-up family she came from!

The title of this novel derives from a series of talks and a book published by the Indian spiritual teacher Osho (Bhagwan Shri Rajneesh), entitled *99 Names for Nothingness*.



In *Spirit Wrestlers*, the author imagines that a group of communal Doukhobors (a religious sect originating in Russia) emigrated from western Canada to Queensland in 1964. The book's advertising blurb notes: "A small country town is invaded by a strange religious sect, an ancient Russian primitive group who believe in pacifism, vegetarianism, and the power of fire." Oh dear!

The two male protagonists are Johann, a German-Australian teenager, and Ivan, a Doukhobor lad of about the same age. A romantic and sexual edge is added by Olga, a Doukhobor girl. Because it describes a "cult," of course the book offers a madman, plenty of repressed sexuality, and outbursts of violence. The three main characters,

Johann, Ivan, and Olga, all move away because of a fire in the community in the mid-1960s but, in 1978, they all return to the commune site in search of each other and of a long-lost, ambiguous but deeply-moving experience at a beautiful rock pool. In the interim, war service in Vietnam, drug use, violence, and the aging process have taken their tolls. The story concludes with a battle. On the surface, this is a wrestle between Johann and Ivan, but on a deeper level it is meant to represent both men wrestling for their souls.

This book's title derives from the original Russian name for the Doukhobours, Doukho-borts, meaning "spirit wrestlers," a name applied in 1785 by Archbishop Ambrosius of the Russian Orthodox Church. Ambrosius probably saw this as a derogatory label because he imagined they were wrestling with God's Spirit, rather than against their base human natures.

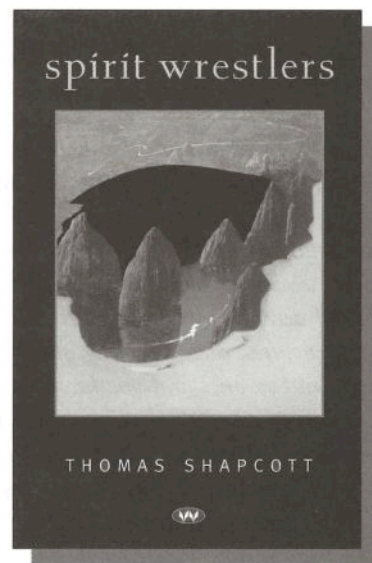
While both *Names for Nothingness* and *Spirit Wrestlers* are at least partially set in intentional communities, neither deal with those communities in other than stereotypical ways. Satya Deva is almost a caricature of the modern, new age "cult" in which naïve young innocents are fleeced by lascivious and hypocritical charismatic leaders. The Doukhobors are likewise misrepresented as a caricature of a quaint primitive religious sect, much as the Amish are sometimes shown.

Neither intentional community is developed in any way which helps us to appreciate the life within the community from the perspective of participants. But then that was probably not the objective of either author. Both stories are well written

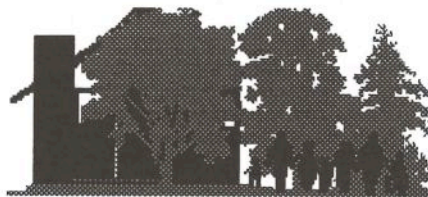
by experienced Australian novelists, and I enjoyed reading them. Blain and Shapcott used intentional community as the vehicle for, and locale in which to construct their stories. Both writers give a real flavour of Australia and Australians. Why should a reader expect the intentional communities to be developed to any sensitive depth? But I do.

I notice that in the review of another fiction work set in community, *Child of the Wild Wind* (Fall '04 issue), the reviewer notes that author Clair Garden "absolutely gets community right." I'm afraid Australia will have to wait for a fictional book other than *Names for Nothingness* and *Spirit Wrestlers* before we can claim the same.

Dr. Bill Metcalf of Griffith University, Australia, has studied contemporary and historic communal groups worldwide since the 1970s. His latest book is *The Findhorn Book of Community Living* (Findhorn Press, 2004).



## Northwest Intentional Communities Association



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and Cohousing.

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<http://www.ic.org/nica>

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Seattle, WA 98144 Email [floriferous@msn.com](mailto:floriferous@msn.com)



# 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](http://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](mailto:order@ic.org); 540-894-5798. Thank you!*

## New

**Forming Community (MI)**  
27710 Cordoba  
Apt 2306  
Farmington, MI 48334-3969  
734-812-5543  
[edgreene@comcast.net](mailto:edgreene@comcast.net)  
[www.taobearbooks.com](http://www.taobearbooks.com)  
5/2004.

**Ferme Yogecostere—Forming (QC)**  
Attn: Michel de Moulemestre  
3523 Chemin Bedard  
Ste Justine deNewton, QC J0P 1T0  
Canada  
450-764-3174  
[yogecostere@sympatico.ca](mailto:yogecostere@sympatico.ca)  
5/2004.

**Knowledge Farm—Forming (OH)**  
Attn: Jonathan Blackshire  
Ohio  
[pytaros@idontknowdude.com](mailto:pytaros@idontknowdude.com)  
[farm.idontknowdude.com/](http://farm.idontknowdude.com/)  
10/2004.

**Omega House**  
2412 1st Ave S  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404  
612-871-8431  
[www.home.earthlink.net/~omegahouse/](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~omegahouse/)  
The Omega House is a unique co-op located south of downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our cooperative is an intentional community of adults striving to live well together.  
10/2004.

**Rewilding Community**  
800-471-5403  
[feralhuman@ziplip.com](mailto:feralhuman@ziplip.com)  
[www.rewild.org](http://www.rewild.org)  
We are in the process of buying land & forming a tribe of aspiring semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers. It is our goal to eventually sustain ourselves entirely (food, clothing, shelter, tools, etc.) from materials we harvest from the wild. The eventual goal will be working towards importing nothing from outside nature. This is expected to be a lifelong transition. We are cultivating a trust that the Earth can and will provide for all our needs with emphasis on joining the community that already exists in nature. The circle of people comprising the community will be first priority. We envision the community functioning as a support group for overcoming addictions and thresholds (both physical and emotional) through the practice of emotional honesty and the Talking Circle. Meals will be cooked around a fire. This will be a garden, pet, livestock, drug, alcohol & electricity free environment. We see our vision as a set of guidelines rather than rules. Owning land is not our primary goal for this community. We see "owning" land as a necessary protection against eviction and harassment in this modern reality of private property rights. We see ourselves as being caretakers rather than owners. All we really anticipate needing is a legal space to build a winter camp & storage. Other small temporary camps will be used for scouting, seasonal food harvests, hunting and fishing. Any level of commitment is welcome, from those with a

desire to live long-term on this land to those who wish to support this project from afar. Anyone with any level of experience is welcome to join us at any time, free of charge, to try to actualize this vision.  
10/2004.

**Sophia Community**  
5615 S Woodlawn Ave  
Chicago, IL 60637-1622  
(773) 955-1325  
[becky\\_032000@yahoo.com](mailto:becky_032000@yahoo.com)  
Sophia Community is an 11-year-old community in a lovely big house in Hyde Park, near the University of Chicago. We recruit new members each year starting in April. Four young women who had all spent a year doing volunteer work in inner-city Chicago neighborhoods and living with Catholic Sisters founded Sophia Community in 1993. Inspired by the Sisters\* life, they created their own form of community life. Four years ago, we moved from an apartment building into Quaker House, where we manage the house and guest business on behalf of the 57th Street Meeting of Friends. Currently, we consist of 4 men aged 35-50, 3 women aged 24-40, and one girl-child. There is one married couple. We have ethnic and national diversity.

Our key values are:

- \* Simple living
  - \* Communal chores, mostly organic food, shared community space, common household fund
  - \* Presence to each other
  - \* Commitment to relationships, shared meals
  - \* Social Justice
  - \* Most of us work for nonprofits or social service
  - \* Spirituality
  - \* Diverse, but we share spirituality together twice weekly
  - \* Hospitality
  - \* We run a small guest business for travelers
- In our new members, we look for people who:
- \* Are emotionally mature and capable of sustaining relationships
  - \* Have experience living cooperatively since leaving their families
  - \* Have a personal spiritual practice or path
  - \* Are willing to accept a vegetarian diet in the house
  - \* Have time for community chores, meals, meetings, the hospitality duties, and
  - \* Hanging out
  - \* Are flexible, and aware of cross-cultural issues
  - \* Have completed college or 2 years work experience
  - \* Are friendly
- 10/2004.



## Updates

**East Lake Commons**  
105 Dancing Fox Rd  
Decatur, GA 30032-3973  
(770) 988-9856  
ContactUs@eastlakecommons.org  
New contact information.  
9/2004.

**Folkhaven**  
HC 30 Box 12778  
Wasilla, AK 99654-9711  
Address update through post office.  
9/2004.

**Glendower**  
Attn: Dave West  
11406 E Scarritt Ave  
Independence, MO 64054-1252  
Address update.  
9/2004.

**Horizons ecoVillage**  
Attn: Alexander and Calloway  
1900 Rio Hill Ctr # 113  
Charlottesville, VA 22901-1142  
Address update.  
9/2004.

**Manzanita Village Cohousing**  
258 Benjamin Dr  
Prescott, AZ 86303  
Address update.  
9/2004.

**Mariposa Grove**  
828 59th St.  
Oakland, CA 94706  
510-655-5500  
www.healthyarts.com/mariposagrove/  
New contact information.  
10/2004.

**Nomad Cohousing**  
1460 Quince Ave #101  
Boulder CO 80304  
www.nomadcohousing.org/  
Mailing address change and new website.  
6/2004.

**Regenerative Co-op of Pomona**  
RegenPomona@gmail.com  
katheRegen@hotmail.com  
New contact information: contact only by email. Updated description.  
The Regenerative Co-op of Pomona, Regen, is an intentional community located in a quiet suburb east of Los Angeles. Founded by graduates of Cal Poly Pomona's Center for Regenerative Studies in 1999, we strive to incorporate sustainable and regenerative principles in our urban/suburban environment.

The food in the co-op is vegetarian, although the co-op includes residents who are nonvegetarian away from home. Community meals occur 5 nights a week and always include a vegan option. We use solar power, maintain a graywater system, edible landscaping and organic gardening. Community decisions use a consensus model in weekly community meetings. We organize a Sustainability Seminar every February with workshops and speakers on topics from solar power and making bio-diesel to activism in the media (topics change each year). We host the local Food Not Bombs chapter every Sunday which provides vegetarian meals to the local homeless. In addition, we host various workshops of social and environmental interest throughout the year.

Currently we can accommodate up to 20 residents distributed among 3 homes. Some of us are very active in local peace and environmental activism; others have never been to a protest. We have had residents from as far away as Germany and as local as Orange County. We are organizers, teachers, technicians, students, business people, philosophers, artists, and many other roles. Most members are students or recent graduates of various local colleges. We do have openings from time to time. If you are interested in applying, please contact us and we'll let you know what space is available.  
8/2004.

**San Mateo Ecovillage**  
Group name updated.  
8/2004.

**Skyhouse Community**  
2 Dancing Rabbit Lane  
Rutledge MO 63563  
660-883-588  
www.skyhousecommunity.org  
New contact information (not a move.)  
New website.  
8/2004.

**Two Acre Wood Cohousing**  
680 Robinson Rd  
Sebastopol, CA 95472-4101  
Address update.  
9/2004.

**Yahara Linden Gathering**  
1038 Williamson St  
Madison, WI 53703-3526  
Group name and address updated.  
9/2004.

**Yonderfamily Housing and Land Trust, Inc**  
6560 GA Highway 18  
Jeffersonville, GA 31044-2704  
Address update.  
9/2004.

**Zendik Farm Arts Foundation**  
HC 82 Box 217A  
Marlinton, West Virginia 24954  
304-799-7281  
Updated address and phone.  
10/2004.

## Lost/Disbanded

**The Garden Belize**  
Disbanded at Belize location, may be reforming elsewhere.  
8/2004.

**Global Village / School of the Americas Florida**  
Postal address lost.  
10/2004.

**Tui Land Trust New Zealand**  
Web site address lost.  
10/2004.

**A rewarding opportunity at  
Camphill Special School-Beaver Run**

The new and exciting Transition Program at Camphill School Beaver Run is currently looking for experienced long-term staff for the fall of 2005. This 3-year program is aimed at guiding youngsters who graduate from Beaver Run toward their next step in life.



The Transition Program is situated near the main campus in the beautiful Northern Chester County countryside, and will expand to become a strong part of the school and the vocational life of Beaver Run. Those interested in working in this rewarding environment please call: Anne Sproll at 610.469.9236 or email: brvolunteer@aol.com



# Reach



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

You may use the form on the last page of the column to place an ad. **THE REACH DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING 2005 ISSUE (OUT IN APRIL) IS JANUARY 20.**

The special REACH rate is only \$.25 per word (up to 100 words, \$.50 per word thereafter for all ads) so why not use this opportunity to network with others interested in community? We offer discounts for multiple insertions as well: \$.23 per word for two times and \$.20 per word for four times prepaid. 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, POB 324, W. Chesterfield, NH 03466. It's important to include your mailing address so I can send you tear sheets of your ad. If you have questions, email me at [patricia@ic.org](mailto:patricia@ic.org) or call at 603-256-8329.

Communities listed in our Directory are entitled to one free update to their listing. Updates submitted for that purpose will appear in the Directory Update section to 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 Update section. We suggest advertising in Reach as well to increase and extend publicity for your group. Contact: [order@ic.org](mailto:order@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, expe-

rienced 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 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](http://www.abundantdawn.org); POB 433, Floyd, VA 24091; 540-745-5853; [info@abundantdawn.org](mailto:info@abundantdawn.org)

**AQUARIAN CONCEPTS COMMUNITY, Sedona, Arizona.** Founded by Gabriel of Sedona and Niann Emerson Chase in 1989. Currently 100 adults and children. International members. Global change work for Destiny Reservists in Divine Administration. God-centered community based on teachings of *The URANTIA Book* and Continuing Fifth Epochal Revelation, *The Cosmic Family* volumes, as received by Gabriel of Sedona. Organic gardens. Starseed School 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](mailto:info@aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org](http://www.aquarianconceptscommunity.org); [www.globalchangemusic.org](http://www.globalchangemusic.org)

**AQUARIUS NATURE RETREAT, Vail, Arizona.** Lease, purchase solar powered 25 acre mountain ranch. Exchange residency. Room \$150/mo. SASE. Box 69, Vail, AZ 85641; [jku-bias@hotmail.com](mailto:jku-bias@hotmail.com)

**BREITENBUSH HOT SPRINGS, Detroit, Oregon.** We are an intentional community set up as a worker-owned cooperative. We support ourselves by running a retreat and conference center. The work and business ethic is one of stewardship and service. We are located in the Oregon Cascade Mountains next to one of the last remaining old-growth rainforests. We have several hot tubs and natural hot spring pools and a steam sauna. We are on the Breitenbush River, which provides us with the means to generate our hydroelectric power, and all of our buildings are heated geothermally. Currently there are approximately 50 community members year round, with an additional 30 seasonal workers in the summer. We are looking for community-minded, hard working individuals in the areas of housekeeping, kitchen, maintenance, construction, office, childcare, marketing and massage (Oregon LMT

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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 with 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 bio-dynamic/organic meat, milk and vegetables. We live and work together with respect for each person's abilities. Although we work out of a nondenominational Christian philosophy, we accept people of all spiritual paths. Fostering a mood of reverence and gratitude is an essential part of Camphill life. We celebrate the seasonal and Christian festivals of the year with songs, stories, plays and other activities that are prepared together in the community. We seek people to join us—families, couples, single people. We need people who can be House parents (usually with four special needs people and one or two other "co-workers"), a dairy farmer, gardeners and people willing to lend a hand wherever needed. We are looking for long-term, committed people generally starting with a six month get-acquainted period. We provide health insurance, three-week vacation and meet each person's need 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 sustainably 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;

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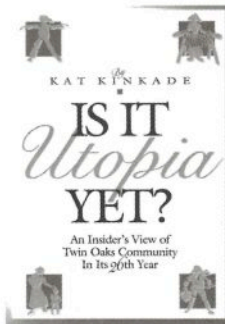
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**EAST WIND, Tecumseh, Missouri.** A 75-member Federation of Egalitarian (FEC) community, est. 1973. Located on 1,045 acres of land in the Ozark foothills of southern Missouri. The topography is heavily forested and scenic. Like other FEC communities, East Wind members value ecological awareness, equality, cooperation, and non-violence. Personal freedom is important to us. We enjoy flexible work schedules, incorporating choices from our successful businesses and domestic labors. Write or call and please contact us before visiting. *East Wind Community, Box CM-R, Tecumseh, MO 65760; 417-679-4682; visit@eastwind.org*

**ECO-FARM, Plant City, Florida.** 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, 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](http://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 ten acre organic farm. EVI welcomes you! *Check out our web site at: [www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us](http://www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us) and contact: Liz Walker, 607-255-8276; EcoVillage at Ithaca, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, 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, coworkers and children, we grow our own fruit and vegetables bio-dynamically. All ages work together in our practical work activities. They include a candle shop, metal shop, wood shop, weavery/handwork group, greenhouse, publishing press, bakery, outlet store and medical practice. The spiritual science (anthroposophy) of Rudolf Steiner is the basis for our work. There is a Waldorf School and several other anthroposophical initiatives nearby. Our lifestyle is an intense social/cultural commitment to the future of mankind. *Check out our web site at [www.FellowshipCommunity.org](http://www.FellowshipCommunity.org) If you are interested in co-working or need additional info, please contact our office at 845-356-8494; or write to: Ann Scharff, c/o The Executive Circle at 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977; [rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org](mailto:rsffoffice@fellowshipcommunity.org)*

**HEARTWOOD COHOUSING, Bayfield, Colorado.** Enjoy community on 250 beautiful acres in Southwest Colorado. For information, including what's for sale or rent, go to [www.heartwoodcohousing.com](http://www.heartwoodcohousing.com) or call 970-884-7077.

**SHIVALILA COMMUNITY, Pahoehoe, Hawaii.** We are seeking new members. Established in 1992, we have three adults and three children on our 37 acres. Values: honesty, nonviolence, shared parenting, income and assets. Organic juice and sawmilling business, homeschooling, marimbas, sustainability nonprofit, exotic fruit orchards, animal husbandry. *Contact: [shivalila@aol.com](mailto:shivalila@aol.com); or RR2 #3315, Pahoehoe, HI 96778; 808-965-9371,*

**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

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love to have you visit. Right now we would especially like more women 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 nonviolence, 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 RENT OR SALE

**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. Structure are all ready and welcoming. \$425,000. Owner financing available. Call 540-789-7897; rockriver@swva.net

**CITY OF THE SUN, Columbus, New Mexico.** GORGEOUS, CUSTOM BUILT ROUND ADOBE approximately 1,000 sq. ft. One bedroom alcove, dining alcove, sunken living and kitchen area. Skylights and windows with views of two mountain ranges. Located on lease land within intentional community in the New Mexico desert. One mile from village of Columbus, four miles from the Mexican border, 30 mi. south of city of Deming. Off the grid with solar lights and radio, propane heat and fridge. Composting toilet needs work. Additional outdoor shed and toilet facility. Present owner returning to Canada. \$40,000 negotiable. Chris at 505-531-2353.

**GREEN AND HEALTHY HOMES FOR SALE!** The Internet venue to buy or sell a green and/or healthy home: [www.GreenHomesForSale.com](http://www.GreenHomesForSale.com)

## COMMUNITIES FORMING

**LUNA HAVEN RANCH, Apalachicola, Florida.** Seven acres, beautiful forest, grass marsh, navigable creek, fenced irrigated garden, large shed. Good fishing, sailing. Currently, there is a house with a room available and sites for three more houses. Present residents: three adults and three dogs. I want to live out my days here in company with open-hearted people who desire to live and work in harmony with each other and

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## Visions of Utopia: Experiments in Sustainable Culture

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

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- Profiles of 7 very diverse communities
  - Camphill Special School ('61, PA), Twin Oaks ('67, VA), Ananda Village ('69, CA), Breitenbush Hot Springs ('77, OR), Purple Rose Collective ('78, CA), Earthaven ('92, NC)
- Insights about what works and what doesn't
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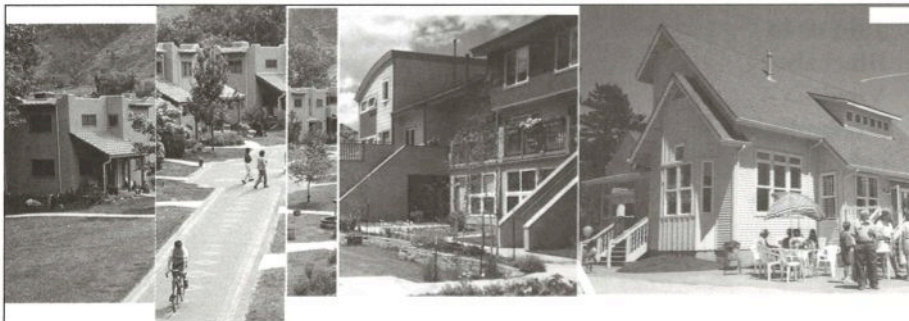
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this lovely place and help with expenses. Like gardening and/or bookkeeping? You would be especially welcome! Luna Moths live here. No smoking. *Kristin Anderson, POB 386, Apalachicola, FL 32329-0386; 850-653-2249; Kristin@kristinworks.com*

**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 homeschooling 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 nonmagick world, but who wish to live with their own kind. Still in planning/dreaming phase. I'd like to hear from any magick folk with ideas/interest or desire to be part of the startup! *Ronindaeymoon@hotmail.com*

**NAMASTE GREENFIRE, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire.** Our work is about polyloving relationships, genuine group intimacy and empowerment (the focus is *not* sex). It's about life-long relationships. Freedom of choice, bonding, blending with nature, wisdom, synergy, celebration, sacred circle(s). We seek maturity, serious intentionality commitment. We want to evolve as a rural education center. *603-776-7776; nhnamaste@yahoo.com*

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

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of community. Contact: Tree Bressen, 541-484-1156; tree@ic.org; www.treegroup.info

**GROUP PROCESS CONSULTANTS** are available to help your community in time of trouble and/or to build skills. FIC maintains a list of facilitators throughout North America who are experienced with intentional communities at [fic.ic.org/process.html](http://fic.ic.org/process.html)

## INTERNS AND RESIDENCIES

**SANDHILL FARM, Rutledge, Missouri.** Internships in Sustainable Community Living. April 15 to November 1, 2005. Gain experience in organic farming, construction, communication and rural and community living. Learning is informal and hands-on. Come for six weeks or longer. More information about the Sandhill Farm Community and applying for an internship: *Sandhill Farm, RR1, Box 155-C, Rutledge, MO 635631 660-883-5543; interns@sandhillfarm.org; www.sandhillfarm.org*

**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](http://www.windtreeranch.org); 4200 E. Summerland Road, Douglas, AZ 85607-9779; 520-364-4611; [windtreeranch@direpc.com](mailto:windtreeranch@direpc.com)

## PERSONALS

**GREEN SINGLES NEWSLETTER.** Free photo personal ads for singles in the environmental, vegetarian and animal rights communities and other progressives who share common values and interests. Finding soulmates for friendship, dating and marriage since 1985. Thousands of listings. [www.greensingles.com](http://www.greensingles.com)

**FOUNDER OF MAUI PERMACULTURE COMMUNITY** seeks female partner (25-35). Yoga practice, child and animal lover, gardening and rustic living experience all a plus. 808-870-8570; POB 922, Hana, HI 96713; [zac13-US@yahoo.com](mailto:zac13-US@yahoo.com)

## PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS, WEB SITES

**COHOUSING: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO HOUSING OURSELVES** by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett. Hundreds of color and black and white photos to inspire, hundreds of drawings and

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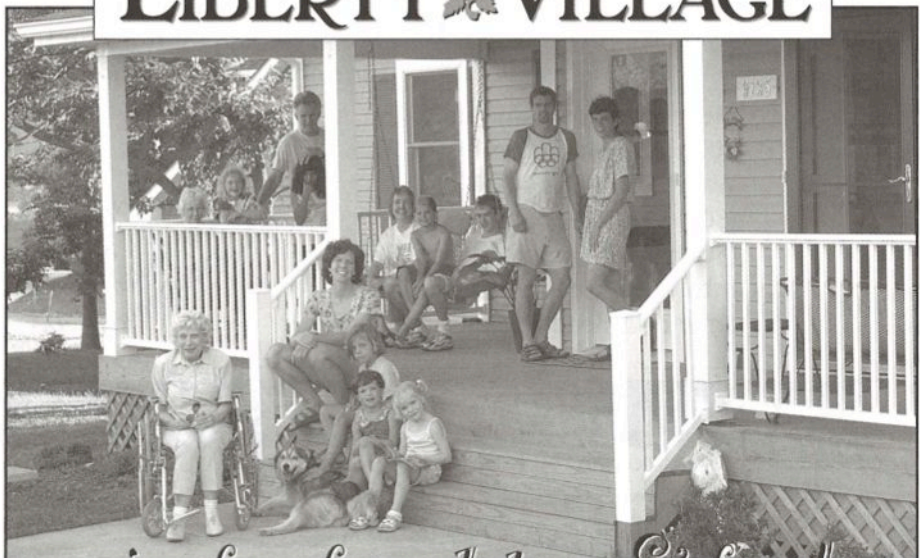
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William J. Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf

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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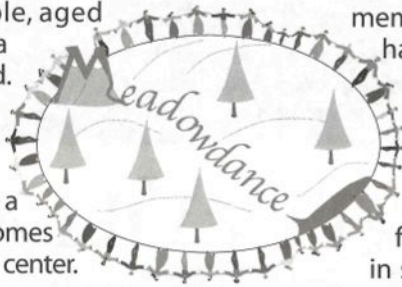
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For now we are seeking to add adult members to our community: hard working folks who love children and want to help create a good way to live that embraces the human family and treads softly on the earth, folks who are interested in settling for the long haul in north-central Vermont.

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## PERIPATETIC COMMUNITARIAN

(continued from p. 72)

**University Students' Cooperative Association, Berkeley, California.** USCA doesn't offer formal mentoring, but does present new-member orientations for student co-op members on the philosophy and history of the co-op movement as an alternative to capitalism. The essence of the student co-op experience, says USCA general manager George Proper, is living with other students and learning to resolve differences and make decisions. In the process, they learn the principles and responsibilities of cooperative ownership, and understand that without the generations of students who came before them, they would have no housing resources to work with. Hence, many student co-op members want to leave a legacy to future students, and often become co-op zealots. Most national co-op leaders, for instance those in the National Cooperative Business Association, were first inspired by living in student co-ops.

**Living Routes, Shutesbury, Massachusetts.** Directed by Daniel Greenberg of Sirius community in Shutesbury, this nonprofit organization offers accredited, college-level programs that take place in ecovillages around the world, including Auroville (India), Findhorn (Scotland), and Plum Village (France). Their mission is to "help students gain the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to build sustainable lifestyles for themselves, their communities and the Planet." Faculty members, essentially on duty full time, serve as role models and mentors during the month-long courses.

**The Mankind Project, New Warrior Training Adventure.** Many men from intentional communities have participated in New Warrior trainings and brought the insights and skills they've learned back to their communities. Group discussions, games, guided visualizations, journaling, and individual process work help men explore their "shadow side," take more responsibility for their lives, and live more

fully and with passion. To help participants stay connected to themselves and each other, the organization offers follow-up programs and a support network of men who meet regularly to work on personal growth, leadership, and teamwork skills. Men who take the training have the option of selecting a mentor for ongoing advice, and those who seek leadership roles in the organization select a mentor.

I believe the practice of mentoring deserves a lot more attention and energy in our society—especially if we want to successfully pass along the wisdom and skills needed to steward our planet and live consciously and cooperatively,

*Geoph Kozeny has lived in various kinds of communities for 31 years, and has been on the road visiting communities for 17 years. He is producer/editor of the Visions of Utopia video documentary on community, and is currently editing Part II of this series. If you have related information on mentoring in intentional communities and contemporary society, contact him at [geoph@ic.org](mailto:geoph@ic.org).*

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## Mentoring in Community

**H**ow are we preparing the upcoming generations, our kids and grandkids, to steward the planet and make the world a better place? I believe mentoring our youth is crucial for the future of the planet. And intentional communities offer ideal settings to do this.

While many communities provide a safe environment and a good education for their children (some even set up community schools); and many offer internships, apprenticeships, or vision quests, most of these are one-time experiences, not ongoing mentoring relationships.

Such programs often focus on concrete physical-world skills such as organic gardening, natural building, or facilitating meetings, as compared to getting to know one's inner self, making ethical choices, or seeking the meaning of life. Although spiritually based communities are more likely to cover the latter, most spiritual communities don't offer mentoring as an ongoing practice.

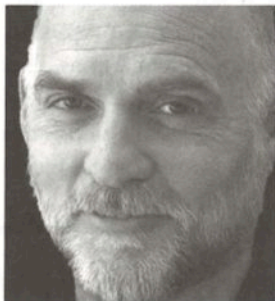
Community internship programs usually rely on an "immersion" experience—demonstrating and living a cooperative life—integrating interns into daily community activities, helping them set their priorities, guiding them in the practice of various physical skills, teaching them how to resolve conflicts and other useful practices. Many offer regular check-ins for monitoring what's up and how things are going, and often interns are buddied up with established members who show them the ropes and offer counsel and advice.

A handful of communities *do* offer inspiring mentoring practices, however.

**Goodenough Community, Seattle, Washington.** Their Private School for Human Development teaches adult self-development: the need to understand relationship, to become more effective interpersonally and in groups, to explore one's vocation and further one's career, to make a contribution to the world at large, and to become a steward

of the Earth. Their annual week-long Human Relations Laboratory works with experiential learning and offers practice in self-development skills.

**Sunrise Ranch, Loveland, Colorado.** The international headquarters of the Emissaries of Divine Light organization, Sunrise Ranch offers The Opening, a week-long immersion experience, to introduce principles of the organization's spiritual practices, and Art of Living seminars to further that exploration.



BY GEOPH KOZENY

***I believe  
mentoring our  
youth is crucial for  
the future of the  
planet.***

**Ananda Village School, Nevada City, California.** The book *Education for Life: Preparing Children to Meet the Challenges*, by Ananda Village community founder, Swami Kriyananda (Donald Walters), informs the curriculum of Ananda's community school. The book suggests methods for encouraging children to explore full maturity as human beings, get along well with others, live healthfully, develop one's latent abilities, become an effective employee or boss, and acquire balance in one's life.

**Songaia Community, Bothell, Washington.** Affiliated with the nonprofit Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) organization, Songaia hosts ICA-sponsored Rite of Passage Journeys to help mentor their youth through various passages in the growing-up process, using ropes courses, hikes, campfires, storytelling, rituals, and individual mentoring to teach about responsibility, uncover new gifts and skills, and help participants make lifelong friends. Their three programs are The Apprentice Journey, a week-long camping adventure for 4th–6th graders; Coming of Age, a three-week experience for 7th and 8th grade girls and boys separately; and Solo Crossing, a three-week co-ed backpacking adventure for 9th–12th graders. Today three quarters of the participants come from outside the ICA communities.

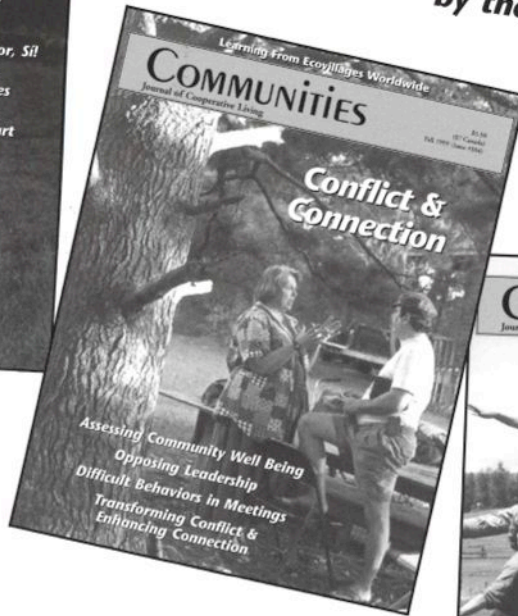
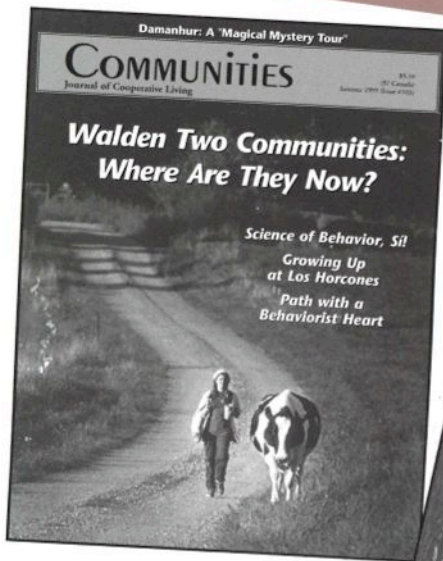
(continued on p. 71)



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